IMAGINATION IN ACTION

A study of the 'prehistory of writing' in children's early symbolising, based on a rereading of Vygotsky.

MYRA BARRS

1

IMAGINATION IN ACTION
A study of the 'prehistory of writing' in children's early symbolising, based on a rereading of Vygotsky.

Abstract

This thesis asks what links exist between young children's early concrete forms of symbolising and storying play - such as dramatic play, play with small toys, and drawing-cum-enactment - and later more abstract ways of world-making, especially writing. It considers which theories offer an adequate description of these aspects of children's learning and development.

After an introductory chapter in the form of an intellectual autobiography, the work of three educationalists (the cognitive psychologist Howard Gardner, the early writing specialist Anne Haas Dyson and the social psychologist Lev Vygotsky) is discussed in turn. All three have made major contributions to thinking about this topic. Vygotsky's work is treated particularly fully, and is the subject of a separate section. A new reading of his work is proposed; a reading which foregrounds his lifelong interest in literature, and which sees aesthetic and creative activities, and emotion, as central to his account of mind.

The empirical section which follows is based on an eighteen month study of seven young children in three classrooms, and an accompanying study of their teachers. Through a combination of interviews, observations, records of study group meetings and children's records, the links between the children's symbolic activities and their developing literacy over this period are traced, and their three teachers' 'theories-in-practice' are explored. A number of themes emerge from an analysis of the data about children and teachers, and these form the conclusions to this section.

A concluding chapter returns to a consideration of the developmental path taken by children as symbolisers. It draws parallels between the 'pre-Vygotskyan' theories of the teachers in the empirical chapter, with their emphasis on the links between different ways of symbolising, and Vygotsky's

view of intellectual development as a process of learning to use the 'psychological tools' involved in thinking - especially the tool of written language. It considers how the 'imagination in action' of childhood may continue to inform later imaginative and speculative writing and it argues for a central place for artistic and symbolic activities in the curriculum, both in the early years and beyond.

Myra Barrs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS

IMAGINATION IN ACTION
A study of the 'prehistory of writing' in children's early symbolising, based on a rereading of Vygotsky

Contents

Table 1

(Anthony : 4.0 YRS.)

A r A ● A

A n O

1st 2nd 4th 3rd 5th

Black =
mummy in
the house

the green around
the black house
is the cat
walking around
outside the
house.

Mrs
Armitage
putting
my picture
in my
special
envelope.

the grass in
the front garden

the purple line
is Sweep his other
cat walking around
the outside of the house,
looking for Sooty.

Feb. '92.

pink = the path going to
the brown broken
gate.

Sooty
my cat

10

ANTHONY'S PICTURE

Anthony is four and he is in a nursery class. According to his teacher, he never normally wants to write or draw. On the occasion when he made this drawing (see Table 1) however, sitting with the teacher, 'he told the story of what was happening as he worked. He changed pens quite deliberately, to use colour as an additional "symbol" '.

Because the teacher annotated his drawing, we can see what Anthony meant to represent. He has drawn his home, and his world at home. In the middle of the picture are some strong black lines which represent 'Mummy in the house'. She is at the centre of things. The green patch at the bottom right of the picture is his cat Sooty, another important figure in Anthony's world. But the green *line* represents Sooty in a different way; it shows him on the move, walking round and round outside the house. The purple line shows Anthony's other cat, Sweep, which is walking around looking for Sooty.

Other patches of colour in the drawing represent part of the garden - the grass, the garden path, the garden gate. But up on the right-hand side of the paper a tiny patch of red stands for something out of a different world 'Mrs Armitage putting my picture in a special envelope'.

So as Anthony was picturing his world he was attempting to draw both people and objects at rest, and also action and things on the move, and he included all these within the same frame. As well as drawing, he was enacting what he drew: the coloured lines moving round the house represent the movements of Sooty and Sweep. All the time he was drawing, we know from his teacher, he was talking, and through his talk he was telling the story of the picture. To make the story clearer he actually used colour as a code, as his teacher points out in her letter to me. At the end of this episode he combined events from very different worlds and time frames when he included a small representation of his teacher putting his picture in a 'special envelope'.

Anthony's 'writing', at the top of the picture, consists of some of the letters from his name. But it is clear that the meaning of this text is in the picture, or rather in the whole event of making the picture, through depiction,

enactment, and talk. Anthony is at the beginnings of using symbols to make meanings - he is 'learning how to mean' on paper. In time he will be able to differentiate between different ways of doing this, through writing alone, through picturing of various kinds, or through a deliberate and planned combination of these. But for now he uses all the means of symbolising at his disposal, in a remarkably inventive synthesis.

In this thesis I shall argue that writing has its roots in these early kinds of symbolising and storying play, and shall pursue the implications of this argument in theory and in practice.

PART ONE: STUDIES OF SYMBOLISING

Chapter one
WAYS OF WORLD-MAKING

1.0 Introduction

In this thesis I examine the connections between young children's creative play - their dramatic play, their play with models and toy figures, their narrative drawing and modelling - and their early writing. All of these activities can be viewed as 'ways of world-making'(Goodman, 1978). Frank Smith describes the urge to construct invented worlds as a basic mental drive, one which underpins many of children's activities and is the main impulse behind their move into literacy:

> 'What in general motivates (children) to learn to read and write? I believe that the motivating force is not a largely mythical impulse to communicate or a simple curiosity about what is going on around them and it is certainly not a blind readiness to learn anything that happens to be part of their environment. Rather, I suspect that children happen to learn about written language, if appropriate demonstrations are available, because writing is a particularly efficacious way of accomplishing that which the child's brain is perpetually striving to do in any case - namely, to create worlds.'(Smith, 1984, p.152)

This quotation is for me a particularly clear statement of the excitements and rewards of literacy, and especially of writing, which offers children a powerful new medium for creative play and thinking. But it does no more than hint at how this new way of world-making is continuous with already established ways, or how the links between the existing systems of symbolising the world that children have at their disposal and this new, more abstract, system are formed.

It is surprising that there are still relatively few studies of writing development that have considered seriously these antecedents of literacy or that have observed the connections between different ways of world-making. For instance, young children frequently 'draw-and-write' - either from choice or because their teachers encourage them to do so. Yet students of writing development (Bissex, 1980; Harste et al.,1984) have rarely looked as closely at children's drawings as they do at their writings, and have thus often neglected an important source of meaning. Similarly, educationalists with an interest in artistic development have been inclined to ignore the role of writing in mixed-media text (Gardner, 1980;

Hildreth, 1941). And neither writing nor art specialists have generally attended to the fact that children making such texts may be accompanying their activity with a stream of commentary and dramatising their stories as they draw-and-write - yet many parents or teachers would testify that texts and pictures often come about as part of this kind of multi-media event (cf. Feinburg, 1976). There is thus a strong tendency in educational circles for disciplinary boundaries to mark the limits of enquiry. This is particularly inappropriate when considering the development of young children, whose activity and thinking is markedly interdisciplinary, or rather, in James Britton's term, 'predisciplinary' in nature.

The links between all these ways of world-making are the subject of my thesis. Implicit in what I shall have to say is a loose, not linear, theory of development which sees literacy and especially writing as growing out of and building on previously established, more concrete forms of symbolism, such as enactment and depiction, and which regards all of these activities as aspects of imaginative thought. I shall seek support for this theory in the work of a number of educationalists and educational psychologists, and in particular in the work of Lev Vygotsky, whose contribution to the study of creative and imaginative activity and its role in children's learning has not yet been sufficiently appreciated. I shall also consider, through an empirical investigation, how some teachers with a particularly well developed theory-in-practice understand the centrality of the imagination in children's literacy learning, and encourage children to make links between more concrete and more abstract ways of symbolising.

A Vygotskyan view of development shows us that it consists not of a series of discrete 'stages', not in leaving earlier forms of behaviour and earlier selves behind in a kind of existential relay race, but of incorporating established forms of behaviour into the self in a constant process of internalisation which involves the transformation of previous experience and previous selves. In this introductory chapter, therefore, I have decided to raise questions about the development of the imagination through a consideration of my own previous selves - some distant, and some more recent - and of the experiences which have led to my interest in this topic. I shall begin this autobiographical section by describing my own childhood experiences of storying play, and of writing as an extension of such play.

I shall then, through a kind of intellectual history of my thinking on this topic, identify some of the experiences that have affected me and helped to shape the argument in this thesis. As part of this history of my own past thinking I shall look back on some of the articles that I have written over the past ten years in my effort to explore this territory. This review will also allow me to introduce references to the work of a number of educationalists, writers and thinkers, either ones who have influenced all that will follow, or some with whose work I have enjoyed arguing in my head and who must be reckoned with in any serious consideration of this topic.

1.1   Distant selves

My personal history is one of the sources of my conviction that symbolic play and writing are not separable into different compartments, but are essentially part of the same developing capacity for imaginative thinking. I remember my own play life as a child as having been rich and abundant. As an only child for the first six and a half years of my life, the whole period of the second world war, I developed a strong appetite for imaginative play.

I was born in Coventry three months after the beginning of the war, so much of my play as a child was solitary. The life of the street - a street of 1930s terraced houses on the outskirts of the city - was fractured by constant air raids, and many families with young children moved out of the city to live, or at least to sleep, during the worst periods of the bombing. My mother and father had no relations to move in with, so the three of us stayed put in the street throughout the blitz.

I remember being involved, throughout this wartime childhood, in fantasy play. Some of this was acted out in the garden, the street, or in private places such as the cupboard under the stairs (where we also sheltered during air raids). At the bottom of the back garden was a pit where a fragment of a bomb had fallen during an air raid, narrowly missing the house. This pit was overgrown with weeds and had become a grassy hollow, which was a private retreat for me. It was inhabited in my imagination by fairy beings - there were, actually, fairies at the bottom of my garden. I remember a strong sense of being in touch with other powers when I played in this place, and an impression of powerful voices

speaking insistently to me in a way that I sometimes found frightening as well as fascinating. It was frightening because I partly knew myself to be the source of these voices, but partly they seemed to be quite separate from me, and their utterances were somehow uncontrollable as well as compelling.

I have remembered these voices in reading some of the work of Oliver Sacks (1970) about delusions in patients with brain damage. I was particularly reminded of them, however, when I read John Jaines' fascinating work on *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind* (1976), in which he speculates that consciousness itself may have its roots, historically, in human delusive fantasies of hearing the voices of the gods inside their own heads. I do believe that these memories probably date from the period when my speech was being internalised, and that I was becoming conscious of my own inner speech.

These instances of solitary play were probably happening at around the same time that social play of a more conscious, role-taking kind was being learned, mainly in dialogue with my mother. I remember her as a willing if slightly distracted play partner, who could keep her side of a drama going with one hand while, with the other, she got on with the housework. I also remember that this arrangement suited me very well because I did not want her to be a full partner in my imaginings or to initiate too strongly within the play. In this way we acted out shopkeeper-and-customer, waitress-and-customer, and doctor-and-patient dramas, and other transactions and encounters, mostly in the kitchen while washing-day or cooking the dinner was on the go.

Role-taking play, from then on, dominated my play life. I acted out recurrent fantasies. As Tinkerbell, from Peter Pan, I danced ahead of my family leading them home through the 'blackout' with my fairy torch. As Dick Whittington, complete with cat and a red spotted handkerchief tied to a stick, I constantly set out for larger worlds, never getting further than half way up the street before the cat gave up. And for many years I regularly rode to my primary school - only a street away - on an imaginary horse which I hitched up carefully to the front gate during the dinner break, and galloped back to school on straightway afterwards.

It seems significant that these fantasies were ones in which I saw myself as independent and adventurous, leading rather than following, and essentially androgynous. I did not ever enjoy doll play, and on the only occasion when I was given for Christmas (by my grandmother) a notably 'girlish' present of a frilly doll's cradle, my strong disappointment must have been communicated to the whole assembled family. My Dick Whittington persona seems to me perhaps the most expressive of what much of my childhood play was about - a way of projecting out of the here-and-now nature of life in a pebble-dashed three-up-and-two-down terraced house in a treeless street, into a wider environment and a less mundane future. .

In many ways my whole childhood seemed, even then, a kind of marking time. I felt constrained, both by the conditions of my life and by the condition of childhood itself. I now locate the source of this sense of dissatisfaction and constraint in my father, a factory toolmaker, whose strong aspirations towards a larger, freer life, a better education, and more fulfilling work were invested in me as his first-born child. Though he was never, in fact, a partner in my imaginative play, it seems to me that his aspirations may have helped to shape my imaginary adventures.

My play life was richest in bed at night. Set bedtimes meant going to bed whether or not one was tired, and I frequently found myself with hours to kill before sleep. I filled them with stories, plays, and concerts, sometimes acted out by my teddy bear - a talented performer who danced and sang on top of the bedclothes, and whose shadow danced too, on the wall. Reading in bed was forbidden, but with a torch under the blankets I made a warm cave where I could read, play, and take all the parts in the fantasy dramas which became a regular feature of my pre-sleep life. With the advent of my teens these fantasies became more obsessive and assumed a character of barely veiled masochistic eroticsm. (Sexual life is obviously one area of adult life where this kind of fantasy play continues unabated, and it is clear that, for many people, play is an uncomfortable topic after childhood.) Some children with whom I have discussed their story-writing have located the origins of their stories either in pre-sleep fantasies or in dreams, and the proximity of pre-sleep fantasy to the involuntary storying of dream perhaps makes it a particularly important practice ground for narrative play.

I began to be a more conscious story-maker, and engaged in more public forms of imagining. A major stimulus to this came when I was given two glove puppets as a Christmas present. This was probably still in wartime, or shortly after the war, because one of them was made of camouflage material. It had a slightly mad-eyed expression, and was christened Twerpy by my father. Its black companion, Koko, was less alive in every way, and simply acted as a stooge, but Twerpy acquired a manic personality and a wild laugh, and became a household favourite. I enjoyed the licence that this puppet gave me to act out parts of myself that were normally to be suppressed - rudeness, vulgarity, disobedience. I had a strong impression that the puppet, even though worked by my own hand, had an independent existence, while at the same time speaking and acting in ways scripted by me.

Later, in the final two years of my primary school, I temporarily gained the same kind of ventriloquistic power over the children in my class through writing, when I wrote - one after another - three plays, each of which was put on as part of end-of-term celebrations. They were, as far as I remember, dull pageant-like plays in doggerel couplets, but the sense of power and achievement that I enjoyed through this realisation of my fantasies, and the sense of recognition I gained as both author and producer of these dramas, made this a formative experience. This was probably the last time that my dramatic play experiences and my writing talents were fused, and subsequently I became more definitively a person whose imaginative work was done through writing.

I relished the sense of omnipotent control that writing plays gave me - control of the characters in the play, of the cast of human actors, of the audience, whose response I was intensely conscious of, and of the language and the verse. As a writer at secondary school I became even more conscious of the pleasure and skill involved in structuring a fictional experience for others so as to achieve a particular response - often in those days a humorous response. I read widely and consciously used my reading. Humour and rhetoric were what I most admired in writing, and this reflected my father's preferences. We enjoyed together *Punch*, the writing of A.A.Milne, A.P.Herbert and Bernard Shaw. My family was the first audience for my school compositions, and I would read aloud to them

or watch my father or mother as they read from my English book, monitoring their response very closely. Developing a sense of an audience and of a reader (I view these as subtly different) now seems to me to be among the most important aspects of development as a writer.

1.2 Recent selves

I did not return to the linked worlds of writing and dramatic play in any systematic way for thirty years, when I wrote my MA dissertation on the subject of young children's story writing (Barrs, 1983). Also at about this time, and probably not coincidentally, I was for a period once more engaged in passionate dramatic play, this time with the child of close friends, Laurie Newell. I was close to Laurie throughout her babyhood and childhood and was a regular partner in her fantasy play, which was intense and frequent. Her extraordinary need and determination, even at age three, to relive and recast experience in fictional form and to reenact stories, her wild pleasure in fantasy, her imperiousness and readiness to initiate play, her powers of roletaking and her enjoyment of her creative omnipotence in dramatic play, all astonished me. Unquestionably, too, these experiences reawakened in me memories of my own play life.

1.2.1. *MA dissertation*

In my MA dissertation, I chose to study the story writing of a number of children, aged from about seven to about nine. As I interviewed these children I found that several of them spoke about their story writing as if it were closely linked to their drawing, or to their imagining in dramatic play. One child, John, eloquently described his creation of imaginary worlds of story in terms which strongly suggested links with dramatic play:

> 'It's just as if I was one of those persons, I'd be there. Like I'm imagining myself in a dream being there.'(p.72)

Links with the involuntary fantasies of dream were also made. Paulet, an elementary school student in Toronto, regularly used the word 'dream' when talking about how she made up her stories:

> 'When I go to bed at sl...I dream about it....I know from when I was sleeping.' (p.67)

I tried to explore where children felt themselves to be within their own stories, and how they visualised the settings of their stories, and was often

rewarded with very graphic and detailed descriptions of their imagined worlds. Angela said:

> '...There was a big, y'know...it was a wooden box, a wooden kind of box....with a door in it, and the key was behind the curtains, and the curtains were, have got flowers on them in all kinds of different colours, and the door was next, just next, the back door was just next to the curtains.' (p.106).

Where stories were accompanied by pictures, it was clear from what the children said that some of them were putting at least as much meaning into their pictures as into their written texts, and that they did not always see these texts as separate from the pictures. Pictures sometimes carried an important part of the meaning, and in some children's work it seemed that picture and written text should be regarded as part of a larger whole 'text'. One child I interviewed spoke of 'drawing a story' and described what she meant by this:

> Alison: 'Cos I like drawing stories and making things up and things, sort of things like that.
> MB: The drawing is part of the story is it...
> Alison: Yes
> MB: ...for you?
> Alison: I just write a little bit near each picture and just carry on with a picture, a little bit of the story by the side of it, a picture, sort of thing like that. (p.58-59)

1.2.2 Study groups

The work I did for this dissertation convinced me that any study of writing development, to which I was particularly strongly drawn as an area of continuing enquiry, would need to look at writing as a way of symbolising which was, for many children, still closely linked to other, more concrete, forms of symbolism. I was especially interested in the links between writing and artistic development, which were also relatively easily available for study in the shape of children's pictures-and-texts. I initiated a series of study groups for teachers, the longest-running of which was a group in the London borough of Brent, where for eleven years I was the adviser for English. This group met regularly over about two years and discussed teachers' observations of particular children.The group came to be particularly interested in the differences between girls' and boys' texts and pictures.[1] I began, as a consequence of this and other experiences to reflect on how many children, whose prime experience of narrative was now derived from television, might find it more natural and satisfying to tell stories through graphic means, or through a combination of picture and text. [2]

Subsequent study groups which I convened, in Toronto, and at the Centre for Language in Primary Education (where I have worked since 1985) also considered the links between writing and art and brought me into contact with more teachers who, like me, wanted a better way of talking about writing development than could be achieved by an unremitting focus on text and linguistic features alone.

1.2.3 *Articles*

From about 1983 onwards, not long after I had completed my MA, I began to write occasional articles on the topic of children's writing development. Since that time I have contributed to a number of books and journals, in chapters and articles which have explored the links between writing and other forms of creative activity or storying play. These articles, taken together, make up an intellectual history of my thinking about the subject of this thesis over the past ten years, and I have decided to review five of them at this point. Through a brief analysis and evaluation of their contents, I hope to be able to show how they have led up to this thesis and contributed to its design. In discussing them I shall also refer to or comment on the work of a number of researchers, writers, and teachers, including some who feature prominently in this thesis (Howard Gardner,Anne Haas Dyson and Lev Vygotsky), and others (Michael Polanyi, Dorothy Heathcote, Donald Winnicott and James Britton), who have been most important influences on my own thinking in this area.

1.2.3.1
'Knowing by Becoming' (1984)

This was a chapter from my MA thesis, which was published in the book *Changing English*. In it, I considered the difference between the stories written by young children (children of six to eight years old) and older children (children of about nine to eleven). I had found the younger children I interviewed for the dissertation to be more confident story-makers, with a stronger sense of the overall shape of their stories, and conscious of fewer problems with composition. Older children tended to be less assured as writers, more likely to worry about the problems of managing a narrative, and more likely to change their original idea as they went along. I found strong parallels for these differences, and for the 'first draft artistry' of some of the younger children's stories - which were often marked by an extraordinary shapeliness and economy - in the psychologist

Howard Gardner's study of children's artistic development, *Artful Scribbles* (1980). Gardner had found that while children's art increased in skill and realism, or what he called 'technical competence', in middle childhood, it decreased in vitality, life, and colour ('flavourfulness') from age six onwards.

This was my first meeting with Gardner's writing and I still consider *Artful Scribbles* to be his best book. For the next few years I became preoccupied with his work, which seemed to focus on a set of concerns which were very close to my own, despite the fact that (as I came to realise) he rarely considered oral or written language in any detail in his research into children's development as symbolisers. I continued my mental dialogue with Gardner in later articles, and came to find his strongly cognitivist focus on symbolic behaviour very narrow, in some ways paradigmatic of the limitations of contemporary educational psychology. I engage much more fully with his work in this thesis, where his long-term research project, Project Zero, forms the subject of my second chapter.

The last part of my article was a reflection on why younger children may be more successful than older ones, in some important respects, in creating and dwelling in imaginary worlds. I drew on an intriguing book, *The Ecology of the Imagination in Childhood* by Edith Cobb (1977), who made her life's work a study of the childhood of 'geniuses' - artists and creative thinkers. She considered that young children, who have not yet built up strong ego-boundaries, might be able to participate more fully in other worlds of experience, by flowing into other states of being and imaginatively experiencing them from the inside, through a form of responsive insight. She called this capacity 'plasticity'.

This seemed to chime in with what I had observed about younger children's tendency to *enact* the experiences they were representing when they were telling stories, drawing, or drawing-and-writing, and thus imagine these experiences in a bodily way. I compared Cobb's 'plasticity' with Polanyi's (1967) description of 'contemplation' or 'in-dwelling' as a way of knowing by which, through attending to experience, we 'incorporate it in our being - or extend our body to include it - so that we come to dwell in it.'(p16). I think that this part of the article touches on issues which become important when one comes to look at the inner

visualisation and enactment which must accompany later writing, and which I hope to consider at more length later in this thesis.

Voice and Role in Reading and Writing' (1987)
This article was originally written for the journal *Language Arts*. It was strongly influenced by the drama work of Dorothy Heathcote, whom I had worked with and written about before. The article looked at the way in which both reading and writing are to some extent a question of role-taking. In reading the reader performs the text, even if in an abbreviated and interior way, while in writing the writer both takes on a range of roles and personae and creates scripts to be performed by the reader, attempting as far as possible to provide 'stage directions' within the text, to enable it to be read as s/he intends.

The article considered how role-taking drama, which involves physical enactment, gives children access to a much wider range of registers and genres than they normally have at their disposal, and discussed how, in writing which involves role-taking on paper, some kind of bodily imagining or physical tuning up of a very attenuated kind may still take place in the course of the mental imagining. It also proposed that the idea of role, in relation to writing, could be an alternative way of viewing *both* the concept of genre - since writing within a certain genre is generally a question of taking up a certain kind of role on paper - *and* the concept of audience - since, similarly, a writer may be able to focus a piece by writing in a particular role, rather than for a particular audience. It might be easier, indeed, for children to take on new genres or write for more public audiences by role-taking on paper (which would make use of well-established capacities for imitation and enactment) than through direct instruction in these aspects of writing. [3]

I had been greatly impressed by Heathcote's work, particularly by the linguistic strengths that children revealed when taking part in dramas in role. They seemed able to operate at whatever level of language she introduced within the drama. Heathcote invited them into areas of language and experience which would be closed to them in their own personae, and they responded eagerly, demonstrating how much tacit knowledge they had of different linguistic registers. The concept of role

greatly extends the idea of learning by imitation. Imitation is sometimes taken to be a matter of straightforward copying, where the copyist simply follows a model in an uncomprehending way. To see it as taking on a role brings out the fact that imitation can have a creative and inventive element, which involves behaving 'as if' one were someone else and drawing on all one's tacit knowledge and past observation to do so. I have since been fascinated by evidence that, in role, children can achieve more than they can in their normal personae. Carroll's study of in-role drama compared children's language in drama with their classroom language and found that children in role initiate more, and engage in a wider range of language uses than they do in normal classroom discourse (Carroll, 1992). In another study, described to me by Phillida Salmon, children taking a test twice, first in their own personae and secondly in role as 'good students', achieved higher scores when they were in role. (Salmon, personal communication).

It was also interesting to me that Heathcote used drama deliberately as a way of introducing children to new areas of the curriculum or to new knowledge. The drama offered children a way of living through this knowledge, experiencing it from the inside, and understanding it feelingly as well as intellectually. Heathcote was contemptuous of the overwhelmingly cognitive emphasis in school learning, and has described secondary schools as being dominated by 'thin mouths talking'. In her drama sessions she set out to show what learning could look like when the whole person, as well as the brain, was involved. Above all what Heathcote demonstrated to me was the way in which children's dramatic play could be developed far beyond its original informal private beginnings, and become a powerful and social medium for learning, and a psychological tool for understanding concepts which might otherwise remain remote, abstract, or academic.

This article, with its emphasis on bodily ways of knowing, had some obvious continuities with 'Knowing by Becoming' and again involved grappling with difficult issues about what Polanyi has called the tacit dimension. The view that is developed in the article of enactment as the most fundamental way of symbolising experience and means of learning, in which the medium is the individual's own body, was to be touched on again in later writing, and reappears later in this thesis.

'1.2.3.3

Maps of Play '(1988a)

This article was published in the book *Language and Literacy in the Primary School* (Meek and Mills, 1988), and was based on an experience of observing a friend's child's play over a period of a week. It traced the links between Ben's dramatic play with toy figures, which was obsessive and continuous, and a development late in the week, in which he shared his play with an adult and created a series of diagrams or 'maps' of the play. In the article I was interested in the connections that could be made between Ben's play, the 'maps of play' that he created, and his literacy development. My theme was similar to the one I am continuing to explore in this thesis - the connections between literacy development and symbolic development in other areas.

A number of issues arose from this observation. One was the play with toy figures, which has always seemed to me a particularly important and complete kind of play. Since it involves the player in taking many parts, including that of narrator, and in organising the whole action of the drama and acting it out physically through the toy figures, it seems an obvious rehearsal for the role of the writer. It is interesting to know that this kind of play is sometimes actually referred to as 'world-making' play, and that it is often used in child therapy (Axline, 1971[4]). The role of commentary in this kind of play also fascinated me, and I tried without success to record some of Ben's monologuing commentary, which I knew, from the snatches that I could hear, was in an entirely different register from his normal speech. I took up some of these preoccupations in a later article (Barrs, 1988b).

I was also interested in the content of the play, and the very 'macho' and violent nature of the fictions that Ben was obsessed with. It was noticeable that he was drawing the material for his play, not from the children's picture books with which he was surrounded, but from television (particularly the children's *He-Man* series), from the film *Star Wars*, and perhaps from computer games. These fictions, representing an exaggeratedly 'male' position, seemed perhaps to have a particular importance for Ben at a time when he was busily defining himself as a boy in a largely female household. This article aroused a good deal of interest,

particularly because it had raised the issue of the influence of media fictions on play, and had also foregrounded the interest that many children have in strongly gender-stereotyped fictions, and in self-stereotyping, at a particular point in their development. [5]

This article involved less theoretical discussion than some of the others outlined here; in it I was telling a story. But the striking move that Ben made, in his play with an adult partner, into a form of 'second order' symbolism, in which the play was represented or diagrammed on paper, was for me the most theoretically interesting aspect of the observation. To paraphrase Vygotsky, Ben seemed to have realised that one can draw not only objects, but also action. It seemed likely that this realisation of new symbolic possibilities would contribute to his literacy development.

Ben's map was a picture map, and this incident strengthened my interest in the kind of picturing which is also a way of diagramming action, or representing a story. (This kind of 'dynamic' drawing seems to be more frequently found in boys' pictures than in girls'). To be fully understood, I think such 'text events' have to be taken in the context of the monologuing commentary which often accompanies them. Anne Haas Dyson is probably the educational researcher who has done most to document and analyse such events, and to enable other educationalists to appreciate the eventful history that often lies behind an apparently simple picture or text. Her work, with its attempt to document the complexities of young children writing and drawing, will be the subject of the third chapter of this thesis.

1.2.3.4
'Play Worlds and Story Worlds' (1988b)
This article was written for the American *Journal of Learning about Learning*. I made the Frank Smith quotation with which I began this chapter the epigraph to the article, which considered examples of children's world-making, both in the play with small toys which is sometimes actually known as 'world-making play' or 'small world play', and in older children's writing. A number of researchers and educationalists interested in language development had observed children in the kind of play situation where they act out narratives with small toys as the characters (e.g. Britton, 1971). Vygotsky had shown that the kind of

monologuing speech that accompanies this and other kinds of private play often disappears if no one else is present. These writers were particularly interested in the relationship of this kind of monologuing commentary to inner speech. Other researchers have focused on what this play revealed about narrative development, as it were the story grammar of the play (e.g.Rubin and Wolf, 1979) - sometimes in what I considered to be fairly mechanical ways which took no account of what the children actually said or of what was being expressed through the content of the play.

I discussed in this article the context in which such play with small toys often takes place - in the presence of an adult, but apart from the adult, so that the child's talk, which may be continuous, is often difficult to overhear (as in my study of Ben). I was particularly struck by parallels between Britton's and Vygotsky's accounts of this kind of play situation, and the description given by Donald Winnicott (1974), who sees play in the presence of an adult (a mother or mother-figure) as a key personal and cultural experience. Winnicott speaks of the child 'being alone in the presence of someone' and in this safe situation being able to 'manipulate external objects in the service of dream' so as to create a living fantasy. Through these kinds of experiences Winnicott believes that there is established, between the mother and the child, a 'third area' which is the area where play and (later) art can take place. For me, this account helps to explain the nature of the relationship between the adult presence and the playing child and how this supportive situation facilitates languaging play.

In this article I also drew parallels between Chukovsky's (1989) description of children's delight in 'topsy turvies' - jokes which turn the world upside down, through language alone - and the kind of world-making play which also juggles with the reality of things and can feed into children's story-making. I believe that one of the main potential attractions for children in literacy is that it can become an area for their play, and I gave examples from a classroom where this was evidently so. If language is, in Bruner's words, 'constitutive of reality', then written language, with its feature of permanence, is even more obviously so, and when children realise that literally anything can be brought into being in written language, even what they know to be untrue, then they can become very excited. I quoted a communication from Maura Doherty about her three year old son Theo. Theo had 'written' two wavy writing like lines and he called his mother

to 'read' it, shouting: This says "I went to the park" - but I didn't! I didn't!
I didn't!' (p.94).

This article explored both the beginnings of world-making play, and its
development (much later) into the creation of worlds through writing,
and stressed the role of the contexts in which such activities flourish, and
of the affective aspects, pleasures and satisfactions, of these experiences.

1.2.3.5
'Drawing a Story' (1988c)

This article was the most sustained attempt I had made to trace the
beginnings of writing in other symbolising activities, particularly in
drawing. It appeared in a book of essays for James Britton, *The Word for
Teaching is Learning* (Lightfoot and Martin, 1988). In it I considered the
way in which, in the early stages of writing, pictures and writing seemed to
be closely linked or complementary forms of expression, and how drawing
may continue to be an important part of the meaning of a text - or even
carry most of the meaning - well after children are able to write
independently. It seems that writing, as a new and relatively abstract form
of symbolism in the child's development, is built on existing ways of
symbolising (enactment and depiction), is initially inseparable from them,
and gradually ceases to be dependent on these more concrete systems.

In this article I quoted an extended passage from Britton's (1971)
introduction to the Penguin edition of *Speech and the Development of
Mental Processes* . This passage is a clarifying account of the Piaget-Bruner
view of the path of child development (ie from enactive to iconic to
abstract/linguistic ways of experiencing and acting on the world). Britton
focuses on the transitions in this model, in which speech which is
originally rooted in action or perception (speech-cum-action) can be seen
as gradually being freed from its dependence on these other ways of
representing the world and from the here-and-now, so becoming an
independent means of organising reality.

> '...language tied to the here-and-now forms the basis from which there develops
> linguistic representation freed from these bonds, freed from its dependence upon
> movement and perception'. (p. 10)

I saw this passage as offering an exact parallel for the way that, in the
development of symbolising activity, writing is at first linked closely to
already established ways of symbolising (eg drawing-cum-writing) only

gradually, and sometimes over a long period, becoming a free-standing means of symbolising. I suggested that we might hypothesise a similar order of development, within symbolising activities (ie from enactment/dramatic play, to picturing, to writing), to that proposed in the Piaget-Bruner hypothesis of child development. In any consideration of development, however, it seems important to put at least as much weight on the transitions and interactions in a developmental picture (as Britton does) as on the idea of progression.

Since then I have connected this view of the process of development with Vygotsky's theory of the way in which higher mental processes mature out of earlier or 'lower' forms. The account of his position given in Kozulin's chapter 'Mind in Trouble' (in Kozulin, 1990) suggests that Vygotsky was particularly concerned to look at the developmental *layers* within any psychological formation (eg concept formation). According to Kozulin, Vygotsky's view was that:

> 'Primitive forms of concept formation...do not disappear in a mature concept; they are *aufgehoben*, that is superseded and saved at one and the same time. On a number of occasions Vygotsky returned to this Hegelian term, *aufheben*, which has a fairly accurate Russian equivalent, *snyatie*, but no precise equivalent in English.'(p.213).

This view of development offers a much richer picture of the relationship between 'lower' and 'higher', or simpler and more complex mental functions. Most importantly from my point of view, it suggests a way in which 'primitive', 'lower', or earlier and simpler forms of thought and behaviour may continue to contribute to later and more complex formations. In this account, language is not, as Britton suggests 'freed from the bonds' of earlier forms of representing the world, but incorporates them and goes beyond them. Transferred to the plane of symbolic development, the developmental framework suggested here would provide a perfect picture of the way that, even when writing has apparently become a free-standing activity, it may continue to draw on and interact with developmentally earlier ways of symbolising.

In this article I also attempted to look at what these different symbolising activities - enactment, picturing, and writing - had in common. One factor running through them was the 'stream of talk' by which they were ofen accompanied, and I recalled that Vygotsky (1978) had stressed the role of spoken language as the basis of all subsequent symbolic systems. Another was story - in general writing seemed to be, in Frank Smith's words, 'a

particularly efficacious way' for children to continue the world-making and storying which also drove their play and their picture-making. These activities also all provided ways for children to express and represent their developing understandings of the world.

I ended the article with a reference to another work by James Britton (1982), who in a brief study of his three year old daughter's 'prehistory of writing' (pp.59-61) had acknowledged the contribution that other forms of symbolic behaviour - 'gesture, make-believe play, pictorial representation' - make to the process of learning to read and write. Britton pointed out that all of these activities were, in his own term, 'spectator role' activities. Children's early writing, dramatic play, and picture-making are all activities in which the desire to order and comprehend experience finds artistic form. The implications of this the view of literacy for the education of young children are of particular importance today, when a severely functional view of literacy development is being promoted by the revised National Curriculum for English.

This article was written for James Britton and refers at several points to his work, which has been a major influence on my development as a writer and a teacher. There are several different ways in which Britton has affected not only my thinking but that of a large English-teaching community world-wide.[5] Through his theoretical work, Britton helped to establish a strong basis for educational practice in the field of language and literacy, and indeed, through the concept of language across the curriculum, well beyond 'English' teaching. In the absence of a sufficiently broad school of educational psychology (particularly in this country), this work has been of fundamental importance, though its unorthodox basis has made it constantly vulnerable to criticism. Britton's emphasis on the interrelatedness of different aspects of development, on the tacit dimension in learning, and on language as a symbolising medium has greatly influenced this thesis, and his work has been my first means of introduction to many of the thinkers whose work I have drawn on here.

1.3   Recurring themes

When I look back through these articles I see that they are linked by their focus on a number of recurring themes. These themes, taken together,

make up the subject of this thesis, which explores the relationships between them. They can be listed as follows:

1.3.1 *Enactment*

In all of them I am concerned with the role of enactment in learning - either direct enactment, in which the medium is the child's own body, or enactment through the medium of small toys. Bodily enactment, or make-believe play, because it involves children in actually *becoming* their imaginings, using all the physical means of expressing meaning that they use in life, is the most fundamental form of symbolising (Vygotsky (1978) doubted whether it should be viewed as 'full symbolism' since it did not involve the manipulation of any symbolic system) and a powerful means of knowing, which goes beyond cognitive knowing. How this capacity to imagine with the body continues to be drawn on beyond the age when children have apparently given up dramatic play is one of the questions that has continued to preoccupy me.

1.3.2 *World-making play*

World-making play, or play with small toys, because it involves the child in projecting imaginary action onto the toys that are the medium of the play, can be seen as a step nearer to 'true' symbolism, and in two of these articles I focused on particular examples of this form of play. It involves the child as stage-manager, narrator, dramatist, and actor, and provides a close parallel to the role of the imaginative writer. I have come to see this form of play as having a particularly important role in children's development as symbolisers. It seems to stand half way between full enactment and the making of fictions in writing. The toys themselves seem to be an important 'pivot' without which the imaginary action could not take place; the playing child is partly involved in manipulating them, and partly in identifying with them. Later, actual figures of this kind will no longer be essential to the creation of mental fictions. I am interested in whether this kind of play constitutes a kind of transition to more formal and systematic kinds of symbolising.

1.3.3 *Drawing and writing*

Enactment is often linked - as it was in the play described in 'Maps of Play' - to *picturing*, in which children attempt to draw action or depict their imaginings, and picturing is another strand common to most of these articles. Picturing is much more obviously and closely related to written

31

language development than enactment is. It involves making representations on paper - as Vygotsky points out, the child who already knows how to 'draw things', and may indeed be experienced in depicting action, has then to learn that one can also 'draw speech'. This move from first order to second order symbolism can be observed fairly readily in the very early stages of children's writing, and several contemporary studies of children's writing refer to this aspect of development (eg Bissex, 1980; Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982; Harste et al.,1984). Few such studies, however, consider the ongoing relationship between drawing and writing, and the way in which the capacity to visualise and depict created worlds continues to inform imaginative and literate activity.

1.3.4 *Storying play and writing*

Still fewer studies attempt to relate writing to dramatic play, or to look at the way in which all these different ways of world-making are linked together. One way in which they obviously are linked is through story, and some of the articles that I have reviewed here suggest that all of children's symbolising activities are ways of making stories. The strong continuities between play and later forms of imagining, which I see as being of particular importance for an understanding of how writers and readers learn to inhabit and create imaginary worlds, are not, however, generally taken into account in studies of early writing.

1.4 Imagination in action

In the remaining chapters of this thesis I shall pick up these themes again, and attempt to answer certain fundamental questions which arise from thinking about them. Chiefly, I shall be questioning the nature of the links between these earlier and more concrete forms of world-making play and the development of more symbolically abstract ways of world-making. I shall be asking whether there is, in fact, an observable progression between these different kinds of symbolising activity, and how far it is actually useful to think in terms of children as 'developing' as symbolising beings. I shall also be exploring the question of how earlier ways of imagining are internalised and drawn on in later imaginative writing and in thinking.

In my empirical study based on three teachers' studies of seven children, which is the subject of chapter 12, I shall be considering whether any clear progression or developmental path in symbolising can be traced in these

individual case studies. I shall also consider the conditions under which children engage in this kind of creative activity, and how some classrooms provide an enabling context where children can draw on their world-making play in their literacy learning. This will involve me in focusing on the role of the teacher, and in asking the three teachers whose classrooms feature in the study about their rationales for their teaching approaches - their 'theories-in-practice' - and how they arrived at them. In the studies both of children and of teachers I shall look for common themes and patterns, which may lead to some generalisations both about this area of learning and about its contribution to learning in general.

My other major area of exploration in this thesis is in the field of theory. I shall review the work of those theorists who have, in my view, contributed most to an understanding of the links between dramatic play, drawing and writing, and the development of symbolising and imaginative thinking. In doing so, I shall be asking which body of theory offers a truly adequate basis for describing these aspects of children's learning and development and for answering the questions that I have posed about the nature of development in this area, about the process of internalisation, and about the continuing links between different ways of world-making.

Three writers have assumed special importance for me over the years that I have been reading and thinking about this subject, and these three - Howard Gardner, Anne Haas Dyson, and Lev Vygotsky - are the subjects of the next chapters of my thesis. They are the educational thinkers who I consider have addressed the issue of the links between artistic forms of thought and later literacy most thoughtfully and directly, though from very different standpoints.

Choosing to focus so closely on these thinkers, has meant that I have not been able to spend time on a consideration of some other bodies of theory which I should have liked to examine more thoroughly. In particular I have not explored in any depth the considerable literature relating to artistic development, although an initial survey of the work of some of the key contributors to this literature, such as Rhoda Kellogg (1969) and Lorna Selfe (1977, 1983), suggests that there are few if any studies of children's drawing which look at the links between drawing and writing,

or which consider creative and artistic development across different domains. The emphasis in this literature is generally on the schemas reflected in children's early artistic behaviour, on stage theories of artistic development (the steps along the road towards adult modes of representation), on links between drawing and visual perception, and on children's growing mastery of a repertory of forms and artistic conventions. Few writers have looked carefully at the way in which early drawings are produced or have listened closely to the stream of talk and narration which often accompanies their production (one researcher from the 1930's refers to her child subject's 'chattering' while she draws (Eng ~~ref~~ ~~needed~~, but does not record any of the chatter). 1931)

Nor are there many studies of the interrelationship between children's drawing and their writing, although Gertrude Hildreth's exceptional pioneering study from the nineteen forties (Hildreth 1941) clearly reveals the way in which, for her child subject, writing became at first a part of his drawings of trains ('He wanted to label everything with correct writing and spelling') and later came to take the place of drawing ('By about age six, writing stories and poems about trains began gradually to supplant expression through drawing' p. 26). It is generally rare, however, for evidence of actual speech, or samples of writing, to be preserved as carefully as samples of drawing by researchers into artistic development.

I should also have liked to have spent more time in reading in relation to child therapy. Much interesting literature in this field (eg Klein, 1975; Winnicott, 1974; Bettelheim, 1967; Tustin, 1981) pays serious attention to play, to drawing, and to imaginative or fantasy activity in general. The use of this kind of creative activity in therapy means that there are some quite detailed accounts of children's symbolising play, generally found as part of case studies. (eg Axline, 1971). Work of this kind is of course centrally concerned with the content of play and the individual meanings expressed by play, a dimension sometimes absent from educational studies of play. Therapeutic literature foregrounds the role of affect in learning and development, and in this way offers a corrective to the unremittingly cognitive emphasis in the accounts of child development given by educational psychology.

1.5 Three educationalists

The three writers whose work I have chosen mainly to focus on come from very different worlds. What they have in common is that they have all contributed in a very substantial way to the thinking about the links between different ways of symbolising, and to the relationship between dramatising, drawing, and writing. However, they approach these questions from very different standpoints.

Howard Gardner's stance is that of a cognitive psychologist who has been working on questions of children's artistic and symbolic development for over thirty years. As co-director of Harvard's Project Zero, a Project set up twenty years ago specifically in order to study artistic activity and artistic development, he has overseen an extensive research programme dedicated to the investigation of the development of human behaviour in this field. Many aspects of children's creative and artistic activity in different symbolic domains have been studied by Project Zero researchers, and there is an extensive list of Project Zero publications. The Project has made explicit connections between children's development in these areas and their developing literacy. Gardner is therefore probably the most important figure in this field in the USA although, surprisingly, he has not contributed significantly to the discussions of early literacy development which have been such an important feature of work in the language arts over the past ten years. His main interest in creativity and artistic development is that of a cognitive psychologist seeking to establish a fuller account of mental development; language does not play an important part in this account. It seemed necessary to me to engage with his work because of its exact focus on my area of enquiry. In doing so I hope to be able to define my reservations about the Project Zero approach to children's imaginative activity.

Anne Haas Dyson looks at these questions from an entirely different standpoint. Her background is in early literacy and the language arts, and she is mainly concerned with children's development as writers. For several years her occasional articles have demonstrated her serious interest in the interrelationship between drawing and writing and, through a succession of lively vignettes, have illuminated the way in which children's texts are actually produced. She is particularly alive to the stream of talk which often accompanies a child's drawing and writing,

and her careful habit of observation has enabled her to record faithfully many different facets of these 'multimedia events'. Her recent book *Multiple Worlds of Child Writers* (1989), based on two years of observation in a California classroom, records the abundant social talk which goes on between these 'friends learning to write'. Haas Dyson's work is much more ethnographic and naturalistic in character than Gardner's, which rests on conventional scientific research paradigms, and her work is deeply rooted in language and education. Of all the students of early writing, both in the USA and in this country, she seems by far the most responsive to the relationship between different modes of symbolising in young children's learning.

Of the three educationalists whose work I have chosen to consider in detail, I have spent longest on my study of the work of Lev Vygotsky, and this study takes up a major part of my thesis. This is because Vygotsky's contribution to this area of thinking is already recognised to be seminal - most educational writers who touch on the links between play, drawing and writing refer back to his important paper on 'The Prehistory of Written Language' (Vygotsky,1978) as a key text (eg Hubbard, 1989; Gundlach,1982). But despite his considerable influence on those involved in researching early literacy, few of these researchers have appreciated the full extent of the contribution that Vygotsky made to the study of creative and imaginative activity and its role in children's learning.

As a psychologist with a background in literary studies, Vygotsky was uniquely placed to consider what is involved in the 'creation of symbols for others', and his work informs all of my thinking in this thesis as well as forming the subject of a separate long section (Chapters 4 - 10). The aspects of Vygotsky's work which have been of particular importance to me in the course of this study are:
•his view of writing as a psychological and cultural act which is far broader than learning the written code, and which therefore requires a more complex and broader history.
•his emphasis on the central place of emotion and affect in all learning - an aspect of his thought which has not as yet received a great deal of attention in Vygotskyan literature.
•the central place that he gives to artistic activity in mental development generally, and his view of art and literature as psychological tools through

which human consciousness, both at an individual and social level, is formed and developed.

•his view of the way in which, through the process of internalisation, the sign-related functions developed in social contexts (interpersonally) become part of children's inner speech or thought processes, and continue to develop and interact - through the process that Vygotsky describes as interfunctionality - *within* the child (intrapersonally), thus continuing to play an important part in mental life, even when they have apparently disappeared.

No commentator on Vygotsky (with the possible exception of Alex Kozulin (1984, 1986, 1990) has fully recognised some of these most fundamental aspects of his psychology, aspects which deserve the closest attention from educationalists interested in children's play and their creative activities. I have found it necessary, in order to support my own argument about the importance of these activities in children's development as writers and thinkers, to develop a reading of Vygotsky's work which gives a more central place to his interest in language, play, art, literature and symbolism, and their role in mental development. This reading takes up the second section of my thesis. It is mainly based on the three books by Vygotsky that have been published in English, and is particularly rooted in his first and last books - *The Psychology of Art* and *Thought and Language* - rather than in the better known, and flawed, *Mind in Society.*

This Vygotsky section will complete my study of these educationalists' work, and I shall then take the insights gained from this study into the classroom. Through an investigation carried out with three primary teachers, I shall attempt to work out how these ideas about learning and development, and about the links between play, art, and writing, relate to actual classrooms, and to the learning of particular individuals. My study will consider teachers as well as learners, and will investigate the way in which what teachers do is rooted in their personal experiences and intuitive theories, as well as in their more formal learning and training. Though most of my empirical work will be based in early years classrooms, I shall also be concerned with the general implications of the ideas being investigated, and the relevance of these ideas to the education of older children. Throughout, I shall be attempting to explore the ways in

which, in Vygotsky's phrase, these early experiences of 'imagination in action' come to be part of later imagining, and of the capacity for imaginative and speculative thought.

---

[1] They noted a tendency for boys' stories to be full of incident and for their pictures to be dynamic, often attempting to depict movement and 'lines of force'. Girls' pictures, however, tended to be more static and decorative, often showing big girls in long dresses, with elaborate hairstyles. Their spontaneous stories frequently dealt with outings, parties and picnics, and although sometimes these occasions were threatened with disasters, these were usually avoided (this plot-type was so common that I came to term it 'danger averted').

[2] One striking case study, brought to the group by Elaine Robertson, a junior school teacher, was that of Ian, a nine year old boy whose graphic abilities were outstanding, but whose writing was well below the standard of the rest of the class. Elaine, supported by the group, took a calculated risk in encouraging Ian to use pictures and texts together in making his stories. During the course of the year he made very considerable progress in his writing. In his illustrated stories, pictures gradually assumed less prominence while text became a more important partner in the whole. He seemed to be learning to deal more confidently with the less fully contextualised medium of written language. At one point, when I interviewed him, he articulated for me what, for him, were the main strengths of pictures as opposed to text (Barrs, 1988):
    Interviewer: How do you feel about writing just ordinary stories now, I mean if you just had to write ordinary stories like this on paper?
    Ian: Well it's all right. Wouldn't be too bad.
    Interviewer: But you prefer to use the illustrations?
    Ian: Yes
    Interviewer: Tell me why.
    Ian: 'Cos they know, they know, when we do that they know what's going on, mostly they can, they can, when they read it they know what's going on but they can't see what's happening. Like for instance say that, erm, they's in a spaceship right, and one of them said 'Look out', they wouldn't know who it was, like, same if it was picture they can see the face and the other one sit there, and then you can do a thing that says 'Look out!'
    Interviewer: So they can see the whole situation. (p.67)

[3] Genre linguists (eg Martin et al, 1987) have suggested that only direct and explicit instruction will enable children to learn the kinds of 'powerful' genres that they regard as most important (eg argument). But experience of drama shows that most children, in imagined contexts, can use more formal registers than they appear to have access to in normal life. I returned to the discussion of the way in which children learn genre in my article on that subject in Language Matters (Barrs, 1991/92).

[4] At the end of Virginia Axline's Dibs, there is an extraordinary moment when the therapist meets Dibs, her former patient, in the street. He is two and a half years older than on his final visit to her and is therefore presumably about eight - he refers to himself as 'grown up'. In the course of their conversation he says: 'I do remember when I was very, very small and first came to see you. I remember the toys, the doll house and the sand and the men and women and children in the world I built. I remember the bells and the time to go and the truck... I remember our office and our books and our recording machine. I remember all the people. And I remember how you played with me...I had the most wonderful time in my life. I built my world with you in the playroom. Remember?'. The whole of this book is remarkable evidence of the value of world-making play in child therapy.

[5] This social reading of the content of Ben's play was obviously justified; the themes of his play were sufficiently like those of other boys of his age to be immediately recognisable by others. But I was also conscious that there was another way of reading Ben's play, which was not so easy to include in the article and which related to his personal history. I was aware of him as a boy who was being brought up by his mother, one who saw his American father only rarely, and who therefore might have a particular need to assert his masculinity in this obsessive play. I also knew that the kind of macho bravado which he acted out constantly through the toy figures was very far from his own behaviour. He was actually a timid child who still found it quite frightening to go out of his mother's presence on his own, who did not like to sleep alone, and who often had to be accompanied to the lavatory. In some ways, then, Ben was still being a baby. His fears meant that he could make a very special claim on his mother's attention. In the light of all this, his play took on a strongly compensatory quality, in which the adventurous and daring nature of the action perhaps expressed aspects of himself which he was not yet able to demonstrate in life. The content of all children's play must have these two dimensions, a social dimension and a dimension expressive of the individual psyche.

[5] First, Britton articulated a broad theory to underpin a coherent modern approach to the teaching of English/language and literacy. Selecting from the work of certain key philosophers, psychologists, thinkers and writers, many of whom like Michael Polanyi had an interestingly unorthodox and interdisciplinary background, he constructed an alternative body of theory to that which might be offered by, for example, linguistics as a base discipline for English teaching. Britton was concerned with larger questions than those generally posed by linguists, though he was drawn to the work of more philosophically inclined linguists such as Sapir and (more recently) Voloshinov. He explored the relationship between language and thought, the role of language in learning, the tacit dimension and the

links between unconscious and conscious ways of knowing, and the symbolising nature of language. Throughout this enterprise he was in search of a fully adequate psychological account of learning and development, one which would take proper account of the relationship between language and thought.

Britton made his own personal synthesis from the work of George Kelly, Lev Vygotsky, and D.W.Harding, names that will recur in this thesis, and also drew on the work of Jerome Bruner in its later and mellower stages. His whole cast of mind was strongly interdisciplinary, and he might have felt at home in Vygotsky's discipline of 'pedology' which briefly brought together, in the later nineteen twenties in Russia, representatives from many different disciplines related to child development, in the belief that it was important to consider the whole child, not just split-off aspects, in creating policy and in developing practice.

Britton lived out his theory, and through a number of initiatives with his colleagues at the University of London Institute of Education, succeeded to a remarkable degreee in affecting the practice of examining boards, of English teachers and teacher educators, and (to a lesser degree, for reasons of structural inertia) policy and practice in other parts of the secondary school and the educational system, both in the UK and elsewhere. My thesis can be seen as contributing to this body of work. Though I am interested in articulating a theory, I am also advocating certain kinds of practice, in which literacy is defined more broadly and less functionally than is sometimes the case (certainly at the level of current official government policy) and in which the strong continuities between creative and artistic activities and literacy are recognised and better provided for.

Finally, some of Britton's most important work was rooted in careful observations of particular children. What distinguishes Britton's observational work is its sensitivity and thoroughness, and his capacity to theorise an observation. In *Language and Learning*, he fuses observation and theory, and stresses the continuities between early language functions and later more complex achievements. He has taught me to look more carefully at apparently unexceptional behaviour, to examine its significance, and view it in the light of theory.

Britton's emphasis on talk and writing was never matched by an equal emphasis on listening and reading, and his work therefore did not fully explore the interrelationships between all these language modes in children's development. This means that there is always something partial in his view of children's growth as writers, which never pays sufficient attention to the role of reading, particularly, in their development. This lack of a sense of the extent to which children's writing can be shaped by and reflect their reading can sometimes lead Britton into a romantic view of children's writing, which sees it as mainly or solely the expression of the individual voice.

Britton's account of writing development is characteristic of his approach to sociocultural issues. Though he was deeply interested in the theories of Vygotsky, Voloshinov, and other Marxist thinkers, his own view of language development was essentially that of a liberal individualist; he was always most at ease when discussing the development of the individual child and the universals in language development. A complete account of children's language and literacy development would have to attend much more closely to the socially and culturally situated nature of that development. Against all these qualifying statements, however, must be set the fact that Britton himself would have accepted them, and was always open-minded enough to recognise as valid and important views that were more directly attuned than his own to broader social factors in human development.

Chapter two
THE WORK OF HOWARD GARDNER

2.0 Introduction

The work of Harvard University's Project Zero, and especially that of its co-director, the psychologist Howard Gardner, constitutes probably the most sustained exploration of the question of children's development as symbolisers that has been undertaken in modern psychological research. In this chapter I shall be referring particularly to four books by Howard Gardner: *The Arts and Human Development*(1973), *Artful Scribbles*(1980), *Art, Mind and Brain*(1982), and *The Mind's New Science*(1987). These books are in the nature of summative statements; they refer frequently to work done by Gardner's associates and research students in Project Zero, where virtually all of his own work has been carried out. I shall also draw heavily on papers and articles published by Gardner and his co-workers in this Project. It will therefore be appropriate to begin this chapter with a history of Project Zero.

2.1 Project Zero

Project Zero is an interdisciplinary research group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. It was founded in 1967 by the aesthetic philosopher, Nelson Goodman, whose book *Ways of Worldmaking* (1978) has a particular relevance to the work of the Project. The Project aims to draw on the diverse disciplines of philosophy, developmental and cognitive psychology, neurology, mathematics, education, and the arts. The bulk of the work done under the aegis of the Project, however, seems to be grounded in cognitive psychology. Howard Gardner was a member of the original research team, directed by Goodman, which began the Project.

The Project publishes a brief introductory brochure (Project Zero: The Development Group, 1988), which gives an account of its history, and divides this history into three or four phases. In the initial phase (1967-971) Project Zero undertook 'an analysis of central concepts in the study and practice of the arts' and considered artistic ideas, such as style, rhythm, metaphor and so on, which could be used in relation to several art forms. During this period Project staff were discussing symbolising activity in general, and were considering the training of artistic skills.

During a second phase, in the early 1970's, a number of psychological investigations into human symbolising activities in a number of different artistic domains were carried out, and the staff of the Project began to look at artistic systems of notation 'as well as the use of covert cognitive codes in the mind'.

The Project now consists of two major research groups: one focused on studies of artistic and symbolic development (the Development Group, directed by Howard Gardner) and the other on cognitive skills (the Cognitive Skills Group, directed by David Perkins). The Development Group covers several areas of research: Figurative Language; Early Symbolization and the Transition to Literacy; The Development and Assessment of Multiple Intelligences; Musical Development; Domain Knowledge and Children's Computing Skills. The Cognitive Skills Group also addresses a number of research themes: Informal Reasoning; Creativity in the Arts and the Sciences; Teaching and Learning; Teaching Thinking; Art Appreciation; Computer Programming and Machine Handling. The Project has published, often extensively, in all of these areas.

Project Zero has depended both on government agencies and private foundations for the conduct of its research and in recent years its work has been supported by (among others) the National Science Foundation, The Carnegie Corporation, the Paul Getty Trust, The Rockefeller Foundation, the Sloan Foundation, and the US Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

More recently the Development Group has begun a series of longitudinal studies of symbolic development in pre-school and school-age children, and is working in the area of assessment, both the assessment of artistic abilities through a portfolio system, and the assessment of 'multiple intelligences' (following the broader definition of intelligence proposed in Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind* (1983), which sets out a theory of multiple intelligences).

Howard Gardner joined Nelson Goodman's original research team in the late 1960s as a graduate student of developmental psychology. As an undergraduate he had been a student of Erik Erikson, so although he was

trained in a discipline which was witnessing the 'cognitive revolution' he
was also convinced of the importance of including emotional and
personal factors in any definition of mental development. In his Preface to
Art, Mind and Brain he describes his reaction to the discipline of
developmental psychology at the time he began to study it:

> '...I was soon struck by certain limitations in the field. The child was seen by
> nearly all researchers as an exclusively rational creature, a problem-solver - in
> fact a scientist in knickers....A second and related limitation was the focus,
> within the cognitive area, on certain forms of logico-rational thought. As a
> onetime dedicated pianist, and as one who has continued to gain major solace
> from the arts, I knew instinctively that there was something wrong with this
> perspective. While a first-year graduate student I elected to direct my own
> research toward a developmental psychology of the arts and, if possible, to
> persuade my colleagues about the desirability - no, the necessity - for a concern
> with artistic forms of thinking.'(p.xii)

When Gardner became a member of Nelson Goodman's research team he
was excited at the possibility of extending the insights of cognitive
psychology into the field of the arts and artistic development. The research
was called Project Zero by Goodman, in recognition of the fact that next to
nothing was known on the subject of artistic forms of thought. The work
of the Project was thus linked from its inception with ideas of creativity
and artistry, and with a tendency to fence this aspect of human
development off into a special area. Such a tendency is present in the
Project, although it is specifically disclaimed by its literature, which insists
on the 'common foundation of symbolic capacities'. But there is
nevertheless omnipresent in this literature a view of art which sees it as a
pursuit not available to everybody, which sees different art forms as being
completely distinct from one another, and which does not observe the
ways in which this aspect of mind is continuous with other forms of
thinking. Gardner has used phrases such as 'the puzzle of child artistry',
and the Project has taken a marked interest in prodigies and geniuses, in
giftedness, and in the inner processes of celebrated artists and performers
(an early activity was the Project's sponsorship of a series of lecture-
performances in which well-known artists explained their craft).

2.2   The influence of Nelson Goodman

This focus seems likely to derive from the Project's origination in the
aesthetic philosophy of Nelson Goodman, whose theories have from its
inception set the agenda for the work. In looking at child art, the
researchers use Goodman's categories (eg flavourfulness, repleteness) for
evaluating how like mature art it is; they appear centrally interested in the

resemblances between children's artistic products and mature productions, and in the child's level of conscious artistry (sense of own style, awareness of artistic criteria, and so on). Goodman's theories have focused on the different types and functions of symbols and symbol systems and on 'notationality' - the ability of the notation provided by a symbolic system to meet certain syntactic and semantic criteria. A true notational system, according to Goodman, enables a work using this system to be performed or experienced from the notation in an essentially similar way on any given occasion. Goodman's work also focuses on the criteria we bring to the evaluation of different symbol systems, and the 'symptoms' by which we judge a work to have the qualities of art.

Project Zero researchers have applied all these concepts to the art of children and to their artistic and symbolic development. They have studied the emergence of different forms of symbolism, and children's mastery of the resources and of the notation available in different symbolic modes. In general, therefore, they have been looking at what is art-like in art and at the acquisition of the artistic competences as they have defined them.

The work of the Project has been classificatory. Researchers have looked for the emergence of symbol-systems in children's art-play, and have charted the stages of development when these systems appear. They have also tracked development (always viewed as development towards adult models of artistry defined according to Goodman's criteria). The value of Goodman's work to the developmental psychologists in the Project, as Gardner points out in his chapter on Goodman in *Art, Mind and Brain* (pp.55-64), is that it has provided objective functional criteria for the description of artistic products. These criteria have been confirmed through psychological experiments and are therefore, in Gardner's phrase, 'psychologically real'. The availability of an objective way of identifying artistic creations seems to allow art, at last, to be studied in a systematic and analytic fashion; it takes art out of the realm of idealism and into the realm of psychology and science.

Another consequence of the fact that the Project is based on Goodman's work has been the regarding of these different symbol systems as being distinct and boundaried. Though all are 'ways of world-making', and

share certain criteria with other art forms, they also have their own own distinct 'languages' or systems of notation. It has been important to the Project to look at the different rates of acquisition of these languages. Different symbolic activities have been viewed as having different 'trajectories' of development. Though the model does allow for comparisons to be made across symbol systems and art forms, it is seen as particularly important to look at what is individual or special to each one (eg what constitutes competence in clay modelling). Language itself is largely excluded from the study, except as a separate 'literary art'; the idea that language may be a basis for, and link between, other ways of symbolising - a fundamental way of expressing, symbolising and ordering experience (Vygotsky, 1978; Britton, 1970) - is not considered, and the role of language in symbolic and creative activity is never discussed.

Despite the developmental continuities between child art and adult art, child artistry is always viewed, in the Project, as different in kind from adult art activity. There are two major reasons for this:

a) The first reason derives from the fact that children's art is not consciously created, and their artistic effects are not intended to be artistic. Psychologists influenced by Piaget take the view that many effects may therefore be happy accidents. Artistic value may simply be conferred on children's work by indulgent adult observers. Gardner devotes a whole book to the question of children's 'artful scribbles', and concludes that the flowering of child art in the pre-school years can best be described as 'first-draft artistry' in which children, only partially in control of their gifts, can achieve, at best, a 'charming approximation' to higher, more mature forms of art.

In a chapter on 'Children's Conceptions (and Misconceptions) of the Arts' in *Art, Mind, and Brain* (pp.103-109), Howard Gardner and Ellen Winner report on an investigation they carried out into the development of understanding of art forms, concepts and processes. The investigation involved extensive interviews with 121 children from ages four to sixteen, in an attempt to establish a stage model of understanding art. This research showed that the children did not share adult criteria for judging art products. They were found wanting on a number of counts. The youngest children 'had no way of distinguishing music from any other sounds', they 'confused the work

of art with the thing it represented', had 'little sense of an artist's style', while some 'saw no difference between a photograph and a painting'. 'None of these children had the slightest inkling that it takes talent and training to produce a great work of art' (p.105).

The subtext of the research is the need for arts education in schools for children of all ages. But the way of talking about children's limitations as judged by mature models revealed in this small-scale investigation is characteristic of these researchers, and recalls strongly the tones of Jean Piaget. The questions put to the children often seem unlikely to produce interesting answers; they are designed to expose the limited understandings that the research does in fact reveal (eg What is the difference between a real shell and a painting of a shell? Is the sound of a waterfall music? How can an artist tell if a painting is finished? (p.104)).

b). Children's artistry is also viewed as being different in kind from adult art activity because of the way it flowers in childhood, and then often dies back at the end of this period of flowering. Gardner observes that there is generally no discernible continuous line of development between child artistry and adult art. This is so generally accepted that the idea of a 'U curve' is frequently invoked to describe a typical path of artistic development, in which the child's initial promise is followed by a period when the talent originally shown appears to die out, to reappear only in adolescence.

But quite often it appears that development for most children takes the shape of an 'inverted U', where a flowering takes place in childhood and then dies out completely. This 'golden period' is often found in children who never pursue their childish artistic interests again, either in adolescence or adulthood. The uneven line of artistic development is contrasted by Gardner with the even and linear nature of scientific development. 'The development of scientific capacity is, generally speaking, a straight line upward; the lifeline of artistic development is punctuated by ups and downs' (*Art, Mind, and Brain*, p. 217). This exceptional line of development is seen as part and parcel of the 'specialness' of art.

45

2.3   Cognitivism and art

It is clear that Gardner has seen himself, throughout his work for Project Zero, as steering a course between a classically cognitive approach to creativity, which construes symbolic activity principally as an intellectual achievement related to a child's general level of cognitive understanding, and an affective approach, which looks at symbolisation in relation to the emotional and affective life of the child. (*Art, Mind, and Brain*, pp. 114-115). He sees cognitive psychologists as being too exclusively preoccupied with the development of intellectual skills and scientific habits of mind; their interest in artistic development is limited to its ability to illuminate other aspects of mental growth. Emotionally oriented psychologists and psychotherapists, on the other hand, are seen as being interested only in the emotional states revealed or symbolised by artistic products and not in artistic expression or growth per se. Gardner frequently presents himself in the role of a psychologist who draws on both of these traditions while maintaining a mid-course between them, and studying artistic activity as an important activity of mind in its own right.

Yet the real direction of the work of Project Zero is obviously the absorption of artistic activity into the cognitive enterprise. This is made especially clear in the brochure describing the work of the Project, which states:

> 'Where some see the creation and comprehension of art as processes standing apart from other modes of knowing and acting, Project enquiries have focused on the common foundation of symbolic capacities and the many parallels of process and strategy which link the arts to practices in the sciences and elsewhere. Similarly, where others have tended to align the arts (as contrasted with the sciences) with issues of affect, motivation, and the "mysteries" of creation, researchers at Project Zero have stressed the cognitive aspects of artistry and have sought, where possible, to offer explanations'. (ref needed)

There is no suggestion here that artistic ways of knowing might themselves provide paradigms for other ways of knowing and acting - the whole thrust is towards explaining them in cognitive terms and regarding them as a branch of cognitive activity. Typically, Project researchers ignore the content of children's art, its expressive nature, and the affective states revealed in their work, and focus instead on the surface features of form and technique. The Project also seeks to identify children's 'cognitive styles' as artists, and to classify them (for instance as 'verbalisers' or 'visualisers').

Gardner's view of the mind is essentially that of a convinced cognitivist, as his book *The Mind's New Science* demonstrates, and his programme for cognitive science is ambitious:

'...in my view, the ultimate goal of cognitive science should be - precisely - to provide a cogent scientific account of how human beings achieve their most remarkable symbolic products: how we come to compose symphonies, write poems, invent machines (including computers) or construct theories (including cognitive-scientific ones)....Ultimately, as part of the cognitive challenge, it will also be necessary to relate a representational account of these human intellectual achievements to what is known about their neural substrate and to what can be established about the role of the surrounding culture in sponsoring and then absorbing (or rejecting or refashioning) them.' (*The Mind's New Science*, pages 110-111).

What Gardner therefore undertakes is the application of cognitive models to artistic material. His view of mental activity and mental development, rooted as it is so firmly in the work of Jean Piaget, is unaffected by the nature of his material. The fact that art is seen as the product of unusual and highly developed talents ensures that the researchers' models of mental processes in general remain uninfluenced by the activity that they are investigating. Project Zero could, in fact, have chosen to consider the ways of thinking that are implied in children's play and in their creative and artistic activity, and how these enter into other kinds of thinking; had they done so they might have had to revise and enlarge their views of mental activity and mental development, and arrive at a broader account of how children think.

Like all followers of Piaget, Gardner is intensely preoccupied with stage theories of development. Much of the work of the Development Group of Project Zero has been devoted to studies of development which attempt to establish stages in the development of each branch of artistic activity. Stage theories can, of course, greatly illuminate the study of development, but can also have serious limitations. Stage theories of writing development, for instance (eg Clay (1975); Temple, Nathan and Burris (1982)), rarely deal with writing in the broadest sense; too often they become studies of spelling development. Anne Haas Dyson (1989) remarks that the issue of developmental order

'has centered on children's control of writing conventions, in other words what is on the paper...Indeed, most researchers who argue for a relatively invariant order focus on children's understanding of the encoding system'. (p.266)

Writing development, she argues, is a more complex process than this; stage theories may be focusing on only surface features of development. This argument is helpful for the distinctions that it draws between the

aspects of an activity that can usefully by mapped onto a stage model, and those which resist such attempts and for which a broader model of development is needed. Project Zero literature tends to focus on the aspects of artistic development which can be mapped according to stages, and in doing may be ignoring other aspects which are just as important.

The major thrust of Project Zero work is to establish objective and scientifically valid ways of investigating art activity and artistic development. Although the focus of the work is on creativity and artistry, therefore, the stance of the researchers is decidedly positivistic. Despite occasional disclaimers, the model of the brain as computer always hovers in the background. In Gardner's brief article on the autistic child Nadia (*Art, Mind and Brain*, pp.184-191), for instance, there is a revealing use of computer imagery to explain how artistic development might be pictured:
> 'Assume that the human mind consists of a series of highly tuned computational
> devices whose location and structure we have not yet identified, and that we
> differ vastly from one another in the extent to which each of these devices is
> "primed" to go off...There is, in principle, no reason why a similar faculty could
> not exist for graphic skills. Such a computational device would study the way in
> which objects are depicted in pictures...direct the movement of eyes back and
> forth along the appropriate contours, and then reproduce forms manually on a
> separate sheet of paper. (pp.189-190)'

Gardner rejects an explanation of Nadia's gift which emphasises her lack of language (Nadia's oral language did not develop in infancy, and when she did begin to talk around age nine, her drawings declined sharply in quantity and quality). He asserts:
> 'I cannot accept the 'linguistic' interpretation of Nadia's giftedness. Other autistic
> children do not draw as well as she does, and most children cease to draw
> imaginatively after the age of six or seven even if they are not autistic.'

He seems to prefer to see artistic ability and linguistic ability as existing in separate compartments.[1]

Gardner's aims and those of Project Zero researchers are classificatory. An important part of several studies is the evolution of categories and levels for evaluating children's symbolic products and their performances.

Gardner derives his own work directly from that of Piaget, with some reservations. In *Art, Mind, and Brain*, the first part of the book is devoted to a series of studies of 'Masters', thinkers to whom Gardner acknowledges an intellectual debt, of whom Piaget is the first. The taxonomic enterprise is something that Gardner is entirely committed to.

But close scrutiny of some of the categories arrived at by the Project, and of the experimental tasks from which these categories are derived, suggests that the basis for categorisation is sometimes shaky. Often the quality of the tasks that researchers set for the children is so poor that it is hard to see how one could hope to derive interesting evidence from such thin 'stimulus' material.

For example, in a paper on 'Artistic Development in the Early School Years: a cross-media study of storytelling, drawing and clay modelling' (1979), which is based on a three-year project by Ives, Silverman, Kelly and Gardner, the researchers consider children's artistic growth by observing them in a range of situations. The study aims to establish simple criteria on which children's artistic development can be rated.Their 'products' in all of these media are rated for 'competence, flavourfulness and uniqueness'; they themselves are judged dichotomously to be either 'self-starters' or 'completers'. In a later review of this work (1982), Gardner mentions other pairs of categories which have proved useful in Project Zero research - children are spoken of as either 'patterners' or 'dramatists', 'object-centred' or 'person-centred'.

The research paper scores children on their working styles across a range of tasks, some of which are open invitations to 'make anything you like', while some are invitations to copy, retell, or complete a drawing or story introduced by the researcher. The paper concludes, at the end of the analysis of the data generated in this way, that there are different developmental trends for different media - the drawings and clay work of younger children is more 'flavourful' than that of older children, but this is not true of their storytelling. The idea that there are 'families of media' is suggested, with drawing and clay modelling having more in common with each other than storytelling has in common with either art activity. There is an attempt to relate these differences to the degree of notationality of the symbol system in use, and the conclusion of the paper also points to the fact that language, as a communicative medium which is valued more highly in school, may receive more encouragement and support for its development in older children.

However, much of this speculation becomes suspect when one examines the appendices to the paper which show in detail the nature of the stimuli

for the drawing completion and copying tasks. These consist of poor
quality pictures (see Table 2 in Tables and Illustrations) such as are found
in the cheaper kind of basal reader, and are themselves notably lacking in
any 'flavourfulness' or 'uniqueness'. The flat, routine nature of these
tasks seems unlikely to engage children deeply, and calls into question the
nature of the enterprise. Elicited evidence based on such poor stimuli is
unlikely to be informative. It is hard to understand why so much research
time was spent on data gathered in this way, when the researchers might
have chosen to gather examples of what children could do when they
were actually making choices between media, or when they were initiating
their own tasks (even copying tasks) - in short, when they were truly
engaged in artistic activIty.

The desire to generate a large body of comparable data, large enough to
yield numerical results, on which firm categories can be based, seems to be
the strongest factor in the design of this research. Numerical data are not,
therefore, lacking; what is lacking is a sense that any other factors in the
experimental situations might be of interest or importance. So the
children's understanding of the task, their interest in it and their level of
engagement with it, what they say about it, and the relation between what
they are able to do in this situation and their normal performance, are not
made to count in the research. Also unacknowledged are the researchers'
preconceptions - as expressed both in the framing of the tasks and in the
way in which the results are reported without any detailed qualitative
information about the children's responses to these tasks.

2.4   Features of Project Zero research

The characteristic research style adopted by Gardner and his colleagues in
Project Zero, which is exemplified in this paper, clearly reveals the stance
of these cognitive psychologists. They are interested in constructing, or
providing evidence to support, stage theories of development in the arts
to match stage theories in other aspects of children's development. They
generally support these theories with numerical evidence based on elicited
data. Their research situations are tightly bounded and non-naturalistic;
their focus is on how children behave similarly, and not on individual
responses or differences. They attend closely to evidence which accords in
some way with their preexistent theories. In order to generate numerical

data, they are prepared to grade what many would regard as ungradeable - eg the art products of young children.

Many of these features of Project Zero research are not, of course, special to the Project. The Project's research teams merely use the accepted methods of psychological research to produce data which will convince the research community to which they belong. As research scientists who have gone through a particular form of training and socialisation, they regard these ways of arriving at conclusions as entirely normal, which they are, within this community. The special feature of *this* research, however, is its focus on artistic activity and artistic development. It is the application of scientific research techniques to material of this nature which highlights so sharply the paradigms on which Project's approach is based, and which calls into question both these researchers' assumptions and the assumptions behind much research of this nature.

Issues to do with the contexts children were placed in, the interaction between the researchers and the children, the interpretations going on during the research tasks - the children's interpretation of the tasks, and the researchers' interpretation of the children's behaviour and responses - are never raised in this paper, which takes no account of the questions about this type of experimental design that have been raised by ethnomethodological research. The kind of qualitative and detailed evidence that could have been provided by quotations from transcript or by examples of children's actual work is also absent. Without the illumination that could be provided from these kinds of insights into the data provided, the conclusions arrived at in this piece of research are bare indeed.

Another paper which bears all the hallmarks of Project Zero research is Paula Gilden's 'The Development of Preschoolers' Apprehension of TV narrative' (1979), a paper published by Project Zero and based on research done within the Project. This again is a three year longitudinal study, which followed a group of nine children from the ages of 2 years to 4 years 9 months. Gilden prepared a videotape for the experiment in which 'The Story of the Boy Who Cried Monster' from Sesame Street was sandwiched between other segments of tape (commercials, cartoons and news). The research aim was to observe children's response to and understanding of

the Sesame Street story at different points in their preschool development. The tape was presented to children on four occasions, every nine months; they were observed during their viewing of the story, and invited to retell and reenact the story after the viewing. Sessions were vidotaped and audiotaped.

The story was chosen in order to allow the researcher to evaluate children's developing ability to, for example, respond to visual and auditory cues, perceive emotional states, assess motivation, comprehend at a literal level, respond to an ambiguous character, understand underlying meanings, and so on. Various categories for measuring response were used. These included: Attention; Reactions; Post-viewing Story Reconstructions (eg via replica play). The paper summarises the children's different responses at different ages, and constructs a stage model of TV response.

Some important features of this style of research, apparent in this example, are:

1. It is non-naturalistic. Children are placed in a special experimental context and their response to TV is not evaluated in relation to material that they normally watch or have chosen to watch.

2. The preconceptions apparent in the experimental design limit from the outset what the researcher is going to be able to observe. Tasks are preset, scoring procedures are preset and invariable, and the criteria in use are not apparently derived from any pilot task (though they may be criteria developed in other branches of Project Zero research).

3. The task is structured to elicit certain kinds of desired behaviour. Despite the availability of audiotape transcript there are no examples given of the children's language or of their individual responses; the thrust of the research is all towards viewing the data through predetermined categories in order to arrive at generalisations about stages of development. Since the population involved is so small this approach seems particularly incongruous; it would after all have been easy to let readers of the paper have glimpses of the diverse nature of individual responses.

4. Some of the assumptions behind the actual task are unexamined. What is thought of as 'difficult' for children seems to be based, for instance, on a straightforward information-processing model of understanding. For

example, a 'visually complex' scene is one in which two things are happening on the screen at once; auditory and visual stimuli are seen as competing for children's attention. This model looks absurdly simple when it is tested against the complexity of children's normal TV watching. Modern children routinely cope with television and computer texts some of which are very hard for adults to deal with (which in itself makes the idea of a straightforward developmental model of this kind appear rather questionable). The paper makes no attempt to study actual competence in real home viewing contexts, where it is likely that children would have been dealing with more demanding material than that described in this account.

Characteristically, as in this example, the conclusions that Project Zero research arrives at are quite broad and only moderately interesting generalisations (eg 'Children sense interpersonal conflicts from an early age, particularly when monsters are involved' (p.18)). Researchers seem preoccupied with arriving at numerical data, which are often based on material that does not lend itself particularly well to numerical treatment. In this way the work of the Project is like a great deal of work in educational psychology. Because the material has been so highly processed, like food that has been through a blender too often the end result is bland and lacking in any individual flavour. The reader, deprived of any sight of children's original responses to the research tasks by the intervening apparatus of categories and numerical tables, has no access to the real data, and is therefore unable to question the research except on its own terms.

2.5   The absence of language

One branch of Project Zero, that on Early Symbolisation, was specifically set up to look at early symbolic play and activity as precursors of literacy. But in general, despite the literacy focus of this work, not a great deal of attention is paid to children's language development, and the kind of detailed qualitative evidence drawn from observation and studies in homes, which has been the strength of much recent research in the field of early literacy (eg Bissex,1980; Maureen and Hugh Crago, 1983; Brice Heath,1983), is absent.

One paper from this branch of the Project may be taken as representative of its work in this area. This is a paper on 'Agency and Experience: Actions

and States in Play Narratives' by D.P.Wolf et al. which is republished in a collection of papers edited by Inge Bretherton (1984). The aim of the study is ambitious; it is to look at how children may come to see others as 'independent beings with distinct histories and agendas' and with inner feelings and cognitions (p.196). The focus is on the way in which early narrative play reflects these developing social understandings.

The study is carried out by observing nine children engaged in replica play, at very regular intervals over a period of four years. Replica play, which is the Project's name for play with small toy figures, is frequently employed by Project Zero researchers to test out theories about narrative competence. In this example, as in other studies, the researchers supply children with a set of small figures and, in addition to observing their self-initiated play, involve them in certain set tasks, such as story completion and the retelling of a story which has been acted out with the small toys by the adult researcher.

In this instance the researchers want to examine the way in which developing children progressively locate more and more of the action of the story 'inside' the toy protagonists in these dramas. They start out with a set of categories according to which they score the examples of children's representations of others in their replica play. These categories are arranged according to levels, also predetermined, and based on previous research in this area. In the model, increasing narrative competence is equated with an increasing ability to 'decentre', to see things from a range of viewpoints, and imagine the 'inner states' of others. The ability to ascribe cognitions like thinking or planning to characters is also viewed as being on a higher level of development than the ability to ascribe emotions to them, and indeed represents the culminating level of development (p.202). The researchers consider that their findings may predict later narrative competence in writing.

The researchers' hypotheses about the order of appearance of these levels are, they claim, largely confirmed by this evidence. 'As the data indicate, seven of the nine children followed the hypothesized order' (p.203). Careful examination of the data, however, shows that only one child (Boy 1) follows this order exactly. Two of the girls invert two adjacent levels, while all the other children deviate from the model by conflating adjacent

levels (see Table 3). The researchers suggest in their conclusions that the model has general applicability: 'In the context of doll play, children elaborate their concepts of other people in a regular manner....This development is not only ordinal but relatively even' (p.213). These are large claims to make for data based on nine children and which show considerable individual variation from the hypothesised model.

An interesting difference between boys and girls emerges during the analysis of the data; it is found that girls characteristically use in their created fictions much more 'Level 4 and Level 5' behaviour (ascribing emotional states and cognitions to characters) than boys do. This causes the researchers to look for a more 'complex' model of development, in which boys' tendency to 'describe how characters act, where they go, what they say, what they accomplish, how they cope with obstacles', and girls' tendency to 'refer to the psychological aspect of events', are seen as being based 'not on differential ability, but on distinctive patterns for using the same core concepts' (pp.212-213). This revision, in fact, seems designed to make boys' behaviour count for more than it would have done in the original hypothesised stage model. The need for such a revision would seem to call into question the whole idea of levels and their importance, but the researchers do not revise their results in the light of their speculations, and continue to treat the data as if they have confirmed a hypothesised stage model.

The findings of this piece of research are undoubtedly of some interest, but what is frustrating, in a paper which is centrally concerned with language growth, is to have so few examples of children's actual language, and to have individual differences and first-hand evidence played down in the interests of the construction of a stage model and the formulation of broad generalisations. For instance, only four examples from the transcripts of children are provided, one of which shows a child responding to a 'story completion' task in a very perfunctory manner. No complete narratives are quoted. This leads one to ask certain questions about the data, questions which have to do with the children's level of engagement in these tasks, and the differences there might have been between children's self-initiated narratives and those elicited through the story completion tasks. Again, given the very small population involved in the study, it seems incomprehensible that more attention is not paid to individual

cases, and that there is no attempt to explore in detail the differences between individuals revealed in the main table of findings.

The problem that the researchers face is obvious: if they paid more attention to the children as individuals and placed more emphasis on the children's spontaneous play, the whole of their research findings would sink under the weight of the resulting 'variables'. But the consequences of their stance are that they arrive at their numerical data and broad conclusions only by leaving out of their picture a great deal of potentially more significant information. For instance, the paper tells us nothing about the themes or content of the children's narratives (except in the one story completion task that is described), though this would be important information in forming a fuller picture of their preoccupations and their development.

The attitude to children's language apparent in this paper, and in the others that I have considered in this chapter, is characteristic of the approach taken in the Project. Most of the tasks that Project researchers engage children in involve the researchers in analysing children's responses. Audiotape and videotape records are often made of sessions, but actual transcript is hardly ever quoted. And yet language accompanies, expresses, and underlines the meanings that children are making through all the symbolic activities studied by the Project. It is fundamental to their dramatic play, where the range of language used includes speaking as oneself and in role, both as a character in the drama and as a narrator. Drawing and modelling activities, too, are very frequently accompanied by commentary and storying.

Despite the omnipresence of language in all of these spheres of artistic activity, Project Zero researchers never focus on the part that language is playing in supporting or extending children's artistic development. The role that language as a symbol system may have in mediating and developing all other symbolic activity is not explored. Vygotsky's view of language as a way of symbolising on which all subsequently symbolic development is based (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 113), so that every kind of symbolic activity is in effect a kind of speech, is not an explanation which is interesting to Project Zero researchers. One reason for this may be that the Project has placed so much importance on the differences between

different forms of symbolising, consistently with its view of the differences between the arts, and Howard Gardner's emphasis on different forms of intelligences (Gardner, 1983), that it cannot endorse an approach which seeks to explore what these domains have in common, or how language (and story) flows between them. Another reason may be that the researchers, with their strong cognitive stance, are quite unsympathetic to explanations of development which foreground the role of language in thought and development. [2]

2.6   Two major themes

Finally, two major themes of Project Zero need to be reexamined here. One is the Project's model of artistic development, and its embodiment in the figure of the inverted U, or the U shaped curve (Gardner, 1980, p. 261). This model of development, as has already been explained, assumes that early artistic ability dies out in most children, or in the case of artistically gifted children disappears during the whole period of the 'latency' years to reappear in adolescence. But the model ignores the possibility that such a 'disappearance' may signify something quite different. Readers of Vygotsky have, in fact, met the 'U shaped curve' before, in Vygotsky's quarrel with Piaget about the place of 'egocentric' speech in children's development. Like Piaget, Project Zero researchers assume that a function that is no longer visible is dying out. But as Vygotsky demonstrated in *Thought and Language*, to Piaget's satisfaction as well as his own, what the apparent disappearance of monologic speech actually meant was that this form of speech was going inwards, being internalised, and becoming the stuff of inner speech and thought.

We may legitimately suppose that, in a similar way, children's artistic abilities do not die out but are internalised and become part of their general mental functioning. Vygotky saw early dramatic play as 'imagination in action'. He points out in 'The Role of Play in Development'(Vygotsky, 1978) that the creation of imaginary situations 'can be regarded as a means of developing abstract thought'. Though 'superficially, play bears little relation to the complex mediated form of thought and volition it leads to', play is an essential precursor of such higher mental functions. It becomes part of the general ability to represent and enact the world internally, which is necessary for the development of thinking. Instead of describing play as imagination in action, in fact, we

might describe imaginative or speculative thought as 'inner play'. Project Zero researchers, whose positivist stance means that their focus is always on external behaviour, can only report the disappearance of that behaviour, and are prevented from speculating on what happens when external behaviour goes inside. In addition, their lack of interest in linguistic development prevents them from applying some of the lessons which can be learnt from this sphere to the sphere of artistic development.

Secondly, in several places but most noticeably in the cross-media study by Ives et al (1979), the Project concludes that different artistic media may have different 'trajectories' of development: that is they may emerge and 'peak' earlier or later. Literary ability, however, is seen as having a different trajectory from that of play or art. Ives et al. consider that literary ability is different from ability in modelling or drawing: 'Cross-media correlations reveal a closer connection between drawing and clay scores than between either of these two media and storytelling on both product scores and working style scores' (p. 10). Moreover, whereas ability in drawing and clay follows the classic 'inverted U' trajectory, development in storytelling shows 'a steady pattern of increasing scores...on measures of the competence, flavor and uniqueness of products. '(p.10). The reasons why storytelling competence increases with age may have something to do, in the view of the researchers, with the fact that elementary schools tend to foster linguistic skills more assiduously than they cultivate artistic skills.

These differences seem to the researchers to 'weaken arguments for a unified semiotic function'. But this is surely a conclusion based on a superficial view of the evidence. What the researchers do not consider is that the trajectory of literary art may be different precisely because it is drawing on the imaginative abilities, manifest in the other media studied, which they regard as having died away or disappeared. The enactment and depiction of imagined events mark young children's play across various media. All of these media provide children with the means of constructing imaginative worlds, ways of world-making. When activity in a particular medium appears to decline we might reasonably hypothesise, as has been argued above, that it has not died out but simply been tranposed into other activities, or internalised.

If we assume that the ability to picture events, to act them out, to take roles, to create worlds, which are manifested in these different kinds of artistic activity, are reconstructed internally in the same way that speech is transformed into inner speech (undergoing subsequently a further series of transformations), then we may come near to having a model of artistic development which stresses the links and continuities between different ways of worldmaking - such as their roots in story - and not the differences between them. In some people such early artistic abilities also develop into mature artistic talents, in others they may become part of other artistic, or less overtly artistic, abilities.

Such an interpretation might lead to a general revision of ideas about cognition, because artistic ways of worldmaking are, as Vygotsky suggests, also forms of thought. The ability to try on other ways of being and thinking, by imaging, visualising, and taking other viewpoints, by becoming someone else, by acting 'as if', is a consequence of the development of a range of psychological tools which originate in early creative and artistic activities. The view of what counts as cognition, and what contributes to cognitive growth, would be fundamentally changed if abstract thought were seen as having its roots in art and play. Artistic development would then be seen, not as a special aspect of mental development to be explained with reference to cognitive theory, but as contributing to a general developmental process, in which language plays a central role. The special status which Project Zero literature gives to artistic development would be called into question. Affect and creativity would be seen to be as important and basic as cognition in any account of intellectual growth, and all of our ideas about thinking would be broadened by this richer and more complex theory of what is involved in the development of mind.

---

[1] A careful study of Nadia's story as told in Lorna Selfe's original book (1977) reveals that there is probably more going on in Nadia's case than the functioning of an exceptional computational device. It seems significant, for instance, that Nadia was brought up as the third child in a bilingual Ukrainian and English speaking family, that her two older siblings were brought up to speak both languages, but that after the age of three she was spoken to as an infant only in English by her parents, who were concerned at her slow language development. (The family conducted most of their domestic life in Ukrainian). After this point she actually regressed linguistically. This seems to suggest a personal history in which relations with siblings, relations with parents, and the role that language played in these relations, might be at least as important factors in Nadia's emotional and linguistic development, and possibly by extension in her artistic development, as any exceptional computational device in the brain. The links between

59

language development and other aspects of development are rarely paid more than perfunctory attention by Gardner.   ·

[2] Gardner et al.'s paper on 'Max and Molly: Individual Differences in Early Symbolization' (1982) does indeed describe the abundant language and storytelling that goes on alongside three-year-old Molly's drawing, but only apparently in order to demonstrate that some children are 'verbalizers', while others are 'vizualisers', who talk 'reluctantly or minimally' while they are working (p.117)). Even in the sphere of musical development it is clear that the musical awareness of the children studied is strongly supported by song, and that words may be playing an important part in their music learning (see 'In Search of the Ur-Song' in *Art Mind and Brain* (pp.144-157), and 'Young children's musical representations: windows on music cognition' (Davidson,L. and L. Scripp, in Sloboda, 1988)

Chapter three
THE WORK OF ANNE HAAS DYSON

3.0   Introduction

Of all the researchers who have carried out any systematic study of children's early writing development, the one who has consistently emphasised the importance of the links between children's writing and their symbolising activities in other media is Anne Haas Dyson. Her major work on this topic, *Multiple Worlds of Child Writers* (1989), will be the subject of this chapter. Prior to the publication of this book, Haas Dyson had published a number of articles which demonstrated her interest in the interplay between the drawing and writing of young children, and in the significance of their play and creative activities in other media for their writing development. In papers such as 'The Emergence of Visible Language'(Dyson, 1982) she looked at the links between pictures and print/writing in children's free work at a writing centre and considered the ways in which they used the terms 'writing' and 'drawing', finding in 'Transitions and Tensions: Interrelationships between the Drawing, Talking and Dictating of Young Children' (Dyson, 1986) that the words were sometimes used interchangeably.

Dyson has also systematically studied the talk surrounding children's drawing and writing, which often provides a commentary on, or gives a meaning to, what the child is making. In one example she describes Rachel, whose 'oral language still surrounded the physical act of writing' (Dyson, 1983, p.20-21). In this paper she demonstrated that the meaning of the text, for many children, was contained in the whole writing event - the drawing, the text, and the surrounding talk: 'to grasp any intended written message their readers would have to listen to their talk, look at their drawing and read their text' (ibid. p.21).

Dyson has always viewed the social context surrounding the writing, the context of the classroom, the peer group talk, and the teacher's view of the task, as fundamental factors affecting children's views of writing and their learning to write. She has stressed that literacy and learning literacy are social processes. Her studies of the narrow sets of expectations created by the contexts of some classrooms (Dyson,1984) and of the support and influence exercised on children's writing by their peer group (Dyson, 1987)

have been ways of exploring this conviction. She has suggested that the nature of the literacy communities that children belong to, in school as well as out, forms their views of the writing process, and of themselves as writers.

3.1   The context of the study

In *Multiple Worlds of Child Writers*, she undertook a longitudinal study over two years of a group of eight children, four from a Kindergarten class and four from a Grade One class, in a Californian primary Language Arts classroom. She observed the program in the classroom as a whole and focused particularly on the eight case study children, observing each child writing at least once a month over the two years. The structuring of her observations was in some ways determined by the structure of the writing program itself. Children in all three year groups that she observed (Kindergarten, Grade One and Grade Two) were taught writing throughout the two years of the study by the same teacher. Each year group was timetabled to work with this teacher for one hour each morning, and with a reading and a maths teacher in the remaining two hours, in a rotary system, in which the children moved around and the teachers stayed in their own bases.

The children's writing was done mainly in their 'journals', which consisted of alternating blank and lined paper, a format which clearly influenced their view of the relations between reading and writing. The teacher's approach to writing in the earliest stages also helped to set the children's expectations of what was involved in a journal entry; typically she would encourage chidlren to draw first and then to write about their picture. Dyson quotes one case study child, Jake, as describing his writing process by saying 'I copy offa the picture' (p.91).

Dyson does not comment on these practices, yet it is clear, as in any classroom, that the routines laid down by the school and the individual teacher are strongly determining of what goes on. As in any social context, the practices are not necessarily consistent. Some areas of the program are tightly controlled, and some seem free of controls. Despite the highly structured nature of the writing lesson, which lasts for only one hour each day, and invariably begins with a discussion (talking about words and letters in the Kindergarten, and about punctuation and spelling in the

older grades), parts of the lesson are quite unstructured, and require children to use their own resources. For instance, the teacher adopts a Graves 'writing workshop' approach, encouraging children to choose their own topics for writing.

Reading and writing, even in these earliest grades, are taught by different teachers, and are not, apparently, linked in any way. With one noteable exception, children do not seem to be drawing on influences from their reading in creating their own texts. The researchers, taking their cue from the school's own organisation perhaps, do not observe the reading program, and are thus not in a position to note in any detail the influence of children's reading experiences on their writing.

In the context of this classroom, then, Dyson selected her eight case study children to observe over the two year period. She audiotaped the children talking and kept notes of their writing and drawing behaviour, observing the writing process of at least one complete 'journal' entry every month for each of the children. Because writing lessons were so tightly timetabled, children often had to leave their texts unfinished and return to them later, so a journal entry (which consisted of both picture and text) could take as long as three days to complete. Dyson kept photocopies of children's drawing and writing, and transcribed their talk and the talk of the children sitting near them. The group of children chosen was ethnically mixed, and consisted of four boys and four girls.

3.2   Multiple worlds

By observing these individuals closely over the two years of the research, Dyson was able to keep close track of their progress and development as writers, to observe the way in which their play and their drawing informed their writing, to study the shifts in the relationship between their drawing and their writing over time, and to consider how their talk, and their conversations with peers, contributed to their creation of imaginary worlds on paper. Throughout the book she is particularly interested to map the interplay, evident in their talk and their writing, between the different worlds in which they are learning to operate - the symbolic or imagined worlds they make in their pictures and texts, the social world of their peer group, and the wider social worlds within and outside the classroom.

Dyson's main concerns in the book have to do with:

a) the relationship between talk and writing, and the way in which children's social talk surrounds and influences their creation of written texts,

b) the relationship between drawing and writing: the transition from the more developed (in most children) symbolic medium of drawing to the more abstract 'flat symbolic surface of written text',

and

c) the relationship between children's imagined worlds and the worlds of their real experiences; the way in which they draw on and organise these experiences in making imaginary worlds.

Dyson sees children as inhabiting several worlds (their imaginary worlds, the social world of their peer group, the wider world outside school) and having to negotiate the boundaries between them as they discover writing as a world-making activity. This core metaphor of a series of boundaried worlds, which children gradually learn to manipulate and travel between, is introduced early in the book and shapes all subsequent observations and conclusions. The helpfulness of the metaphor is that it enables Dyson to manage material which might otherwise become uncontrollably complex. She is attempting a study on many levels, all of which interact. The ambitious nature of her project relates to these interactions; in her account of writing development Dyson is unwilling to focus on any one aspect of the process or the context without considering how it involves other layers and levels of experience, other 'worlds'.

Unlike much other research on early writing, then, this study does not focus on texts to the exclusion of pictures, on the development of written language to the exclusion of oral language, on work-focused talk to the exclusion of talk about the social world, on similarities between children to the exclusion of differences, or on individuals to the exclusion of the rest of the peer group. Dyson attempts to map the whole scene, and to make all that she observes count in her description of children becoming writers. The dangers of such a broad focus is that the material will become unmanageable and direction will be lost - such a 'rich description' may easily come to seem messy or shapeless. By reference to her core metaphor,

Dyson attempts to keep on track, despite the breadth and inclusiveness of her approach.

But there are problems inherent in her chosen metaphor, and these become apparent in the course of the book. It is perhaps too schematic a concept and too neat an attempt to sum up a complex whole in a phrase. Despite the apparent inclusiveness of this framing metaphor, the study still omits certain major areas - children's home lives, for example, are hardly mentioned, and their parents never appear. Thus an essential 'world' that they inhabit daily does not form part of the picture of their development given in the book. This also means that other aspects of their personal experience, such as home language, ethnicity and class, are hardly touched on. Any study which was more sensitive to home influences would inevitably have focused more centrally on these key factors.

Another kind of 'world' that is hardly explored is the inner world of the psyche. The writing and drawing of the case study children reveal distinct themes and intense preoccupations. For instance, Jesse's pictures have a distinct thematic content of action, conflict, and destruction. Jesse draws action, rather than static forms, and his drawings are in fact dramas which build up to a climactic act - the destruction of a castle, the explosion of a moon (p.75). These themes are clearly linked to Jesse's view of himself, also evidenced in his talk and play. There is evidence that some of Jesse's tough macho behaviour is assumed in order to cover up fears and babyish feelings; he has crying fits and often seeks a cuddle from the teacher (p.74). Yet, in her commentary, Dyson rarely addresses issues of this kind. Gender, and their sense of themselves as male or female, is a basic factor in several children's drawings and fictions, but these aspects do not feature in this apparently comprehensive study.

Dyson's core metaphor also contains some theoretical assumptions which must be open to question. The 'multiple worlds' that children inhabit are viewed as being separate and 'boundaried' and many of Dyson's observations and conclusions relate to children's abilities to cross or negotiate these boundaries. This creates a strong emphasis on the differences between symbolic worlds, rather than the similarities. Another

treatment might put more emphasis on the continuities from one world to another, rather than on the boundaries between them.

3.3   Rich descriptions

The great strength of Dyson's work lies in her powers of observation. She is a sensitive and experienced observer who aims to capture as much as possible of what goes on in the literacy events she witnesses. Her naturalistic study is a record of what goes on in a real classroom in real time; there is no attempt to set up artificial contexts or to present children with standard tasks in order to arrive at data from which it will be easier to generalise. Her careful and detailed recording of particular journal entries provides ample evidence of the complexity of the processes she is studying. She clearly demonstrates the need for any serious study to take into account more than the finished 'products', and more than a superficial description of context. One example of a child's journal entry will demonstrate the richness of the evidence that Dyson is able to gather by maintaining such a broad view of what goes on in a literacy event.

Regina, one of the children who is the subject of a detailed case study, begins her journal entry one day by drawing a Brownie Scout. All the time she draws, she keeps up a commentary on her drawing, which includes some generalisations about what she thinks Brownies do.

> Regina: These are not her knees. Her knees are off the ground. She's skating. The Brownies have to skate....And if....the ball goes somewhere else they stay. (p. 119)

Talking in this way, and discussing the habits of Brownies with her table-companions, Regina completes her drawing, which as Dyson remarks, ' seems rather sparse given the great amount of information about "her Brownie" and Brownies in general that she had voiced' (p.122). The next step, a routine one in this classroom, is to write her 'story' - the words to go with the picture. This means that Regina, as Dyson points out, has some choices to make: ' which parts of her drawn and spoken worlds would find their way into print.' Some of these choices are actually articulated at this point by Regina. '"She's just in the Brownies" she remarked, pointing at her drawn girl "but I'm not going to say that she's in the Brownies" '. Regina's text reads as follows:

> 'The little girl was playing with The Bol and she was Satg (skating) on The ground. She had two sisters. One was Named Elizabeth and one was Named Diana' (p.123).   .

66

It would be impossible to discern from an examination either of Regina's picture, or her text, or the combination of the two, the kind of thinking and planning that had gone into the making of this journal entry. Regina's deliberate omission from the text of what had seemed the central fact about her picture is remarkably intriguing. It is impossible to say whether her decision stems from a desire to develop her story - the introduction of two invisible sisters suggests that she has decided to people the imagined world more fully - or a reluctance to encode what has gone into her picture (even perhaps a reluctance to attempt certain key spellings). The quality and detail of Dyson's observation has provided a very full description of the immediate context of creation of this picture-and-text. The book contains many such well-documented literacy events, with the consequence that it gives an almost cinematic picture of these children as writers, enabling us to appreciate fully the individuality of different children's approaches to their writing.

Anne Haas Dyson wants to document writing behaviour in this amount of detail because she has an essentially holistic view of writing development. In her concluding chapter she observes that some students of writing aim to establish a developmental sequence of emergent writing behaviour (eg Ferreiro and Teberosky, 1982; Charles Read, 1986) while others, such as herself and Harste et al. (1984) oppose the idea that there is any such fixed order. Dyson believes that most documentation of development to date has tended to look at a single aspect of development, and that the overwhelming focus of studies of early writing development has been on code. She acknowledges that 'within any one strand of written language knowledge patterns...can be identified' (p.266), but argues that it may be that only the most superficial aspects of writing development follow this kind of fixed developmental sequence.

3.4 A 'long series of developmental events'

Researchers who contest the idea of a fixed order of development, in Dyson's view, are led to do so because they are not focusing on a fixed phenomenon or on a single strand. They have chosen to look at development holistically, and to include in their view of what counts as writing development a far wider range of behaviours. Studies of this kind, such as that of Bussis et al. (1985) and those of Dyson herself, because their view of development is broad and inclusive of many diverse factors, tend

to highlight the differences between children rather than their similarities, and to stress individuality and stylistic variation. Their view of literacy development is dynamic and considers a child's development in the context of general social, cognitive and symbolic growth, stressing the interconnectedness of these aspects. Dyson herself is especially interested in the relations between drawing and writing; she wants to look at the way children continue to make use of an established system of symbolism while they master a new one.

A major strength of Dyson's work, as has already been suggested, is the importance that she accords to talk and the role that talk plays in her account of development, both as a connecting thread between different ways of symbolising and as a means of linking the imaginary and real worlds. As in Regina's 'Brownie event', talk surrounds children's picture and text making, sometimes as monologue (an explanatory commentary about a drawing; a dramatic enactment of the pictured events; a running commentary on a developing piece of writing) and sometimes as dialogue (comments by peers on a picture or text; talk that relates the imagined world to the real world; social chat bearing no apparent relation to the picture or text). To trace the connections between this stream of talk and the pictures and texts that are produced in this context is far from easy, but Dyson's accounts of this talk sometimes enables us to understand better what kinds of considerations have shaped a child's journal entry. The 'decisions and revisions' of the writing process are made visible in this closely documented talk.

Dyson observes that the teacher's interventions and discussions with individuals can never represent more than a fraction of the interaction that surrounds a developing text; children's neighbours and companions in the classroom provide them with far more immediate responses than the teacher does. In these circumstances, Dyson observes how children's comments help to shape a picture or text and how such comments contribute to a child's developing sense of a reader and of a readership. A young writer's concepts of such features of writing as realism, coherence, suspense, and the creation and fulfilment of expectations in the reader, are developed and supported, she suggests, by the actual presence of the text's potential audience. Some children, in these circumstances, begin to be skilled manipulators of the responses of others.

In exploring the links between different kinds of symbolic activity and the contribution to writing development made by development in other symbolic media, Anne Haas Dyson, like many other educators including myself, is drawn to the work of Lev Vygotsky, with its stress on the interrelatedness of apparently different competences. It is above all Vygotsky's 'Prehistory of Written Language' (Vygotksy 1978) that she takes as her main point of reference. In her introductory chapter she considers Vygotsky's emphasis on the relationship between writing development and sign development in general, and summarises Vygotsky's views on the links between gesture, dramatic play, and drawing. [1]

A further element from the Vygotsky chapter which informs Dyson's final reflections and theoretical statements is the idea of internalisation. Dyson thoroughly understands Vygotsky's stress on the 'internal reconstruction' of external events, and exemplifies this in her account of how children not only begin to use, in their own writing, the features of discourse encountered in the context of shared reading and writing, but to use them appropriately and purposefully, for their own ends. Dyson's view of writing development is strongly influenced by the stress, in Vygotsky's chapter, on writing as the culmination of 'a long series of developmental events'. Her book can, in fact, be viewed as an attempt to map these events, and in particular to trace in more detail the links between talk, drawing and writing.

Some of the major shifts that Dyson observes in this series of events, and which she documents in the lives of individuals, are as follows:
1. For all the children in this classroom, doing their journals initially means 'draw-and-write'. This routine is laid down both by the teacher and by the nature of the notebooks provided and is, of course, standard practice in many primary clasrooms. For the children it seems to be an accepted and acceptable routine. By and large they all, initially, devote more attention to, and include more meanings in, their pictures. Text is done after the picture and is secondary and brief, often little more than an extended label for the picture. Quite often it does not seem to include some of the elements of the picture which seem most important to an observer. In one example, Regina, in her kindergarten year, explicitly draws Dyson's attention to the rich detail of her finished picture:
    Regina: There's a lot of things happening in this picture

69

> Dyson: There *are* lots of things happening
> Regina: It's all about the birds and butterflies and the eggs. It's all about this much, this much, this much and this much (curving her arms in front of her in ever wider circles) (p. 112)

Yet her dictated text makes no mention of the birds or eggs and, in Dyson's words, 'represents only a small portion of the "much, much, much" that was going on in Regina's picture and talk'.

Over the two year period of the classsroom-based study, Dyson's observations show children coming to put more meanings in the text and, in the case of most of her focus children, to write before they draw. Jake, in his Grade 2 year, begins to achieve greater fluency in writing, mainly by finding a successful personal formula for his stories, based round his invention of a car that is propelled by blowing bubbles. These 'bubble car' stories dominate his journal entries in second grade, accounting for fourteen out of twenty of the entries. As many as ten consecutive entries begin 'Once there was a bubble car that was going to be destroyed'. The use of such a formula seems to enable him to become a more fluent writer, one who no longer needs to draw before he writes

> 'He explained to his classmates that writing before drawing was quicker. He even admonished Jesse..." Do you remember what I said? You should never draw before you write. Breaking my rule. You're breaking Rule One of mine"'.
> (p 157)

This is a particularly explicit example of the shift between drawing and writing.

2. The fact that writing about an existing picture is standard practice in this classroom produces a kind of writing that is hard to define. Though children often refer to their 'stories', most texts are not actually narratives. They are more often present tense descriptions of pictures (eg: 'This little girl is watching the girl do her trick. And the butterfly is looking at the rainbow. And the little cat was sticking his tongue out', p. 112). Dyson terms this genre 'art notes', a good coinage for this genre, which is obviously encouraged by the school routine.

Dyson finds that 67% of the children's writing in the first year of her observation in kindergarten and first grade classes falls into this category. She makes the interesting point that all such classifications are to some extent fluid 'indeed the picture-dependent art notes that I have viewed as early stories are very similar to those that Newkirk describes as early expository texts' (p.265). Genre linguists might call the same texts 'reports'

(Rothery, 1984). The strength of Dyson's term, however, lies in its recognition of the role of the picture in these early texts.

Over the period of observation, Dyson notes that there is a general tendency among the children's texts to move into narrative. Tenses shift from present to past tense, children begin to deal with series of events and move their narratives through time. In other words, what is shown in the picture no longer dominates what can be said in the text - the written part of the journal entry now deals with events that lie outside the frame of the picture. Regina, whose texts in kindergarten had all been art notes, begins in first grade to write about more than can be seen in the picture. One first grade journal entry has a picture of a clown in a spotlight surrounded by a cheering crowd. The text, however, says

'The mom went to the show and had a good time but the little girl had to go to bed'.

This change in Regina's approach to her journal entries seems significant and is mirrored in the journals of other children, some of whom have to draw more illustrations to go with extended texts which have outgrown their pictures!

Other differences derive from children beginning to incorporate dialogue into their texts, initially in some cases by incorporating speech bubbles into their pictures. This change means that children's dramatisations of the narrated events, which previously had been part of the talk accompanying their drawing and writing, can become part of the text. When Jake begins to write a series of stories with his friend Manuel as the main character, he moves the stories along partly through dialogues between Manuel and his own (Jake's) fictional self, who is also a character in the story:

'Manuel are you OK? Yes I am OK. You are being attacked. I will shoot the bad guys out of the universe. OK yes shoot them now.'(p.160)

In this way, resources which may have been developed in dramatic play are integrated into writing.

3. Anne Dyson observes that most of the children, as they begin to write more independently, have to focus closely on encoding initially. Spelling each word entails a deliberate decision, research, or a request for help. Progress is slow, and so texts are brief. Much of the talk accompanying the writing reflects this struggle. For instance, in one incident, Jake wants to begin his text 'Once upon a time'. He copies 'once' from his personal dictionary and then tries to look up 'a pond'. To do this he turns to the 'p'

page of the 'dictionary', and begins to copy down the wrong word. The word he copies is 'pepperoni'. The talk accompanying this incident is entirely limited to Jake's repetitions of the phrase he is trying to encode, in a kind of determination to hold on to his text and help himself spell out the words he is copying (p.92).

However, in time this struggle lessens, as children gain more experience of written language. Manuel, who had considerable spelling problems in first grade, to such an extent that his teacher had debated whether he might need special help, begins to be a far more confident and fluent speller:

> 'As Manuel himself said, he "used to ask for every word", but now he did not. Like many of his peers, he spontaneously studied the spelling patterns of puzzling words...and began to engage regularly in phonologically based spelling. (In one text) Manuel requested the spelling of only six of the twenty five words' (p.193).

4. A major development is the growing awareness among young writers of the audience for their texts. This sense of audience may be quite absent from early journal entries. In her kindergarten year, Regina's journal entries seem of a piece with her play with toys.

> 'She often brought little toys (animals, dolls) to school; during the morning rug activity, she would talk to these little companions' (p.77).

Similarly, as she draws her usual pictures of 'little girls, suns, flowers and small animals' Regina talks about each one:

> 'As she talked and drew their hair and coloured their clothing one might think she was dressing her dolls rather than drawing her girls' (p.78).

These activities seem almost entirely private, or as Piaget would say autistic. Over the two years of the observation, however, Regina becomes aware of an audience for her journal entries, and in one incident refers explicitly to this audience. She has decided not to mention in her text that the picture she is drawing is a picture of her grandmother:

> 'I'm gonna keep that a secret, because everybody else is gonna know and they'll laugh' (p 127).

Regina is here obviously aware both of her readers and of her own power to include or omit elements of the story that she is telling. This growing sense not only of the writer's/artist's power over a created world, but also of their power to manipulate response is most conspicuously evident in Manuel, whose pictures and texts are always carefully planned. Manuel's major breakthrough during the period covered by the observation comes when he undertakes a long story, the 'Snowman' story. At the end of the

story we learn that the whole adventure between a fictionalised Manuel and a snowman who comes to life has been a dream, but as Manuel remarks as one point to the observer 'I don't reveal that 'til the end' (p.207).

Dyson stresses the role of the peer group, and of the continual feedback the children receive from their companions, in the development of this sense of a reader. We might, however, wish to look beyond the immediate context and hypothesise further about the development of a more impersonal sense of an audience in these young writers, one deriving from their reading as well as from their writing.

5. Finally, Anne Haas Dyson stresses the importance, for most of the case study children, of coming to inhabit their own texts more fully, a shift which is symbolised in several cases by their move into writing in first person. All of the case study children at some point become characters or first person narrators in their own stories. This move seems to signal a growing ability to 'play in the text' - to use the resources established in dramatic play and social interaction within their fictions, in order to explore fictional worlds more fully. One aspect of this ability to dwell in their own fictions is seen by Dyson as being the children's increasing tendency to refer to mental states, and to characters' feelings and thoughts, in their stories.

Two children, Jake and Manuel, include each other in their stories, in Jake's case repeatedly (Dyson terms these stories 'The Manuel adventures'). Dyson feels that this ability to incorporate social worlds into fictional worlds signals children's realisation that story writing can be a major means of interaction with others, and is part of a growing confidence in 'negotiating the boundaries' between their invented worlds and the real immediate social world of the peer group.

All of these changes in children's writing are well supported by the evidence Dyson has gathered and are of serious interest to anyone studying writing development. The strength of her findings lies in her careful documentation of individual children's histories as writers and the way in which these observations are carried out in the normal working conditions of a primary classroom. Unlike the researchers in

Project Zero, Anne Haas Dyson is not mainly interested in standardising her data gathering so that she can arrive at numerical conclusions, although in an appendix she does draw some interesting conclusions from the data which lend themselves to this kind of treatment (for example, her finding about the decline in the percentage of 'art notes'). She is aware of the impossibility of 'controlling variables' in a study of this kind, which is concerned with the fine detail of social processes. She recognises that, although it is possible to draw some generalised conclusions about the children from her evidence, it is also important to give full weight to their individual differences.

The children in her study display significant differences as symbolisers. In many ways these variables and differences provide some of the most interesting information in the study, as they reveal the different routes that children take into writing, and the range of resources that they draw on. Her comparisons between individuals enable Dyson to define more particularly the special qualities of the children being compared, and also to identify common factors. It is her ability to capture the fine detail of particular events, and then to explore her data in a reflective way, which makes this study such a permanently useful contribution to research on writing development, and on the links between writing and other forms of symbolising.

In many ways this research can be viewed as representing an opposite paradigm, as work on early symbolisation, to that embodied in Project Zero research. Where that research is consciously 'scientific' in its methodology and presentation, aiming to exclude variables and arrive at impersonal findings, Dyson's work draws its legitimacy from ethnographic method and from an approach which takes full account of context and of the differences between individuals. Where Project Zero researchers focus on children in isolation as research subjects, Dyson focuses on interaction. Where they foreground abstract and numerical findings, she offers descriptions and voices.

3.5   The limits of metaphor
Yet Dyson's last chapter, her conclusion, is disappointing. Her data are so rich that one is led to hope for correspondingly rich theoretical conclusions. In the last chapter, however, she attempts a very broad

review of the way in which her findings relate to other theoretical and empirical work on early writing, and at this level of generality some of the strengths of her way of thinking and observing are obscured.

In the chapter she takes issue with two established ways of looking at early writing, and also sets out in more detail her own theoretical framework for thinking about writing development.

> 'In brief, from the perspective of this book, writing development is viewed as evolving within and shaped by children's interactions with other symbolic media and other people, including their peers. Both the developmental challenges children face as writers and the resouces they lean upon are found in the varied symbolic and social worlds within which they, and all authors, work.
>
> This way of viewing writing development leads to a re-viewing, a rethinking, of two basic developmental concepts or, more particularly, developmental relationships - that between embedded and disembedded language, and that between an understanding of print's function and an understanding of its inner workings.'

The first concept that Dyson challenges here is that of 'disembedding'. Olson (1977), Donaldson (1978) and others have seen the process of development in writing as a process of separation, where written language is progressively detached from the surrounding context of talk and other symbolising, which initially give it meaning, to become a free-standing medium. Dyson's case for reviewing this concept is that she sees children's writing, far from being 'disembedded', gradually coming to be more *embedded* in a social and interactive context. Young writers, she thinks, realise the function of writing as they come to interact more consciously with their readers, and as they discover a widening range of real social purposes for written language.

This is a useful and uncontroversial qualifying statement, which helps us to keep in mind the social nature of the process of becoming a writer. It adds to the concept contained in the original idea of 'disembedding', but does not replace it. Obviously both generalisations are helpful in viewing early writing development, they are not mutually exclusive, as Dyson - focusing too closely on a linguistic point - seems to believe.

Similarly, Dyson suggests that past studies of writing development have viewed the process of becoming literate as one in which the realisation of the *functions* of literacy drives the discovery of its *form*. Though Dyson appreciates that this is a plausible concept of development, she herself wants to assert a more dynamic relationship between 'children's understandings of written language's functional possibilities and their

understandings of its systemic workings'. These changes are also affected by the social context of the writing and by the responses of others. 'New ways of writing engender new responses which in turn engender the discovery of new functional possibilities.' There is no one-way causal relationship, but a constantly interactive process.

This dynamic and interactive quality characterises Dyson's view of development, but it tends to be stated as a credo rather than an argument. As with her challenge to the concept of 'disembedding', her view of the relations between function and form offers a helpful additional perspective on, rather than a basic correction to, existing views of writing development.

The weakest part of Dyson's theoretical position, however, seems to me to lie in the idea which she presents as her main theoretical insight in this area, that which gives the book its title and often shapes her observations. This is the notion that children learning to write are 'learning to negotiate the boundaries among multiple worlds'. Dyson refers to this as the 'guiding metaphor of this book' (p.259).

Dyson has already, in a diagram (see Table 4 in Table of Illustrations), defined what she means by the 'multiple worlds' that children inhabit or create. In this diagram she categorises all the 'worlds' referred to in children's talk. They include the imagined worlds created through talk, drawing and writing, which are viewed as existing inside the ongoing social world of children in the classroom. This world in turn is seen as existing inside the wider experienced world which surrounds the children in the classroom, and which they continually refer to as they work on their texts. She sees all these worlds as 'boundaried', and children as having to learn to differentiate between them.

Some children, like Jake, begin by 'crossing symbolic boundaries to compose his imaginary worlds, interweaving talking and drawing' (p.260). In time they become more aware of the boundaries between these symbol systems and attempt to 'coordinate and negotiate these boundaries'. Similarly, Jake is seen as crossing 'social boundaries' by bringing peers into his texts as characters in his stories. Later he is said to learn to establish firmer boundaries between social and imaginary worlds, and begins to

regard his peers as a potential audience for his texts. This metaphor is pervasive in shaping both Dyson's observations and her conclusions:

> 'Jake's talk with others during writing demonstrated a sophisticated negotiation among imaginary, ongoing, and wider experienced worlds. For example, the well-known character Buck Rogers, a part of his experienced world, was also an actor in his imaginary world, and a tool for engaging the interest of his friend Manuel in the ongoing social world.' (p.171-172)

Dyson's metaphor of boundaried worlds is both helpful and unhelpful to her. It can be useful to sum up an argument in a metaphor, but if thinking is to be carried forward then it will be important to leave the metaphor behind and engage directly with evidence and argument. Otherwise, the metaphor will tend to limit what can be thought. Metaphors provide us with provisional images to encapsulate ideas or insights at a particular point of thinking. They cannot be the basis for reasoning a case, or the medium through which argument is advanced. Dyson's problem arises from the fact that she is reluctant to let go of her guiding metaphor. In her view it sums up everything she wants to say about children's development as symbolisers, writers, and social beings. Yet there are ways in which the metaphor is limiting.

For instance, in this metaphor the 'boundaries' between the social and imagined worlds are regarded as if they were of the same kind and order as those between different kinds of imagined worlds. This seems to be little more than a verbal connection. Moreover, some evidence that Dyson quotes, such as the inclusion of peers as characters in a story, is not necessarily an indication of a weak sense of the boundaries between real and imagined worlds, which will be left behind as the writer matures. One would have to look beyond superficial indications of this kind to understand what is involved in a developing ability to draw on real experience in the creation of fiction.

By insisting on the boundaries between certain imaginary worlds (eg those imagined through pictures and those imagined through words), Dyson's guiding metaphor may be positively unhelpful. It emphasises the differences between these worlds, rather than what they have in common, and focuses the argument on the need to identify and mark boundaries. Children are then seen as being engaged in 'establishing'. 'crossing', or 'negotiating' these boundaries. Some are involved in 'struggles on the boundary'.

This key metaphor, therefore, leads Dyson to emphasise differences rather than similarities, boundaries rather than continuities, and struggles, manoeuvres and negotiations on these boundaries rather than transitions, translations, or more fluid movements between closely linked worlds. A different view of what is involved in developing as a writer and symboliser might take these other ways of symbolising as allied, rather than competing, forms of development, and might consider how these different ways of symbolising support, rather than impede, one another. Dyson's vision is limited by the metaphor she has chosen to guide her.

Dyson's own interest is mainly in writing development; the book is presented as a study of learning to write. Because of this she is not inclined to consider as closely the development of children's other ways of symbolising. Her study is somewhat skewed by this focus, and opportunities for considering (for example) children's pictures as fully as their texts are lost. Dyson's view that, in normal development, 'a picture must become an illustration' to the text (p.81) is limiting, and ignores the evidence of what has been happening in the modern picture book, where picture and text now interact closely. Manuel, for instance, in his Snowman story (p.185-205), achieves a sophisticated interplay between text and pictures, in which the pictures sometimes carry more of the 'whole story' than the text, and sometimes vice versa, but Dyson's analysis pays significantly less attention to pictures than to text.

There is often too little apparent awareness in Dyson's study of the limitations being placed on children's concepts and competences by the regime of the classroom in which the research was conducted. The timetabling of writing separately from reading effectively discourages children from drawing on their reading experience as a key resource in learning to write, and also means that the 'writing teacher' knows much less about the children's overall literacy experiences than she would know if she were also the 'reading teacher'. The rigid view of the relationship between drawing and writing exemplified in the draw-and-write routine, and in the alternating blank and lined pages of the journals, must be highly determining of what children go on to do in these media. Dyson needs to offer some evaluation of the effects of these aspects of the context in which her observations are made.

She might also have at least considered some of the other influences on children's developing literacy that surface regularly in the children's writing, particularly influences from the media. All of the children studied are forming their concepts of fiction, of audience, of the role of picture and text in narrative, and so on, from the experience of picture books, cartoons and graphic novels, media texts and popular culture, as well as from the Language Arts program. In all of these popular genres the 'boundaries' between text and picture are far more fluid than those established in this classroom, and this needs to be realised and acknowledged in the research.

Thus, though in some ways Dyson's book offers a more inclusive and responsive view of development than the work of other researchers, in other ways her perspective is limited by her close focus on writing. Her interest in other symbolising activities is limited to the way in which they contribute to learning to write. She does not take an extensive interest in children's symbolic development in other media, and does not view symbolic development within a general picture of children's intellectual development. Her work has greatly illuminated some aspects of children's writing development, and has given a fuller account of it than that generally found in the literature on this subject, but has also revealed some of the problems involved in seeing writing development as separate and split off from other kinds of creative activity.

In order to see how writing development fits within a more comprehensive map of mind we need to approach it from the perspective of psychology and of a more inclusive and dynamic psychology than that of the researchers of Project Zero. This means that we shall have to go back in time in order to learn from a psychologist whose sociocultural approach is only now beginning to inform thinking in education, and who was particularly interested in the links between different ways of symbolising and the development of writing - the Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky.

---

[1] Dyson's reading of Vygotsky does not seem to go much beyond this chapter. Consequently her understanding of some of the concepts touched on in the chapter lacks depth. In particular, her reading of 'interfunctionality' is a personal reading, and does not recognise the specialised meaning that the term has in Vygotskyan psychology, where it relates to the changes that come about from the interplay between symbolic systems or 'higher

functions' when these functions have been internalised. Thus 'interfunctionality' in Vygotsky is part of the explanation of how development that is begun interpersonally continues intrapersonally. Dyson reads Vygotsky's phrase about 'changes in interfunctional connections and relationships' as relating to children's developing sense of the potential functions or purposes of writing, and explains: 'children's sense of what can be accomplished through writing changes as others respond, both playfully and critically, to their efforts'.

Dyson's misreading is an interesting example of the way in which a text such as the Vygotsky chapter on the Prehistory of Written Language, with its apparent brevity and simplicity, can be misleading. This chapter is a dense and suggestive text which, if it is read in isolation from other writings of this period of Vygotsky's work, hardly reveals the architecture of the theory which lies behind it. Dyson reads the chapter in the light of her own 'spontaneous concepts' about the word 'function' in relation to writing, and is able to support this reading to her own satisfaction, without considering the 'scientific concept' which the term actually represents in Vygotskyan thought.

PART TWO: REREADING VYGOTSKY

Chapter four
READING VYGOTSKY IN ENGLISH

4.0 Introduction

Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934) is a psychologist who offers an account of human development - of what is involved in becoming a person and a member of a culture - which is both broad and complex. His constant emphasis on the role of language in the growth of higher mental processes makes his psychology of special importance to an investigation of children's writing development. His own interest in semiotic mediation, and the emphasis he places on signs in cultural development means that his work has a particular relevance to a study of the links between written language and the creative use of other symbol systems.

In his discussion of 'The Prehistory of Written Language', originally published, posthumously, as part of the book *Mental Development of Children and the Process of Learning*, and published in English as the final chapter in *Mind in Society* (Vygotsky, 1978), Vygotsky surveys a number of play activities in childhood that he sees as linked, through their intentional symbolising character, to the development of writing ability. He describes these activities as 'different moments in an essentially unified development of written language'. Throughout this chapter he is concerned to define writing, especially what he terms the 'higher form' of writing, as a psychological and cultural act which involves far more than learning to manipulate a written code, and which therefore requires a more complex history. He sees writing as the culmination of a general and growing capacity to use available forms of symbolising in order to express meaning.

Vygotsky's account, in this chapter, of the relationship between writing and earlier forms of symbolising in play is tantalisingly brief. It is full of hints and glimpses of an overarching, comprehensive theory of symbolisation, and suggestions of the outline of a detailed developmental map of this area. But despite its brevity and incompleteness, this view of the interrelationships involved in children's dramatic play, drawing, and

writing, still promises to provide a more adequate explanation of what is going on when children are learning these ways of symbolising meaning than any of the theories discussed in my previous chapters.

In order to fill in the outline of this explanation, I mean to look elsewhere in Vygotsky's work, and to trace the links between the views sketched out here and other aspects of Vygotsky's thought. I expect to consider his writing on topics such as creative and artistic activity, play and symbolisation, and language and thought. One important source is likely to be the lecture on Play (reprinted as Chapter 7 of *Mind in Society* (1978)). Others will be the discussions of writing in *Thought and Language* (1986), as well as all that Vygotsky wrote, both in that book and in the earlier *Psychology of Art* (1971), on poetry, literature, and the creation of works of art, or 'symbols for others'.

These are not necessarily the parts of Vygotsky's work that have received most attention from his regular commentators, most of whom are, by discipline, training and profession, psychologists. Both *The Psychology of Art* and the final chapter of *Thought and Language* are specifically concerned with the creation of consciousness, the development of the conscious mind, and the role of language, literature and art in this process. These are elements in Vygotsky's work that are generally passed over by his psychologist commentators, who tend to find questions of this kind too 'soft' to be interesting, and may even be embarrassed by this aspect of his psychology.

But for many other readers of Vygotsky, including many teachers, what is so exciting in his work is that it does recognise the existence of questions like these, and gives them serious and sustained consideration. These readers find in Vygotsky's work a different approach to psychology from that which they are accustomed to, one which sets out a broader and more ambitious account of mental development, an account in which language plays a particularly crucial role. Vygotsky's approach has room for discussion of the role of emotions in learning, for an exploration of inner states of mind, for speculations about the relationship between the innermost recesses of thought and the world outside the self, and for an analysis of what is involved in creative processes. Vygotsky, of course, began his career as a teacher of literature; there are good grounds for

thinking that his interest in literary art and creativity was never completely left behind, and indeed that it remained at the centre of much of his subsequent work, even during his pressurised period of cognitive experiment at the Moscow Institute of Psychology. It has been left to other literature teachers, including James Britton, who was quick to recognise the importance of Vygotsky's work to discussions of language and learning (Burgess, 1993), to lay due stress on this alternative Vygotsky.

In the chapters that follow I intend to provide a reading of Vygotsky which foregrounds these elements in his work and shows how central they are to his psychology as a whole. Tony Burgess has pointed out that all students of Vygotsky are involved in a process of interpretative reading, and that we all, actually, construct our own Vygotsky through this process. The rather special feature of Vygotsky as a writer is that much of his work, including some of his most important books, remained unpublished in his own lifetime, and has only recently begun to be widely read, or read at all. Vygotsky is therefore primarily known to us as text or texts (for he was prolific, and his work is multi-faceted), and texts that are still very open to interpretation. These texts are being read out of their historical context, often by readers with no knowledge of that context, and they come to us with very little in the way of textual apparatus, surrounding commentary, or contemporary response or criticism. His present day readers approach his work from a variety of perspectives - academic, professional and ideological - and their readings reflect these perspectives.

Burgess defines two main readings current among contemporary English teachers with an interest in Vygotsky: a reading which focuses on Vygotsky's work on language and symbolisation (he sees this reading as deriving ultimately from Langer, Cassirer, and nineteenth century idealist philosophy), and a reading which focuses on the social and cultural elements in Vygotsky's psychology, especially his theoretical work on semiotic mediation. Burgess derives this second way of reading Vygotsky from Gramscian Marxism, with its interest in the psychological processes by which hegemonic cultures are internalised, or resisted. Although this school of thought would have been unknown to Vygotsky, he would obviously have recognised and shared its interest in the relation between individual consciousnesses and the prevailing culture. He himself, after

all, had ample experience of a period which saw the growth of the deliberate exercise of hegemony.

There may be well be other ways of reading Vygotsky, especially outside the boundaries of contemporary English teaching. But one thing seems clear from even a cursory consideration of the number of references to Vygotsky that are currently being made in psychology, education, and other fields: many people currently seem to need Vygotsky. His work, like a newly discovered 'lost continent', explains such a lot about the rest of the world. This continent is currently being explored, described, mapped, and of course also staked out, claimed, fought over, and colonised. It has supplied us with an intellectual territory that previously we could only see in glimpses, and its existence changes the world we thought we knew.

There are several 'Vygotskys' now current in the West (as well as, I imagine, in the former Soviet bloc) most of them the product of interpretative readings not by teachers but by psychologists. These versions of his work naturally reflect the histories and concerns of the interpreters. What I want to briefly explore here is the fact that, for most of us in the West, reading Vygotsky means reading him in English. We are therefore hugely dependent on the few books by him that have so far been published in English, and on the editors, publishers, translators and commentators who stand between us and the texts in the original.

The textual history of Vygotsky studies in English is complicated, and at times, as I shall try to show in the chapters that follow, it verges on the scandalous. There is evidence that in the 1960's and 1970's Vygotsky's work was viewed by Western psychologists - and probably by Russians too - simply as a quarry to be mined for those ideas which seemed useful in the context of their own preoccupations. Thus, the first translation of *Thought and Language*, published in 1962, was considerably shorter than the second translation by Alex Kozulin, published in 1986, or the third, published in 1987 and translated (as *Thinking and Speech*) from the Russian edition of Vygotsky's *Collected Works*. Kozulin describes how the translators and editors of 1962 removed

> 'those portions of Vygotsky's work, including certain essential psychological discussions and broader philosophical ideas, that they perceived as redundant or obsolete. As a result, Vygotsky the theoretician and polemicist somehow disappeared from the English version of *Thought and Language*.' (p.lv, Vygotsky,1986)

84

As a result, of the 318 pages in the Russian original, American readers received only 153 pages, with fewer words per page than in the Russian volume.

These translators and editors were guided by their view of what was appropriate to the concerns of psychology as they knew it ('It was agreed' they explain ' that excessive repetitions and certain polemical discussions that would be of little interest to the contemporary reader should be eliminated in favor of more straightforward exposition' *Translators' Preface*, Vygotsky, 1962, p. xii). Any sense that they were responsible for the transmission of an important historical text seems to have been absent from their considerations. Other work by Vygotsky met a similar fate: the making of *Mind in Society*, which I shall describe in a later chapter, is illustrative of the extent to which psychologists at this time felt free to take extraordinary liberties with what was still, then, the work of an obscure dead Russian psychologist with some useable, though occasionally eccentric, ideas.

In a way, the textual history of Vygotsky in the West would provide us with a picture of the development of psychology, in the USA in particular, over the past thirty years, and this might also be true of his history in the former USSR. Editions of, and commentaries on, Vygotsky have reflected the growing freedom in Russia to discuss the ideas of a writer whose work was banned for thirty years after his death, and have also mirrored developments in the discipline of psychology, away from a limited positivist and behaviourist viewpoint and towards a 'cognitivist' view of mental activity, or more recently towards a social-cultural psychology, in which semiotic systems are seen as having a key role to play at the interface between the individual and society.

4.1 Vygotskyan commentators

Surveying the Vygotskyan continent as it is currently, one would see, perhaps, three major Western camps set up in different sectors. One would be the lone tent of Jerome Bruner, who manned the original Western expedition into this territory, and who found in Vygotsky an elegant practitioner of cognitive experiment not unlike himself. As Burgess suggests, Bruner's account of Vygotsky (Bruner, 1962,1985,1986) is oblivious to, or deliberately neglectful of, the broader philosophical

framework of Vygotsky's thought, with its serious attention to the methods and arguments of Marx.

Another camp would belong to Michael Cole and James Wertsch, who may be presumed to be prepared to share a site, since their readings of Vygotsky, though different, are overlapping. Cole and Wertsch both foreground Vygotsky's Marxism, but like Bruner they also read him primarily as a cognitivist. Their acounts of his psychology (Cole, 1978,1985; Wertsch, 1985a,1985b) focus closely on the texts from the 'middle' period of his work, the years from 1926 - 1930, when he was involved in directing a programme of research into the development of higher mental processes. (They say almost nothing about his work before 1925, in the psychology of literature, and are reserved about the overall argument of *Thought and Language*, his last book.) Wertsch, however, is also interested in Vygotsky's contribution to a socio-cultural-historical account of mind, in which individual psychology is seen to be closely related to, and dependent on, the historical and cultural context, and in which the role of semiotic mediation - 'psychological tools' - is basic to the development of mind and mental functioning. He finds in Vygotsky a suggestive, though incomplete, view of what might be involved in such an account (Wertsch, 1991).

Both Cole and Wertsch, in making their translations and interpretations of Vygotsky's work, have worked closely with his ex-colleagues, and partners in the original 'troika' at the Moscow Institute, Luria and Leontiev, and with Leontiev's Kharkovite colleague Zinchenko. To some extent they tended, initially at any rate, to read Vygotsky through the eyes of these contemporaries, and their successors such as Davydov. Their picture of Vygotsky may have been somewhat coloured by the views of these more orthodox Soviet scientists and Party members, who had their own reasons for promoting certain aspects of Vygotsky's work above others, and who had distanced themselves from him towards the end of his life. Both Leontiev (1971) and Luria (1978) have written introductions to works by Vygotsky, and these provide a good picture of their cautious approach to his work; the habits of a lifetime spent circumventing the traps of Stalinist and post-Stalinist orthodoxies seriously limit what they feel able to say. Both were compromised by the adjustments they made to

their intellectual positions in order to survive and prosper under a regime which promoted Pavlov as the doyen of psychology.

In addition, both Cole's and Wertsch's readings could be viewed as being to some degree ahistorical, though in a different sense from Bruner's. Both writers are largely silent about the constraints on Vygotsky which made it impossible for him to publish many of his major works within his own lifetime, and which led to his denunciation in the early 1930's, as part of the general ideological purge of Soviet psychology, and eventually to the posthumous banning of his work. They tend to share Leontiev's deprecatory attitude to Vygotsky's early work in literature and psychology, and to be sympathetic to the revisions made to Vygotsky's theory by the Kharkovite group of psychologists. In general, as Marxists themselves and as cognitive scientists, they feel uncomfortable with those aspects of Vygotsky's thought which seem to come to close to idealism, and in this respect they share the reservations felt by many Soviet psychologists past and present.

Finally, a new camp - occupied by Alex Kozulin (1984, 1987, 1990) and David Joravsky (1988, 1989) - offers an interesting alternative perspective on these more established psychological positions. Both writers know the historical background to Vygotsky's work well, and have written books about Russian psychology, though Kozulin writes as a psychologist, while Joravsky is a historian of ideas. Both respond strongly to strands in Vygotsky's thought which have been largely neglected, if not buried, by his more cognitively oriented commentators. They tend to be interested in many of those aspects of Vygotsky's work which have attracted English teachers - the role of language in learning and in the creation of consciousness; the role of literature in understanding the workings of mind and as a psychological tool for the development of mind; and the place of affect in learning and cognition. Both offer fascinating accounts of the way in which literary texts can provide more complex structures for the understanding of the working of the human mind than any orthodox psychological theory.

Somewhere on the edge of this territory, perhaps, equipped with every imaginable technical aid, and a mountain of data, are two cartographers - Van der Veer and Valsiner (1991) - who, if they have no very distinctive

thesis to put forward in relation to Vygotsky's work, are at least well-informed guides to the terrain, with excellent access to original texts and to a number of important local sources of information, including Vygotsky's daughter. Their claim to this territory rests mainly on their extensive information, and their painstaking scholarship. These writers are critical of the ahistorical stance of most previous explorers from the West, and provide some fascinating translations from contemporary documents, including some extracts from letters by Vygotsky.

One or two Russian commentators, such as Davydov and Radzikhovskii (1985), should also perhaps be mentioned at this point, although the bulk of their work is not available in English. These descendants of the Kharkovite activists have now taken up the aspect of Vygotsky's work which was so much criticised in the 1930s, about the role of semiotic mediation in the creation of mind, and are developing a cultural historical theory which builds on this aspect of his work.

The aspects of Vygotsky's work that are most acceptable to contemporary psychologists are, then, still those that are closest to an orthodox positivist approach, and that lend themselves to being incorporated into cognitive theory. Methodologically, Vygotsky actually irritates many contemporary scientists, even though they may acknowledge that - despite rarely providing detailed descriptions of method or tables of data - his experiments are immensely suggestive and interesting. The most current reading of Vygotsky is therefore one which integrates him into a cognitive account of mental development, and which takes the texts that make up *Mind in Society* as representative of his thought. This is the approach that has led to so much work being done on the zone of proximal development, and which has drawn on Vygotsky for support in discussions of 'scaffolding' and peer teaching. (Davydov is the leader of the Developmental Education movement in Russia, which has built on some elements of Vygotsky's work and translated them into a school of highly structured pedagogy (Davydov, 1994; Davydov and Zinchenko, 1993)).

Yet the texts that form *Mind in Society* are not actually those which best represent Vygotsky's habit of mind, which was broad and generalising, always concerned with large and ultimately philosophical questions about

culture, consciousness, and the evolution of mind. In any discussion Vygotsky was always poised for a mental leap to another level; he was essentially a Hegelian, and would frequently arrive at a solution to a problem by viewing it from above - as in his metapsychological account of *The Crisis in Psychology* (1927/1982). These important aspects of Vygotskyan thought are still not, on the whole, interesting to the scientific community that is the gatekeeper to his work. Nor are most psychologists remotely interested in Vygotsky's work in art and literature. My reading of Vygotsky, however, will regard this work as central to his whole enterprise, rather than juvenile or marginal.

4.2 Three major texts

I have made clear that I think it important to discuss the fact that most of us read Vygotsky in English, and this consideration has shaped the section that follows. I have chosen to structure this section round the three major texts by Vygotsky that are still the main ones that have been translated into English (the rest of the work available in English consists of a few papers and lectures). These three books form an interesting group to study in any case, since they represent fairly well three phases of Vygotsky's work. He died so young that it is perhaps unhelpful to insist too much on the notions of phases; many of his concerns overlap chronologically. But in general the first phase, prior to his move to Moscow and his full-time involvement in psychological research, was one in which Vygotsky's main studies were literature and art, and psychology was seen by him mainly as a means of investigation of a central element of culture. *The Psychology of Art* belongs to this early phase, which dates from about 1920 to the point when he entered psychology proper and joined the Moscow Institute of Experimental Psychology in 1925.

Thought and Language, similarly, is incontrovertibly a late work; much of it was dictated by Vygotsky while he was dying in 1934, although some chapters apparently draw on earlier papers. The third phase, which it belongs to, was one in which Vygotsky was elaborating on his view of language as one of the most important of the higher mental functions, the development of which offered a model for every other kind of mental/cultural development, and which provided an essential basis for many other intellectual abilities.

.

Mind in Society, has rather a different status from the other two texts, which are both directly shaped by Vygotsky and reveal a similar sense of design. However, this volume, which is edited from a number of sources by Michael Cole and others, does usefully represent the work that Vygotsky and his colleagues were doing at the Moscow Institute during the second phase, 1926-1930, which was the period of his extensive research programme into conscious behaviour, during which his studies and experimental investigations were focused on the development of the 'higher mental functions' of logical memory, voluntary attention, understanding, and language. There are particular textual problems around all of these books (and especially *Mind in Society*) which will be discussed in the chapters which relate to them.

I shall try to demonstrate the existence of powerful continuities running through all of these texts, despite their very different concerns. I shall also argue that Vygotsky never lost touch with his early work in art and literature, and that its themes continued to sound in much of what he subsequently did. This reading of Vygotsky, because of its central focus on language and symbolisation, might initially be viewed as belonging to the idealist, individualist type of reading described by Burgess. However, I shall be attempting to bridge individualist and sociocultural readings of Vygotsky by exploring the interface between the individual and the social, and the process of internalisation - the constant dynamic and dialectical relationship between inner and outer reality in the construction of an inner self. Vygotsky was also preoccupied with this relationship; his central self-set task was to create a psychology which would be capable of studying the creation of consciousness, and the role of language in that process.

My account of Vygotsky will provide a background against which to read the evidence from teachers and children that I shall examine in the empirical section of this thesis. Vygotsky's own intricate account of the role of symbolising play in the development of the imagination, of writing, and of thinking, provides a convincing intellectual explanation of why there needs to be room for children's symbolising play in any early literacy curriculum: His arguments are often unconsciously echoed in the more intuitive judgements that the teachers in my study make about these relationships.

Chapter five
VYGOTSKY'S *PSYCHOLOGY OF ART*

5.0   Introduction

The Psychology of Art, though it is an early book which is passed over briefly by some commentators, is a key part of Vygotsky's work. To begin with, it is the most complete book that we have in English by Vygotsky. Of the three books by Vygotsky that I intend to consider, those that have been published in English, the second - *Mind in Society* - is, as we shall see, an unsatisfactory compilation from Vygotsky's papers, whilst the third, *Thought and Language*, was rapidly written and dictated, and probably not revised (it was completed as Vygotsky was dying). *The Psychology of Art* is therefore in some ways the best guide we have to Vygotsky's methods as an author. Enough of the features of its construction are parallelled in *Thought and Language* to confirm that it is a good demonstration of how Vygotsky went about structuring a long piece of thought and writing.

Like several of Vygotsky's other books (eg *The Crisis in Psychology*), it was never published in his lifetime. It was, strictly speaking, the text of Vygotsky's doctoral thesis. But everything suggests that it was written also for publication, and for a wider audience and it is interesting to speculate why, in this case, it was never published. Leontiev, in his Introduction (1971), suggests that this was because Vygotsky outgrew the ideas in the book, and 'clearly saw the incompleteness and imperfections of his work up to that point' (p.x) (when he embarked on a more empirically oriented phase of his work in psychology). This is a strikingly disingenuous explanation; Vygotsky is hardly likely to have abandoned a text on which he spent so much care and which was the culmination of his work in literature and education. Far more likely is the possibility that Vygotsky decided not to publish the book as it stood given the political climate of the time; that he 'saw its imperfections' in relation to the ascendant ideology. The hypothesis that the work may have remained unpublished because it dealt with cultural and psychological issues that were becoming increasingly ideologically sensitive in the late 1920s (such as the formation of consciousness) is supported by Van der Veer and Valsiner's report (1991, p. 47) that a copy of a contract with a publisher for the book, with related correspondence, has been found in Vygotsky's private archive. There are several mysteries around the textual history of the book.

Vygotsky's own copies of his thesis apparently went missing, and the current text is based on a manuscript found in Eisenstein's private papers, without which the work would have disappeared altogether.

5.1 The construction of *The Psychology of Art*

The most striking aspect of this shapely book's construction is its symmetry. The book is divided into four parts. The title of the first, introductory, part is 'On the Methodology of the Problem', and this introduction lays out the method by which Vygotsky is going to operate in the book. There then follow three sections, each of which is sub-divided into, essentially, three parts. The first section deals with three schools of art criticsm which have, as Vygotsky intends to, attempted an objective explanation of the psychological basis of artistic activity: the 'Art as Perception' school; the Russian Formalists; and classic psychoanalytically oriented art criticism. The second section considers the construction of three literary works: a fable by Krylov, a short story by Bunin, and Shakespeare's Hamlet, in a way that demonstrates the relevance of Vygotsky's theory of catharsis to a series of works of increasing complexity. The third section again consists of three chapters in which Vygotsky sets out his own theory of art, considering in turn 'Art as a Catharsis', 'The Psychology of Art', and 'Art and Life'.

The rhythmical nature of this construction contributes to the force of the argument and helps us in understanding Vygotsky's mind. The book is most carefully planned. A thoughtful selection has taken place, both in relation to the critical works that Vygotsky considers and to the literary works that he analyses; all of the critics or works he deals with are presented both in their own right and as representatives of an approach or genre that Vygotsky wants to include in his analysis. It is clear that this is a finished piece of thinking which has been shaped carefully to advance a particular thesis. But the deliberate 'threeness' which is so apparent in the construction of the book represents another kind of shapeliness; it is an index of Vygotsky's pleasure in this kind of intellectual beauty and Hegelian balance, and of his stylish approach to intellectual problems. It is the ease and grace of composition evident in this book that makes Stephen Toulmin's description of Vygotsky as 'the Mozart of psychology' so particularly appropriate.

5.2 *The Psychology of Art* and Vygotsky's psychology

Before considering *The Psychology of Art* itself, it will be helpful to look at it in relation to Vygotsky's last book, and the only other book of Vygotsky's in English that is definitely the product of his own hand - even though much of it was in fact dictated. It is clear that there are many parallels that can be drawn between *The Psychology of Art* and *Thought and Language*. One of them lies in their graceful construction, the feeling for the rhythm and movement of a longer work. Like the early work, the later book has a basic 'threeness' in its construction: after a brief introductory chapter Vygotsky begins with three chapters devoted to critiques of previous writers in this field (Piaget,Stern and a group of psychologists including Kohler and Buhler), and ends with three chapters laying out his own theory.

The basic themes of both books also have much in common. Both are essentially Hegelian in their approach, deliberately building on the contradictions in previous thinkers' work in order to approach a synthesis. Both open with the definition of the 'unit of analysis' to be used in the book - the approach that Vygotsky took from Marx - though they find this unit at opposite ends of the spectrum of language. In the case of *The Psychology of Art*, the 'unit' is the complete work of literature, while in *Thought and Language* Vygotsky focuses on the individual word - even though, in the last chapter of this last book, the word is increasingly viewed in the context of the work of literature. Both books are preoccupied with similar themes - consciousness and the construction of consciousness, the central place of affect in psychology, and the function of literature, in relation to the shaping of individual consciousness and as a cultural tool within society.

Commentators on Vygotsky can be evaluated by the extent to which they recognise *The Psychology of Art* as an integral part of the Vygotskyan enterprise, and not as a piece of juvenilia, a precursor to his more serious scientific work. Leontiev, in his introduction to the posthumously published English translation of the book, views it from the perspective of the later cognitively-oriented Vygotskyan work with which he and his colleagues in Kharkov were closely associated. He perceives its brilliance as a contribution to aesthetics, but is reserved about its value as

psychology, and particularly as Soviet psychology, seeing it as lacking a basic vocabulary with which to discuss the complex issues it raises:

> 'At the time this book was written, many of these concepts had not yet been worked out: there was as yet no doctrine of the sociohistorical nature of the human psyche...a completely psychological theory of consciousness had merely been adumbrated in very general terms'(p.ix).

Leontiev suggests that Vygotsky's interests shifted and that he 'virtually never again returned to the theme of art'. Thus *The Psychology of Art*, dealing as it does with issues in psychology that were uninteresting to Leontiev and the Kharkovite activist psychologists, is relegated by Leontiev to the juvenilia shelf. Yet Vygotsky was twenty nine when he wrote this book, and had already been publishing for ten years.

Of Vygotsky's major commentators in the West, whom I take to be Kozulin, Wertsch, and Van der Veer and Valsiner, neither Wertsch nor Van der Veer and Valsiner seem to accord any real importance to *The Psychology of Art*. Wertsch (1985) includes the book in his brief biographical account of Vygotsky's development, but completely leaves it out of his account of Vygotsky's psychology. Wertsch identifies himself strongly with the cognitive Marxist approach of Leontiev and the activists, and for him neither Vygotsky's early work nor his late work (especially the last chapter of *Thought and Language*) is part of the main line of Vygotskyan thinking.

Van der Veer and Valsiner include their account of *The Psychology of Art* in the introductory section of their book (1991), that which deals with Vygotsky's childhood and youth. Pointedly, the main part of the book begins after this. They see *The Psychology of Art* as a transitional work marking Vygotsky's entrance into psychology proper ('We can say that the whole period of Vygotsky's life during which he gradually entered psychology (i.e. the years 1922 to 1925) was colored by his continued interest in issues of literature and art, from which questions of psychology gradually emerged.' p. 19). Like Wertsch, they see no real continuity between this book and Vygotsky's work that followed, and their treatment of the book is extremely partial. Though they do allocate nearly a full chapter to it, they do not attempt to view the book as a whole, and focus only on details which interest them, such as the (admittedly very interesting) first experimental study which Vygotsky carried out. This study - which is only briefly referred to in *The Psychology of Art* - involved recording and analysing the breathing of nine people reading

Bunin's story 'Gentle Breath', in an attempt to observe how the author controlled response by constructing a text with a particular breathing rhythm. Van der Veer and Valsiner see this experiment as marking Vygotsky's first move to a more scientific and objective way of studying human responses. The complex overall argument of his book, and its implications for a study of Vygotsky as a psychologist/philosopher whose theoretical preoccupations went a long way beyond the findings of empirical studies of this kind, seems by and large to be lost on Van der Veer and Valsiner, which is disappointing, as their account of Vygotsky's psychology is so thoroughly researched.

Only Alex Kozulin, of the major commentators, gives the book its full importance in the Vygotsky canon, and his treatment of it (Kozulin, 1991, pp. 36-46) enables us to understand it more clearly. In his account of the book Kozulin looks at how it fits into the modernist aesthetics of the time, and discusses the battle between the Symbolists and the Formalists, and the philosophical and aesthetic questions that they were debating. He shows how involved poets of the time were with general questions of poetics, and with broader issues of the role of literature in culture. He provides a map of the whole terrain, showing the relations between the Acmeist school (which included Mandelstam), their predecessors the Symbolists, the later and more radical Futurists, and the Formalist theoreticians. It is clear that Vygotsky would have known and followed the arguments about aesthetic philosophy that were taking place between these different groups, and would have debated issues of the difference between everyday and poetic language, the question of how art works, and the relations between story and plot, content and form.

Against this background, Kozulin shows what an important contribution Vygotsky made to the aesthetic debate, but also argues that *The Psychology of Art* should unquestionably be viewed as an important first step in Vygotsky's psychological theory as well as a work of literary theory, suggesting that 'some of the magisterial ideas of Vygotsky's future psychological system' are easily recognisable in this earlier book. Both methodologically, and in its preoccupations with fundamental psychological questions of culture and the individual consciousness, the book reveals how Vygotsky's mind works, and foregrounds issues that were to continue to preoccupy him until just before his his death ten years

later, when he returned to almost the precise terrain of *The Psychology of Art* in the last chapter of *Thought and Language*. Kozulin's respectful and thorough treatment of *The Psychology of Art* shows him to be a commentator who is interested to elucidate the whole of Vygotsky's psychology, not merely those aspects of it which can be assimilated into a more orthodox psychological picture.

The importance of *The Psychology of Art* to my argument in this thesis is the central place that it sees for art and literature as 'psychological tools'. Vygotsky ascribes a key role to art and to artistic and creative activity in child development, and in the development of whole societies. In the closing pages of this book, he commits himself to a series of statements which reveal what a potentially powerful psychological force he feels art to be:

> 'Art is the social within us and even if its action is performed by a single individual it does not mean that its essence is individual....the action of art, when it performs catharsis and pushes into this purifying flame the most intimate and important experiences, emotions and feelings of the soul, is social action.'(p.249)

and

> 'Art is the organisation of our future behaviour. It is a requirement that may never be fulfilled but that forces us to strive beyond our life to all that lies beyond it.'(p.253)

and

> 'Psychological investigation reveals that art is the supreme centre of biological and social individual processes in society, that it is a method for finding an equilibrium between man and his world, in the most critical and important stages of his life.'(p.259).

It is this vision of the profound significance of the role of art (and most specifically literature) in cultural development and in the individual life that powers Vygotsky's rejection in this book of a series of psychological theories of literature, and his construction of a theory that he finds more adequate to encompass the complex interplay between art and individual consciousness. Vygotsky was beginning at the top in his study of the development of mind. Throughout his future work in psychology he would be concerned with the way in which mental development is furthered by the use of semiotic systems or psychological tools. By choosing to study the workings of the highest, or most complex, form of 'psychological tool', he was engaging with unanswerable, though important, questions. Kozulin sums it up: '...*The Psychology of Art* looks like an overambitious first step in the implementation of a psychological

96

program' (Kozulin, 1991, p.36). This is certainly how the book should be viewed, as a bold opening move in a programme to explore the making of mind in society, rather than a piece of literary juvenilia.

In the book Vygotsky examines and rejects three schools of aesthetic theory which are concerned with the psychological effects of works of art. He explains that he has limited himself to a consideration of only those schools of thought which (firstly) offer anything like a systematic and coherent theory of the subject and (secondly) which adopt the method of analysis which Vygotsky considers the only method suitable for such a study, what he calls the 'objective-analytic' method. Vygotsky seeks a method which will rely on relatively objective sources of information, and finds it in an approach that focuses not on the psychology of the artist, nor on that of the audience or reader, but on the work of art itself. This approach is in line with Vygotsky's general and lifelong belief that psychology may quite properly deal with indirect evidence as well as with direct experimental data and, when investigating large-scale cultural and psychological phenomena, may have no alternative to this approach.

The three psychological theories of art which Vygotsky deals with are firstly the school of 'art as perception' - the work of Potebnya and others; secondly 'art as technique' - the work of the Russian formalists; and thirdly 'art and psychoanalysis' the work of the Freudians. All of these theories have been chosen, says Vygotsky, because their analysis, like his own, starts from a consideration of the indirect evidence present in the work of art itself.

But from the beginning of the book it is clear that these three schools have also been strategically chosen in order to prepare the way for Vygotsky's own argument. Vygotsky has a plan in his mind, and his aesthetic theory is already well developed. He is going to consider the relationship between form and content in works of art, and to offer a theory of how art works - a theory of catharsis - which views the psychological effect of the work of art as arising from a tension or conflict between its form and its content. His three examples are all of schools of thought which had taken up extreme positions on the relative importance of either the form or the content of artistic works. Potebnya and the Freudians are most preoccupied with the content of art - either the intellectual or the emotional content - while the

Formalists are concerned with its formal properties, virtually to the exclusion of content. Vygotsky therefore intends to develop his own position dialectically from these beginnings, arguing that all these schools offer accounts which are in some way incomplete of the complex relationship which is his subject.

5.3   Art as Perception

The chapter on 'art as perception'is a critique of the work of Potebnya and his school, who considered literature as 'a certain way of thinking and perceiving' and consequently as an intellectual exercise in which aesthetic satisfaction comes from an appreciation of the 'inner meaning' of the work. Potebnya was a linguist, the title of whose best known work was *Thought and Language*. Vygotsky was immensely influenced by this book, and the title of his last work was a (surely conscious) echo of it. It is interesting that he chose to begin this first book with a critique of Potebnya, whose work in language so much of his own later thinking took as a starting point

In Potebnya's *Thought and Language* the author gives an account of the work of Humboldt, and of his view of the relationship between language and thought. Potebnya and Humboldt both considered that 'thought achieves its becoming in language' - a position that Vygotsky himself was to develop in his later work. This position leads Potebnya and Humboldt to posit the existence of an 'inner form' of language, preverbal in character, which is the 'essence' that is constant, for instance, between translations of a poem into different languages. Vygotsky's explanation of Potebnya's theory stresses its view that the pleasure of the aesthetic reaction derives mainly from the perception of the meaningful content, or essential image, behind the work of art, regarding emotional content, and the outer form of the work of art itself, as largely irrelevant to artistic response.

Vygotsky rejects this theory both because of its 'one-sided intellectualism' and disregard of the strong emotions involved in artistic creation and perception, and because of its lack of appreciation of the essential role of form in art. He parodies the views of this school, pointing out that they would consider it possible to re-narrate *Anna Karenina* in other words than Tolstoy's, without the work suffering any damage in the process

since its intellectual features could be preserved. He draws on Tolstoy's own words to emphasise that a work of art cannot be paraphrased or restated. He concludes that 'we discover...that to violate the combination of thoughts and words, that is, to destroy its form, is tantamount to destroying the novel....The rationality of this system clearly reveals a complete lack of understanding of the psychology of form in a work of art.' (p.35)

5.4 The Formalists

In the next chapter, on 'Art as Technique', Vygotsky deals with the opposite error of the Russian formalists, who held that art was dependent on its formal properties, and that artistic experience was completely independent of the content of a work of art. The Formalists had had their beginnings in a reaction against Potebnya's theory of the image, and had undergone a rapid transition in the immediate post-revolutionary period. From being an avant-garde school, the theorists of Futurism, they had become, by the time that Vygotsky was writing, the literary establishment, and the dominant influence on discussions of aesthetics. But by the time that his book was completed in 1925, their view of 'art for art's sake' was beginning to be challenged by Marxist writers critical of the Formalists' neglect of social and historical content.

Formalism was a kind of precursor of structuralism. The formalists were interested in forms and formal systems in literature, rather than in meaning and content, and regarded discussions of emotions, ideas, feelings and psychological material in art as irrelevant to the study of aesthetics. Vygotsky quotes the words of Shklovskii, a leading member of the school: '"Sentimentality cannot be the content of an art, if only for the simple reason that art has no content"' (p. 55). All speculation about the meaning of particular actions of a character were short-circuited by the formalists' assertion that everything that happens in a work of art happens because of the demands of the form or structure.

Vygotsky was not alone in his critique of the formalists; we are told that there was an abundance of polemical critiques of Formalism in the late 1920s. But it is interesting to compare Vygotsky's arguments against the formalists with the critique of them which is probably the weightiest - that of Bakhtin and Medvedev, in their book *The Formal Method in Literary*

Scholarship (1985) which was originally published in 1927. There are striking similarities between the arguments in Vygotsky's chapter and those in *The Formal Method*:

•Both Vygotsky and Bakhtin/Medvedev criticise the way the formalists deliberately ignore the content of art. Bakhtin/Medvedev describe this avoidance of content as 'the fear of meaning'; Vygotsky suggests that 'The formalists could only come to these conclusions by proceeding from such a nonfigurative, subjectless art as music....'(p. 58)

•Both are critical of the formalists' ahistoricsm and their construction of a theory 'outside sociological and psychological foundations' (ibid. p.56)

•Both view the formalists' aesthetic theory as being based on the simplest form of 'elementary hedonism' (ibid.p.63), and regard the formalists ultimately as nihilists

•Both are particularly critical of the formalists' attempts to define the difference between 'practical language' and 'poetic language', and both comment at length on the inadequacy of Jakubinskii's work on the poetic properties of sounds, which attempts to consider poetry as pure sound.

In addition, the range of references that Vygotsky and Bakhtin/Medvedev refer to are interestingly similar. Of course, they were basing their critiques on a common set of texts, but the overlap between their references is striking. In the circumstances, one must speculate as to whether Vygotsky's thesis had been read by Bakhtin/Medvedev, and its arguments drawn on in the construction of their critique. [1]

There is one clear difference between the way in which Bakhtin and Vygotsky approach their subject, which is characteristic of their approach to theoretical work in general. Bakhtin/Medvedev begin their book with a whole section on 'The Objects and Tasks of Marxist Literary Scholarship' (pp.3-37), with a chapter on the study of ideologies and one on the immediate tasks of literary scholarship. They present their work primarily as a move in the definition of a Marxist aesthetic. This can be seen in part as a necessary political gesture, especially in the context of the late twenties when party control of the press, publishing, and intellectual and professional discussions, was beginning to be felt. But although Bakhtin obviously did manage to weave his way skilfully between ideological hazards in this period, his work seems to have a fundamental Marxist orientation.

Vygotsky's work is never so explicit in its foregrounding of a Marxist rationale, although it is difficult to form an accurate judgement about this, as Western translators and commentators have sometimes suppressed Vygotsky's reference to Marxism, seeing in them merely conventional gestures. It seems clear that Vygotsky had read in both Marx and and Engels carefully, and that he identified strongly with the social programme of Marxism, although he was not (unlike Kornilov and Luria) a Communist Party member. It is also clear that he greatly admired Marx's intellectual scope and his use of Hegel, and that he modelled his intellectual method closely on Marx's own. [2]

In *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky's critique of the Formalists does not, therefore, like Bakhtin/Medvedev's, begin from a Marxist argument about the need to understand art as a 'type of ideological intercourse' (Bakhtin/Medvedev, 1985, p.13). On the other hand, Vygotsky's stress on the importance of content, and particularly social content, in art, is very similar to Bakhtin's. 'The fundamental principle of formalism is completely incapable of revealing the social-psychological content of art that changes historically and depends on the selection of the subject, content or material' (Vygotsky, 1971,p. 68). But Vygotsky's central argument against the Formalists is that form or technique 'is not an end in itself but...acquires meaning and significance in relation to the overall task to which it is subordinated' (ibid, p. 58). To view art as pure form devoid of content is as meaningless as an attempt to create an aesthetic of content in which form does not count.

5.5 Freudianism

Finally, Vygotsky considers Freudian theories of art - chiefly in the writings of Rank and Sachs. Vygotsky was obviously interested in Freudianism for several years; his colleague Luria was at this time the secretary of the Russian Psychoanalytic Society and Vygotsky himself became a member of the society in 1927 (Van der Veer and Valsiner, p.86). This was not, at the time, a proscribed field of study, although Bakhtin's critique of Freudianism, also published in 1927, was one of a growing number, and by 1930 it had become dangerous to take too close an interest in psychoanalysis.

Like Bakhtin, Vygotsky was critical of attempts to reconcile Freudianism and Marxism, and had argued this case, prefiguring (according to Van der Leer and Valsiner p. 97-98) some of Bakhtin's arguments, in *The Crisis in Psychology* . Again one is struck by the coincidence of Vygotsky and Bakhtin's interests, and by the fact that a manuscript by Vygotsky seems to have sketched out a similar argument to one developed more fully by Bakhtin. But in *The Psychology of Art* Vygotsky at least pays Freudianism the respect of taking it seriously as one of the theories to be considered in relation to the content of art, although he may have chosen rather an easy target by focusing so much of his case on the work of the volatile Freudians Rank and Sachs. Vygotsky wants to include Freudianism in this discussion because he is quite clear that art involves subconscious processes, which are beyond the understanding of either artist or audience. He is open and sympathetic to the need to consider these subconscious responses in any psychology of art: 'We can really tackle the problems of art only by penetrating into this area' (p.71).

But Vygotsky finds the psychoanalytic approaches to art that he studies to be reductive. Artistic activity in psychoanalytic literature is viewed as a kind of therapy in which suppressed desires are satisfied by being given artistic form, and daydreams and fantasies are toned down and made public. Vygotsky fundamentally disagrees with this: 'Unlike dreams and symptoms of illness or neurosis, works of art are both social and socially conditioned' (p.79). Vygotsky is particularly unimpressed by the explanation of all artistic pleasure in terms of the sublimation of infantile sexual impulses. 'Such an interpretation of art reduces its social role; art begins to appear as an antidote whose task is to save mankind from vice, but which has no positive tasks or purposes for man's psyche' (p.79).

The reduction of the role of the conscious to zero in human cultural behaviour, by this exaggeration of the importance of the subconscious, is at odds with all that Vygotsky believes to be characteristic of human society. Any psychology of art, Vygotsky explains, will have to consider the conscious as well as the subconscious, will have to see form not as a veil or facade, but as an essential component of art, and will have to 'include in its sphere of investigation the sum total of human life' and not just primal childhood sexual conflicts. Finally, the psychology of art will have to deal not only with the limited scope of the individual life, but with

social life. In the theory Vygotsky goes on to expound he tries to take account of all these factors.

5.6 Vygotsky's theory of art

Vygotsky's own theory of art in this book is arrived at by a method which he lays down in the first chapter of the book. He is concerned to ensure that a theory of art is based on solid facts and is objective, and his method therefore proceeds by objective analysis of the only concrete evidence available - works of art themselves. 'Here is the formula of this method: from the form of the work of art, via the functional analysis of its elements and structure, recreate the aesthetic reaction, and establish its general laws' (p.24). Essentially this method is based, therefore, on practical criticism, but the conclusions derived have to do with art in general rather than remaining at the level of the individual work.

Vygotsky analyses in turn three examples of literature in the next three chapters - Krylov's *Fables* (a Russian Aesop), a short story by Bunin called 'Gentle Breath', and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The progression, from the basic elementary form of the fable, to the problematic of the play which has probably generated more critical confusion than any other literary work, is deliberate. Vygotsky wants to show a certain principle at work in all three, and to show it at work in conditions of increasing complexity and subtlety.

This principle is the principle of contradiction, the collision between conflicting emotions, and the catharsis that resolves them. Vygotsky successfully demonstrates that each of his literary examples contains this essential conflict or struggle. .

In this part of the book Vygotsky again proceeds methodically, beginning with the simplest literary form, the fable. The section on the fable is in fact longer than those on Bunin's novella or on *Hamlet*, and must have originated in a separate essay. The fable was obviously a genre which Vygotsky was interested in. He finds in this popular folk form the seed of much later literature: 'The fable is a basic, elementary form of poetry and therefore contains the seeds of lyric, epic and drama' (p. 101). What interests Vygotsky particularly in the fables of Krylov, the Russian fabulist he considers, is the 'subtle poison' infused in his fables.

Krylov had begun as a satirical writer, and was a frustrated dramatist. Vygotsky shows how in almost every one of his fables there is a double meaning, a second level, which 'turns his stories into real works of poetry' (p.137). For instance, in the well-known fable of The Fox and the Crow, the fox's flattering speech is not the speech of a supplicant - it is witty and mocking: 'each word he utters has for us a double meaning of adulation and mockery' (p.120). Vygotksky finds this same 'second level' in each of the ten fables that he analyses and suggests that for Krylov 'this double meaning overcame the narrow horizon of the prosaic fable which Krylov detested and helped him penetrate the wide field of dramatic poetry which was his passion.' (p.137) But from Vygotsky's point of view the doubleness of Krylov's fables also illustrates in the simplest form his theory of catharsis:

> 'If the two levels, or parallel themes, in the fable are supported and described with all the skill of poetic technique, that is, if they exist not only as a logical contradiction but also as an affective contradiction, the reader of the fable will experience contradictory feelings and emotions which evolve simultaneously with equal strength' (p.139).

It is the form, the skill and organisation of the poetry, which makes this contradiction unignorable.

Whereas in the simple form of the fable, this contradiction or struggle takes place within the action itself, in Bunin's short story 'Gentle Breath' Vygotsky analyses the way in which form and content interact, or pull against one another. The material of the story is 'the insignificant and rather senseless life of a schoolgirl in a provincial Russian town'; her seduction by one lover and then her murder by another. All of the material, suggests Vygotsky, 'comes under the category "troubles of life". There is not one single bright spot in the entire story'. Yet this story leaves the reader with a sense of 'liberation, lightness, the crystal transparency of life, none of which can be derived from the literal events' (p.154). Vygotsky analyses the time scheme of the story and shows how deliberately Bunin has structured the story. He actually *draws* the story, showing its complicated time scheme and recursive structure, how it apparently 'drifts from one event to another, connecting the most remote events of the chronologically arranged material' (p.152). It is this structure which moves the relatively banal material onto a different level:

> 'We recognise that the events are connected in such a way that they lose their turbidity. They are associated as in a melody...Now we can formulate our idea and say that the author's reason for tracing such an extremely complex curve is

his intent to undo life's turbidity and transform it into a crystal transparency.'
(p.154)

At this point in the book Vygotsky is ready to state his main finding: the fact that the aesthetic reaction involves a struggle, an affective contradiction, which results from a contrast between the content of the work of art and its form. This he believes is an astonishing discovery:

'Astonishing because traditional aesthetics prepared us for a diametrically opposed understanding of art: For centuries, scholars of aesthetics have told us of the harmony of form and content. They have told us that the form illustrates, completes or accompanies the content. And now we suddenly discover that this was an error, that the form may be in conflict with the content, struggle with it, overcome it. We discover in this dialectic contradiction between form and content the true psychological meaning of our own aesthetic reaction' (p.160).

Vygotsky's analysis of *Hamlet* completes his thesis. This analysis is remarkable for the economy with which Vygotsky summarises and rejects a whole series of critical theories about *Hamlet* before proceeding to his own hypothesis. Vygotsky suggests that, in his source material:

'Shakespeare had available to him readymade logical and psychological motives. If he chose to process this material so as to ignore all the obvious ties which hold the original saga together, he must have had a special intention'(p.181).

The tragedy continually draws our attention to the fact that Hamlet is delaying, while providing us with contradictory explanations of his procrastination. When he eventually comes to kill Claudius, it is at the point when the audience least expects it, and he does so to avenge not his father, but his mother.

Vygotsky again considers the 'interpretational curve' of this work - its topography. The plot - the basis of the tragedy - runs in a straight line, and 'if Hamlet had killed the king immediately after hearing the ghost's revelations he would cover the distance between these two points in the shortest possible way' (p. 186). But as it is 'it appears as if Shakespeare had set himself the task of pushing the plot from its straight path onto a devious and twisted one.' The function of Hamlet's monologues is in fact to inform the audience 'in spurts, that the tragedy has left the preset track.' (p,189). The structure of the tragedy is a double structure and can be expressed by:

'two very simple formulas. The formula of the story is that Hamlet kills the king to avenge the death of his father; that of the plot is that he does not kill the king. If the material of the tragedy tells us how Hamlet kills the king to avenge the death of his father, then the plot of the tragedy show us how he fails to kill him and, when he finally does, that it is for reasons other than vengeance'.

Vygotsky finds, then, in Shakespeare's play, the same contradiction within the *story* that he found in Krylov's fables, and the same conflict between *form and content* that he found in Bunin's story, but there is now the added complexity of *character* - for in this play there is a clear 'incompatibility between protagonist and plot'. Hamlet the character becomes the 'supreme and ever-present embodiment of the contradictions inherent in the tragedy' (p.195).

In the remainder of the book Vygotsky expands on his wider argument, and acknowledges the links between his theory and other theories of catharsis from Aristotle onwards:

> 'Despite the indefiniteness of its content, despite our failure to explain the meaning of this term in its Aristotelian sense, there is no other term in psychology which so completely expresses the central fact of aesthetic reaction, according to which painful and unpleasant affects are discharged and transformed into their opposites. Aesthetic reaction as such is nothing but catharsis, that is, a complex transformation of feelings' (p. 213/4).

In a most striking formulation of this general law Vygotsky rephrases his basic principle as follows: 'A work of art always contains an intimate conflict between its content and its form, and the artist achieves his effect by means of the form, which *destroys the content*.' (p.215, my italics)

Vygotsky relates this literary theory to other art forms, and to 'the role of art in the general behavioural system of man'. He sees the transformation that takes place in a work of art as a means whereby individual emotion is made social and capable of being experienced by others; and whereby the audience can also participate in the cathartic experience of resolving and overcoming the emotions aroused in them. He goes on to explore further the social significance of art and, in line with his usual dialectical approach, he does not see any fundamental distinction beween the individual and the social:

> 'Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual, it does not mean that its essence is individual. It is quite naive and inappropriate to take the social to be collective as in a large crowd of persons. The social also exists where there is only one person with his individual experience and tribulations.' (p.249)

Vygotsky argues that something fundamental happens when the feelings that generate - and are then transformed by - art are objectified and fixed in a lasting art object. Such a work of art then becomes one of the 'tools of society' ('Art is a social technique of emotion, a tool of society which brings the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle

of social life', p.249). As such, it joins the other means that human beings have for transforming the world *and* transforming themselves, the range of 'psychological tools' that are going to be the main focus of Vygotsky's work in psychology from now on, because of what they reveal about the development of higher mental functions. This transformative action of art happens on both a micro and a macro level. At the level of the individual life, art is a potential part of the education of each one of us - 'a long range program for changing our behaviour and our organism'. At a social level, art is also a means of cultural transformation and part of the development of the whole society.

5.7 Implications for artistic development

The Psychology of Art deals with adult psychology and Vygotsky only very occasionally and tangentially refers to children's art, play, or fantasy in the course of his argument. However the book does have important implications for the study of children's creative and artistic activity. Vygotsky presents mature artistic activity as being on the one hand continuous with other forms of creativity, and in other ways as being discontinuous. On the one hand he emphasises that there is no fundamental difference between 'the processes and products of popular and individual creativity'. An ancient bylina - a folk poem taken down from the words of a local fisherman - and a poem by Pushkin are both the products of similar creative processes. Both combine the workings of literary or oral tradition with the contribution of the individual creative mind.

But children's art, in Vygotsky's view, is in some important ways different from adult art.

> The domain of child art and the response of children to art is completely different from that of adults .... Apparently art does not perform the same function in a child as it does in an adult. The best example of this is a child's drawing which in many cases is on the borderline of artistic creativity .... Some claim the opposite, but they seem to ignore the simple fact that a child's drawing is not yet art for the child' (p.258).

By most of Vygotsky's criteria in this book, children's creative activities are 'not yet art' mainly because children are not engaging consciously in these activities. Vygotsky's definition of art, stated in his preface to the book, is 'a combination of aesthetic symbols aimed at arousing emotion in people'. Child art would not conform to this definitions on several counts: the element of *conscious control* and *conscious intention* in the

107

combination of symbols is undeveloped in young children, and their *sense of an audience* for their art, to whom it is *consciously directed*, is still embryonic.

Although Vygotsky does not go on to trace the probable course of the development of these functions in children in this book, all of his later work would lead one to believe that he would have been able to do so readily, and that the developmental path he would have described would have been similar to that he saw all other 'higher mental functions' following - a path of gradual internalisation. The differences between immature and mature functions as Vygotsky sees them are:

> 1) the extent to which such functions are voluntary functions, under the control of the individual
> 2) the extent to which such functions are conscious in character
> 3) the social nature of such functions, and
> 4) their involvement of the deliberate use of psychological tools, or signs, to control one's own behaviour, or that of others.

In all of these respects, young children's art, dramatic play and storying are at an early stage of development. The course of their growth, as with all other intrapsychological processes, would be through social activity and an exposure to 'mature cultural forms of behaviour' - including of course to the mature art forms of which children's art objects are as yet immature examples. [3]

Although Vygotsky saw such major and essential differences between child art and adult art he acknowledged that there were also very strong continuities between children's play and imagining and adult artistic activity. It is these links, like the links between other immature and mature functions, that will become his subject when he moves decisively into the field of psychology, and particularly into his theoretical exploration of the development of higher mental processes. He suggests that children's imaginative play is perhaps their way (in terms of Sherrington's principle [4]) of transcending the limitations of normal life:

> 'If a child plays at soldiers, cops and robbers and so on, this means, according to some, that inside himself he really becomes a soldier or a robber' (p.246).

In the same way, art allows adults to live more than one life.

Similarly, adult art and fantasy and children's imaginative games both involve real feelings. Vygotsky considers that such fantasies take place on

a completely real emotional basis, and thus regards artistic feeling as capable of being psychologically real (p.211).

In his last chapter, Vygotsky again specifically links the activities of art and play:

> There are remarkable phenomena in the art of children. First, there is the early presence of a special structure required by art, which points to the fact that for the child there exists a psychological kinship between art and play.' (p.257)

The recurrent comparison beween art, play, and imagining which Vygotsky is drawn to in this part of his first book prefigures the much more extended treatment of this same theme in the Play chapter of *Mind in Society*, in which he will work out more carefully the parallels between the physical enactment of play, and the interior imagining of art. [5]

5.8   Tools of society

The last specific element in *The Psychology of Art* which has direct implications for any study of artistic or symbolic development, comes from the key role that Vygotsky sees for art in cultural growth and development. Repeatedly, Vygotsky states his conviction of the importance of art, and particularly of literature. ('Art is the supreme centre of biological and social processes in society', p. 259). Art objects are 'tools of society' - a means of changing existing ways of feeling and thinking. Because of the role art can have in transforming existing patterns of cultural behaviour, it has a crucial educational significance, and Vygotsky argues for its central place in a curriculum: 'A school that eliminates lessons in literature is bound to be a bad school' (p.256). Though artistic creation may not be teachable, Vygotsky is sure that educators can 'cooperate in forming it and bringing it about'; even if they cannot operate with the subconscious processes involved, they 'can organise the conscious processes in such a way that they generate subconscious processes...'(p.257).

Vygotsky seems to have been quite convinced that both on a macro/societal level, and within an educational curriculum, art had a centrally important·part to play in development and was in fact 'a long-range programme for changing our behaviour and our organism'. One can make comparable claims for the kinds of artistic activities that young children engage in, either spontaneously in play, or as part of a creatively designed curriculum. In dramatic play and storytelling, picturing and

writing, children are taking control of some of the most important symbolic means of representing human life in the world. But such 'tools of society' have an inner dynamic as well; they both represent and transform perception, and constitute, as Vygotsky was later to go on to show, the means by which the 'cultural line of development' is supported. In Vygotsky's later work the key part played by different forms of mediation in development is clearly highlighted. This whole area is the topic of the next major book that I shall consider, *Mind in Society*, and of the next part of my·analysis.

The *Psychology of Art* deserves to be seen as a seminal Vygotskyan text, which both prepares the way for his future experimental work on the development of higher mental functions, and for his argument in *Thought and Language*. The fact that it is not so seen reflects the nature of the psychological communities who should have been its first audience, in both Russia and the West, and on whom we by and large depend for the editing, translating, and distribution of his work. Vygotsky's major theme in the book, his analysis of artistic experience and attempt to account for it in a psychological theory, has attracted little interest, while his wider discussion of the construction of consciousness is a subject which, seventy years later, is still perfectly embarrassing to most psychologists. To leave this theme out of an account of Vygotsky, to take from his whole oeuvre only the recognisably empirical elements, is to ignore the main line of his life work - its own 'interpretational curve' - and to refuse the possibility he offers of a different kind of psychology, one less relentlessly positivist in character, more capable of discussing all aspects of mind and feeling and of explaining the complex processes involved in becoming human. Yet the history of *The Psychology of Art* suggests that, both in his own time and in ours, this is what 'Vygotskyan' psychologists have done.

---

[1] We do not know whether Bakhtin and Vygotsky knew each other or knew of each other. We can believe that Bakhtin probably knew Vygotsky's cousin, David Vygodsky, who was part of literary circles in Leningrad, and was the link between Vygotsky and Mandelstam (Kozulin, 1990, p.180, 192; Nadezhda Mandelstam, 1989, p.223). We also know that Bakhtin referred to Vygotsky's paper on consciousness which was published at around this period, in his/Volosinov's book on Freud - *Freudianism, a Marxist Critique* (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991, p.95). The question of how far Bakhtin and Vygotsky were acquainted with each other's work remains a mystery, but it does seem unlikely that two such omnivorous readers and obsessive thinkers, each with an interest in literature, language and thought, psychology, and psychoanalysis, and each in his different way intent on constructing a cultural theory on the basis of Marx's work, should not have been aware of each other's writing.

2 One of the errors for which Vygotsky would be censured in the early 1930s was his declaration, in *The Crisis in Psychology*, that 'immediate application of the theory of dialectical materialism to the problems of science, in particular to biology and psychology, is impossible.' He was impatient with the ritual gestures of many of his contemporaries, who in order to prove their orthodoxy decorated their work with quotations from Marx. He remarked, and his exasperation is evident in his tone, 'I don't want to discover the nature of mind by patching together a lot of quotations. I want to find how science has to be built, to approach the study of mind having learned the whole of Marx's *method*.'(from 'unpublished notebooks, cited in Cole et al.(1978) Introduction to *Mind in Society*.

3 Others have drawn on Vygotsky's work to observe what happens as children gradually gain more control over their artistic creations. Arthur Applebee's study of the developmental history of children's stories (Applebee, 1978) uses Vygotsky's theory of concept development from *Thought and Language* to show how their early stories are like the 'unorganised heaps' that young children make with the Vygotsky blocks, and how their stories then develop into clusters of disconnected episodes around a central character, or chains of events without any central focus, before achieving both cohesion and coherent sequence. Another part of Applebee's study considers what kinds of story experiences children draw on in their increasingly close approximations to adult forms of story, and how their stories show a growing ability to meet the needs of the reader/listener. This study makes important links between the course of the developmental progression of children's story-telling and their general conceptual development, and also traces the way in which their artistic activity becomes more conscious, more controlled, and more aware of audience.

4 In these chapters, Vygotsky also reaches after a more biological explanation, what he calls a psycho-physical explanations, of the effects of art, examining first of all the effects of rhythm on human beings, then going into a detailed examination of Sherrington's principle, by which only an infinitesimal part of the stimuli reaching the nervous system can ever be acted on - so that art becomes a kind of escape valve for unexpressed feelings and sensations. In the chapters on catharsis, he quotes Darwin's 'principle of antithesis': the fact that certain moods are associated with particular physical movements, and that these movements are associated physically with their opposites (because of the symmetry of the muscle system of the human body). Vygotsky sees these physically opposite reactions accompanying the antithetical emotions that art arouses, and underlining the mixed and contradictory feelings that it generates.

5 Vygotsky makes a tantalisingly brief reference to what he calls the 'most important trait in art' which child art and adult art have in common. This is the essential dualism of art, the perception of the difference between reality and fantasy, the recognition of contradictions: 'In order to perceive art we must contemplate simultaneously the true situation of things and their deviation from this situation'. Vygotsky draws heavily here on Chukovsky's recently published work and particularly on an article in which he is discussing the role of nonsense and 'topsy-turvies' in the establishment of a sense of real-world logic. Chukovsky's argument, which he was later to expand in *From Two to Five* (1989) is that verbal play like this has a function in the development of the intellect, and that such games 'enhance (rather than weaken) the child's perception of reality'. Any imaginative artistic work must depend to some extent on a constant interplay between magic (or fantasy) and realism, and children are constantly, in their artistic development, pulled between the demands of realism and the demands of magic - both of which have rules. Vygotsky obviously sees a link between this dualism and the other dialectical relationship, between form and content, that he has established.

Chapter six
VYGOTSKY'S *MIND IN SOCIETY* (1)

6.0   The making of *Mind in Society*

Mind in Society is unlike the other two books by Vygotsky which are discussed in this thesis, in that it was not planned as a book by Vygotsky himself. It is a compilation from four sources:

- an unpublished manuscript by Vygotsky : *Tool and Symbol in Children's Development*, dated 1930,

- a monograph by Vygotsky entitled *The History of the Development of Higher Psychological Functions*, published in Moscow in 1960 in the second volume of his writings, and probably written in the late 1920s,

- a posthumously published collection of essays entitled *Mental Development of Children and the Process of Learning* (1935) and

- the text of a lecture on Play, which Vygotsky gave in Leningrad in 1933, and which was subsequently published in the USSR in 1966 and in the UK in 1976 (Bruner et al, 1976).

The different parts of the book are connected by certain themes but were not originally written as continuous text.

Unlike *The Psychology of Art*, and *Thought and Language*, the book therefore has no sense of being conceived as a whole, or of having a coherent and developing argument which runs through all its parts. It is a far less shapely book than either of the others: its shape is simply a construction of Vygotsky's editors in the USA. The selection the editors chose to make from the sources made available to them (initially by Alexander Luria) was designed to show the scope of Vygotsky's interest in cognitive development, and the nature of his experimental work in this field. The editors' preface (John-Steiner, Souberman, Cole and Scribner, 1978) is revealing in its presentation of the motives for the selection. They remember the interest with which they read the essays made available to them by Luria:

'A cursory study of these essays quickly convinced us that the scope of Vygotsky's work reached considerably beyond *Thought and Language.*'(p. ix).

They saw that Vygotsky was far more than an 'early neobehaviourist of cognitive development' (an odd description of the author of *Thought and Language*) and that his work would be of interest to modern psychologists.

112

In his epilogue to Alexander Luria's autobiography, *The Making of Mind*, however, Michael Cole describes in more detail how this book came about. He recalls his reactions on first reading *Thought and Language* in the 1950s:

> 'Both Vygotsky's prose and the style of his thought defeated my attempts to understand Luria's admiration of him. I had read Vygotsky's *Thought and Language* as a graduate student, but except for some observations on concept learning in children, which at the time I knew nothing about, I could see little in his work to generate enthusiasm'. (Cole, 1979, p.194)

When Cole went to Moscow to work with Luria for a year in 1962, he went to study work in conditioned reflexes and other Soviet work using Pavlovian conditioning techniques. His whole background, and the focus of his work, were in the American behaviourist tradition.

Cole is very honest about his initial responses to Luria's attempts to interest him in the work of Vygotsky and those who had been his collaborators, or who were his successors in Soviet psychology:

> 'For example he urged on me the work of Alexander Zaporozhets on the development of voluntary movements in children, or the studies of Lydia Bozhovich on motivation in young school children. Yet I could make nothing of such global 'soft' topics.'(ibid. p.195).

Given this mind-set, it is easy to see how resistant Cole must have been to the 'global, soft' preoccupations of *Thought and Language*, and of Vygotsky's work in general. Luria went on pressing him to read Vygotsky. But it was not until Cole began to edit Luria's autobiography, and to understand more about how his career and thought had been influenced by Vygotsky, that he gradually saw the point of Luria's insistence.

At around this same time, Cole agreed to ensure that two 'long essays' by Vygotsky, which were being published in the USSR, would also appear in English. Luria had been urging him to publish Vygotsky in English for some time, but Cole confesses that 'as I did not understand Vygotsky well, I could see no point in it'. Once he had actually undertaken the project and was engaged in the editorial work, he began to read the manuscripts in question more closely and came slowly to a realisation of the significance of Vygotsky's work:

> 'In struggling to understand Vygotsky well enough to resolve our editorial group's different interpretation of his ideas, I slowly began to discern the enormous scope of his thinking. His goal had been no less than the total restructuring of psychological research and theory. This undertaking would never have occurred to me or, I suspect, to very many other psychologists of my generation as anything but a crackpot scheme. Yet Vygotsky was no crackpot, and his scheme was extremely interesting.'(ibid. p. 196).

Mind in Society is therefore a product of the struggle of Cole and his colleagues to understand Vygotsky's work, and to present him to a sceptical psychological community as a psychologist that it would be worth taking seriously. All this time, of course, psychology in the USA had also been changing and developing, and by the mid 1970s behaviourism was becoming less tenable as an intellectual position. So it is likely that Cole's discovery of Vygotsky's relevance was also a part of his own gradual development into a cognitive psychologist. At any rate, the selection he and his co-editors made from the two main texts at their disposal represents an attempt to present Vygotsky to the West as a cognitivist, and as a scientist with respectable credentials in empirical research.

6.1   Distorting history

But the book which has resulted from this attempt is a very unsatisfactory production. Instead of printing the complete manuscripts available to them as a whole, the editorial team chose to edit the text in a highly interventive fashion. This is freely acknowledged in the editors' preface, which is an unashamed account of their 'tampering' with what were given to them as two finished texts.

The changes made are justified by the editors as being necessary in order to make Vygotsky, whose style they describe as 'extremely difficult', clearer to the reader:

> The reader will encounter here not a literal translation of Vygotsky, but rather our edited translation of Vygotsky, from which we have omitted material that seemed redundant and to which we have added material that seemed to make his points clearer'. (John-Steiner et al., 1978, p. x).

The editors confess that they have, in several places, 'inserted material from additional sources', in order to make the meaning of the text clearer, and to elucidate passages that seemed 'dense and elliptical'. They explain that they have used extracts from *The History and Development of Psychological Functions* for this purpose, but that they have also included extracts from writings which were not by Vygotsky, but by his collaborators. Similarly, text seems to have been cut, where the editors have judged the original to be repetitious. Summing up what they have done, they end:

> We realise that in tampering with the original we may have distorted history; however, we hope that by stating our procedures and by adhering as closely as possible to the principles and content of the work, we have not distorted Vygotsky's meaning'. (ibid., p.x).

However, although these general procedures are described, there is no detailed information in the notes to the volume about where particular changes have been made, about the nature of the omissions and insertions, or about the sources of the insertions. There are no translations or summaries of omitted passages. Nor is there any indication of the extent of any of these editorial changes. All that the readers of this volume know is that we are working with a text which has been substantially altered from the original sources, in which sections which did not originally appear together are juxtaposed and made to appear as part of one work.

All of this makes any commentary on the place of *Mind in Society* in Vygotsky's work very difficult. What any student of Vygotsky needs to keep in mind is that, although *Mind in Society* is the text of Vygotsky's that is most frequently referred to in the West, it is surrounded by these uncertainties, and we have no means of knowing whether its editors have in fact succeeded in 'not distorting Vygotsky's meaning'. The book represents a particular construction that has been placed on his work by psychologists working within a particular scientific and socio-historical context. [1]

Despite these criticisms it must also be said that Mind in Society is an essential work for anyone reading Vygotsky in English, and of the three books dealt with in this thesis is the one that is most centrally concerned with education and child development. Its extracts from *Tool and Symbol* and the *Development of Higher Mental Functions* are crucial for an understanding of Vygotsky's theory of mental development, and of the role of signs in general, and language in particular, in this development; while the three chapters that end the book - on the zone of proximal development, on play, and on the prehistory of writing - have each in their own way become key texts and major influences on educational thinking since their publication in 1978.

The material included in *Mind in Society* comes mainly from Vygotsky's research work with his colleagues at the Moscow University Institute of Experimental Psychology (1924-1930). At the Institute, Vygotsky's programme of research was extremely ambitious: no less than an explanation of the development of human consciousness and an analysis

of the 'transformation of natural psychological functions into the higher functions of logical memory, selective attention, decision making, and comprehension of language.' (Kozulin, 1986, p. xxvii).

Throughout this experimental work, Vygotsky and his colleagues, chief among them Luria and Leontiev who with him formed the original 'troika' at the Moscow Institute, focused on the development of 'higher psychological processes' or 'higher mental functions', as opposed to the lower, or 'natural' functions of perception, non-mediated memory, and attention. This was a field that psychology at the time had neglected or refused to enter, because of the difficulty of investigating processes that were generally hidden, or which it was thought could only be discovered via introspection. Neurologists such as Pavlov, whose work later became the basis of the official Soviet school of psychology, conducted all his research on reflexes and conditioned reflexes in both animals and human beings, while at the Moscow Institute, the official programme was based on the broader study of human 'reactions' to a variety of stimuli.

Vygotsky always rejected the division of psychology into two camps, one scientific or empirical and one descriptive or introspectionist in character. With Luria, Leontiev, and a small team of co-researchers, he embarked on a series of imaginative experiments which were designed to provide windows on the way in which these higher processes develop in individuals. Vygotsky's starting-point was that all such processes were socially learned, and that they were also cultural in origin, involving the use of cultural codes or signs - some form of 'semiotic mediation' - and particularly the key symbol-system of language.

All of Vygotsky's work was a consistent refutation of the psychology of the Pavlovians; his first scientific paper, given in 1924, which led to his appointment at the Moscow Institute, concerned the relation between conditioned reflexes and conscious behaviour, and was a direct challenge to these early behaviourists. But Vygotsky did not want to replace Pavlovian behaviourism with a subjective or idealist psychology, he wanted instead to build a monistic and materialist psychology, which would be Marxist in its theoretical basis and in its methods, and which would yet be complex, subtle and dynamic enough to be capable of explaining the development of the interior lives of individuals and the

laws of that development. In building this psychology, he had to explain methodically the social processes by which he saw that human consciousness was constructed, and the tools - psychological tools - which were part of these processes.

According to Wertsch's account in *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind* (Wertsch, 1985a) towards the end of his life Vygotsky had begun to articulate a model of consciousness in which the interrelatedness of different subcomponents was seen as the key to the dynamic of the whole. The (incomplete) model Wertsch describes (ibid., p.189) looks like this :

consciousness

intellect   affect

memory   attention   thinking
("higher mental functions")
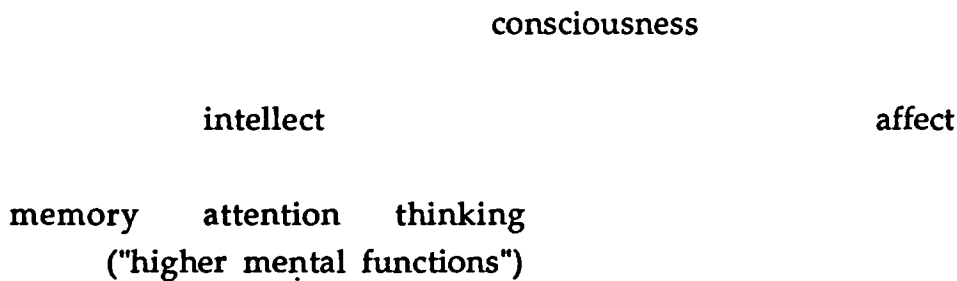
In *Thought and Language* Vygotsky stated his belief that the separation of the intellectual side of consciousness from the affective, emotional side was a serious mistake.

> Their separation as subjects of study is a major weakness of traditional psychology, since it makes the thought process appear as an autonomous flow of 'thoughts thinking themselves', segregated from the fullness of life, from the personal needs and interests, the inclinations and impulses of the thinker.' (Vygotsky, 1986, p.10).

He maintained consistently that the study of thought - cognition - is not complete without an equal focus on affect:

> ' Behind every thought there is an affective-volitional tendency, which holds the answer to the last "why" in the analysis of thinking.'(ibid., p.252)

Had Vygotsky lived longer there seems no doubt that he would have moved to focus more closely on the affective side of consciousness and the relation between intellect and affect; indeed one of his last unfinished works was a *Study of Emotions* (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991, p.249-259). However, much of his experimental work was done on the left-hand side of the diagram, in relation to the subcomponents of intellect, the 'higher mental processes'[2]. *Mind in Society* mainly comes from the period when he had embarked on an intensive study of these processes, and the work of several of the researchers at the Moscow Institute

117

contributed to Vygotsky's arguments in the papers and chapters that make up the first part of this book.

The second part of Mind in Society, however, includes two chapters from a slightly later period. These chapters ('The Role of Play in Development' and on 'The Prehistory of Written Language') are more concerned with the place of affect and creativity in learning and are basic to a discussion of Vygotsky's treatment of symbolic activity, and I shall discuss them separately. In this chapter I shall first focus on three key concepts from Mind in Society which are both central to Vygotsky's work on the development of higher mental functions and also important for an understanding of his theory as a whole. These are: the role of psychological tools, the place of "qualitative shifts", and the process of internalisation.

6.2   Psychological Tools

The concept of psychological tools was probably Vygotsky's single most important intellectual achievement. Through this one powerfully generative idea, he transformed materialist psychology and opened the way for it to move into the study of consciousness. Vygotsky's original paper on the relation between conditioned reflexes and conscious behaviour, and his later book (published in Russian only in 1982, and as yet untranslated (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991, p. 142)) on The Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology had both circled round the same problem - materialist behaviourist psychology was hopelessly reductionist in its treatment of mental activity, while idealist philosophical psychology was not sufficiently scientific. Vygotsky needed a 'third way' by which psychology could break out of this crisis. He was to find it through the concept of psychological tools, the means by which he thought higher mental functions were constructed, through a process of interaction and internalisation. Sign mediation is therefore absolutely basic to Vygotsky's whole theory of mental development.

Vygotsky developed his theory of psychological tools by building on Marx. Marx and Engels had argued that human beings become human by engaging in labour. Vygotsky quoted directly from Engels who, in this process, ascribed particular significance to the role of tools.('The tool signifies specifically human activity - a transformation of nature by

humans'. Wertsch, 1985a, p.77). Through tools human beings achieve control over their material environment; tools are externally oriented, they set in motion the process whereby people are able to change the external world and, consequently, themselves:

'By thus acting on the external world and changing it, he at the same time changes his own nature' (Marx, quoted in Lee, 1985 p. 73)

But many contemporary psychologists were showing that the higher apes were capable of tool use. Vygotsky extended Marxist theories of tool use by proposing that tool use in young pre-verbal children was indeed essentially no different from tool use in animals; it was only when language entered the picture that children were able to achieve 'the specifically human use of tools' (Vygotsky, 1978, p.24) This was the same difference that Marx had noted in Capital between the labour of bees and the labour of the architect, but Marx had situated the difference between the bees' work and the architect's work in 'consciousness'. Vygotsky was to take as his psychological province this area of consciousness, the inner workings of mind, and to show that it was created through psychological tools, and most particularly through language. He thus refined on Marx and greatly extended the possibilities of Marxist psychology - though these posibilities have been largely ignored by his followers.

Language was, for Vygotsky, at first a means of organising practical activities, planning projects, managing the use of other tools, and solving practical problems through speech-cum-action. Later, he thought, it became a means of organising one's own behaviour by the internalisation of the shaping powers of speech. Once it was directed inwards, language became a sign or 'psychological tool', the kind of tool which changed the user:

The tool's function is to serve as the conductor of human influence on the object of the activity; it is externally oriented; it must lead to changes in objects. It is a means by which human external activity is aimed at mastering and triumphing over the nature. The sign, on the other hand, changes nothing in the object of a psychological operation. It is a means of internal activity aimed at mastering oneself; the sign is internally oriented'. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.55)

Psychological tools offered the basic machinery by which consciousness, thought, and the 'higher mental functions' could be built, gradually, from the outside in, on the principle of 'reversibility' - the ability to act on their agent, to be directed inwards. And, with this building of consciousness, comes 'the experiencing of experiences' (Lee, 1985, p.76) and the

119

development of an ever-expanding system, in which signs originally developed for communication with others are used to communicate with and expand the boundaries of the conscious self.

In a paper written in 1930 Vygotsky stated that:
> 'the following can serve as examples of psychological tools and their complex systems: language; various systems for counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps and mechanical drawings; and so on'. (Wertsch, 1985a, p.79.)

It is the sheer eclecticism of this list that is exciting, that, and the bold inclusion in it - dropped in between algebra and writing - of 'works of art'. It was through the concept of psychological tools that Vygotsky was able to include works of art and literature fully in his theory of mental development - he had already anticipated this when he termed them 'tools of society' (Vygotsky, 1971). Towards the end of his life in *Thought and Language* Vygotsky turned more and more towards the investigation of the key semiotic systems of language, and, in the last chapter of that work indeed, to the use of language *within* works of art, a return to his earliest intellectual concerns.

All psychological tools, then, are social in character - social in several senses. Firstly, these semiotic systems are all systems that have been developed within societies for social purposes, as systems for recording, communicating, extending thought, and facilitating different kinds of thinking. Then, such systems are socially acquired, the ability to use them and/or communicate through them is learned through the individual internalising what were originally interpersonal processes. Finally, even when an individual is using one of these 'psychological tools' in apparent isolation, the essence of this activity is always social, as Vygotsky had already emphasised in *The Psychology of Art*:
> 'Art is the social within us, and even if its action is performed by a single individual, it does not mean that its essence is individual. It is quite naive and inappropriate to take the social to be collective as with a large crowd of persons. The social also exists where there is only one person with his individual experiences and tribulations' (p.249)

Vygotsky seems deliberately to write his list of psychological tools as if there were no distinction and no hierarchical relationship between the items in it - as if all these systems were functionally equivalent. And yet the list contains systems which operate at very different levels of generality; even if there is no clear hierarchy between the items, it is clear

that mnemonic techniques and algebraic symbol systems, for example, are very different systems despite their common semiotic role. The most obvious diference relates to the extent to which the items listed have an internal systematicity, and can be used in a decontextualised way. Some symbol systems - such as mnemonic techniques - are tied very closely to concrete contexts, and are not marked by a network of internal relationships. Others, like algebra, are complicated decontextualised systems, in which signs are related to other signs in a detailed and predictable way. Still others, like works of art, have a more complex and personal symbolic character, while language is the ultimate example of a complex and self-referring symbol system. It seems clear that Vygotsky saw some kind of progression from the simplest to the most complex psychological tools, both in individual lives, and in social history. [3]

6.3   Qualitative Shifts

Developmental progression in individuals was not seen by Vygotsky as a smooth cumulative process, but as one in which changes in mediational means and in the level of control of those means could produce striking developmental shifts.

> 'At each new stage the child changes not only her response, but carries out that response in new ways, drawing on new 'instruments' of behaviour and replacing one psychological function by another'. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.73)

The development of higher intellectual functioning was therefore not evolutionary but revolutionary, and the agents of this revolution were psychological tools, tools which fundamentally transformed the user:

> 'By being included in the process of behaviour the psychological tool alters the entire flow and structure of a new instrumental act, just as a technical tool alters the process of a natural adaptation...' (Vygotsky, 1981a, p.137)

Vygotsky consistently put forward a view of development which was full of discontinuities, reversals, gaps, unevenness, and complex interactions, and in which 'revolutionary shifts' occurred when 'the very nature of development changes'. Such major transition points he linked firmly to the form of mediation used: 'Vygotsky defined development in terms of the emergence or transformation of the forms of mediation' (Wertsch 1985a, p.15). The basis of Vygotsky's experimental method in fact - it was called the 'experimental-developmental method' - was to provoke such shifts by intervening in a child's normal thinking processes, often by introducing new 'possible tools' into a situation in order to observe their effect on the child's approach to the task.

This aspect of Vygotsky's work suggests that he saw a hierarchy existing between the different sign systems or psychological tools that children learn to incorporate into their functioning, and that for him development implied the gradual mastery of systems that operate at an increasing level of decontextualisation, or abstraction. Wertsch terms these transitional points in development, which result in a reorganisation of the whole functioning of the organism, 'qualitative shifts'. Unlike researchers such as Piaget, whose explanatory framework is essentially biological, or the behaviourist psychologists, who recognised only one basic set of explanatory principles of behaviour, Vygotsky wanted to build a theory in which changes in development had to be reflected in changes in the system of explanatory principles used to analyse them. He saw a major shift in development, from what he called the 'natural' line of development to the 'cultural' line of development at about age six or seven, when children began to master systems of cultural signs or psychological tools.

6.4 Internalisation

The third side of this triangle is the process of internalisation. This process was the means by which Vygotsky thought that psychological tools could be turned inward, precipitating the qualitative shifts in development that came from the profound internal changes associated with the mastery of new mediational means.

Internalisation is probably the aspect of Vygotsky's theory that has been most generally accepted and cited. The principle of learning through internalisation is in any case a feature of many psychological theories of development, including Piaget's. The Vygotskyan view that internalisation is rooted in social behaviour, and that 'what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow' has also received widespread recognition and agreement. But there is a much less general understanding of the fact that, for Vygotsky, what happened in internalisation was not a simple transferral from the outer to the inner. Many of his own statements in *Mind in Society* seem to imply, superficially, that this 'transfer model' of internalisation was what he meant:

> '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)'. (p.57)

However, in other places Vygotsky makes clear that a transfer of this kind was not what he envisaged. What he intended to be understood was a more complex process: 'the internal reconstruction of an external operation' (p.56). Moreover this process was a developmental process which would take place over time as 'the result of a long series of developmental events' (p.57). In the course of this development the external interpsychological process was not copied, but changed:

> 'It goes without saying that internalisation transforms the process itself and changes its structure and functions'. (Vygotsky 1981a, p.163)

The development Vygotsky chose to illustrate this process was that of pointing. The gradual transformation of a baby's unsuccessful attempt at grasping at something beyond reach into a sign, because of the involvement of an interpreting adult, with all that this sign prefigures in terms of later language acquisition, is a powerful example of the kind of long-term and complex development that Vygotsky meant by internalisation.

The role of the interpreting adult - of human mediation - in internalisation is also basic to the process in Vygotsky's account of it. The child who begins to point 'learns how to mean' through the intervention of the adult, who ascribes meaning to the original action. Throughout the papers in *Mind in Society* which refer to internalisation, Vygotsky continually stresses the fact that human learning is always social:

> 'Human learning presupposes a specific social nature and a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them.' (p. 88).

> 'Every function in the child's 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' (p.57).

The emphasis on human mediation in Vygotsky's theory of internalisation separates it from Piagetian theory, which is characteristically concerned with development of the solo child. It is probably the aspect of Vygotskyan theory which has had most impact on educational thinking in the years since the publication of *Mind in Society*, but its full implications for teaching and learning have yet to be fully explored.

The last distinctive feature of Vygotsky's model of internalisation that his 'pointing' example illustrates is that, for Vygotsky, internalisation always takes place in relation to sign operations; internal mental processes are actually built through the gradual mastery of 'psychological tools'. This last feature of Vygotsky's model is crucial, because it was the essence of the disagreement between Vygotsky and his followers in Kharkov, and led to the foundation of a new theory of psychology under Leontiev - the theory of activity. The Kharkovites went on to study the internalisation of shared *actions* and their translation into mental functions - in a much more straightforwardly Piaget-like theory of internalisation. (Their reservations about this aspect of Vygotsky's theory may be seen as deriving partly from anxiety about its relationship to orthodox Marxism, and partly from their own conviction of the importance of 'concrete operations' in mental development). But Vygotsky had been centrally concerned with the role of semiotic mediation in mental growth, and he had insisted that internalisation had to do with the way children come to master and internalise the use of sign forms. In Mind in Society he makes this point over and over again:

> 'Of particular importance to the development of higher mental processes is the transformation of sign-using activity". (p.57)
> "The internalisation of cultural forms of behaviour involves the construction of psychological activity as the basis of sign operations'. (p.57)
> 'the entire operation of mediated activity...begins to take place as a purely internal process.' (p.56)

The three features of Vygotsky's theory that have been discussed so far in this chapter are interdependent. Through the internalisation of signs, or psychological tools, the 'qualitative shifts' occur which characterise the uneven, revolutionary nature of mental development. In the papers which make up *Mind in Society*, Vygotsky both expounds this model (Part One), and shows it in action (Part Two).

The first half of the book is largely made up of chapters from an unpublished manuscript, *Tool and Symbol*. In most of these chapters Vygotsky gives examples of psychological experiments with young children - experiments which illuminate his arguments about the development of the higher mental processes of voluntary attention, logical memory, and so on. The editors of *Mind in Society* take a somewhat defensive attitude to the way these experiments are reported, a

way which certainly does not conform to conventional scientific paradigms. They suggest that these accounts of Vygotsky's:

> 'sometimes leave readers with a sense of unease. He presents almost no raw data and summaries are quite general. Where are the statistical tests that record whether or not observations reflect 'real' effects? What do these studies prove?' (Cole and Scribner, 1978, p.11)

They devote a section of the introduction to a discussion of these experiments, and to the justification of this 'new approach to experimentation' (already, as they discussed it, nearly fifty years old). It is interesting to watch these cognitive scientists struggling to reconcile their own training and preconceptions with their sense that there is something important to learn from Vygotsky's descriptions of experiments which were intended to provoke new and enterprising kinds of behaviour in children, and not to confirm preexistent hypotheses, or elicit particular kinds of anticipated responses.

6.5   The second signal system

A further theme runs through these chapters from *Tool and Symbol* which is of particular importance for an understanding of Vygotsky's psychology, and this is the place that the 'second signal system' plays in so many of the reported experiments. One whole chapter in *Mind in Society* ('Problems of Method',pp. 58-75), though not itself taken from *Tool and Symbol*, is entirely devoted to explaining the operation of experiments using this system, and it is obvious that Vygotsky attaches a great deal of significance to it.

On the surface the second signal system is a way of describing some fairly simple shifts in children's ability to use signs to help them in mental experiments. In the experiments described in the chapters about attention and memory, for instance, a key element in the experiments is to offer children sets of signs (eg a set of picture cards to act as aids to memorising) which they are then invited to use as a support in the experimental task. As they learn to use these signs in the problem-solving tasks that the experimenter asks them to undertake, the researchers observe the *ways* in which they use them. They particularly note how children at different ages operate with these aids to memory. Young preschool children do not make any effective use of them at all - indeed the signs seem to complicate the task for them. Children a few years older, however, begin to make good use of these external aids, and become quicker and more skilful at using them, in a way that visibly improves their performance in the

memory-related tasks. With adults, the use of cards does not seem to improve their performance on the tasks at all.

Vygotsky and his colleagues conclude that the external sign is only helpful at the point where children are actively searching for ways to extend their own ability to remember, and learning that they can draw on the mediation of the signs to help them. At this point, signs enter the thinking process, and fundamentally reorder mental functioning, in an obvious 'qualitative shift'. The child learns how to attend to the sign rather than to the immediate stimulus, and how to use an external system to order and direct her/his own thinking.

The value of these experiments, with their focus on the second signal system, rooted though this focus seems to be in the reactological psychology of its time, is that they slow down the developmental process and illustrate on a very simple level, over and over again, how children's behaviour alters when they begin to use the semiotic means of mediation made available by the experimenters. The key role that these signs come to play in the children's problem-solving, and the way in which the children come to be able to use these semiotic tools fluently and automatically to help with the task, demonstrate the part that Vygotsky believes systems of semiotic mediation play in mental development. Once the children know how to use these mental tools, they are less confused by the demands of the task and more in control of their own responses.

In just the same way, Vygotsky's later work will go on to show, language - as a very much more complicated and reflexive system of signs than any pack of cards - will be the means children learn to use in order to organise and direct their own learning and, as they do so, their behaviour and their thinking will be changed. Like the simple sign systems in these early experiments, the much more complex system of language will enable learners to detach themselves to some extent from the demands of the immediate situation, and approach problems more logically, systematically, and also reflexively. This emphasis on the role of semiotic mediation, in enabling learners to step out of the here-and-now and detach meanings from objects, is part of Vygotsky's lesson to the activists, with whom he was, it seems likely, already arguing about the relative importance of language and of activity in learning, and it constitutes an

elegantly simple proof of the way in which semiotic mediation is basic to higher mental processes.

In other words, despite the apparent focus of *Mind and Society* on cognitively oriented experiments, and on problem-solving, the whole thrust of the argument of the book is actually towards the exploration of the role of semiotic mediation in thinking. Though not apparently a book in which language features as centrally as in the other texts that I consider in this section (except of course in the chapter on 'The Prehistory of Written Languge') it nevertheless constitutes an important preparation for Vygotsky's later work, a carefully built justification for the role of semiotic mediation in mental development, and the basis for a case against the activity-oriented psychology which Leontiev went on to develop, and which is now promoted as the Vygotskyan inheritance. It seems likely that a major motive of Vygotsky's in undertaking this programme of experimentation was precisely in order to prepare the ground for his larger purposes, which already included the development of a theory which gave a central place to language in thinking and in the creation of consciousness.

6.6   The zone of proximal development

One chapter in *Mind in Society* , and that which has been most consistently taken up and used in the West, as well as in Russia, is the chapter which begins Part 2 (Educational Implications), on 'Interaction between Learning and Development' (pp 79-91). It is here that Vygotsky's theory of the 'zone of proximal development' is explained. No account of Vygotsky's thought could possibly omit some discussion of a concept which has had such a far-reaching influence on contemporary educational thinking.

In this chapter Vygotsky describes the way in which children's problem-solving ability, as measured by mental tests, differs in different contexts. In a way that everyone can understand, he explains that children who are apparently very similar in their problem solving ability - going by their solo performances - may achieve very differently when they are asked to solve problems in supported situations. He calls the difference between what they are able to do alone and what they are able to do in collaboration with others (adults or 'more capable peers') their 'zone of proximal

127

development'. By the use of mental tests he demonstrates that the ZPD of different individuals is different, even measurably different. He suggests that teaching needs to be directed to this zone - not to what children can already do, but to what they can do in collaborative and supported situations. Contrary to conventional wisdom about the need for children to be able to develop up to a certain point before they are ready to learn (cf the concept of 'reading-readiness') Vygotsky suggests that learning can *lead* development, and indeed that 'the only good learning is that which is in advance of development' (p.89).

This simple proof has convinced many educationalists of the need to rethink their attitude to what can be learnt from the testing of solo individuals. It has made many more people consider the value of talk in learning, the importance of children working collaboratively, and the importance of the social context of the classroom in the learning of individuals. In addition, however, it has been used to provide support to arguments for more directive and didactic pedagogies in the primary school, and for more schematic approaches to the organisation of children's learning - through a more overt use of intervention, the 'scaffolding' of learning experiences, and so on.

The simple elegance of Vygotsky's argument about the ZPD is absolutely convincing, but the method he uses to prove his point is also simplicity itself, and his proof has been replicated in many contexts. It is tempting to conclude that one of the reasons why the ZPD, more than any other aspect of Vygotsky's work, has aroused such extraordinarily wide interest in psychological and educational circles, is because it is so much more conventional in its system of proof than many of his other ideas, so much more recognisable (with its 'pretest/post-test' format) to workers in educational systems which are rife with testing - and also perhaps because it is to some extent *concerned* with mental measurement. Though an important idea, it is a relatively small element in his whole picture of mental development. It seems a pity that it should have commanded so more attention and respect than Vygotsky's more important and far-reaching ideas about language and thought, which - if attended to as carefully - would have much more profound implications for educational practice.

For many people, the chapter on the 'Interaction between Learning and Development' is the main reason why they will remember *Mind in Society*. It is therefore odd and ironic that this is also the one chapter in which the model of internalisation described is relatively simple, and which says little or nothing about the part that semiotic mediation plays in the learning processes described. Most other chapters in *Mind in Society* contribute something to Vygotsky's developing argument about the role of signs, and particularly of language, in learning and the creation of consciousness. But this, which is often thought of as the key chapter, adds nothing to that argument. Moreover, what has been taken from it has sometimes been the reverse of what Vygotsky intended - it has indeed been used to serve as a means of *refining* the practice of mental testing, instead of calling its validity into question. The overvaluing of this one chapter, and the undervaluing of what Vygotsky has to say about psychological tools and the second signal system, in *Mind in Society*, reflect the slant put on his psychology by his chief Soviet commentators (the ZPD, unlike several other aspects of Vygotsky's theory, was never rejected by the Kharkovite activist psychologists). They are also indicators of the degree of resistance that still exists in psychological circles in both East and West to his central argument about the role of language in thinking and learning. The way in which Mind in Society is currently read, as well as the way in which it was originally compiled and edited, both indicate a curious obtuseness, an almost deliberate missing of the point of the whole direction of Vygotsky's work in psychology.

---

1 Fortunately, we have other sources in English for some of the material included in this book. In *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology* (1979), James Wertsch has published two extracts from The Development of Higher Mental Functions, while the lecture on Play also appears in the anthology *Play: its role in development and evolution* (Bruner et al, 1976). Comprehensive accounts of Vygotsky's work in this area, with extensive quotations, also appear in Alex Kozulin's *Vygotsky's Psychology* (1990) and in Van der Veer and Valsiner's *Understanding Vygotsky* (1991). All this enables us to get another perspective on the contents of *Mind in Society*.

2 However, Vygotsky saw the growing capacity to symbolise experience and personal meanings - to create 'symbols for others' - as part of general mental functioning, and not as part of a specialised development of a separate 'emotional' side of consciousness. In *Thought and Language*, he deliberately juxtaposed the two directions in which consciousness develops through language - on the one hand intellectually, through the formation of increasingly complex and abstract intellectual concepts, and on the other hand affectively and artistically, through the creation of denser, richer, emotional and poetical meanings in the reading and writing of literature. The work of James Britton on the place of language and the role of literature in human learning, has also explored the relationship between the left and

right hand sides of Vygotsky's diagram. His model of writing development was designed to demonstrate two directions in which written language developed - towards the representation of ideas and argument, on the one hand, and the symbolisation of experience through the 'poetic' use of writing, on the other. His two main books - *Language and Learning (1970)*, and *Literature in its Place (1993)* - are also concerned with these two faces of language.

[3] Sylvia Scribner, drawing on Vygotsky's unpublished manuscript 'The Development of Higher Mental Functions', describes the way in which he saw sign-mediated activities as changing and becoming more complex as a function of sociohistorical change. 'Changes in social activities that recur in history have a directionality: hand-powered tools precede machines; number systems come into use before algebra' (Scribner, 1985, p.122)

However, according to Scribner, Vygotsky:
> 'does not offer a "progression of cultural stages", he does not offer a stagelike progression of higher forms of behaviour. One reason, I believe, is that he does not represent higher systems as general modes of thought or as general structures of intelligence in a Piagetian sense. Vygotsky addressed the question of general processes of formation of particular functional systems....each of these systems has its own course of development; all of them ("higher" or "cultural" by definition) advance from rudimentary to more advanced forms. But there is no necessity in theory for all functional systems characterising the behaviour of an individual, or behaviours in a social group, to be at the same level.' (ibid. p.132)

It is true that Vygotsky always rejected biologically based stage theories of development, and that this was one of the reasons for his disagreements with Piaget. However, it seems disingenuous to claim that Vygotsky saw no progression between these different higher systems. Wertsch identifies an overarching principle of development in Vygotsky's work:
> 'This principle, which I shall label the principle of decontextualisation of mediational means, replaced those of Darwinian evolution after the emergence of culture. The decontextualisation of mediational means is the process whereby the meaning of signs becomes less and less dependent on the unique spatiotemporal context in which they are used. A focus on the decontextualisation of mediational means emerges repeatedly in Vygotsky's account of the sociocultural history of higher mental functions'. (Wertsch, 1985a, p.33)

A clear pattern of progression through sign systems in fact emerges from Vygotsky's separate discussions of both calculation and writing, in which systems that are essentially aids to memory (mnemotechnic systems) are replaced by systems that are increasingly abstract and self-referential (eg symbolic logic, algebraic symbols). Moreover, Vygotsky saw development both in societies and in individuals as being marked by the process of the decontextualisation of mediational means. This progress from context-bound thinking to decontextualised thinking, in which the meaning of signs becomes more and more detached from the concrete context, and more and more related to an abstract system of interrelationships, was shown with extraordinary force in Vygotsky's studies of concept development, using the Vygotsky blocks.

Wertsch concludes that:
> 'scientific concepts are what make it possible for humans to carry out mental activity in a way that is maximally independent of the concrete context. That is, they represent the end point in the decontextualisation of mediational means....(this means) that sociohistorically evolved semiotic mechanisms come to play an increasingly important role in mental functioning, while concrete context plays a decreasing role.' (ibid. p.104.)

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this is that Vygotsky did indeed see a progression from certain kinds of sign systems to others, both in sociocultural history, and in individual development. This progression was from sign systems that were more closely tied to concrete contexts to ones that were more decontextualised or abstract in character. In the history of writing systems, for instance, pictographic systems, which directly depicted things, preceded the development of more abstract alphabetic systems for depicting language itself, while in ontogeny children's development was seen to change radically as they came to master increasingly sophisticated forms of mediation - from the use of counting blocks, to mathematical symbols, to algebraic symbols.

Chapter seven
VYGOTSKY'S *MIND IN SOCIETY* (2)

7.0   Introduction

Mind in Society, as the last chapter explained, suffers from being a
compilation of lectures and unpublished articles by Vygotsky which are
connected by particular themes, but which were not written as continuous
text to be read as part of the same argument. The text is edited in a highly
interventive fashion and the editors freely acknowledge that they have
often added to the original and 'inserted material from additional sources'
to elucidate passages that seemed to them 'dense and elliptical'. Text has
often been cut, where the editors have judged the original to be
repetitious.

The chapter on 'The Role of Play in Development' - which is taken from
the text of a lecture originally given in Leningrad in 1933 - illustrates some
of the problems that this interventive editorial style has produced.
Another translation of the chapter, which appears in some respects to be a
better one, is to be found in the anthology *Play* edited by Bruner, Jolly and
Sylva (Bruner et al., 1976). Here its provenance is clearly given; it is a
translation of an article in *Soviet Psychology* Vol. 12 No.6, 1966, which was
a transcription of a 'stenographic record' of the original lecture. Whole
passages which appear in the text in the Bruner anthology are omitted
from the chapter in *Mind in Society*, the order of the argument is often
changed, and the translation and reordering sometimes seems to have
rendered the argument more obscure than it appears to be in the Bruner
version. [1]

This lecture is inserted, in *Mind in Society* between two chapters which
come from a posthumously published collection of essays by Vygotsky
entitled *Mental Development of Children and the Process of Learning*
(published in the USSR in 1935). It is therefore clear that both the chapter
on play and that on the development of writing are works from what I
have called the final phase of Vygotsky's work rather than from the
middle phase to which Part One of *Mind in Society* belongs.

It is problematic to have to work with a text which contains so many
examples of corruption and uncertainty caused by poor editorial practice as

is the case with *Mind in Society*, and the difficulties that this editorial licence has caused become particularly apparent in the two chapters under consideration here. Though they are thematically close, there are very considerable discontinuities between them, and it seems unlikely that Vygotsky would have chosen to juxtapose them in just this way. The most obvious discontinuity lies in the view that they take of children's play, and in the extent to which Vygotsky is prepared to consider play as true symbolic activity. In 'The Prehistory of Writing' chapter, where his interest lies in the child's developing capacity to symbolise meanings, he focuses on the close links between different forms of symbolism: drawing, gesture, play, and early mnemotechnic and pictographic writing. In 'The Role of Play in Development', however, he explores the nature of play itself, and seeks to understand its role as a pivotal activity in the separation of words and meanings; in this chapter he emphasises the transitional nature of play, and the elements which distinguish it from genuinely symbolic activity.

Though there is no real evidence for this except internal evidence, it seems to me likely that 'The Role of Play in Development', which is based on Vygotsky's lecture of 1933, may be a slightly later work than 'The Prehistory of Written Language', which only carries a later date because it was posthumously published . I consider this is a possibility mainly because the theoretical position in 'The Role of Play in Development' seems to be a stage further on from the ideas in the chapter on writing, and closer in many important respects to the arguments of *Thought and Language*(1934). 'The Prehistory of Writing', on the other hand, follows on more straightforwardly from the general discussion of psychological tools that makes up the first part of *Mind in Society*. I therefore propose to discuss these two chapters in the reverse order from that in which they appear in *Mind in Society*.

7.1   The Prehistory of Written Language

Vygotsky's approach in the chapter on 'The Prehistory of Written Language' is an example of his 'genetic' approach to the explanation of human behaviour - he looks for the 'genesis' of a particular competence, and finds its roots in sometimes apparently unlike areas of behaviour. Vygotsky's outline history of the development of writing, given at the beginning of this chapter, suggests that learning to write is not, as it

appears on the surface, either a question of learning to form letters, or even to transcribe spoken language, but involves the mastery of a complex sign system in order to symbolise meaning. As such he finds its roots in earlier and established ways of symbolising, such as gesture, drawing, and symbolic play, rather than in the 'mechanics of writing'.

Vygotsky sees development in this area as 'saccadic' - marked by sudden leaps forward, rather than proceeding along a smooth and continuous curve. This is all of a piece with his general view of mental development as uneven, recursive, and characterised by a series of sudden 'qualitative shifts'. This view of development implies that a researcher will need always to be on the watch for those key moments when a child moves to another level of functioning. Such moments will not necessarily take place within the well regulated world of the psychological laboratory, and this is one of the reasons why Vygotsky's experimental methodology was so unconventional and piecemeal in character. He was uninterested in most conventional psychological methods of experiment, believing that they could not capture higher psychological functions, which did not lend themselves to being studied in controlled conditions. In the chapter called 'Problems of Method' in *Mind in Society* Vygotsky explains what kinds of problems confront the researcher who wishes to go beyond a simplistic stimulus-response approach to behaviour, and describes his own method of enquiry which he terms 'experimental-developmental'.

Vygotsky states the main problem in several different ways in this chapter, but his major preoccupation is with the idea of development in process. Human behaviour cannot be studied only in relation to achieved and established functions, for these are fossilized forms of behaviour and will not teach us anything about the live process of mental functioning. Behaviour can only be studied in real contexts for 'it is only in movement that a body shows what it is.' We are not likely to learn anything important about higher functions, either, by studying only the externals of behaviour, for 'their outer appearance tells us nothing whatsoever about their internal nature'. With arguments like these, Vygotsky makes the case for a much more naturalistic and impressionistic approach to the study of the mind, one in which subjective and introspective methods can legitimately contribute to understanding of the complexities of human psychology.

In 'The Prehistory of Written Language', we see Vygotsky's 'experimental-developmental' method in action. Vygotsky does not present an achieved or complete history of young children's development towards writing, but a sketch of a history which, with its many gaps and unanswered questions, nevertheless attempts to provide an explanatory framework for the further study of that development. Vygotsky freely acknowledges the necessarily incomplete nature of his history:

> 'At the present time, in spite of a variety of research studies, we are in no postion to write a coherent or complete history of written language in children. We can only discern the most important points in this development and discuss its major changes.' (p.107)

The chapter then proceeds by describing a series of developmental moments, some of which may constitute 'qualitative shifts' in development and all of which bear, in Vygotsky's view, some relationship to the development of writing.

1. The first of these is the relationship between gestures, later visual signs, and written signs leading to writing. Vygotsky states, rather than explores this relationship, and refers to some experiments connected with children's drawings, which focus particularly on what happens when children are asked to draw the undrawable, as when a child is asked to draw 'good weather'. In this situation the child resorts to gesture, and attempts to fix this gesture in drawing:

> '...a child will indicate the bottom of the page by making a horizontal motion of the hand, explaining "This is the earth," and then, after a number of confused upward hatchwise motions, "And this is good weather."' (p. 108)

As they 'draw the undrawable' children are going beyond representation and entering the realm of symbolisation. Of course children are in any case, from the beginning, far more symbolists than realists in their drawing. Their earliest representational drawings are symbolic - they draw what they think is important rather than being guided by observation - and they enter the realm of symbolism every time that they attempt to show more than the simple physical appearance of things - when, for instance, they draw anything moving.

I have coined the phrase 'drama-cum-drawing' to describe the kind of play in which the chidren live out the world of the drawing they are making, making free use of gesture and mime as they do so, and this is what seems to be happening in the example that Vygotsky cites. This kind of play can

be seen as a halfway house between dramatic play and drawing, and perhaps foreshadows the continuing links between the 'imagination in action' of play and the interior imaginings which find expression in drawing and in writing.

2. Vygotsky's chapter proceeds with reference to studies of the use of symbolism in play. In imaginative games, children animate objects and invest them with symbolic meaning for the purposes of the play. Vygotsky and his colleagues attempted to build on this natural propensity and created a 'language' in which certain objects stood for particular things and people. In a set of 'play experiments' they played games in which, for example, a book meant a house, and a knife stood for a doctor. Children as young as three were invited to use this sytem of 'symbolic notation'. Children were able to associate objects with their play 'meaning' even when the game was over, thus showing an ability to substitute a symbolic meaning for the everyday meaning of an object, and use a system of 'second order' symbolism. (The implication is that it is this power of symbolic substitution that children draw on when they come to learn the system of arbitrary signs that we call writing.)

Vygotsky is investigating the interrelationships between forms of representation generally presented as separate, and showing how, in certain circumstances, children can be led to demonstrate that such forms are actually interrelated. The line of development he sketches is by no means straightforward. Though he suggests that gesture is the genesis of writing and contains the germ of writing 'as an acorn contains a future oak'(p,107), the path from gesture to writing - on the one hand through dramatic play, action, and mime, and on the other hand through scribbles, drawings, and graphic representation - is not unbroken. There is a constant interplay demonstrated in the examples so far given between, on the one hand, dramatic, and on the other hand, graphic representation, with one supporting the other in the creation of symbolic meaning. This path can be represented as follows:
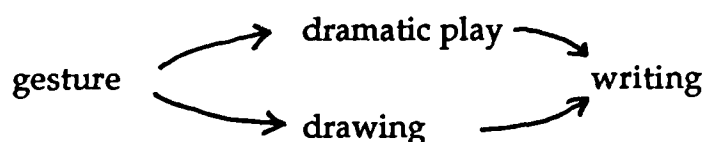
What this model omits, of course, is speech, and the place of spoken language in the genesis of written language.This omission must now be remedied, for spoken language is fundamental not only, obviously, to written language - which Vygotsky described as a way of 'drawing speech' - but to all sign systems. Vygotsky quotes Hetzer's assertion that 'primary symbolic representation should be ascribed to speech and that it is on the basis of speech that all other sign systems are created.' (p. 113)

4. Vygotsky's next area of investigation in this chapter has to do with the role of speech in drawing, and the naming of drawing. Vygotsky muses on the place of speech in the development of all symbolic activity, extending the word 'speech' to all forms of meaning-making:

> 'Thus we see that drawing is graphic speech that arises on the basis of verbal speech.' (p. 112)

Vygotsky questions whether, even when children recognise and can name what is drawn, they really understand the symbolic function of drawing. It is only gradually that the realisation of the representational function grows, and Vygotsky sees this realisation mirrored in the way children come to be able to name what they are drawing earlier in the process of making the picture. 'Graphic speech', then, is based on verbal speech, while written speech has its basis in other achieved symbolic activities, including graphic speech.

5. Vygotsky goes on to describe Luria's experiments with invented notation, where children who could not yet write were asked to remember a series of sentences, and given paper and pencil to help them record what they could not remember. Luria saw the beginnings of writing in the mnemotechnic symbols that several children invented to help them with this task, and noted a progression from undifferentiated marks, to little pictures, to more abstract signs, as children became more experienced in this kind of personal notation. In *The Making of Mind*, Luria makes clearer than Vygotsky does here that the words or phrases the children were asked to record were abstract in character (eg 'the teacher is angry'), so that this was another example of children being asked to draw the undrawable, and being pushed towards symbolic representation.

****

The series of examples that Vygotsky uses in this chapter are drawn sometimes from naturalistic observations of children, sometimes from

psychological experiments, and sometimes from reading in named or unnamed sources. The types of experiment that Vygotsky quotes are different in kind from classic laboratory experiments in psychology. Often they consist simply in observing how children meet a new situation or behave in different kinds of play contexts. Because these contexts are generally unfamiliar to children, they are required to operate at the leading edge of their development, and the interest for the researcher lies in gaining insight in this way into the formation of behaviour, and in seeing what resources, and what tacit theories, children draw on in order to meet these challenges.

Vygotsky does not arrive at a finished theory of writing development in this chapter, but the direction of his thought is clear enough both from his arguments, and from the examples he chooses to present. He sees learning to write as a psychological process far more complex than simply the learning of a written code, and presents it as part of a general and growing ability to symbolise personal and cultural meanings and to use established systems of symbolism to express meanings. Vygotsky shows that a process at this level of complexity is not learnt all at once, but is the product of a 'long series of developmental events', and sketches moments from the history of this learning. He finds the roots of writing in other forms of symbolising, and thus shows literacy to be the further development of expressive, artistic, and meaning-making impulses, which still, by implication, remain in some way present in the achieved ability.

'Learning to write' like 'learning to read' always has both a broad and a narrow meaning. Though it does imply a very complex cultural piece of learning, it also means coming to terms with the mechanics of the written code. In this chapter Vygotsky experiences the problems that face any student of early writing development, having to shift his focus continually between, on the one hand, the whole broad symbolic activity, and on the other hand, the 'code-cracking' aspects of the process, which are in some ways easier to study. His examples are uneven in this respect, some of them relating more closely to the question of symbolising meaning in a variety of modes and others which seem more preoccupied with understanding, and ultimately breaking, the written code itself.

But Vygotsky does stress, particularly in the section of the chapter which is subtitled 'Practical Implications', that writing is much more than transcription, and should not be taught as a 'purely mechanical' activity. Writing should from the outset be 'relevant to life' so that it develops as 'a really new and complex form of speech'. In this way children will achieve an inner understanding of writing, in such a way that what they learn is 'written language and not just the writing of letters.' As to how teaching can support the kind of learning that Vygotsky thinks that children should experience - Vygotsky draws the obvious conclusion from his own argument that drawing and dramatic play should be viewed as basic elements in the curriculum, and as the foundation for children's learning in this area. And he merely hints at the fact that teaching will need to support and also to lead development, very much in the same way that the experimenters and researchers in the examples he quotes stimulate and cultivate children's nascent and tacit understandings.

7.2   The Role of Play in Development [2]

The chapter on Play begins by stressing the role of affect in play, even though the point is made that to define play simply as pleasurable activity is quite inadequate - many childish experiences give as much, if not more, pleasure as play does. Nevertheless, Vygotsky suggests that to ignore the role of affect, pleasure, and fulfilment in play would result in a 'terrible intellectualisation' of the whole process - and he goes on to stress that this kind of intellectualisation affects much work in child development, where it is not sufficiently appreciated that 'stages' do not follow one another automatically:

> 'Without a consideration of the child's needs, inclinations, incentives and motives
> to act...there will never be any advance from one stage to the next.'(Bruner et al.,
> p.538)

With this passage, Vygotsky places the role of affect and intention in a central position in child development.[3]

Thus, in the chapter on Play, Vygotsky is making a start on the right hand side of the diagram that I drew to illustrate Wertsch's account of Vygotsky's 'model of consciousness'. and is beginning to explore the area of imagination, emotion, and intention which he was to pursue further in some chapters of *Thought and Language*. This is a different preoccupation from that found in.the two framing chapters in *Mind in Society*, on the 'Interaction between Learning and Development' and 'The Prehistory of

Written Language', where Vygotsky is much more closely focused on the process of development of higher mental functions and the roots of that development, on the one hand in social experiences of learning, and on the other hand in already established and related competences.

The main difference between the view of play found in this chapter and that presented in the chapter on 'The Prehistory of Written Language' lies in the extent to which play is viewed as a fully symbolic activity. In 'The Prehistory of Written Language' Vygotsky presents play as a straightforwardly symbolic activity, within which objects come to represent other objects or people. In this chapter, however, Vygotsky states that 'play itself, in my view, is never symbolic action in the proper sense of the term'. Later, he distinguishes play from properly symbolic activity, because of the absence of any truly 'free substitution'. The child can imagine that a stick is a horse, but needs action or gesture to support that imagining. Something like a postcard cannot be a horse for a child, though an adult can readily accept that even a postcard can symbolise a horse. Because the child needs gesture to support the act of imagining, Vygotsky concludes that 'this is play, not symbolism'.

Vygotsky stresses that he wants to distinguish play from symbolism because he does not want to see children's play merely as a matter of them learning to use a complex symbolic system 'a kind of...algebra in action'. Play is more than the cognitive process implied in this description, and young children in their early play are not simply 'unsuccessful algebrists' who have not yet mastered a system. Instead, Vygotsky views play as a pivotal activity which leads to symbolism proper. This is because, in play, children first learn to act independently of their immediate perceptions and detach an object from its meaning usually - as Vygotsky explains, in a closely argued passage of fascinating complexity - by transferring it to another object (eg horse > stick), where the stick is 'the necessarily material pivot to keep the meaning from evaporating' (ibid, p.548). Once, through play, children have appreciated that words can be detached from the objects they denote, they stand in a different relation to language and consequently to thinking. In this way play also paves the way for abstract thinking, and is an important way of learning how to decontextualise.

Vygotsky might have developed this argument further. One major difference between play and more fully developed forms of symbolism lies in the fact that the medium and instrument of play is often not 'out there' - as in mapping, drawing, or writing - but is actually the player's own body. Gestures, words and expressions which in real life mark actual intentions and social actions become the symbolic currency of play. Vygotsky exmplifies this strikingly when he tells the story of the sisters who play at being sisters (pp.541-542). In this way children learn not only to detach words from their everyday meanings, but also to detach the means of signifying that we use in everyday social life from their normal contexts and meanings.

Vygotsky therefore sees play as a preliminary form of symbolism and an important transition to all other ways of symbolising reality. It is play that enables us to be the omnipotent creators of alternative worlds, and ultimately to use these world-making powers in other intellectual spheres. Vygotsky makes clear the relationship between play and imagination in this chapter, as well as the place of imagination in human consciousness:

> 'Imagination is a new formation which is not present in the consciousness of the very young child, is totally absent in animals, and represents a specifically human form of conscious activity. Like all functions of consciousness, it originally arises from action. The old adage that child's play is imagination in action can be reversed: we can say that imagination in adolescents and schoolchildren is play without action.' (p. 539)

Vygotsky does not expand in this lecture on the important role that he sees imagination as having in intellectual activity; his position on this is much more fully laid out in the 'Lecture on Imagination', which I shall discuss in the final chapter of this Vygotsky section. However, he does suggest that the imaginative role-taking involved in play is a major reason why play is such an important developmental influence. He explains this through the concept of the 'zone of proximal development' which he believes is created by play.

> 'In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behaviour; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself.... Play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development'. (p. 552)

Because of this Vygotsky sees play as 'the highest level of pre-school development' and considers that at this stage:'The child moves forward essentially through play activity.' (ibid.)

There are fascinating differences between the way in which Vygotsky uses the ZPD concept in this lecture, and the way in which it is generally used (and how it was introduced in the chapter on 'Interaction between Learning and Development'). As the concept is normally stated, a child's zone of proximal development becomes apparent only in social or collaborative situations:

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

The concept is presented in a scientific manner, and is said to be capable of proof through the mental testing of children in different situations - Vygotsky's explanation underlines the possibility of *measuring* this zone in individuals. Over and over again, in this chapter, Vygotsky stresses that a study of a child's independent behaviour will only reveal achieved and already matured functions, and that to observe a child's developing abilities we need to see how she/he operates in a supported or collaboratively undertaken task, for

> 'what a child can do with assistance today she will be able to do by herself tomorrow'(p.87).

Yet in the lecture on Play, Vygotsky frequently refers to independent or solitary imaginative play, and gives few examples of collaborative play (though it is true that play, like all human behaviour, is defined as being social in its *origins*). The kinds of play behaviour that Vygotsky most frequently refers to recall the egocentric monologues that, in Thought and Language, he demonstrates to be the antecedents of inner speech. In the examples of the child who goes to his room to play at riding in a cab, the child who imagines the stick is a horse, the child who plays at mothers and babies with her doll, or the one that plays at being the doctor who has just examined his throat, Vygotsky is continually returning to a solitary play situation in which children replay, or create in imagination, the experiences or roles they most desire in life. In a most interesting passage, Vygotsky comments on the place of desire in this kind of play:

> 'In short, play gives a child a new form of desires, i.e. teaches him to desire by relating his desires to a fictitious 'I' - to his role in the game and its rules'. (p. 549)

This represents a fascinating extension of the concept of the zone of proximal development, which works helpfully against the narrow interpretation of that concept as a simple framework for instruction or,

worse, for establishing children's true mental test scores. What Vygotsky seems to be implying - for the brief, almost elliptical treatment of the idea is tantalising - is that, in this kind of imaginative play, a child can become his/her own 'other' and create, in interaction with his/her own fictional self (fictitious 'I'), a zone of proximal development, or new area of growth.

Vygotsky also connects this new freedom, paradoxically, with the child's willing submission to the rule-bound behaviour of play. In a passage in which he is obviously drawing heavily on Piaget, he seems to agree with Piaget that development depends on the voluntary renunciation of immediate impulses,and the internalisation of rules. In play, however, to obey the rules becomes the strongest impulse: 'To carry out the rule is a source of pleasure'. The part of the lecture which deals with rule-bound behaviour seems less worked out than the rest. Vygotsky seems to be accepting uncritically Piaget's view of development as increasingly socialised behaviour, in which early instinctive behaviour comes to be renounced as social rules are internalised.

The argument with Piaget in Thought and Language is, however, no less relevant here. All human behaviour is social, from the outset. But it is precisely the ability to suspend the rules that normally govern social behaviour that creates the area of freedom, or indeed the zone of proximal development, represented by play. In play one need not behave as oneself, according to the rules of behaviour that normally limit one's interactions with the world, but can bring into the play all one's intuitive knowledge of other ways of being. This can result in a considerable extension of one's normal competences - an example of this is the fact that, in play, children are frequently observed using a linguistic range that they never reveal when speaking in their own personae. [4]

Benjamin Lee, in his commentary on this chapter in 'Origins of Vygotsky's semiotic analysis' (Lee, 1985), makes further links between the argument of this lecture and that of Thought and Language. He picks up Vygotsky's brief remarks about the development of play, and draws an extended parallel between the developments of play and language, based on Vygotsky's account of the two directions in which children's speech develops: on the one hand towards adult forms of social speech, and on the other hand, via egocentric speech, to inner speech and post-verbal

thought. Lee sees that Vygotsky's argument goes beyond an account of language development, providing a means of describing the creation of human consciousness within a Marxist framework.

Lee describes play as developing, like language, in two directions - outwardly towards more fully developed forms of social behaviour, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, inwardly towards the formation of inner processes. On the outer level, Lee indeed stresses the value of play in the development of rule-bound behaviour, and relates this to Marx's thesis of the uniquely rule-governed quality of human social activity. This line of development of play is towards games with rules and social role-taking; in Vygotsky's words, it 'does not die away but permeates the attitude to reality. It has its own inner continuation in school instruction and work (compulsory activity based on rules)' (op.cit. p.554). Lee sees this 'social' play as the basis of maturity, developing the ability to exercise self-restraint and self-determination.

On its way inward, however, play is also transformed, like language becoming more personal and condensed on its journey. According to Vygotsky's hasty description of this process at the end of his lecture: 'Play is converted to internal processes at school age, going over to internal speech, logical memory and abstract thought' (ibid., p. 548). Also, of course, as he had previously stated, internalised play becomes the capacity to imagine, to inhabit other ways of being, invent worlds, and think what is not. Lee stresses that in this way it is linked to the development of higher mental functions, and not only to the 'inner world' of fantasy. All these relationships are made much clearer in Vygotsky's 'Lecture on Imagination' (Vygotsky, 1987b).

Vygotsky saw the development of mind not as a straightforward series of cognitive advances; but as a more complex process of growth involving emotion and reason, affect and cognition, in an interdependent unity. Both language and play, in this model, stand at a turning-point between affect and cognition, and are thus fundamental to mental development; both are essential to the creation of consciousness. Although *Mind in Society* seeks to present Vygotsky as an esssentially cognitive scientist, the texts that make up this book constantly and subtly undermine that intention. The chapters on the development of writing and play explore

the field of early symbolisation, establishing broad continuities between language and other sign systems, and finding the roots of written language in play, drama, and art. The relatively straightforward psychological experiments reported earlier in the book, which are apparently designed simply to establish the existence of a 'second signal system', a refinement of reactological psychology, actually demonstrate the way in which all higher cognitive processes make use of, and are transformed by, the use of signs, and thus lay a firm empirical basis for all of Vygotsky's work on the role of language in thinking and the development of consciousness, and for his great final work, *Thought and Language*.

---

[1] The following extracts will perhaps illustrate the difference in quality between these two translations:
'But while pleasure cannot be regarded as the defining characteristic of play, it seems to me that theories which ignore the fact that play fulfils childrens needs result in a pedantic intellectualization of play. In speaking of child development in more general terms, many theorists mistakenly disregard the child's needs - understood in the broadest sense to include everything that is a motive for action. We often describe a child's development as the development of his intellectual functions; every child stands before us as a theoretician who, characterized by a higher or lower level of intellectual development, moves from one stage to another. But if we ignore the child's needs, and the incentives which are effective in getting him to act, we will never be able to understand his advance from one developmental stage to the next, because every advance is connected with a marked change in motives, inclinations, and incentives.'
Mind in Society, p. 92.

'Nonetheless it seems to me that to refuse to approach the problem of play from the standpoint of fulfilment of the child's needs, his incentives to act, and his affective aspirations would result in a terrible intellectualization of play. The trouble with a number of theories of play lies in their tendency to intellectualize the problem.
I am inclined to give an even more general meaning to the problem; and I think that the mistake of a large number of accepted theories is their disregard for the child's needs - taken in the broadest sense, from inclination to interests, as needs of an intellectual nature - or, more briefly, the disregard of everything that can come under the category of incentives and motives for action. We often describe a child's development as the development of his intellectual functions, i.e. every child stands before us as a theoretical being who, according to the higher or lower level of his intellectual development, moves from one stage to the next.
Without a consideration of the child's needs, inclinations, incentives, and motives to act - as research has demonstrated - there will never be any advance from one stage to the next. It seems to me that an analysis of play should start with an examination of these particular aspects.
It seems that every advance from one age stage to another is connected with an abrupt change in motives and incentives to act.'
'Play and its Role in the Mental Development of the Child' in Bruner et al. (1976) pp. 537-538.

This comparison highlights the way in which the text of *Mind in Society* compresses Vygotsky's prose, and loses the characteristically relaxed tone of the original lecture. In this compression some of the sense is also lost; there is a too rapid gliding over of the essential point of the passage which Vygotsky is at pains to pause on and reiterate - the absolutely central role of affect, and the way in which theories of child development often fail to take adequate account of the fact that all 'development' depends on children's emotional needs, their personal motives and their intentions. Vygotsky's characteristic way of building up an argument systematically, making each link in the chain firm, is also a casualty of the condensation of the argument in the *Mind and Society* version of the passage. Altogether, this comparison leads to a considerable sense of unease about the text of Mind in Society. If all of its editorial changes are as extensive as this, and if they affect the tone and nuance of the original as substantially as they seems to do in the Play chapter, then readers of *Mind in Society* will have to bear in mind that what they are reading may be a very changed version of what Vygotsky wrote, or said (for we know from Luria that Vygotsky's lectures were often delivered without notes).

[2] In my discussion of this chapter I shall draw on both the version found in *Mind in Society* and on that published in the anthology *Play* (Bruner et al, 1976) which, as I have already indicated, seems in many ways a preferable text.

[3] Many examples of the kind of 'terrible intellectualisation' that Vygotsky refers to can now be found in the academic literature on the links between play and literacy. In a recent volume (Christie, 1991) the nature of the research described into children's literacy-related play is often distressingly narrow. Researchers time play episodes, calculate the percentage of time spent in literate behaviours, score children's dramatisations, and measure the use of metalanguage in play. Such studies often focus only on

play which is very *overtly* related to *functional* literacy behaviours. In one study in particular (Williamson and Silvern, 1991) the researchers measure the relationships between engagement in play, 'language production', story comprehension (as judged by a criterion-referenced test) and metaplay (talk about play). They find that although there is no observable correlation between play and comprehansion, there is such a correlation between metaplay, language production and comprehension.. They conclude that, despite the apparent lack of relationship between play and story comprehension, creating play situations can still be argued to be important - 'Otherwise there is no context in which metaplay can naturally occur'.(p.86).

[4]In my article 'Voice and Role in Reading and Writing' (Barrs, 1987) I gave an example of some adolescent non-Standard speakers who were able, when assuming the role of a 'posh' person, to access Standard English forms which they seemed unable to use in their own personae.

.

.

.

.

Chapter eight
VYGOTSKY'S *THOUGHT AND LANGUAGE*

8.0   Introduction

In *Thought and Language* Vygotsky wants to investigate language, the symbolic system that for him is the peak of all the higher mental functions, in that it is involved in the development of all other functions, and is itself such a function. The whole book is an exploration of the way in which social, cultural, and scientific meanings are taken on, internalised, personalised, and then externalised again in communication with others. In the culminating chapter on 'Thought and Word', which I shall deal with separately, the majority of the examples are taken from works of literature, Vygotsky's most complex example of the creation of symbols for others.

However, the study of language and thought in this book is not confined to the language of literature. His subject enables Vygotsky to take a strong public interdisciplinary stand as a psychologist, and assert the relevance to psychological enquiry of many disparate forms of evidence - evidence drawn from theoretical reading in psychology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, philosophy, sociology and anthropology, observation and experiment, introspection, and indirect evidence drawn from cultural sources (such as works of art). In addition, it allows him to assert the centrality to human consciousness of emotion as well as intellect.

Vygotsky's method of enquiry is clearly articulated in the first chapter of the book, and serves as an organising principle throughout the book. He has to find a way of analysing language which will not destroy its essential nature. In the first chapter he explains clearly why reductionist analysis that attempts to break down a complex process or system into its constituent sub-skills or parts must always fail - the whole is always greater than the sum of the parts and such analysis destroys the very phenomenon that it sets out to investigate. Only holistic analysis, which works with units of analysis that still contain the properties of the whole, is adequate to describe the kinds of complexities that are the subject of psychological enquiry:

> 'Psychology, which aims at a study of complex holistic systems, must replace the method of analysis into elements with the method of analysis into units.'
> (Vygotsky, 1986, p.5)[1]

8.1 Word meaning

Vygotsky also needs a way of studying language in use for 'it is only in movement that a body shows what it is' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 65). He therefore takes as his unit of analysis throughout the book word meaning, the semantic properties of words, which will allow him to observe, on a small scale, the interrelationship of thought and language:

> 'Clearly, then, the method to follow in our exploration of the nature of verbal thought is semantic analysis - the study of the development, the functioning, and the structure of this unit, which contains thought and speech interrelated.'(Vygotsky, 1986, p.6)

The unit of analysis he chooses could hardly be more different than that which he had worked with in *The Psychology of Art*, in which he focused on three complete literary works. Yet in some ways, Vygotsky's concerns have not changed. He is still seeking ways, in his psychology as in his literary criticsm, of analysing complex systems without destroying the very features that make them function.

Vygotsky's emphasis on analysis into units rather than analysis into elements, and on the choice of the unit of analysis that will reveal most about the system as a whole, reflects his study of Marx, and his determination to formulate a psychological theory which would be truly Marxist and not merely pay lip service to Marxism. What Vygotsky particularly admired in Marx's method was his unerring choice of the right unit of analysis for revealing the essence of a system:

> 'The whole of Capital is written according to the following method: Marx analyses a single living 'cell' of capitalist society - for example the nature of value. Within this cell he discovers the structure of the entire system and of all its economic institutions.' (quoted in Cole and Scribner, 1978, p.8)

Vygotsky, intent on creating his own Capital, is preoccupied with the problem of finding a comparable unit for psychology:

> 'Anyone who could discover what a 'psychological' cell is - the mechanism producing even a single response - would thereby find the key to psychology as a whole.' (ibid.)

Initially, however, Vygotsky's choice of a unit of analysis does not look promising. A word cannot easily 'mean' by itself; and larger 'meanings' are not arrived at by combining individual units of meaning. In Luria's words:

> The listener or reader never is confronted with the problem of understanding isolated words or sentences. Neither words nor sentences occur "in vacuo"....The

basic process in comprehension consists of deciphering the meaning of the whole message.' (Luria, 1982,p.170)

Nevertheless, the study of language growth in young children reveals that the development of word meaning is an important aspect of their growth, and also reveals changes in their conceptual development. Vygotsky pointed out the difference between the syntactic and semantic aspects of language development:

> 'In mastering external speech, the child starts from one word, then connects two or three words; a little later, he advances from simple sentences to more complicated ones, and finally to coherent speech made up of series of such sentences; in other words, he proceeds from a part to the whole. In regard to meaning, on the other hand, the first word of the child is a whole sentence. Semantically, the child starts from the whole, from a meaningful complex, and only later begins to master the separate semantic units, the meanings of words, and to divide his formerly undifferentiated thoughts into those units. The external and semantic aspects of speech develop in opposite directions - one from the particular to the whole, from word to sentence, and the other from the whole to the particular, from sentence to word. (Vygotsky, 1986, p.219)

By selecting word meaning as his unit of analysis, Vygotsky enables himself to study these transitions and to look at the changes in the relationship between language and thought, and the growth of the semantic field of words.

As well as possible linguistic objections to Vygotsky's choice of a unit of analysis, there are objections from the perspective of psychology. It seems likely that it was Vygotsky's commitment to this unit of analysis which led to differences between him and his followers in Kharkov. Leontiev and the Kharkovites, who had been Vygotsky's students, formulated a revision of Vygotsky's psychology, a 'theory of activity', based on the premise that it is practical activity which is internalised and becomes the foundation of cognitive thought. The Kharkovites discounted Vygotsky's emphasis on the semiotic mediation of this process, and the role of culture and of signs in individual development, considering that he had exaggerated the role of symbols and psychological tools, and underplayed the child's 'actual relationship to reality' - implying that Vygotsky had misunderstood Marx on this point. ('Vygotsky understood the Marxist perspective idealistically. The conditioning of the human mind by social and historical factors was reduced to the influence of human culture on the individual'. Zinchenko, quoted in Kozulin, 1986, p.xlvi).

James Wertsch, one of Vygotsky's chief commentators in the West, shares this view, arguing that:

'Vygotsky's account of word meaning is not a good unit for analysing the development of human consciousness', (Wertsch, 1985, p.198)

and that Vygotsky failed to fulfil his own requirements for a unit of analysis. In *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind* he aligns himself with Leontiev and the Soviet psychologists who helped to formulate the theory of activity. It is ironic that Vygotsky's work should have met these kinds of objections, many of which have their roots in a desire to conform to a prevailing interpretation of Marxist-Leninism, given his own evident commitment to Marx's method of analysis. His goal of applying Marx's method systematically to psychology offered a means of extending Marxism in this field, by enabling it to treat questions of mind and human culture in terms that went beyond behaviourism or materialism.

Vygotsky was convinced that his chosen unit of analysis was adequate for his purposes. What his study of word meaning enabled Vygotsky to do was to consider equally the two major aspects of consciousness to which he wanted to give equal importance: cognition and affect. His book looks at two aspects of word meaning:

1. the cognitive aspect, including the developing relation between thought and language in childhood, its links with concept development,and the relations between children's 'spontaneous' concepts, or meanings, and the 'scientific' concepts that are part of their formal learning,

and

2. the affective aspect, including the personal meanings, derived from social experience, which are expressed in intimacy and can be communicated generally, through literature, in such a way as to bring: 'the most intimate and personal aspects of our being into the circle of social life'.

Vygotsky's theme is the interrelation of thought and language, but his subtext is the creation of consciousness. In the closing pages of *Thought and Language* he celebrates the far-reaching nature of his analysis, and the perspectives that it has opened up:

'Not only one particular thought but all consciousness is connected with the development of the word...The word is a direct expression of the historical nature of human consciousness.' (Vygotsky, 1986, p.256).

In thus taking the construction of consciousness through language for his subject, Vygotsky confronts the great philosophical problem that continually dogs materialism - how does matter think? What is the process whereby it becomes conscious? He sets out to explore this huge question and to demonstrate how consciousness grows and is constructed through the internalisation of signs, both in the species and in the individual. Always building on the basis of dialectical materialism, he erects a structure which will enable all those aspects of mind manifested in signs, including philosophy, art, religion, and expressions of the unconscious, to be accounted for and included in the study of psychology, and regarded as valid evidence of the mind at work. And in this structure, language is the key: 'Thought and speech turn out to be the key to the nature of human consciousness'(ibid, p.256).

8.2   Vygotsky's plan
At the end of the first chapter of Thought and Language Vygotsky sets out his plan of the book. In my summary of the book which follows I shall first give Vygotsky's own outline of its contents, and then my gloss on this outline:

1. *The book begins with a critical analysis of Piaget's theory of thought and language. Vygotsky views Piaget as his only considerable rival in this field, though his own theory proceeds, as he observes, 'in an absolutely opposite direction' from Piaget's. Vygotsky also intends this part of the book to be a general review of the work relating to language and thought. He stresses that in all this his approach will be developmental and he will be concerned with the 'genetic roots' of thought and speech.*

In this part of the book Vygotsky develops his argument through a series of studies of other workers in the field, though the most substantial chapter is that on Piaget. He progressively discards the theories he considers as being either overly biological or insufficiently developmental in their treatment of the relation between thought and language in the development of the species and of the individual. This whole section leads up to the great passage on the development of inner speech and the changing relation between thought and language ('We shall now summarise our investigation of inner speech', p.94) where Vygotsky explains how, at a certain point 'the nature of development itself changes,

from biological to socio-historical'. From this point on in the book, thought and language are explored in their social and human context.

2. *The subsequent study of concept development underlines the developing nature of the relationship between thought and language. This part of the book will begin by an experimental study of concept formation (the Vygotsky blocks), and continue with a study of how children arrive at their spontaneous concepts in real life.*

In this central section, Vygotsky demonstrates through an elegantly designed experiment how concepts develop from simple associations to fully abstract concepts, and the role of 'thinking in complexes' and of 'pseudo-concepts' in this. What the argument shows is that conceptual development can also be seen as the development of word meaning: both have to do with the way that children come to internalise adult (abstract) meanings. But the section then moves beyond a study of development into pedagogy: Vygotsky considers how learning can lead development, and how 'scientific' concepts can be grafted onto children's existing 'spontaneous' concepts.

3. *Finally, there will be an 'analysis of structure and function of verbal thought in general'.*

This final chapter on 'Thought and Word', in which Vygotsky explores the development of word meaning, follows on from the associated study of concept development. Vygotsky examines, only to reject, previous work on semantics, which did not look at word meaning as an evolving thing, and therefore remained stuck at the level of 'associationism' as a theory of how words acquire meanings. Vygotsky's particular focus in this chapter is on inner speech and verbal thought and what happens to language as it goes inside. ('Inner speech works with semantics, not phonetics.' p.244). His study of the nature of inner speech leads him to look, sometimes by implication, at the way in which literature exploits the nature of this inner language, where the senses of words and their soft fringes become more important than their literal meanings. In this way Vygotsky returns, in this last book, to his preoccupations in *The Psychology of Art*.

In the exploration of *Thought and Language* that follows I shall look in
some detail at the chapter on Piaget, and consider what we learn about
Vygotsky's stance as a developmental psychologist from this critique. I
shall then consider the question of internalisation as Vygotsky treats it in
Thought and Language, and consider his account of this fundamental
psychological process - and its differences from the account given by Piaget.
As part of the study of internalisation, I shall then examine what Vygotsky
has to say about writing and learning to write (an example of
externalisation) in the central section of the book, and relate this to the
argument of the chapter on scientific and spontaneous concepts, in which
Vygotsky continues his debate with Piaget. Finally, in a separate chapter, I
shall consider the last chapter of the book, which deals with the
development of word meaning.

Vygotsky, as a psychologist whose roots were in literature and the study of
art, represents a unique promise, the promise of a psychology which might
draw both on the strengths of scientific enquiry and on the powers of
imaginative thought, to create a comprehensive theory of mind and the
development of human consciousness. In this theory creative and artistic
activity would be recognised as having a central part to play in mental
development, and would not be viewed merely as emotional appendages
to the main line of mental growth, or as aspects of cognition. The creation
of a fully adequate psychology which would not subordinate all other
aspects of the study of mind to positivist scientific empiricsm is still a long
way off, but Vygotsky did a great deal to prepare the ground for a new view
of the discipline, and to situate it where it ought properly to be, at the cusp
between the sciences and the arts and humanities, drawing on evidence
and ways of seeing from both of these spheres.

8.3   Vygotsky and Piaget

One of the ways in which Vygotsky defines his stance as a psychologist in
this book is in opposition to other psychologists who had concerned
themselves with the question of the development of language and
thought. From the very first chapter of the book Vygotsky makes clear that
one of his aims is to provide a thorough-going critique of the work of the
one developmental psychologist who had in his view offered a theory of
development which was in any way adequate to the facts (Vygotsky calls it
'the best available'), Jean Piaget. In addition to the long chapter 2, on

'Piaget's Theory of the Child's Speech and Thought', Vygotsky returns to Piaget's work again and again in the book, and particularly in the chapters on 'The Development of Scientific Concepts in Childhood' (Chapter 6) and 'Thought and Word' (Chapter 7).

In fact Vygotsky's critique of Piaget can now, in Kozulin's new edition of Thought and Language, be seen to be much more extensive than it appeared in the first and much shorter edition in English. Vygotsky is concerned to dismantle Piaget's account of early language development systematically because Piaget's view, as he makes plain in Chapter 1 ('The Problem and the Approach'), is exactly the opposite of his own. In the second chapter which deals directly with Piaget's theory, and which can now be seen to have been extensively cut in the 1968 translation, he makes plain just what are the grounds of his deep disagreement with Piaget, and I will summarise these at this point:

i) Piaget's account of development sees the child's thought as originally and naturally autistic, egocentric, and egotistical. Only later, in his view, does a social instinct develop, and does speech become socialised. Vygotsky identified Piaget's theory in this respect very closely with the ideas of Freud, who had seen the pleasure principle as ruling all early behaviour, with the reality principle beginning to affect behaviour only much later in childhood. It is interesting to note that Kozulin's translation shows Vygotsky making constant parallels between Piaget's views and those of Freud on this point; the great majority of these references to Freud, as well as a very long discussion of autism, were simply omitted from the 1968 translation. (eg. 'We find the same idea (egocentrism) in Freud, who claims that the pleasure principle precedes the reality principle.' p.18).

Vygotsky's theory could not be more different from Piaget's on this key point. He sees early development, and particularly the development of speech as being 'essentially social'. On this premise he bases his methodical and convincing study of egocentric speech, in which he shows the crucial role that such speech plays in the development of inner speech and of verbal thought. Vygotsky's view of language as social in its origins is part of his general theory of signs, but also seems to be very much a part of the way he sees babies as taking part in life from their earliest months;

154

his is a far more optimistic and inclusive view of young children than the rather detached picture drawn by Piaget.

ii)Vygotsky's judgement of Piaget's whole stance as a scientist is extremely critical in this chapter. He considers that Piaget avoids the key responsibility of the scientist: to explain. Piaget's consistently empirical approach and unwillingness to generalise prematurely from the facts seems to Vygotsky to be a weakness. Piaget appears to think that he has avoided taking a philosophical position in his work but 'Deliberate avoidance of philosophy is itself a philosophy.' Piaget wants to refrain from explaining psychological phenomena, and instead to substitute a factual account of genetic progression, the order of development, in which one phenomenon is not seen to be the cause of another, but merely to precede it.

Vygotsky is scornful of this evasion:
> 'In his attempt to substitute functional explanation for the genetic explanation of causes, Piaget, without noticing this, made vacuous the very concept of development. In his schema everything is contingent: A may be viewed as a function of B, but at the same time, B may also be viewed as a function of A.'(ibid, p.42. - passage omitted in 1962 translation of *Thought and Language*).

Similarly Vygotsky is dissatisfied with Piaget's eclectic use of sociological or biological frameworks for his description of development, and his rationale for this almost arbitrary way of proceeding ('We have chosen the language of sociology, but wish to emphasize the point that there be nothing exclusive in the choice. We reserve the right to revert to the biological explanation of child thought...' Piaget, quoted in ibid, p.43). For Vygotsky, whose theory of the relationship between the biological and social in development had been thoroughly expounded in the papers that now form Mind in Society, this untheoretical approach is actually shocking, and so is Piaget's apparent unawareness of the meaning of his arbitrariness.
> 'We, thus, arrive at the paradoxical conclusion that the presentation of material can be transformed from the sociological into the biological.The choice of sociological point of view appears as an arbitrary decision of the author....Such a position is not casual for Piaget, and it sheds some light on how he views the role of the social factor in child development in general.'(ibid, p.43, passage omitted in 1962 translation.)

iii) Piaget's account of egocentric speech makes it a useless function which withers away when speech becomes "socialised", instead of a key transitional point in the development of language and thought. The

whole concept of egocentrism, so basic to Piaget's view of development, perpetuates the idea of a dualism between autism and realism, emotion and logic. It also points to the fact that, for Piaget, the biological and the social are in opposition, alien to one another.

This kind of dualism is exactly what Vygotsky has been trying to discredit in his developing theory. He himself is a convinced monist. Vygotsky considered that psychology had as one of its major tasks precisely the reconciliation of biological explanations of elementary psychological functions with sociological explanations of higher mental functions. His own psychology was a systematic attempt to enable these different aspects of behaviour to be brought within one theory.

iv) Finally, Piaget's developmental psychology was, in Vygotsky's view, insufficiently developmental. By seeing logic and abstract thought as alien to the child's egocentric ways of thinking, and presenting adult logic as something which has to replace these primitive ways of thinking, Piaget is actually ignoring the roots of abstraction in the child's thought, and divorcing logic from practical activity altogether. Vygotsky quotes Lenin appositely to show that this is an idealistic view, in which consciousness is derived from itself and not seen to have any connection with practice. Vygotsky will go on to demonstrate, in this book, the way in which, building on practical experience, thought becomes progressively more abstract, and spontaneous concepts, with teaching, are the basis for the development of scientific concepts.

•• ••

Vygotsky finds in Piaget an important opponent, and one whose differences from himself as a psychologist help him to define himself and to articulate his position in more detail. Vygotsky is concerned in this book to show how logical thought and imaginative thought are fundamentally related. In treating both of these aspects of mind, and explaining how they both develop through language and inner speech, he is asserting his own monistic position, and the value that he gives to both the cognitive and the affective. It has been his concern to develop a human and social psychology which is rooted in this philosophical (and Marxist-Leninist) position, and this book represents the fullest expression, so far, of his achievement.

But apart from these theoretical reasons for Vygotsky's adversarial use of Piaget in *Thought and Language,* it is clear that Vygotsky finds Piaget an uncongenial figure. Piaget's patient accumulation of fact, his careful and painstakingly detailed classification of data, is finally wearisome: 'An avalanche of facts, great and small...tumbles down on child psychology from the pages of Piaget' (p.14). This approach is as different as possible from Vygotsky's often sketchy experimental detail and his relatively sparse, and often uncontextualised, data. Piaget's desire to avoid premature generalisation, his desire to be rigorously scientific, and his consequent atheoretical stance and eclecticsm make him, for Vygotsky, an uncommitted, almost unprincipled thinker. This kind of detached empiricsm is not Vygotsky's idea of science; nothing could be further from Vygotsky's own passionate, committed theorising. Finally, Piaget's treatment of his child subjects seems to indicate to Vygotsky a pessimistic and negative view of young children, which again is very different from Vygotsky's optimistic and positive view of their achievement. Piaget regards egocentric speech as essentially useless; for Vygotsky it is both a means of expression and an instrument of thought. His disapproval of Piaget's very attitude to childhood is never stated in this chapter, but is everywhere implied.

Vygotsky returns to Piaget several times throughout *Thought and Language.* The whole book can in a sense be read as a testing of Vygotsky's theory against Piaget's work. In the studies of concept formation, in the discussion of the relationship between learning and development, in the continuing preoccupation with the creation of consciousness, through to the extended discussion of inner speech in the final chapter, Piaget constantly recurs as the protagonist whose psychological picture of childhood, language, development and learning is systematically interrogated and then refuted. In view of Piaget's subsequent influence on educational psychology and educational practice, this is ironic; what would have been the consequences if Vygotsky's arguments had been more widely available in the West from 1934 onwards?

The next chapter in which Vygotsky engages with Piaget's theory is Chapter 6, where, in his discussion of 'The Development of Scientific

Concepts in Childhood', Vygotsky calls into question Piaget's whole view of mental development.

8.4 Internalisation revisited

Any developmental psychologist must have a view of the way in which children internalise their experiences of the world and make them part of their world view. In *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky returns to the exploration of the theory of internalisation which had already played such an important part in his work on the development of higher mental processes.

Internalisation, as Vygotsky presents it in both the papers in *Mind and Society* and in *Thought and Language* is a completely unPiagetian process. For Piaget, internalisation was essentially a matter of internalising actions, through the (originally biological) processes of assimilation and accommodation, whereby the organism either absorbs experience into its existing structure, or slightly adapts that structure to meet new circumstances. Piaget's learners are alone in the world. As if blindfolded, they stagger along bumping into things, and altering their mental maps as a result of these hard knocks. (Piaget's stress on the internalisation of actions is of course interestingly similar to the Kharkovites theory of action which Vygotsky's revisionist colleagues and successors went on to formulate.)

In Vygotsky's account of internalisation, developments are decidedly not contingent on what learners happen to bump in to, they occur for good reasons, and the facts he describes are saturated with theory. Vygotsky's view of internalisation is essentially social. In his work this process is presented as the bridge between biology and social psychology; through internalisation, cultural forms are incorporated into children's developing behaviour. It is interesting to compare how his treatment of this concept in *Thought and Language* relates to its treatment in the papers that make up *Mind in Society*, in which his approach to psychology and psychological method is more orthodox.

In *Mind in Society*, Vygotsky had outlined the process of internalisation, whereby external sign operations, originating in social processes, begin to turn inwards and to be reconstructed inside the child so that they

eventually become part of the child's own thinking. His brief exposition of the working of this process, in the chapter called 'The Internalisation of Higher Psychological Processes', is hardly more than four pages (Vygotsky 1978, p.52-57). In Thought and Language his account of the internalisation of speech and its reconstruction as inner speech, takes up practically the whole of two long chapters, and its ramifications occupy the rest of the book.

The special feature of the development of Vygotsky's theory of internalisation in *Thought and Language*, however, lies in the way that Vygotsky now, not content to describe from the outside the way in which language turns inwards, decides himself, like Alice going down the rabbit hole, to follow speech inside and begin to explore what goes on when inner speech becomes available to form and structure inner processes - for internalisation is the path taken, in their development, by both logic and feeling.

The book provides two dazzlingly different ways of investigating these inner processes. One way is classically experimental and also bears all the hallmarks of a Vygotskyan experiment (which it is to say that it is ingenious, creative, challenging, open-ended, multi-layered, and approaches its subjects respectfully, not as experimental props to be manipulated). This is the study of concept formation. The other way is to be found in the final chapter, which is reflective, introspective, and draws on a great range of evidence from quite different sources - including psychology, linguistics, and indirect evidence from literature and drama. Here, books and writers are brought in as familiar companions and shown to inform Vygotsky's thinking as much as his reading in psychology does, while authors like Tolstoy are credited with being themselves great psychologists, whose business is to explore the workings of the inner worlds of their characters, even as they draw on their own inner material. As always in Vygotsky, internalisation is seen as one part of an essentially dialectical process in which inner worlds are first constructed, and then come to impinge on and to affect external reality.

> 'In Vygotsky's view, the process of art or intellectual creation is antipodal to the process of internalisation' (Kozulin 1986, page xxxviii)

This discussion of the externalisation of inner meanings and inner speech is an important development in *Thought and Language*, and is conducted

mainly in relation to writing. In one or two places in the book before the final chapter, Vygotsky describes something of what is involved in the journey from the densities of inner space to the maximal detail and elaboration of written language.

8.5   Writing as externalisation

In the chapter on 'The Development of Scientific Concepts in Childhood' (Chapter 6), Vygotsky considers the writing process, and why writing must of necessity involve some effort and difficulty, especially for children. [2] He enumerates some of the well-known differences between written and spoken language (absence of intonation, lack of a shared context and an interlocutor) and points to the deliberateness of the writing process, which always implies, especially in these early stages an act of conscious translation.

> 'Inner speech is condensed, abbreviated speech. Written speech is deployed to its fullest extent, more complete than oral speech. Inner speech is almost entirely predicative because the situation, the subject of thought, is always known to the thinker. Written speech, on the contrary, must explain the situation fully in order to be intelligible. The change from maximally compact inner speech to maximally detailed written speech requires what might be called deliberate semantics - deliberate structuring of the web of meaning.'(op.cit.p.182)

Three points stand out in Vygotsky's account of the writing process, all of which have pedagogical implications:

1. One is *the role of inner speech*. The fact that Vygotsky sees writing as an act of translation from inner speech implies that inner speech needs to be established before children can engage fully in the writing process.
Vygotsky has already drawn this conclusion himself:

> '(Oral speech) precedes inner speech in the course of development, while written speech follows inner speech and presupposes its existence (the act of writing implying a translation from inner speech)' (ibid, p.182).

This assumption opens up a major subject of enquiry, into the developmental relationship between learning written language - and therefore learning to read as well as learning to write - and the development of inner speech.

2. Another point relates to the *role of speech in writing*. Vygotsky sees oral speech standing between inner speech and written speech, as a kind of halfway house.   ·

inner speech   >   oral speech   >   written speech

In Vygotsky's account of the act of writing, both inner speech and oral speech are both seen as 'drafts' for written speech (inner speech being the earlier and more condensed draft). This description corresponds to what we know about the support young children can derive from 'talking through' their writing with someone else before they embark on composition.

3. A further point which carries implications both for theory and for practice is Vygotsky's view of the *role of writing in children's growing awareness of language*. Vygotsky sees the deliberation of the act of writing as drawing children's attention to features of language which are generally 'transparent'.

> 'In speaking, he is hardly conscious of the sounds he pronounces and quite unconscious of the mental operations he performs. In writing, he must take cognizance of the sound structure of each word, dissect it, and reproduced it in alphabetical symbols which he must have studied and memorised before.'(ibid,p.182)

There are implications here for the teaching of reading. The continuing controversy about the teaching of 'phonics' has largely ignored the role that writing plays in learning to read. Children may not need a conscious awareness of letter-sound correspondences in the early stages of learning to read but, as Vygotsky explains, they need such phonological knowledge from very early on in learning to write. This need directs their attention to letter-sound correspondences from an early stage, especially when they are not learning to write by copying, but by making their own independent attempt at writing.[3]

8.6   Writing and concept development

Vygotsky uses this study of the externalisation involved in the writing process as an exemplar in his discussion of the relationship between spontaneous and scientific concepts, and therefore in a further stage of his argument with Piaget. Vygotsky sees spontaneous and scientific concepts as different, but interrelated. Piaget had coined the terms 'spontaneous' and 'nonspontaneous' concepts to describe the difference between those concepts that reflect the child's idea of reality, and those that are influenced by rational adult thinking. By making this distinction he had, Vygotsky acknowledges, gone 'further and deeper than any of the other students of children's concepts'(p.153).

However, Vygotsky believes that Piaget saw these two forms of thinking as essentially antagonistic to each other. In a series of confrontations between the two, the egocentric spontaneous concepts are eventually replaced by the mature nonspontaneous concepts, as part of the progressive socialisation of the child's thinking. Spontaneous concepts thus have no real part to play in the child's learning, though it is important to study them, as they offer important clues to the stage of development that the child has reached. Piaget is thus proposing 'a principle of antagonism between development and learning' (p.157, omitted in the 1962 translation). He thinks spontaneous concepts need to be known about, but only because they are what has to be combated in the reshaping of the child's thinking through education.

Vygotsky takes a diametrically different view. While granting the importance of the distinction between spontaneous and what he prefers to term 'scientific' concepts, and considering that they have quite different lines of development, he suggests that both are important in mental growth, and that they are closely connected:

> 'The development of a spontaneous concept must have reached a certain level for a child to be able to absorb a related scientific concept.'(p.194)

They have different strengths; scientific concepts have a 'conscious and deliberate' systematic character, while spontaneous concepts are strong 'in what concerns the situational, empirical and practical'. Thus, they are mutually supportive, providing each other with structures for development:

> 'Scientific concepts grow downward through spontaneous concepts; spontaneous concepts grow upward through scientific concepts' (p.194).

Instead of using examples from science to illustrate the workings of scientific concepts, Vygotsky frequently uses illustrations from language learning; not the learning of the mother tongue, but the learning of a second language or of written language. He finds in writing a good example of the more abstract, voluntary and conscious kind of learning which characterises the learning of scientific concepts. He makes the point that when instruction begins, it has to deal with 'barely emerging, immature functions'; it must build on the basis of children's existing knowledge of oral language and their spontaneous concepts of how writing might work. The mature processes that involve the act of translation from inner speech are not yet formed. The full antipodal relationship between inner speech and written speech that characterise

mature writing, the story of language's voyage into the self and then of the voyage out, will be explored further in Vygotsky's final chapter on 'Thought and Word.'

Thought and Language is very closely focused on the symbolic system of language and does not have much to say about other forms of symbolising activity, but its arguments have considerable importance for any study of symbolic development. In particular, the detailed argument about the internalisation process, helps us to formulate a possible theory of the way in which different kinds of symbolic activity and ways of symbolising can become part of mental functions. We may take it that, like language, any form of symbolising or semiotic activity is likely to go through similar processes of internalisation, and that as it does so it will also be transformed. Benjamin Lee's study of play (1985) shows how Vygotsky's account of the inward path taken by language can be applied to other ways of representing the world.

As they are internalised, these functions will affect each other. One of Vygotsky's themes in Thought and Language is that of interfunctionality. In the papers that make up Mind in Society he had principally been concerned with the development of higher mental functions, the transformation of natural functions into cultural functions, and the role of sign systems in this process. In studying what happens in the further, internal, development of such functions, Vygotsky stresses the interaction between them:

> Their relations and connections do not remain constant. That is why the leading idea is that there is no constant formula of relation between thought and speech that would be applicable to all stages and forms of development or involution.'

In the final chapter of the book, on thought and word, he will pursue this idea of involution still further.

---

1 All references in this chapter are to Alex Kozulin's translation of the text in 1986. If I had had access earlier to the translation of the Soviet publication of Vygotsky's Collected works by Norris Minick (Rieber and Carton, 1987) this might have been a preferable text. Minick's translator's preface to this edition (Minick, 1987) is a very insightful account of Vygotsky's work in psychology in the period leading up to *Thought and Language* (or *Thinking and Speech*).

2 Although Vygotsky's views about learning written language seem to run counter to much modern work which stresses the continuities between learning spoken language and learning written language, it must be acknowledged that something like the complexity of his view of the interrelationships between spontaneous and scientific concepts is needed in thinking about this kind of learning. Throughout the chapter Vygotsky emphasises that the development of scientific concepts can sometimes run ahead of the development of spontaneous concepts and in doing so alter their course; the internalisation of scientific

concepts leads to the systematisation of spontaneous concepts. It is this idea that learning can lead development that constitutes Vygotsky's greatest challenge to our assumptions about educational practice, strongly influenced as they have been for so long by Piagetian stage-oriented developmental psychology.

[3]Even Marilyn Adams concurs that there is evidence that invented spelling develops phonemic awareness. Reviewing all the major studies in this field, she concludes that 'For each group, the practice of inventing spellings was coupled with impressive awareness of and attention to the phonemic structure of words'. (Adams, 1990, p.387).

Chapter nine
VYGOTSKY'S 'THOUGHT AND WORD'.

9.0 Vygotsky's last chapter

In the last chapter of *Thought and Language*, Vygotsky returns to the subject of his earliest book, and to the personal manifesto represented by that book. In *The Psychology of Art*, he had striven to show how literature works, both in terms of the internal organisation of works of art and in terms of the function of art in human society. He had made the strongest possible case for art as a major means by which human consciousness is developed, a 'tool of society'. In revisiting this subject, his argument is immeasurably strengthened by his experiences of the intervening years: his experimental work in psychology, his experience of theory-building and planning a major research programme, and his work on the place of higher mental functions and of psychological tools in human development.

The last chapter is an extraordinary document and one cannot really imagine what its effect might have been on its readers, particularly its readers in the world of psychology, at the time of publication. In it, Vygotsky seems to turn with great pleasure, almost with relief, to the world of literature. His study of word meaning and of the deep semantics of inner speech in this chapter is carried on in relation to literary discourse, which is admitted as completely legitimate evidence of the workings of mind. Vygotsky seems not to acknowledge that he is making any kind of statement through this approach, and yet it must have been a very public and challenging demonstration of his belief that psychology should not confine itself to the study of behaviour in experimental contexts but should study mind in all its manifestations, including works of art. It was this refusal to limit psychology to its traditional empirical sphere that led to Vygotsky being rejected by the psychological community both in his own country and in the West for many years, and makes him still, in many respects, a marginal figure today.

At the time when Vygotsky wrote this chapter the political mood in Soviet Russia was darkening. Party control of scientific and intellectual activity was tightening and the need to demonstrate orthodoxy as a psychologist, both politically (in deriving one's work from Marxist-

Leninist and materialist principles) and scientifically, was becoming more acute. Yet Vygotsky focuses this chapter on the problem of consciousness, a subject which was bound to expose him to rigorous scrutiny, and chooses as its epigraph a verse from Mandelstam, a poet who had been under increasing political suspicion in the 1920s, and whose work was finally banned in 1934, the year when Thought and Language was published. For Vygotsky to choose to quote Mandelstam at this time, and in such a public way, must be seen almost as a manifesto, a statement of his determination to define psychology and its legitimate concerns in his own terms, despite his awareness of the stance of the regime.

The Mandelstam quotation is about the difficulty of voicing thought, or more specifically, for the poet, of writing thought down:

> The word I forgot
> Which once I wished to say
> And voiceless thought
> Returns to shadows' chamber.

Vygotsky had been reading Mandelstam, especially his essay 'On the Nature of the Word' (Mandelstam,1991), and themes from that essay and quotations from the poems thread through this last chapter. It is clear that in many ways he saw Mandelstam's themes and preoccupations as continuous with his own. We shall return later to the Mandelstam poem and look in more depth at the words Vygotsky had running through his head as he wrote this treatise on the word.

9.1 Vygotsky's argument

Vygotsky's argument in the last chapter concerns a) the development of word meaning, b) the formation and nature of inner speech and c) the nature of non-verbal thought and the path it must take to be realised in language. He is concerned to stress the role of affect in this: desires and needs are what give birth to thought and language, and Vygotsky's argument in this chapter has running through it many examples which underline the role of emotion and affect in the genesis of thought.

9.1.1

a) The development of word meaning

The first part of the chapter (pp.210-224) defines the shifting nature of the relationship between thought and word. Vygotsky is impatient with most

theorists who have written about word meaning (Kulpe, Selz, Ach and the Gestalt psychologists are discussed). All of this work errs in his view because it is tinged with "associationism", the theory that words acquire meanings by being constantly associated with them. This view leads into a blind alley, for it ignores the dynamic nature of word meanings and the fact that they both change and develop. In an outstanding passage, Vygotsky describes how 'the external and semantic aspects of speech develop in opposite directions' and how words come to mean both less and more, as children's vocabulary grows and becomes more differentiated, but words lose some of the layers of connotative meaning that they have held. This focus on the way that language travels between the inner and the outer worlds, the nature of both the voyage in and of the voyage out, will preoccupy Vygotsky for the rest of the chapter.

9.1.2

b) The formation and nature of inner speech

Vygotsky turns to inner speech and his quarrel with Piaget (pp.224-235), and returns to the experiments on egocentric speech reported in Chapter 2. These experiments revealed important facts about the nature of inner speech. Studies of egocentric speech 'on the way in' demonstrated its increasingly idiosyncratic syntax, 'abbreviated and incoherent' in character, and its increasingly predicative style, like the speech of intimates.

In order, apparently, to clarify still further the nature of inner speech, Vygotsky refers back to the contrastive analysis he made in Chapter 6 of the characteristics of inner, outer and written speech. In this passage, he is also concerned with the antipodal relationship between these forms - the way oral speech is abbreviated and internalised as inner speech, and the way that inner speech must be expanded and elaborated in the act of writing. Though Vygotsky does not entirely acknowledge what he is doing, from now on his focus in the rest of the chapter will largely be on the 'deliberate structuring of the web of meaning' which takes place in writing. This focus will enable him to look at the longest journey which thoughts have to travel:

thought > word meaning > inner speech > (oral drafts) > writing

Moreover, out of all the many kinds of written language, Vygotsky refers more and more from now on to literature and particularly to poetry. Out of the forty five references in this chapter, over half are to literature, and of these about half are to poetry. These poetic references are particularly predominant in the last part of the chapter.

The reason for this becomes clear as Vygotsky unfolds his description of the characteristics of inner speech (pp.235-249). He begins to explore the essence of this speech form, which is that it works 'with semantics, not phonetics'. Words in inner speech become concentrates of sense, which need considerable expansion in order to be expressed in oral speech. Vygotsky identifies three 'semantic peculiarities' of inner speech:

    i) the predominance of 'sense' over meaning

    ii)the agglutination of words in inner speech - the way words are combined into compounds

    iii) the way words acquire layers of meaning and become 'saturated with sense'.

Implicitly, as Vygotsky explores these characteristics of inner speech, he is showing what it is that writers and poets have to work with in their creation of symbols for others. The connotative character of inner speech, the predominance of moods, sounds, shades of meaning, allusions, the texture and feel of words, the dynamic, fluid and personal nature of inner language, are the resources that poetry exploits.

There is a paradox in this, for what Vygotsky goes on to show is that all these characteristics of inner speech make it likely to be incomprehensible or opaque to others, even if there were any way of recording it fully or sharing it with others. Yet it is this very density that poetry taps into. The condensed semantics of inner speech find their closest outer parallel in poetic language. This is not the same as suggesting that poetry makes raids on the unconscious - inner speech in Vygotsky's model is a real and observable phenomenon, even though observation of it may be difficult and partial. But it does go some way to describing what it is that poets, in particular, do when they turn private language and private symbols into language and symbols for others. Vygotsky suggests that in inner speech a single word can become a 'concentrate of sense', needing 'a multitude of words...to unfold it into overt speech'. Part of the power of poetry,

however, lies in not completely unpacking these 'concentrates of sense', but allowing them to enter the inner speech of others, and to unfold in the mind of the reader.

Yet at the same time, of all the ways of 'structuring the web of meaning', poetry is the most deliberate. It is this paradox in poetry, the fact that it is both the most conscious and artful way of using language, yet that which is most responsive to the subterranean and condensed meanings of inner speech, that makes it a uniquely powerful medium. In this last chapter, Vygotsky quotes frequently from poets - from Mandelstam, Pushkin, Tiutchev, Fet, Klebnikov, Gumilev and Goethe - while his own writing, particularly in the last pages, takes on more and more the character of poetry.

9.1.3
c) The nature of non-verbal thought

Vygotsky has not yet completed his voyage into the interior. He now looks at what lies beyond inner speech, on a still more inward plane. 'That plane is thought itself'.

Vygotsky's analysis (p.249-254) leaves unexplained whether 'thought itself' is intended to be understood as a yet deeper internalisation of language - what James Britton has illuminatingly termed 'post-verbal symbols' (Britton, personal communication) - which would be the logical and seemingly necessary conclusion from the general argument of the book. He has, on the other hand, always maintained that there are areas of thought which lie outside language, and at this point in the chapter he stresses that there is no necessary or exact correspondence between thought and speech, as can be seen when 'a thought will not enter words'. Thought has its own structure, and is not made up of separate units, as language is. In further expounding this idea, Vygotsky refers to mental or eidetic imagery, and to the way in which a complex thought can be contained in a single graphic image, which will have to be translated into a linear form as it is put into words. Vygotsky seems to be suggesting that other semiotic systems and ways of symbolising meaning may, in their internalised form, help to make up thought - but this part of his argument is weaker for the lack of any clue as to what he really intends by 'thought itself', and what he sees as its genetic roots.

The rest of the chapter deals with two major questions:

1. the path that thought must follow in its 'voyage out', particularly in order to find its fullest and most elaborated expression in written language,

and:

2. the role that emotion and affect play in the engendering of thought.

Vygotsky has stressed from the first chapter of the book that thought is not an abstract, purely cognitive process; it is powered by desires, needs, interests, and feelings. Intellect and affect are separated by psychology, but this is a major weakness, 'since it makes the thought process appear as an autonomous flow of "thoughts thinking themselves", segregated from the fullness of life, from the personal needs and interests, the inclinations and impulses, of the thinker' (p.10) . Stanislavsky's analysis of the subtext behind a text provides Vygotsky with a neat illustration of what is involved in understanding spoken language:

'To understand another's speech it is not sufficient to understand his words - we must understand his thought. But even that is not enough - we must also know its motivation. No psychological analysis of an utterance is complete until that plane is reached.' (p.253)

The work of the actor consists of uncovering the true meaning of the utterance, which may be different from the overt meaning of the words.

Essentially both of these points have to do with tracing the path of the voyage out. In thinking about what is involved in expanding thought into written language, Vygotsky focuses on the shifts that occur during the successive 'drafting' that takes place during the 'deliberate structuring of the web of meaning'. The model he proposes of such drafting was outlined in my previous chapter and looks like this:

thought > meaning > inner speech > (oral drafts) > written speech

In considering the affective basis of thought, however, Vygotsky draws the map of the journey slightly differently:

affective		emergence		meaning realised
volitional	> thought >	of	>	in
basis		meaning		language

170

Here the stress is on what lies behind even thought itself - the feeling or impulse that leads to the original thought and its successive stages of expression.

At the end of the chapter, Vygotsky's summary of what his argument has shown (p.254-256) is confident and unequivocal. Thought is born through words, and words are seen as the culmination of development. Briefly Vygotsky sketches, in a paragraph, what would have been his response to the Kharkovites' revisions of his work in their 'theory of activity'. He perfectly accepts that activity has a fundamental part to play in human development, but places language at the peak of development:

> 'The word was not in the beginning, action was there first; it is the end of development, crowning the deed.' (p.256).

9.2   The construction of consciousness

Finally, Vygotsky returns to his subtext, the problem of consciousness. His closing paragraphs are condensed, almost notes. In the 1962 English translation this passage is even more condensed as it is cut by the translators to about a third of its length, with most of the philosophical content omitted. Vygotsky's tone in these last sentences is triumphant; in word meaning he has found his 'cell', the unit of analysis which has allowed him to investigate the furthest recesses of the psyche. Using this one building block he has constructed an immense piece of architecture, his Capital.

Vygotsky has shown how consciousness is constructed through language, and consciousness has a radical transforming power. Kozulin quotes his notes on this subject from one of his Collected Papers, 'The Problem of Consciousness':

> 'Of course life defines consciousness. Consciousness is only one of its moments. But once it has emerged, consciousness itself starts to define life.' (quoted in Kozulin, 1990, p.245)

It is the demonstration of the objective existence of mental lives and worlds beyond the mechanically materialistic world of the behaviourists, that Vygotsky celebrates. His preoccupation with the problem of consciousness had been the subject of his first foray into psychology; his first paper had taken as its subject the problem of conscious behaviour (ibid.p.73). He persisted to the end in labouring to establish the objective existence of the creative human mind and therefore of much which had

171

been termed 'idealistic' in previous psychology. By enlarging the boundaries of psychology to take in more than external behaviour and activity, he laid the basis of a new cultural and humanistic psychology, which we are only just beginning to inhabit.

9.3   Inner Speech

Volosinov, like Vygotsky, considered that:

> 'the semiotic material of the psyche is preeminently the word - inner speech....Were it to be deprived of the word, the psyche would shrink to an extreme degree.' (Volosinov, 1986, p.29)

Inner speech, its development, status, and particular characteristics, lies at the heart of the last chapter of Thought and Language and I shall now explore Vygotsky's theory of it in more depth.

The nature of this speech function, which Vygotsky recognises as that which is most difficult to investigate, is demonstrated above all through the experiments on egocentric speech. These experiments, however, allow Vygotsky to study only the ontogenesis of inner speech, its very beginnings, and not its later developments, which have to be glimpsed through the (mainly literary) examples that begin to be widely used in the latter part of the chapter. Moreover, the experiments lead Vygotsky to view inner speech mainly as interiorised monologue.

Yet although Vygotsky unhesitatingly classes written speech and inner speech together as monologic, and in one place in the chapter expresses the view that monologue is a 'higher, more complicated form, (of speech) and of later historical development', this classification of inner speech presents him with an unacknowledged difficulty. When he comes to look at the characteristics of inner speech he finds that in many ways this speech form has more in common with dialogue than with monologue, for instance in its tendency to predication. This tendency, never found in written speech and only sometimes in oral speech, arises in inner speech always. Predication is the natural form of inner speech' - though in outer speech it is only found in particular contexts, such as between intimates with shared perceptions. This leads Vygotsky to suggest that in inner speech we are in fact in dialogue - an inner dialogue with ourselves.

> 'In inner speech, the 'mutual' perception is always there, in absolute form...'(page 243).

Vygotsky knew the work of Lev Jakubinskij, the linguist, and his work on dialogue and had read Jakubinkij's article "On Dialogic Speech"(1979), which was originally published in 1923. One reason why we may be fairly sure that Vygotsky had read the article is because of parallels between the examples from literature that he uses in this chapter and Jakubinskij's examples. These include the long quotation from Dostoevsky's *A Writer's Notebook*, which Vygotsky uses to illustrate a point about the abbreviation of speech in dialogue, and which is used by Jakubinskij to illustrate the same point. It seems likely that Vygotsky absorbed a good deal from the article, whether or not he used it directly during the writing of the chapter.

In the article Jakubinskij sets out to examine dialogue, or direct verbal interaction. In the course of a brief but intense and illuminating paper he touches on the place of mime, gesture, facial expression and intonation in direct face-to-face dialogue, on the abbreviation of speech between intimates ('speaking by hints'), and on the tendency of all speech, even monologic speech, towards dialogue.[1] The whole of Jakubinskij's argument in the article very interestingly prefigures - as Jane Knox points out in her introduction to it in *Dispositio* - the later work of Bakhtin on the 'dialogic imagination'. Jakubinskij's work was certainly known to Volosinov, and is frequently cited in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1986) which borrows some of Jakubinskij's terminology.

It is possible that Vygotsky had not read the work either of Volosinov or of Bakhtin, though as Ladislaw Matejka points out (Matejka, 1986, p.171) both Volosinov and Vygotsky borrowed Jakubinskij's Dostoevsky's quotation, and both wrestled with the question of the relationship between inner speech and outer or oral speech. Matejka finds them coming to very similar conclusions on this subject, with inner speech being defined by each of them as a completely different speech function from oral speech. Volosinov's views on this matter:

> 'It is clear from the outset that without exception all categories worked out by
> linguistics for the analysis of the forms of external language-speech (the
> lexicological, the grammatical, the phonetic) are inapplicable to the analysis of
> inner speech...' (op.cit.p.38)

strongly recall Vygotsky's.

Had Vygotsky been more closely acquainted with the work of Volisinov or Bakhtin[2] he might have been inclined to explore more fully the dialogic, rather than the monologic, aspect of inner speech. For the words of others,

as Volosinov points out, are in fact taken into inner speech, it is there that 'Word comes into contact with word.' The background to all spoken dialogue is the inner dialogue taking place in the inner speech of both parties. 'After all, it is not a mute wordless creature that receives such an utterance but a human being full of inner words.'

9.4   Inner planes

For both Volosinov and Vygotsky, inner speech is key territory because it is the area where the inner and outer worlds of experience meet. It is where the formation and development of mind takes place, and is thus of importance both to psychology and philosophy. It is interesting to observe the metaphors used by these and other thinkers to picture this territory of inner speech. Volosinov describes the relations between inner speech and outer speech as those between a sea, and an island rising from the sea:

> 'The outwardly actualised utterance is an island rising from the boundless sea of inner speech; the dimensions and forms of this island are determined by the particular situation of the utterance and its audience.' (op. cit. p.96)

The form of the island is decided by the context of the utterance, but the sea from which it rises is formless, boundless, infinitely potential.

Vygotsky, in the last chapter, habitually refers to the 'planes' of verbal and non-verbal thought. He conceives of a series of inwardly receding planes, which range from the outermost plane of external speech to the inmost plane of feeling, motivation, intention - the 'affective-volitional' basis of all cognition. Between these are the planes of inner speech and that of 'thought itself'. Affect is thus imagined as lying at the core of all verbal and intellectual activity.

I have already suggested that although the plane of inner speech is explored relatively thoroughly by Vygotsky, the plane of 'thought itself' is left unexplored, while that of affect and emotion is also only sketched in on this inner map. It is interesting to speculate how Volosinov's work might have been able to help Vygotsky conceptualise in more detail what might be present on these inner planes. Volosinov's brilliant contribution to this area of psychology lies in his argument about the fundamental role of signs in experience. He maintains that 'experience exists even for the person undergoing it only in the material of signs. Outside that material there is no experience as such' (op.cit. p.28). All experience is potential expression - through gesture or intonation or movement or facial

expression, even if not through language. And Volosinov proceeds to demonstrate the wide vocabulary of sign material available to the psyche by his astonishing list of examples of what can count as sign:

'What then is the sign material of the psyche? Any organic activity or process: breathing, blood circulation, movements of the body, articulation, inner speech, mimetic motions, reaction to external stimuli (eg light stimuli) and so forth. In short, anything and everything occuring within the organism can become the material of experience, since everything can acquire semiotic significance, can become expressive.'(ibid.)

At the same time Volosinov acknowledges that the most important sign material of the psyche is language: 'The semiotic material of the psyche is preeminently the word - inner speech' (ibid.)

This powerful contribution enables us to conceptualise more clearly what might be found on Vygotsky's inner planes. There is the *plane of inner speech*, that most fully described by Vygotsky, where speech becomes abbreviated and is marked by predication, compression and agglutination. This plane is clearly a continuum - Vygotsky's experiments on the development of this speech form suggest that there must be a zone close to the border with external speech where inner speech is almost as elaborated as oral speech, and another, close to the border of the more inward plane of thought, where inner speech is maximally compressed and at the point of being transmuted into 'post-verbal symbols'.

Next comes the *plane of thought*. Here we would find post-verbal symbols but also other thought material from other symbol systems - including 'presentational symbols', in Suzanne Langer's term (Langer, 1980). Her distinction between presentational and discursive symbolism provides a helpful means of describing ways of thinking that are different from or lie beyond language. In her account of mind, although language is recognised as a major instrument of thought, it is not the only means of knowing the world. Earlier ways of knowing are 'the abstractions made by the ear and the eye - the forms of direct perception'. These non-discursive symbols constitute a different kind of semiotic material which is no less part of mind. [3]

Finally there is the *'affective-volitional'* plane of feelings, needs, desires, and intentions. Because this plane is still less available to scrutiny, it becomes even harder to imagine what is to be found there. But Volosinov's list gives us a suggestive start. The sign material of affect will
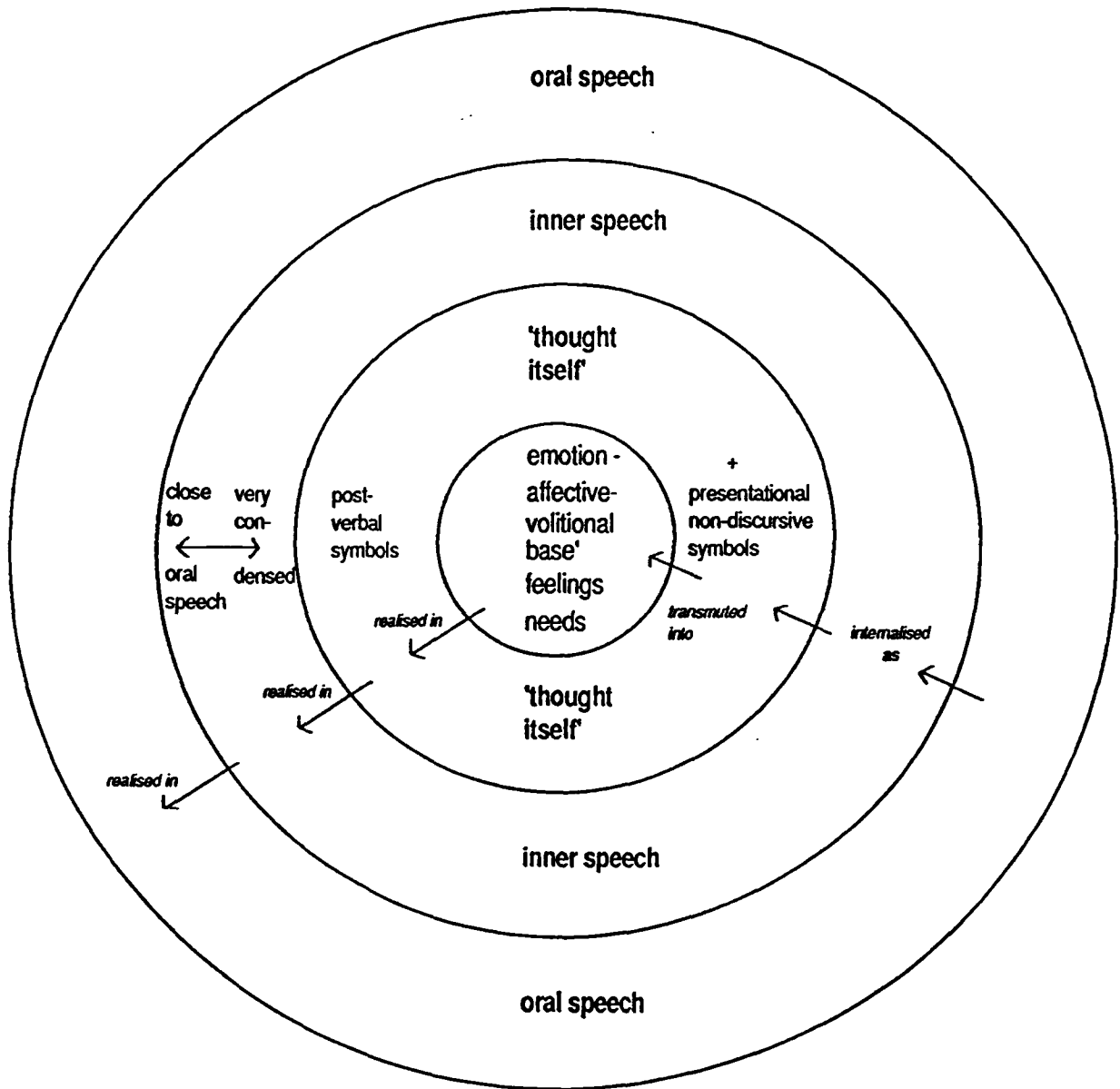
need to express the feelings that lie behind thought. Vygotsky's use of Stanislavsky's directions to actors in order to illustrate this point reveals how it is that such feelings are generally expressed and understood - through the language of the body, through facial expression, through habits and mannerisms, through breathing.

But these are the most outward and obvious signs of affect, and we should also include in the sign material on this plane what D.W.Harding in his essay on 'The Hinterland of Thought' calls: 'much finer postural sets and movements: shrinking, local tensions, twistings, asymmetries of muscle tone, and also contractions of smooth muscle in the viscera and changes in the circulatory system'(Harding, 1974, p.178). (There is a striking similarity between Harding's list and that of Volosinov). Harding describes this kind of physical behaviour as 'an intimate gesturing of the whole body, which may accompany or precede or entirely replace the outcropping of a belief or attitude in cognitive terms' (ibid.). He stresses that behaviour of this kind, which is sometimes difficult or impossible to detect, may be the only way in which some ideas, beliefs or attitudes exist - though psychoanalysis or psychotherapy may bring them 'to verbal formulation or other ideational recognition.' A person's expressed thoughts and beliefs may be at variance with their inner feelings and attitudes. As Vygotsky suggested: 'No psychological analysis of an utterance is complete until that plane is reached.'(op.cit. p. 253)

With the help of thinkers like Harding, Langer, and Volosinov, we are therefore able to attempt a sketch map of Vygotsky's 'inner planes' (see Table 5).This should be recognised for what it is, as a way of playing with these ideas creatively, the better to understand them. The map could never be completed, and there are many ways in which it is visibly incomplete as it stands. One of the most obvious ways is the fact that it is closely focused on the relations between language and thought, and therefore does not follow the lines of development of other non-discursive forms of thought.

However, the map does allow us to consider the relations between Vygotsky's inner planes, which are important to his theory of thought and word, but not closely examined in his chapter. The semiotic material in each plane undergoes a transmutation as a thought moves into the next

Table 5

oral speech

inner speech

'thought
itself'

emotion -
affective-
volitional
base'
feelings
needs

+
presentational
non-discursive
symbols

post-
verbal
symbols

close   very
to   con-
⟵   ⟶
oral   densed
speech

realised in

*transmuted
into*

*internalised
as*

'thought
itself'

realised in

realised in

inner speech

oral speech

A sketch map of Vygotsky's 'inner planes'

plane - thought, for example, is, on its voyage outwards into consciousness, realised in inner speech. Similarly, on the inward voyage, thoughts are transmuted into affects, and the semiotic material in which they are expressed changes at this point. Of course, there would in reality be a constant and dynamic interchange between these planes, which would undergo continual change as they incorporated new language, thoughts and feelings through interaction between these outer and inner worlds.

In moving outward, thought travels further away from its affective roots and further towards the purely cognitive. Language becomes progressively less connotative and more denotative as it moves from the more condensed and private imagery of the plane of thought, and towards the elaborate discursive symbolism of external public language. And words which, in the furthest recesses of inner speech, are 'concentrates of sense', packed with personal associations, as they move outwards into external speech begin to be used in less idiosyncratic ways, and take on more clearly differentiated and public meanings.

9.5 Vygotsky's theories and Mandelstam's poem

'Swallow', the poem that Vygotsky quotes from in his epigraph for the last chapter of *Thought and Language*, is resonant with his preoccupations in the chapter. The imagined setting for the poem seems to have a strange affinity with one of Vygotsky's inner planes, the plane of inner speech. The voyage out into the world of external speech, and the difficulty of making that voyage, of expressing private meanings in public language, is the topic of Mandelstam's poem, and I should like to end my study of *Thought and Language* by exploring some of these ideas through a discussion of the poem.

Vygotsky's focus on literature in this chapter implicitly proposes it as a major site for exploring issues to do with word meaning,inner speech, and thought. In this respect Vygotsky's argument is like that of Bakhtin, who considered that literature was a means of understanding human consciousness. Because literature, in Bakhtin's view, is continuous with, and the furthest development of, ordinary speech, and because human consciousness is formed through language, the analysis of literature can:

'reveal such capacities of human consciousness and communication which remain undeveloped or invisible in other media of communication.' (Kozulin 1991, p.183).

In particular, the creation of a work of literature raises, in a particularly acute form, questions of how innermost thoughts are, often with difficulty and effort, brought into inner speech and finally elaborated in writtten speech. All writing involves this journey, as we have seen, but the writing of literature and especially of poetry, in which every word, with all of its associations and connotations, is significant, allows the process to be studied minutely.

Like Vygotsky, Mandelstam was a thinker who was preoccupied with defining the scope and nature of his chosen craft. Like him, he was pushing at the boundaries of that craft, working at its cutting edge. His prose writing, with its idiosyncratic, energetic pursuit of ideas, and his poetry writing, with its ceaseless experimentation, striking metaphor, and allusive logic - making him a poet who is always difficult, and often almost untranslateable - are comparable to the brilliant and compressed psychological writings of Vygotsky. Also, like Vygotsky, Mandelstam was a Jew who had managed to achieve success in a society which was systematically anti-semitic. Since 1926 he had increasingly written about his Jewishness, which he had begun to rediscover. There was a strong affinity between the two thinkers on all of these points.

Vygotsky's choice of Mandelstam is obviously meaningful; his use of the quotation as an epigraph is a political act. For many years before 1934, the year when *Thought and Language* was published and Mandelstam was exiled, the poet had been suspect in the eyes of the regime and had been the subject of investigation and criticism. He found difficulty in publishing his poetry. In 1933 his privately circulated epigrammatic poem on Stalin was the event that led to his arrest and exile in 1934. Vygotsky's own work had been coming under what Van Der Veer and Valsiner term a 'carefully orchestrated attack' since 1931, with articles being published against his theories, and an investigation taking place into his work in 1933. Some of his closest associates had moved to Kharkov and started to distance themselves from his position by 1933 (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991, p.290). Vygotsky must have felt sympathy for Mandelstam in the shadow of the times that they were approaching.

But Vygotsky's choice of Mandelstam was also a personal choice. Mandelstam and Vygotsky evidently knew each other personally, although the only direct reference to their meetings is in Nadezhda Mandelstam's account (1989), and refers to the year 1933. At any rate, Vygotsky's copy of Mandelstam's *Tristia*, from which the poem 'Swallow' is taken, was dedicated to him personally by Mandelstam in a printed dedication at the time of publication in 1922. There is therefore every reason to think that Vygotsky knew and followed Mandelstam's work. In this chapter it is possible that he is drawing on ideas from Mandelstam's major essay 'On the Nature of the Word' (Mandelstam, 1991, pp. 117-132) - one of Vygotsky's main themes, the difficulty of realising thought in words, is part of Mandelstam's argument in that essay, and Mandelstam quotes in illustration of that point exactly the same two lines from the poet Tiutchev that Vygotsky uses in this chapter:

'How can the heart fully express itself?
How can someone ever know you?'

Mandelstam's poem also centres round the difficulty of expression, the failure of language:

The word I forgot
Which once I wished to say
And voiceless thought
Returns to shadows' chamber'

Yet this is of course a paradox; the poem itself is evidence of the poet's eloquent control of words. And the poem is not entirely a lament - the fleeting, independent character of words is also celebrated here, as in other writings by Mandelstam.

In my discussion of this poem I shall use a recent translation by James Greene (Mandelstam, 1989) which, of all those available, seems both (as far as I can tell) the most accurate and consistent, and also the most poetically satisfying. This translation is printed here for ease of reference.

Swallow

I have forgotten the word I wanted to say.
On severed wings, to play with the transparent ones,
The blind swallow flies back to her palace of shadows.
Night songs are sung in frenzied absentmindedness.

No birds are heard. No blossom on the immortelle.
The manes of the night horses are transparent.
An empty boat floats on an arid estuary
And, lost among grasshoppers, the word swoons.

It slowly grows, like a tent or shrine,
Now throws itself down like demented Antigone
Now like a dead swallow falls at one's feet,
With Stygian affection and a green twig.

Oh to bring back the shyness of clairvoyant fingers,
Recognition's rounded happiness!
I am so afraid of the sobbing of the Muses,
Of mist, of bells, of brokenness

They who are going to die can love and see,
Even sound can pour into their fingers,
But I have forgotten what I wanted to say
And a thought without flesh flies back to its palace of shadows.

The transparent one keeps on saying the wrong thing:
Always swallow, my love, Antigone...
And on my lips the black ice burns,
The recollection of Stygian clamour.

The setting of the poem is the classical Underworld, the shores of the Styx.
Dead souls rustle like leaves, transparent shades. Donald Rayfield in his
introduction to this edition of the poems (Rayfield, 1988) remarks that in
Tristia, the world of the dead is ever-present. This Underworld is both a
place of exile, and a refuge full of 'Stygian affection', tender and nurturing.
Mandelstam's attitude towards the silence of this world set apart is full of
ambiguity. The scene is in many ways a barren one - there is no birdsong,
only the scraping of grasshoppers, there are no flowers. An empty boat
drifts on the river, which has almost dried up. The mood recalls 'The
Waste Land' - there is a shrinking, a fear of failure, a dry forgetfulness as
'the word swoons'.

Yet there is also an impulse to become, a sense of being on the brink of
meaning. The word 'slowly grows, like a tent or shrine', or mimes
passionate feeling. It is infinitely potential. To fix its meaning at all might
perhaps be to limit it too much, as Mandelstam wonders in his essay
'Word and Culture':

> 'Is the thing really the master of the word? The word is a Psyche. The living word
> does not designate an object, but freely chooses for its dwelling place, as it were,
> some objective significance, material thing, or beloved body. And the word
> wanders freely around the thing, like the soul around an abandoned but not
> forgotten body.'(Mandelstam, 1991, p.115).

The soul, or Psyche, according to Donald Rayfield, symbolises for
Mandelstam 'the free spirit, the unspoken word'. The swallow 'the
classical symbol of communication between the land of the living and the

city of the dead' is free to wander between the two spheres, and to bring back green leaves from the living world. Rayfield suggests that it represents both free poetic thought and political freedom. In a world where men are executed for their words, as the poet Gumilev had been executed in 1921, there is, of course, a kind of freedom in silence.

Yet in the poem the swallow's wings are clipped, and finally it dies at the poet's feet, seemingly exhausted from its journey. The overwhelming mood of the poem seems to be one of regret for lips that can no longer speak and envy for fingers that can still write - into which 'sound pours'. 'Those who are going to die', who inhabit the living world, still have this ease and fluency. The poet, whose home is now the twilight world of the dead, is cut off from them.

It may have been as much as anything the setting and atmosphere of this poem that drew Vygotsky towards it. It pictures a shadowy world before speech, on the other side of speech. This underworld, or underside of things, like D.W Harding's 'hinterland of thought', is largely unmapped and unmappable, but is sketched in as a real landscape, perhaps an internal landscape, with trees, a river, grasshoppers, plants, transparent figures. It is a 'palace of shadows', constructed with hints and half seen through night and leaves. For Vygotsky, who at the beginning of the final chapter of *Thought and Language* was about to embark on a voyage into just such an unmapped world, the poem may have suggested something of the feeling of the 'inner planes' that he wanted to explore[4].

Most particularly, the situation of the poem, which takes place on the very bank of the river which marks the boundary between the underworld and the world of the living, is a powerful symbol for the moment that Vygotsky returns to again and again in this chapter, the moment when a thought enters words, when the boundary between two of his 'inner planes' is crossed. It is this sense of a brink, the poet's meaning trembling on the edge of words, the *liminality* of the world that Mandelstam pictures and where the swallow hovers, that creates the strongest link between the thought and feeling of the poem and those of Vygotsky's chapter.

In the poem, Mandelstam reveals his private images and allows them to enter the consciousness of others. Perhaps no other poet celebrates and

explores the world of the inner and private senses of words so unceasingly as Mandelstam. His poem is an embodiment of what Vygotsky saw as creative activity, in which 'inner context-dependent senses gradually unfold their meanings as symbols-for-others' (Kozulin, 1986, p.xxxviii). It may stand here both for the most developed use of written speech, and as a 'tool of society', the cultural tool that Vygotsky knew literature to be, and that he strove to prove it to be through his psychology.

But it is also a reminder of the broader and more public and political destiny of words. In this poem about the failure of speech or, as Donald Rayfield would have it, the triumph of silence, Mandelstam touches on themes to which he returns in his prose writings. In 'The Word and Culture', Mandelstam acknowledges that words are dangerous things, that they are entering a period of trial:

> 'The life of the word has entered a heroic era. The word is flesh and bread. It shares the fate of bread and flesh: suffering.'(op.cit, p.115.)

The passage that follows is that which questions the necessary link between word and thing ('Is the thing really the master of the word? The word is a Psyche.'). It is the power of resistance in words that Mandelstam celebrates here, the inability of meanings to be made fixed, the strength that lies in language itself to break through constraints and not to submit to final or official definitions.

Vygotsky's words, as he wrote *Thought and Language* in his last illness, were already under hostile scrutiny. After his death they were to be denounced and suppressed as heresy, and subsequently to pass through many stages of incomprehension and distortion. The exact nature of his achievement in psychology would perhaps never be fully recognised, even though, sixty years later, psychologists and educationalists in many parts of the world would venerate his work. The last chapter of *Thought and Language* was to remain unread in the West in its full form until Kozulin's translation of 1986. As he dictated it, on May 13th 1934, four days after his first haemorrhage and just under a month before his death on June 11th, Mandelstam was arrested.

---

[1] Jakubinskij refers in the article to the need recognised by many serious linguists for a "theory" of dialogue and monologue, and to the work of Scerba, whose student he had been, and whom he describes as a definite 'dialogist'. (It is Scerba whose work Vygotsky cites in *Thought and Language* when he refers to some linguists who consider dialogue as the most natural form of language, and monologue as 'to a great extent artificial' (p.242)). Jakubinskij demurs at Scerba's view of dialogue as a more natural form ('In the long run both monologue and dialogue are equally natural phenomena of any given social order'), but the whole thrust of his article shows him also to be a 'dialogist'. Even when language is at its most monologic, as in written speech and in literature, he demonstrates that it retains something of the character of dialogue.

2 Bakhtin drew attention to the dynamic and social nature of language itself:
   'The word is not a tangible object but an always shifting, always changing means of communication.
   It never rests with one consciousness, one voice. Its dynamism consists in movement from speaker to
   speaker, from one context to another, from one generation to another. Through it all, the word does
   not forget its path of transfer and cannot completely free itself from the power of those concrete
   contexts into which it has entered. By no means does each member of the community apprehend the
   word as a neutral medium of the language system, free from the intentions and untenanted by the
   voices of its previous users. Instead, he receives the word from another voice, a word full of that
   other voice.' (quoted in Titunik, 1986, p.199)
The basic material of speech and of inner speech is here shown to be inescapably dialogic in its nature.

3 The symbols found in art, mime and music, which enable thoughts and feelings to be presented as
complex wholes, help us to understand better Vygotsky's hints of what else might be contained on this
plane. Vygotsky stresses that thoughts are wholes: 'Thought, unlike speech, does not consist of separate
units', and gives the example of the speaker who wishes to 'communicate the thought that today I saw a
barefoot boy in a blue shirt running down the street...I conceive of this all in one thought.'(p. 251). The
very functioning of presentational symbols, as described by Langer, 'depends on the fact that they are
involved in a simultaneous, integral presentation' (Langer, 1980, p.97). Moreover, Langer suggests that
these ways of thinking are often better adapted to the realisation and articulation of feeling than
language is. Her description of the subtle 'connotational semantics', the 'unconsummated symbol', (op.cit.,
p.240) of music is an excellent illustration of the powerful nature of this inner semiotic, but non-
linguistic, material. By allowing her theories to inform our map of this inner territory, we enable crucial
transitions between thought and feeling to be more carefully described.

4 Perhaps this half-way place between life and death was one Vygotsky felt that he himself had inhabited
for much of his life. He had been suffering from recurrent attacks of tuberculosis since 1920 . Several
times doctors told him that he would die within a few months (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1990, p. 12).
At the time of *Thought and Language* he was approaching his final crisis;the whole book was dictated in
the final months of his life.. The setting of this poem powerfully expresses his own state. It also strongly
recalls the atmosphere of the first scene of Vygotsky's favourite play, Hamlet, the subject of his first long
essay, written in 1916. Both Shakespeare's play and Mandelstam's poem stand on this border between
the land of the living and the land of the dead.

Chapter ten
VYGOTSKY AND THE IMAGINATION

10.0 Introduction

In these chapters I have tried to show that the three books available by Vygotsky in English should be viewed synoptically as expressions of his thought, and that it is not possible to split off - as several commentators have tried to do - *The Psychology of Art* from the rest of Vygotsky's work, and view it as a piece of juvenilia. I have suggested that there is a strong continuity between this book and the very last piece of writing that we have by Vygotsky - the final chapter of *Thought and Language*. My argument has been that the aspects of Vygotsky's thought that I have foregrounded - his preoccupation with the affective and aesthetic dimensions of mind, and with the role of language in the development of consciousness - were of lifelong importance to him, and central to his psychology.

Vygotsky's strength as a psychologist and thinker was his breadth of mind, which meant that he was just as at home discussing literature, culture, and the formation of the individual sensibility, as he was in discussing concept-formation and experimental methodology. He retained this dual perspective throughout his psychological career, and never lost sight of the fundamental importance in all human enterprises of feelings and the workings of imagination. This ability to take an inclusive view of different ways of understanding the human mind is unusual in a discipline (psychology) which has striven to achieve scientific standing, and where positivism and scientism have thus dominated research agendas and methods, with the consequence that important areas of experience have either remained unstudied (because they were considered too 'soft'), or have been studied only reductively.

10.1 Versions of Vygotsky

The version of Vygotsky's thought that was given currency in the West through the publication of *Mind in Society* was thus, I would suggest, a misrepresentation of his ideas in their totality. Although it is true that much of the work he did at the Moscow Institute of Experimental Psychology was carried out through small scale cognitive experiments, and that these experiments with human subjects are important

demonstrations of his scientific inventiveness and open-mindedness, this kind of work was not representative of his most important concerns. His major books (eg *The Psychology of Art, The Crisis in Psychology, Thought and Language*) were all books with far larger arguments, metatheoretical critiques of both psychology and of the psychology of art, arguments about the nature of and the construction of consciousness, the cultural-historical nature of development (of both societies and individuals), and the relationship between language and thought, and about the methodologies neede to investigate these kinds of issues. Vygotsky's characteristic habit of mind was philosophical, Hegelian, and theoretical. He was interested in overarching questions, and operated on a plane of theoretical representation of many aspects of human experience. On the whole, psychologists in East and West alike are still not ready to respond to these aspects of Vygotsky's work. *Mind in Society* was an attempt to present Vygotsky as a different kind of psychologist, a more conventional kind, but one with an unorthodox and interesting line in experimental design.

Even in his work as an experimental psychologist Vygotsky was ground-breaking, in that he did not necessarily expect these experiments with human subjects to be reproducible - they were 'formative experiments' which were designed to provoke new behaviours, and spur children to use their initiative and imagination. I have argued that much of this work was actually undertaken in order to provide a convincing empirical basis for his larger arguments - work on the 'second signal system', for instance, was of importance to him mainly because of its implications for his argument about the role of language in thinking. But psychologists discovering Vygotsky in the West have on the whole taken from his work only what they want to hear, and have tended to respond most postively to those experiments which come closest to classic scientific paradigms. They have taken particular notice of the idea of the 'zone of proximal development', with its mental testing (pre- and post-testing) of the children involved. Other more readily recognisable bits of Vygotsky's work (such as his work on concept-development) have similarly been chipped off, like pieces of the Elgin Marbles, for display in the psychological museums of the West.

Commentators have come to Vygotsky with particular preoccupations. Some, like Michael Cole in the ways described above, have focused on

Vygotsky the cognitivist. Others, like James Wertsch, have made more of Vygotsky the social psychologist (though Wertsch shies away from a full consideration of Vygotsky's own controversial cultural-historical theory and its roots in Marx). But most commentators, in both East and West, have neglected a fundamental aspect of Vygotsky's work, his deep continuing interest in imaginative and artistic ways of thinking. They presumably choose to ignore this line of thought because they see it as an essentially idealist aspect of his work; this is the element in Vygotsky which his interpreters in psychology have generally tried to lose. It was one of the reasons for the avoidance and denunciation of Vygotsky's work during his own lifetime, and is still the reason why his psychology is misrepresented today.

Even commentators such as David Joravsky, who are sympathetic to this strand in Vygotsky, see his work as essentially split, and Vygotsky as having failed to reconcile the two parts of his thought - rationalist and artistic - or to resolve them within a single view of mind:

> 'This was the basic antimony: The belief that imaginative literature (or art in general) is merely a matter of signalling, like birdsong or rat-squeak, to be explained by its biological and social functions, versus the belief that it is also a thing in itself, to be not only explained but also understood as beautiful truths accumulating in a cultural process, which created the human mind even as it is created by it. Vygotskii began with the second belief, was drawn against his aesthetic inclination toward the first, tried to fuse them, but did not succeed.'(Joravsky, 1989, p.255).

If there is one thing that is clear about Vygotsky's habits of thought it is that he was an intellectually convinced monist who, in every sphere that he wrote about, searched for ways of synthesising apparently irreconcilable dualistic positions, and tackled the problem of dualism in psychology head on [1]. For a corrective to Joravsky's rather melodramatic interpretation of Vygotsky's 'dilemma' we need only turn to the calm arguments of Vygotsky's 'Lecture on the Imagination' (Vygotsky 1987a), which affords a particularly good example of his intellectual method, as well as providing us with an excellent summary of his ideas on the central topic of this thesis.

10.2   The 'Lecture on the Imagination'

The line of thought in this lecture, as in many of Vygotsky's arguments, is graceful, overarching, and pursued thoroughly through detailed analysis. Vygotsky begins by rejecting the views of the imagination put forward by

the 'old'psychologies, both the atomistic (or associative, or materialistic) psychology of Wundt and Ribot, who viewed imagination as an aspect of memory, and the idealistic (or metaphysical, or vitalist) psychology of Bergson and James, who saw imagination as a primal characteristic of mind. Neither school, Vygotsky saw, was thinking about the subject developmentally, both were presenting imagination either as a basic constituent of mind, or as a sum of other basic constituents.

Vygotsky links the development of the imagination to the development of language, which allows children to begin to represent and think about objects that are not present, and which frees them from immediate impressions. (This argument counters Piaget's presentation of imagination as an essentially autistic, non-verbal and subconscious process). He argues, still in opposition to Piaget, that imagination is often conscious and directed, and he cites as evidence of this kind of imagining what he terms 'utopian constructions'. His picture of these 'world-making' activities - surely based on direct observation - shows them as being very far from autistic or subconscious fantasies:

> 'Consider, for example, what are commonly called utopian constructions. These are deliberate representations of fantasy, representations that are clearly different in consciousness from realistic planes of thought. Clearly these representations are developed not subconsciously but consciously....We could also consider the domain of artistic creativity in this connection. This domain of activity is available to the child at a young age. If we consider the products of this creativity in drawing or storytelling, it quickly becomes apparent that this imagination has a directed nature. It is not a subconscious activity. Finally, if we consider the child's constructive imagination, the creative activity of consciousness associated with technical-constructive or building activity, we see consistently that real inventive imagination is among the basic functions underlying this activity. In this type of activity, fantasy is highly directed. From beginning to end, it is directed toward a goal that the individual is pursuing.' (Vygotsky, 1987a, p.346).

Vygotsky acknowledges that imaginative activity is often accompanied by strong emotions, but denies that this means that it is a product or consequence of those emotions. He rejects any simple oppositions between affect and imagination, on the one hand, and rationality and cognitive thinking on the other. He points out that imaginative thinking is not at all the only kind of thinking with emotional content, and emphasises that rational realistic thinking can be accompanied by very strong emotions - if the content of the thought matters enough to the thinker. He acknowledges that in one particular kind of imagining - day-dreaming - thinking is mainly engaged in serving emotional interests. But he stresses

that this is only one kind of imagining, and that there are other kinds, such as invention, which are not necessarily dominated by the dictates of pleasure or emotion.

Vygotsky concludes that there is no simple opposition to be set up between directed, realistic, cognitive thinking and autistic, emotional, imaginative thinking. Both imaginative thinking and realistic thinking can be directed and conscious, often characterised by high levels of affect. Both have developed through language and are dependent on the verbal character of thought. So he finds an 'extraordinary kinship' between thinking and imagining, and an 'intimate interconnection' in their development - 'in brief, the two processes develop as a unity'(ibid. p. 349).

Vygotsky pinpoints the essential feature of imagination in the fact that in this kind of thinking 'consciousness departs from reality'. But even then, he regards this capacity to think about things that are not, to imagine other realities, as important to the development of thinking generally, especially in its more advanced aspects.

> 'At advanced levels in the development of thinking, we find the construction of images that are not found in completed form in reality. By recognising this, we can begin to understand the complex relationship between the activity of realistic thinking and the activity of advanced forms of imagination....A more profound penetration of reality demands that consciousness attain a freer relationship to the elements of that reality, that consciousness depart from the external and apparent aspect of reality that is given directly in perception'. (ibid. p. 349).

So imaginative thinking has the capacity to greatly enrich realistic thinking, by liberating it from too close a dependence on immediate perception and reality and 'more primitive forms of cognition' and enabling it to achieve a freer and more speculative character.

This view of imaginative thought as a no less important way of thinking than cognitive thought, like it in some respects, but also independent of it, and therefore able to interact with it in positive ways, is characteristic of Vygotsky's style of argument and his ability to integrate aspects of mind which, for most psychologists, either have to be viewed as separate, or denied existence. Moreover, his method of integrating these aspects does not mean that imaginative ways of thinking are simply assimilated into a theory of cognitive development. In some important respects Vygotsky's account of the role of the imaginative thinking views it as primary to all advanced thinking - but in a different and less metaphysical way than in the arguments of the idealists. Vygotsky stresses the social and linguistic

origins of imaginative thinking - as in all his arguments about the creative aspects of mind, he refuses to see creativity and imagination as belonging mainly to the emotional sphere. So in the course of the lecture he has turned the tables on conventional views of the relative importance of these two kinds of thinking. Without resorting to an idealist argument, he has nevertheless built a case for seeing imaginative thinking as paradigmatic of advanced thinking generally, and necessary for its development.

10.3 The case for artistic ways of thinking

This, essentially, is the case that Vygotsky goes on making throughout his psychology, in different ways - the case for artistic, imaginative ways of understanding the world. It is not a case that scientifically-oriented psychologists generally want to attend to. Vygotsky's continuing focus on higher mental functions, advanced forms of thinking, the specifically and uniquely human aspects of mind, and their means of further development, leads him to place a special value on creative activity and on the contribution that he sees it as making to the general development of mind. This attitude is clearly reflected in Vygotsky's empirical work. In his experiments, he is always interested in the workings of mind, in the way in which children represent problems to themselves in language, in the stories they tell themselves, in how they play with a problem, or use their imagination to go beyond it. The experimenters observe the intelligent, creative, resourceful mind at work - the children in Vygotskyan experiments are never passive objects.

Instead of seeing symbolic and artistic activities as secondary to more fundamental psychological processes, such as perception, Vygotsky actually included them in the category of 'higher mental functions'.

> The concept of the development of higher mental functions and the subject of our study include phenomena which at first glance may appear unrelated, but which actually represent two main branches, or two streams in the development of the higher forms of behaviour....The first group consists of the processes of mastering the external means of cultural development and cognition eg language, writing, counting, drawing. The second group (includes) the processes of the development of the higher mental functions which so far have failed to be precisely identified and defined, and which still pass traditionally under such names as selective attention, logical memory, concept formation, etc. These two groups of processes, taken together, represent what we are calling the processes of the development of higher mental functions.' (Vygotsky, *Istoriya Razvitiya*, p.24, quoted in Kozulin, 1990, p. 113.)

190

This interesting classification of symbol systems like writing and drawing as 'higher mental functions' helps us to see how, in coming to use these ways of symbolising, children may actually be learning different cultural means of thinking. As children acquire more experience of these higher mental functions, and make them part of their own functioning, we may expect to find some of the indicators that in Vygotsky's view mark this kind of development: growing control over and ability to manipulate these symbol systems, growing consciousness, and greater directedness.

In the chapters that follow, I shall continue to refer back to many of the aspects of Vygotsky's thought which most commentators in both Russia and the West leave out, or soft-pedal, and which my reading of Vygotsky views as central to his psychology. These include the place of affect in thinking, the role of the imagination in thinking, and the importance of artistic and creative activities in the development of mind. I shall consider development in art and literacy not simply as an unfolding, but as evidence of children learning to use new cultural forms of semiotic mediation or, in Vygotsky's term, psychological tools. In his view, as they do so they both achieve control over new ways of meaning, and also change themselves. I shall explore the several different ways of meaning available to children in their play, art, creative and constructive activities, and the ways in which the possibilities in these forms of symbolising are taken up variously by different individuals. Through studies of children and discussions with their teachers, I shall hope to trace the links between these different ways of meaning and evaluate the role they play in developing literacy. I shall consider the place of 'human mediation' in children's learning, and try to analyse what it is that teachers do as they support and guide learners. And in considering children's development over time, I shall bear in mind the complex, dynamic view offered by Vygotsky of the internalisation of experience, his description of how inner worlds and capacities are created through interaction, from the outside in, and the role that he sees both symbol systems and human mediation playing in this process.

Vygotsky's view of the development of mind, and the place of imaginative and creative thinking in that development, has considerable educational and pedagogic implications. If imaginative activity is so intertwined with advanced thinking, then early experiences of

'imagination in action' - the kinds of creative play activities that I am concerned with throughout this thesis - are fundamental not only to the development of the imagination, but to mental development generally. Perhaps the place where this process of development may best be observed is in relation to the 'higher mental function' of writing, which, following Vygotsky, I shall argue draws directly on experiences of symbolising play. In the section that follows, I shall consider the case studies of seven children over a period of eighteen months, and the pedagogic approaches of their three teachers, all of whom have a strong interest in the links between drawing, dramatic play, and literacy. I shall also examine these teachers' 'theories-in-practice' in order to see how, instinctively and intellectually, they relate this kind of symbolising play to children's learning,thinking and writing.

---

[1] It seems likely that Vygotsky drew, in his quest to establish a basically monistic psychology, on the monistic philosophy of Spinoza. Spinoza was Vygotsky's favourite philosopher (Bertrand Russell calls him the 'noblest and most lovable of the great philosophers' (Russell, 1946, p.592)). There is evidence that as a young man he intended to write a major work on Spinoza (Levitin, 1982, p. 33), and he quoted from him throughout his life. It is fascinating to observe the parallels between Vygotsky's life and that of Spinoza. Both were Jewish but both rejected the consolations of organised religion. Spinoza was actually banished from the nation of Israel and ritually cursed; no information is available as to Vygotsky's way of leaving his Jewish faith. After his expulsion from the Jewish community, Spinoza changed his name in a gesture seemingly symbolic of reinventing himself as a new person. Vygotsky too changed his name (from Vygodsky), as a young man, though it seems that this change may have been prompted by a desire to get *closer* to his roots, as he believed that his family had originally come from the village of Vygotovo (Levitin, 1982, p.24). Both Spinoza and Vygotsky suffered from tuberculosis, and both were to die as comparatively young men from this disease. Both were radical in politics, but lived through popular revolutions which became corrupted, and under repressive regimes which suppressed freedom of thought and speech. Because of this, both (knowing that their books would be attacked) postponed publication of some of their major work until after their deaths, entrusting their manuscripts to their friends. But above all, both wanted to follow reason, and to use their reason to establish a unified view of human life in the world. Their monism, however, was not a mechanical materialism, but a far broader and more inclusive philosophy. It seems likely that Vygotsky may have been attracted by Spinoza's monistic vision, in which there was no division between body and spirit, but both were viewed as aspects or attributes of one original substance, which was termed by Spinoza 'God or Nature'. Both meditated on death, which they knew themselves destined to meet earlier than the majority of their contemporaries. Both built their theory of how human beings can create and improve themselves on the idea of 'intellectual tools', a concept which it seems clear Vygotsky took partly from Spinoza (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991, p.241). Both devoted a substantial place in their philosophies to the emotions, and to the way in which the emotions can be developed and educated (one of Vygotsky's last - uncompleted - works was a 'Study of the Emotions' which may have been a reworking of his earlier projected book on Spinoza).

PART THREE: IMAGINATION IN ACTION

Chapter eleven
VERSIONS OF REALITY

11. 0. Introduction.
Throughout this thesis I am concerned with tracing the links between young children's writing and their work in other symbolising media - particularly their dramatic play, their world-making play with toy figures, and their picturing. I believe that these ways of representing the world grow out of one another and interconnect in a complex fashion, and that all contribute to the development of imaginative and speculative thought. In earlier chapters I considered some theories which might account for these relationships, drawing on the work of psychologists and of educationalists concerned with writing development. In the Vygotsky section, I offered a reading of Vygotsky which suggested that his early investigation of the psychology of art continued to inform all his subsequent work in psychology. Art and literature were for him 'psychological tools' with a fundamental part to play in the development of mind. I related these views to Vygotsky's discussions of play, and of the development of writing abilities, which he saw as rooted in play and other forms of symbolising activity.

In the section which now begins I explore these same ideas by means of an empirical study carried out with the collaboration of a group of infant teachers. I undertook this study over an eighteen month period in 1991-92. The next chapter gives an account of my findings. The present chapter is intended to explain the rationale behind the study and its design, and to tell how I went about it, relating my approach to other work in this area.

But as I thought about writing this chapter I became acutely aware that there were many possible versions of what had happened in the course of my study. One version, that which I was initially tempted to present, would select only those features of it which I want to make public, and would suppress much of what had actually happened because the reality was too messy, problematic and inconclusive. It would seek to present the

enquiry in a way that made it seem as factual, 'scientific', and as objective as possible. This kind of version might read as follows:

11.1. Summary 1: Positivist

A group of five teachers took part in this study of children's symbolic development and their writing development. Four of the teachers kept detailed records of a total of nine children over a period of eighteen months, from January 1991 to July 1992. In addition, in some cases, records existed for the period September 1990-January 1991. The aim of the record-keeping was a) to collect evidence over this period of children's symbolic activity in a range of media, including picturing, dramatic play, and play with toy figures and b) to record children's language and literacy development over the same period, and to observe any apparent links between writing development and development within other symbolic systems. It was hoped that a longitudinal study of this kind might reveal changing relationships between children's different modes of symbolising. Two types of observational schedule ,those included in the Primary Language Record (see Appendix 1a), were used for most observations. They were i) an observational .diary and ii) detailed 'samples' of children's talk, writing and reading on particular occasions, observed and recorded within a standard format. These records enabled teachers to record observations of children's play and picturing within observations of their language and literacy-related activities.

The study group of teachers met four times between January 1991 and April 1992 and presented and discussed their observations. Sessions were taped and a detailed report of each meeting was written up (see Appendix 1b). In addition, the researcher visited the classrooms of the teachers involved, made brief independent observations of the children, and conducted individual interviews with the teachers, according to a previously agreed schedule (see Appendix 1c).

In April 1992, after reviewing the available data and the children's records, it was decided that the study should focus on seven children in particular (those for whom there were relatively full records) and that the final study should not be confined to the children but that conclusions should also relate to teachers, since the evidence available was revealing as much about their practice as about the children included in the observational

study. In Summer 1992, therefore, further interviews were carried out with all four teachers in the study group, and with one further teacher with substantial experience of the area under investigation (see Appendix 1 d,e, f).

All available data was then reviewed again and a descriptive analysis of each set of case studies was completed. Following this, a system of coding the data was arrived at, and individual sets of conclusions were drawn for each of the three classrooms included in the final report. Finally, from the evidence available, some general conclusions were drawn about the links between children's literacy and their symbolic activities in other media, and about the way in which teachers facilitate these links. These findings were checked with the teachers individually, and were also reviewed and discussed at a final meeting of the study group in 1995.

11.2 Commentary

In a certain kind of educational journal a study like mine might, I suppose, be reported in this way. The writing here is self-consciously factual and lacking in affect. It is a register which I associate with 'research' and which I therefore obscurely continue to feel to be appropriate to the report of an empirical investigation, even though I am actually aware that this kind of way of thinking and writing is no longer seen as particularly appropriate for the discussion of human and social phenomena.

An account like this seeks to suppress or play down some of the most human elements in the events it reports. Although at one level this version does give a bare outline of the course of the enquiry, it conceals more than it reveals. It suppresses the more human, fallible, and untidy aspects of the study, and implies that it was straightforward and uncomplicated. The account also gives no impression of the way in which the enquiry developed, of its evolutionary progress, or of the kind of shifts of thinking, internal self-questionings, and instinctive revisions that contributed to its changes of direction. And it makes the researcher disappear, presenting findings as if they were entirely objective, and not the product of an individual subjectivity. In what follows I shall, in contrast, include my own perspectives on the enquiry.

As a personal experience the enquiry was fraught with logistical and organisational problems, and marked by uncertainty, confusion, and disappointments. At more than one point I had to revise my original plans and improvise new solutions. I was dogged by a feeling that this kind of low-key operation was not really research, that the whole process was too disorganised, and that the findings which were emerging were too banal to be of interest to anyone. An account which foregrounded these kinds of feelings and which attempted to give a more unvarnished picture of what went on might look like this:

11.3   Summary 2: Personal

Initially I invited seven teachers to take part in this study. After the first meeting of the study group two teachers dropped out, and although I later interviewed another teacher with an interest in this topic, she was unable to attend the study group. The meetings of the group took place during a very disturbed period for primary schools, during which the National Curriculum and asessment at Key Stage One were being introduced. It was difficult to involve teachers in meetings, and none of the meetings of the study group, after the initial meeting, had more than two teachers present. In addition, in the course of the study two teachers were promoted to headship or acting headship, lost their contact with the individual children to some extent, and experienced even more difficulty in attending meetings.

In the second year of the group not all of the teachers continued to teach the same children, and it continued to be difficult for them to attend after-school meetings. One meeting had to be cancelled because of my illness, which meant that a whole term went by with no meeting. One of my original aims, therefore, which was to involve teachers very fully in the study through the study group, was not achieved. Ideally I should also have liked to have done much more observation myself within each classroom, but the constraints of my normal work made this impossible.

The study developed as it went along, and it was not easy to stick to standard procedures. Although I did use a standard format for interviewing individual teachers about their children during my initial visits to schools, not all interviews conformed strictly to this format. During these visits I was able to observe the case study children in only

196

two of the three classrooms, for organisational reasons. The interviews had to be carried out in lunchtimes and breaks, and were subject to constant interruptions.

When I came to review the available evidence in April 1992, two things were immediately apparent to me. One was that there was insufficient evidence in the records alone for the study to achieve what I had originally hoped - to follow children's development very closely over a two year period and trace in detail any links between dramatic play, picturing, and developing writing. The teachers' records were more than adequate for record-keeping purposes but were not systematic enough for the purposes of a longitudinal study of this kind, and while they contained several observations of play and artistic activity, they were heavily focused on literacy. Although there was sufficient material for a set of case studies, these would be have to be based on an analysis of particular moments of learning rather than on a continuous record. In addition, I found that records of children's work were only available from four of the five teachers, and of these only three sets were in the Primary Language Record format which I had hoped to make the common basis for gathering evidence.When I arrived at this realisation I was depressed and unsure of how to proceed.

Secondly, I became aware, as I read through what I had, that the evidence available revealed as much about the teachers as it did about the children. The teachers were clearly operating with implicit theories about the kinds of links that my study was focusing on, and through their teaching were encouraging children in making these links. What was happening in the children's records, therefore, needed to be read in the context of each individual teacher's classroom. I realised that it might be important to make the teachers themselves an additional focus of the study. I agreed this shift of focus with my tutor and quickly organised further individual interviews with the study group of four teachers and with one other teacher whom I knew to have a long-standing interest in this area. At these further interviews I was able to get up-to-date information about the children in the study, as well as discussing with the teachers their 'theories-in-practice' and the evidence I had found in the data of their individual pedagogical approaches.

I transcribed these interviews, and read them in relation to the rest of the data. At this point I had no absolutely detailed plan of how I was going to arrive at conclusions from all of this evidence, although I had one definite model, the book Inquiry into Meaning, *which had guided most of my empirical work up to now (Bussis et al., 1985). I lacked the resources available to these researchers, however, and the multiple perspectives on the evidence that they were able to arrive at from working in teams, and I had also departed substantially from their model in choosing to study teachers as well as children.*

In the absence of other perspectives on my data, I had to hope that clear impressions and generalisations would emerge from my own reading of the material. I had already become aware of some recurrent themes in each teacher's material, and as I wrote up the individual case studies and descriptions of classrooms these themes became more apparent. I went on to track them through the data in more detail through an improvised coding system, and to write them up as conclusions. The final study is on a smaller scale and is more modest in its scope than the detailed investigation that I had originally envisaged.

11.4 Commentary

However, although this summary is much closer than the first to the felt experience of doing the enquiry, it is far from being an adequate account of what went on. It insists too much on the problems and difficulties that were encountered, as if unaware of the fact that all research, particularly the kind of research which aims to study behaviour in real contexts and to investigate human situations, is bound to meet with exactly such checks and complications. It is apologetic about the fact that the enquiry did not always follow absolutely standard procedures, and again does not seem to recognise that work of this kind must sometimes proceed in pragmatic and ad hoc ways. It presents changes of direction in the enquiry as weaknesses, distortions of an original design, instead of recognising that they can also be viewed as developments out of that design, and form part of its findings. In all these areas, this account seems to be looking over its shoulder at a positivist model of research, and evaluating what went on in relation to this model. Though it does foreground human factors, therefore, it does so in a way that presents them as failings and deviations from an ideal way of doing research.

Above all, this account does not sufficiently reflect the amount or nature of the intellectual work that went on during the enquiry. It presents the researcher's task as if it were essentially practical and organisational and omits the theoretical dimension of the work. It does not sufficiently explain what thinking helped to shape the enquiry, or reveal enough about the other enquiry work that it derives from, and the emergent tradition of naturalistic research in the human sciences that it ought to be seen in relation to. We therefore need at this point to turn to a third summary, one which is more explicit about the rationale for the enquiry and its methodology, and which situates it in relation to other work of this kind:

11.5   Summary 3: Naturalistic Enquiry

My starting point for this enquiry was my discovery of the book Inquiry into Meaning *(Bussis et al.,1985), which provided a remarkably complete model for a study setting out to look at the interrelationship between different aspects of children's literate activity, particularly the links between their literacy development and other areas of their learning. Many aspects of the research design in* Inquiry into Meaning - *including the involvement of teachers in the observation of children, the collection of evidence of children's work in many media over an extended period, and the way in which this evidence was then interrogated and the data integrated - made it an important precedent for my study. A naturalistic design of this kind seemed the only really appropriate one for a study like mine which hoped to document the individual development of young children over time, and to consider not only their developing literacy but also their play and creative activities. The collaboration of teachers as observers was an important element in the design, and one that seemed essential if classroom observations were to be regular, informed and sympathetic, and if small-scale but important indications of children's progress and development were not to be overlooked.*

The first individual interviews which I held with the teachers in my study about the children were based on an adapted version of the 'descriptive interview' schedule used in the Inquiry into Meaning *research. This schedule was itself based on a format generally known as the Descriptive Review from the work of Patricia Carini (1975,1979). The researchers in*

Inquiry into Meaning *drew substantially on Carini's work, not only in the formats for their study, but in the whole data analysis and integration process which they used as a way of arriving at their conclusions. In Thomas Kuhn's (1970) term,* Inquiry into Meaning *was an important 'examplar' for me, a 'concrete problem-solution' that showed me, by example, how an enquiry of this kind might be carried out.*

I asked the teachers involved in the study to observe the case study children with the help of the Primary Language Record (P.L.R.) *(Barrs, M., S.Ellis, H.Hester and A.Thomas, 1988). I hoped this would provide a common framework for looking and would also add another dimension to the data collection, by exploring the possibilities of the P.L.R. as a tool for observation-based research. The teachers involved in the study were familiar with the elements of the* P.L.R. *and I hoped that the work of data-collation would be eased for them by its use. Its relatively open format meant that it would enable teachers to observe a wide range of behaviour and allow us to look back over the records for repeated themes. There were no predetermined categories for the research apart from those that were part of the* PLR; *both the teachers and I were trying to construe children's behaviour and their intentions in a Kellyan manner, through systematic observation and documentation, and then through inference from the data. The approach to assessment in the* PLR *meant that all the teachers were well acquainted with the use of observational records as a basis for identifying children's 'patterns of learning' (Barrs, M., S.Ellis, H.Hester and A.Thomas, 1990) and arriving at summative statements.*

About three quarters of the way through the study, there was a change of emphasis when I decided to focus on the teachers as well as on the individual children being observed. This change came about partly for pragmatic reasons, when I realised that the documentary evidence available, though generally adequate, was not as full as I had hoped it would be. But by this time it had also begun to seem to me more important to take the teachers' individual perspectives on this evidence more thoroughly into account. The way in which they themselves construed the relationship between literacy and other symbolising activities, and viewed children's development in this area, had obviously shaped their observations. It also influenced their teaching, which in turn affected the behaviour of the children in their case studies. It was already

apparent that the teachers in the study had well developed personal theories of the links between writing development and other ways of symbolising meaning, and I felt that it would be important to see where these theories had been derived from, and how such 'theories-in-practice' could be studied and compared with more formal and academic theories of children as symbolisers.

Consequently, I conducted a series of interviews with five teachers. These interviews, like those described by Elliott Mishler in his article 'Validation in Inquiry Guided Research'(1990), were 'relatively unstructured, with respondents controlling the introduction, content and flow of topics' (p.427). My aim was to understand how the teachers had arrived at their theoretical understandings of children's symbolic development, and how they felt they tried to incorporate these understandings in their practice.

After these interviews my data consisted of:
  • reports of study group meetings with back-up tapes,
  • transcripts and tapes of initial and final interviews with five teachers,
  • notes of my observations in three of the teachers' classrooms
  • records and samples of children's work for nine children from four of the teachers' classrooms. (See Appendix 2)
I decided that three of the teachers and their observations should be centrally featured in the final report, and drew on all this data to make full descriptive analyses of each featured classroom.I wrote up these analyses into the three main sections of the empirical chapter. These sections then became part of the data I had to work with.

The process of writing about each teacher's classroom highlighted certain recurrent themes that were emerging in each section, both in the evidence about children and in the evidence about teachers. It was already apparent that there were differences between the teachers involved in the study, although there might also be common themes to be drawn out. I decided to try initially to arrive at themes that were particular to individual children and teachers. Within each teacher's section, I drew up a list of provisional headings which were based on the themes that seemed to recur in the data. This process was modelled on the process of 'heading' described in Inquiry into Meaning, where headings are interpretations based on initial readings of the data (See Appendix 1 g) .

To further explore the evidence about teachers, I roughly coded these headings , and trawled back through all my material using the codes in order to see how well they stood up to this attempt to apply them systematically (in Inquiry into Meaning this process is called 'charting through the data' p. 50) and how far they needed to be revised or added to. (See Appendix 1 h). I was guided in this process both by the detailed description of the 'data integration process' in Inquiry into Meaning, by Glaser's description of 'theoretical coding' in his book Theoretical Sensitivity (1978), and by the chapter on 'Processing Naturalistically Obtained Data' in the book Naturalistic Inquiry (Lincoln and Guba, 1985 pp. 332-356). Some of my original choices of headings were confirmed by this process of revisiting the data, and others were called into question. Some new and important themes also became apparent. I arrived at definitive lists of headings for each teacher's section (see Appendix 1 i), and based a set of overall conclusions for the chapter on the common factors emerging from a consideration of all three teachers' sections (see Appendix 1 j). Finally, I revisited all of the data on the case study children and identified common themes that emerged when I looked across all three classrooms and considered all of the evidence on children.

This was a piece of qualitative enquiry-based research, which developed slightly differently from my original intentions, but which still enabled me to arrive at some tentative conclusions about the links that children were making between literacy and established modes of symbolising, as well as about the kinds of pedagogies that were supporting this kind of learning. A study of this kind is obviously dependent on personal interpretation. I hope that the descriptive analyses of the data that I have provided, and the examples of records given,will enable readers to evaluate the 'trustworthiness' of my conclusions. (Mishler 1990)

11.6   Commentary

This summary comes the closest to giving an adequate account of the enquiry, and to situating it in relation to a new and growing tradition of what has been variously called naturalistic enquiry, enquiry-guided research, and qualitative or interpretative research. These ways of doing research in the human sciences, according to Mishler, 'share an emphasis on the continuous process through which observations and

202

interpretations shape and reshape each other' (op.cit.,p.416,note). The progress of an enquiry of this kind is therefore evolutionary, a sharp departure from the hypothesis-testing experiment-based model of traditional positivist research.

There is obviously a danger that this kind of enquiry, instead of developing in a shapely and convincing way, may become sloppy and ad hoc, justifying its weaknesses in relation to a rhetoric of post-positivism. There is therefore a real need for guidelines and exemplars for anyone, particularly a lone and inexperienced research student, embarking on a piece of work of this kind. I found my chief exemplar in the work of the *Inquiry into Meaning* team of researchers, whose project resulted in some key findings in the field of early literacy and also provided a powerful model for enquiry work of this kind. This book influenced both my theory and my practice in the empirical chapter.

On the level of theory, *Inquiry into Meaning* offers a critique of positivist and behaviourist models of educational research and argues that the meaning and intentionality in human learning should be the subject matter of educational research. Deriving their theoretical position from Piaget, Ulric Neisser (1965) and above all George Kelly (1963), the researchers suggest that the brain is constantly involved in interpreting and construing experience, and finding meaning through the perception of patterns in events. They suggest that Kelly's theory of personal constructs provides an explanation of how we can come to understand children's personal meanings, and their very different ways of learning. But in addition they also derive the design of their study from Kelly, whose theory, with its focus on learning and experience, they believe has a particular relevance for educational research. They stress the need for careful observation and record keeping since 'Kelly's theory implies that systematic obervation and documentation are the first steps towards understanding another person's thinking' (Bussis et al., 1985. p.18). They argue that, when inferences come to be made from this data, it will be important not to rush to generalisations, but to register individual patterns of behaviour, and to try to understand how each child has construed its experience and gone about its learning. Only when the research has taken into full account this level of individual meanings and

differences will it be appropriate to move to another level of generalisation and look for common patterns.

This theory is reflected in the practice of the researchers. Three chapters of the book (Chapters 2, 3 and 4) are devoted to an explanation of how the research was conducted. It was a collaborative project, with teachers and researchers working together to observe the children over a two year period. The documentation consisted of four kinds of data: teacher interviews, observations made by the external observer, samples of work, and tape recordings of children's reading. Both teacher interviews and observers' records provided broad descriptions of children's behaviour in a wide range of contexts, focusing as closely on affective and expressive behaviour as on progress in school work and in reading. The project employed data integration procedures which involved another level of analysis. Initially a researcher prepared a descriptive analysis of each child's work samples and oral reading. These analyses and the other parts of the child's record were then read by all the collaborators in order to identify patterns in the data, in a process known as a 'reflective conversation'. The patterns identified were given 'headings', and these were then tracked or 'charted' through the data again, with headings being added, discarded, or redefined. The concept of 'headings' and the practice of 'charting through the data' derive from procedures developed by Patricia Carini; they are integral to the methods of the study and are very fully described in *Inquiry into Meaning*.

Several of these practices influenced my enquiry. I took from the research the idea of a broad and descriptive record encompassing many areas of a child's school life over a two year period, the idea of a collaborative study with teachers as the main observers, the framework for my first interview with the teachers, and the overall approach to data integration. My study was obviously limited by the fact that fewer people were involved, both in the observation (I visited the classrooms only once), and most particularly at the data integration stage, when the multiple perspectives of a collaborative team would obviously have been particularly valuable.

I departed from this model in one major way: at the same time that I began to find that the data on individual children was less full than I had hoped, I also began to see that it could be important to focus on teachers as

well as children. This move was prompted by evidence that the pictures emerging of children seemed to be very much linked to the curriculum on offer in their classrooms. What children were doing obviously reflected not only the content of this curriculum, but the context of the classroom and the approaches adopted by their teachers. (This would also be true of the case studies in *Inquiry into Meaning*, of course; one of the weaknesses of that study is the absence of any serious consideration of the contexts of children's learning).

I therefore decided to focus more consciously on the teachers in these classrooms as well as on the children, and the skill and craft of the teachers - what it was they were doing, and what guided their intuitive moves - became a second important dimension of my study. In combining a study of learners with a study of their teachers I felt that I was recognising the difficulty of separating learning from teaching, meaning from context, and observations from their observers. In interrogating the evidence available to me I looked both for differences - differences between children and between teachers - and for common patterns. My eventual findings related both to teachers' 'theories-in-practice' and to the patterns of children's learning that they were trying to support.

The data collected in my study included teachers' records of children's language and literacy activities, generally in the shape of their *Primary Language Records*. This record-keeping system, which I was involved in developing at the Centre for Language in Primary Education, London, lends itself very readily to research purposes. The *Observations and Samples* part of the record uses two types of recording, a diary of observations and a structured 'sample' through which to observe in depth a child's reading or writing on a particular occasion. The combination of these two different types of observational record, one broad and impressionistic and the other close and detailed, is powerful, and can give a rounded picture of a child as a learner. A record like this provides far more information about the quality of a child's behaviour as a learner than could be obtained from any work sample out of context. The use of the *Primary Language Record* also enabled evidence to be brought out of classrooms into the study group, and provided a firm and familiar framework within which teachers could share and discuss their observations.

My experience of working with the *Primary Language Record,* over the ten years since its development began in 1985, has taught me a great deal both about the practice of observation and about the delicate business of drawing inferences from this kind of observational data. One of the books which I co-authored on the use of the Primary Language Record was entitled *Patterns of Learning* (op cit.) and looked at the way in which teachers completing the summative part of the Primary Language Record draw on information in the Observations and Samples form in order to arrive at provisional conclusions about particular children's learning styles and developmental paths.

In carrying out my study, I have also drawn on the very full account given of interpretative and qualitative research in *Naturalistic Enquiry* (op.cit.). The work of Lincoln and Guba, and that of Elliot Mishler and other theorisers of this emergent tradition, has done a great deal to ground a new school of educational enquiry work in particular practices, and to establish the wider acceptance of some key concepts - the need to establish meaning in relation to context, the diversity and complexity of real-world systems, the value of multiple perspectives, the concept of the emergent design of enquiry work. This new tradition has to engage at every point with criticisms of its validity and reliability, and the article that I have referred to by Mishler is an excellent account of how ideas of 'validity' can be replaced by a concept of validation as a process, in which professionals in the field come to treat particular pieces of research as 'trustworthy' and reliable as models for their own work. I have found all of this work suggestive and useful, not only in the present study but also in my educational work, where I have been much concerned with questions of educational assessment, which also has to address issues of validity, reliability, and trustworthiness.

Finally, I have been intrigued and interested both by the work of Glaser and Strauss in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1967) and particularly by the idiosyncratic but important work of Glaser in *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978). Glaser and Strauss's work has had wide repercussions in research circles in the human sciences and offers a fascinating analysis of what is involved in generating theory from data. It is an unusual account from the inside of the processes of social research, as well as a

theory of doing research which can be applied to enquiry work in many areas. Most usefully for a novice researcher, it is full of advice about techniques for managing the task and for coping with the enquiry at different stages. It confronts most helpfully the kinds of problems - thinking problems - that researchers come up against in the course of a project, and that I have experienced in a small way in this enquiry, and it suggests effective ways of coping with them. I have used this work mainly in relation to the data integration stage of my study, and in arriving at my findings I drew on a combination of the process suggested by Glaser for theoretical coding, and the 'heading' process described in *Inquiry into Meaning*.

One aspect of Glaser's work that interests me very much is the emphasis he places on writing. Glaser advocates the writing of 'theoretical memos' to oneself whenever an idea results from a consideration of data, and the building up of a 'memo fund' which will be the basis of theory generation (pp. 83-92). Like many other aspects of Glaser and Strauss's work, this is a codification of a practice which must be commonly used, although not in such an organised way, by many researchers. Reading Glaser has made me reflect on the way in which I have used writing as an increasingly deliberate strategy throughout this study, and on the relation between the different kinds of private or more public writing that have gone into the production of the empirical chapter that follows.

A further version of the process of doing this study might therefore focus on the fact that it has rested mainly on the generation of texts, on the use of writing both to *shape* data and to *provide* the data for further levels of theorising. I have myself been engaged in writing a series of texts, I have collected texts from others, and have superimposed texts on one another, in a process that I have come to call 'text on text'. In addition to the reports I have written for others (the teachers in the study group, my tutor), I have made notes in a research journal and have written a number of private memos to myself, sometimes deliberately undertaking this kind of tentative or provisional writing in order to confront a problem. Often the process of writing such texts has focused or changed the course of my enquiry. My final summary in this chapter looks at my study from this point of view.

11.7   Summary 4: Text on text

All enquiry work involves the continual generation of texts, which then serve as the basis for reflection and analysis, and the generation of new text. As one text builds on another we enter new areas of generalisation and abstraction, but also new areas of concreteness and definition, as ideas become clearer and findings are described in more detail for more public audiences.

Viewed as the history of these texts, my methodology in writing the empirical chapter looks like this:

1. In Easter 1989 I wrote a long exploratory memo ('Reflections on a research subject') which was a first attempt to focus my work in this thesis as a whole, and to imagine what its empirical aspect might look like. This memo had as its initial audience only myself, but was subsequently shared with my tutor and with James Britton, who both responded to it in writing. In this memo I drew heavily on the research reported in Inquiry into Meaning, *which subsequently became a loose model for my study in the empirical chapter. My expectations were that the chapter would focus on a number of case study children, as well as on general findings.*

2. I convened a study group to further the research, and kept very detailed notes of all meetings. I wrote up these notes as formal reports after each meeting, referring occasionally to the tapes that were made of the discussions.

3. In my visits to the study group teachers' classrooms I made full observational notes on all of the children that I was able to observe, as well as detailed records of my interviews with the teachers about the children. These notes were kept in my file as raw data.

4. I collected copies of the teachers' records, and of children's work samples at two points, in July 1991 and April 1992. These records and samples were not annotated, but could be read in the light of the teachers' presentations to the study group.

5. In April 1992 I read and reread all this material, in order to see how it was developing, and to begin to conceptualise the shape of the chapter. I hoped to be able to gain some initial impressions from a reading of the data. At this point, I became concerned about the adequacy of the data relating to the children. In an attempt to pin down what the data did and did not show me I wrote myself an anguished memo. As I wrote, however, I realised that although I had less information than I had hoped

about the children in the study, I had quite a lot to say about the teachers and their practice. Moreover, as it was already obvious that the children's developments reflected the contexts for learning provided in their classrooms, it seemed to make sense to focus on teachers as well as on the children. I decided to shift the focus of the chapter and to make the teachers more central to it, with their observations of the children serving as examples of their practice.

6. I wrote another, less anguished, memo for my tutor about this same topic, setting out the problem and making the case for a shift of focus. I suggested that I might interview the teachers again, this time focusing more on their personal theories and their 'theories-in-practice', both as expressed by them and as evidenced by their records and my visits to their classrooms. I outlined a plan for the chapter and listed some of the kinds of themes that seemed to be emerging from the data that I had already collected.

7. In the following term (Summer 1992) I re-interviewed the four members of the study group, both about the children they had been observing and about their own views on the links between writing and other forms of symbolising. I also interviewed a fifth teacher whose views I wanted to include if possible. I taped and made notes of all the interviews, and transcribed the tapes in the summer and autumn of 1992.

8. In the summer of 1992 I began, very hesitantly, to 'write up' the empirical chapter. I worked through all the material relating to one of the teachers and her observations and wrote a rough outline of her section in the form of a set of descriptive notes. This teacher had fewer records than some of the others, and writing up her data was a more manageable job. I was experiencing a lot of difficulty in juggling all the texts by which I was now surrounded; there seemed to be both too much paper, and too little of the right kind.

9. Working from these notes and consulting the transcripts, study group reports, and children's records, I then wrote up this teacher's section. This text was in part a description of the teacher's practice and of our conversations, and in part an analysis of what had emerged from the evidence. I ended with lists of 'conclusions' - initial impressions arising from my writing up of the data relating to her and her case study children.

10. This first piece of writing helped me to feel that there was a way through the data, and that I could create a final text. With more confidence, I wrote draft outlines of the sections for a further two

classrooms, and began to write up one of these descriptive analyses in detail. All of my writing had to take place in school holidays, and it was often difficult to re-embark on writing that had been begun or planned several weeks or months before. I became good at leaving writing at a point which it would be easy to pick up again later.

11. I completed the writing up of the teachers' sections over the next few months. By now I had realised that three sections would be more than sufficient and had selected three teachers and their case study children to study in detail. I rewrote my 'outline' of the chapter; I now planned to use the material from the fourth and fifth teachers in the introduction and conclusions to the empirical chapter, but to base the main body of the chapter on the three teachers whose sections I had written up, and the seven children they had observed.

12. Now that the material was written up into a more manageable form, I was able to step back from it more easily. Each teacher's section ended with a set of conclusions or themes, in the form of a list, and I began to consider these again, and to think about how they interrelated. I wrote myself some notes about this, and made a list of the common elements that I began to perceive between the three teachers' sections. At the same time I read and made notes on a number of texts which I thought would help me in this process of inference from the data. They included Glaser (op.cit.), Kelly (op.cit.), Bannister and Fransella(1971), Mishler (op.cit.), Lincoln and Guba (1985), as well as the chapter on data integration in Inquiry into Meaning, which I was already very familiar with. I realised that I could adapt the approaches discussed in these texts into a more formalised method of arriving at conclusions from the data. I did a brief memo to myself about how to go about this.

13. I 'coded' my provisional conclusions for each section, and read back through the section, noting the evidence which supported each coded conclusion. The results of this exercise were interesting - although some conclusions seemed well supported by evidence, others were less well grounded in the evidence, and there were some further obvious conclusions which I had not perceived. I made new lists of conclusions for each section, recoded them, and went back through the sections again annotating them with the new codes. This gave me a good impression of which were the dominant themes in each section, although I recognised that it was not possible to completely equate the importance of a theme with the number of times that it recurred in the data.

14. At the end of this coding and recoding exercise, I had several pages of notes and jottings, and a rough table which showed three new sets of conclusions for each section. I wrote a short piece for myself comparing these sets of conclusions, in the process becoming more aware of common factors. Working from all these notes, I then embarked on the redrafting of the conclusions to the sections, and on the drafting of the conclusion to the whole chapter. ·

******

The process of 'doing' the research, apart from the four study group meetings, the interviews with teachers, and the brief visits to the classrooms, has therefore very largely consisted of writing. I used writing as a means of planning my moves, reflecting on the task, and thinking through the data. These private lists, plans, memos, outlines, notes, jottings and reflections became the basis for later and more public pieces of writing. The research methodology I arrived at was substantially a method of learning how to superimpose 'text on text' in this way, and how to use writing and the stages of writing to shape the informal texts at my disposal into a more finished set of texts. The final draft of the empirical chapter is built on many layers of earlier more provisional texts.

11.8 Commentary

Mishler speaks of all research having as one of its features 'the reduction and transformation of source data - that is initial observations and descriptions....different rules and strategies of reduction lead to different re-presentations of the phenomena' (op.cit.,p.425). Like other researchers I have been faced with the problem of how to reduce messy and diffuse data into new and more manageable 'objects'. I have done this through writing. By continually representing the data to myself in writing, by generating texts which have in their turn become the material for new texts, in a process which gradually transforms the original data into public reading, I have been behaving no differently from many other researchers; these texts are basic to research and constitute the 'audit trail' which Halpern sees as essential to the 'confirmability' of any naturalistic enquiry (Halpern, 1983, quoted in Lincoln and Guba, op.cit., pp319-327).

However, writing as an aspect of 'methodology' has, I believe, rarely been commented on. It is an invisible element in all research, taken for granted, and yet quite central to the intellectual work. In Kellyan terms I could be

described as using writing to construe my material and put a shape on the research evidence that I have accumulated. But a great deal of my evidence about children comes to me indirectly, through the teachers who in their turn have been engaged in interpreting and construing children's behaviour through their written observations, and in summarising these observations at intervals. Thus the layers of writing that I have described above rest on another body of writing, that done by the teachers. Both they and I have been engaged in layering texts on the top of other texts, and in the process arriving at new conclusions. It is the act of writing, which is - as I have argued in my chapters on Vygotsky, and shall argue in my concluding chapter - both a support to thinking and a form of thinking, that has provided, in both cases, the means of reflection.

Chapter twelve
A STUDY OF CHILDREN AND TEACHERS

12.0   Part 1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on seven children from three different infant classes, and on the teachers of these three classes. Through this detailed picture of individual children learning and of teachers teaching, I hope to show how the ideas about the interrelationships between different symbolising activities that I have been exploring throughout this thesis are reflected in actual case studies. In the final section I draw some conclusions from these stories of children and teachers, and look at what can be learned from them about the links between play, artistic activity, and writing development.

This group of three teachers is the nucleus of a larger invitational study group of seven teachers which met between January 1991 and June 1992 at the Centre for Languge in Primary Education. One or two other teachers who also attended the study group over much of its life were not, for reasons of space, included in this final study. To introduce this chapter and give an impression of the kind of discussion that went on in study group meetings, I will go back to the first meeting of the group, and to a contribution made to the discussion by one of the teachers whose work is not otherwise represented here.

We had been talking about the way in which young children's play and enactment precede, and seem to provide a way of rehearsing for, later symbolic activities like drawing and writing. Members of the group saw play as a site for practising important narrative competencies, and discussed its place as an area of freedom where children were able to take risks that they might not be prepared to take in their normal personae. Kathy MacLean, a teacher at an infant school in Wandsworth, described how her interest in children's play and drawing had originally been stimulated, not in an educational context, but through her observations of her own sons and their writing at home. This writing was quite unlike their writing at school, in that it was generally a mixture of drawing and writing. She was particularly interested in examples where writing was an integral part of a picture, as in annotated maps, or game plans inspired by 'dungeons-and-dragons'. She felt that boys might be more inclined to

engage in this kind of drawing-cum-writing than girls. In her Year 1 class, she had deliberately set out to provide opportunities to combine writing with dramatic play - the home corner had been set up as a travel agency, while the science corner was now a laboratory, with notebooks for observations, labels, and charts.

Kathy said that she had not really been able to engage other teachers in the schools where she had work in discussions of these links, and had not heard them talked about seriously except on courses at CLPE. She felt that she had only begun to consider them seriously herself when she had been invited to write a short article for *Language Matters* on her sons' writing at home (MacLean, 1986).

Three elements in this contribution foreshadowed themes that came to be important in the study group. The first was Kathy's recognition that she had first begun to take a serious interest in these issues through observing her own children. This was also the case for some other members of the study group. Their privileged position as observers of their children - most of them were mothers - had enabled them to watch young children and observe their involvement in play in a more continuous way than was generally possible in classrooms, and had convinced them of the crucial role of storying play in children's learning. In their classrooms they were applying the insights gained from these home experiences. Several of them could also draw parallels with their own memories of childhood play. I grew increasingly interested in the play 'histories' of teachers. [1]

Secondly, like Kathy, all of the members of the study group were instinctively sure that there were important connections to be made between dramatic play, play with small toys (sometimes known as 'miniature world play'), drawing, and writing. They had observed striking differences in children's language in the context of dramatic play, where they often seemed more resourceful and articulate than they did in their own personae. They had observed children engaged in 'world-making' play, which was often accompanied by a stream of commentary, and watched them making pictures with the same kind of dramatic commentary. They were interested in finding out more about these connections, which they were all supporting in different ways in their

classrooms, putting an emphasis on different aspects of symbolising and storying play, often in ways which reflected their own creative interests.

Thirdly, these teachers' interests in the links between different kinds of storying play were not necessarily shared by their colleagues in schools. Their own theories about these links had been formed independently and were generally not the result of reading, discussion, or academic study, but of observation. Though in several cases these theories-in-practice were well-developed and closely informed the organisation and practice in the teachers' classrooms - for instance, the amount of time and space they were prepared to give to play in the home corner - they had never been articulated at any length before these meetings of the study group. They were a product of intuition based on experience - part of the 'practical art' of teaching (Schon, 1983).

This was not a particularly appropriate time in history to be exploring these ideas. Throughout the period of the meetings of the study group the political atmosphere in England was growing increasingly and overtly hostile to these kinds of ways of working. 'Play' had become a term of opprobrium in the mouths of government education ministers. For the first time a set National Curriculum, organised into discrete subject areas on the model of the secondary curriculum, had been laid down for the primary school. The content demands of this curriculum were excessive, and it was designed positively to discourage integration between subjects. Teachers found it hard to 'cover' the curriculum content. Much of their time was taken up with National Curriculum-related meetings, and with planning and assessment.

National Curriculum assessment made heavy demands on teachers' record-keeping, and there was confusion surrounding the cumbrous demands of an assessment system which, in the words of the Dearing Report, had reduced record-keeping to the 'meaningless ticking of myriad boxes' (Dearing, 1993, p.61). There was as yet no official recognition that the National Curriculum had got out of hand. Three government advisers reporting on the primary curriculum (Alexander et al. (1992)) were sceptical about the direction that primary education had taken in the post-war years, and recommended a greater degree of specialisation, less integration of the curriculum, and a different kind of physical organisation, with less

emphasis on small group work and one-to-one teaching and more use of whole-class teaching.

Primary schools were trying to meet what they perceived to be the demands of the new system, but in the process were sometimes losing sight of important principles. Play and creative subjects were being squeezed by the demands of subjects with more 'content'. The provision of learning experiences which would reflect children's home learning, with their previous experiences, cultures and individual interests and preoccupations was felt to be harder, because of the requirements of the official curriculum. Descriptive record-keeping based on observation, which helped to inform teaching, was being given up because of the perceived need to keep more detailed 'tick-sheets' corresponding to the National Curriculum 'statements of attainment'.

The focus and the educational assumptions of the study group were therefore at odds with the spirit of the time, and with the chaotic changes going on in schools. But for several of the teachers involved, the need to assert the importance of the study group's concerns, given this prevailing climate, had become even greater. Despite the apparent untimeliness of its agenda, the group provided a way for us to go on exploring ideas which (contrary to right wing opinion) had never really been given their full importance in schools: ideas about the centrality of affect in thinking and learning, about creativity and its relation to learning, about the place of play in learning, and about the role of teachers in the development of all these aspects of learning. We observed that certain areas of experience - art, movement, drama, play - were being treated as 'extras' or 'frills', sidelined and excluded by a narrow and utilitarian National Curriculum which was increasingly coming to reflect the prejudices of the right wing of the Conservative Party. The case studies that form the main part of this chapter need to be read against this background.

12.1 Learners and teachers

The study that follows consists of two main elements; a study of learners and a study of the teachers who were observing them. I have tried both to explore these two elements separately and to look at the links between them.

The children who were chosen for case study were not a random sample. They were selected by their teachers because, in the short time that they had been in school, they had given signs of being interesting subjects for study, in relation to the theme of the study group. Sometimes teachers had noticed a propensity in them towards certain kinds of play or creative activity. A few important principles informed the choice of children overall. Girls and boys were, as far as possible, equally represented, and children were also chosen to represent the cultures and language groups in these classrooms. Some of the children chosen seemed, at the beginning of the study, to be confident in their learning, while others already seemed to be experiencing some difficulties.

Of the seven children eventually included in the study, five were at the very beginning of their school lives (ie they were all about age five when the study began) and at a key stage in their literacy learning. The other two children were two years older, but were still at an early stage of learning to read and write. Most of the case studies show the children making visible progress over the period of the study; by the end of it most have a basic understanding of the system of written language, although some are still severely hampered by difficulties with transcription, and continuing to need support. Links between their literacy learning and their creative symbolising activities are quite apparent; in the two cases where such links are not apparent, or are weak, the child concerned is experiencing difficulties in literacy.

The three teachers whose practice is described here were, as I explained in the previous chapter, not an original focus of my study. Including them centrally in the study has enabled me to investigate the relationship between children learning and teachers teaching more closely, and has also obliged both them and me to try and define more rigorously what it is that they are doing in the classroom. It is notoriously difficult to define what is that good teachers do - Professor Maurice Galton, whose work on primary classrooms is now a classic, recently admitted (personal communication) that there had been too little research on pedagogy, and on what exactly is involved in successful primary teaching. Peter Johnston (1987) has compared a skilled primary teacher to a chess master playing twenty or thirty games at once, and has suggested that the mark of

the expert teacher, as of the chess master. is the ability to recognise complex patterns.[2]

Often, also, the kind of pedagogy that I describe here is made invisible in research. The habitual focus, in much of the literature about early literacy, on the developmental processes of young learners may imply that their learning is independent of context and of pedagogical approaches[3]. It is true that the subtle and intuitive moves made by teachers of very young children may be particularly hard to track. Within the constraints of my research design I have tried to pin down what it is that these teachers do and what they are providing. But I have also focused closely on their 'theories-in-practice' and on the, often tacit, ideas about learning that inform their day-to-day teaching decisions.

All three teachers whose classrooms are studied here were using the Primary Language Record (PLR) (See Appendix 1a) as part of their school record-keeping systems, and all were well acquainted with the PLR. This made it much easier for them to undertake the work involved in recording children's behaviour in the classroom regularly; they were used to observing children and noting their observations in a diary, and to annotating samples of children's work. Many of the techniques employed for recording children's learning in the PLR overlap with techniques used by classroom researchers and with the methods used in case study; the teachers did not have to draw a dividing line between the recording they were doing for the study group and their normal record-keeping. More subtly, their familiarity with the PLR meant that we could all take for granted a way of thinking about children's developing literacy which included an interest in children's intentions and individual learning styles, an interest in play and in home learning, and a belief in the value of detailed analysis of particular learning episodes. In any study group meeting we generally studied the records and work of at most two children; at these times teachers presented their records and talked about the other documentary evidence before responding to questions and remarks from other members of the group.

Each of the three sections that follow begins with a general introduction which presents the teacher whose case studies follow, and says something about her experience and involvement in the study group. The section

then moves on to the detailed case studies of children. These are based on the minutes of five meetings of the study group, on tapes and notes of two interviews with each of the teachers involved, on all of the teacher's records of the case study children over the period of the study, together with numerous samples of the children's work, some of which are reproduced in Appendix 2. In two cases they also draw on my own direct observations of the classrooms involved. These case studies are followed by an account of the final interview with the teacher concerned. The section ends with a set of provisional conclusions about each particular teacher's 'theory-in-practice' as it emerges from the case studies and from the interview.

In the final section of the chapter I draw two sets of conclusions from all of this data. I have arrived at these conclusions by the processes of 'headlining' and identifying key themes that were described in the previous chapter. My criteria for including a theme in my conclusions did not only relate to the frequency of its appearance in the data, although this carried some weight in my decision. More important was my sense that I could perceive clear patterns, or identify recurrent themes, within the material. One set of my conclusions relates to the children in the case studies and sums up what seem to be strong common patterns across this very diverse group of individuals. These patterns relate in interesting ways to the picture of children's learning and development which emerge from the theoretical section of this thesis.

The second set of conclusions to this chapter relates to the three teachers and to the themes which I identified at the end of their individual sections. My analysis of their ideas again reveals some common patterns across their very individual classrooms, and also allows comparisons to begin to be drawn between these teachers' well-developed theories-in-practice and the theoretical ideas that have been the subject of previous chapters, particularly those that emerged from my reading of the work of Vygotsky.

12.2   Part 2. Iris Mode

At the time when the study group first met, Iris Mode was deputy head of an infants school on a council estate in the extreme south-east of the London Borough of Greenwich. During the period that the study group was meeting the head teacher of the school retired, and Iris became acting head for one year. The borough then decided to amalgamate the infants school with the junior school on the same site. Such amalgamations can be difficult for all those concerned, and there was an inevitable period of adjustment as the two schools merged. As a senior teacher Iris was deeply involved in helping to bring the two staffs together, and for this reason found it difficult to attend the study group regularly. When this study came to an end in July 1992 Iris was hoping to be able to take early retirement in the following school year, and was looking forward to having more time for her own interests, and especially for her painting.

I had known of Iris' work for some time before the study began. With the headteacher of the school and one other member of staff, she had been an influential figure in the early development of the Primary Language Record. The school had piloted the first version of the Record and had made many helpful comments on this version. Examples of the school's records had been collected for the Centre for Language in Primary Education archive of children's records, and some of these had been used in CLPE publications. The staff had been invited to write for *Language Matters*, the CLPE journal, about its experience of using the PLR, and Iris had contributed to this account. She had also been one of a small panel of teachers invited to appear in the ILEA video programme on the Primary Language Record, and can be seen in the discussion session which concludes the video.

Her own classroom also features in the video, characteristically in the section which deals with talk. In the extract which was included in the final programme we observe a discussion in which the children, who are preparing their own plays in pairs and small groups, come together to report on their progress. They are not only devising and improvising the plays but also designing and making their own costumes and props. In the video, Iris invites one pair of children to talk about the story they are dramatising - an adventure about 'two skeletons and a dog skeleton'. Her way of talking with these six year olds is impressive; she treats what they

have to say seriously, giving them plenty of space to develop their ideas, and encouraging them to plan their independent projects. I was aware that this extract was typical of her way of working and was pleased when she agreed to take part in the study group, knowing that she would bring substantial experience to its thinking.

In fact, because of the situation in her school, Iris was only able to attend the first two meetings of the study group. At the second meeting, however, she made a very thorough presentation of the work of two children (Bill and Beth) who were being withdrawn regularly from their classes for special work with Iris because of concerns about their language development. Iris subsequently provided me with very full documentation of the work of these children.

Over a year later, in June 1992, I was able to have an extended interview with Iris at which I learned more about the progress made by Bill and Beth, and we discussed her ideas and her practice as a teacher in more depth.

Iris's contribution to the very first meeting of the study group focused closely on dramatic play and highlighted two issues which I came to see as very important in her work. One was the deepening of dramatic situations, which she generally tried to achieve not so much by work within the drama itself but by encouraging children to prepare for the drama. These preparations mainly took the form of making things which would support the drama - costumes, props, masks, and so on.[4] Iris also emphasised the value of reworking experiences in different media (she told a story about a child who had done a painting of herself as she had been in her role as a clown). These kinds of links between different types of creative work were strongly emphasised and supported in her classroom.

12.2.1 Observations of children

When she came to tell the group about her observations of particular children, Iris did not present many observations from role play, but the idea of reworking themes in a variety of different ways and different media was still strongly present in her examples. Iris had observed two children in a small mixed-age withdrawal group. All the children in the

group had been selected by their teachers as being in need of extra help, mainly because they rarely contributed in class and were believed to have language difficulties. Beth (Year 1) and Bill (Year 2) were part of this group. Iris described their work in the withdrawal group sessions and discussed pieces of work (writing or art) which they had done and which she brought for the study group to see.

12.2.1.1
Beth

Iris' first impression of both of her case study children, when she went to observe them initially in their normal classrooms, was that they were very silent and unresponsive. Neither talked in class during the observation period, and Beth in particular hardly betrayed any sign of involvement - Iris said she 'barely blinked'. The very first time Iris took the withdrawal group she asked the children to choose an activity. She had made paper, crayons, and dressing up clothes available. Iris' observation of this occasion (see Appendix 2, A.i)[5] notes that Beth could not choose. She stood looking on while the others did, 'blinking and staring'. Iris knew that she had as yet hardly spoken in her own class.

While Iris talked to some of the other children, Beth stood at a distance from her, but Iris observed her moving a little nearer. She asked Beth if she was all right and Beth nodded. When Iris suggested she could draw, Beth got paper and crayons and slowly did a drawing. Iris stopped and looked at it and said 'That looks interesting', waiting for a response. Beth said 'All the things.' Then she said 'All the colours going round'. Towards the end of the session the children discussed their favourite activities but Beth didn't offer a contribution. She did, however, join in when the group said a nursery rhyme together. This kind of very silent behaviour, on the edge of things, was like her behaviour in class.

In subsequent sessions Iris observed the same quiet unresponsive behaviour and apparent lack of affect. The only time that Iris noted Beth expressing any feeling was when she overheard another child's story about the dragon she had drawn, in which the dragon ate up a teacher. Beth laughed at this and said 'Eat Mrs W. up'(A.ii). This was a major reaction in her terms, and Iris encouraged her to develop this idea in the (dictated) caption to go with the picture of her plasticene model (A.iii and

A.iv). Generally in the group Beth did not join in, although she sometimes 'looked as if she wanted to'. In shared story-writing Beth looked very interested; her expression suggested that she wanted to join in, but when invited to she would not say anything and 'went back to blinking'. Her whole posture and manner suggested that she felt on the outside of activities, wanting to come in and take part, but unable.

Beth's drawings (A.v) were like those of a much younger child. She actually was a very young Year One child, because she was summer-born and had only had one term in the reception class. The study group noted Beth's bold use of colour in her drawings, and remembered her remark 'All the colours going round'. We discussed the kinds of play that might arouse Beth and asked about her attitude to dramatic play. Iris said that in the home corner Beth generally played alongside other girls, and rarely spoke. Iris felt that she was strongly aware of other children, and of two girls in the group in particular. She would watch them and pick up on what they were doing. In the group, you could sense her wanting to take part but not knowing how - 'she was just looking at you'. Iris felt saddened by Beth's dilemma.

12.2.1.2
Bill

Despite her initial impression of him as a silent child, when Iris observed Bill working in the classroom she realised that he was talking to himself all the time, keeping up a running commentary under his breath. This made her realise that he was far from silent or lacking in language, and this impression was confirmed the first time he came to the withdrawal group. Bill chose to make a plasticene model of a dragon, but the model did not come out as he wanted it, and he decided to turn the dragon into an elephant (B.i). When the modelling was finished, Bill did a drawing based on the model, and then a piece of writing (B.ii). All the time he worked he was talking, and Iris was able to overhear and transcribe some of his talk:

> 'Yellow and blue make green...I'm going to call mine Holyhead...my hands are blue...I'm doing it quick...we might run out of time...it takes a hard time to do this...I'm doing a snake...nearly biting it off...I'm doing a picture...(writing) I've only done one line...that's his trunk...I've forgotten his name, I'm naming it Roy...he's taken his glasses off, I'm putting them on...' (B.iii)

Iris considered that one of the most important aspects of Bill's work had been to make the plasticene model, and to feel confident enough to change the dragon into an elephant when his original plan went wrong. She talked about the value of plasticene as being a malleable medium 'within his control. Plasticene *is* what you say it is'. The dragon could easily change into an elephant in this medium, without the errors and false starts showing as they would in a drawing. Iris felt that this experience of making an error and being able to transform it into something different might be particularly important for Bill, who was anxious about mistakes, and whose class teacher tended to emphasise the need for correctness.

When Bill had finished his modelling and drawing, he joined in a shared writing session in which the group wrote a story about a dragon. He took an excited part in the discussion and contributed more than once to the development of the story. He supplied the introduction to one sentence ('the dragon blew fire') and offered a further complete sentence which was also used in the book: 'The dragon had a big hole in him and was bleeding and crying'. After the shared story-writing Bill was eager to make a model of a dragon with wings, and found a book which contained a picture of a dragon's wings. He also contributed a picture (B.iv) to be used in the shared-writing book that Iris put together, and the study group noted how very much more successful his picture of a dragon in this book was, compared with his original attempt. His drawing illustrates the dragon 'bleeding and crying'- the sentence he had contributed to the story - and shows quite clearly the path of the bullet which injured the dragon, and the dragon's drops of blood.

The whole sequence of these activities had been:
1. Making the plasticene model, or relief picture, of a dragon/elephant
2. Drawing an elephant
3. Writing about the drawing
4. Shared story-writing and discussion in a group
5. Drawing a picture to illustrate the shared-writing book
6. Making a model of a dragon
7. Presenting the shared story to a school assembly
8. Contributing a photograph of his dragon model to a class book.
9. Drawing his own illustrations for a personal version of the shared-writing story book (B.v)

Bill's first piece of writing (B.ii), which was about his elephant drawing, was neat and small, a good imitation of a seven year old's writing. On closer examination, however, it was apparent that some of the 'writing' was randomly copied, while other parts showed signs of Bill using some initial letter sounds. The writing also contained other kinds of symbols than letters, including musical notes and numerals. It seemed to indicate that Bill was trying hard to make his writing look like that of other children, while having only the beginnings of an understanding of phoneme-grapheme relationships. However, his reading of the shared story book, in a context where his reading was strongly supported, was good.

The study group remarked on the marked difference between the children in their readiness to take up what Iris had provided for them. Bill seemed released by the possibility of choice and eager to experience all the choices available. His running commentary on his work showed his involvement, as did his lively contributions to the shared-writing book. One group member saw him as a child who 'breathed life into what he was doing'. His literacy development was slow for his age, but he was talking all the time, and his 'language difficulties', judging by the transcribed monologue and his contributions to the group story, were only apparent in certain contexts. We felt that literacy teaching would need to build on Bill's obvious existing strengths in oral language and creative work if it were to help him to make the links between oral and written language.

Iris's observations of the two children had also revealed a great deal about her own assumptions as a teacher. She had provided a great deal of choice for the children but had constantly extended what they did. Throughout the sequence of activities she described, children were able to build on experiences and rework their original ideas (eg the dragon) in different media. In the case of Bill it was strikingly clear how helpful it had been for him to return to the same material and treat it in different ways, working both independently and also in a supportive group.

The other striking aspect of Iris's case studies was the quality of her observations of individual children. Her observations of Beth were highly

sensitive to Beth's very tentative behaviour. She was aware of the significance of Beth's small moves, and aware of her unspoken and barely expressed desire to be able to join in more of what was happening. Her observations responded to body language, facial expression, behaviour in groups, and emotional states, as well as to what children were expressing through their drawing, modelling and language.

12.2.2 Themes emerging from case studies

Iris' evidence was obviously limited by the nature of the contact that she had had with her case study children. She was not their class teacher, but was withdrawing them from their normal classroom for extra help, and she had taught them for only one term. This was a very short time; all the other case study children in this chapter were observed over a period of at least eighteen months. The quality of Iris's observations was such that I felt it was worth including her case studies in this chapter. However, the conclusions emerging from her case studies must necessarily be thought of as provisional.

12.2.2.1
Beth

1. Silent and on the edge

This phrase seems to sum up a great deal about the picture of Beth that emerges from Iris's observations. Both in her normal class, in the first meeting of the withdrawal group, in shared story-writing, and in the home corner, Beth rarely speaks or joins in, although she often seems to want to. However, she is watchful, sometimes looks interested, and listens to what is going on. Her difficulty in fully joining in the life and the creative activities of the group, and particularly in initiating any move herself, is palpable in Iris's observations, and is obviously part of her general difficulties in learning and literacy.

2. Apparent lack of affect

Beth does not reveal her feelings, and rarely responds. The one occasion when she laughs is a major event. Iris's observations refer to Beth 'blinking and staring' and there are several references in the evidence to her gaze, giving an impression of her as an impassive watcher of others.

3. Tentative moves

During the period that Beth is observed, she makes a very few tentative moves to take part in the activity of the group - for instance, she joins in a nursery rhyme - and to interact with others. Often she seems to be on the verge of doing or saying something, but then does not. The tentativeness of these moves reveals some of the anxiety underlying her silence and lack of participation.

12.2.2.2

Bill

1. Running commentary

Although Bill, like Beth, is thought of by his classroom teacher as a child with limited language, Iris's observations both in class and in the withdrawal group show that he is only apparently silent. In reality he is talking to himself all the time about the activity he is engaged in; his talk is a means of directing his activity. Bill's constant stream of talk, when he is drawing and writing about his plasticene model, demonstrates his intense involvement in his work. His sense of urgency and desire to take a full part in everything on offer is also revealed in his running commentary, and shows how committed he is to this activity, despite his difficulties with writing.

2. Growing confidence to initiate

In the shared writing group, where he does not have to worry about his difficulties with transcription, Bill becomes very vocal and contributes two elements to the story. He seems energised by this successful experience, and immediately afterwards initiates another activity, making a model of a dragon with wings, and consulting a book for this purpose. Iris suggests that Bill's early experience of being able to overcome his initial failure with his plasticene model (the dragon that had to be turned into an elephant) was an important factor in the growing confidence and ability to initiate observable in his behaviour throughout the session she describes in detail.

3. Involvement in creative activity

Bill's visible involvement in all the activities of the group and his readiness to engage with them suggest that he is attracted and excited by the range of creative activities on offer in the withdrawal group. His anxiety (apparent in his running commentary) about running out of time

seems to indicate that he is getting a great deal out of the session and does not want it to end. His artistic work (drawing and modelling) over the short period Iris describes in detail reveals a striking gain in confidence and control in this area of symbolising.

12.2.3 Interview with Iris

In my long interview with Iris in June 1992, I focused on her own theories and theories-in-practive, as I did with all the teachers in this final interview. I asked about her views on the links between art, drama and literacy, how she arrived at these views, and how she enabled these links to be made in the classroom. I also asked her something about her own creative and imaginative experiences, both as a child and as an adult, and how these had influenced her teaching.

Iris was definite about the central importance, in her classroom, of art and creative subjects.

> 'I think it's important to use art as a road in, and I mean art in a wide variety of forms - perhaps I should say creativity, creative subjects - because it frees the children from any preconceptions of what they should be doing. For instance, when young children start school they're told they're going to learn to read and write and they sometimes freeze at the very thought...In creative activities there isn't an ultimate right or wrong so they feel secure. Also they can talk *through* things, rather than directly, which gives them some sort of shield between themselves and these new people, this new situation.'

Iris was acutely aware of the pressures experienced by young children starting school, their feelings of newness and strangeness, and of the demands and stresses of academic expectations. She felt that artistic activities provided a way of getting involved immediately, a means of relating to this new world through a medium other than language.

> 'If they're talking through creative activity they can get lost within it....You can get their feelings and perceptions through their work'.

She saw children's artistic productions as a means whereby they could offer other people aspects of themselves in a real act of communicating something of importance, but one which was still an indirect, and therefore safer, form of communication.

> 'It's very much part of you, you've made a statement and offered it to people, but it's in *between* you and the other person, and that helps in many cases.'

She gave as an example a child learning English who was mainly communicating with her through drawing at the moment.

I wondered whether Iris was not underestimating what she did by presenting it primarily as an ice-breaker, a means of establishing a

communications route in difficult circumstances. I pressed her to say more about what might be happening in this form of communication, and how creative activities might be seen as linked to literacy in a more specific sense. She pursued this line of thought:

'Because if you create something it's essentially part of you...When you draw, when you paint, a certain part of you is revealed, the way you perceive and how you feel comes over in a drawing. So it's helping you to share your feelings and your ideas...At the early stages, especially with children with language difficulties, they're locked in themselves unless you can find a vehicle for them to reveal part of themselves and their feelings in language.'

It was clear that Iris saw creative activities like painting as providing children with a kind of promise of what literacy had to offer, and that she was strongly aware of the affective aspects of both kinds of communication. In both cases, children were revealing themselves to others and sharing their feelings and ideas. But artistic activities offered a more concrete means of doing this, and were thus an effective way of preparing for literacy, which was a more abstract way of communicating:

'We're starting in concrete terms before we go into more abstract offerings'.

Iris felt that the main influence on her practice had been children themselves, and especially her experience of teaching very young children entering the reception class. As a reception teacher she was aware of children who were

'reluctant to take part in group activities, reluctant to speak in class discussion - and yet you felt that they had a lot to say...but something was holding them back'.

In play, however, children would open up. Iris took to structuring much of her group discussion round children's creative and play experiences, inviting them to bring their pictures or their models with them to the discussion corner.

'If you said "Would you like to tell us about that model you've made" you got an immediate response.'

This realisation had come to her very early in her teaching career.

'A long time ago. I've always worked through creative activities'.

There had been very few formal influences on her way of working. She had discussed her ideas with her own colleagues, and with teachers on courses, but had not explored them at a theoretical level. Some INSET courses, especially CLPE courses on storytelling, and courses on role play, dance drama and allied subjects had, however, helped her to formulate her ideas more concretely. But the main influence on her teaching of art had been her own experience as a painter.

'I think the creative work in terms of painting and clay is innate in myself...that came naturally.'

Iris is a gifted amateur painter who has painted since a child and who regularly exhibits in local exhibitions. I asked her more about her own experience of creative arts, and about her play experiences. When she was a child play was an important part of her life.

> 'I was very imaginative as a child. My parents have told me. My dolls came to life. I used to put them in all sorts of situations.'

Today she enjoys play with her granddaughter, who reminds her of her younger self. 'I can see myself being repeated in her'. She has no inhibitions about this kind of imaginative play:

> 'I've opened the door with a tablecloth round my neck being Wonderwoman when I've been playing with my granddaughter. It doesn't worry me. Other people would say "What is she up to?"'.

We talked about the probable importance of teachers having had good play experiences themselves, in order to recognise what children were doing in their play Iris thought that:

> 'If you haven't had those experiences, it's possible that you would think..."What on earth are they doing, get on with something more concrete"'.

She herself regularly joins in children's role play ('I quite enjoy it actually'). It was important for teachers to get involved in play rather than just standing outside the play and watching.

> 'If they feel you're participating they know they're in the right realm of things. They don't feel inhibited because they know that you're appreciating what they're saying.'

But not all teachers would want to do this, or be able to work in this way.

> 'Some people keep the child in them...it depends if they've had a childhood they *want* to retain, whether they do.'

Iris gave one example from her current classroom of children feeling 'secure enough within their imagination' to be able to explore and share an imaginary world. She had created a 'boat' in the home corner, by the simple expedient of bringing in a ship's wheel and making a prow out of cardboard:

> 'I have a boat in the classroom and we have one person as the captain and the other as the crew. And if they go in the boat they have to go on a voyage and tell the rest of the class where they've been. One sailed the boat up the river Thames to the Tower of London, one went to the North Pole to see the polar bears (because we did bears last term so they were using some of that experience). The other one went to the seaside and saw mermaids. And they're coming out of the boat, I'm writing the stories down and they're drawing pictures for the captain's log. We only started it last Thursday. They can't wait to get in the boat. And all they're doing, in a literal sense, they're standing in this piece of cardboard and they're turning the wheel. But they're going all sorts of places. Where you couldn't say to them " Write me a story about a journey" - if you said that to them they would find it very very difficult. But they're in this boat and they're turning the wheel and they're going *anywhere*. So they just need a prop.'

The whole of this account reminded me irresistibly of Vygotsky's lecture on the role of play in development, and in particular the passage about the child who imagines a horse with the aid of a stick. According to Iris, the wheel was a necessary 'prop' - and there is a nice ambiguity in the word itself, which can mean either a support, or a theatrical 'prop' which is part of the world of the drama. Whenever Iris spoke about children 'turning the wheel', she actually mimed the action she was talking about. She seemed by this to be demonstrating that it was the combination of the object itself and the action which enabled the children to enter the imaginative world of the sea voyage. Similarly, in the Vygotsky play chapter, it is the the combination of the stick itself and the child's action in straddling the stick which creates the imaginary horse, and enables the child to operate outside the world of normal meanings.

Over and over again in this difficult section of the play chapter Vygotsky stresses how important such a prop is in enabling the child to *detach* a word from its primary object and *attach* this meaning to a different object. 'A vital transitional stage towards operating with meanings occurs when a child first acts with meanings as with objects (as when he acts with the stick as though it were a horse)'. Vygotsky calls the stick a 'pivot' in this process ('He cannot detach meaning from an object, or a word from an object, except by finding a pivot in something else'). This, in Vygotsky's view, is a key moment in the development of the ability to use symbols, and in the development of the imagination.

In Iris' example, the bodily act of turning the wheel seemed to be essential to children's ability to enter an imaginary world. The children were otherwise hardly moving, certainly not miming movement with their whole body in the way that the child with the stick/horse can be assumed to be doing in Vygotsky's example, yet these minimal movements seemed to be enough to enable them to embark on their imaginary voyages. Imagining in the body was the starting-point for their mental imagining and their subsequent writing.

Iris cited other examples of working with children in this way:
> 'We once did an exploration through a wood, and we had to find all the creatures we thought we may find in a wood and pick them up - and be careful because that rabbit is going to jump! All through play time and the next couple of days there was "Look at my little mouse here, stroke it" and "Look at my spider". They were

listing or collecting in their minds all kinds of creatures that they would expect to find in a wood. Instead of my saying "A rabbit, a hare", they actually had to try and catch and stroke them and put them back - so that it could run down the hole, or fly up into the tree.If you said to them "Mice are very small, a rabbit is much larger than a mouse", they would accept that. But if you say to them "Look, there's this little mouse, pick it up, it just fits your hand" - and they're picking up this little mouse that's in their hand wriggling and trying to get away. And you say "Pick up the rabbit" - and they need a bigger space to hold it, and they're sort of feeling the weight, and feeling the mass, and they're *knowing* that there is a difference between the mouse and the rabbit.'

This sort of enactive, bodily knowing seemed to Iris particularly important for young children: 'I think young children learn through their bodies a great deal'. She saw children measuring and perceiving the world around them in relation to their own size and their own bodies. I asked her what she thought the effect on their language was of this kind of bodily imagining:

'Well, for example, going back to the creatures of the forest...you might say to them "Can you describe a fox for me?"- and they possibly could in very dispassionate terms, just answering you back. But if you're saying "Pick it up, feel it, is it wriggling?" and they're saying "It's wriggling, it's scratching, it's trying to get away" - you're letting them open areas which straight questions and answers couldn't quite reach, and which can bring in more language as they explore the experience'.

Like many other educationalists, then, particularly those, like Dorothy Heathcote, who work through drama, Iris sees that language and thought are rooted in emotion and experience, and that they can be supported and extended by work which - through enactment, work in role, or what I have called 'bodily imagining' - draws on and explores these feelings and experiences.

I asked Iris how she went about providing in her classroom for the kind of creative work that she wanted children to engage in. She talked first about the kinds of materials that she provided:

'Creative materials are always readily available - paints, crayons, pastels, they're all labelled, children know what they are, paint palettes, so if they want to use something it's there, plasticene, sand, water, lots of tactile apparatus, Mobilo, sticklebricks. I have an area for imaginative role play. At the moment it's the boat, but I've had the usual things - a TV station, a shop, a circus, a fairground, surgeries, dressing up clothes. At one point in the year I put face paints out, when I feel they're not going to draw on the walls. Pencils, paper, all readily available. Little books for them to make or to use.'

But Iris does not simply provide these creative materials and invite children to use them. When she talked about her way of introducing different activities, it was apparent that she had a detailed and structured way of inducting children into each new area:

'I have a sort of timetable where I put the emphasis on various things. I'll take drawing and talk about what they're going to draw, direct their attention to the details, give them the materials they'll need to make a really successful attempt. Just the same with painting. For example, we did some painting copying some of Monet's work. I made the palette, so that they had the right colours, the right textures. I showed them the pictures and talked about it, so that when they actually tried to do it there was at least a 70% success built in. Whereas if I'd given them an open palette, so that they had to mix their colours, some might have been sophisticated enough to do it, but others would have been disappointed. So I build in success - I give them enough support to ensure that it's going to be successful. Then, as they become more au fait with what's required, I withdraw some support so that they've got to mix colours and things like that....There's certain skills they must be taught before they can use the medium. When you've taught them the skill, then you leave them the materials for them to explore or develop, or perhaps they'll need to be taught again. I'm not really in the business of leaving everything and just saying "Let's see what happens"....But at the same time if they do something which is perhaps not the best way to do things, but they're getting a pleasing result, then I'll leave them. I won't say "No, no, stop, you shouldn't do it that way"'.

I asked how this approach worked with dramatic play. How did Iris provide this kind of initial teaching or support for children's play in the home corner, or for their role play?

'By arranging the area, talking about it, fully, to know the sort of things we expect to be explored. Take the boat, for example. I could have put a boat there and said "Oh well, there's a boat to play with, do what you want". But I give them guidelines. Now it doesn't mean I'm watching every time they're in the boat and saying "No, you didn't turn the wheel properly". I give them guidelines within which to create their play. Now they may, I'm hoping that they will, come up with something else, they may introduce pirates, or they may introduce mermaids, which I will help them to develop. But I lead them off on something and we talk about it, so that they have a path to follow - but hoping that they'll go off the main path and bring something to it themselves.'

I had particularly noted, in Iris' accounts of her teaching, her apparently deliberate sequencing of work in different media within the same project. In the drama work in the video, in which children were designing and making their own costumes; in the work of the withdrawal group, in which children moved from modelling, to drawing, to story-making, and back to drawing; and in the work in the 'boat', where dramatic play was followed by storying and painting, there was a structured sequencing of creative activities around a theme, which always involved reworking an experience in a range of media. It was as if she was demonstrating to children how experiences can be represented differently in different media, and inviting them to rework the material over and over again in these different ways. I asked her how deliberately she set out to do this, and what in her view was the value of combining these different modes of representation:

233

'Well, when you explore anything, let's say a shell, you're looking at a shell, you can express how you feel about it by drawing it. You can express something else about it by trying to capture its three dimensional shape with clay or whatever. Then you can even feel something else about it by dance drama with shells on the shore - how they move. I don't think you can fully explore an object or idea in any one medium. Because each medium makes you look at it or feel it in a different way. And I think by experiencing all of them you get more of a whole.'

Iris's answer obviously reflected her own experience as an artist, and her awareness that different modes of representation embody different ways of knowing. The desire to enable children to achieve as full as possible a representation of experience, then, was one element in her approach. But another was a desire to help them use all their potential ways of knowing in the classroom, and to enable them to express themselves in the medium in which they felt most confident and at home.

'If they find it more difficult to express themselves through drawing and more comfortable to express themselves through clay, they have the opportunity. And it also gives them the notion that there is no one way to express what you feel about something.'

I felt that this approach had other potential benefits to children. It demonstrated very concretely the links between different ways of symbolising, enabling children to appreciate both how different modes of representation are alike as well as different. It linked literacy experiences with creative experiences in other media, in a way which might encourage literacy learners to draw on previous good learning experiences and established skills. And in providing the opportunity to work through material over again in different ways, it helpfully enabled them to revisit the material, to gain more control over their experience through this kind of practice in different media, and to represent it more confidently and competently. As Iris said 'It gives a fuller understanding'.

Finally, we talked about what had happened to Bill and Beth since Iris had discussed them with the study group a year before. They had continued to respond to the work with the withdrawal group during the remainder of the year, and had become more able to work autonomously within the group. In the case of Bill, this had seemed to be reflected to some extent in his work and behaviour back in the classroom.

This year both children were in new classes. Bill was in the junior school (Year 3) and was waiting for a place in a tutorial classs. He was talking much more than he used to. His teacher felt that he worked more

confidently in creative areas of the curriculum than in maths or English, and that this success in creative work was helping his confidence. His imaginative ideas for writing were far ahead of his ability to write independently.

Beth still had difficulties in all kinds of academic work. Painting was her strongest area, and she was producing some pleasing work. Her teacher felt that this was one of the only ways in which she was able to express herself. She was in a large and demanding class, and was still rather lost in this kind of situation.

It seemed that, for Bill particularly, the work of the withdrawal group might have been important in demonstrating to him some things that he was able to do, and enabling him to operate more independently and confidently. Did Iris think that this experience of working with her had made a substantial difference for Bill? 'I like to think I showed him a way - but is that just wishful thinking?'

12.2.4 Conclusions

Through my work with Iris, in the study group and in conversations with her, I became aware of her as a teacher with a particularly well developed 'theory-in-practice'. All that she did in the classroom reflected a strongly held set of views about learning, which had not been developed in abstraction, but in response to her observations of children and of the influences on their learning. Although she was not used to articulating this set of beliefs, they formed a coherent whole. Iris was a sensitive observer of young children and sympathised with the reactions of children entering school. It was through watching children in this situation that she had come to realise how easily they could be deterred from learning, and how much importance confidence and a sense of 'being heard' had for their ability to learn, particularly in the unfamiliar and formal context of the school. Her emphasis on creative activities as an important 'basic' in early education reflected her observations of how such activities could be a key transitional activity for many children, but also recognised that there were other ways of representing the world (eg enactive or iconic ways) apart from language, and that these representations could be seen as preceding and underpinning more abstract linguistic representations. She had a marked concern for children with learning difficulties; for these

children she believed that creative activities had a particular function and importance. In conversation, Iris continually stressed the need for children to feel confident in their learning.

When I came to reflect on all the material I had gathered about Iris' work, certain themes seemed to me to emerge:

1.Bodily imagining

In discussion, Iris emphasised the importance to children of knowing through the body, and of bodily ways of symbolising, such as drama. In her description of the drama of the 'creatures of the forest', or of the 'boat' in the home corner, she continually stressed the way in which, through mime and enactment, children can experience knowledge of a personal and affective kind. She contrasted this kind of knowing with a more abstract and cognitive kind of knowing, where facts are taken on without any element of personal knowledge and understanding. Iris considered that this bodily way of knowing was particularly important for young children:

> 'I think, with young children, they learn through their body a great deal. Because when you think of it, they're measuring the world around them by their own size and their own experiences, and their place, their bodily place, among these objects they're coming into contact with.'

The kind of 'bodily imagining' that children are so readily able to use in such mini-dramas is an extension of their play, an established and successful way of knowing and representing the world that many children can bring into school. For this to happen, however, play has to be accepted and positively used as a means of learning.

2. Symbolic progression

Iris quite explicitly saw a progression from 'concrete' ways of representing or symbolising the world, such as enactment or picturing, to the more 'abstract' symbolising of language and particularly of literacy. She worked with the grain of this movement and developed it, using creative and imaginative activities as the basis for discussion or group story writing. She had found that, for children entering school, art activities could provide a safe means of beginning to communicate. Children reluctant to speak in class could take part in the activities of the classroom, and use a mode of expression they felt confident with, one in which there was no 'right' or 'wrong' way. This seemed to be of particular importance, as Iris considered that for many children literacy, even in its very beginnings (or

particularly then), was strongly fraught with the possibilities of error. She felt that following the progression from more concrete to more abstract forms of representation enabled children to use these established modes of representation, which they felt at home with, as a basis for subsequent work in literacy.

3.Translations

Linked to this was Iris' characteristic way of sequencing work with groups of children. She would normally sequence a group or class project so that children worked on the same material in several ways. For instance, they might begin with a piece of dramatic play, which would form the basis for some work in art, perhaps in modelling, which would in turn be followed by a group story making session. Finally, children might be encouraged to dictate and illustrate their own versions of the story which had been begun in the drama. My personal name for these different ways of treating the original material is 'translations'. In the course of these translations, children could be observed to gain in confidence and in a sense of control of the material. The opportunity to rework the same material over a period of time had made them thoroughly familiar with their subject, and given them opportunity to practise and improve on their original ideas, and to look at them from different angles. The sequencing of the project constituted a kind of demonstration to the children of how their work could be developed from its original conception.

4.Symbol systems as ways of knowing

These 'translations' reflected Iris' view that all ways of knowing are partial, and that no idea or thing can be fully known through a single medium. When she spoke about the shell, she described different media and forms of symbolising as different ways of knowing the world ('Each medium makes you look at it or feel it in a different way'). She introduced children to a wide range of creative activities in a careful and structured way. She did this partly in order that they should have access to as wide a range of ways of knowing as possible - as she explained, she believed that in order to know anything wholly it was necessary to represent it in many different ways. But also, as a teacher who was sensitive to children's individual natures and to the considerable differences between them, she was aware that some children would find some ways of knowing far more accessible than others.

5.Teacher in role

Iris habitually took part in dramatic play and drama with children, and felt that it was important for her to take a role in the imagined world of the drama. She believed that children saw her participation as a sanctioning of their play, and that it helped them to use play as a way of learning. By joining in she was also able to influence and extend the play. In order to join in the drama, Iris had to be able to 'play' herself, and call on her experience of play. She was able to do this because she remembered very satisfying imaginative play experiences as a child and had not lost touch with them. Not all teachers, she believed, had had such experiences, or remained in touch with them, and this made it harder for them to understand what was going on in dramatic play, and to promote it.

6. Observation and imagination

Finally, I realised how many of these themes were related to Iris' ability to observe children. She habitually drew on these imaginative ways of knowing, in her observations as in her teaching. In discussion with me, she mimed the way the children behaved in drama sessions - when they picked up imaginary animals or took the ship's wheel. In making her observations of Beth, she responded to Beth's whole physical way of being, and when she presented her case study to the group she made us see Beth and feel what it might be like to *be* Beth, enacting Beth's manner in the group for us, and making us see how difficult a child like this might find it to make a first move. Her ability to look closely, to listen, to empathise with individual children, and to respond to their individuality, was highly developed. It was above all this power of sensitive and empathetic observation that she brought to her own case studies, and that she contributed to the discussions and work of the study group.

12.3   Part 3. Margaret Wyeth

In January 1991, when the study group first met, Margaret Wyeth was the deputy head of Gallions Mount, the primary school in Greenwich where she has taught for twenty years. In the course of that time she has taught in both junior and infant departments, but in 1991 she was teaching the reception infants class.

I had known Margaret Wyeth since 1985. She was one of the original members of the Primary Language Record steering group and contributed substantially to the thinking behind the Record. She had piloted the original versions of the Primary Language Record. She had been a frequent speaker on courses at the Centre for Language in Primary Education and a participant in many other aspects of the Centre's work. She had been a member of a CLPE moderation group on the Primary Language Record and the National Curriculum, a member of the working party which developed the cross-curricular Primary Learning Record, and, for a short time, a member of CLPE staff during a project on planning and record-keeping undertaken for the National Curriculum Council. In addition her classroom had featured in two major CLPE publications, *Patterns of Learning* (Barrs, M., S. Ellis, H. Hester and A.R.Thomas,1990) and *The Reading Book* (Barrs and Thomas, 1991). I knew from my involvement with her that Margaret was a teacher with a strong interest in literacy and in the links between literacy and other ways of symbolising. I also knew what an experienced observer she was, and I admired her thorough and perceptive records. Observation was built into her way of working in the classroom.

In the first two terms of the study group (January 1991- July 1991) Margaret attended its meetings and presented her case studies to the group. I visited her in her classroom and was able both to observe her case study children for a morning, and to interview her individually about her observations. In the second year of the study group, Margaret continued to teach the same class, so that by July 1992 she had very full records of the progress of her two case study children over their first two years in the infants school. But by then she was no longer herself their class teacher, because in April 1992 the head teacher had retired, and she had become head teacher of the school. This meant that she had taken over a heavy administrative job just at a time when national changes and changes in local authority

financing were making even more demands of head teachers. In these circumstances, it became more difficult for her to attend further meetings of the study group. I was, however, able to discuss her case study children with her once more in July 1992, to collect copies of the children's records, and to record a final extended interview with her about her own ideas on the topic of my research, the development of her ideas, and how they had influenced her approach as a teacher.

Margaret's classroom was characterised by a workshop-like atmosphere in which children were engaged in many kinds of making. A very vivid impression of the classroom and its activities is given in *Patterns of Learning*, which gives a map of the room, with photographs of the different areas, showing children at work in all these areas. One group of children is shown making a three dimensional plan of the room itself, using Lego. Another group is making picnic baskets for a 'Teddy Bears Picnic' which the class is preparing for in the near future. They have designed the baskets and are working from their own designs. Two girls are making a lighting circuit for a doll's house, which is arranged as the three bears' house from the Goldilocks story. Two children are reading in the book corner, and taking turns to read to the big teddy bear which lives there. There is a general air of purposeful making, with many of the children's activities linked to the class topic on bears. There are also pictures of Margaret working with the whole class on a piece of shared story writing, which she transcribes onto a flip chart as the class composes it. Many of the activities shown are closely interwoven with literacy or story - children may be labelling their diagrams, making information books to describe their projects, or working on projects that derive from stories. The classroom is organised in such a way that the children can find the materials and equipment that they need, and they seem able to work independently, either by themselves, or in collaboration with others.

This classroom plan illustrates Margaret's style of working as a teacher very well. A combination of relaxed informality with meticulous planning and recording characterises her approach. Children are given as much autonomy as they are capable of using, and Margaret is a constant observer, who always manages to be aware of what is going on in the different corners of the classroom. Her stance as a skilled observer, however, never results in her becoming detached from children or their

activities; she is a frequent participant in their work and in their play. The quality of her observation is seen most clearly in her records of individual children, which are detailed and illuminating. These records contributed invaluably to the case studies of the two children that she chose to observe, and they provide a remarkably full picture of these children's progress and development over the two years of the study.

12.3.1 Case studies

At the first meeting of the study group Margaret had decided that one of the children she wanted to focus on would be Gurjeet, a Panjabi-speaking boy who had spoken for the first time in English while he was making a model. He had talked through a story with the primary helper while he was modelling in clay. When he had finished the model he 'wrote and wrote'. He was invited to retell the story he had 'written', and it proved to be just like the story that he had told while he was modelling. But he also revealed an unexpected knowledge of written language conventions when he pointed to a dot in the corner of the paper and explained that it said 'the end'. Her account of this episode sparked off a whole series of anecdotes in the group about the way in which play and enactment can often precede and prepare for drawing or writing.

Margaret had also been interested in documenting the progress of Fareeda, a girl who had recently come to England from Pakistan, and who was communicating with others primarily through her play with a doll. In the event, however, the subject of Margaret's second major case study was Ann, a girl who looked as if she was going to have few problems with literacy, and who was constantly involved in book-making.

Margaret followed Gurjeet and Ann through the eighteen months of the study, as far as she could in view of her changes of role. She presented her case studies to a meeting of the study group in March 1991, collected examples of the children's work and of their records, and discussed these with me at two separate interviews, one in March 1991 and one in June 1992. From the considerable amount of data relating to these two children, very clear pictures emerge, both of the children themselves and of Margaret's classroom and her teaching.

12.3.1.1

Gurjeet

Margaret's interest in choosing Gurjeet to observe for the study group had partly been prompted by his extraordinary talent for drawing, which was already evident after only one term in the reception infant class. Her original description of him talking through the story of his model, and then going on to 'write and write', proved to be fairly representative of Gurjeet's subsequent behaviour as a learner. Her presentation of his work to the study group, her records, and the evidence of her interviews, continued to emphasise the important role that drawing and modelling played in Gurjeet's learning and literacy development, and provided abundant examples of the way in which Gurjeet's texts often accompanied, or arose from, his models or drawings.

1. Evidence to the study group

In her presentation to the study group in March 1991 Margaret showed us three different kinds of drawing and making that Gurjeet had done:

- a board game (made with a friend) based on the popular Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles characters,
- two kinds of observational drawings - one of a stuffed owl, and one of daffodils growing from bulbs,

and

- a technical drawing of a meccano model of a tricycle (which Gurjeet had made before he did the drawing).

Apart from the board game, these were all Gurjeet's individual work.

The extreme accuracy of Gurjeet's drawing, both the observational drawings and the technical drawing of the tricycle model, was very striking. Gurjeet was only five at this time, but his work in this medium had the characteristics of that of a much older child. It was very detailed and precise. His tricycle drawing showed all of the parts of the model and made clear how they interconnected. The proportions of the drawing were well judged, and it was done with confidence and vigour. Both this drawing and those of the owls and the daffodil plants demonstrated Gurjeet's ability to observe detail closely without losing a sense of the whole. The concentration implied in such accurate, painstaking and finished drawings was impressive. In drawing the stuffed owl, Gurjeet had paid great attention to the texture of the owl's feathers. His pencil drawing

of the daffodil plant was meticulously shaded, with each part of the drawing shaded in a different way. The drawing on the Turtles board game was much freer and more playful in character, but was an attempt to make an authentic game, with squares numbered and hazards clearly indicated.

Some of these projects had been carried out over successive days, and had gone through different stages. After the original owl drawing, for instance, Gurjeet had painted a photocopy of his drawing, and had then done a further drawing, this time from memory. The second drawing retained many of the features of the observational drawing, but was more formalised and pattern-like in character. Some of the details in the first drawing had been transformed into patterns in the second drawing - for instance the owl's feathers. Gurjeet's visual recall of shapes and details was apparent from this example.

The first draft of the text of the book which he went on to produce after doing these drawings consisted of numbered facts about owls. It was brief and informative, written in impersonal information prose:

'1.The owl has one beak and two eyes and

2. he can't move the eyes and

3. he can't move the head all the way round.'

Gurjeet had obviously absorbed the style of the information books which Margaret had been reading to the children at drink time.

The drawing of the tricycle model had also been made into a fact book, in response to Margaret's suggestion. She had asked Gurjeet how someone else would know how to make the model. This text had shown Gurjeet's ability to use basic known words (and, I, my) and to read his writing back with 'one-to-one correspondence' - fitting each word spoken to a word on the page. Gurjeet had drawn some of the meccano parts alongside his writing to make the instructions clearer, and had numbered each new instruction.

Gurjeet's ability to focus on one task over a period and to carry out an extended project was evident in all of these examples. So was his independence and his capacity to direct his own work. It was clear that he was interested in the world and how it worked, and his projects showed him exploring different aspects of his world in a practical way.

Gurjeet's drawings were replete with information, and his texts seemed to be simply an additional way of recording information, a supplement to his pictures. Sometimes, as with the board game, they were brief labels and directions. Sometimes, as with the fact books, they were texts that arose from and depended on the pictures. The tone of these texts was strictly factual, Gurjeet was writing within a genre which he liked and was familiar with.

2. Classroom visit

On my visit to Margaret's classroom at the end of March 1991, I was able to spend a little time observing Gurjeet. He was finishing the making of a paper kite, and brought to this task all of the focused attention that had informed the drawings I had seen. The kite was divided into quarters by pink lines, and Gurjeet was filling each quarter with a different speckled pattern in a different colour. Finally he fixed a pink paper spot to the exact centre of each quadrant, and fixed pink paper bows to the kite's tail. There was a strong sense of pattern and regularity in his design, and his way of working was methodical. He never deviated from his task until it was completed, hardly lifting his eyes from the table, and his expression was concentrated and grave.

As soon as he had finished Gurjeet looked up, smiled, and went over to Margaret. He asked her permission to go and play at the water tray, and immediately became involved in a game with a group of friends, making Lego motorbikes, complete with helmeted riders, to load onto a lorry which they were floating in the water. Gurjeet brought the same focused attention to making and repairing the Lego bikes and riders that had marked his kite-making, but he nevertheless appeared much more animated, and became excited when the lorry began to sink under its load. Whenever I looked at him he had his head down, manipulating the Lego. But his activity was social, he was supplying all of his friends with motorbikes and organising the play.

3. Discussion with Margaret

During this visit, I was able to interview Margaret about her case study children. I questioned her about Gurjeet's behaviour in the classroom and his preferred activities. She described him as an exceptionally well

behaved child ('perhaps too much so') who, given the choice, would always work with sand and water, or with Lego. Characteristically he chose to take Lego and Playmobile figures to the sand or water table and play with the same group of boys, and these were the only occasions when he was at all vocal - sometimes indeed quite loud and naughty.

Margaret identified some of the chief themes of Gurjeet's play. He was obsessed with motorbikes and bike races, and also played with other miniature figures (eg farm animals). In the play house he would generally role play an official. He would put on a cap, and make telephone calls.

Gurjeet would always draw rather than paint. His drawing was skilful, and he understood the difference between a preliminary sketch and a finished drawing. His drawings were always very informative. Most of his writing arose from his drawing, modelling, or construction work and seemed to be simply an additional way of recording information. Gurjeet liked some of the fiction books that were popular with the class, but during the morning reading time he was more likely to choose information books than fiction to read.

I spoke briefly to the community language teacher who worked with some of Margaret's class and learned that although Gurjeet seemed intelligent, and was familiar with his numbers in Panjabi, he preferred not to speak Panjabi in school yet. Margaret's records also noted that Gurjeet seemed to be shy in speaking Panjabi (for instance when translating for Fareeda).

4. Primary Language Records
Further evidence of Gurjeet's progress and development in drawing and in literacy was contained in Margaret's detailed Primary Language Records. Fairly full records were available for Gurjeet for the period from September 1990 to December 1991 (C.i and C.ii), when Margaret stopped teaching his class.

From early in this period, Gurjeet's accurate visual memory was apparent to Margaret, as is apparent from the following extracts from her PLR diaries.:
> '...Can recognise word patterns i.e. identify blocks from shared writing and use them in his own eg I like egg and chips' (Reading Diary, Sept 14 1990)
> '...Notices words he knows, will write 'and' (no reference to message, just put in as he knows how to spell it).' (Writing Diary, Oct. 20 1990)

His progress in decoding and encoding print proceeded steadily, supported by his memory for texts, his visual memory, and his attention to detail:

'...Great enjoyment in spotting letters and relating sounds to words - G for Gurjeet and goat. V. focused.' (Reading Diary, Nov. 20 1990)

Gurjeet was keen to copy underneath Margaret's writing (Feb. 1991), and by this period was also beginning to self-correct when reading, showing an increased ability to check his memory for the text against the print.

But a strong tendency to rely on his visual memory continued into Gurjeet's second year in the infant department:

'I feel Gurjeet is learning to read through word shapes - cannot use sounds to help himself - maybe he won't need to!' (Reading Diary, Nov. 1991).

This attention to the look of words and pictures was even more strikingly apparent from some of the samples of Gurjeet's work that Margaret had saved. Perhaps the most outstanding example of Gurjeet's powers of observation and his sensitivity to visual style is his retelling of *Not Now Bernard*, done in June 1991. Gurjeet is able to reproduce not only the style of David McKee's illustrations, but the whole mood and meaning of the pictures - we can see how well he conveys Bernard's mum's indifference to Bernard, and the father's attentiveness to his hammering (C.iii).

Gurjeet's independent drawing is very different in character, but equally informative. The picture of himself and his friends playing at the water table with the Lego bikes (Sept.10, 1991) (C.iv) is characteristic; some parts of the picture are only suggested, but some parts which obviously seem important to Gurjeet (such as the water table itself and the level of water in it, and particularly the Lego bikes with their riders) are carefully drawn. The text accompanying this picture ('I like chips and fishfingers and lollipop and that's all') makes no reference to the picture, but shows distinct progress; an ability to attempt spellings of words with reference to their sounds ('HEEPS' for chips) as well as a desire to reproduce their general appearance ('FSEGFSHFEGS' for fishfingers).

A picture and text from a later period ('I went to see my auntie because she came back from India' March 30, 1992 (C.v)) shows Gurjeet's spelling continuing to improve, with crossings-out indicating that he is beginning to pay closer attention to his attempts, and to self-correct. But the accompanying picture still contains far more information than the bare text, and gives a remarkably good idea of what goes on in an airport. As well as a detailed picture of a plane coming into land, it shows the

terminal building, with escalators and waiting room, the multistorey car park, and cars approaching the terminal via the ramps. It is a classic example of the kind of diagrammatic drawing found in information texts, with everything laid out so that the reader can appreciate the workings of the scene being shown.

Gurjeet's records also reveal his strong and developing interest in reading information texts:

> 'Very keen to get info. book basket out each morning - loves sharing and browsing through these books.' (Reading Diary, March 1991) (C.i)

and his desire to make use of them:

> 'Looked at craft book this morning and took great interest in page on bubble printing - "Can we do this as an activity?" He later worked with primary helper and did his printing. He then took a group and showed them how to do it.' (Reading Diary, June 1991). (C.i)

12.3.1.2

Ann

Margaret had been interested in studying Ann because in her early days in the reception class she was so obviously drawn to storying and writing. Many of her activities led naturally into story-making and spontaneous book-making; she spent a lot of time in the writing corner. It seemed that Ann was strongly drawn to literate activities, and would have little difficulty in making the links between her storying and dramatic play and reading and writing.

1. Evidence to the study group

When Margaret presented Ann's case study to the study group in March 1991 it was evident that Ann was constantly involved in book-making. We looked at several examples of her work:

•a book about a boat, originally inspired by a boat which Ann had made out of cardboard and had waterproofed with black polythene. The boat was successfully floated in the water tray, and Ann decided to make a book about it.

•a story based on a big book about water play, based on photographs. This book began as a collaborative effort with a friend, but finally Ann chose to write her own story. She made a cover using a Paintspar computer design, fabric, and pictures.

•Ann's contribution to a class recipe book. Cooking had led to the making of a cookery book and Ann had announced that she was

making pancakes. When asked what she was making them out of she said 'mystery'. The class book contained a recipe for 'pancakes out of mystery'.

Ann's work was lively and colourful and seemed to be the work of a happy and creative child. Margaret's observations presented Ann as an inventive and busy learner. She stressed how much Ann appeared to enjoy her time in school and how constantly engaged she was with a succession of activities, especially with book-making, which was what she liked doing best. There was a regular interplay in her learning between realism and imagination - the work on the boat had a practical side to it, involving construction and scientific reasoning, but had led to a story which contained story book language, and elements of fantasy.

Ann generally took the books that she made home. She seemed to be a confident learner and was always ready to read her work to the class, but her understanding of letter sound relationships (though she was taking and interest in them) was not particularly advanced. In the water play book she had 'written' lines of capital letters, with full stops at the ends of each line. She had included the names of members of her family in the book, and was very keen to spell these correctly. Otherwise her writing was just beginning to show signs of an awareness of some initial sounds (D.i,D.ii,D.iii).

Ann also liked dramatic play. Margaret described how Ann and Gurjeet had presented a puppet show, taking all the preparations very seriously. They arranged the chairs, made tickets, and provided cardboard money for buying the tickets. Ann had made a poster to advertise the show, and a programme. She also spent a good deal of time in the play house, playing at housekeeping, generally with other girls. A lot of cooking went on during this play. The boys tended not to take any part in it. Ann occasionally tried to get the boys to take part - she had chased Raymond round the classroom ('I'm trying to catch my husband to marry him'). She had also commented, of the boys 'They're pigs, but they get busy in the end' - possibly a reference to Anthony Browne's *Piggybook*. Her involvement in dramatic play was all part of her spontaneous storying. It seemed as if Ann was was making intensive use of her time in school

2. *Classroom visit*

During my visit to Margaret's classroom I observed Ann engaging in a range of art-related activities. She had made a pop-up book before assembly and showed it to Margaret while I watched. The picture she had done was a regular pattern of red and green stripes with a pop-up blue band. Ann said that the picture was a creature: 'It was Mr Wolf, but it's changing to be a person - it's Shelley!'.

She spent part of the time painting while I was in the classroom, painting a pattern of colours. Most of the children around her were using bright paints, but Ann was doing very faint washes of colour, like transparencies. She was working attentively and mixing her faint colours carefully. She drew her neighbour's attention to a violet wash she had painted on one part of the paper: 'Look at that funny colour!'. Although absorbed in her work, she was also aware of what was going on around her. Mr Singh, the community language teacher, was working with Fareeda near the painting table. Ann overheard them talking about the letter A and automatically remarked 'A for Ann'.

When she had completed both of these projects she went to play in the sand tray. Initially she seemed to be cooking with sand, and played happily alone. Then she began to make a castle. Shelley joined her and together they began to mass up the sand in a huge pile. The girls' play became louder as they became excited and built their pile higher and another girl joined them. The sand castle turned into a 'snowman' and the girls competed to make the pile taller. Ann was organising the game, directing the other girls' efforts, and keeping up a running commentary. The noise they made attracted the attention of Gurjeet and his friends at the water tray, who came to see what was going on.

Like Gurjeet, Ann drew a clear line between her work and her play; her manner changed completely when she went to the sand tray and was joined by the other girls. Her art work was very regularly and carefully done, and showed a well developed sense of colour and of different techniques of painting. Her manner was lively and confident and she commented readily on what she and others were doing. She seemed extremely focused and well organised.

3. Discussion with Margaret

Margaret described Ann as a very confident and organised child. She worked well with other children, and did not always work in the same group, although she did mainly choose to work with the girls. She was thoroughly independent in her way of working, and was capable of long spells of concentration during which she was completely involved in what she was doing. Margaret thought that she would be capable of organising herself for a whole day if need be.

I described Ann's behaviour at the sand tray, when she had become more animated and noisier than usual, but had also directed the play of others. Margaret said that Ann was very serious and focused for most of the time and always asked permission before leaving an activity or beginning a new project. She habitually organised the other children that she was working with.

Certain themes had emerged in Ann's play and her storying. One had to do with water. Several of Ann's stories were about the seaside. In one particular play episode that Margaret had noted at the water tray Ann had made up a story about a floating boat. Everyone was at the seaside and the boys could swim, but one girl couldn't swim and she was drowning. Margaret had talked to Ann about how girls can learn to swim. Similarly, in one of Ann's paintings the 'drowning' theme was also present. Her dictated caption to the painting read 'The water comes out of the steam pipe and all the water goes in the road and drowns people'.

Other themes had to do with weddings, cooking, and general playing house. Ann habitually acted out traditional female roles in the play house, being a housewife, or sometimes being a receptionist. She took down messages and made bookings in a big diary.

Ann loved book-making and would spend most of her time in the writing corner if she was allowed to. I read two stories on the wall that she had written. She had used the computer for one of them, and had drawn Margaret's attention to the fact that she had left spaces between words: 'I've got spaces haven't I?'. (The term before she had said, of spaces, 'I

don't put them in my writing'). Some of the books she made were based on other books, such as the pop-up book, which was based on *Dinner Time*, but she would sometimes choose to make up a story rather than retell a story she knew.

Margaret described Ann as a ~~confident~~ child who talked freely and spontaneously about her work. She seemed to enjoy talking to both adults and children and had no difficulty in expressing her ideas and feelings. She talked as readily in big groups. In general, she seemed to be developing into a well motivated learner, who was working in a focused way and was able to reflect on her own learning.

4. Primary Language Records

Ann began her first year at school very confidently. The Talk and Listening section of her Primary Language Record (D.iv) says that 'she enjoys talking with both adults and children. She is able to express herself articulately'. She enjoyed every aspect of school life, especially drama, model making, and making books in the writing corner. The Talk and listening diary of observations shows her working with others and notes: 'competent at showing other children how to set about activities, enjoys describing what to do'.

Ann seems as if she would have few problems in reading and writing. She is a competent, focused worker in most areas of curriculum; Margaret's records describe the science experiments she has carried out, the way in which she is able to use maths terms with understanding, and her confident and independent way of working on maths problems. But from early in the first year there are signs that Ann is beginning to find reading a problem. She begins enthusiastically - the first entry in Margaret's reading diary (D.v) says 'Enjoys books and stories and will anticipate text. Knows lots of letters, can identify ones which are in her own and her brother's names.' The fact that book-making is much her most favourite activity also suggests that Ann is drawn to literacy and will enjoy learning to read and write.

But Margaret's records show that, despite her enthusiasm in this first year, Ann finds it difficult to read, and has problems focusing on the text. She is keen to recognise letters, but seems not to connect letter recognition with

reading. A reading sample in December 1990 (D.vi) says that she sometimes misinterprets which piece of text belongs to which page in a well-known book and doesn't always notice the mis-match, and suggests that she needs to pay closer attention to text.

The writing diary (D.vii) shows Ann mainly writing lines of capital letters. She is very keen to spell some words correctly, such as the names of people in her family, and asks Margaret for these spellings. But she 'wrote these words in isolation from her other story writing in the book'. It looks as if, in writing too, there is a division for Ann between her enjoyment of books and writing and her learning of the written code. The writing samples taken over the course of this reception year show little progress - despite her continued enjoyment of book-making Ann is often just 'drawing writing.'

5. Home/school reading record

Reading Ann's home/school reading record (D.viii) makes the nature and the context of Ann's difficulties much clearer. From Ann's first days in school, her mother keeps a scrupulous and regular record of her reading at home of the books brought home from school. The first entry in the record by her mother shows what her expectations are, and gives a flavour of home reading experience:

> 'Ann was able to recite the entire book from memory but she was very reluctant to take note as I tried to point to individual words, so I didn't push things too much' (Sep 90).

From early on, Ann's mother discounts Ann's ability to retell the story, to use picture and context cues, and to respond to literary styles and rhythms. She counts as reading only the ability to sound out the letters. Behaviour that at school is regarded as positive (retelling a known text) is not regarded as important at home.

> 'Ann knew the words off by heart and so was again not interested in studying the individual words' (Oct 90).

At home, Ann's mother tries to get her to point to the words as she reads them, but this is often a mechanical exercise for Ann:

> 'Ann pointed to each word as I read the story to her. Sometimes she has difficulty in understanding that one word can have several syllables and therefore she sometimes jumps to the next word before I've read it.' (Jan 91).

Towards the end of Ann's first year in school, her mother's tone becoming slightly panicky.

> 'Ann can now point properly to each word as she says it but she still shows no signs of actually reading yet. If I point to a word out of sequence or at random she hasn't a clue as to what it is, even if I try to get her to spell it phonetically. So she is still only 'reading' because she knows the book off by heart beforehand' (April 91).

There is a considerable mismatch between view of what counts as reading at home and the view of the school. This is not to say that the school is not concerned about Ann's ability to decode. Margaret's Primary Language Records show that she is trying to get Ann to use her knowledge of letters in her reading. Margaret also occasionally intervenes in the home reading record, and the tone of her remarks suggests that she is trying to encourage the mother as well as Ann by pointing to strengths in what Ann is doing:

> 'Ann read a book to me today that I had chosen for her. It was unknown to her and she managed to read most of it unaided. I was very pleased with her.' (June 1991)

By Ann's middle infant year (Year One) it seems as if Ann has lost some of her original enthusiasm for reading. The reading diary notes that at the beginning of the Autumn term Ann does not seem keen to read and 'often says lately that she doesn't have time to read' her book at home. The home/school reading journal shows that mother is still concerned about whether Ann is really reading:

> 'Ann read some of the words but she still just seems to be guessing most of the time, looking at the pictures and guessing what it might say'. (Oct 91).

A note of exasperation enters into the tone when Ann brings home a nursery rhyme book:

> ' Humpty Dumpty. I think it would be better is Ann didn't bring this type of book home. She obviously knows the rhyme off by heart and therefore it's impossible to test whether she's really reading.' (Nov 91)

The use of the word 'test' is revealing here.

Margaret replies to this entry, and points out that Ann chose this book herself. She suggests:

> 'If she chooses a quick read like this one you could turn it into a game -write the words out on a piece of paper and ask her to cut the words up individually and then arrange them again to make sense'.

The diary continues, with a clear improvement becoming apparent in Ann's reading. In November, Ann's mother notes that :

> 'Ann is definitely making a better attempt to work out the words she doesn't recognise';

> 'Ann read most of the book';

'Ann read most of the words and made a good attempt to work out the words she didn't know'

and (on December 3rd)

'This is the best Ann has ever done.'

In the next term this improvement continues:
> 'Ann read the book by herself and even when I covered the pictures up and just pointed to individual words she was still able to read them'.

Ann is beginning to be able to do the things that, for her mother, count as real reading. But there is evidence of some tension accompanying these reading at home sessions:
> 'When Ann really concentrates she can read most of the words, but sometimes she gets very "worked up" if she can't read a word and I want her to try to work it out herself'.

The strategies Ann is encouraged to use at school - such as using pictures and context cues, reading for meaning, reading on in the text instead of sticking at unknown words - do not count as reading at home, where decoding is all that matters.
> 'She still doesn't seem to have any idea how to attempt to work out how to read the words'. (March 1992).

One of Margaret's rare interventions in the diary suggest that Ann needs to feel more relaxed about making mistakes:
> 'She tends to freeze at the moment and she needs to feel confident that it is okay to take a risk and that it doesn't matter if her try is wrong. I feel she needs lots of encouragement from both home and school in this.'

In her writing in this second year Ann's attempts are gradually getting closer to adult spelling, though she still writes clusters of letters that bear no discernible relationship to the target word at times. One or two of her writing samples show her practising another kind of writing: lists of simple spellings (my, no, by, little, cat, mat, sat, pat) which she 'marks' with a row of ticks. It isn't clear whether this kind of practice is something that she has invented or has been involved in at home.

However, Ann has always been ready to write and make books. An episode from her reception year is typical:
> 'Arrived this morning beaming, waving a book she'd made at home. It was a book with photos she'd chosen and cut up and wrote text to go with each photo. She read the book to me. I photocopied it and then asked her if she could read her book to me again so that I could write the text in mine. "Don't think I can remember the same as this morning".' (Writing Diary of Observations, March 1991).

This pleasure in writing, which is so closely linked to book-making, continues throughout Year 1, and Ann always wants to take her books home to show her mother. She actually remarks on this in her language and literacy conference with Margaret.

Ann's attempts at writing, like her reading, begin to show a growing understanding of written code, and so become easier to read, and in her second year in school she makes very visible progress (D.x, D.xi, D.xii). By April 1992 she is able to attempt the spellings of most words, even words like 'rockery' and 'helicopter' (D.xiii). In this piece of writing from her folder her writing looks much more mature. It is well spaced and clear. This simple piece of 'news' about helping with the gardening reads as if Ann is really trying to communicate. Detail is concrete and specific, as it often is in Ann's writing, which seems to be less affected by her concerns about correctness, and by the differences in expectations and approaches to literacy at home and at school. Writing may well be a more important site for her literacy development than reading; and it seems likely that this is partly because it has continued to be associated with pleasure for her, and with artistic and playful ways of learning.

12.3.2 Themes emerging from case studies

When I considered all of the evidence relating to Gurjeet and Ann, and tried to sum up the strongest impressions I had gained about these case study children from reading and rereading all this material, the following themes emerged:

12.3.2.1

Gurjeet

1. Accuracy and visual sense

Gurjeet's accurate visual sense is dramatically evidenced in his drawing, which is remarkably assured, detailed and painstaking. He is capable of very careful close observation, and of sensitivity to different visual styles. He is highly responsive to the way in which information can be conveyed in technical diagrams and drawings; in his own texts the drawings often carry the bulk of the information. Gurjeet's accurate visual memory is a characteristic of his learning in general; his approach to reading and writing draws heavily on his memory of word shapes.

2. Preference for information texts

Gurjeet is drawn to information books and likes browsing through these books and using them. He takes them as models for his own book-making, and picks up on their style both in his pictures and his texts. Gurjeet may be particularly attracted to the way in which these books convey their information through a combination of picture and text.

3. Embedded texts

Most of Gurjeet's own early texts are 'embedded texts' ; they are part of a diagram, a map, a board game, or a drawing. Even where this is not so, much of his writing emerges from drawing, modelling or construction work. Gurjeet readily takes up the opportunities offered in this classroom for combining writing with creative work and technology.

12.3.2.2

Ann

1. Attraction to book-making

The activity to which Ann is most drawn is book-making. She spends her time, by choice, in the writing corner, and while there she is generally engaged in producing books. Ann is a very focused learner and can spend considerable amounts of time on this activity. The books she makes are highly illustrated and decorated. She generally takes these books home; they seem to be intended for her mother.

2. Gap between progress in reading and progress in writing

Ann's records over eighteen months reveal a great disparity between her reading and her writing. Her reading begins confidently, but by the beginning of her second year her slow progress is beginning to give concern. Ann's home/school reading record reveals her mother's worries about her reading; some of her positive behaviours (willingness to guess, to read on) are not recognised at home. However, her writing is relatively free from this kind of anxious scrutiny, and there is visible and rapid progress in this area of her literacy. Writing may be the site where Ann actually learns to read.

3. Confidence/consciousness of error

Ann is notably confident in her writing and book-making, but her reading is marked by a growing lack of confidence and consciousness of error. Initially it seems as if she will have few problems with her literacy learning. But as time goes by she becomes less willing to take risks and more conscious of error. Her continuing enjoyment and involvement in writing and book-making, however, are apparent: her confidence in this area seems relatively unaffected by her problems in reading. Her writing is closely associated with practical and creative activities (drawing, collage and book-making).

12.3.3 Interview with Margaret

My final interview with Margaret, in June 1992, began with Margaret telling me about some work that Gurjeet had been doing towards the end of his time in Year 1 (he had been taught by another teacher since Christmas, when Margaret became head teacher of the school). He had made a dinosaur out of a construction kit - Rioclick - which didn't at first sight seem to be a particularly good choice of medium. Gurjeet however had managed to make recognisable dinosaurs of different types with this apparatus. He generally began by making the model and then went on to recount all the information he knew about the creature he had represented. Afterwards he would play with the figures he had had made. Margaret felt that it would be a good idea for Gurjeet to make his own dinosaur information books, to 'pull it all together'. This 'pulling it all together' seemed to me to be a key concept in her classroom, and I asked whether she thought that this was true.

Margaret agreed that she was very interested in enabling children to make links between different aspects of their learning. 'Seeing models as separate from paintings, and separate from story, and separate from factual information' seemed to her to be a waste when 'there are obvious links to be rounded into a whole.' She felt that children were helped by a teacher saying 'You could...' and showing them the links that they could make between one activity and another. They began to take on these habits of mind themselves. But children 'who haven't been used to linking things - they see it all in isolated pockets.' And the curriculum, particularly the National Curriculum, didn't always help children to see the connections between different kinds of learning. History, particularly, could present

problems in this way, and was therefore now being deliberately taught at Gallions Mount through role play and drama, supported by craft work.

I asked her to say more about the way in which creative activities could support learning, and what it was about creative work which made it a medium through which children could learn. Margaret stressed that in creative work children were usually thoroughly involved in what they were doing, and they themselves were in charge of their work. Nobody could tell them how to do a painting, they took the decisions about how they wanted something to look. This gave children an unusual measure of responsibility.

> 'You're totally involved in it, and you feel in control of it, and you can extend it as you wish, you can stop as you wish, and you can return to it and change it.'

She found it inspiring when children were using their creative abilities successfully, 'You see them come alive.'

Margaret herself has always enjoyed painting, drawing and modelling, but has never studied it. Her own experiences of school learning did not encourage her to learn in any formal context. She had not experienced in her own school learning the kind of satisfactions that she hoped to the children in her class would experience. One incident from her own school days in particular brought home to her the fact that she lacked control over her own work. She remembered a painting lesson where the teacher had painted something and pinned it up and the children had to copy it. While she was painting the teacher had

> 'taken the brush out of my hand - it was a horse and cart I was trying to paint - and he painted it for me, and then at the end held it up as a lovely piece of work and I remember thinking "How's he done that, because I haven't painted that, it's not mine"'.

She contrasted the negative influence that her own schooling had exerted on her with the influence of a teacher in the first school where she taught, who had given her class a great deal of responsibility for displaying their own work, and had allotted each group of children their own display board to work on.

> 'It was making the children think about what they wanted to do and why they wanted to do it, and they could talk so confidently, that was what struck me, and that was due to the teacher.'

Margaret was also interested in the effect that role play could have on children's achievement. She had a striking experience to recount about

her own niece, a girl who very much disliked taking risks or making mistakes but who, in role, was prepared to learn things that she would not risk learning in life:

> 'She would say "I'll be Anna, and I'm going to be a gymnast, and you're going to teach me to do it" - I remember this - so she would practise doing headstands, because she, as Rebecca, wanted to do a headstand, but she couldn't bear being taught to do it, so *if she was somebody else* she could then learn it, and it wouldn't matter'.

Margaret felt that role was very often a releasing experience, enabling people to try behaving in ways that were not available to them in their normal lives.

> 'You take on a different role and you can do anything and I think my niece felt like this, she could be anything'.

This strongly reminded me of Vygotsky's observation that children can be a 'head taller' in play; they can try out ways of knowing and being that are not usually available to them *as children*.

I told Margaret that I had noticed that mapping and modelling played a big part in her classroom. These very concrete ways of imagining seemed to be a feature of her approach as a teacher. She said she had not been conscious of that, but that on the other hand she had at one point become very excited by the possibilities of story maps, and had developed other means of using drawing and diagramming for learning since that time.

> 'I've got into asking them to draw what they've learned. I posed a question of "how can you pick up a cuboid with a magnet?" just like that. And then some of them put paper clips in the cuboid and picked it up - and then I said "Now draw what you found out". I've got very much into that "what do you think's going to happen? What did you find out? and the accuracy of their drawings tells you everything that they have learned.'

Many responses to problems in mathematics and science could be expressed through drawing or modelling.

Similarly, Margaret would often ask children to enlarge a story, or interpret it, through a drawing, a map, or a model. In one example, she had asked children to think about where the crow had found the jug in the Aesop fable (cf Gurjeet's picture of this story (C.vi)). This had involved the children in considering the landscape beyond the story, and extending the boundaries of the story. The children had decided that the jug had been found on a hill and wanted to know how to show a hill on a flat map. This had involved Margaret in explaining to them about contour lines on maps.

'A lot of the learning comes from story and from them playing within the story and taking it on', Margaret explained. Gurjeet, for instance, had made his own book about an animal going for a walk round the school, based on *Rosie's Walk* - all the children had done this. But whereas many of them had chosen to write about different animals, Gurjeet had based his story on Rosie. Margaret showed me one of his finished drawings, which was strikingly reminiscent of Pat Hutchins' style without being a copy. His whole book, according to Margaret,

'was brilliant because his drawings were as accurate, every single drawing in the concertina book was as accurate as that one'.

He had made Rosie visit familiar areas of the classroom - the storyboard, which crashed down just after she passed, the book corner, where a book fell down, and so on. 'His drawings told you everything....the pictures in that book are far more powerful than the text, and he'd taken that on.' Gurjeet had also made a particularly successful map of *Rosie's Walk*, and in response to Margaret's suggestion had plotted the fox's route on the map as well as Rosie's. He had made little figures of Rosie and the fox, that could be moved across the map by means of a magnet. Many kinds of knowledge came together in activities like these.

Gurjeet's response to *Rosie's Walk* was an interesting mixture of fidelity to the original and an ability to play with it and change it - to 'play within the story' as Margaret put it. He was able to get inside this invented world that he knew so well and to change it - when he played with the magnet figures on the map he had made, he could change the story, make Rosie chase the fox, and so on. In general the mapping and the modelling that went on in Margaret's class seemed to encourage this kind of playing with an original text or world. Frequently, too, these pictures or maps or models involved some writing; children's texts in this classroom were often part of a larger representation. They appeared as labels, as commentary, as instructions on a board game, or as a booklet accompanying a model.

The name I came to give to these kinds of writing was 'embedded texts'. The meaning of such texts was not necessarily all in the writing, sometimes it was in the combination of the writing and the map, picture, or model.

Margaret's teaching depended on a very carefully prepared environment, one which was highly organised, in which children knew their way around and were able to be independent in their learning:

> 'I try to create a good environment for them to come into. I think that's very important, that they can come into the room and think "OK, what's on offer in here for me?" And somewhere that they feel relaxed and safe in. I think it is important to create a classroom that they feel they can work in. I try to make sure that the class is well organised, because you can often lose your inspiration if you've got to stop and say "Where's the so-and-so, where do you keep the - ?"'.

Within this workshop-like context, Margaret involved the children in frequent demonstrations.

> 'I'd ensure, I suppose, that I'd show possibilities to children of what they could do. If you're talking about watercolour painting I might gather the class together and talk to them about mixing a colour. Like shared writing. I would do shared drawing that way....I think it's very important that you do that and that they see you actually doing it. I'd paint alongside them, I would often do that.'

Margaret stressed that she organised activities carefully. 'It's not a case of coming in at 9 o'clock and what do you fancy doing today, there is a balance.' Though it was sometimes important for children to 'do their own thing' there was also a need for direction. Nor was there an automatic acceptance of anything that children produced 'I'm not about saying "Oh that's lovely" all the time.' But she stressed the importance, for her, of the teacher being involved in the children's activities, not standing back from their learning. Even with the role play area, Margaret believed in getting involved in order to extend children's play.

> 'Get into the role play area yourself, to take it on....You're giving it importance by doing that - it's not seen as the area where the teacher never goes - she comes alongside you in everything else, but in there you can have a right laugh....And also with the sand tray or water tray, it's not just seen as somewhere that you go and play, the things you provide will determine and direct their play.'[6]

12.3.4 Conclusions

Margaret Wyeth's characteristic stance towards her teaching is down-to-earth and practical. She always subjects educational theories to the test of common sense, but her commonsense approach is never reductive. She is an extremely experienced and knowledgeable observer of children's learning, and her record-keeping is exceptionally detailed and insightful. It reveals her concern to understand children's intentions, and their individual ways of learning. All her teaching reflects this fine awareness of different learning styles, and her commitment to enable children to develop their own particular skills as far as possible.

The apprenticeship approach to learning is taken seriously in her classrooom, with its workshop-like atmosphere. Children are encouraged to exercise a high degree of autonomy, to take decisions about their work, and to pursue projects as far as they are able - eg to work up a rough sketch or model into a finished piece of work. Margaret works alongside them, demonstrating, listening, and making suggestions. Literacy is a major focus of the classroom, but there is no neglect of other aspects of the curriculum, and topics in (for example) science are often the occasion for literacy activities, and information reading and writing are strongly supported. The creative work going on in the classroom is often craft work; there is a strong emphasis on making. Margaret's theory-in-practice emphasises independence, problem-solving, and making links between different areas of learning. On several occasions she stressed the key importance of helping children to make sense of their experience and their learning.

The themes that seem to emerge most strongly from a consideration of her teaching and of the learning of the children in her class are:

1. Empowerment
Throughout her participation in this project, Margaret stressed the value of children taking responsibility for their own work. Many of her own interventions involved urging children towards taking decisions about their work, and towards the further development of their ideas. Her records invariably note when children's work is self-initiated, and her case studies reveal children taking the opportunities given to carry out extended projects, and direct their own work. The commitment that the children bring to these self-chosen projects often enables them to work in a concentrated way for long periods. Margaret values creative projects partly because they enable children to take complete control of their work - nobody can tell them how to do their own painting.

2. Workshop approach
Margaret's practical planning of the organisation of the classroom enables children to exercise a high degree of autonomy in their work. The room is set out like a crafts workshop, with all necessary equipment and materials carefully stored and labelled, and accessible to the children, who know where to find everything. There is an emphasis on having the right tool

for the job (eg the right brush sizes), and on experimenting with different media. This workshop approach extends into literacy and all other aspects of curriculum, where there is an equal emphasis on 'hands-on' skills, on learning how to work independently, on learning a craft (eg drafting a piece of writing), and on taking pride in a finished product.

3. Embedded texts

This workshop approach means that literacy in this classroom is often part of other activities - linked to art, science, or technology. Children's texts often do not stand alone, but function in relation to a diagram, map, drawing, or model. Information books are drawn on widely, and serve also as models for children's own texts. Much of children's writing is informational in character - instructions, labels, recipes - and literacy is seen to have a functional importance, as well as being strongly linked to books and story. The 'embedded texts' that these children often produce would not necessarily have much meaning apart from their immediate context (eg instructions on a board game); in time we may assume that they will begin to 'disembed' their writing from these functional contexts, which initially provide such strong support to their meanings.

4. Making links

Margaret sees one of her main jobs as a teacher as helping children to make links between different aspects of their learning, and pointing out how new knowledge connects with things that children already know. She thinks that this kind of intervention encourages children to look for ways of making these links for themselves. Essentially Margaret's view of learning reflects James Britton's formulation, contained in Chapter 4 of the Bullock Report (D.E.S.1975):

> 'In order to accept what is offered when we are told something, we have to have somewhere to put it....Something approximating to "finding out for ourselves" needs therefore to take place if we are to be successfully told" (p.50).

She thinks that all new learning is a question of making links with already existing knowledge, and that teaching is partly a question of constantly demonstrating these connections. In general creative activities in her classroom are often a means of taking control of new knowledge, and her teaching often links scientific knowledge with story - as if story were a 'glue' enabling this new knowledge to be held together in a comprehensible whole.

5. Story

Although factual 'embedded texts' are a major feature of Margaret's classroom, story is also a key genre. Children meet many stories every day and have a wide repertoire of narrative experiences and influences to draw on in their own story making. Many different ways of bringing stories to life and translating them into other, often more concrete, media are commonly used in her classroom. Children make story maps, and draw and model stories, as well as exploring them in dramatic play - Margaret spoke of 'playing within the story'. Narratives also provide comprehensible structures for work right across the curriculum, within which childen can experience widely different ways of knowing.

6. Teacher as participant and co-learner

Margaret continually emphasised the importance to her of apprenticeship approaches to learning in which the teacher was thoroughly involved, as provider, model, and co-learner. Learning went on through a process of constant demonstration and imitation, and when learners were working independently the teacher was nevertheless also involved in their learning, working alongside them, and continuing to provide them with examples and feedback. The teacher was there inside the activity - as well as being outside as an observer.

> 'I think it's important that they should see you learning too, you who are the provider of the education, you can receive something, they can sometimes teach you something. I mean that creates a learning environment doesn't it, when everyone within it is learning.'

12.4 Part 4. Sarah Horrocks

In January 1991, when the study group first met, Sarah Horrocks was a newly qualified teacher in her first post as a reception infants teacher at Riverside Primary school in Southwark. Sarah was the youngest and least experienced of all the teachers in the study group, but she had spent a great deal of time thinking about dramatic play, story, and imaginative play with small toys. This was not only a theoretical interest for her. She had worked as a puppeteer, both in her student days and, on a part-time basis, since beginning teaching. She regularly drew on her puppetry skills in her teaching and had used puppets in several different subject areas (eg in mathematics, to develop mathematical concepts about relations and sequencing). She had also made puppets available as resources in the classroom and demonstrated to children how to act out stories using puppets and toy figures.

12.4.1 Sarah's dissertation

I originally met Sarah some time before the study group began, when she was a student writing her third year dissertation. She had chosen to write about story, and about children's retellings of stories in imaginative play with dolls, glove puppets, and toy figures, and was interested in the links between these storying activities and children's developing literacy. I spent some time talking to Sarah about her dissertation, and about parallels in articles I had written. I met Sarah again during her teaching practice and when I learned she had begun her teaching career in Southwark I invited her to take part in the study group, which had just been formed.

Sarah's third year dissertation (Horrocks, 1990) was a study of four five-year-olds in a South East London primary school. I shall briefly summarise her findings here, so as to illustrate the background experience which she brought to the work of the study group. She had set out to study the children's oral storytelling and its links with their literacy. In order to elicit storytelling, and observe how it might be developed, Sarah involved a small group of children in make-believe play with small toys. The children in her case study group told and retold stories, and reenacted traditional stories using puppets, both individually, in pairs, and as a whole group.

Sara invited the children to act out stories with toy figures. She told a story first, using the toy figures. In her story she made use of role, voices, sound effects and props. She then observed the children reenacting the story, or making a new story. Their ways of working were markedly different. In one pair of children, for instance, the girl, Becky, 'seemed most concerned with making the environment for the play to go on in. She made a mountain with the sand and tried to direct Daniel to make a river' (p.33). She apparently needed a physical setting to give meaning to her story, and wanted the environment she had made to be part of the story, disagreeing with Daniel who wanted to 'pretend the village' not make it. Daniel, on the other hand, concentrated on the characters, speaking in different voices to characterise them, and moving them around. Some children negotiated a joint retelling with difficulty ('they seemed as if they were simply involved in their personal retellings and did not listen to each other' p.29).

Sarah found marked differences between the children's approaches to story-telling, and to the construction of the stories. Their control of the development of plot was different, and so was their use of story language and of rhythmical repetitive language. Some paid more attention to dialogue than others, using different intonations for different characters. Others made more use of description, of narration, and of scene-setting.

Children also responded differently to Sarah's presence. Arlette seemed to need to direct her play at Sarah, and told a story round the figures, with Sarah as the audience. She explained what was going on to Sarah ('This is the roof of the people's house and the monster broke it') and elaborated on particular moments of the narrative with dramatic dialogue ('he was covered in sand and didn't know how to get out. Sand got in his eyes and he shouted "help, help"') (p.34). Mark, however, wanted Arlette as his audience. He did not move the toy figures around, but set up a static arrangement of characters. His commentary took the form of scene-setting ('pretend the sheep heard a noise') and he didn't act out the scene he had prepared or use dialogue.

Sarah concluded that the individual variations between the children's narratives and their styles of play were significant and she saw some progression over the five weeks, as the children's different experiences of,

and approaches to, story and play fed into one another. Their control of storytelling conventions seemed to improve as a result of this shared experience, and the practice in story-making she had provided.

Sarah's contribution to the first meeting of the study group was based on her dissertation. She described the differences between the children in her study, and the way in which some children had developed the characters in the drama, behaving like playwrights and using the resources of dialogue and intonation to create character, while other children had seemed more interested in scene-setting, using the sand tray to create a background for the drama. Sarah was interested in the considerable understanding of narrative that all the children had demonstrated, which appeared to be drawn from television as well as from their experiences of stories read and heard.

12.4.2 Case studies

Sarah attended two subsequent meetings of the study group and presented detailed case studies of three children. Between these meetings, I visited her classroom and observed the case study children briefly myself, talking to Sarah afterwards about what I had seen. I also conducted a long taped interview with Sarah at her flat in summer 1992. By this time Sarah was about to leave Riverside to go to a new post as a nursery teacher in Lambeth.

In her first year at Riverside School, which was the first year of the study group, Sarah taught the Reception class full-time, but during the second year, when her case study children were in year 1, she worked part-time and shared the year 1 class with another teacher. Sarah's records of individual children, and my notes of my visit to her classroom in May 1991, reflect the strong emphasis on story in her classroom. In this class there were group storytelling sessions, in which children told stories to the class, shared reading and writing sessions, and regular reading aloud. Children were used to taking part in dramatic play and would engage in imaginative play in the home corner and in the small library (a small room off the main classroom, where a box of dressing up clothes was kept). Other props, including puppets and a magic wand, were available for children to use in their storying play. Just before my visit, a group of artists had been to the school and had worked with the children, taking

them out to draw the local area. It was a class where children were encouraged to develop their play, and to bring their imaginative abilities into their curriculum work.

Over the two years of her time at Riverside, Sarah continued to observe the three children fully: Layla, Darren and Maria. (In the second year she also observed Triumph, a girl newly arrived in the class). She had full records for all three children and kept samples of their writing over the two year period. The case studies that follow are based on the records and samples for these three children, on Sarah's contributions to two meetings of the study group, on my notes from my visit to the classroom in May 1991, and on my final interview with Sarah in July 1992.

12.4.2.1

Layla

1.Evidence to study group 1990-1991

Sarah described Layla as a very verbal, lively, talkative child. the first person you would notice in the class. She was inclined to demand attention, to the point of being a pain in the neck, but she was also funny and witty. She liked taking the teacher's role. Above all, Layla was a great storyteller. Sarah had chosen her as a subject for case study because she was so interested both in Layla's narrative powers, and in the mismatch between these and Layla's literacy development, which was relatively slow.

Layla was born in Nigeria but had spent most of her life in London. She had a baby brother in London and two other siblings who had been left in Nigeria with her grandparents. She talked about her brother and sister in Africa all the time and liked to claim other children as her siblings. Until her baby brother arrived, she had been effectively an only child, and she seemed to find it difficult to play with other children. She was quick to be bossy or spiteful.

Most activities, even dramatic play, were hard for Layla to sustain. She was achieving much less at school than Sarah felt she was capable of. She was easily distracted and lacked focus in academic things, always getting diverted from her work into conversation or looking at other people's work. In art she was anxious, convinced that she could not draw from

observation ('I can't draw those'), but sometimes doing lively imaginative drawings - Sarah mentioned drawings of a monkey and a monster that were wild and free with proliferating pencil lines (E.i). She would improvise stories around these drawings.

Layla was a natural storyteller. Storytelling satisfied her desire for attention and her exhibitionist tendencies. She was a very good performer: telling stories to the whole class was one of her favourite activities. She was so accomplished that she could command the attention of the whole class, who would often copy her ideas in their own stories.

But her literacy development was slow. She was finding it difficult to focus on print. In reading she generally relied on the pictures or on her memory of the book to tell the story, and was hesitant when she could not rely on these. In writing she lacked the confidence to attempt independent spellings, and by the Easter of the reception year was only just beginning to use the initial letter sounds she knew (E.ii), though her dictated stories, like her stories told to the class, were lively and original. Literacy activities easily gave rise to anxiety for Layla.

2. *Classroom visit, May 1991*

I observed Layla working with a friend in the writing area on my visit to the classroom. The friend was helping her to spell something. Layla seemed somewhat detached from the task in hand, dividing her attention between what her friend was doing and what was going on in the classroom. She took offence when she suddenly realised that her friend (Stephanie) was writing Layla's name on her own paper.

> Layla: You shouldn't copy me.
> Stephanie: But this is yours Layla, remember, I've got to show you how to write your name.

Layla's eventual copy of what Stephanie had done was a bit rushed. Stephanie had done a careful drawing of a girl holding a heart shaped balloon with a name written inside it. Layla's copy showed a heart, a few straggly lines, and a half copied name. Throughout all of this time she was constantly distracted.

When I sat down beside her she asked me how to write R, and I could see that she was writing SARAH. Then she drew two more hearts, to show me she could draw them properly, and wrote my name, finding the letters

on an alphabet chart with no difficulty. She worked very well all the time that I was watching her, with only the occasional appeal to me for help. She seemed very concerned about accuracy, yet simultaneously quite slapdash in her way of working. Unfortunately I was not lucky enough to be in the class when Layla was telling one of her stories, but I did get a strong impression of a child who was conscious of being observed, and eager to be observed, and who was liable to constant distraction if she was not strongly supported by an adult presence.

Sarah was not at all surprised at my account of Layla's writing. She felt a lot of the procrastination could be put down to Layla's anxiety; Layla would use any possible strategy to avoid doing what she should be doing, and was very aware of and anxious about what others were doing. She was also very aware of adults observing her. In general she related more easily to adults than to children, seeming to see herself as an adult. She needed the other children to show her how to do things, but was not always prepared to accept their help.

3. Primary Language Records 1990-91

Layla's language and literacy conference in the spring term of her reception year showed that she was very aware of her storytelling talent. Sarah reported her as saying: 'I'm great at telling stories - I love doing it' (E.iii). The talking and listening diary of observations (E.iv) records one of the occasions (18.1.91) when she told a story to the whole class, commanding their complete attention. Her timing was very sophisticated, with a strong sense of pausing for comic effect. Her story began:

> 'Once upon a time there lived a little girl...called Hayley. And Hayley had a daddy...called...Qui' (using the names of two children in the class).

Sarah noted that she had deliberately worked to get laughs. This story had been so successful that it had given rise to many imitations when other children told stories.

In general Layla liked attention and was very aware of being observed. Another entry in the talking and listening diary (21.3.91) shows her engaged in playing with the dolls' house with Maria, but relating more closely to Sarah, observing, than to Maria, who is trying to draw her into an imaginative game. She keeps talking to Sarah and telling her what she was doing ('I'm pretending this rubber is the soap, Sarah'). Even once she has started to take part in the dramatic play she keeps coming out of role to

tell Sarah what she is doing. Sarah notes that in this play, she 'uses lots of different characters' voices with very expressive intonation'.

In contrast with her own assessment of her storytelling, Layla revealed in her language and literacy conference that she felt she was 'just a little bit good' at reading, and not very good at writing. This self-assessment also seemed to be borne out by Sarah's records which showed Layla tending to avoid dealing with print. In the first of her reading samples (E.vi) Sarah notes:

> 'Layla used her memory of the book in conjunction with pictures and her sense of story. When she didn't remember the text she used the pictures to "talk like a book"' (12.12.90).

It is possible that Layla may have been relying too exclusively on her strong sense of story in these early stages of her literacy development, and giving too little importance to her knowledge of letters and sounds. Her reading 'alternated between expressive reading and hesitation' (16.4.91) as she met passages she did not recall in these memorised texts (E.v).

Her writing development was also relatively slow, and here Layla's problems of concentration tended to work against her. Sarah's samples (E.vi) comment 'worked hurriedly' (2.10.90); 'Poor concentration. Needed to be moved to table alone.'(30.1.91). In these early texts Layla's picture occupies most of the space, and the text is a fringe of letters at the edge of the page (E.vii). Layla writes random strings of letters; in January Sarah comments 'Layla has a lot of knowledge about writing which she doesn't apply'. But by July of the first year Layla has begun to use her knowledge about writing and is more confident. Her text (E.viii) now fills half of the page with large bold letters, and her independent spellings, in the first half of the text at least, are recognisable attempts (A BKL WTE MS SDOQ QDAD KOS KO - read as "A burglar went in my daddy's car"). Unfortunately, in this first batch of writing samples there are no examples of Layla's dictated stories, or transcripts of her told stories, so that the flavour of her humorous narratives only comes over in small details, such as the dictated caption to a picture, which reads 'I am going to a party with my eyes popping out' (E.ix).

In July Sarah comments:

> 'Layla appears more confident than she was at the beginning of this term. She has started to apply her knowledge of phonics in her writing and is less anxious about it. She is still very concerned with what other children are doing and tends

to talk all the time rather than work...She taped some stories for me which she enjoyed, although she seemed less fluent without an audience'.

4. Evidence to the study group 1991-1992

By January of 1992, Sarah was able to report to the group that Layla seemed to have matured emotionally and to be less anxious and less in need of attention - she was more able to share, less preoccupied with what other people were doing, and also less reluctant to read and write. In general she seemed more focused and confident, and ready to tackle her work; there was much less evidence of the avoidance techniques she had used in the past. She was still ready to be an entertainer, and had done dances for visiting adults, as well as singing and performing in class events. Her storytelling to the class had not happened as frequently in this middle infants year so far, but her storytelling powers were perhaps for the first time just beginning to become apparent in her writing. In retellings of *Rosie's Walk*, most of the children chose to base their versions on an elephant going for a walk. Layla's version was markedly and deliberately different - a story about 'a worm called Samuel'.

5. Interview with Sarah, July 1992

In July 1992, when we discussed Layla for the last time, Sarah showed me a story that Layla had dictated to her in the spring term. This dictated story was the first real example I had had of Layla's narrative powers, in which her distinctive voice was apparent:

> 'Once upon a time there was two monkeys. One was called Suzanne and one was called John and Suzanne kept coming up his house and John kept coming up her house and they wondered why they keep on coming up each other's houses and one day Suzanne said "*I* shall stop coming up John's house" and Suzanne came up to John's house and said "John, I'm going to stop coming up your house. I'm going to start coming up someone else's house. Because you keep on coming up my house and I keep on coming up your house and it's got to stop"'.

This story was loosely attached to a drawing of two monkeys with a boat (E.x), and bore no apparent relation to it. Sarah imitated the way Layla had told the story, with considerable emphasis and expression. It was clearly an important development in her storytelling, dealing in complicated and half understood rather grown-up feelings, and might perhaps have had its roots in soap opera.

Layla was still having some difficulty in getting to grips with writing independently (though she had made considerable progress) and she obviously could not have attempted to write this story unaided. Sarah did

feel that there was some evidence that she was now beginning to use her 'inimitable wit' in her independent writing, but it continued to be difficult for her to translate her narrative gifts onto paper. There might also be less satisfaction in writing than in storytelling for Layla, who so much enjoyed being the centre of attention. Sarah said:

> 'It's very important for Layla to be seen. There's something about being a writer which is unseen'.

Layla was a challenge to Sarah's strongly held belief, and to my argument in this thesis, that there are strong links between different kinds of storying, symbolising play, and later literacy development. She was a child with very well developed dramatic and storytelling abilities, whose literacy development was not reflecting these narrative strengths, partly because of her difficulties in getting to grips with code. In a sense, these very strengths created a problem for her, because the gap between her oral storytelling ability and what she might hope to achieve in her independent writing was so great that these two ways of storying may have seemed to her essentially different kinds of activity.

Oral storytelling also involved her in direct contact with an audience, and drew on her capacity to improvise, embroider, and make people laugh. Layla was above all a performer, and in her storytelling much depended on performance skills of mimicry and timing. As a writer, it might be a long time before she could achieve the kind of timing, balance between narration and dialogue, and above all control of audience response, that she demonstrated and enjoyed in her oral storytelling. It might be hard for her, even in a classroom where stories were always being read aloud, to see the connection between written stories, with their unchanging and impersonal texts, and the live performance of her oral stories. I was strongly reminded of Shirley Brice Heath's account (1983) of an African-American community, Trackton, where story was, as it was for Layla, also an essentially improvisatory experience.

In our last conversation Sarah and I talked about how it might be possible to help Layla to make stronger links between the performance of a story and the words on the page. I described the practices in Vyvyen Paley's Chicago kindergarten classroom, which are detailed in her book *Wally's Stories* (1987) where children were encouraged to dictate their stories to the teacher and then bring these written versions to life through

dramatisations in a'story circle'. Layla might need the links between oral and written stories made clearer and more explicit, so as to be confident enough to make use of her marked skills in composition in her writing.

The movement from improvisation to scripted/written drama or story seemed to Sarah to be a key move for all children, as it had been for her in her development as a puppeteer, not only because it supported their literacy, but because it led to a new stage in narrative development, and involved a new deliberateness in the planning and shaping of a narrative, and a new reflectiveness about the elements of story. Sarah felt that Layla did need to slow down and think more carefully about the content and structure of her stories:

> 'She's more hung up on getting a laugh than really developing ideas.'

12.4.2.2

Darren

1. Evidence to the study group 1990-1991

Of Sarah's three case study children, Darren was probably the one who was talked about least, both in the study group and between Sarah and me. Sarah had originally chosen to focus on him because of his imaginative narrative drawings. However, it proved very difficult for her to record in any detail the development of these drawings, which were accompanied by a constant stream of talk and sound effects, because they took so long, and Darren's storying commentary was not very audible. As he drew he would also semi-mime the action he was portraying, living out his fantasy narrative. Sarah said of him: 'I sort of think he's all the time in a story'.

Darren had a sad family background. His mother had died when he was two and he had been abused by his father. He had lived with various foster families, and was now being brought up by his father's sister. He had several cousins in the school, one in Sarah's class. Darren was very aware of macho style, and male behaviour generally, and liked Turtles, cartoons, planes and guns. These kinds of elements were often found in his drawings and dictated stories, in which media influences were often apparent.

Sarah described Darren's drawings as being like technical drawings, with the elements of the story clearly denoted. It was obviously a considerable

development for Darren to be drawing so clearly. Darren's aunt - whom he called mum - had told Sarah that when he first came to live with her he would only draw in black, and all the outlines were heavily filled in. His drawings were sometimes a bit shaky in their outlines because he had a slight tremor.

2. *Classroom visit, May 1991*

When I visited the class Sarah talked me through one of Darren's drawings (F.i) which was also the subject of one of her PLR entries in the talking and listening diary (14.2.91) (F.ii). Darren had been drawing a fantasy map. He had worked on it in a very sustained way and seemed very involved. Periodically he had told Sarah what he was doing. ('I'm going to see a chocolate man'). Darren told Sarah he was doing 'Chinese writing' on the map (this seemed a shrewd move, as she was unlikely to be able to contradict him). Once having said this, he added 'I saw a Chinese man too', and added a symbol to his drawing. The other writing on the map-drawing he said meant 'Hey, what are you doing to that castle'. His description of what was going on in the map was involved. There were many elements ('The tin man...A twirly bit you can't get past'. 'That's where the people wave all about when they're bored. That's where the electric goes to the bit you can't get past'). The map represented movement and action as well as being a drawing. It seemed perhaps to derive from computer games in some way.

3. *Primary Language Records 1990-1991*

The rest of the pictures in the work that Sarah kept from Darren's reception year were far less easy to read because they were accompanied by no such detailed commentary. Sarah's samples show Darren as making fairly slow progress in literacy, but nevertheless bringing considerable confidence to his early attempts at reading and writing. A reading sample in January 1991 (F.iii) comments that Darren

'used his memory of the text and the pictures as cues. Where he did not remember the text exactly he demonstrated his sense of story and knowledge of the ways books go'.

Darren is always ready to discuss his reading, and to talk about the book, particularly about the pictures. The reading samples comment frequently on his confident approach to reading known text ('Read very quickly - rushing, but confident'(21.3.91). 'Told the story with expression.'(21.5.91)).

In writing, Darren is confident in composition. He will readily draw a picture, dictate a 'story' or sentence about it, and then copy what Sarah has transcribed from his dictation. He likes to copy, otherwise needing a lot of support in his attempts at spelling ('Darren is usually very anxious about writing without copying words' (2.7.91)). By July of 1991, however, he is just moving on from using random strings of letters. He is beginning to work more independently and use his knowledge of written language and the relationship between sounds and letters (F.iv).

By then end of the year, Sarah writes
> 'Darren's concentration has improved. He is able to settle at activities and become more involved in tasks. Last week he began to apply his knowledge about initial sounds and one-to-one correspondence.'(F.v)

At the end of this reception year, Darren was at quite a decisive moment in his literacy development, when several aspects of his learning were coming together.

4. Evidence to the study group, 1991-92

By January 1992, Sarah felt that Darren had become much calmer and more confident. His behaviour in the classroom had changed. Whereas he used to spend quite a lot of time doing his narrative drawings, she was now much less aware of him doing this of his own accord. He had become more confident and calmer as a writer, and less anxious about the correctness of his invented spellings. In general he seemed to be relating much more easily to other children. But a consequence of his mixing more readily with others, and spending more time in social and cooperative enterprises, was that he was spending less of the time in his own world, and was apparently was less involved in imaginative activities. Sarah speculated that his liking for drawing before might in part have been a way of avoiding relationships, and withdrawing from other people.

5. Interview with Sarah, July 1992

However, Sarah was given some evidence later in the year that Darren's storying play was still taking place, though now in company with others, and in the playground.
> 'One day Darren and Layla came in from the playground and they said "Can we tell you about our game that we made?" and I said "OK" and quickly scribbled notes while they told me".

The game was called The Crystal Man, or The Crystal Ghost, and Darren was the main inventor of it.

Sarah's notes of this involved narrative are incomplete, but they still give a good flavour of the story-drama. It was obviously strongly influenced by visual media - television and perhaps computer games. It began:

> 'Once upon a time there was two girls and one boy and the boy was a Crystal Ghost, and Zara was Supertex, and Layla was Supergirl and they put glue on the walls, and the Crystal Ghost had magic powers to get people unstuck. One day they got stuck...' (F.vi)

Darren, in the person of the Crystal Ghost, then had to go to the Magic Princess to get a magic crystal which would unstick the two girls.

The plot of the story was like a quest game with complicated rules. There were different levels or worlds in the fantasy - at one point the two girls, by touching Darren, were able to go 'through his heart and through the ground' to a place where the monsters were. This fantasy game was occupying a lot of the children's playtime, and they all acknowledged that Darren had made up most of it. It seemed like an interesting development - a move into social drama and away from Darren's private narrative games, as well as an insight into children's play life that is not always granted to teachers.

Three other texts written or dictated by Darren in 1992 show him using writing to explore what appear to be important areas of experience. The first text was a story told to the class, of which Sarah took notes. It was a very violent story about a puppy, called 'The Little Puppy'. In the story all that really happens is that men try to kill the little puppy, who proves indestructible. First they 'came stabbing him', but he did not die. Then they took the puppy to the top of the house and threw him down, but 'he don't die still'. Then they banged him with hammers, still without success. Finally men went to his house saying to each other 'Let's try to kill this dog'. But once again they did not manage to destroy the little puppy, who is still alive at the end of the story.

This fantasy seems unignorably reminiscent of Darren's own story. So many bad things had happened to him, including physical abuse, and yet he had survived. The story seems to celebrate the mere fact of survival, the indestructibility of spirit. Sarah describes Darren as having told it with

much expression, and with different accents for the different characters, obviously deeply involved in the narrative.

The second text was written in response to a discussion about early memories. Children were invited to write about the first thing they could remember. Darren's response was to write about his mother's death. Darren has first attempted to write independently, and then has copied under Sarah's transcription of his text. The short text simply reads

'When I was a baby I went with my mum who died'. (F.vii)

The picture appears to show a patient on a hospital trolley being pushed by a nurse. This is obviously a memory of major importance, which Darren may be imagining rather than remembering. It sums up, in a brief sentence, a key biographical fact which is charged, for Darren, with strong feelings.

Finally, Sarah transcribed later in the year a complete story by Darren, which followed on from a picture he had drawn. The picture is very colourful and gay (F.viii), a considerable development from the rather private and sketchy pictures of Darren's reception year and from the all-black pictures that he used to do before that. It shows a smiling bear, the main character in the story, a large and welcoming house, a sky full of stars and a large shining sun, and in the middle of the picture a special multicoloured star with a face, who is also a character in the story.

The story goes:

'Once upon a time there was a little bear. He was so good. One day a star fell down from the sky and then he touched it and it gave him good luck and he never was bad. They talked and they was friends. He said "Are you hungry?"'.

This text reads like a celebration of friendship and concern for others. It is full of happy and optimistic feelings. Like the picture that accompanies it, it seems to express something about Darren's attitude to the world, and his more social, less withdrawn and private persona. Like the other texts in this collection it also shows him using story to explore important feelings and imagined or recalled experiences. If Darren is no longer 'all the time in a story' in the way that he had seemed to Sarah to be in the first part of his reception infant year, there are nevertheless still many stories in him, and he seems to be better able, now that they are no longer tied to his solitary dramatised drawing activities, to share his stories with others.

12.4.2.3

Maria

1. Evidence to study group 1990-91

Maria was one of the youngest children in Sarah's reception class, but one of the most advanced in terms of literacy development. From early on in Maria's school life it was apparent that she spent a great deal of time in dramatic play. Before entering the reception class she had attended the nursery class at the school and the nursery teacher had told Sarah how much time Maria had spent in the home corner, dressing up, and in playing very complex imaginative games. Maria had seemed upset, when she came into the reception class, to find that she would no longer be able to spend most of her time playing in the home corner.

This kind of activity also filled a great deal of Maria's time at home. When Sarah presented her observations of her to the study group in July 1991, she referred to Maria's Primary Language Record, and to the language and literacy conference with Maria which had taken place in the spring term, where Maria had talked about her literacy (G.i). The conference revealed Maria's confident approach to school work and to literacy.

> 'Maria is very confident about her work in school and is aware of her ability. She enjoys quiet reading time best "cos I can read all the books I like to read' (eg *So Can I, Where's Wally,* and books made by the class). She felt that writing is the thing she is best at 'I'm good 'cos I can spell words'. She does a lot of reading and writing at home and told me that she learns a lot with her mum. Maria plays a lot of imaginative games at home with her elder brother and younger sister involving complicated narratives and characterisation. She prefers reading or playing to watching TV. Her favourite programme is Tom and Jerry.'

The group was interested in Maria's substantial experience of imaginative play at and to what extent Maria was drawing on this experience in her dramatic play in the reception class and in her imaginative writing. She had told Sarah that she made up stories at home in the bedroom with her brother and sister, sometimes basing them on TV narratives. They seemed to be complex stories which continued over a long period, with large casts of characters. Sarah described Maria as being physically small but having a dominant personality - she regularly directed the play of others and vied with other dominant girls.

In Maria's dramatic play in the classroom there was always a great deal of scene setting, with Maria being both narrator and characters. She would plan in her narrator persona what the characters were going to say, and

then say the dialogue again in the characters' voices. She would try to draw other children into the play through setting the scene. Some of Sarah's observations were of Maria playing with Layla, another case study child. Layla was far more interested in enacting the situation, 'doing the voices', than Maria. But Sarah described Maria as capable of turning any classroom activity into a story.

Sarah showed us some samples of records which demonstrated Maria's very impressive progress in reading and writing in her reception infants year. Both in reading and in writing (G.ii, G.iii) Maria seemed to understand from early on what was involved. Her development was consistent and rapid. In October/November 1990, the first term of her reception year, she was relying on memory to some extent in her reading, but was also focusing on print and noticing familiar words. In writing, she was writing strings of letters with the occasional name of members of her family in among the letters, and was noticeably keen to write. By the spring term she had begun to apply her knowledge of how sounds are written down to her writing, and was attempting some spellings successfully. In reading she was showing a good understanding of print, while never ceasing to read for meaning. It seemed clear that her enjoyment of writing was helping her understanding of phoneme-grapheme relationships, and supporting her rapid progress in reading.

But it also seemed that the possibility of having access to, and making, stories was a major stimulus to her rapidly developing literacy. By the summer term of her reception infants year Maria was writing short stories with a definite shape, and was a fluent and independent writer, one who was enjoying her own writing and spending a great deal of time in the writing area (G.iv). It seemed clear that her love of dramatic play and her literacy were closely linked, and that written stories were proving a good way of satisfying her considerable appetite for imaginative story.

2. Maria: Classroom visit, May 1
I visited Sarah's classroom towards the end of Maria's reception year, in May 1991. When I arrived, Maria was in the book area with Tom, with whom she had been doing a puppet show. The book area was a comfortable small room off the main classroom, with a carpeted area. Dressing up clothes and puppets were kept there, alongside the books.

I was too late to observe the puppet show. Maria evidently believed that it was over and had begun to read a book. Tom, however, was still trying to interest her in playing and was attempting to attract her attention by making a pig puppet talk to her. Maria continued to read her book,*Tiddalick*, quite impervious to Tom's persuasions. As soon as she had finished *Tiddalick* she fetched another book, *There Was an Old Lady*. At this point Tom found a magic wand and announced that he was going to turn Maria into a frog. Maria's only response was to sing the book out loud, as if demonstrating her absorption in it and her indifference to Tom. Tom did everything to tempt Maria into play - trying on a wig, trying the wig on her, complaining 'Oh why can't we do it' - but she went on singing the book right up to the last line 'She died of course'.

The suden conclusion of the old lady's story led to a conversation about death between the two children. Tom said, apparently of the last line, 'That ain't funny is it'. Maria explained to him that after death you go to heaven, or that:
> 'you can be a devil, that's underground, or you can be an angel or a fairy...I don't want to be dead'.

Faced with her continuing non-cooperation, Tom ran out of the book area to find Sarah ('Sarah, Maria won't play with the puppets'). But by the time he came back Maria had put down the book and picked up the pig puppet. She was ready to play again, but first she said:
> 'Maybe my little sister will come back to life again - not Luisa - there was a little sister that was living with me and after twelve days she died - I don't know why - my mum told me that'.

By this time Tom had found another pig puppet and announced 'We're going to a wedding'. The two puppets were arranged in a formal 'wedding' position and Maria and Tom sang 'Here comes the bride'. Now Maria started to organise the play with planning talk - 'This is the mum and dad and that's the little child - pretend this is the mum and dad'. The play continued for a while, but soon had to stop as it was lunchtime.

I got the clear impression that Tom needed Maria to direct the play - without her the idea of imaginative play was empty and he could not do without her input. In this incident she seemed to be teasing him, and exaggerating her involvement in the books. But she did seem genuinely preoccupied with her thoughts about death and with the idea of her dead sister (whom Sarah said she had talked about before). Once she started to

play it was apparent that she was a busy organiser, and a great source of fun and ideas. Suddenly, with the pigs' wedding, a complete change of mood took place and the two children became jubilant and anarchic.

Later, Sarah said that she was not surprised that Tom needed Maria in order to get started with the puppets. Maria would need to be in charge as the organiser and the storyteller if the play was to go anywhere - often in dramatic play she took charge of all the narration. As a rule Maria was constantly to be found in imaginative play. All the construction activities she engaged in turned into dramatised narratives. Sarah felt that Maria was aware of her own ability - she was the youngest in the class but the most able - and was inclined to be a bit of a prima donna.

3. Primary Language Records

Sarah's careful records of Maria's progress in language and literacy give a very good impression of Maria's first year in school. From the beginning of the record, her involvement in dramatic play is made clear.

The observations in the Talking and Listening diary (G.v) generally show her engaged in construction activities - building a structure of rolled newspaper, or building bridges with lego. Each time she makes this construction activity into an imaginative game or a setting for a game. When Maria is making the lego model Sarah notes her as saying:
> 'I don't like drawings any more 'cos this is going to be the fastest model and that puppet is for this'(15.2.91).

She had brought a puppet into school that day and appeared to be regarding the model as a potential setting for imaginative play with her puppet.

When she is playing with the doll's house with Layla, another of Sarah's case study children (21.3.91), Sarah notes that Maria continually describes the setting ('This is the chair where they have breakfast') and gradually sets up a story and draws Layla into the game. Once the play has started it is she who plans the development of the story, says what each character will say, and then repeats the lines, this time in the character's voice. Whereas Layla most enjoys being different characters and taking on the voices, Maria does far more in the way of scene setting, narration, and control of the development of the story.

Her reading record shows her as very engaged with stories. She is drawn to funny stories and scary stories, and likes returning to familiar books over and over again, quickly becoming familiar with their stories and with the features of the print. By the end of the spring term she is reading confidently and with expression, though occasionally leaving out words she doesn't feel sure of. She likes to 'do the voices' when she reads the text aloud.

Sarah's diary of observations of Maria's writing shows that from Maria's very first day at school she is involved in story-making. The story she dictates on her first day (G.vi) is complete and individual and also somewhat disconcerting:

> 'When this mum laid an egg that was the baby.
> When the egg was thrown away the rubbish man came.'

Already here is a reference to a dead baby.

Her writing proceeds very rapidly from these dictated beginnings to texts that Maria writes for herself, which at first bear little relation to what she says (G.vii). Then in January 1991 there appear definite and painstaking attempts to master written code (G.viii). Sarah notes that Maria is using invented spellings based on a knowledge of phonics, as well as a bank of known spellings. She also observes, in the record, that

> 'Maria responds very quickly when aspects of writing are drawn to her attention eg when we talked about words being separate'.

Sarah had told the study group that Maria never went through any obvious 'stages' in her independent writing. Once she started to write independently, she didn't write initial letters to stand for whole words, or conform to any other well-known developmental patterns - she seemed to recognise from early on what was involved, and to attempt to spell whole words, with vowels and consonants all represented.

During this period the writing samples saved by Sarah are briefer and less narrative in character. But by April Maria is in control of written code and is writing stories again - and again stories that bear a decidedly individual stamp.

> 'Once there was a baby that love his mummy his clothes and one shoe was his favourite shoe.' (G.ix)

Maria's narrative is obviously limited by the fact that she cannot transcribe at the speed that she can compose, but this first sentence of a story - which was as far as she got - is a very arresting opening.

By July of this reception year, Sarah notes

'Maria has become a more fluent writer. She is now reading and writing more extensively. I sometimes have to encourage Maria to read longer or more complex books and to write more - although she does enjoy both activities enormously. I feel she has become slightly conceited about her abilities recently and her mum has noticed this too.'

In this summary there is a note of reservation. Sarah was beginning to feel that Maria was marking time to some extent in her writing. She seemed to be attempting less than she was capable of doing. This impression grew in the following year.

4. Evidence to study group 1991-92

By January 1991, when she presented her case studies to the study group for the second time, Sarah was feeling that of all her three case study children there was least to say about Maria. She had continued to make good progress in her understanding of written language, and was becoming more and more confident and fluent in reading and writing, but the content of her writing was somewhat disappointing and she was writing less than Sarah thought she could write. She was also playing less in the home corner, and generally showing less interest in dramatic play. In the autumn term language and literacy conference of this second year in school, when Sarah had asked about the dramatic play at home that had been such a striking feature of her reception year conference, Maria said:

'We don't play those games any more.'

Maria's texts were now very short, and she would sometimes become upset if Sarah suggested that she could write more on a particular topic. After her rapid initial development, Maria appeared to be consolidating her knowledge of the written code, but not drawing on her rich imaginative experience to create more substantial fictions.

It was surprising to all those present that Maria's progress seemed to have slowed down so much in an area which had seemed so very important to her. Everyone agreed that it was more difficult to observe the links between children's play and literacy as they got older. Their private worlds were less immediately apparent and observable especially in school. Perhaps they were no longer so readily revealed to teachers. And as children began to play more socially and to relate more fully to other children, perhaps these private worlds were left behind, and early play

experiences either disappeared or went underground. We were rather depressed by the way in which this important aspect of Maria's life had apparently disappeared or been suppressed.

5. *Interview with Sarah, July 1992*

By July of Maria's second year in the infants school, however, another change had taken place. This had come about rather dramatically. Throughout the autumn and some of the spring term Maria had continued to write rather short and unambitious texts:

'I remember in the beginning of the Spring term when she was writing only two sentences at the most and she'd burst into tears if you suggested she might like to write more...and she was also writing very boring things in terms of content... sentences like "Once upon a time there was a girl and she went to the park. The end" '.

Sarah had tried to encourage Maria, without apparent success.

'But one day I found on the classroom floor a scrap of paper which was something she'd written at home. And it was written on this tiny, tiny piece of paper, and it was all written close together, as if it had been cut - as if it wasn't all there.'

The story that Maria had written was a new kind of story, which from then on became a regular part of her repertoire. It was about a magical adventure with a friend. Sarah feels that these stories demonstrate the kinds of links that exist between Maria's writing and her dramatic play:

'Often they're stories about her friends going off to magical places and things happening, but you can imagine from them the sort of games she plays in the playground.'

Sarah was excited to find this new evidence of Maria's development as a writer and encouraged her to bring her stories to school and to write in that way in the class as well as at home:

'It was almost like it was secret at that point, it wasn't part of school. It was something she'd done for her own pleasure and the idea of writing in school was not for pleasure.'

Sarah and I read one of the stories that Maria had written since, which Sarah said was typical of the kind of story that had been on the scrap of paper:

'One day I went to see my friend Alanna and she had turned into a grapefruit. Alanna said "A witch turned me into a grapefruit" "Why?" I asked "Because she wanted my house" "Quick" I said "she's coming" "Who?" "The witch of course". I put Alanna in the cupboard. I got in too. The witch went on her broomstick but I tied it up. The witch was hopping mad and accidentally turned herself into a frog. So we went to the park and I did not notice Alanna was herself again.'

This story showed a remarkable control of plot, as well as a sophisticated sense of dialogue, and a noteable ability to use inverted commas correctly - all the inverted commas in the above transcription are as Maria used them. The laid-back ending to the story, with its twist in the tail, suggested a writer with considerable confidence in her ability to direct the reader's response. Altogether the story was a remarkable development for Maria, and Sarah and I discussed how it might have come about.

On the one hand, Maria's reluctance to write much at the beginning of her middle infants year might have been partly a consequence of her previous success - everyone's expectations that she would continue to develop rapidly as a writer might simply have created too much pressure on her. It might also have been difficult for her to be working so much in advance of her peer group. Whereas other children were writing strings of letters, Maria was being expected to write complete stories, properly punctuated. It seemed significant that this story had come from home. Perhaps Maria felt freer to try things out at home, and to make mistakes. I had met this phenomenon of children exploring new kinds of writing in a home context before. Her bringing the story in and leaving it about for Sarah to find might have been more than chance; she might have been ready to bring this new development into school.

On the other hand, Sarah felt that Maria had definitely needed a push at this point in her development, and that she had benefited from being encouraged to use the computer for writing, and from being asked to write collaboratively with other children. She was inclined to be unambitious in her reading as well as her writing, but if pushed would attempt more difficult texts than she would have chosen independently. When she was encouraged to do more she appeared to be really pleased. The fact that the rest of her peer group was catching up with her by the summer term of the middle infants year, so that she was not the only person writing long stories, had also helped.

Maria offered, in Sarah's opinion, the clearest evidence that there were links between writing and other, already established, forms of symbolising. It seemed that Maria's background in play, imaginative play and role play, was a strength that had underpinned all of her literacy development, and particularly her development as a writer.

12.4.3 Themes emerging from case studies

My process of reading through all of the data relating to Sarah's class with a view to identifying patterns in individual children's case studies produced the following themes:

12.4.3.1

Layla

1. Confidence and enjoyment in storytelling

Layla knows herself to be a successful storyteller and her talent is recognised by the rest of the class. She is a natural performer who enjoys the attention that her storytelling commands. Her stories are witty and designed to make people laugh. These narrative strengths have not, by the end of the study, begun to be fully reflected in her independent writing, though they are more apparent in her dictated stories.

2. Lack of confidence in other areas of creative activity, and in literacy.

Layla is reluctant to draw and to write. She is anxious about putting pencil to paper and avoids doing so. She readily takes part in dramatic play and play with small toys, but is easily distracted and finds it hard to sustain an activity for long. Even in a classroom like Sarah's, where every attempt is made to link oral story with the narratives in books, Layla finds it hard to make the connection, and her literacy development is relatively slow.

12.4.3.2

Darren.

1. 'All the time in a story'

In his first year in school, Darren is deeply involved in producing imaginative narrative drawings, accompanied by a sub-vocal running commentary. In his second year he apparently spends less time in this kind of private storying, but begins to engage in storying play with other children in the playground. In this year, he also seems to use his written and dictated stories to explore important experiences and feelings.

2. Developments in drawing

Darren's drawing develops dramatically. There is an obvious progression in the move from his pre-school drawings with their heavy black lines to the private fantasy maps of his reception infants year, and then to some of the lively and colourful narrative drawings of his middle infants year.

3. Growing optimism and confidence

Darren's stories and drawings express a growing optimism. This seems to be linked to a growing ability to relate to other children and to play with them. As a learner he becomes progressively less anxious.

12.4.3.3

Maria

1. Constantly engaged in imaginative play

In her first year in school, Maria turns everything into a dramatised narrative. She is often the instigator and organiser of play with puppets and small toys, and takes the role of narrator as well as 'doing the voices'.

2. Early confidence as a writer

Maria is keen to write, and makes very rapid progress as a reader and a writer in her first year in school. She quickly becomes an independent writer and spends a great deal of time in the writing area, often engaged in writing stories.

3. Play and writing 'going underground'

In her second year in school Maria reaches an apparent plateau in her development as a writer; her texts are very short and conventional and she resists the idea of writing at more length. In this year she also shows less interest in dramatic play in the classroom. Developments during the year, however, suggest that her imaginative play is still taking place, but in the playground. Towards the end of the year she reveals that she is also writing quite extended imaginative stories at home, and begins to write these kinds of stories in school.

12.4.4 Interview with Sarah, June 1992

In my final interview with Sarah I asked her to say more about her view of the links between the different kinds of representational activities that we had been discussing in the study group - dramatic play, world-making play with small toys, drawing, and writing. She was quite sure that these links existed ('I instinctively feel there are links') and located the nature of these links in 'a sense of story'. It was story which seemed to link all the symbolic activities that I had listed, and to offer an overarching unifying principle which explained them all. She felt that it was possible to make a

good guess, from watching children play at a very young age, at how their play would develop. 'That sense of story that you can see in the play of very young children, how characterisation and plot and all those elements are there and usually become more refined and more complex'.

I agreed that Maria was an excellent example of this kind of progression, but Layla seemed to be a counter-example. Nobody could doubt her ability as a storyteller, but she did not seem able to draw on this ability as a support to her literacy, or in developing her written stories. Sarah stressed how much of Layla's storytelling was tied up with performance factors, and how much of it was to do with her liking for attention. She did not yet seem able to detach her stories from the act of performance, or to work on them, or move them into a form that was more available to scrutiny - she was not yet putting the stories 'out there', outside herself, they were very much still part of her. Both Darren and Maria had developed their storytelling through other kinds of symbolic play; Layla was less involved in this kind of play. Sarah spoke of the need to develop children's storytelling abilities, and to support storying through, for example, using puppets, or small toys. She thought that there was a kind of progression evident in children's dramatic play and play with puppets - from spontaneous beginnings to a greater degree of planning of the drama, with more emphasis on narration.

Sarah's instinct was that world-making play with small toys was one of the most important activities leading to literacy. She stressed the need to provide resources for this kind of play, and the value of introducing new kinds of resources - but also emphasised that there was not always a need for special equipment, it was just as important, sometimes, for children to play in this way with any kinds of objects - eg bits of wood - and to experience 'that real basic symbolising'. It was particularly important for children who had not had experiences of this kind at home to see other children playing in this way and pick up the idea from them.

But the most important resource in developing this kind of play was an adult who was prepared to join in the play. She felt that she had supported her own son's play when he was very young, and she was sometimes able, but less often than she would like, to join in children's play in the classroom.

'That's particularly what a lot of children need more than resources - they need the adult to get down on the floor'.

She felt frustrated at not being able to provide more of this kind of input, because of the need to exercise constant supervision of the classroom.

'I feel like I'm just the person who provides the resources and then polices the activities, with an occasional bit of input, and that's very unsatisfactory'.

Sarah felt that because her own interests had always lain in dramatic play and puppetry, she was less inclined to notice story-making in other media, such as drawing. But Darren had been a good example of someone whose drawings were accompanied by storying with 'the movements of the pencil being part of that story, part of that action'. She had also had many experiences of childen using a finished drawing as the basis for improvised storytelling. We discussed the progress that Darren had made in both his drawing and his storytelling, and at the very visible progression, in his case, from a private kind of storying play-cum-drawing, to a more public and shared kind of storying, as exemplified both by his more socialised playground play, and by his written stories.

In general I felt that this was a class where there was a great deal of very rich fantasy going on, and where stories were readily shared, and I asked what Sarah felt had influenced this. Among the influences that Sarah mentioned were the stories that she regularly made up for the class:

'I make up a lot of stories about them....they're called the 'Dinghies' adventures' - the class is called the Dinghies - and both years I've had the class they've gone on various adventures. They just adore these stories....It always starts in school, very mundane, and it's me saying we're going on a trip today. And it's the whole class and me, with fantastical things happening. And it always ends up with having to get back for half past three, and then going into the playground and telling their mums 'We went to Kerala in India today', or 'We went back in time on the river Thames' - or whatever the story is. And the mothers never quite know whether to believe them - like when they've gone to Kerala, that night when their mothers take off their socks they find sand between their toes, and bits of papaya skin in their pockets, so they're never quite sure. So there is that sort of experience that they have with me, that they - I hope - take on. They know that story is valued.'

Finally I asked Sarah about the influences on her that had led her to her present theories-in-practice. She felt that her own interests - puppetry and stories - and her own experiences of play as a child, were strong influences on her practice as a teacher. These interests were strengthened by her observations of her own son, who from a very early age had been an enthusiastic storyteller. She had also become aware of her son and his friends using a combination of action, settings, narration and dialogue in

290

their imaginative play. On one occasion she observed her son creating an environment on the beach for a complex shared imaginative game. The kind of insights that came from observing your own childen could, she thought, influence your practice as a teacher - at the most basic:

'when children come to school you might not know their personal experiences but you have more of a sense of where they've been to get to five years old'.

Sarah had several years experience as a professional puppeteer, and did use puppets in the classroom. But apart from the puppet plays she wrote, she was used to improvising with puppets with her friends, in a sophisticated kind of play.

'That's why I relate to it so strongly, if I see someone picking up an object or a doll and doing a little voice, I take it more seriously because I'm still doing it, age thirty'.

As a young child she had been given to animating everything. Numbers, for her, were characters 'because otherwise what was the point, what was the meaning, if they didn't have characters?' She still remembered the system of hierarchy that she visualised for them:

'I remember very clearly now, I can see this, slight steps with numbers going up into infinity. And that one was male, two was female, three was female, four was male, five was female, six was male, seven was male, eight was male, nine was male, and ten was male - but then when you had two numbers, like in the twenties it was dominated by the female, with the male as subservient, and in the eighties the other way round.'

Numbers also had individual characters - 'Five was a bit spiteful'. Sarah remembered this sense persisting until she was quite old. Even at eleven or twelve, for her:

'Twelve was a very strong female character, and ten was also quite a caring sort of number'.

When she ate, she animated the food on the plate:

'If I had a satasuma I'd put all the pieces around and I'd play with them, they'd be like little children all sort of playing together, and then one by one they'd be eaten'.

Sometimes this kind of imagination made eating difficult, because it involved destroying the game:

'Like if you'd made a scene - you can do quite good things with mashed potato'.

Sarah believed that this kind of animistic imagination was probably very common indeed, but that many people didn't remember doing it, or suppressed it or gave it no importance. It seemed clear that in Sarah's case there was a direct link between this kind of animation and her later interest in puppetry, as well as her educational interest in the possibilities that writing offers for the enactment of imaginary scenarios.

By the time we recorded this final interview, Sarah had decided to leave Riverside Primary School and had taken a post as a nursery teacher in Lambeth. One of the factors in her decision to move was the difficulty she was experiencing in working in the way that she wanted to work - making a great deal of use of play, story, and imaginative and creative activities - in an infant department. The National Curriculum was dominating the life of the school. There was pressure on all teachers to focus their teaching on the new curriculum and its assessments. The demands of teacher assessment were experienced by all the teachers in the school as unreasonable and excessive, and Sarah (whose records were extremely full) was finding it almost impossible to cope with the administrative demands made on her. She was not enjoying her work as much as she had hoped she would, and had been considering leaving teaching. She felt that there were fewer pressures on nursery education, and that this might give her a better and more open context for her teaching. She hoped to be able to develop further, in a nursery classroom, her interests in story and storying play.

12.4.5 Conclusions

Sarah's observations and records were particularly full, and the pictures that emerge of the three children she observed in most detail are sharply individual. Of the three children, Maria and Darren, in the two years during which she observed them, made clearly significant moves from an engagement in imaginative play, or drawing, into a literacy firmly based on storying. Layla's progress was less obvious, although she did become somewhat less anxious in her literacy, and may simply have made slower progress. This may have partly reflected the fact that Layla did not engage as readily in other forms of symbolising play as she did in oral storytelling, or it may reflect cultural differences between Layla's home life and the life of the classroom which were unfortunately never fully explored. Sarah's observations were informed by a strong sense of the significance of children's play, and a well developed theory of the place of early play in later literacy, and especially writing, development. Some of the themes that emerge from a consideration of the account of Sarah's involvement in the project, from her records, and from my interviews, are the following:

1. Storying play, and its links with literacy.

Rather than seeing dramatic play, play with small toys, drawing, and writing, primarily as different forms of representation or symbolism, Sarah saw them all as having their roots in story. All, for her, were different ways of making a story, and different forms of storying play. She was instinctively convinced of the importance for literacy of this kind of play, and did all she could to provide a context in which it could flourish. She made puppets, dressing up clothes, a 'magic wand', and 'play people' and other small figures available. In her classroom, many children were deeply involved in dramatic play and play with puppets and small toys. Her observations recorded children's spontaneous storytelling, and the kind of storying that went on, for example, around construction activities, as well as the stories that children told to the class, and those that they brought in from the playground. Sarah felt that she could see a definite link between the quality of children's storying play and the later development of their literacy.

2. Narration and dialogue as the elements of story.

Sarah's material and the transcript of my interviews with her contain numerous references to the two elements that she sees as the basic elements in storying - the management of the narrative line, and the enactment of characters in dialogue. She finds different children drawn towards different aspects of storying. Whereas Layla is more interested in 'doing the voices', Maria varies this role with that of the narrator and the organiser of the story, who is preoccupied with issues of plot, and the control of the development of the narrative. Sarah hypothesises that those children who are interested in narration may be preparing themselves for a writer's role better than those who play mainly through creating dialogue, partly because narration involves more conscious planning.

3. The development of play

Sarah is interested in enabling children to develop their play. She finds that development in play is partly a question of being able to make one's play more public, being able to put it 'out there', as an artefact, rather than simply live it through. Maria and Darren both moved from fairly private forms of storytelling play towards more shared, social, and public forms of storying. Another sign of progress that seems to emerge from Sarah's script is a move from spontaneous play towards a more organised and

planned kind of play, in which ideas are more consciously developed. Sarah associates this kind of movement with the movement from improvised to scripted drama, and sees writing as a kind of scripting. This kind of move seems to be supported by a growing readiness to take on the role of the narrator in play. It is clear that in dramatic play Maria is much readier than Layla to be a planner and narrator; while Darren's 'Crystal Man' playground game shows him taking on a a major role in planning and narrating a game which others enact.

4. The unevenness of development

Sarah's account of the three children's progress is marked by apparent plateaux in children's learning, by discontinuities, and by certain abilities being apparently lost, or going 'underground' to emerge in new forms. The most dramatic example of this kind of unevenness of development is Maria, who seemed at one point in the history of the study group to be losing her early involvement in story, and who informed Sarah that she 'didn't play those games any more'. But Maria's narrative talents surfaced in a new form in the stories she turned out to be writing at home.

In general, the stories of the children that Sarah tells show that, though they may appear to lose their earlier ability to engage freely in storying play, this may be a case of an activity disappearing only to surface in another form. Play abilities that were previously displayed in the classroom are seen to reappear in peer group play in the playground. It seems clear that this may have something to do with children's growing tendency - generally encouraged by the organisation of schools - to mark off different areas of their lives, and to regard play as an activity which is no longer to be so freely shared with adults. But there are also points to be made here about the uneven character of development in general.

5. Affective aspects of learning

Like Margaret Wyeth and Iris Mode, Sarah puts a great deal of emphasis on the affective side of children's learning, and sees their progress in school as closely linked to their emotional development and their pleasure in their learning. The case of Darren is the most obvious example of a child whose emotional state is reflected in his work, and who manages to achieve an emotional equilibrium, despite very difficult beginnings. It seems likely that Sarah's sympathetic understanding of Darren's background and his feelings, and the space that she gives him to

pursue his narrative drawings, helped him to achieve some control over his early experiences. The content of his dictated stories and of his writing strongly suggests that this is so.

6. Error and anxiety/self-confidence

Also like the other teachers in this study, Sarah emphasises the need for children to overcome their anxieties about error, which can otherwise completely inhibit their efforts. Layla comes through Sarah's observations as a learner who is very conscious of error, and who easily becomes anxious. Maria, on the other hand, is a learner who seems buoyed up by a confident sense of her own abilities. Sarah's record shows her constantly looking for areas where children feel confident, and trying to give them experience of success. In writing, the problem of transcription, which presents so many opportunities for error, is a difficulty for both Layla and Darren, while even Maria loses confidence and becomes distressed when Sarah makes demands on her that she feels she cannot meet.

7. Teacher as a participant

Sarah's record shows her not only as a thoughtful organiser and a sensitive observer, but also as an active participant in children's storying play. She demonstrates to children ways in which they can develop their play, through her use of puppetry, and through her own made-up stories, in which the class features. She feels a close identification with their imaginative activities, and does not feel that play is a private area or one that it is difficult to join in. In fact she would like to spend far more time in participating in children's play and storying, and is frustrated by the need to spend so much time in supervising activities rather than engaging in them. She thinks that above all what many children need is an adult to join in and help them to play: 'They need the adult to get down on the floor'. Sarah was the more able to engage in this kind of play with children because she remembered her own rich play life very well, and in a sense had continued this into adulthood, through her puppetry.

12.5. Part 5: Conclusions

In this final section of my study, I shall consider first of all what conclusions can be drawn from the case studies of children that have been detailed in the three preceding sections. I am particularly interested to see what they reveal about the relation between symbolising and storying play of all kinds and the development of writing. I base my conclusions on all three forms of data which formed the basis of the case studies - the children's records and samples of their work, their teachers' contributions to study group discussions and presentations of their case studies, and the taped interviews which I conducted with each teacher. All of this material has been read through as a whole in order to identify recurrent themes, and then reread and coded in relation to these themes in order to arrive at these final generalisations.

Secondly I shall look at the themes which have emerged from the studies of individual teachers and consider how far it is possible to find common factors in these teachers' theories-in-practice. These conclusions are based on a rereading of the material in the teachers' sections, in order to see how far the themes emerging from each section could be applied to the other teachers in the study.

12.5.1

Conclusions about children

1. All of the children included in this study prove to be *very different as learners*, and their differences are in many ways more apparent than their similarities. Although most of them engage in various forms of symbolising in work and play, they have quite different preferences. Apart from their writing, the range of their activities includes:

   Ann's dramatic play and book-making

   Bill's modelling

   Darren's narrative drawing

   Gurjeet's diagrams, models, and sand-table play with toys

   Layla's dramatic play and storytelling

   Maria's dramatic play and her play with small toys and puppets.

Though different in their preferences, however, all of the children (except perhaps Beth) seem strongly drawn towards this kind of creative work and play, and are capable of concentrating on creative projects over time in a sustained way. They seem to find both emotional and aesthetic satisfaction

in their creative play, and in their finished projects. Creative play of this kind is a major area of meaning-making for them.

2. Where they are able to pursue these chosen activities freely over a considerable period of time, *links often become apparent between children's chosen modes of symbolising and their developing literacy*, and these links are also fostered in their classrooms. Writing is sometimes part of their symbolising in other media (eg Gurjeet's labelled diagrammatic drawings), or it clearly reflects play experiences (eg Maria's stories). They are often, in fact, working in mixed media (drama-cum-drawing; drawing-cum-writing). In these activities the media that are combined often seem to be supporting each other.

3. *Many of these activities have a basis in story and can be viewed as alternative ways of making stories*, or perhaps as supports to story-making or the development of stories. But *most involve using other means of symbolising meaning (iconic, enactive) than linguistic means alone*. It seems likely that working through other media in this way provides children with helpful parallels with, or transitional activities towards, their use of the more abstract symbolising medium of written language. World-making play with small toys, which offers such close parallels with story-writing (in that it involves narration, enactment, and the manipulation of characters and settings) seems to be an especially supportive activity in this respect.

4. Although this sample is too small to draw any definite generalisations from, it is interesting to note that there does seem to be a *difference between the girls and boys in the sample in their choice of symbolising media*. The boys (especially Darren, Gurjeet) seemed more inclined to play and make stories using visual media (Gurjeet also uses both visual media and writing extensively to record factual information), while the girls (Maria, Layla) engaged much more frequently in interactive and verbal dramatic play and in play with puppets and small toys.

5. *Personality and 'learning style' are enormously important factors* in how these children develop their play and their learning. Individual personalities emerge clearly from the case studies, are reflected in many aspects of behaviour, and seem to be fundamental to whether children are

able to take advantage of experiences and opportunities for learning. Some children who begin with obvious difficulties (Bill, Darren) make a remarkably positive use of the possibilities on offer in their classrooms, while others seem to be less able to take up what is offered, or are seriously inhibited by anxiety (Beth) and the fear of error (Layla). Self-confidence, and the ability to maintain a basically positive and optimistic position about oneself as a learner, seem to be major factors in the successful learning described. Equally, it is important to be seen positively and optimistically by others; Ann seems to offer an example of someone whose initial confidence about literacy is eroded, perhaps by her mother's anxieties.

6. *As the children get older, it becomes harder for teachers to observe their development through their play.* The dramatic monologue which accompanied their drawing or play may seem to disappear, either because it is going 'underground' or 'inside', or because it is no longer engaged in within the classroom - though it may still be happening in the playground and with the peer group. (This move towards peer group play may also mean that the kind of imaginative play, drama or drawing that children previously engaged in, which was sometimes solitary, is being left behind in favour of more social and organised forms of play). Development is not continuous, and there are occasions when children seem to be standing still, or even regressing. There are plateaux, and children may seem to lose interest in activities that were previously very important to them ('We don't play those games any more'). But there are also sudden shifts, pieces of work that seem to be important landmarks and to signal a marked development or a breakthrough.

7. Most of the children began, during the period of observation, to acquire some control of writing as a system for symbolising important meanings. Because of the difficulties that transcription presented them with in these early stages, by no means all of them began to realise the potential of writing for story-making or creative play, but some did. Writing was sometimes an adjunct to drawing, diagramming, or modelling, and there were numerous examples of 'embedded texts', or of 'drawing-cum-writing'. *Over the relatively short period of the study, it was possible to observe writing becoming a more important part of these mixed texts.*

12.5.2

Conclusions about teachers

Despite considerable differences between the teachers involved and between their classrooms, when I came to review the conclusions to each teacher section and combine them, I found strong similarities between their approaches, and clear common patterns. However, it did not seem adequate simply to amalgamate the conclusions to the individual teacher sections, and these general conclusions have been arrived at through a process of revisiting all of the data in the light of the conclusions that end each individual teacher's section.

This comparative exercise enabled me to see how far these teachers' theories-in-practice were overlapping, and to note differences in emphasis. Sometimes the existing themes seemed to fit the data from all three sections, and sometimes there was a need to identify a new theme, which was a better description of what was common to all three classrooms. Sometimes, also, the comparison of the three sets of evidence meant that themes emerged which had not been apparent before. The general conclusions that follow are based on the new set of themes which arose from this rereading and recoding exercise.

1. All of the teachers assume that *play, and creative activities in general, are important sites for learning*. They value children's emotional engagement in play, and their capacity to pursue creative projects independently over considerable periods of time. They regard this kind of storying play as important to the subequent development of literacy, and foster the links that they see children making between play in various media and story-making. They set up a culture in their classrooms in which creative activities are central to what goes on, are developed, valued and celebrated. They create occasions for sharing creative work, and for shared aesthetic experiences of all kinds.

2. Learning to write obviously presents children with particular difficulties in the area of transcription. Early independent writing involves children in taking risks and making visible errors. One reason why these teachers so value play and creative activity is because they are acutely aware of the *inhibitions that surround error and of the need for children to overcome these inhibitions* in order to learn. They are concerned that children

should experience pleasure and success in their learning; they observe children's readiness to learn in this kind of context, and their enjoyment of this kind of symbolising activity. They foster the development of the compositional aspects of writing through various kinds of story-making play, and continually encourage children to focus on the purposes and the content of their writing, while also helping them to deal with issues of transcription.

3. These teachers are continually helping children to make links between different aspects of their learning, and to move from one activity to another. They feel that it is essential to encourage children to grasp the connections between different aspects of their learning, instead of seeing things in 'isolated pockets'. They discuss with them how they could translate experiences into different media. In *seeing learning as linking*, the teachers are arriving at the same conclusions as James Britton in chapter 4 of the Bullock Report (D.E.S., 1975), where he says:

> 'In order to accept what is offered ~~what is offered~~ when we are told something, we have to have somewhere to put it...The development of this individual context for a new piece of information, *the forging of the links that give it meaning* (my italics), is a task that we customarily tackle by talking....' (p.50).

This habit of helping children to see how they can use existing learning as a basis for new learning differs, I think, from what is generally known as 'scaffolding', in that it does not involve teachers in structuring learning activities for children, or providing models for children to imitate, but in helping them to recognise what they can do already, and how *they* can build on what they already know.

4. All of the teachers are skilled observers with a remarkable gift for standing back from the constant activity of the classroom, and noting and analysing what is going on in children's learning. But all also stress *the importance of being a participant in this learning*. All of them are prepared to join in children's play activities, and ready to take up a role in dramatic play, for example. They do not regard play activities as being out of bounds to adults, or feel anxiety about how far they should intrude on children's created worlds. In this I think they are unusual, as many adults feel some inhibitions about engaging with children's play. They all remember their own play experiences, and are perhaps more in touch with these aspects of their childhood than many adults are. Their capacity to get inside the play, or 'inside the story', with children, means that they are in a good position to help them to develop their imaginative worlds,

and they see it as part of their role to foster this kind of development, as well as the more formal aspects of learning.

5. By working alongside children in this way the teachers are able to see how far children can develop their ideas, given support and encouragement. This means that they can be said to be *working within children's 'zones of proximal development'*, although in a very different way from how that phrase is normally used. In Vygotsky's term, these teachers are *mediators in children's learning*, and their ways of working exemplify the skill and sensitivity involved in successful 'human mediation'.

6. All of the teachers underline the *importance of story*, and view it as a key way of learning. They see story as a genre that is immediately available to children, one which can deal with an infinite range of experience and ideas, and also one which is very open and malleable. All of them set out to explore stories with children and to demonstrate how stories can be brought to life through dramatisation or puppetry, how they can be mapped, pictured, or translated into other media, retold, seen from different viewpoints, and generally explored through play. Story offers a structure for organising experience which is different from, and in many ways more flexible than, more abstract and hierarchical ways of ordering knowledge. It enables facts and ideas to be presented in a human context where the feelings that are part of the experience are not left out. When stories are dramatised, children are able to bring all of themselves, including their capacity for 'bodily imagining' and enactment, to thinking about the story. Story also offers a way of linking the different modes of symbolising that have been the subject of discussion in this study; dramatic play, play with small toys, drawing and modelling, and writing can all be seen primarily as ways of story-making, or 'world-making'.

7. All of the teachers regard it as central to their role to develop children's artistic and creative abilities, and to help them *extend and develop* their symbolising play. They all put a considerable emphasis on the craft skills that children need - on showing them how to explore different media and use different techniques in painting and modelling, or on demonstrating how stories can be told through puppets, putting emphasis on the development of plot or dialogue. They do not regard art play as a private

activity or as an area of personal freedom where 'anything goes', and they have no inhibitions about intervening - like Dorothy Heathcote they know that 'teaching is interfering'. They themselves have some experience of developing their own artistic skills in particular arts or crafts, and they see a continuity between children's learning and adult learning in this, as in other areas.

8. As well as encouraging development within a particular medium, the teachers encourage children to undertake 'translations' between media, and suggest to them how ideas that have arisen in one symbolic mode could be explored in another. This focus on reworking ideas is sometimes deliberate, but it also seems to be part of an intuitive move, based on a feeling that different ways of symbolising, although embodying different ways of knowing and representing the world, are in some fundamental sense linked. In demonstrating these kinds of translations to children, teachers are actually underlining the links between symbolic systems, and helping children to see how ideas worked out in one medium can be used and developed in different ways in another. They do this partly in the belief that in the course of this kind of reworking children are able to revisit and reflect on what they have done, and thus gain a more conscious control of their ideas and their created worlds. The teachers share a sense of the plasticity of art forms and of permeability of the boundaries between them, and they emphasise the value to children's learning of being able to draw flexibly on a range of different ways of representing the world.

9. In general the teachers in the study are concerned to move children from more private forms of play towards work that can be shared more publicly, and from concrete beginnings ('imagination in action') towards mental imagining (eg through story writing). This is not at all to say that, as children's literacy develops, they begin to discourage drawing and dramatic play. They are interested in enactive and iconic ways of symbolising as important modes of representation in their own right and because they consider them to be important learning media for children; they see a central place for arts in the curriculum. But they are also convinced that these *creative and artistic activities have an important transitional function in the development of literacy* - and in particular writing.

●●●●●●●●●●●●

In my final chapter I shall consider how the evidence contained in this study relates to the arguments in the theoretical section of this thesis, and shall set out my conclusions about the connections between different kinds of symbolising play, and their links with literacy. The conclusions listed here, however, constitute a good first step towards answering the questions with which I began. It seems clear, both from the case studies of children and from the discussions with teachers, that links between dramatic play, play with small toys, art, and writing are unignorably evident in the development of young children, where classroom practice allows these forms of creative play to be pursued and to be seen as part of the literacy curriculum.

In all the cases studied, with one exception (Beth), children's developing literacy was rooted in or closely linked to their play, artistic, dramatic, literary and creative activities. This may partly have been a function of the context of the classrooms included in the study, but it was also evident from the way in which children took up the possibilities on offer that this was an active choice on their part. Given the opportunity, children engaged for long periods in creative activities of different kinds, in a way which was sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly linked to their learning of written language. They took up these possibilities differently (eg Ann's book-making, Darren's narrative drawings, Maria's play with puppets and small toys) and pursued their chosen activities tenaciously. Over the period of the study, which was for most of these children an eighteen-month period in their first and second years of schooling - a crucial time in their literacy learning - it was apparent that they were all making clear progress in learning written language, and although some were still not fully in control of transcription, nearly all seemed to have a better knowledge and understanding of how written language worked, and some successful strategies for spelling. The links apparent between their creative activities and their early writing seem to substantiate Vygotsky's account of the 'prehistory of writing'.

The study has also shown, however, how closely learning and teaching are bound up together, and how children's activities reflect both the provision in their classrooms, and the strengths and creative preferences of their teachers. In some of the classrooms described in this chapter certain ways

of working were foregrounded (eg story in Sarah Horrocks's class, 'embedded texts' and workshop approaches in Margaret Wyeth's class). It seems clear that in these classrooms the choices and activities of children were shaped and influenced by the contexts for learning provided.

The aspect of this study which deals with teachers has shown more about what is involved in informal styles of teaching. In all the cases included in the study, the teachers' practice was informed by very strong tacit theories, which they had not previously articulated at any length. These theories informed every aspect of the way they worked - the physical organisation of their classrooms, the curriculum and materials on offer, the amount of time given to different activities, the demonstrations, direct teaching, and opportunities for shared experiences they provided, their habits of observation, the focus of their observations, their interactions and interventions with individual children, and their participation in children's learning and play. All of these teachers had one further thing in common which has not emerged directly from all their interviews; their very fine sensitivity to individual learners' intentions, and their habit of looking at learning from 'behind the head of the learner' and trying to see the task from the learner's point of view. Their own ability to imagine helped them in this.

In several respects, the tacit theories that these teachers are working with agree very well with the account of Vygotskyan theory that I gave earlier in this thesis. Both place a very strong emphasis on affect. The teachers emphasise the importance of children's enjoyment of, and confident involvement in, their learning. This is one reason why they value the links that they see between creative activities and literacy; they are convinced of the emotional importance to children of these ways of learning. They stress the need for schools and teachers to pick up on young children's powerful interests and desires and to make these early impulses to engage in world-making play an important element in their learning of written language and in the curriculum of the infant school. They agree with Vygotsky that 'there is no cognition without affect' and that an account of mental development which concentrates only on conceptual and intellectual development risks leaving out the fundamental affective element in all learning.

304

But, also like Vygotsky, they do not want to limit the role of play or the development of the imagination in learning by suggesting that it belongs only to the affective sphere. They are interested in an intellectual way in the issue of how different ways of symbolising are related and flow into one another, and how they provide children with alternative ways of representing the world. They view symbolic and creative activities as part of literacy development and, by extension, of mental development generally; they stress the value of the capacity for imaginative thought for children's future thinking and writing, and they seek to develop that capacity. The evidence from these classrooms provides a very clear exemplification of the picture of children's learning implied in a full reading of Vygotsky's psychology. In this picture, art, play, drama, literature - those aspects of the primary curriculum which are often denigrated as 'frills' by the new right - are seen to be the true 'basics', those which underlie all subsequent learning.

---

[1] Some of the teachers in the study group shared very interesting play histories with me in the course of interviews and meetings. Kathy MacLean had grown up in Domenica and had vivid memories of her play:
'There weren't necessarily many toys in the way that children have now but we used to make toys. A hibiscus flower we used to make into a doll...I was fascinated by the idea of little people and I used to make a lot of little baskets out of palm leaves for the fairies, and I used to leave them lying in the garden...We had great sessions dressing up. I remember my cousin who was four years older than me telling me stories about the lady in the tamarind tree, and the jewels. And I wanted to believe these stories. We dresssed up and did plays....there were a lot of us and we played games that would go on the whole day'.
These rich memories of narrative play, of enactment, and of play with miniature toys were paralleled in other teachers' accounts of their own childhood play. Madeleine Stirzaker, who was briefly associated with the group, had very strong memories of how she played as a child in Ghana:
'What I can remember doing is *ordering* everything. I can remember that we had gravel near the door and I can remember - it must have taken me hours to do - making roads with litle pieces of gravel in an area at least as big as that carpet and it must have taken me hours to put each piece of gravel round, making little roundabouts. And I can't remember the cars - I can't remember *using* the roads, it was actually making it that was important, not using it.'
Madeleine had noticed her own son, and several children in her nursery class, spending a lot of time in 'ordering' and organising things in preparation for miniature world play (cf Feinburg (1976)).

[2]Johnston's whole analogy is worth quoting: 'A good analogy for classroom evaluation expertise is provided by chess masters who recognize around 50,000 board patterns (Chase and Simon, 1973). If we think of students engaging in recognizable patterns of behaviour which are motivated, organized and goal directed, the analogy to the chess master is accurate. Indeed, Peterson and Comeaux (1985) found that expert teachers could recall many more incidents from videotapes of teaching than could novice teachers.
The analogy is most appropriate in exhibition matches in which a master chess player plays 20 or 30 club players simultaneously. The analogy is not perfect, however. The chess player faces a less complex problem, because the context beyond the board is of little concern. Teachers, on the other hand, must not only know what patterns to look for, but also the conditions under which the patterns are likely to occur. In a sense, unless teachers understand the patterns and how and where to look for them, they simply will not see them.' (Johnston, 1987, p. 745)

[3]The role of the teacher or enabling adult, and of the context of the classroom, are nearly always important elements in learning. Modern literature about learning often takes too little account of the interaction between learners and the contexts of their learning, and in doing so may (unconsciously) falsify the picture of learning that is presented. Bruner has written about the dangers of this model of a 'solo child,' mastering the world by representing it to himself in his own terms' (Bruner, 1986, p.127). There are too many examples to list of the kind of unremitting focus on learning rather than teaching that I describe here, but among those that would have to be cited are Dyson (1989), Clay (1975), Harste et al.(1984), and many others.

305

[4]This focus on 'getting ready' reminded me of other ways of 'tuning up' for involvement in an artistic experience, such as (in the play of children) the kind of ordering and organising for miniature world-play described by Madeleine Stirzaker (note 1, above) and, in adult artistic activity, the preparatory exercises now routinely undertaken by actors beginning to rehearse (cf Stanislavski, 1968)..

[5]All references in the text from now on in this chapter are to Appendix 2.

[6] Like the other teachers that I interviewed on this subject, Margaret had vivid memories of her own play history, and of the roles that she had habitually taken on in her play. Many of these were linked to her developing literacy and numeracy:

'My tricycle dominated my play. I played bus drivers and conductors. I cut up bits of paper for tickets and pretended to hand them out to passengers boarding the bus. My brother tied a broken trike (the back half) onto my bike to form a tandem so that I could pick up friends and passengers.

When I went to school I was dinner monitor and I marvelled at the way the secretary counted the money so fast. At home I used to pretend to be the secretary and I played with hundreds of co-op checks - sliding them from the table top into the palm of my hand and stacking them in piles.

These checks were also for playing shops. I weighed out potatoes, vegetables etcetera and 'sold' them to my mum and I used to swing the paper back over and over at the corners like the shopkeepers'.

Chapter thirteen
CONCLUSIONS

13.0 Introduction

In the preceding chapters I have been considering the links between different ways of world-making - from dramatic play and play with small toys, to drawing and imaginative writing. It has seemed likely to me, as it does to many teachers, that these creative ways of symbolising are in some way related, and that they may all contribute to the development of a generalised capacity for imaginative and hypothetical thought which children continue to draw on, in their writing and their thinking, well after they have apparently stopped engaging in these kinds of creative play.

The studies I have made in classrooms, and my theoretical studies of Gardner, Dyson, and especially Vygotsky, have affected my view of the links between these different kinds of creative symbolising and writing development. For some years, in thinking about these questions, I was drawn to the idea that development in this area seemed to follow a developmental sequence. If this was so, I thought that it ought to be possible to map the progression from earlier and more concrete symbolising to later, more abstract and linguistic, ways of world-making. As I explained in my first chapter, I took the model for this sequence from the Piaget-Bruner framework of child development, as interpreted by James Britton (Britton, 1971), an interpretation which focused particularly on the transitions between the different ways of representing the world - enactive, iconic, and abstract/linguistic - included in this framework.

At this time I assumed that development probably entailed children in moving from earlier ways of symbolising, in which the 'medium' for symbolic expression was that closest to hand, the child's own body, to forms of symbolising involving cultural codes - drawing and, later, writing. I looked at the many examples of 'mixed modes' apparent in children's symbolising play, where drawing was often accompanied by storying monologue (drama-cum-drawing), or where texts consisted of writing accompanied by pictures (writing-cum-drawing), and sketched the outline (in my article 'Drawing a Story' (Barrs, 1988c)) of a developmental sequence which emphasised these links and transitions, and the way in

which forms of symbolising which were early- acquired continued to underpin and support later developing forms.

Although I still believe that this model of development offers one powerful way of looking at the links between different ways of world-making, I have become increasingly dissatisfied with it as a complete account of what is going on as children engage in different ways of representing or symbolising the world. This is mainly because I have become uncomfortable with what is, fundamentally, a stage model of development, which is biological in its underlying assumptions about the growth of mind. My reading of Vygotsky has made me particularly conscious of the inadequacy of any model which presents development essentially as 'unfolding' - however subtly the stages, interconnections and transitions in the developmental sequence may be traced. I have become convinced of the need for any description of development to have a cultural and social dimension, particularly when this development involves learning the use of established cultural codes.

Vygotsky's view of these ways of symbolising was that they were 'psychological tools'. He regarded these tools as being of fundamental importance in the development of 'higher mental functions' - the aspects of mind that he saw as characteristic of developed and schooled societies (such as voluntary memory, the formation of abstract concepts etc). He suggested that these forms of mediation developed the capacity for thought through their special property of 'reversibility' - as well as acting on the world, they turned back and acted on the user. Consequently Vygotsky suggested that writing and other ways of representing the world should themselves actually be viewed as 'higher mental functions', because they involved 'the processes of mastering the external means of cultural development and cognition' (quoted in Kozulin, 1990, page 113). This view of writing reflects both its role in culture, and the part that it can play in individual learning.

13.1 Writing and thinking

In this thesis I have moved towards an assumption that writing is indeed, at least potentially, a 'higher mental function', and that development consists in the progressive mastery of psychological tools and ways of symbolising, of which written language is probably the most developed

and complex example. But the idea that writing constitutes in itself a 'higher mental function', and that learning to write inevitably leads to the development of mind and to 'higher' forms of thought, has in recent years been strongly challenged [1]. The best known work which calls this assumption into question is Scribner and Cole's (1981) study of the Vai, a West African people with their own writing system. Because Vai script was not taught in school, the researchers believed that an investigation among these people might enable them to study the effects of writing on thinking, independently of the effects of schooling. Their research was based on the premise that grand ideas about the beneficial effects of literacy on thinking were misguided and, moreover, seriously eurocentric in their assumptions. Unfortunately, despite its very thorough and careful design, their enquiry seems to have been flawed at the outset by the limited concept of literacy that informs it, and the narrow cognitive tasks that it uses to assess thinking.

In fact, Vai writers offered a very poor example of a literate group among whom to test out ideas of this magnitude. The form of literacy that they practised was functional and limited; they were merchants and most of their writing was in the form of business and family letters. Scribner and Cole found that 'experience of schooling' was a more important factor in performance on the experimental tasks that they devised than was the ability to write Vai script, and concluded that no case had emerged for literacy, rather than schooling, having any marked cognitive effects. It seems likely from their account of their research that the experience of schooling would indeed be the best preparation for undertaking the kinds of mental tasks and tests that they confronted their subjects with. But the amount of time they were prepared to spend on investigating a set of literacy practices that are so restricted in nature suggests that Scribner and Cole's own understanding of the arguments about the potential of writing for thinking was limited.

13.2 Cultural and social approaches to developmental psychology
Psychologists writing about Vygotsky today are, in fact, in a dilemma in relation to this aspect of his work. On the one hand many of them are attracted to his psychology precisely because it does focus on cultural and social factors in development, and also because it makes cultural and symbolic activity - semiotic mediation - central to the study of mind in

society (eg Wertsch, 1991). But on the other hand they are always having to distance themselves from the fact that Vygotsky and Luria's own speculations about the relations between the development of societies and the development of individuals led them to propose a 'cultural-historical theory' which, even in its own time, appeared dangerously ethnocentric. In order to explain something of the reluctance of present-day commentators to take on board Vygotsky's view of the role of writing in mental development, it seems important to review the history of this theory.

The Vygotsky-Luria cultural-historical theory, which gave rise to some ingenious 'historical experiments', was being developed at a time when sweeping theories about the development of the human race and of human societies were being propounded quite generally. In their study of human development Vygotsky and Luria found it necessary to identify three distinct strands. They stated in the preface to their book on development:

> 'Our task in this volume was to trace three basic lines in the development of behaviour - the evolutionary, historical, and ontogenetic lines - and show that the development of acculturated humans is the product of all three lines of development, to show that behaviour can be understood and explained scientifically only with the help of three different paths from which the history of human behaviour takes shape'. (Wertsch, 1985, p. 27).

Thus, in an amazingly ambitious design, they tried to account for the way in which, through a series of 'qualitative shifts', modern societies had developed from earlier societies, and originally from the societies of primates.

The theory was obviously Darwinian in its evolutionary aspects, but it was also very consciously and directly based on Marx in its assumptions about how *human* societies develop. In other words Vygotsky and Luria were not guilty of 'social Darwinism', or the argument that some human groups are more 'evolved' than others. They were convinced that quite different principles of explanation had to be called on to explain each of the 'three different paths' they describe above, and in relation to human history that principle was not evolution but dialectical materialism. However, the short book in which they summed up their findings, from which the above quotation is taken, was called *Studies in the History of Behaviour*, and had the subtitle of *Ape; Primitive; Child*. This book was found offensively ethnocentric in its assumption of the primitive and

childish nature of 'underdeveloped' cultures in its own time (Van der Veer and Valsiner, 1991, pp.376-381), and has continued to offer a serious obstacle to the acceptance of Vygotsky's psychology by social psychologists who are drawn to his work. Today, psychologists who seek support in Vygotsky for a psychology which takes proper account of the interaction between culture and the development of the individual have to engage in a ritual handwashing in order to ensure that they are not contaminated by association with this aspect of his theory.

It is ironic that the text for which Vygotsky and Luria came under most attack from orthodox Marxists should have been the very text in which they had set out to extend to psychology Marx's own theories about the influence of the means of production on social life. Marx wrote that: 'In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production; and in changing their mode of production....they change all their social relations' (quoted in Garaudy, 1967,p.75) Luria's main purpose in undertaking his journey to Uzbekistan, where the fieldwork for this study was carried out, was to take advantage of the fact that the situation in this geographical area constituted a natural 'historical experiment'. Because the communities there had been part of a rapid drive to the collectivisation of agriculture, it was as if people from different historical periods were to be found living there side by side; Luria and Vygotsky hypothesised that the historical-economic circumstances of these different groups would have influenced their behaviour and their thinking, and Luria's findings seemed to demonstrate this. [2]

13.3   'Development' and relativistic thinking

It is clear there are major dangers in cross-cultural psychological experiments, and even greater dangers in attempting to draw parallels between different kinds of 'development', although in fact it must be true that human child development is, as Vygotsky and Luria point out, a product of all three lines that they identified. The very word 'development' itself is suspect in many quarters now, for the eurocentric and absolutist assumptions that it has often implied about the nature and direction of development. Most modern psychologists leave all such parallels and large-scale generalisations about the development of the human species and human societies strictly alone, and confine their thinking to the development of the individual mind and to assumed

'universals' in human child development. By doing this, however, they also cut themselves off from forming a view of the psychological effects on groups and individuals of the large-scale historical and social movements that have shaped their worlds. As James Wertch suggests (Wertsch, 1991), this lack of a focus on the social and historical situatedness of behaviour has impoverished psychology.

Moreover, the consequence of not engaging with large and important questions about how human development is like and unlike animal development, or about how mental development differs in different societies, is that these large questions have simply gathered dust. An important area of theory has been neglected, mainly because it is just too difficult and charged to engage with. The identification of Darwinian-type theories of social 'evolution' with racist politics in the first part of this century has made this an impossible subject to reopen or to look at differently. The general reluctance to consider these issues has been accompanied by a bland and automatic cultural relativism.

A consistently relativistic stance makes it impossible actually to make any general statements about development at all, as it can always be argued that what counts as development in one social context may not be as significant in another. It is partly because of this relativistic habit of mind that Vygotsky's central belief about the key place of both oral and written language in human development has been so neglected even by psychologists with an interest in establishing a sociocultural psychology.

13.4 The place of writing in mental development

In his most recent book, for instance (Wertsch, 1991), James Wertsch is highly critical of Vygotsky's account of the role of writing in development, and critical too of Vygotsky's fundamental argument about the role of language in thinking and learning. In what might in other contexts be termed a racial slur, he puts Vygotsky's theory of the linguistic basis of many higher mental functions down to his Jewish heritage and the highly verbal character of Jewish family life (p.30). Wertsch quotes one or two small-scale cross-cultural studies to show that children in nonwestern cultures may make more use of nonverbal communication and nonverbal strategies in problem-solving than European children do (p.31). These studies, he suggests, reveal the 'ethnocentric bias' in the work of Vygotsky

and others who propose a relationship between speech and thinking. Wertsch does indeed want to make a case for the role of semiotic mediation in thinking, but he wants to do so without in any way 'privileging' language or writing.

It is hard to see how this position could ever be sustained for long. If one puts on one side for a moment the cross-cultural comparisons that have made this whole argument so problematic and led to this doggedly relativistic position, and considers the question instead solely in terms of the semiotic systems available within any particular culture, it seems reasonable to argue that acquiring these 'means of meaning' would always represent a crucial piece of cultural learning and, in the life of any individual, a major developmental shift. It is hard to see how oral language acquisition could not be viewed as an essential part of becoming human in any society; studies of 'wild children' have revealed how closely language is linked to most of our ways of defining being human (Malson and Itard, 1972).

Written language is fundamental to cultural activity in most societies with a written code. Writing is the medium through which most such cultures store their knowledge and do their theoretical thinking (Goody, 1987). Learning to understand and use written language is generally the basis of elementary education. And as well as its obvious function as a means of recording and communicating, writing is an important medium for thinking and learning. If learning to talk, in Halliday's words, is 'learning how to mean' (Halliday, 1975), then learning to write is learning how to mean on paper. Writing enables meanings to be put outside the self, where we can, literally, 'see what we mean'. It opens up possibilities of reflecting and operating on our own thought. In this way, the potential for reflection that has been realised through writing can be taken into the self and become a part of thought. It is in this sense that writing can be viewed, in Vygotsky's words, as a 'higher mental function'.

No other sign system, as Vygotsky pointed out, is as complex or systematic as language. Written language enables the subtle meanings that language can embody to be explored and inspected more closely, and pushes the writer to set out these meanings more fully and carefully. Learning to explore the 'layers of abstraction present in language' (Lee, 1985) is an

essential part of our conceptual development; as we do so we add further layers to our original spontaneous concepts of the meanings of words. When we come to write about ideas and concepts we have to take our understanding of them one stage further, in order to make them more explicit and communicable. Learning how writing can be used for thinking, and also for the creation of literature - the most complex, deliberately structured and nuanced use of written language - is the basis of much later education.

Language and writing cannot so lightly be downgraded on the scale of semiotic mediation as James Wertsch suggests, and Vygotsky's claims for the role of writing in mental development are not so easily set aside. The attractions of seeing writing itself not only as a psychological tool but also as, potentially, a 'higher mental function' is that this provides a solution to the problem of describing what happens to development when children begin to gain full access to these cultural aids to thinking. It extends the idea of development so that it can be seen to interact in complex ways with learning. Although not all learners experience these uses of writing, the potential of writing for developing the learner in these kinds of ways must not therefore be undervalued.

Vygotsky's description of the 'two lines of development' that he saw in children - the 'natural line ' and the 'cultural line' of development - takes into account that there are aspects of development which are like 'unfolding', and others which are more obviously learned, which are fundamentally social and cultural in their nature, and which develop through internalisation and the learning of cultural codes. Although this double notion of development is somewhat flawed (learning language is certainly a social process as well as a 'natural' one) it does underline the fact that 'development' cannot be regarded as one thing. Whether we focus on cultural codes or cultural contexts - for in most educational contexts there is pressure for children to 'develop' in particular ways - it is clear that cultural factors become an increasingly dominant part of 'development' in childhood, so that learning and development are eventually indistinguishable.

Development beyond the early stages may partly be seen as a question of learning to use to their fullest extent the possibilities inherent in different

semiotic systems. Olson, in his recent book on literacy, *The World on Paper* (1994), argues that narrow and utilitarian definitions of literacy fail to grasp the long learning process that is involved in coming to be able to explore meanings in texts, and the difference between 'what is said' and 'what is meant'. His sophisticated definition of literacy is helpful in enabling us to circumvent simple either-or arguments about the relationship between mental development and learning written language. Olson shows that literacy is not one thing, and as we learn more and more complex and sensitive 'ways of taking' meaning from text we develop both our reading and ourselves, extending the uses of our literacy.

Yet Olson's own argument is limited in its assumptions, for hardly anywhere in this would-be comprehensive account of the debate about literacy and its effects does he ever seriously consider the role that writing plays in becoming a reader. This is a serious omission, for a major influence on reading development, and on the ability to read in the increasingly responsive and critical way that Olson describes as marking high levels of literate competence, is surely experience as a writer. Reading development, in this sense, can never properly be separated from writing development - or vice versa.

13.5   Ways of imagining

However we choose to tell the long-term story of the developmental relationship between language and thought, and between enactment, drawing and writing, it seems clear from the evidence in my empirical chapter, that, contrary to the views of Gardner and Dyson, in the short term these modes of representation support one another rather than being in competition with one another. Children engaging in 'world-making' play move between symbolic modes. As they do so, they develop their ideas more fully, drawing on the resources particular to different ways of symbolising.

Though in later childhood it may appear that certain kinds of symbolising, for some children, simply disappear or die out, I have argued that they remain as part of children's internal resources and continue to inform their thinking, imagining, and writing. In other words I have argued that in development these earlier ways of knowing are not simply lost or abandoned, but merely (in Vygotsky's words) 'superseded and saved'

(Kozulin, 1990, p.213). In my second chapter on Vygotsky's Thought and Language, I was rash enough to draw a hypothetical map of the inner landscape which these internalised ways of imagining might inhabit.

Vygotsky considered that 'interfunctionality' - the continuing development of the relations between different mental functions - was the next stage of the development of thought once these functions had been internalised. He was interested in speculating about how such functions continued to interact and affect one another once they had become a part of mind. In the same way, my argument now needs to pursue the question of what happens to the interrelationships between dramatic play, modelling and picturing, once they have become part of children's inner imaginative resources.

It seems likely that, as these ways of symbolising are internalised, they continue to interact inside the human being. Imaginative and hypothetical ways of thinking clearly draw on the capacity to visualise and form images, to create mental models and maps, to enact, imitate, and pretend and to identify mentally and quasi-physically with an immense range of experience. Such ways of knowing can no more be thought of as discrete mental activities than they could be seen as discrete when they were part of world-making play. All these ways of symbolising were viewed by Vygotsky as being part of the 'prehistory' of writing, but I should like to see them as also part of its continuing history.

13.6   Heteroglossia, play, and writing

For a view of how these different internalised resources may continue to be drawn on in the creation of imagined worlds, not only by children but also by mature writers, we can turn to the writings of Bakhtin, and especially his book *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), where the essential heteroglossia of imaginative fiction is the foundation of his argument. Bakhtin suggests that all novels are 'systems of languages', and that the author - who has presumably internalised these very diverse languages from the multiplicity of languages by which we are surrounded in the world, including the world of our reading - orchestrates these resources, taking on one language after another. In Eugene Onegin, for instance, Bakhtin finds that 'the author participates in the novel (he is ominipresent in it) with *almost no direct language of his own*' (p.47).

315

Instead the author represents characters and the different aspects of his creative world through a range of languages. Bakhtin identifies in Onegin a 'distinct voice zone' for each character. The voice zone of the character Tatiana, for instance, is itself a hybrid creation:

'What is limited, almost comically old-fashioned, in Tatiana's language is combined with the boundless, serious and direct truth of the language of the folk. The author not only represents this language but is also in fact speaking it. Considerable sections of the novel are presented in Tatiana's voice zone.'(p.46)

Bakhtin's whole thesis about the interplay of languages and voices in the novel, and the way in which the author ventriloquises these voices, implies that the capacity for play, enactment, and mimicry is an essential resource, drawn on constantly by the writer of fiction. Play involves, among other things, a taking-on of the voices of others and an adopting of the roles and lives of others, often by adopting their language. It is this languaging play, the endless role-taking of dramatic play, that as it is internalised becomes the 'dialogic imagination'. It could be argued that all writers, not only novelists, are ventriloquists, or actors playing many parts, and that the chameleon quality of role-taking, which is fundamental to taking on particular genres, has been developed and rehearsed in play.

But just as important in the creation of imaginary worlds is the capacity to visualise these worlds and depict them for others. Writers of fiction draw on a wide range of mental imagery in their descriptions of settings, characters and action. In doing so, they may also draw on their own stored experiences of creating actual images of the world, through drawing, painting, mapping and modelling. In other words, we might enlarge on Bakhtin's vision of the essential heteroglossia of the novel by suggesting that all imaginative writings are *systems* involving the organisation of a multiplicity of languages, voices, images, and models of the world, and that the capacity to create imaginary worlds on paper, by drawing all these different symbols into a unity, essentially derives from the internalisation of early experiences of symbolising play.

13.7   An alternative paradigm

It is likely that other ways of thinking-and-writing than imaginative writing alone also draw on these capacities for role-taking and for the mental modelling of alternative versions of reality. Certainly Vygotsky thought so; as we have seen, the lecture on the 'Imagination and its Development in Childhood'(1987) provides a carefully argued explanation

316

of how creative thinking, thinking that 'departs from reality', is fundamental to all 'advanced' thinking. What this argument of Vygotsky's makes it possible to envisage is an alternative paradigm for mental development to that offered by cognitive psychology, one in which creative play and the development of the imagination are the basis for the fullest development of thought.

This alternative paradigm would provide an explanation of why the reading and writing of stories seems to be such an important element in written language development, as all the teachers in my study thought it was. Stories show that the potential of written language can extend beyond the straightforwardly functional and referential, in much the same way in which play reveals more of the possibilities inherent in spoken language. Vygotsky suggested that play was the activity in which children could come to realise that the meanings of words and their actual referents can be detached. In the words of Benjamin Lee (1985):
> 'The key to Vygotsky's analysis of symbolic play is that meaning and object separate, but that meanings of things are given by words.'(p.91)

Story (both spoken and written) further develops these possibilities of talking and thinking about things that are not.

Written stories provide particularly clear demonstrations that writing is a powerful means of altering and playing with reality. Once children appreciate the potential in written language for creating alternative meanings and worlds, they are in a better position to exploit that potential. This argument suggests that current critiques of the place of story in the language arts classroom (eg Newkirk, 1989; Martin et al, 1994) [3] may be missing the point. Story is held by these writers to be only one of the many possible genres that children need to learn to use, and they believe that it is over-used in the elementary school. But stories cannnot be viewed simply as examples of a privileged genre. Even leaving aside other factors, such as the pleasure they provide and their individual intrinsic qualities, stories demonstrate ways of making meaning and playing with reality that are important in the formation of all ways of thinking that 'depart from reality', and so in speculative and hypothetical thinking generally.

Colette Daiute (1989) has argued that 'writing play is thought' and suggested how teachers can exploit the role of play as a catalyst in classroom learning. My thesis has not explored these issues fully, but may

suggest the desirability of further studies to look at the way in which thinking and writing across the curriculum can also draw on these stored capacities for imaginative play and imagining.

Vygotsky's argument in this lecture forms part of a larger argument running through all his work. I have made the case that his views on art, literature, imagination, creativity and emotion lie at the heart of his account of mind. My reading of his work, which differs substantially from that given by cognitivist commentators, suggested that Vygotsky always saw art and creativity as basic to mental development and to the creation of consciousness. What Vygotsky offered psychology - which has never been taken up - was a way of reconciling two opposing positions (the 'rationalist' and 'idealist' positions) by providing an account of the development - through the internalisation of social relations - of consciousness and inner mental worlds, with language playing a key role in this development.

I found that Vygotsky's account of the links between different ways of symbolising and creative activity was far richer than the account contained in the work of Howard Gardner, director of Harvard's 'Project Zero'. This work was preoccupied with the formulation of stage theories of development, with categorisation - both of artistic products and of children as symbolisers, and with the tracing of discrete developmental trajectories for different creative activities. The links between different ways of symbolising, the role of language in all symbolising and thinking, and the fact that creative and artistic thinking can be seen as paradigmatic of thought in general, were ignored in this unremittingly cognitive view of artistic development.

Both Gardner and Dyson, whose research gives particular emphasis to the mixed modes used by young children learning to write, tended to see these symbolic modes as being fundamentally different from one another. Despite Dyson's deep appreciation of the important place of different forms of symbolising in children's writing development, she saw the different symbolic 'worlds' that the children were exploring as boundaried and separate, and children as having to negotiate these boundaries, often with difficulty. She did not consider how different ways of symbolising can flow into and support one another, or be, in Vygotsky's words: 'different

moments in an *essentially unified* process of development of written
language' (1978, p.116) (my italics).

13.8 Teachers and learners

But the teachers in my empirical study all saw all kinds of symbolising
play as important, essentially related, and linked to literacy development.
Interfunctionality, or rather the interplay between different symbolic
activities - so particularly marked in young children's art play and the
beginnings of their writing - was instinctively modelled, supported and
encouraged by these teachers, who all viewed it as helpful for children to
make connections between these different 'ways of knowing'. In
demonstrating these links, the teachers might both have been responding
to children's tendency to see these symbolic modes as interrelated, and
also leading them to appreciate the possibilities of such interrelationships.
The multiplicity of symbolising activities seen in these classrooms and the
many ways in which teachers made links between different ways of
symbolising and children's literacy, demonstrated their conviction that
such activities are an important part of reading and writing development,
and that they need supporting and extending.

These teachers' 'theories-in-practice' could be seen, in fact, as 'pre-
Vygotskyan'. Many of the key elements in Vygotsky's theory - such as his
central emphasis on the role of affect in learning, his definition of a 'zone
of proximal development' within which teachers need to work, and his
foregrounding of the role of play and literature in mental development -
were very much part of their own theoretical assumptions. Their
observations of children confirmed the general emphasis of the theory
emerging from the theoretical section of this thesis, while grounding it in
actual studies of individuals. My reading of Vygotsky, and my account of
the links between symbolising play and the development of writing has
tended, in its theoretical statement, to be unitary in character, and to
absorb all these kinds of play into an abstract and generalised view of
development and learning. The studies in the empirical section, however,
have demonstrated the very different ways in which the development of
individual children exemplifies this general theory.

These case studies of learners have added complexity to the overall
account of children's growth as symbolisers, by showing how very diverse

the paths taken by individuals can be, and how many factors - personality, gender, 'learning styles', and other aspects of difference - affect their development. What these case studies have demonstrated is the need for a view of development which takes fully into account, as good teachers do, the wide differences between learners, and the different ways in which they respond to and take up the same experiences.

Current moves to write a national curriculum for the nursery and reception years will probably highlight the differences between those who will defend the place of play in early learning, and those who will argue the need to prepare young children for entry into the national curriculum. This kind of debate is likely to be represented as a debate about whether early years education needs to focus more closely on the 'basics'. I have argued in this thesis that there are indeed basics in literacy education, but that they need to be redefined. Early forms of symbolisation need to be seen as key antecedents to literacy learning, because of the way in which they engage children, emotionally and cognitively, in all the possibilities of world-making, and involve them in the progressive mastery of different ways of symbolising meaning. Some children experience these kinds of symbolising play at home or in nursery schools; others may not. Early years educators need to consider the situation of children whose opportunities to play have been limited, and how these kinds of experiences can be more generally provided.

Some other implications of my argument include the need for initial teacher education courses to take seriously the links between play and literacy, and to encourage teachers in training to observe play, and to learn to support and extend children's play. After several years of media pressure, 'play' has become a dangerous word to use in education, and some local education authorities are even reluctant to include it in their curriculum guidelines. It will be essential, if children's education is not to be greatly impoverished, for there to be a rehabilitation of the concept of 'play', and this should involve an effort to integrate it more fully into a broader long-term account of learning. There may also be a need for a more systematic analysis of play provision, and a consideration of how creative and imaginative forms of play, in particular, can most effectively be supported.

Certain kinds of world-making play, such as play with small figures, have been highlighted in my thesis as being particularly important for young children. Some teachers agree that this kind of play can have a particular significance for children's literacy (Horrocks 1994). One nursery school in the London Borough of Lewisham has demonstrated the links between literacy and this kind of play to children and their parents by making 'story props' (miniature characters) to accompany all of the tapes and books that children take home as part of the home reading scheme. My evaluation of this project (Barrs and Garrard, 1995) found that the experience of reenacting and retelling the stories through using the story props had been of major importance for several children, seeming to lead them to feel that they had control of the story and an active role to play in reading. One mother put this into words when she said 'We made a story tape at home with R. The breakthrough came when she started to make her own books. It was realising that stories aren't cast in stone - you can make them up yourself. The story props gave her the confidence to start reading'. This seemed to be a particularly clear example of the value of what Margaret Wyeth calls, 'playing within the story'.

My argument about the importance of these kinds of experiences for development in literacy depends on the recognition that literacy in a modern society is not the narrow, fundamentally scribal activity which is implicit in the 'Key Skills' section of the new National Curriculum for English (1994), with its constant foregrounding of decoding and encoding, and the transcriptional aspects of writing for children in the infant school. It sets against this view a broader definition of literacy, which Margaret Meek Spencer has termed 'full' or 'powerful' literacy (1991) and others have called 'critical literacy'. An essential characteristic of this broader definition is that it assumes that all children are potentially writers as well as readers, that they are composers as well as - and before - being transcribers, and that, in favourable contexts, they can bring to their writing and their reading the same confident powers of control of alternative created realities that they bring to their world-making play.

---

[1] Brian Street (1984), approaching these questions from a background in ethnography and an experience of literacy programmes in developing countries, has argued forcefully and eloquently against what he has termed the 'autonomous' model of literacy, which assumes that literacy automatically carries with it cognitive consequences, and that there is therefore a marked difference between preliterate and literate societies. Street argues that this case is made by academics (he cites in particular Goody and Olson) who are defending their own vested interests ('the ideological purpose of such work is to justify and defend

western educational practice') and that no such case about the effects of literacy or the difference between literate and nonliterate cultures will stand up to careful scrutiny. He draws on Cole and Scribner, among some others, for evidence to support his argument.

2 Luria hypothesised that these different categories of subject, having grown up in very different social and historical circumstances, should perform very differently on mental tests, and that their performance would reveal something about the modes of thought in societies with differing means of production and social organisation. His findings are still of interest (Luria, 1976), and did demonstrate differences between these groups, though many of his questions can now be shown to be loaded in character. It can be argued that his mode of proceeding and the conclusions that he drew from his experiments were naive, though not a great deal more naive than the assumptions that shaped the research of Scribner and Cole.

3 E.g. 'But that children should be stranded there, writing stories for example as their only genre in infant and primary school, is impossible to accept. It cuts them off absolutely from any real understanding of what the humanities, social sciences and sciences are on about and denies them the tools these disciplines have developed to understand the world.' Martin, J.R., F. Christie and J. Rothery. (1994).'Social Processes in Education' in Stierer, B. and J. Maybin. (1994), p.237.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adams, Marilyn Jager. (1990). *Beginning to Read.* Cambridge, MA:
    M.I.T.Press.

Alexander, Robin, Jim Rose and Chris Woodhead (1992)*Curriculum
    Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools. A
    discussion paper.* London: Department of Education and Science.

Applebee, Arthur N. (1978). *The Child's Concept of Story.* Chicago:
    University of Chicago Press, Ltd.

Armstrong, Michael. (1980). *Closely Observed Children.* London:
    Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative Society Ltd.

Ash, M.G. and W.R. Woodward (eds.) (1990) *Psychology in Twentieth-
    Century Thought and Society.* Cambridge: Cambridge University
    Press.

Auster, Paul. (1988).*The Invention of Solitude.* London: Faber.

Axline, Virginia. (1971). *Dibs: In Search of Self.* London, Penguin Books.

Baghban, M. (1984). *Our Daughter Learns to Read and Write: A case
    study from birth to three.* Newark,DE: International Reading
    Association.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981).*The Dialogic Imagination.* Austin: University of
    Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1986) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays.* Austin:
    University of Texas Press.

Bakhtin, M.M./Medvedev, P.N.(1985). *The Formal Method in Literary
    Scholarship.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press

Bannister, D. and Fransella, Fay. (1971). *Inquiring Man.*
    Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Barrs, Myra. (1983). *Making Stories: Young Children's Fictional
    Narratives.* M.A. in Education, University of London.

Barrs, Myra. (1984). 'Knowing by Becoming' in Meek, M. and J.Miller (eds.)
    Changing English: Essays for Harold Rosen. London: Heinemann,
    pp. 71-85.

Barrs, Myra. (1987) 'Voice and Role in Reading and Writing' in *Language
    Arts,* 64, pp. 207-218.

Barrs, Myra.(1988a) 'Maps of Play' in Meek, M. and C. Mills (eds.) *Language and Literacy in the Primary School*. Basingstoke, Hants. Falmer Press, pp. 101-115.

Barrs,Myra. (1988b) 'Play Worlds and Story Worlds' in *Journal of Learning about Learning*, Vol.1, No.1, Fall 1988, pp. 86-97.

Barrs, Myra. (1988c) 'Drawing a Story: Transitions between Drawing and Writing' in Lightfoot, M. and N. Martin (eds.). *The Word for Teaching is Learning: Essays for James Britton*. Oxford: Heinemann, pp. 51-69.

Barrs, Myra. (1991-92). 'Genre Theory: What's it All About?' in *Language Matters: Thinking about Writing*. 1991-92, Vol. 1. London: Centre for Language in Primary Education, pp. 9-16.

Barrs, M., S. Ellis, H. Hester and A.R.Thomas. (1988) *The Primary Language Record: Handbook for Teachers*. London: CLPE/ILEA.

Barrs, M., S. Ellis, H. Hester and A.R.Thomas. (1990). *Patterns of Learning*. London: CLPE.

Barrs, M. and A.R.Thomas (eds.). (1990). *The Reading Book*. London: CLPE.

Barrs, M. and S. Garrard.(1995). *Final Evaluation Report on the Lewisham GEST Project (Raising Standards of Achievement in Inner City Schools)*. Informal report, London Borough of Lewisham.

Bates, E, Begnini, I.Bretherton, L.Camioni and V.Volterra. (1979). *The Emergence of Symbols; Cognition and Comunication in Infancy*. New York: Academic Press

Becker, Howard S. (1986). *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bettelheim,B. (1967). *The Empty Fortress*. New York: The Free Press

Bettelheim, B. (1976). *The Uses of Enchantment*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Billington, James. (1970). *The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture*. NY: Vintage Books.

Bissex, Glenda.(1980). *GYNYS AT WRK: A child learns to read and write*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bogdan. R.C. and S.K. Biklen. (1992). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (2nd ed.) Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Bretherton, I. (1984). *Symbolic Play*. New York: Academic Press, Inc.

Britton, James. (1970). *Language and Learning*. London: Penguin Books.

Britton, James. (1971) Introduction to Luria, A.R. and F. la. Yudovich. *Speech and the Development of Mental Processes*. London: Penguin Education.

Britton, James. (1982). 'Spectator Role and the Beginnings of Writing' in Britton, 1982, pp.46-67.

Britton, James. (1982) *Prospect and Retrospect*. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.

Britton, James. (1987). 'Vygotsky's Contribution to Pedagogical Theory'. in *English in Education*, Autumn 1987. NATE, pp. 22-26.

Britton, James. (1993). *Literature in its Place*. London: Cassell.

Bruner, J. (1962) Introduction to *Thought and Language*. (Vygotsky, 1962), pp. v-x..

Bruner, J. (1985). Vygotsky: a historical and conceptual perspective' in Wertsch, 1985.

Bruner, J. (1986). *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, J. (1990).*Acts of Meaning* . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bruner, Jerome, A. Jolly and K. Sylva. (1976). *Play*. London: Penguin Books.

Buckley, M.H. and O.Boyle. 'Mapping and Composing' in Myers, M. and J. Gray (eds.) (1983). *Theory and Practice in the Teaching of Composition: Processing, Distancing and Modelling*. Urbana, ILL: NCTE, pp. 59-95.

Burgess Tony. 'Reading Vygotsky' in Daniels, H.,1993. pp.1-29.

Bussis, A., E. Chittenden, M. Amarel and E. Klausner. (1985). *Inquiry into Meaning*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Carini, Patricia. (1975). *Observation and Description: An alternative methodology for the investigation of human phenomena*. Monograph, North Dakota Study Group on Evaluation. Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota Press.

Carroll, John. (1992). Paper on 'In-Role Drama' given at Peel Board of Education conference 'Talk: A Medium for Learning and Change'(Peel, Ontario) .

Cassirer, Ernst. (1944). *An Essay on Man*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Christie, James F. (ed.)(1991). *Play and Early Literacy Development*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Chukovsky, K. (1989). *From Two to Five*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Clark, Katerina and Michael Holmquist. (1984). *Mikhail Bakhtin*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Clay, Marie. (1975). *What Did I Write?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Cobb, Edith. (1977). *The Ecology of the Imagination in Childhood*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Cole, M. (1979) Introduction to *The Making of Mind* (Luria, 1979, pp. 1-14).

Cole, M. (1979) Epilogue to *The Making of Mind* (Luria, 1979, pp.189-225).

Cole, M. (1985) 'The zone of proximal development: where culture and cognition create each other' in Wertsch, 1985b, pp.146-161.

Cole, M. and Scribner, S. (1978) Introduction to *Mind in Society* (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 1-14).

Cole, M. and Scribner, S. (1981). *The Psychology of Literacy*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Coles, Robert. (1989). *The Call of Stories*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin

Cowie, Helen.(1989). 'Children as Writers' in Hargreaves,D. (ed). (1989) *Children and the Arts*. Open University Press, pp. 87-104.

Crago, M. and H. Crago. (1983) *Prelude to Literacy*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

D.E.S. (1975). *A Language for Life (The Bullock Report)*. London: H.M.S.O.

Daiute, Colette. (1989). 'Play as Thought: Thinking strategies of young writers' in *Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 59*, pp.1-23.

Daniels, H. (1993). *Charting the Agenda: Educational activity after Vygotsky*. London: Routledge.

Davidson, L. and L.Scripp. (1988). 'Young children's musical representations: windows on music cognition' in Sloboda, J.(ed.). (1988). *Generative Processes in Music: the Psychology of Performance, Improvisation, and Composition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp.195-230.

Davydov, V.V. (1994). 'L.S. Vygotsky and the Reform of School'. Keynote address to the First International Vygotsky Conference, Moscow, January 1994.

Davydov, V.V. and L.A. Radzikhovskii. (1985). 'Vygotsky's theory and the activity-oriented approach in psychology' in Wertsch, 1985b, pp. 35-65.

Davydov, V.V. and V.P. Zinchenko. (1993). 'Vygotsky's Contribution to the Development of Psychology' in Daniels, H. (ed.) *Charting the Agenda: Educational Activity after Vygotsky*. London: Routledge.

Dearing, Ron. (1993). *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: An Interim Report*. July 1993. London: National Curriculum Council/School Examinations and Assessment Council 1993.

Dearing, Ron.(1993a). *The National Curriculum and its Assessment: Final Report*. London: School Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Dombey, Henrietta. (1983). 'Learning the Language of Books' in Meek (ed.) 1983, pp. 26-43.

Dombey, Henrietta. (1988). 'Stories at Home and at School' in Lightfoot and Martin, 1988, pp.70-81.

Dubinsky, A. and O. Bazhenova. 'Moments of Discovery, Times of Learning' (unpublished paper)

Dyson, Anne Haas. (1982). 'The Emergence of Visible Language: Interrelationships between Drawing and Early Writing' in *Visible Language*, Vol XVI, No. 4, pp.360-381.

Dyson, Anne Haas. (1983) 'The Role of Oral Language in Early Writing Processes' in *Research in the Teaching of English*, Vol.17, No.1. pp.1-30.

Dyson, Anne Haas. (1984) 'Learning to Write/Learning to Do School: Emergent Writers' Interpretations of School Literacy Tasks' in *Research in the Teaching of English*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp.223-264.

Dyson, Anne Haas. (1986). 'Transitions and Tensions: Interrelationships betweeen the Drawing, Talking, and Dictating of Young Children' in *Research in the Teaching of English*, Vol. 20, No. 4, pp.379-409.

Dyson, Anne Haas. (1987). 'The Value of "Time Off Task": Young Children's Spontaneous Talk and Deliberate Text' in *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol. 57, No. 4, pp.396-420.

Dyson, Anne Haas. (1989). *Multiple Worlds of Child Writers*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Dyson, Anne Haas. (1993). *Social Worlds of Children Learning to Write*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Edelman, Gerald.(1994) *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire*. London: Penguin Books.

Edwards, Derek and Neil Mercer. (1987). *Common Knowledge*. London: Methuen.

Eisner, Eliot. (1979). 'The Contribution of Painting to Children's Cognitive Development' in *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1979, Vol.11, No.2, pp.109-116.

Emig, Janet. (1971).*The Composing Process of Twelfth Graders*. NCTE Research Report no. 13. Urbana, ILL: NCTE.

Eng, Hilda. (1931). *The Psychology of Children's Drawings*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Erikson, Erik. (1965). *Childhood and Society*. London: Penguin Books

Erikson, Erik. (1972) 'Play and Actuality' in Piers, M.W. (ed.) *Play and Development* . New York: Norton.

Farr, M. (ed.). (1985) *Advances in Writing Research, Volume One: Children's Early Writing Development*. New York: Ablex.

Feinburg, Sylvia G. (1976) 'Combat in Child Art' *in* Bruner, J.S., A.Jolly and K.Sylva (eds.). *Play*. London: Penguin Books, pp.589-593.

Ferreiro, E. and A. Teberosky. (1982). *Literacy before Schooling*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann.

Fitzpatrick, Sheila (1970). *The Commissariat of Enlightenment: Soviet Organisation·of Education and the Arts under Lunacharsky*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fox, Carol. (1983). 'Talking Like a Book' in Meek (ed.) 1983, pp. 12-25.

Fox, Carol. (1988). 'Poppies will Make Them Grant' in Meek and Mills (eds.) 1988, pp. 53-68.

Galda, L. and A. Pellegrini (eds.). (1985). *Play, Language and Stories*. Norwood,NJ: Ablex.

Garaudy, Roger. (1967). *Karl Marx: The Evolution of His Thought*. New York: International Publishers.

Gardner, Howard. (1973). *The Arts and Human Development*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Gardner, Howard. (1978). *Developmental Psychology*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Gardner, Howard. (1980). *Artful Scribbles: The Significance of Children's Drawings*. London: Jill Norman.

Gardner, Howard. (1982). *Art, Mind and Brain: A Cognitive Approach to Creativity*. New York: Basic Books

Gardner, Howard. (1982a). 'Nadia's Challenge' in Gardner, 1982, pp. 184-191.

Gardner, Howard. (1983) *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, Howard. (1987). *The Mind's New Science: A History of the Cognitive Revolution*. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H., D. Wolf and A. Smith. (1982). 'Max and Molly: Individual Differences in Early Artistic Symbolisation' in Gardner, H. (1982). *Art, Mind and Brain*. New York: Basic Books, pp. 110-127. *Knowledge*. New York: Basic Books

Geertz, Clifford. (1983). *Local Knowledge*. New York: Basic Books.

Genishi, Celia and Anne Haas Dyson. (1984). *Language Assessment in the Early Years*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Gilligan, Carol. (1982). *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glaser, B. and A. Strauss. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.

Glaser, Barney. (1978). *Theoretical Sensitivity*. San Francisco, CA: University of California Press.

Goelman, Hillel, Antoinette Oberg and Frank Smith. (1984). *Awakening to Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Goodman, Nelson. (1978). *Ways of Worldmaking*. Hassocks,Sussex: Harvester Press

Goody, Jack. (1977). *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goody, Jack. (1987). *The Interface between the Oral and the Written*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goody J. and I.P.Watt. (1963). 'The Consequences of Literacy', in *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 5, pp. 304-345.

Graham, L. (1987) *Science, Philosophy and Human Behaviour in the Soviet Union*. New York, Columbia University Press.

Graves, D. H. (1983). *Writing: Children and teachers at work*. Exeter, NH: Heinemann.

Gundlach, Robert. (1982). 'Children as Writers: The Beginnings of Learning to Write' in Nystrand, M. (ed.). *What Writers Know: The Language, Process and Structure of Written Discourse*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 129-147.

Hall, Nigel (ed.). (1989). *Writing with Reason: The Emergence of Authorship in Young Children*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Halliday, Michael. (1975). *Learning How to Mean*. London: Edward Arnold.

Harding, D.W. (1974). 'The Hinterland of Thought' in *Experience into Words*. London: Penguin, pp. 176-198.

Harding, D.W. (1976). *Words into Rhythm*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Harste, J.C., V.A.Woodward and C.L.Burke. (1984) *Language Stories and Literacy Lessons*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Heath, S.B. (1983). *Ways with Words: Language, life and work in communities and classrooms*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heathcote, Dorothy. (1980). *Drama as Context for Talking and Writing*. National Association for the Teaching of English.

Heathcote, Dorothy. (1984). *Collected Writings on Education and Drama*. London: Hutchinson.

Hildreth, Gertrude. (1941).*The Child's Mind in Evolution*. New York: King's Crown Press, Columbia University.

Holdaway, Don. (1979). *The Foundations of Literacy*. Sydney: Ashton Scholastic.

Hopkins, M.W. (1970). *Mass Media in the Soviet Union*. New York, Pegasus.

Horrocks, Sarah. (1990). *'Tell it like it is': An investigation into the value of stories for children's learning*. (Dissertation submitted for the degree of B.Ed., South Bank Polytechnic, London)

Horrocks, Sarah. (1993). 'Animating the Imagination: Using puppets in the classroom.' in *Language Matters: Early Years*, 1993-94 No.1, pp. 5-9.

Hubbard, Ruth.(1989). *Authors of Pictures, Drafters of Words*. Portsmouth,NH: Heinemann.

Ivanov, V. V. Commentary on *The Psychology of Art*, in Vygotsky, 1971, pp. 263 - 296.

Ives, S.W., J.Silverman, H.Kelly and H. Gardner. (1979) 'Artistic Development in the Early School Years: A Cross-Media Study of Storytelling, Drawing and Clay-Modelling'. *Technical Report No.8*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Project Zero.

Jaglom, Leona and Howard Gardner.(1981). 'The Preschool Television Viewer as Anthropologist'. in Kelly, Hope and Howard Gardner (eds.)(1981). *Viewing Children through Television*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Jaynes, J. (1976). *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Jakubinskij, L.P. (1979).'On Verbal Dialogue' in *Dispositio*, November 1979. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp.321-336.

John-Steiner, Vera. (1985). *Notebooks of the Mind*. University of New Mexico Press.

Johnston, Peter. (1987). 'Teachers as Evaluation Experts' in *The Reading Teacher*, April 1987, pp. 744-748.

Johnston, Peter. (1992). *Constructive Evaluation of Literate Activity*. New York, NY: Longman.

Joravsky, David. (1988). 'L.S. Vygotskii, The Muffled Deity of Soviet Psychology' in Ash, M.G. (ed.) *Psychology in Twentieth-Century Thought and Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 189-211.

Joravsky, David. (1989). *Russian Psychology*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Kellogg, Rhoda. (1969). *Analyzing Children's Art*. Palo Alto, CA: National Press Books.

Kelly, G. (1963). *A Theory of Personality*. W.W.Norton.

Klein, M. (1975).'The Psychoanalytic Play Technique. Its History and Significance' in *The Writings of Melanie Klein*. Vol. II, pp.122-140. London: Hogarth.

Kimberley, K., M. Meek and J. Miller. (1992). *New Readings: Contributions to an understanding of lieracy*. London: A.&C. Black.

Kozulin, A. (1984). *Psychology in Utopia*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kozulin, A. (1986).'Vygotsky in Context' in Vygotsky, 1986, pp. xi-lvi.

Kozulin, A. (1990). *Vygotsky's Psychology: A Biography of Ideas* . Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf

Kress, Gunther. (1982). *Learning to Write*. London: Routledge.

Kroll, Barry, M. and C.M.Anson. (1984). 'Analysing Structures in Children's Fictional Narratives' in Cowie, H.(ed). *The Development of Children's Imaginative Writing*. Beckenham: Croom Helm, pp.153-183.

Kuhn, Thomas. (1970). *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Langer, Suzanne. (1953). *Feeling and Form*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Langer, Suzanne. (1962). *Philosophical Sketches*. Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins Press.

Langer, Suzanne. (1980). *Philosophy in a New Key*. Boston,MA: Harvard University Press.

Language Matters.:Home and School. 1986 No. 2. London: Centre for Language in Primary Education

Lee, Benjamin. (1985). 'Intellectual origins of Vygotsky's semiotic analysis', in Wertsch, 1985b, pp. 66-93.

Leondar, Barbara. (1977). 'Hatching Plots: Genesis of Storymaking' in Perkins, D. and B. Leondar (eds.).(1977). *The Arts and Cognition*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, pp. 172-189.

Leontiev, A.N. (1971). Introduction to *The Psychology of Art* (Vygotsky, 1971), pp. v-xi.

Leontiev, A.N. and A.R.Luria. (1968). 'The Psychological Ideas of L.S.Vygotskii' in B.B. Wolman (ed.) *Historical Roots of Contemporary Psychology*. New York: Harper and Row, pp. 338-367.

Levitin. (1982). *One is Not Born a Personality*. Moscow: Progress Publishers

Lightfoot, M. and N. Martin (eds.). (1988). *The Word for Teaching is Learning*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Books.

Lincoln, Y. and E. Guba. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Luria, A.R. (1971). *Speech and the Development of Mental Processes in the Child*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Luria, A.R. (1976). *Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*. Cambridge,MA: Harvard University Press.

Luria, A.R. (1978). 'Biographical Note on L.S.Vygotsky' in Vygotsky (1978), p.15-16.

Luria, A.R. (1979). *The Making of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Luria, A.R. (1982). *Language and Cognition*. New York: John Wiley.

Luria, A.R. and O.S. Vinogradova. (1959). 'An Objective Investigation of the Dynamics of Semantic Systems' in *British Journal of Psychology*. Volume 50, Part 2, May 1959. pp.89-105.

Malson, Lucien and Jean Itard. (1972). *Wolf Children and The Wild Boy of Aveyron*. London: NLB.

Mandelstam, Nadezhda. (1989). *Hope against Hope*. London: Collins Harvill.

Mandelshtam,O. (1989). *The Eyesight of Wasps*. London: Angel Books.

Mandelstam, O. (1991). *The Collected Critical Prose and Letters* (ed. Harris). London: Collins Harvill.

Mandelstam, O. (1991a). *Stone*. London: Collins Harvill.

Martin, J.R., F. Christie and J. Rothery. (1994).'Social Processes in Education' in Stierer, B. and J. Maybin (1994),pp. 232-247.

Matejka, Ladislaw.(1986). 'On the First Russian Prolegomena to Semiotics' (Appendix to Volosinov, 1986), pp. 161-174.

MacLean, Kathy, 'Writing at Home' in *Language Matters: Home and School*, 1986 No. 3, pp. 7-8.

Meek, M., G. Barton and A.Warlow. (1977). *The Cool Web*. London, The Bodley Head.

Meek, Margaret. (1982). *Learning to Read*. London: The Bodley Head.

Meek, Margaret (ed.)(1983). *Opening Moves*. Bedford Way Papers No. 17. London: Institute of Education.

Meek, Margaret. (1988). *How Texts Teach What Readers Learn*. Stroud: Signal Press.

Meek, Margaret. (1991). *On Being Literate*. London: The Bodley Head.

Meek, Margaret and Colin Mills. (1988). *Language and Literacy in the Primary School*. Lewes, Sussex: The Falmer Press.

Minick, Norris. (1987). 'The Development of Vygotsky's Thought: An Introduction' in Rieber and Carton, 1987, pp. 17-36.

Mishler, Elliot G. (1979). 'Meaning in Context: Is there any other kind?' in *Harvard Educational Review*, Vol 49, pp. 1-19.

Mishler, Elliot G. (1990).'Validation in Inquiry-Guided Research: The Role of Exemplars in Narrative Studies' in *Harvard Educational Review* Vol 60 No 4, November 1990, pp.415-442.

Moffett, James. (1968). *Teaching the Universe of Discourse*. Boston,MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Moss, Pamela A. (1992). 'Shifting Concepts of Validity in Educational Measurement: Implications for Performance Assessment' in *Review of Educational Research*, Fall 1992, Vol.62, No.3, pp. 229-258.

Mott, Sina.(1936). 'The Development of Concepts: a study of children's drawings' in *Child Development*, Vol. 7, pp. 144-148.

Neisser Ulric. (1967). *Cognitive Psychology.*. New York: Meredith.

The New ILEA Primary Language Record: an introduction to its use. (1988). (Video). London: Inner London Education Authority.

Newkirk, Thomas. (1989). *More than Stories*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Newman, F. and L. Holzman. (1993). *Leo Vygotsky: Revolutionary Scientist*. London: Routledge.

Olson, D.R. (1977).'The Languages of Instruction: The Literate Bias of Schooling' in Anderson, R., R. Spiro and W. Montague (eds.).(1977) *Schooling and the Acquisition of Knowledge*. Hilldale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, pp.64-89.

Olson, D.R. (1977a) 'From Utterance to Text: The Bias of Language in Speech and Writing'. in *Harvard Educational Review*, 47 (3), pp.257-281.

Olson, D.R., N.Torrance and A. Hildyard. (eds). (1985). Language, Literacy and Learning. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Olson, D.R. (1994). *The World on Paper*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ong, Walter. (1982). *Orality and Literacy: the technologizing of the word.* London: Methuen.

Ortony, Andrew. (Ed.) (1979) *Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

O'Sullivan, Olivia. (1991). 'From Dependence to Independence'. In *Language Matters: Reading*, 1990/91 No. 3. London: CLPE. pp. 29-32.

O'Sullivan, Olivia (ed.). (1995). *The Primary Language Record in Use*. London: CLPE.

Paley, V. (1987).*Wally's Stories*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Paley, V. (1984). *Boys and Girls: Superheroes in the Doll Corner*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Pariser, David. (1979). 'A Discussion of Nadia: A Case Study of Extraordinary Drawing Ability in an Autistic Child'. *Technical Report No. 9*, Harvard Project Zero.

Pariser, David. (1979a). 'The Orthography of Disaster: Children's Drawings of Wrecked Cars'. *Technical Report No. 10*, Harvard Project Zero.

Perera, Katharine. (1984). *Children's Writing and Reading*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Perkins D. (1981). *The Mind's Best Work*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Piaget, J. (1951). Play Dreams and Imitation in Childhood. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Polanyi, Michael. (1967). *The Tacit Dimension*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Polanyi, Michael. (1958). *Personal Knowledge*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Polanyi, Michael. (1969). *Knowing and Being*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Popper, Karl. (1992). *Unended Quest*. London: Routledge.

Pradl, Gordon. (1988). 'Learning Listening' in Lightfoot and Martin, 1988, pp. 33-48.

Pradl, Gordon.(1989). 'Recovering the Claim of the Story'. in *Typereader: Journal of the Centre for Studies in Literacy*, Deakin University, Australia, No. 3, December 1989, pp. 5-20.

Project Zero: The Development Group. (November 1988). Brochure describing the work of the Project.

Rayfield, Donald. (1989). 'Osip Mandelshtam: an Introduction', in Mandelshtam, 1989. pp. 19-34.

Read, Charles. (1986). *Children's Creative Spellings*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Rieber, R. and A.S. Carton. (1987).*The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky: Volume 1. Problems of General Psychology*. New York: Plenum Press.

Rogers, Don and John A. Sloboda. (1983). *The Acquisition of Symbolic Skills*. New York: Plenum Press.

Rosenblatt, Elizabeth and Ellen Winner. (1988). 'The Art of Children's Drawing' in *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, University of Illinois, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 3-15.

Rosenblatt, Louise. (1978). *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Rothery, Joan. (1984). *Language Studies. Children's Writing: Study Guide*. Deakin University Press.

Rubin and Wolf. (1979). 'The Development of Maybe: The Evolution of Social Roles into Narrative Roles' in *New Directions for Child Development*, 6, pp.15-28.

Rustin, Mike and Margaret. (1987). *Narratives of Love and Loss: Studies in Modern Children's Fiction*. London: Verso.

Russell, Bertrand. (1946). *History of Western Philosophy*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Sacks, Oliver. (1970). *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*. New York: Harper and Row.

Sacks, Oliver. (1990). *Seeing Voices*. London: Pan Books.

Sacks, Oliver. (1993). 'Making up the Mind'(a review of *Bright Air, Brilliant Fire* by Gerald Edelman) in *New York Review of Books*, April 8th,1993, pp. 42-49.

Salmon, Phillida. (1988). *Psychology for Teachers*. London: Hutchinson Education.

Salmon, Phillida. (1980) (ed.) *Coming to Know*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Scarlett, W.G. and D.Wolf (1979a).'When it's only Makebelieve: The Construction of a Boundary between Fantasy and Reality' in Wolf (1979), pp.29-40.

Schon, Donald. (1983). *The Reflective Practitioner*. New York, Basic Books.

Schon, Donald. (1987). *Educating the Reflective Practitioner*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Scribner, Sylvia. (1985). 'Vygotsky's uses of history' in Wertsch, J.V. (1985b),pp. 119-145..

Scribner, Sylvia and Michael Cole. (1981). *The Psychology of Literacy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Selfe, Lorna. (1977). *Nadia: A Case of Extraordinary Drawing Ability in an Autistic Child*. London: Academic Press.

Selfe, Lorna.(1983). *Normal and Anomalous Representational Drawing Ability in Children*. London: Academic Press.

Sloboda, J. (ed.). (1988). *Generative Processes in Music: the Psychology of Performance, Improvisation, and Composition*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Smith, Frank. (1982). *Writing and the Writer*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Smith, Frank. (1984). 'The Creative Achievement of Literacy' in Goelman et al, 1984, pp.143-153.

Smith, N.R. and M.B.Franklin (eds.).(1979). *Symbolic Functioning in Childhood*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates

Stanislavski, C. (1968). *Creating a Role*. London, New English Library Mentor Books.

Stern, D.N. (1985). *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*. New York: Basic Books.

Stierer, B. and J. Maybin. (1994). *Language, Literacy and Learning in Educational Practice*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.

Stirzaker, Madeleine. (1988). 'Constructing a model of reality through miniature world toys - observations of a three year old at home with his toys'. (Long essay submitted for Diploma in Child Development and Early Childhood Education, Goldsmiths' College, University of London).

Street, Brian V. (1984). *Literacy in Theory and Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor Denny. (1983). *Family Literacy*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Teale, W.H. and E. Sulzby. (1986). *Emergent Literacy: Reading and Writing*. New York: Ablex.

Temple, C.A., R.G. Nathan and N.A. Burris. (1982). *The Beginnings of Writing*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Trevarthen, Colwyn. 'Signs before Speech'. (unpublished paper).

Tustin, F. (1981) *Autistic States in Children*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Van der Veer, Rene. (1987).'Thought and Language' in *Journal of Mind and Behaviour*, Winter 1987. Vol.8, No.1., pp.175-178.

Van der Veer, R. and M. H.van IJzendoorn. (1985). 'Vygotsky's Theory of the Higher Psychological Processes: Some Criticisms.' in *Human Development*, Vol. 28: pp.1-9, 1985.

Van der Veer, R. and J. Valsiner. (1991). *Understanding Vygotsky*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Volosinov, V.N. (1986). *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Volosinov, V.N./Bakhtin, M.M. (1976) *Freudianism: A Marxist Critique*. New York:Academic Press.

Vygotsky, L.S.(1962). *Thought and Language*. (ed. Hanfmann and Vakar) Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1971).*The Psychology of Art*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1976). 'Play and its Role in the Mental Development of the Child' in Bruner et al., 1976, pp. 537-554.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1978). *Mind in Society*. Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1979). 'The Instrumental Method in Psychology'. In Wertsch, 1979, pp. 139-143.

Vygotsky, L.S.(1979a).'The Genesis of Higher Mental Functions'. In Wertsch, 1979, pp.144-188.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1979b). 'The Development of Higher Forms of Attention in Childhood'. In Wertsch, 1979, pp. 189-240.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1986). *Thought and Language*. (ed. Kozulin). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Vygotsky, L.S.(1987a) *Thinking and Speech*. In Rieber, R. and A.S. Carton (1987), pp.39-285.

Vygotsky, L.S. (1987b). 'Lecture 5. Imagination and its Development in Childhood'. in Rieber, R. and A.S. Carton (1987), pp. 339-349 .

Wallace, Marjorie. (1987). *The Silent Twins*. London: Penguin Books.

Wertsch, J.V. (1979). *The Concept of Activity in Soviet Psychology*. New York: M.E.Sharpe.

Wertsch, J.V. (1985a). *Vygotsky and the Social Formation of Mind*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wertsch, J.V. (ed). (1985b).*Culture, Communication, and Cognition: Vygotskyan Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wertsch, J.V. (1991) *Voices of the Mind: A Sociocultural Approach to Mediated Action*. Hemel Hempstead, Herts: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Wells, Gordon et al. (1981). *Learning through Interaction: Language at Home and at School*. Vol.1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Wells, Gordon. (1987). *The Meaning Makers*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Wilberg, H.P. (1992). 'The Language of Listening: Towards an Ontology of Communication' in *Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis*, uly 1992, pp. 54-68.

Wilder, Paula Gillen. (1979). 'The Development of Preschoolers' Apprehension of a Televised Narrative'. *Technical Report No.12*, Harvard Project Zero.

Winner, Ellen. (1989). 'Development and the Visual Arts' in Damon, W. (ed.) (1989). *Child Development Today and Tomorrow*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, pp.199-221.

Winnicott, D.W. (1974). *Playing and Reality*. London: Pelican.

Wolf, S. and S.B.Heath. (1992). The Braid of Literature. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wolf, D.P., J.Rygh and J.Altshuler .(1984). 'Agency and Experience: Actions and States in Play Narratives' in Bretherton,I. (ed.). *Symbolic Play*. New York: Academic Press, pp. 195-217.

Yaden, David B. and Shane Templeton (eds). (1986). *Metalinguistic Awareness and Beginning Literacy: Conceptualising what it Means to Read and Write*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Zinchenko, V.P. (1985). 'Vygotsky's idea about units for the analysis of mind'. In Wertsch, 1985b, pp. 94-118.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

Allan Ahlberg & Colin McNaughton. (1985).*So Can I* . London: Walker Books

Anon. (1973).*There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly,* illustrated by Pam Adams. London: Child's Play.

Anthony Browne. (1986). *Piggybook.* London:Julia MacRae

Martin Handford. (1987).*Where's Wally?* London:Walker Books.

Pat Hutchins. (1968). Rosie's Walk. London: Bodley Head.

David McKee. (1980).*Not Now Bernard.* London: Andersen Press.

Jan Pienkowski .(1989).*Dinner Time.* London: Orchard.

Robert Roennfeldt. (1980). *Tiddalick. The frog who caused a flood. An adaptation of an Aboriginal Dreamtime legend.* London:Puffin.

.

.

Primary Language Record

This record can be used to record a child's progress in the English National Curriculum

School	Year Group	School Year
	☐	└─┴─┘

| Name | DoB └─┴─┴─┘ | Summer born child ☐ |
| | ☐ Boy ☐ Girl | |

Languages understood	Languages read
Languages spoken	Languages written

Details of any aspects of hearing, vision, coordination or other special needs affecting the child's learning. Give the source and the date of this information.	Names of staff involved with child's language and literacy development.

Part A To be completed during the Autumn Term

A1 Record of discussion between child's parent(s) and class teacher *(Handbook pages 12-13)*

.

Signed Parent(s) _____   Teacher _____

Date _____

A2 Record of language/literacy conference with child *(Handbook pages 14-15)*

.

Signed Child _____   Teacher _____

Date _____

Part B

Child as a language user (one or more languages)   *(Handbook pages 17-18)*

Teachers should bear in mind LEA policies on Equal Opportunities (e.g. race, gender and class) and on special educational needs in completing each section of the record.

B1 Talking and listening (AT1)

Please comment on the child's development and use of spoken language in different social and curriculum contexts, in English and/or other community languages: evidence of both talking and listening for learning and thinking; range and variety of talk for particular purposes; experience and confidence in talking and listening with different people in different settings.

What experiences and teaching have helped/would help development in this area? Record outcomes of any discussion with head teacher, other staff, or parent(s).

B2 Reading (AT2)   *(Handbook pages 23-28)*

Please comment on the child's progress and development as a reader in English and/or other community languages: the range, quantity and variety of reading in all areas of the curriculum; the child's pleasure and involvement in story and reading, alone or with others; the range of strategies used when reading and the child's ability to reflect critically on what is read.

continued

343

The stage of reading at which the child is operating ———————————(see Reading Scales pages 26-27)

What experiences and teaching have helped/would help development in this area? Record outcomes of any discussion with head teacher, other staff, or parent(s).

B3 Writing (ATs 3, 4,5)   *(Handbook pages 29-34)*

Please comment on the child's progress and development as a writer in English and/or other community languages: degree of confidence and independence as a writer; range, quantity and variety of writing in all areas of the curriculum; the child's pleasure and involvement in writing both narrative and non-narrative, alone and in collaboration with others; influence of reading on the child's writing; growing understanding of written language, its conventions and spelling; development of handwriting.

What experiences and teaching have helped/would help development in this area? Record outcomes of any discussion with head teacher, other staff, or parent(s).

Stage of English learning for bilingual children ——————————— (refer to p41 **Patterns of Learning**, CLPE 1990)

Signature of head teacher and all teachers contributing to this section of the record

Part C

To be completed during the Summer Term
(or by the Summer half-term for children in Year 6)

(Handbook page 35)

C1 Comments on the record by the child's parent(s)

C2 Record of language/literacy conference with child

C3 Information for receiving teacher

This section is to ensure that information for the receiving teacher is as up to date as possible. Please comment on changes and development in any aspect of the child's language since Part B was completed. At the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 please include the child's level of achievement in English arrived at by statutory assessment.

What experiences and teaching have helped/would help development? Record outcomes of any discussion with head teacher, other staff, or parent(s).

Signed Parent(s)_____ Class Teacher _____

Date _____ Head Teacher _____

Observations and Samples <superscript>1a</superscript> (The Primary Language Record)

attach extra pages where needed

Name: **Year Group:**

1 Talking and listening: diary of observations

The diary below is for recording examples of the child's developing use of talk for learning and for interacting with others in English and/or other community languages.

Include different kinds of talk (e.g. planning an event, solving a problem, expressing a point of view or feelings, reporting on the results of an investigation, telling a story...)

Note the child's experience and confidence in handling social dimensions of talk (e.g. initiating a discussion, listening to another contribution, qualifying former ideas, encouraging others...)

The matrix sets out some possible contexts for observing talk and listening. Observations made in the diary can be plotted on the matrix to record the range of social and curriculum contexts sampled.

(Handbook pages 37-39)

LEARNING CONTEXTS	SOCIAL CONTEXTS				
	pair	small group	child with adult	small/large group with adult	
collaborative reading and writing activities					
play, dramatic play, drama & storytelling					
environmental studies & historical research					
maths investigations					
science investigations					
design, construction, craft & art projects					

Dates	Observations and their contexts

Date	Reading
	Record of observations of the child's development as a reader (including wider experiences of story) across a range contexts.

	Writing
	Record observations of the child's development as a writer (including stories dictated by the child) across a range of contexts.

3 Reading Samples (reading in English and/or other community languages) 1a

to include reading aloud and reading silently

Dates			
Title of book/text (fiction or information)			
Known/unknown text			
Sampling procedure used: informal assessment/running record/miscue analysis			
Overall impression of the child's reading: ● confidence and degree of independence ● involvement in the book/text ● the way in which the child read the text aloud			
Strategies the child used when reading aloud: ● drawing on previous experience to make sense of the book/text * playing at reading * using book language * reading the pictures * focusing on print * directionality * 1:1 correspondence * recognition of certain words) ● using semantic/syntactic/ grapho-phonic cues ● predicting ● self-correcting ● using several strategies or over-dependent on one			
Child's response to the book/text: ● personal response ● critical response (understanding, evaluating, appreciating wider meanings)			
What this sample shows about the child's development as a reader: **Experiences/support needed to further development:**			

*Early indicators that the child is moving into reading

4 Writing Samples (writing in English and/or other community languages)   **1a**
'*Writing*' *to include children's earliest attempts at writing*

(Handbook pages 50-54)

Dates			
Context and background information about the writing: ● how the writing arose ● how the child went about the writing ● whether the child was writing alone or with others ● whether the writing was discussed with anyone while the child was working on it ● kind of writing (e.g. list, letter,story, poem, personal writing, information writing) ● complete piece of work/extract			
Child's own response to the writing:			
Teacher's response: ● to the content of the writing ● to the child's ability to handle this particular kind of writing ● overall impression			
Development of spelling and conventions of writing:			
What this writing shows about the child's development as a writer: ● how it fits into the range of the child's previous writing ● Experience/support needed to further development			

Please keep the writing with sample sheet

Links between writing, art and dramatic play : Study group

Notes on first meeting January 14th 1991

Study group members: Kathy MacLean (Broadwater Infants)
        Sharon Rutherford (Joseph Lancaster Primary)
        Sarah Horrocks (Riverside Primary)
        Iris Mode (Horn Park Infants)
        Paula Moore, Archie Thomas (St. Stephens Primary)
        Margaret Wyeth (Gallions Mount)
        Myra Barrs (CLPE)

We introduced ourselves and talked about our interest in this area:

Kathy was interested in writing combined with art - e.g. annotated maps, dungeons-and-dragons inspired writing. She mentioned gender implications and her own sons' inclination to use writing in this way. In her new infant classroom she had turned a writing corner into a travel agents, with forms to be filled in, passport-making etc. The science corner had become a laboratory, with associated writing.

Sharon was interested in the beginnings of writing. She mentioned confidence as a basis for children's learning. She had observed instances of children talking and enacting scenes as they drew them: one boy who announced "This is a monster and he spit - spit - spit" (drawing the monster spitting).

Sarah had done a special study on developing narrative, imaginative play and play with small objects. She had studied four children acting out stories in the sand tray with little figures. She described the way the children manipulated the characters in the drama, but also the whole environment.

Iris discussed children's work in drama and how dressing up and face paints seemed to support children's play. She had noticed a growth in children's language when they were in role. Drama also stimulated a range of creative activities and arts - prop-making, puppets, painting. Children often translated drama into another medium - a child dressed up as a clown and then painted herself in this role.

Paula had used drama as a stimulus for writing. She felt it was important for the teacher to be in role with the children. In role children are not themselves, and can go beyond their normal capabilities. Also the urge to clarify their meanings, expressed in the drama, can extend out into further discussion, painting etc.

Archie was interested in children's oral storytelling ability and the way this was not often translated into writing. She wanted ways of enabling children to use their narrative strengths in writing. She told of the success she had had in extending children's written stories just by asking them to write longer stories.

Myra was interested in children's symbolic development and in links between creative play, drawing and writing. She had written articles on all these activities including studies of drawing-cum-writing and of children's play with small toys. Now developing these studies and extending them for an M.Phil/Ph.D. She was concerned that play may be squeezed out of the infant curriculum.

Interview questions about case study children

1. *Physical character and self-expression through bodily action*
a) Physicality, expressiveness
b) Use of gesture and facial expression (eg in dramatic play)
c) Control of own behaviour in work and play
d) Voice qualities - intonation, expressiveness (eg when storytelling).

2. *Character and relationships*
a) What impression does s/he make on others? How do others view her/him?
b) How influential is s/he? Does s/he direct collaborative activities, dramatic play?
c) Level of energy, how well controlled
d) Relations with peers and adults
e) Social situations s/he prefers in work, play?
f) From whom does s/he seek help, support, feedback?

3. *Activities*
a) What would child normally choose to do? What range of activities would s/he engage in from choice? (eg play with small toys, modelling, book-making, drawing or painting, dramatic play, construction, reading or writing)
b) What would child rarely choose to do?
c) What does child persist at/get absorbed in?
d) How well organised is s/he in pursuing activities?

4. *General approach to learning and play - especially dramatic play, art, and literacy.*
a) How confident and independent is the child in these areas?
b) How wide is her/his range of experience? (eg of story)
c) Any characteristic learning strategies? (eg imitation)
d) What kind of knowledge does s/he demonstrate of these areas? (eg of techniques of drawing, picturing, or modelling, of the structure of stories, of other genres, of written language, of dramatic structure).
e) How reflective does s/he seem to be as a learner? (eg readiness to talk about own work or self as a learner, awareness of how s/he goes about learning, consciousness of process).

1. Interview with Iris Mode, June 1992

(We have been talking about Iris's feeling that creative activities are particularly useful as a way of getting to know children who are otherwise uncommunicative)

MB   So you think that this might be particularly valuable as a way of working with children who have some difficulty with communicating, either because they don't have much English yet, or because they're silent children, or because they have learning difficulties.

IM   Yes. That proved to be so - or perhaps proved is not quite the right word, it *seemed* to be so with Beth and Bill, who I made those notes on. That was a similar situation, working through a creative activity.

MB   You see I think you're actually underrating what is happening there, because you seem to be talking about it as if it were an ice-breaker, and it's obviously more than that, isn't it? You spoke earlier of art being a 'road in', a kind of route into literacy. What would the literacy be building on in those experiences, why would they be more relevant than playing games, for example?

IM   Because if you create something it's essentially part of you. So you're giving much more, or you're revealing much more of yourself. When you draw, when you paint, when you create anything, a certain part of you is revealed, the way you perceive something and how you feel about it comes over in a drawing. So it's helping you to share your feelings, your ideas, and if they're received with pleasure or appreciation from whoever you're offering them to that can only build confidence and encourage you to express yourself more fully. And at the early stages, especially with children with language difficulties, they're locked in themselves unless you can find a means for them to reveal part of themselves and their feelings in some kind of language.

MB   So it's very much in the area of the affective, it's very much seeing creative activities as a kind of promise of what literacy has to offer them if they can see it.

IM   Yes, because literacy is more abstract. We're starting in concrete terms before we go into the more abstract activity.

MB   That seems a good way of putting it. Why do you think that literacy is abstract?

IM   Well, language is abstract. You can't hold it, you can't see it, you hear it and it's gone. Even talking and listening is very abstract. It's quite sophisticated, even though it's the simplest thing one does.

MB   Yes, I suppose the question of what's involved in it as an abstract skill rarely comes up because it's so essential to your functioning as a person....How did you come to think like this? What is it that's formed your views?

IM   I think it's seeing children when they first come into school - reception class highlighted it, it was more obvious - reluctant to take part in group activities, reluctant to speak in class discussion - and yet you felt that they had a lot to say, they wanted to participate but something was holding them back. But when they were playing and focusing on something other than themselves, they would open up. So I often used to ask them to bring their model to the carpet to talk about, lots of children would do that. If you said 'Would you like to give your news to the class? Is there anything you'd like to tell us? Would you like to tell a story?' there would be an absolute blank. But if you said 'Would you like to tell us about that model you've made?' you got an immediate response.

(Later Iris talked about the need to take part in children's play, even in their dramatic play)

IM   If you've had those experiences you can see where they're going and join in with them, in their role play, and extend it. I quite enjoy it, actually.

MB   I feel that there's something very different about actually being able to enter the play rather than standing outside play and watching it, .

IM   They know when you're watching and they know when you're participating. If they feel you're participating they know they're within the right realm of things. They don't feel inhibited because they know you're appreciating what they're saying.

MB   In this long history you have of working in this way, what have you noticed?

IM   Generally speaking I see children losing their inhibitions quite quickly and becoming very involved in what's going on, and feeling quite excited about it, feeling it's part of them.

MB   A group feeling building up very quickly

IM   Yes and a relaxed feeling, where they're secure within their imagination, they know it can be used, it can be explored, nobody's going to say, Oh that's stupid.

Extracts from interview with Margaret Wyeth: June 1992

> We are talking about Gurjeet's drawings: He's particularly interested in information writing and his drawing reflects this - it's informative and full of detail....

MW 'He sees the fine detail - it connects with what he likes in information - his pictures are informative.' With paints 'he was very careful to represent that.' 'He did a very accurate map connected with Rosie's Walk and he plotted in the route of the hen very accurately, and then I said what about the fox, would the fox's route be the same as the hen's? And you can see quite clearly where he's - the fox's route goes off - yes I know, to the beehives, he connected straight away with that . At the time we were doing magnets, so he made little models of a hen and put paper clips on the back of them. I know this was teacher-initiated but nevertheless he was able to do it - put the magnet under and then he could see the route. So that's combining art and everything isn't it? They're learning about route-making and map-making without it being a chore. There is a purpose to it.'

> I asked what the point of 'making links' was for her. Had it to do with supporting learning, increasing enjoyment.

MW 'Yes, meaningful. And also allows them to be creative within the learning. They can extend it and they can play. For instance, when he put the paper clips on the back of the hen they had a great laugh with that.'
Crow and jug (Aesop) - Margaret 'wondered where crow found jug.' He decided on a hill - so they started talking about how contours were shown on maps.

MW 'A lot of the learning comes from story and from them playing within the story, and taking it on. With the *Little Red Hen* we fed in *Rosie's Walk* with the map and they made their story books - they could pick any animal they liked going for a walk round our school, he had Rosie. And it was brilliant because his drawings were as accurate, every single drawing in the concertina book was as accurate as that one.'

> Gurjeet made Rosie walk past the storyboard just before it crashed down, into the book corner where a book fell down, with Rosie unconscious throughout.

MW 'His drawings told you everything. He gave his little text - Rosie the hen went out for a walk - but the pictures in that book (*Rosie's Walk*) are very powerful, far more powerful than the text, and he'd taken that on, whereas other children had written masses.'
So Gurjeet's book was closer to the original, the relationship by picture and text was closer to the original.

> 'Playing within the story' - in replaying Rosie's walk with magnet figures, Gurjeet and friend were also able to *change* the story, make Rosie chase the fox, etc. There were not bound by the original.

> Gurjeet made a dinosaur out of Rioclick - you wouldn't think it would be possible to represent a dinosaur with this apparatus, but he managed. Representing particular dinosaurs. Habitually represents a particular dinosaur and tells all facts about it, but then plays with dinosaur figures he's made. Margaret thinks he could make his own dinosaur information books to 'pull it all together'.

> I say 'You've said that twice now.'

MW 'Well I feel it all being, I suppose, seeing models as separate from paintings and separate from story and separate from factual information - and really there are obvious links to be rounded into a whole. And I think you see them making the

links, as they get used to the teacher saying 'You could' as they get older you see them doing that naturally themselves; they take it on. And I think you see children who haven't been used to linking things, they see it all in isolated pockets.'

.

.

.

.

.

Extracts from interview with Sarah Horrocks: June 1992

M   So you feel, going back to the symbolising bit, you feel fairly convinced that for
     Maria that background in play, particularly role play and story was a strength
     that's underpinned all of this development?

S   And she loved the nursery, and the nursery teacher says she played very complex
     imaginative games all day long in the nursery and was always in the home corner
     or dressing up - not too much acting out things with figures, but imaginative play.
     And she was very upset when she came into reception, even though it wasn't
     particularly structured, because there were times when you had to be doing an
     activity, and not wandering about or playing in the home corner.

M   In general terms, you say, 'I instinctively feel there are links', can you enlarge on
     that - not necessarily saying what the evidence is but enlarge on your beliefs, what
     might be the nature of the links?

S   I suppose it's all that stuff you call a sense of story

M   So you feel that what ties it all together is story?

S   Yes.

M   Because that's another jump isn't it? Because I could say that what ties it all
     together is representation, different ways of representing the world, but by saying
     story you've bought in a different set of organising principles.

S   It may be my personal view to be looking more at that, but just seeing the way
     children play from a very young age, the way that comes across, the way you can
     see a two-year-old's play and make a good guess at how it will develop. I mean
     there are things that can make someone a reluctant writer if they have problems
     with the mechanics or the uncoding or actually becoming a writer - but that sense of
     story you can see in the play of very young children, how they characterise about
     plot, all those elements are there and usually become more refined and more
     complex.

M   But what about someone like Layla who was such a good oral storyteller but had
     such difficulty?

S   I've got a wonderful story to show you from her, this is from last term. This is Layla
     telling a story to me and I was transcribing it because she is still having problems
     with her actual writing independently. So she did a picture and then she was
     telling the story of the picture.

M   Do we have the picture?

S   It should be here, she usually doesn't spend very long on the pictures, she like to get
     them done. Here it is - (reads) 'Once upon a time' (Suzanne and John monkey story)
     That's the story.

M   That's fantastic. They didn't do anything in the boat then, I was waiting for the
     boat, It's like Eastenders isn't it?

S   She was very clear and certain of what she wanted to say.

M   So what about her? Because she's got the strongest sense of story, hasn't she?

S   She really has. I think she's this year really been trying to get to grips with the
     actual writing, though it's come slower than I'd have expected. I had one story by
     her which she'd written by herself. It was quite short, she'd spent a long time
     working out the sounds and the letters, but it still had that inimitable wit. That's a
     shame. Perhaps I'll get those to you.
     Layla's just a performer.

M   Yes I suppose in a way that might be the problem mightn't it? because to perform on
     paper is a tough number isn't it? I sort of wonder if all story-making *is* the same.
     Because the ability to make the story, as it were *out there* is rather an important
     thing. Because that's what you do when you write it, you put it outside yourself.

S   And it's very important for Layla to be *seen*. There is something about being a
     writer which is unseen.

communication, and how creative activities might be seen as linked to literacy in a more specific sense. She pursued this line of thought:

> 'Because if you create something it's essentially part of you...When you draw, when you paint, a certain part of you is revealed, the way you perceive and how you feel comes over in a drawing. So it's helping you to share your feelings and your ideas...At the early stages, especially with children with language difficulties, they're locked in themselves unless you can find a vehicle for them to reveal part of themselves and their feelings in language.'

It was clear that Iris saw creative activities like painting as a kind of promise of what literacy had to offer, and that she was aware of the affective aspects of both kinds of communication. In both cases, children were revealing themselves to others and sharing their feelings and ideas. But artistic activities offered a more concrete means of doing this, and were thus a way of preparing for literacy, which was a more abstract way of communicating: 'We're starting in concrete terms before we go into more abstract offerings'.

Iris felt that the main influence on her practice had been children themselves, and especially her experience of teaching very young children entering the reception class. As a reception teacher she was aware of children 'reluctant to take part in group activities, reluctant to speak in class discussion - and yet you felt that they had a lot to say...but something was holding them back'. In play, however, children would open up. Iris took to structuring much of her group discussion round children's creative and play experiences, inviting them to bring their pictures or their models with them to the discussion corner. 'If you said "Would you like to tell us about that model you've made" you got an immediate response.'

This realisation had come to her very early in her teaching career. 'A long time ago. I've always worked through creative activities'. There had been very few formal influences on her way of working. She had discussed her ideas with her own colleagues, and with teachers on courses, but had not explored them at a theoretical level. Some INSET courses, especially CLPE courses on storytelling, and courses on role play, dance drama and allied subjects had, however, helped her to formulate her ideas more concretely. But the main influence on her teaching of art had been her own experience as a painter. 'I think the creative work in terms of painting and clay is innate in myself...that came naturally.'

Iris is a gifted amateur painter who has painted since a child and who regularly exhibits in local exhibitions. I asked her more about her own experience of creative arts, and about her play experiences. When she was a child play was an important part of her life.

> 'I was very imaginative as a child. My parents have told me. My dolls came to life. I used to put them in all sorts of situations.'

Today she enjoys play with her granddaughter, who reminds her of her younger self. 'I can see myself being repeated in her'. She has no inhibitions about this kind of imaginative play:

> 'I've opened the door with a tablecloth round my neck being Wonderwoman when I've been playing with my granddaughter. It doesn't worry me. Other people would say "What is she up to?"'.

We talked about the probable importance of teachers having had good play experiences themselves, in order to recognise what children were doing in their play Iris thought that:

> 'If you haven't had those experiences, it's possible that you would think..."What on earth are they doing, get on with something more concrete"'.

She herself regularly joins in children's role play ('I quite enjoy it actually'). It was important for teachers to get involved in play rather than just standing outside the play and watching.

who had given her class a great deal of responsibility for displaying their own work, and had allotted each group of children their own board to work on. 'It was making the children think about what they wanted to do and why they wanted to do it and they could talk so confidently, that was what struck me, and that was due to the teacher.'

Margaret was also interested in the effect that role play could have on children's achievement. She had a striking experience to recount about her own niece, a girl who very much disliked taking risks or making mistakes but who, in role, was prepared to learn things that she would not risk learning in life. She would say "I'll be Anna, and I'm going to be a gymnast, and you're going to teach me to do it" - I remember this - so she would practice doing headstands, because she as Rebecca wanted to do a headstand, but she couldn't bear being taught to do it, so if she was somebody else she could then learn it and it wouldn't matter'. Margaret felt that role was very often a releasing experience, enabling people to try behaving in ways that were not available to them in their normal lives. 'You take on a different role and you can do anything and I think my niece felt like this, she could be anything'. This reminded me of Vygotsky's observation that children can be a 'head taller' in play, that they can try out ways of knowing and being that are not usually available to them as children.

I told Margaret that I had noticed that mapping and modelling played a big part in her classroom. These very concrete ways of imagining seemed to be a feature of her approach as a teacher. She said she had not been conscious of that, but that on the other hand she had become very excited by the possibilities of story maps some time ago, and had developed other means of using drawing for learning since that time. 'I've got into asking them to draw what they've learned. I posed a question of "how can you pick up a cuboid with a magnet?" just like that. And then some of them put paper clips in the cuboid and picked it up - and then I said "Now draw what you found out". I've got very much into that "what do you think's going to happen? What did you find out? and the accuracy of their drawings tells you everything that they have learned'. Many of responses to the problems in mathematics and science that children met could be expressed through drawing or modelling.

Similarly, Margaret would often ask children to enlarge a story, or interpret it, through a drawing, a map, or a model. Gurdeep had made a particularly successful map of Rosie's Walk, and in response to Margaret's suggestion had plotted the fox's route on the map as well as Rosie's. He had also made little figures of Rosie and the fox, that could be moved across the map by means of a magnet. Many kinds of knowledge came together in activities like these.

In another activity based on a story, Margaret had asked children to think about where the crow had found the jug (in ???). This had involved the children in considering the landscape beyond the story, extending the

play it was apparent that she was a busy organiser, and a great source of fun and ideas. Suddenly, with the pigs' wedding, a complete change of mood took place and the two children became jubilant and anarchic.

Later, Sarah said that she was not surprised that Tom needed Miriam in order to get started with the puppets. Miriam would need to be in charge as the organiser and the storyteller if the play was to go anywhere - often in dramatic play she took charge of all the narration. As a rule Miriam was constantly to be found in imaginative play. All the construction activities she engaged in turned into dramatised narratives. Sarah felt that Miriam was aware of her own ability - she was the youngest in the class but the most able - and was inclined to be a bit of a prima donna.

Miriam: Primary Language Records

Sarah's careful records of Miriam's progress in language and literacy give a very good impression of Miriam's first year in school. From the beginning of the record, her involvement in dramatic play is made clear.

The observations in the Talking and Listening diary generally show her engaged in construction activities - building a structure of rolled newspaper, or building bridges with lego. Each time she makes this construction activity into an imaginative game or a setting for a game. When Miriam is making the lego model Sarah notes her as saying:
> 'I don't like drawings any more 'cos this is going to be the fastest model and that puppet is for this'(15.2.91).

She had brought a puppet into school that day and appeared to be regarding the model as a potential setting for imaginative play with her puppet.

When she is playing with the doll's house with Lola, another of Sarah's case study children (21.3.91), Sarah notes that Miriam continually describes the setting ('This is the chair where they have breakfast') and gradually sets up a story and draws Lola into the game. Once the play has started it is she who plans the development of the story, says what each character will say, and then repeats the lines, this time in the character's voice. Whereas Lola most enjoys being different characters and taking on the voices, Miriam does far more in the way of scene setting, narration, and control of the development of the story.

Her reading record shows her as very engaged with stories. She is drawn to funny stories and scary stories, and likes returning to familiar books over and over again, quickly becoming familiar with their stories and with the features of the print. By the end of the spring term she is reading confidently and with expression, though occasionally leaving out words she doesn't feel sure of. She likes to 'do the voices' when she reads the text aloud.

Sarah's diary of observations of Miriam's writing shows that from Miriam's very first day at school she is involved in story-making. The

Sarah

1. 'Story as a link (SL) between diff. narr'st symbolising r likeay.
2. Dramatisation and narration as (D/N) 2 elements of story.
(3. Private → public (P/P
(4. Spontaneous → planned (S/P)
5. Teacher as storyteller (TS)
6. Teacher as participant (TP)
7. Error/confidence (E/c)
8. Affect, emotional content of work (A/E)
9. Discontinuities (Dis) (unevenness of dev. 'going underground')

Margaret

1. Classroom as workshop (W)
2. Apprenticeship/induction (App.)
3. Empowerment (Em)
4. Linking - learning as linking (L)
5. Story and 'playing' within the story (S)
6. ~~Functional literacy embedded texts~~ (f)
7. Embedded texts (ET)
8. Role - behaving 'as if' (R)
9. Teacher as participant (TP)
10. Mapping r modelling (M)
11. Visualisation (V)

Iris

1. Brain imaging (BI)
2. Symbolic progression (SP) (concrete → abstract)
3. Ways of knowing (WK) (symbol systems as)
4. Translations - reworking same material in different symbol systems (T)
5. Teacher in role (TR)
6. Observing as imagining (OI)
7. 'Third area' - play as the meeting-ground, site of learned activity (3)
8. Teacher's own play experiences (T.PL)
9. Demonstrations (D)
10. Error r confidence - (E/c) anxiety abt error inhibiting learning
11. Affect, emotions, key (A/E) in prose making likeay
12. Apprenticeship/induction (App)

Iris Mode	Margaret Wyeth	Sarah Horrocks
Bodily imagining (BI) (knowing through the body, eg through mime)	Empowerment (Em) (children's autonomy, responsibility for work)	Story as a link (SL) - story as main linking factor in all symbolising play.
Symbolic progression (SP) (from concrete to abstract ways of symbolising)	Linking (L) (connecting different aspects of learning)	Narration and dialogue (N/D) as the elements of story.
Symbol systems as ways of knowing (WK)	Embedded texts (ET) (texts in context of drawing, diagram, map, model etc)	Teacher as storyteller (TS) and participant in play
Translations (TR) (reworking same material in different symbol systems)	Story (S) and 'playing within the story'	Affect and Error (A/E) (learning powered by feelings; inhibiting effects of anxiety about error)
Teacher in role (TR)	Teacher as participant (TP) and co-learner	Discontinuities (D) (children's abilities and interests seeming to disappear or 'going underground')
Observing and imagining (OI)	Workshop/Apprentice-ship (W/App) (classroom as work shop, children as apprentices)	Private to public/Devel. of play (P/P) - children learning to share their stories and play.

List of definitive conclusions arrived at for individual teachers after
reading through all the evidence relating to their classrooms using
headings.

Theme	Iris	Margaret	Sarah
BI	//////// (7)		
SP	////// (6)	/// (3)	/// (3)
WK	///// (5)		
E/c	//////// (9)	////// (6)	//////// (8)
TR	///// (5)	// (2)	// (2)
T	//////// (10)	//·· (4)	
OI	//// (4)		
3	/// (3)		
TPl.	/// (3)	// (2)	/··· (4)
Em.	// (2)	//·//·// (9)	
W/A	/// (3)	::// (8)	
L	/// (3)	/////// (8)	
ET		/////·/ (13)	
F		/// (3)	
P/p	// (2)	///· (4)	/·/· 4
S	/// (3)	/////// (7)	//·· { (4)
SL			/////// { (7)
D/N			//////// (8)
D	/// (3)	//// (4)	
TS			/// { (3)
TP	//// (4)	/////·// (7)	//// { (4)
A/E	//////// (12)	///////· (8)	/////// (7)
R	// (2)	// (2)	/ (1)
M		/// (3)	
S/P	/ (1)		////// (6)
Dis.			////// (6)
V		// (2)	

Text dictated on Maria's first day at school

           not
Could∧choose an activity. Looked at teacher blinked several times.

T.   What would you like to do, B.?   No reply.
        B. stood some distance from teacher but slowly edged nearer to teacher.
T.   Can I help you B.? Are you alright?
        No reply. Nodded her head.
T.   Would you like to paint or draw?
B.   "I want to do some drawing".
        Went on to draw using crayons. Made no comments while engaged in drawing.
T.   That picture looks interesting. Let us talk about it B.
B.   "All the things".
        (Looked at children dressing-up)
        "All different colours going around ....going around".
        General discussion (group of 8)
T.   What do you kike to do?
B.   No reply.
        Was not interested in dressing-up.
        Reciting poem - Joined in with group very quietly.

A.ii Iris' observations of Beth (31.1.91)

31.1.91
        Took red/yellow plasticine. Started to make flat model-mostly circles and lines. Said nothing while handling plasticine but looked occasionally at S. work but still made no comments.
        When she had finished the model she sat quielty with her hands in her lap looking at the model.
T.   That looks interesting B., will you tell me about your model.
B.   No reply.
T.   It looks like a dragon to me.
B.   Pointing to a part of the model - "It's his legs".
T.   Has it got a name?
B.   Has it got a name (repeated)
S.   -to B. "Call it dragon".
B.   "I'll call it dragon" (looking at S's. work - pointed to S's. work) a dragon.
1.2.91
        Children asked to write a story about their models.
B.   -chose felt-tip and began to write.
T.   Put the felt back.
B.   "Um" Eat Mrs Worth up" (laughed).
T.   What part of Mrs. Worth will the dragon eat first?
B.   (becoming quite excited)
        -"her legs" (laughed)
        -"her arms"
T.   What will Mrs. Worth be doing while the dragon is eating her?
B.   "Reading a story. She wouldn't know".
5.2.91
        Children engaged in shared story about a dragon.
B.   Showed interest and indicated that she wanted to take part but could not actually make a contribution.
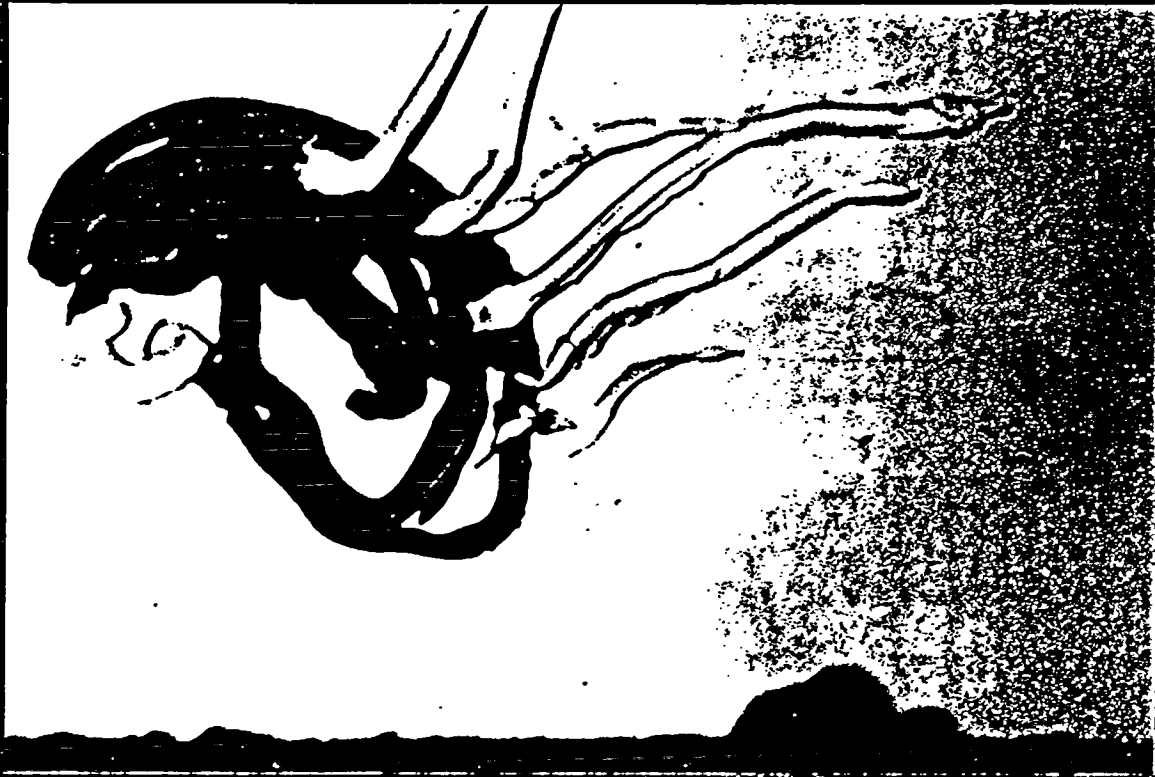
B's   dragon is going to
eat Mrs. Worth.
First her legs
then her arms
but Mrs. Worth will go on
reading a story.
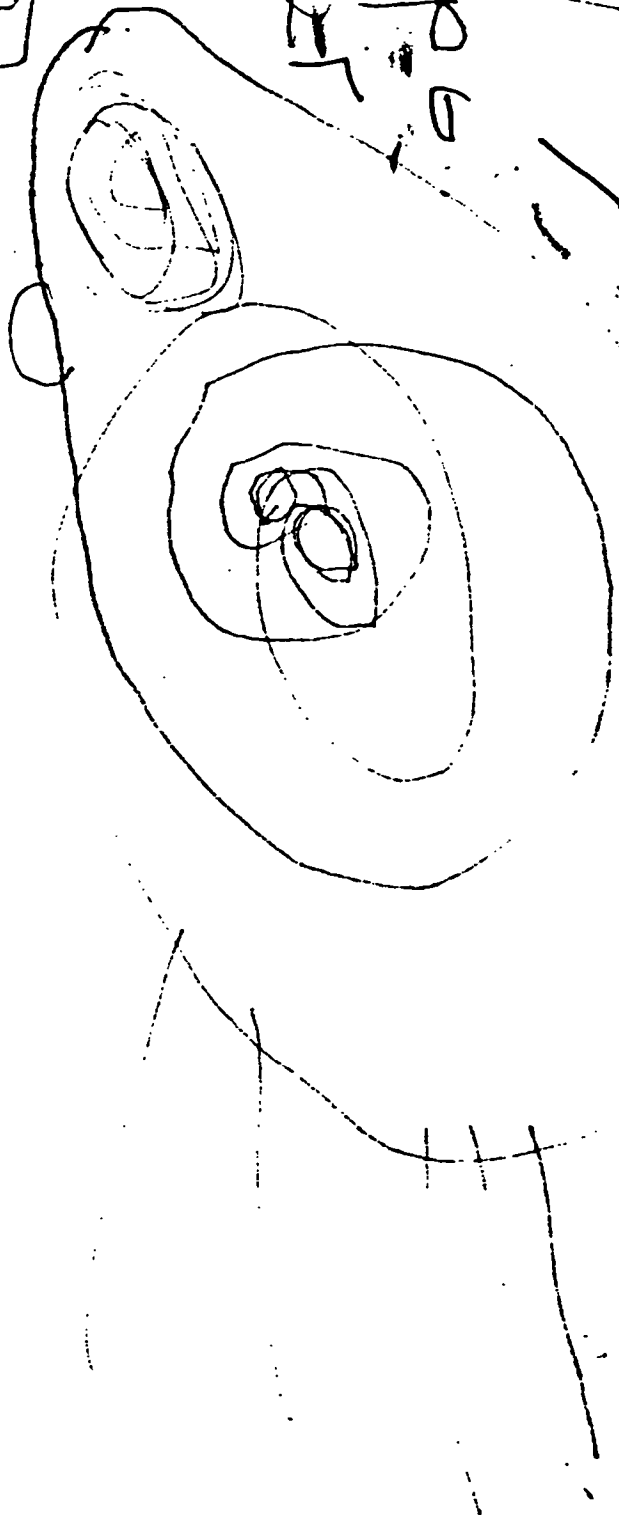
A.v Beth's illustration for 'Freddie the Dragon' (shared–writing story)
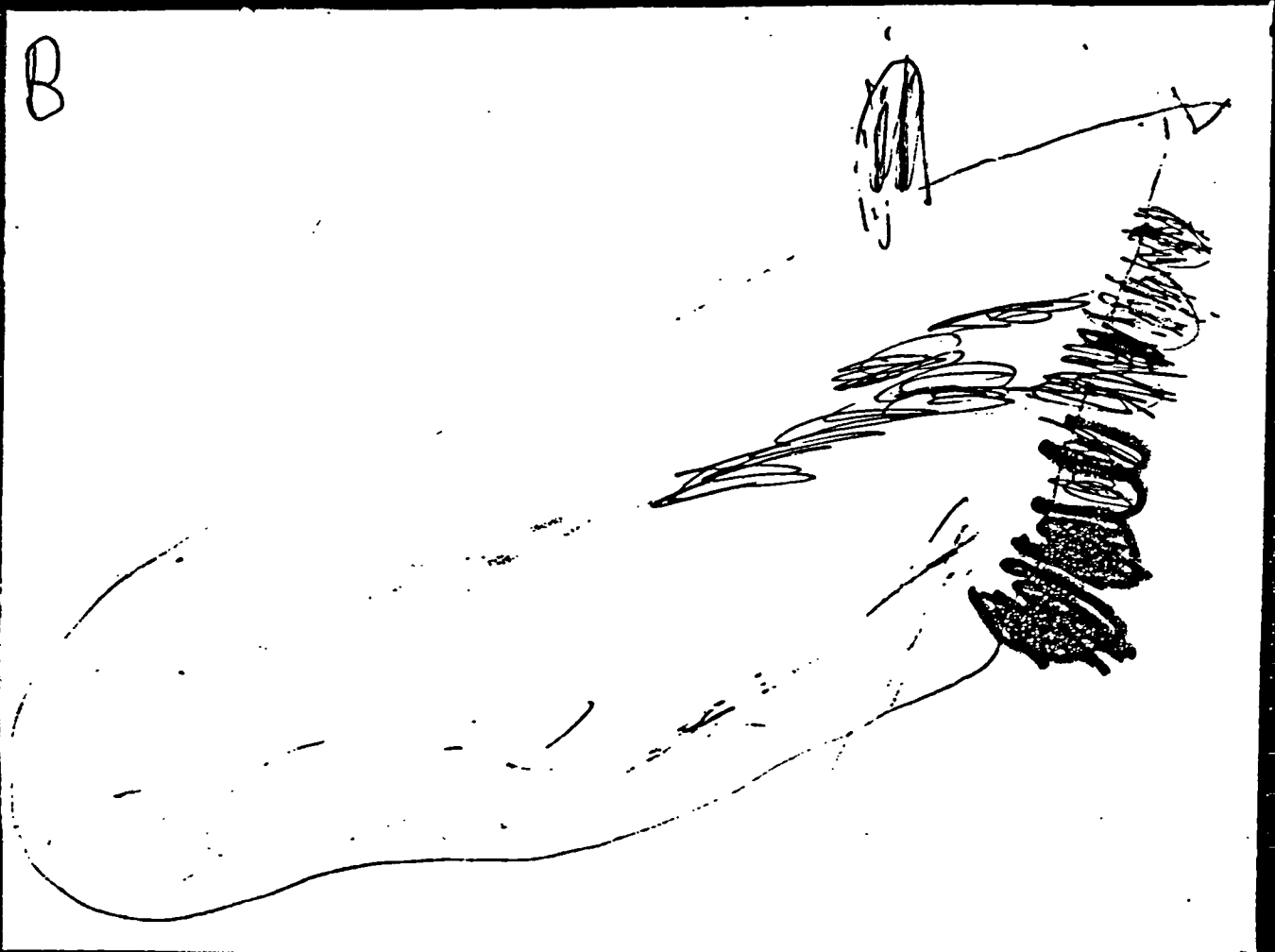
Making model/character with plasticine.
B.   enjoyed making plasticine model.
      enjoyed rolling plasticine and talking through the activity
      -yellow and blue make green
      -I'm going to call mine Holyhead
      -look at my hands they're blue
-     -I am doing it quick - we may run out of time
      -It takes a 'hard' time to this
      -I'm doing a snake - nearly biting it off
      -I'm not telling about my dragon it's a secret
      -I'm doing a carefully round eye
      -I might do an elephant
      -He's eating a carrot
      -What do elephants eat?
      -My elephant likes turtles
drawing
      -I'm doing the picture
started writing
      -I've only done one line
drawing
      -Needs to be a bit bigger
      -I like the bit where its got glasses on
      -That's his trunk and his eating
      (looking around the room for words)
writing
      -I've forgotten what his name is
      -I'll think of another name
      -I'm naming it Roy
      -Can you copy a picture of this?(to teacher- meaning can you
      take a photograph?)
Looking at plasticine model
      -Oh thats its tail
      -Clumsy elephant
      -He's taking his glasses off - I'm putting them back on
stopped work
      -looked carefully at R.s jumper.
Writing group story

      B>W> was very keen.

I like elephants. Roy is his
name.   He likes turtles.   He
watches T.V. and he goes up in
space.

Kias elephant goy enend mikes yello ehend TURTLES

hand undotfa If you somid meet a dragon......... y ohha dragohad

273 4 B 6780 10111 2 0 and a8 a TURTLES states you

372

B.iv Bill's illustration for 'Freddie the Dragon' (shared-writing story)

B.v First page of Bill's personal
illustrated version of 'Freddie
the Dragon'
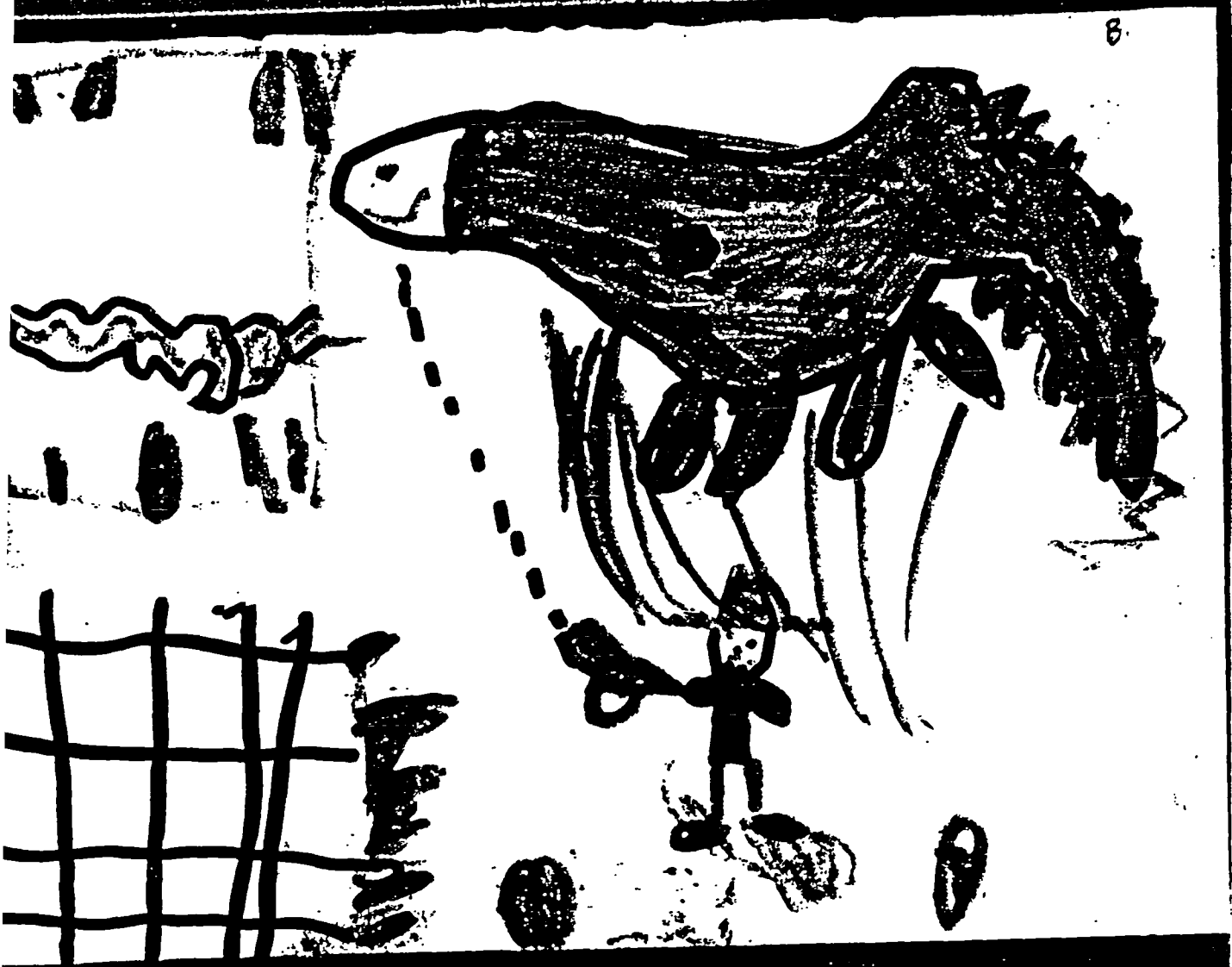
Freddie the Dragon

Once upon a time there was a
dragon in a cave.
There was an old man and he
looked into the cave and found
the dragon.
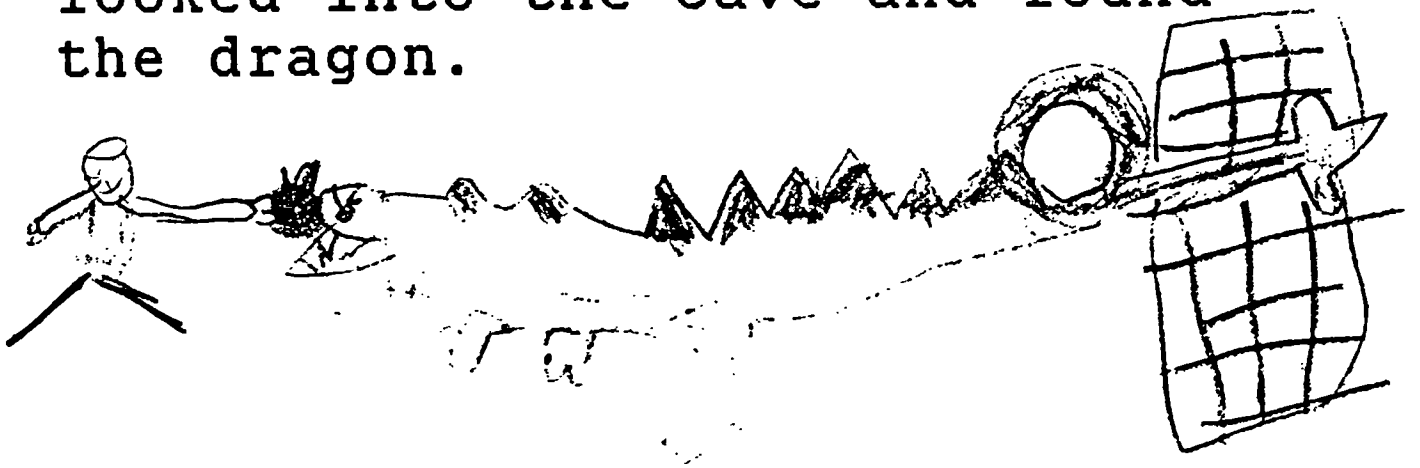
The man took an apple from
his knapsack and gave it to
the dragon.

Reading

Record observations of the child's development as a reader (including wider experiences of story) across a range of contexts.

14. Enjoys books hugely, and will anticipate text, join in pred rhymes etc. Will 'read' own writing left to write (not 1:1). Can recognise word patterns ie. identify blocks from shared writing + use them in his own eg. I like egg r chips.

15. Has learned large chunks of texts from known books eg. Sing a Song, Mrs. Wishy Washy, but doesn't always relate text to ~~your~~ writing.

Nov. 20. Great enjoyment in spotting letters, and relating sounds to words → G for G + goat. V. focussed.

'91 Beginning to self-correct. Now has 1:1 with text he knows very well.

G — Reading continued —

ay '91 — Keen to pick 2 books that are the same + give one to a friend so that they can read together.

— Likes to tell stories + make up own story with a friend based on the sticker books (Must try to make time to scribe story for them)

ne '91 — Looked at craft book this morning + took great interest in page on bubble printing "can we do this as an activity." He — later worked with primary helper + did his printing He then took a group + shared them how to do it.

375

Writing

Record observations of the child's development as a writer (including stories dictated by the child) across a range of contexts.

4 . Writes own name without a name card. Very keen to write. Will use shared writing as support.

Dec 7 Uses numbers and letters to convey message no discrimination.

20 . Keen to put in full stops — notices words he knows & write 'and' (no reference to message, just put in as he knows how to spell it.)

10
'91
91
3/1
2
2|

Numbers eliminated from writing — I scribed. Told me an imaginative story about his painting — keen to copy underneath my writing. Began writing with I —
Wrote 'and' correctly & used it well in his story. Wrote Owl facts & used nos. for each different fact. Confidently group letters into 'word' units. Also words spelt accurately. Not quite correct initial sound.

made a book up of his owl facts he chose to add more facts that he'd noticed from owl models in our room

<u>Writing</u>

March '91 using basic known words - and, I, my, to
Made a book up on how he made a tricycle out of
Meccano - T-initiated - How would somebodyelse
know how to make it? Had 1:1 when reading back his writing
Drew meccano parts to make clear some of his writing -
child initiated. Used nos. again for each new instruction

March '91 Turned his sketch into a diagram - we talked
about his drawing and he spontaneously named the
parts of his daffodil sketch - I suggested that he
labelled them. He then modelled the daffs. in
plasticine & used his sketch (first attempt labels) to
label his model accurately copying my writing that
I'd put under his label writing attempts - child initiated.

March Made a map based on Book 'Bears In the Night' only
evoytly takes place in our classroom - Read map instructions
out to a group of friends & then reversed instructions to get
them back to beginning - wrote ooooooh! for owl
sound. Teacher initiated (after acting out in classroom situation)
Can you make a map to show a route you or the bears
might go to meet the owl in our classroom?

19/4 Grouping letters into word units - almost are do one
& realises that he hasn't quite achieved this yet
when he reads back his work to me.
Sight vocab building up - I, like, to, and
10/5 " " increasing steadily, - mum, dad, the, my, on
me

Jun 91 Achieved 1:1 with his writing today
factual based on conditions for setting up
tank for snails - Asked to make a list
he chose to write phrases.

C.ii Gurjeet's Primary Language Record:
Reading and writing diary of
observations, September 1991 –
January 1992

Reading

Record observations of the child's development as a reader across a range of curriculum contexts, including experiences of story and texts written by the child, information texts, charts, diagrams, and other symbol systems.

9| Beginning to tackle unknown text – quite confidently & making word/good substitutions.

9| I feel G   is learning to read through word shapes – cannot use sounds to help him yet – may be he won't read to!

Writing

Record observations of the child's development as a writer across a range of curriculum contexts, including stories dictated by the child, charts, diagrams, and other symbol systems.

1| Using basic words – and, I, like, the, that.
Really thinking about length of words that he's trying to write.

'9| Prepared now to have a go at writing down his thoughts – could soon be encouraged to underline words that he thinks he has spelt inaccurately.

| Writing zig zag book based on Rosie's Walk – really clever context (see samples enclosed).

| Needs to be encouraged to think more carefully about final sounds of words.

9| Made his own version of 'Who Likes Honey' – made at home – first time he has done this spontaneously.

'9| Using full stops in his writing.

92| I've begun to underline words of his writing & asking him to think more carefully about the spelling –

HO DaD SooD BERNARD
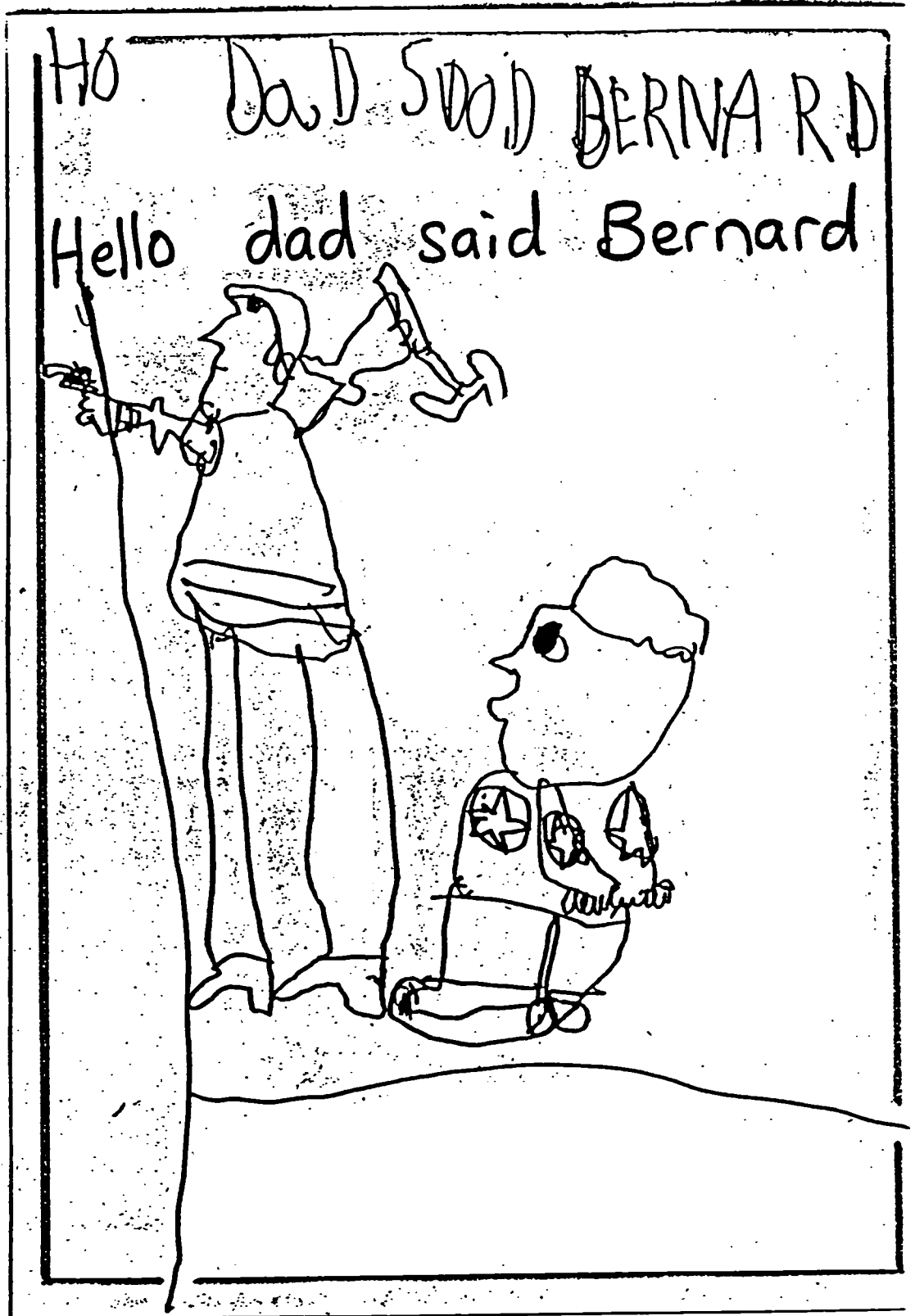
Hello dad said Bernard

HELLO Ol[...]PPD BERNARD
Hello Mum said Bernard
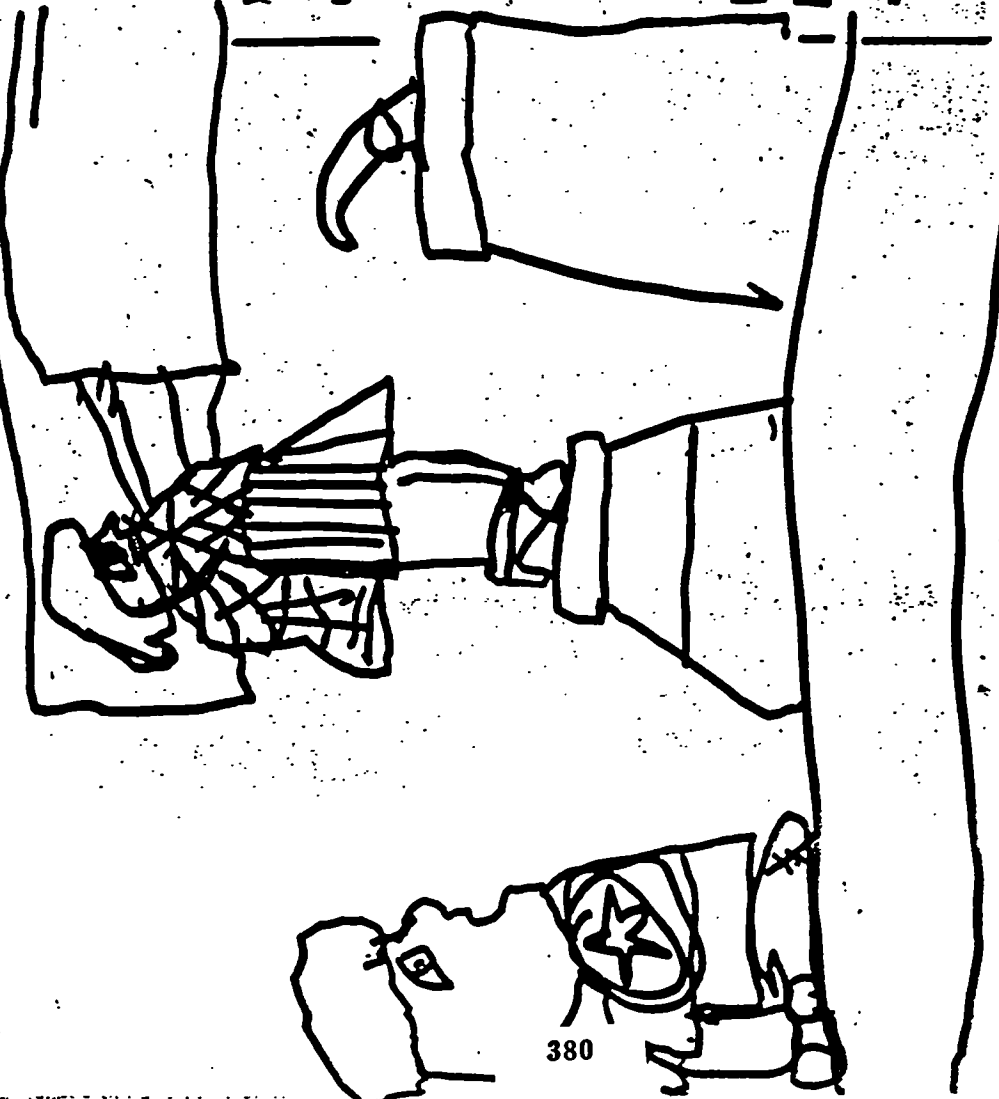
NOT NOW BERNARD
Said his Mum
Bernard

Not now Bernard
Not now said his mum
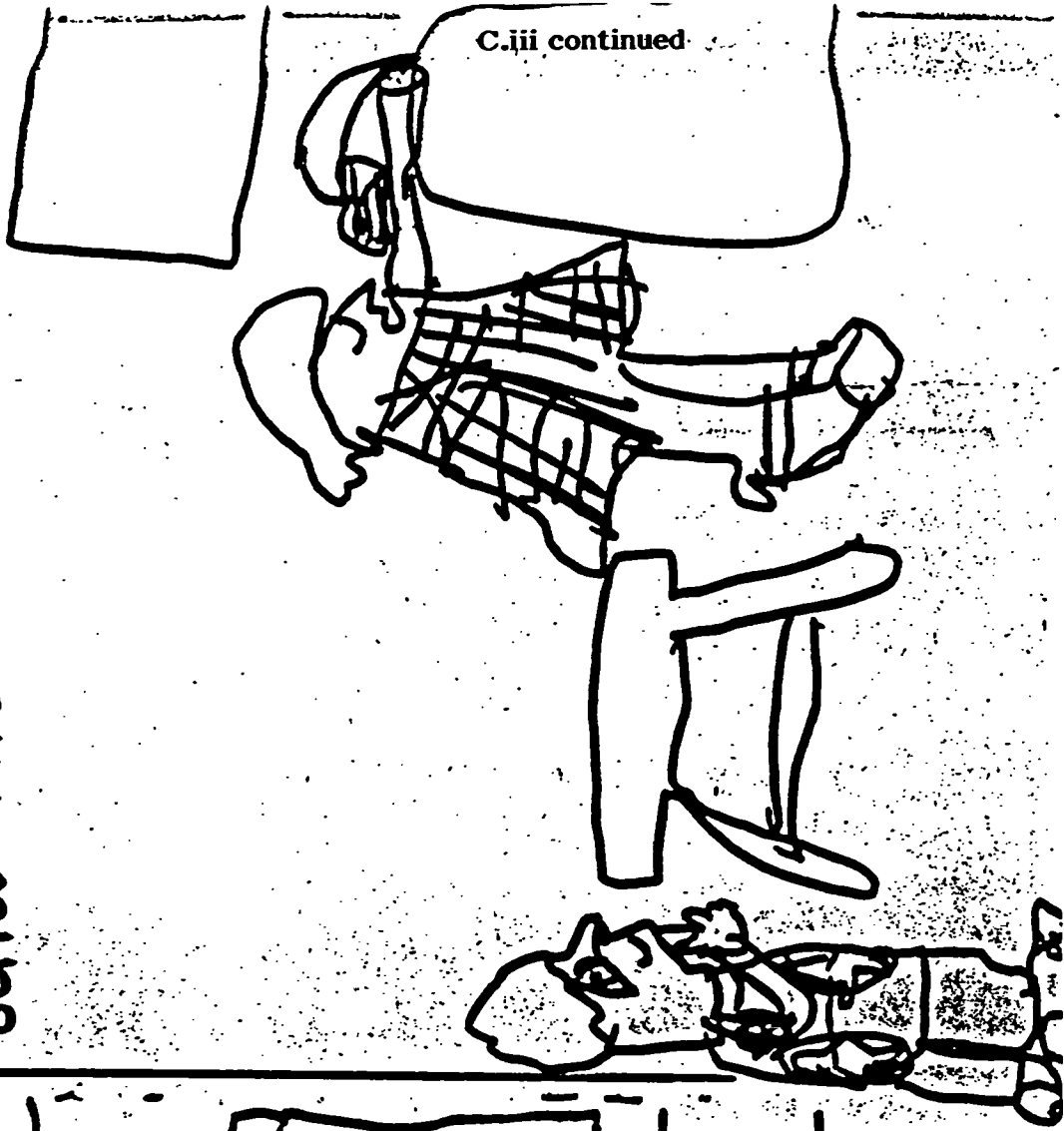
I like heers and Esg&FSHFGs arti
wecrisp and Thargm al
I like chips and fishfingers and
a lollipop and thats all.
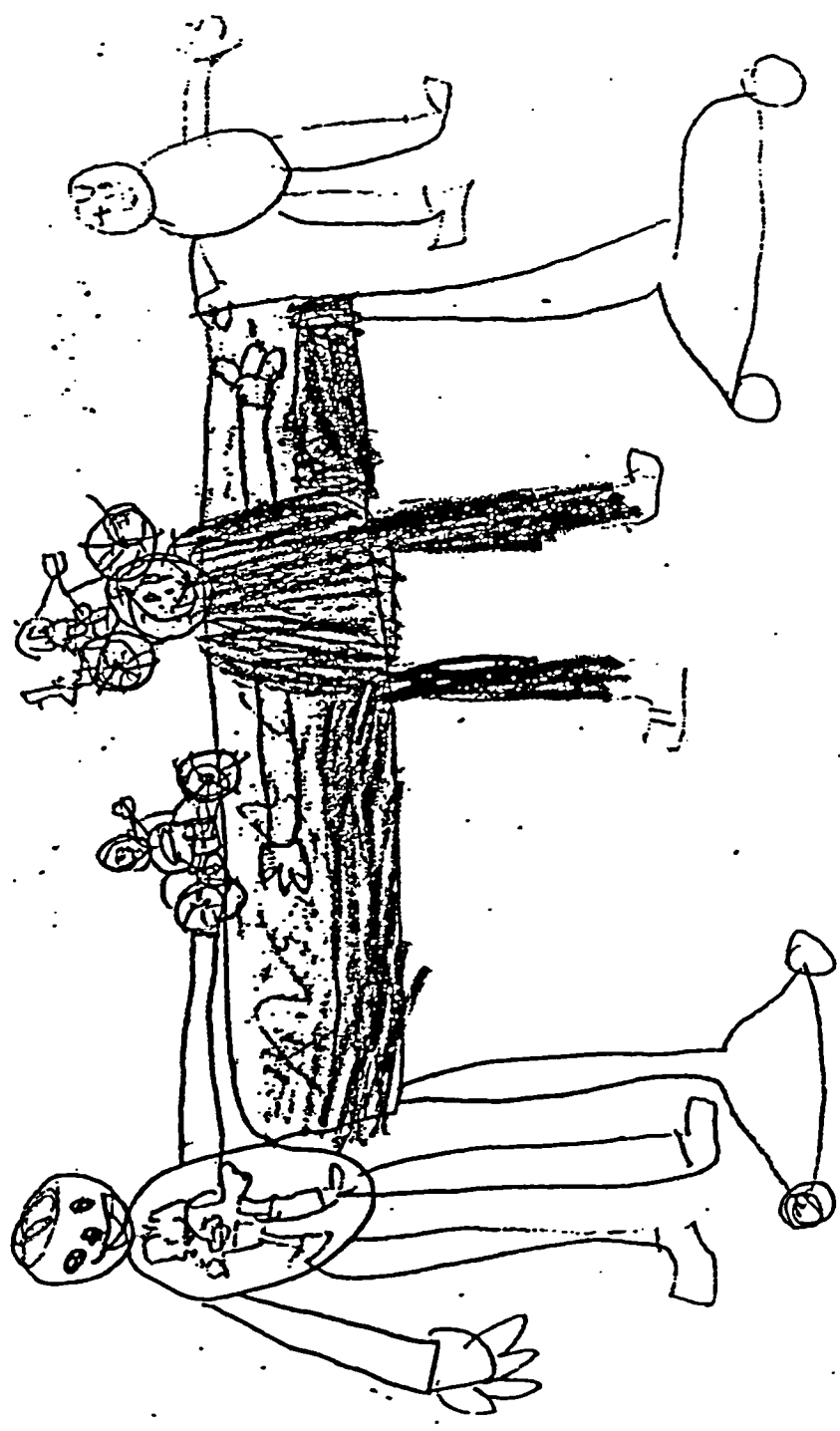
30/3

I atHis+ Wante to Sea my Becos She cahm Bac from Endcr.

I went to see my auntie becaise she came back from India.

The Cogolc Cod a Big E-elfolt
to noc oak Wov The 95 Lgl
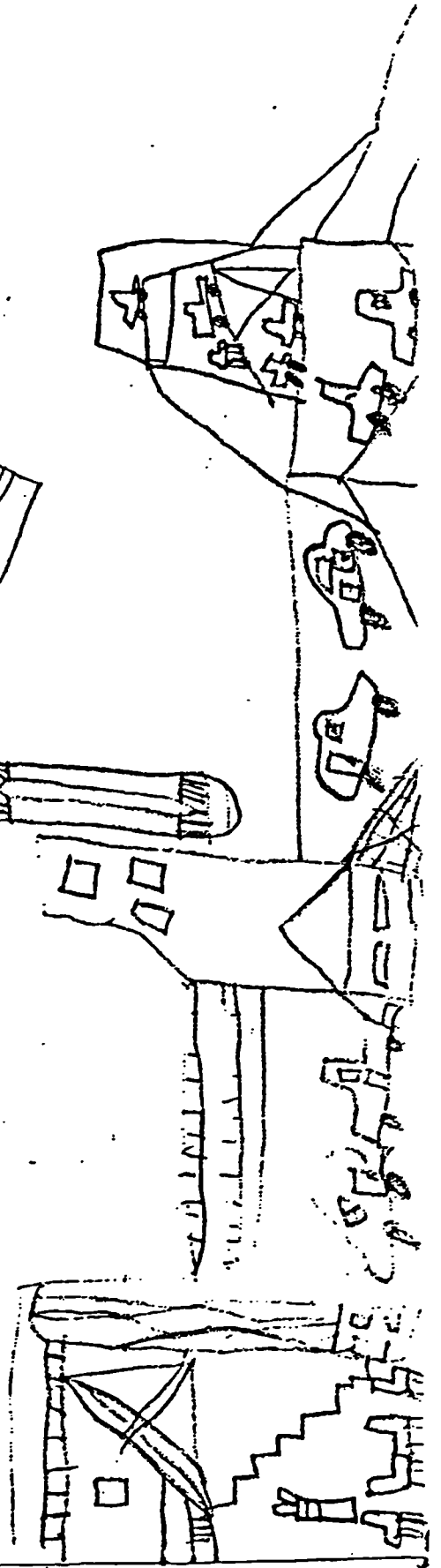
The crow called a big elephant
to knock over the jug.
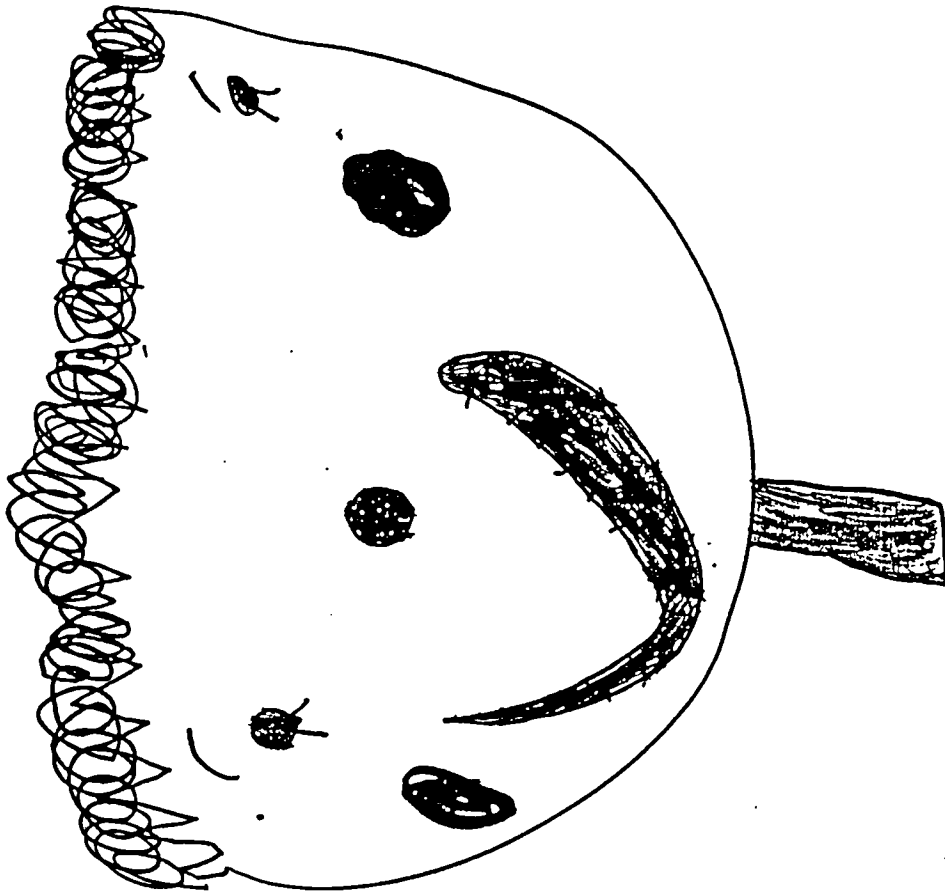
Faversham

I went to ~~Maidstone~~ Nanny she
and I saw my
Came up to my house on New Years Eve.

KATIE HARIM.

I

th. — wanted to 'do' writing
i produced this + a
book. V. confident +
with work.

ABCDEFGHIJchIPS.A
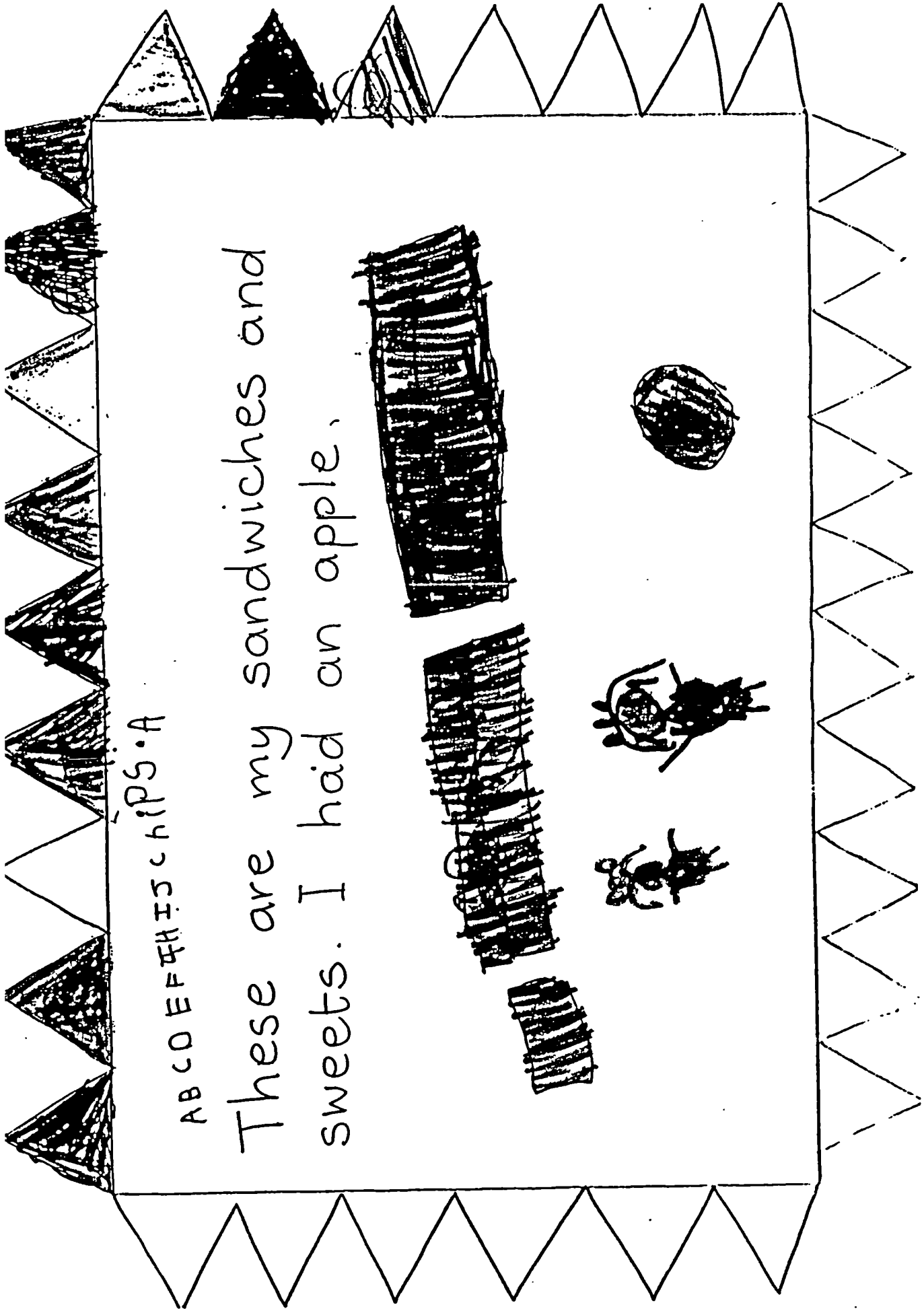
These are my sandwiches and sweets. I had an apple.
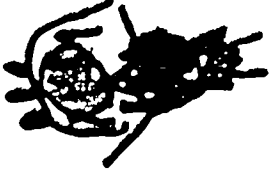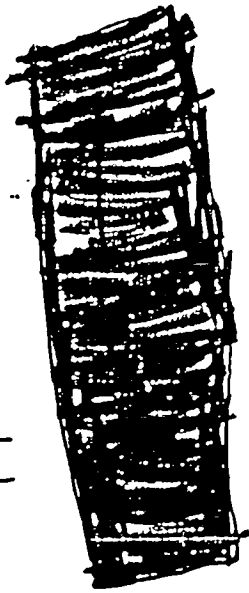
servations and Samples

D.iv Ann's Primary Language Record:
Talking and listening diary of
observations, 1990 – 1991

ra pages where needed

Year Group:

人

& listening: diary of observations

below is for recording examples of the child's
g use of talk for learning and for interacting with
English and/or other community languages.

fferent kinds of talk (e.g. planning an event,
problem, expressing a point of view or feelings,
on the results of an investigation, telling a

child's experience and confidence in handling
ensions of talk (e.g. initiating a discussion,
o another contribution, qualifying former ideas,
ing others ...)

x sets out some possible contexts for observing
stening. Observations made in the diary can be
i the matrix to record the range of social and
n contexts sampled.

(Handbook pages 37-39)

LEARNING CONTEXTS	SOCIAL CONTEXTS				
	pair	small group	child with adult	small/large group with adult	
collaborative reading and writing activities					
play, dramatic play, drama & storying					
environmental studies & historical research					
maths investigations					
science investigations					
design, construction, craft & art projects					

Observations and their contexts

14. Very confident. Seems to enjoy talking with both adults and children. Is able to express her own feelings articulate

17. Can match, sort into sets. Uses words 'match, set, together, belong'.

V. competent at showing other children how to set about activities — (w sus describing what to do.

Learnt to write WRITING I — good message to go with her writing)

'91 Can carry out simple instructions

Can take a simple message verbally to another class.
e.g. Can we borrow yor shape tray — would you bring your class into Ass. please.
When asked to take messages has started to ask to go with a friend (she ends up going on train after I say no!)

D.v Ann's Primary Language Record:
Reading diary of observations,
1990 – 1991

(Handbook pages 40-44)

ding and Writing: diary of observations
ng and writing in English and/or other community languages)

	Reading
	Record observations of the child's development as a reader (including wider experiences of story) across a range of contexts.

Sept. Enjoys books + stories, and will anticipate text. Knows lots of letters can identify ones which are in her own and her brothers names.

. A B C D G Z — v. pleased that she recognises letters.

nvbr Making own books regularly, and sharing them with friends — often reading to class.

15th Playing at being 'headmistress' – reading to class – sharing pictures, pointing to words up side down – showing pictures to class as she read ' look Gemma there's a g that's in your name isn't it?'

4¹ beginning to point 1:1 unor ler full recog books usually rhyme books. J+Jillett.

91 Turk alphabet home to learn the sounds that letters can make.

	D.vi Ann's Primary Language Record: Reading sample
book/text (fiction or tion)	Dec. 90. Measles
'unknown text	
ng procedure used: l assessment/running miscue analysis	
impression of the eading: lence and degree of endence ement in the book/ ay in which the child he text aloud	V. confident + involved in text.
es the child used ading aloud: ng on previous ience to make sense book/text g at reading book language g the pictures ng on print ionality, rrespondence, ition of certain words) semantic/syntactic/ o-phonic cues ting rrecting several strategies or lependent on one	A remembers alot of the text, but sometimes mis - interprets which piece of text belongs to which page, + sometimes self corrects, but mostly not. Doesn't always notice mismatch.
esponse to the xt: nal response l response rstanding, ating, appreciating meanings)	Interprets herself as one of the measles with huge enjoyment.
is sample shows e child's ment as a reader. ices/support to further ment.	Needs shared reading activities alongside another child or adult + child, to pay closer attention to text.

adicators that the child is moving into reading

Writing	Writing diary of observations, 1990 – 1991

Record observations of the child's development as a writer (including stories dictated by the child) across a range of contexts.

4. Uses shared writing for support, copied word 'chips' from writing stand, and identified that she had already used 'I' when writing random letters. No consistant message, but understanding of individual words.

15. Wrote first book today — wanted to read it to the class, completely self initiated. Song book — Oats & beans. Consistant message.

6th Will choose to write books before anything else. When asked about spaces, said isn't her writing doesn't have any.

mummy I'll Made a book up — "when I've finished reading this I'll bring it back to school for the book area — if I remember. Jan 91 I'll story about party — steam pigs drawing people.

Writing

Record observations of the child's development as a writer (including stories dictated by the child) across a range of contexts.

Continues to like to make her own books.

'91 Has learnt to spell I, on, no although writes them in isolation not in the context of her stories etc. Needs lots of look, cover, write practice.

91 Child initiated — spontaneously cut up some calendar pictures that were in the writing area — made a book up with them. Showed book to class telling them how she'd made it. Book not story book! Made another book using only the calendar maths picture. Cut them up and stuck them — said she'd made a diary — "I'm taking this home."

'91 Produced her first piece of factual writing (T. init) Saw the adults their facts & chose to do so — wrote ours correctly in this second set of facts. Good facts. Used a full stop in her writing & pointed this out to me.

Writing. cnt.

12 Chose to collect some snow & melt it. I asked her to tell us what she'd done & to read it. (see sample) Began with whole patch of letters. Asked her to read to me what she wanted it to say - I suggested to her that she thought more carefully about the words she was trying to write. She then got some initial sounds & began to space her words she got some end sounds too GT - got cm - some needs to be reminded that she can do this (without spoiling her fluency)

1/91 - Made a book about how she made a boat & - waterproofed it - child initiated. Wrote lines of letters mainly capital & underlined each letter line. Put full stops — at the end of some of her lines. Book content fluctuated from how she made it & story language.

5 Wrote a story to go with photos taken of her playing with her boat. Very keen to spell, mummy, daddy, Adam correctly — bring a piece of paper to me for me to write these words down for her. Wrote these words — 1 sentence from her other story writing — the back. Worked on this book for 1 hr. — morning & then wanted to finish it — the afternoon — took herself into the quiet room — be on to write on it. Chose her position (Had turned her previous design into a folder)

9/3/ Got very involved in a puppet show with a group of other children. they spent 30 mins. getting ready! A made show signs & stuck them all over the storyboard. "these tell you what the show are."

13/3 Arrived this A.M. beaming, waving a book she'd made at home. It was a book with photos that she'd chosen & cut up & wrote text to go with each photo. She read the path to me. I photocopied it & then asked her if she could read her book to me again so that I could write the text in mine. "Don't think I can remember the same as this morning." She then proceeded to tell me what to write in mine. (see sample).

L 391 others — "Can I got she"

Date	Book	Comment
22.3.91	Two Stories Jesus Told	I read the stories to A
25.3.91	Mouse	After some help, A pointed to and read every word.
17.4.91	Three Blind Mice	A pointed to each word as she sang the song
14.4.91	The Grand Old Duke of York	A pointed to each word
22.4.91	Each, Peach, Pear, Plum	A can now point properly to each word as she says it, but she still shows no sign of actually reading yet. If I point to a word, out of sequence, or at random, she hasn't a clue as to what it is, even if I try to get her to sound it phonetically. So she is still only 'reading' because she knows the book off by heart beforehand.
23.4.91	Brown Bear	A read the book to me
29.4.91	A Dark, Dark Tale	A liked this book and read it several times.
?.5.91	The Ghost	A read the story
9.5.91	Whatever Next?	I read the story to A
10.5.91	The Spot by Old Tree	I read the story and then A read it both to me
12.5.91	Each Peach Pear Plum	A likes this book
4.5.91	Cinderella	I read the story to A
16.5.91	Snow White	I read the book to A
22.5.91	The Geese Girl	A listened while I read the story.
3.6.91	Heidi	Listened while I read the story
6.6.91	Billy Goats Gruff	A as above
11.6.91	Jack and the Beanstalk	A recognised several words as I read the story to her
12.6.91	Snow White	With quite a bit of prompting, A read several words, but she is still guessing and most of what she is reading is from her memory of having had the story read to her before.
17.6.91	Dear Zoo	A 'read' the story from memory
18.6.91	The Grand old Duke of York	As above
20.6.91	Ship?	
24.6.91	Night Time	A made a good attempt to read the words

that she tried to read it back to me. Most of the time she was just guessing — telling the story in her own words — but now and then words like 'the' 'and' 'and' 'Snow White', she was actually reading properly

D.ix Ann's Primary Language Record:
**Language and literacy conference,
Summer 1991**
(Handbook page 35)

rt C To be completed during the Summer Term*

nents on the record by child's parent(s)

We are pleased with her progress.

d of language/literacy conference with child A, thinks her reading and writing is
. "I like doing stories and making books, my best book was about Red
Hood." I leave spaces between my words now and I've learnt sounds.
thinks her mum thinks her reading is alright and her dad thinks its not too
she thinks she's quite good at maths "like 4+4 make 8, 3+3 make 6
like taking the old telephone to bits and using the screwdriver."
e my reading even better I need to learn more sounds and to learn
words like and, the, went." I wrote down these words on a
separate piece of paper + she read them

rmation for receiving teacher with ease. She then said I can spell like
on is to ensure that information for the receiving teacher is as up to date as possible. Please comment on changes
lopment in any aspect of the child's language since Part B was completed. A.
n went on to say she could spell mummy, daddy, Adam, writing → like

has 1:1 correspondence with the text that she knows
ll and she is just beginning to really focus in on the words
ther than relying solely on memory and the pictures. She is
sing her knowledge of letter sounds to read words that she is
unsure of and this needs to be continually encouraged. She writes

eriences and teaching have helped/would help development? Record outcomes of any discussion with head teacher, other
arent(s).
using initial and some final sounds in her words and is building
extending basic sight vocabulary such as and, like, my, me, on, at,
etc.

Parent(s) Diane S Smith
Class Teacher M Liscett

Date 10/7/01.
Head Teacher

My

MEN Me OHRA A

CNOa SLPSCL

My shell reminds me of a snail shell.

My frfot WEhP iS

Soo I Kan MAK A

Snooman

My favourite weather is
snow. I can make a
snowman.

My Two nannys and Garnd
And Kam RaTd
And Theaey goth me gory.

My two nannys and grandads
came round
and they gave me jewellery.

I was in my gurd Heping 6/4
(garden) (helping)
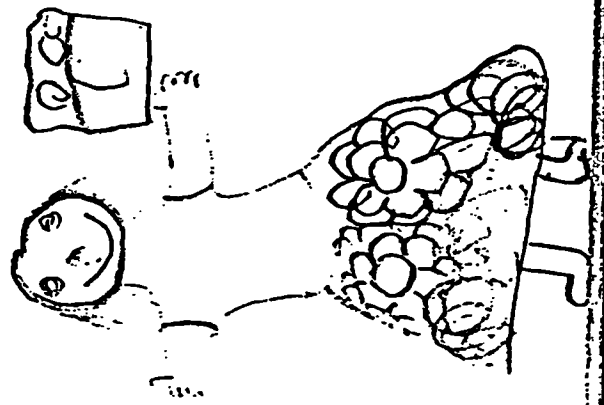
my mum, Two get the mud
(to)

Soow ym mum Kod Pod
(so) (my) The rokry (could) (put)
(on) (rockery)

Then I Pad weth
(played) (with)

Lean and Natey Natalie
(Leanne)
Wen I KaM Th Ey cooand I saw a
(when) (came!)

HeLktr
(helicopter)

E.i A drawing of a monkey with 'proliferating pencil lines', done soon after Layla's entry to school (September 6th 1990)

i a.s a c EB

I am sleeping in the night

April 1991 — L. uses initial letters for 1st time.

E.iii Layla's Primary Language Record:
Language and literacy conference
Spring 1991

...ary Language Record

RIVERSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL SE16.

School Year

DoB	
☐ Boy ☑ Girl	Summer born child

...understood: YORUBA ENGLISH   Languages read

...spoken: ENGLISH   Languages written

...any aspects of hearing, vision or coordination ...the child's language/literacy. Give the source of the information	Names of staff involved with child's language and literacy development.

...t A   To be completed during the Autumn Term

...of discussion between child, parent(s) and class teacher *(Handbook pages 12-13)*

Teacher _____

...of language/literacy conference with child *(Handbook pages 14-15)*
...said she likes books. Her favourite books are On a dark, dark...
...elephant and the bad baby. You'll soon grow into them...
...since ... She felt she was just a little bit good...
...and not very good at writing. I love eating...
... ... I'm great at telling stories. I love...
... ... at home and tells stories. Mammy reads...
...mouse and Donald Duck. Her favourite programmes...
...and Mrs Pepperpot. She also enjoys playing...

Observations and Samples

E.iv Layla's Primary Language Record:
Talking and listening diary of
observations, 1990 – 1991

use extra pages where needed

Year Group:
R (sep '90)

Talking & listening: diary of observations

The diary below is for recording examples of the child's
developing use of talk for learning and for interacting with
others in English and/or other community languages.

Include different kinds of talk (e.g. planning an event,
solving a problem, expressing a point of view or feelings,
reporting on the results of an investigation, telling a
story)...

...the child's experience and confidence in handling
the dimensions of talk (e.g. initiating a discussion,
responding to another contribution, qualifying former ideas,
encouraging others...)

The matrix sets out some possible contexts for observing
talk and listening. Observations made in the diary can be
keyed on the matrix to record the range of social and
curriculum contexts sampled.

(Handbook pages 37-39)

LEARNING CONTEXTS	SOCIAL CONTEXTS			
	pair	small groups	child/ren with adult	whole/large groups with adult
collaborative reading and writing activities			FEB	
play, dramatic play, drama & storying	MAR			JAN
environmental studies & historical research				
maths & science investigations				
design, construction, craft & art projects				

Observations and their contexts

Told story to whole class. V. confident, had their rapt
attention. Her timing was v. soph. getting laugh at ...
Once upon a time there lived a little girl ...
"Hayley" And Hayley had a daddy ... called ...
(children in class.) — Since this ... other children have
copied Lola's model (... it's success) ...

Playing w/ dolls houses w/ Miriam.
Kept talking to me. Told me what she was doing ...
Pretending this rubber is the soap, Sarah ...
Argued a lot w/ M. about who should have what ...
prevents narrative developing although M. is trying to get ...
... to M. "Pretend they all came back and were v. tired ..."
uses lots of diff. characters voices w/ v. expressive ...
hello man Reddy?" Manipulated the doll a lot ...
of role — telling me scene ... giving voices ...

Drew fantasy map. — Told me about it before she began ...
"There's going to be a good place here ... "
place." "We went to the kings house and ...
and bubble gum ... my daddy's hair went away we put
food on his head."

401

	12/12/90	16/4/91.	21/6/91
book/text (fiction or tion)	Bear's Birthday	The Hungry Giant	' Hle Pig
unknown text	Known	Known	known
g procedure used: l assessment/running niscue analysis	informal	informal.	informal
mpression of the ading: ence and degree of ndence ement in the book/ y in which the child e text aloud	She was more reserved in her reading than during whole class readings, but enjoyed and was involved with the book · knew title.	Alternated between expressive reading r hesitation	Read confidently and accurately. Knew the title.
es the child used ading aloud: g on previous ence to make sense book/text *f at reading* *ook language* *f the pictures* *g on print* *onality* *respondence* *tion of certain words)* semantic/syntactic -phonic cues ing rrecting several strategies or ependent on one	L used her memory of this book in conjunction ✓ with pictures ✓ and her sense of ✓ story. When she didn't remembered the text she used the pictures to "talk like a book."	Used memory and pictures. Focused on print more when it was part of text she had memorised. Told the story with the pictures.	Focused very well on print. I i all the time on last page, didn't know the text, but self-corrected and asked me for help, until she had got it just right
sponse to the t: al response response standing, ting, appreciating meanings)	Chose this book herself. She particularly enjoyed the humourous pictures and talked afterwards about them.	Chose book herself. Didn't really talk about the story or why she liked it. seemed to answer only to please me.	Didn't know sausages ... ... p... Thought the book her wanted the pig because his tail looked like sausages — Talked at length about this.
sample shows child's ment as a reader. ces/support o further nent.	L loves books and stories and memorises known texts. Draw her attention to print more and widen her repetoire of remembered texts.	Encourage her to memorise more texts and draw attention to sep. words - 1:/ corr., initial sounds	... now its a good ... of ... she has m..e good progress ... building bank of known texts ...

Dates	2/10/90	30/1/91	1/7/91.
Context and background information about the writing: • how the writing arose • how the child went about the writing • whether the child was writing alone or with others • whether the writing was discussed with anyone while the child was working on it • kind of writing (e.g. list, letter, story, poem, personal writing, information writing) • complete piece of work/extract	Writing in response to "Where the wild things are" read to whole clan. Worked alone.	Writing about work done with visiting artists on previous day. Discussed in group. Wrote without help.	Writing about what had happened when her father's car was stolen after telling class about it. Worked alone.
Child's own response to the writing.	Keen to tell me what the writing said.	Seemed pleased with her work, once she settled to get on with it.	L. was pleased with her success – correct initial sounds, but had been anxious wh. writing.
Teacher's response: • to the content of the writing • to the child's ability to handle this particular kind of writing • overall impression	L. was clear about the part of the story she wished to write about. Worked hurriedly.	Poor concentration. Needed to be moved to table alone. L. was confident about what she wanted to say.	I was pleased that L. had thought carefully about the writing. She has spaces between words and thought about sounds.
Development of spelling and conventions of writing.	String of letters "E+O₅" Aware that print carries meaning.	String of letters "I" – 1st word Rest of letters capital. No spacing.	Separate words correct 1:1. Initial sounds for most words + other sounds in word e.g. "BRL" = Burglar "wi
What this writing shows about the child's development as a writer: • how it fits into the range of the child's previous writing • experience/support needed to further development	Draw more attention to print – words sep. Encourage L. to use knowledge of initial sounds.	L. has a lot of knowledge about writing which she doesn't apply. Encourage her to find words she knows when she writes - eg. from display class books, word banks. Draw attention to spacing. Encourage 1:1 corr.	L. is now applying her knowledge about writing. She is far clearer about writing conventions (e.g. spa and is more confi. Her large handwriting sometimes creates problems for her – develop handwriting. cont. to extend writing boost confidence.

... Sleeping with no Supper

2/10/90 See OLR record.

BRK

burglar

BRL

my

went

WIEMS

QPPOLK

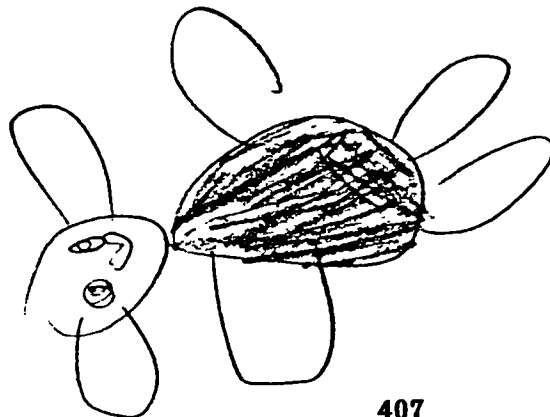in

daddy's

car.

1/7/91.

See PLR.

405

I SHZNHWV わ〜)つへつて〜 わ

L
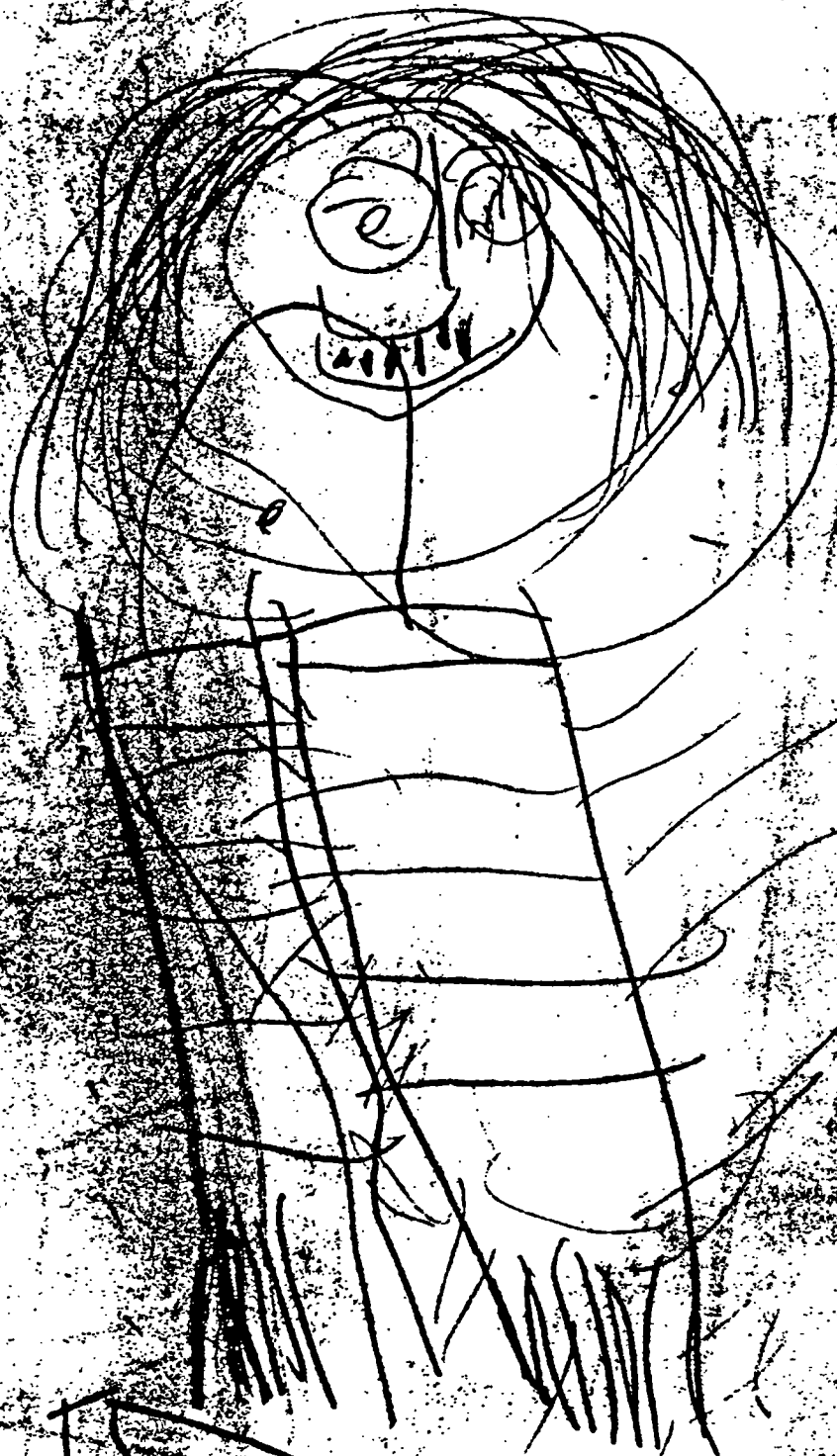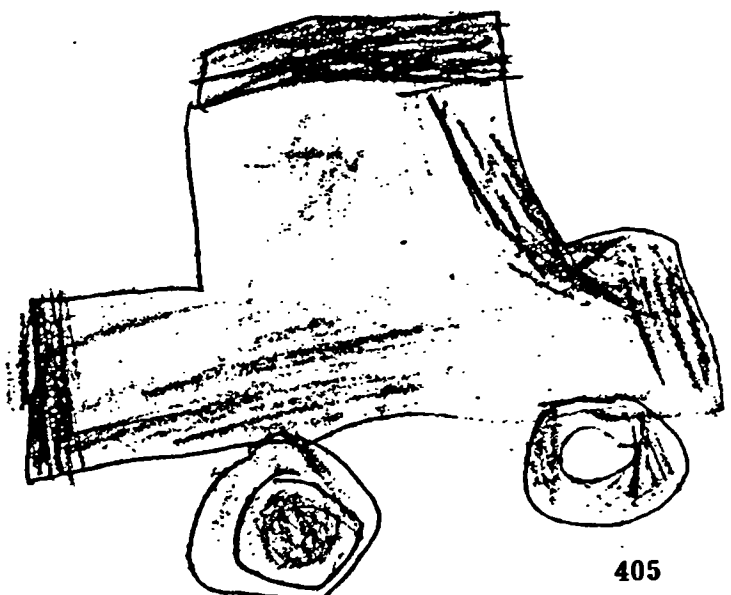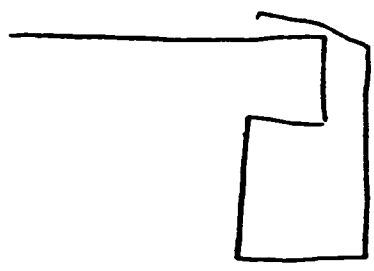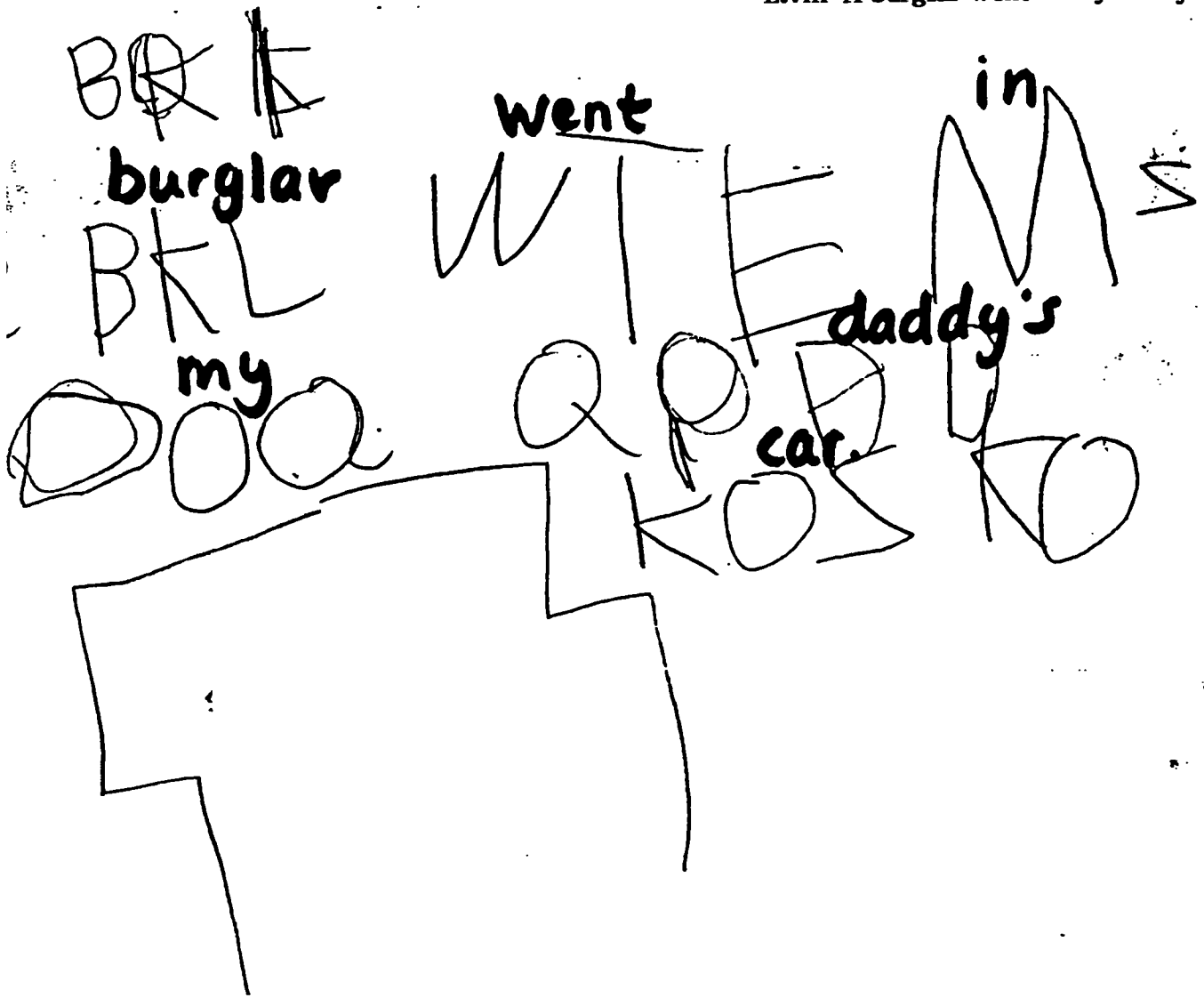
E.ix 'I am going to a party with my eyes popping out'

lalAogoy台Ru ← N.B. this is copy of my writing, not done 1st.
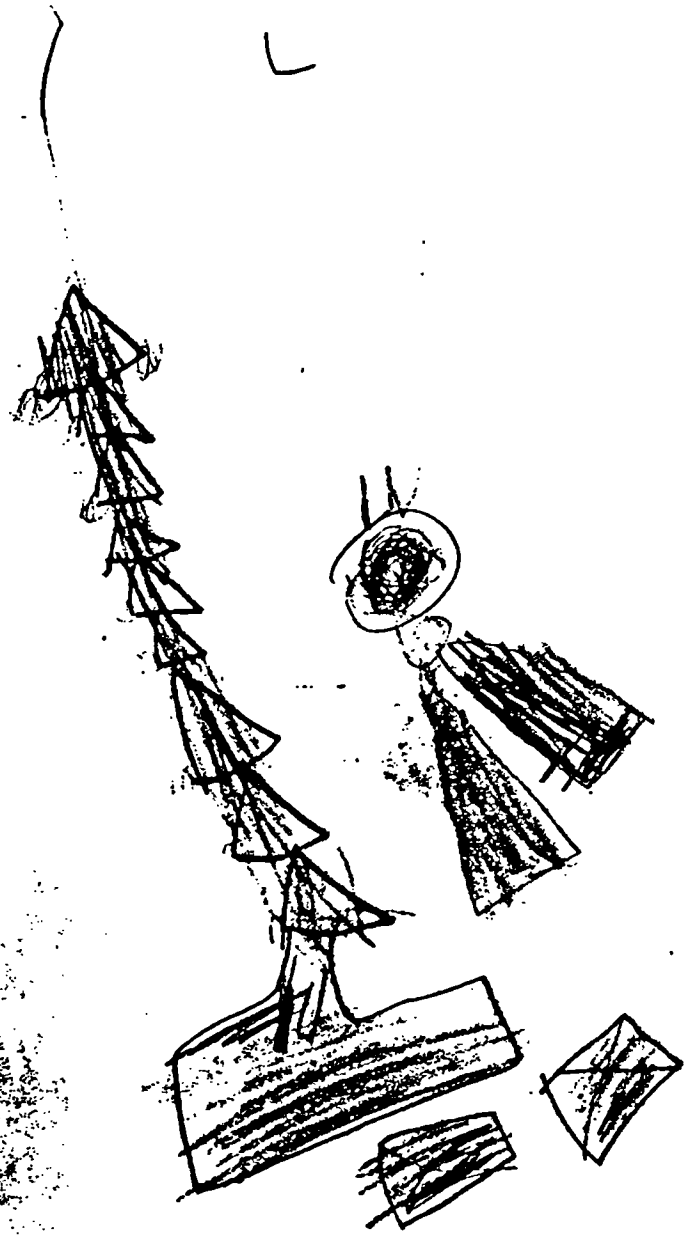
am going to party with

my eyes popping out.

E.x 'Two monkeys and a boat'
(illustration accompanying Layla's
Suzanne and John story)

HQT
IKCTOM Hot

HOM

a Chinese man too.

SON
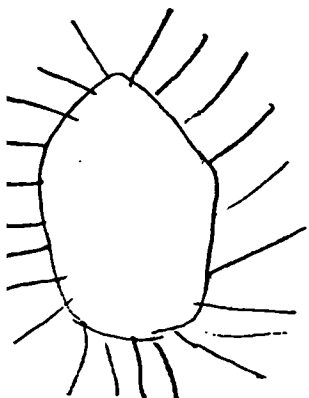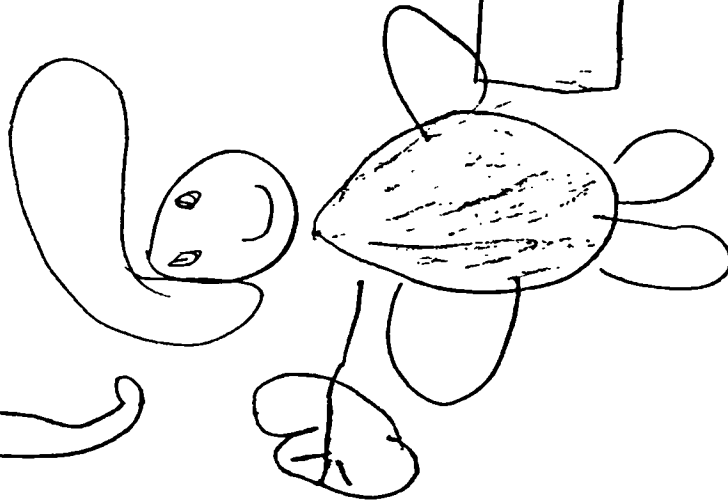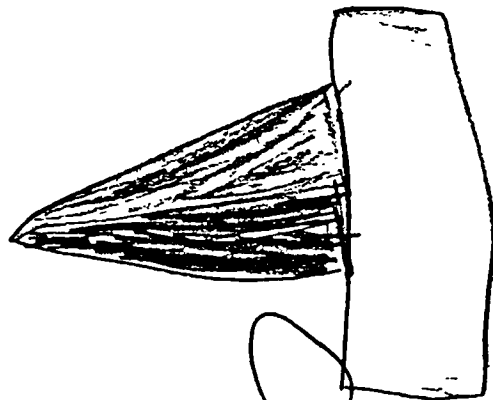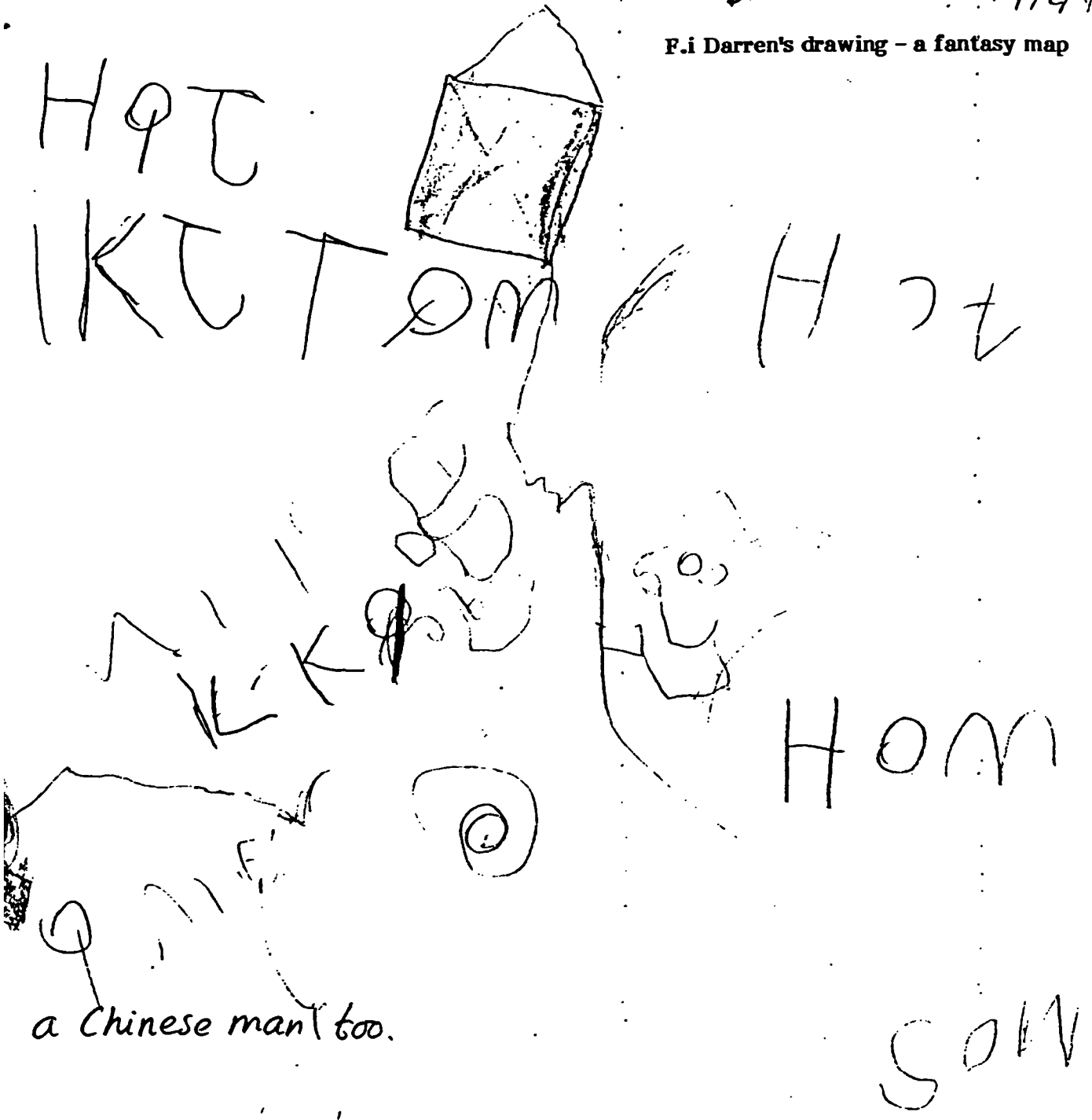
Hey, What are you doing
to that castle.

Observations and Samples

ttach extra pages where needed

F.ii Darren's Primary Language Record:
Talking and listening diary of
observations 1990 - 1991

ame: D

Year Group: R.

Talking & listening: diary of observations

he diary below is for recording examples of the child's
eveloping use of talk for learning and for interacting with
thers in English and/or other community languages.

clude different kinds of talk (e.g. planning an event,
olving a problem, expressing a point of view or feelings,
:porting on the results of an investigation, telling a
ory ...)

ote the child's experience and confidence in handling
ocial dimensions of talk (e.g. initiating a discussion,
stening to another contribution, qualifying former ideas,
ncouraging others ...)

he matrix sets out some possible contexts for observing
lk and listening. Observations made in the diary can be
otted on the matrix to record the range of social and
irriculum contexts sampled.

(Handbook pages 37-39)

LEARNING CONTEXTS	SOCIAL CONTEXTS				
	pair	small group	child with adult	small/large group with adult	
collaborative reading and writing activities			·		
play, dramatic play, drama & storying		✓			
environmental studies & historical research	·		·		
maths & science investigations					
design, construction, craft & art projects					
				·	

ates

/2/91.

Observations and their contexts

Drawing fantasy map. Worked v. quietly, v. involved. Periodic told me what he was doing. "I'm going to go r see a chocolat man". Said he was doing chinese writing on the map." It says, ' I saw a chinese man too'." Told me other writing said "Hey what are you doing to that castle." ... "The tin man ... A twirly bit you can't get past. [Descriptions of what was going o in pic/map] "Thats where the people walk all about when they're bored. Thats where the electric goes to the bit you can't get past."

	10/1/91 .	21/3/91	21/6/91 .
ook/text (fiction or on)	Lost	How do I put it on?	i?.S?
nknown text	known	known	knw..
procedure used: assessment/running scue analysis	informal	informal	informal
ipression of the ding: nce and degree of idence ment in the book/ in which the child text aloud	Told the story in a confident and enthusiastic way.	Read v. quickly –rushing, but confident.	Didn't know title Told the story with expression
the child used ding aloud: on previous nce to make sense ook/text al reading ok language the pictures on print nality spondence ion of certain words) :mantic/syntactic/ phonic cues ng ecting veral strategies or pendent on one	D. used his memory of the text and the pictures as cues. Where he did not remember the text exactly, he demonstrated his sense of story and knowledge of "the way books go."	Used memory and picture cues. Not focusing on print.	Used story language, pictures, memory in ... of text Didn't focus on print ·
sponse to the : l response esponse tanding, ng, appreciating earnings)	He liked the pictures in this book and talked about which pictures he liked best and why.	Enjoyed the pictures + understood the story.	... the ... trouble ... didn't ... was better ... dressed
sample shows child's ent as a reader. es/support further ent.	D is making progress. He enjoys books and has a good sense of story. Develop his range of known texts. Provide texts with strong repetition.	Continue to develop range of known texts. Draw attention to print.	needs lots of good adult ... more of... lots. Most ... of print and ... terms ... not de... ... in story ... Build back

tes	24/1/41.	5/9/90	2/7/41.
ntext and background ormation about the iting: iow the writing arose iow the child went about he writing vhether the child was vriting alone or with others vhether the writing was fiscussed with anyone vhile the child was vorking on it cind of writing (e.g. list, etter, story, poem, iersonal writing, nformation writing) complete piece of vork/extract	Writing about claywork after working with artists, previous day. Discussion with other children and teacher 1st. Worked alone. complete piece of work.	1st day at school. Asked to draw a picture & write about it.	Writing about Puppet show seen at school. Working on own work at table of children involved in same activity.
ild's own response to : writing.	Very willing to share his work with me. Enthusiastic about telling me what to transcribe. Wanted to copy my transcription.	Told me about the picture. Didn't relate the writing to it "It says D with a D."	Pleased with his success at writing correct initial letters. Likes to get things 'right'.
acher's response: o the content of the writing o the child's ability to iandle this particular kind of writing overall impression	D. is confident in his composition of what he wants to write. He is imaginative.	Not really interested in writing!	D. really thought about this piece of writing —counting words etc. I was v. pleased with this development
velopment of spelling d conventions of iting.	Strings of letters and numbers along top of page & some random letters around page.	Wrote name.	Used initial letters 1:1 Spaces between words.
hat this writing shows out the child's velopment as a writer: iow it fits into the range of he child's previous writing experience/support ieeded to further jevelopment	D. understands that print conveys meaning. He needs lots of support and attention drawn to initial sounds, separate letters, 1:1 correspondence.	Relate speech to spoken word written down.	D. is now beginning to apply his knowled about letter sounds & other conventions of writing. Dean is usually v. anxious about writing without copying words. Hes only just moved from strings of letters. Cont. to develop confidence, extend ...

Sarah Horrocks
Riverside Primary School

D 's concentration has improved. He is able to settle at
tivities and becomes more involved in tasks.
ith his writing, he is very keen to "get it right" and will
ways copy words from around the classroom rather than
tempt his own writing. Last week he began to apply his
nowledge about initial sounds or 1:1 corr. (see writing sample PC2)

P   L

Game at playground - made up together

"The Crystal Man" - Dean's name for game.

~~Once upon a time~~ Ghost   2 girls r 1 boy.

oy - Crystal Ghost.

am - Supertex   L - Supergirl.

They part of 'alls with glue. and the 2 Cryst. Ghost had magic power to get people whatnots.

One day they got stuck r Dean had to got to the magic princess

Went to magic crystal. they mustn't touch walls. But Dean was Lallowed to touch anything in here.

Some Ghosts not kind. Some are Monsters.
So it was like a quest games with rules, and he has great
When L. r L. touch P they go through
his heart r from the ground to the
~~than~~ ground L monsters. He can't
go from the wall where the monsters ~~are~~.

P made up most.

hey wdrrıp
2wof d ı

When I was a baby I went

ith my Mum who died.

hen i was a baby+l Weht
ith my Mum who died

2/92.
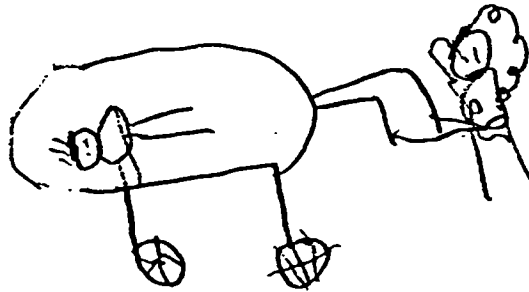
F.viii Darren's picture of the little
bear and the star
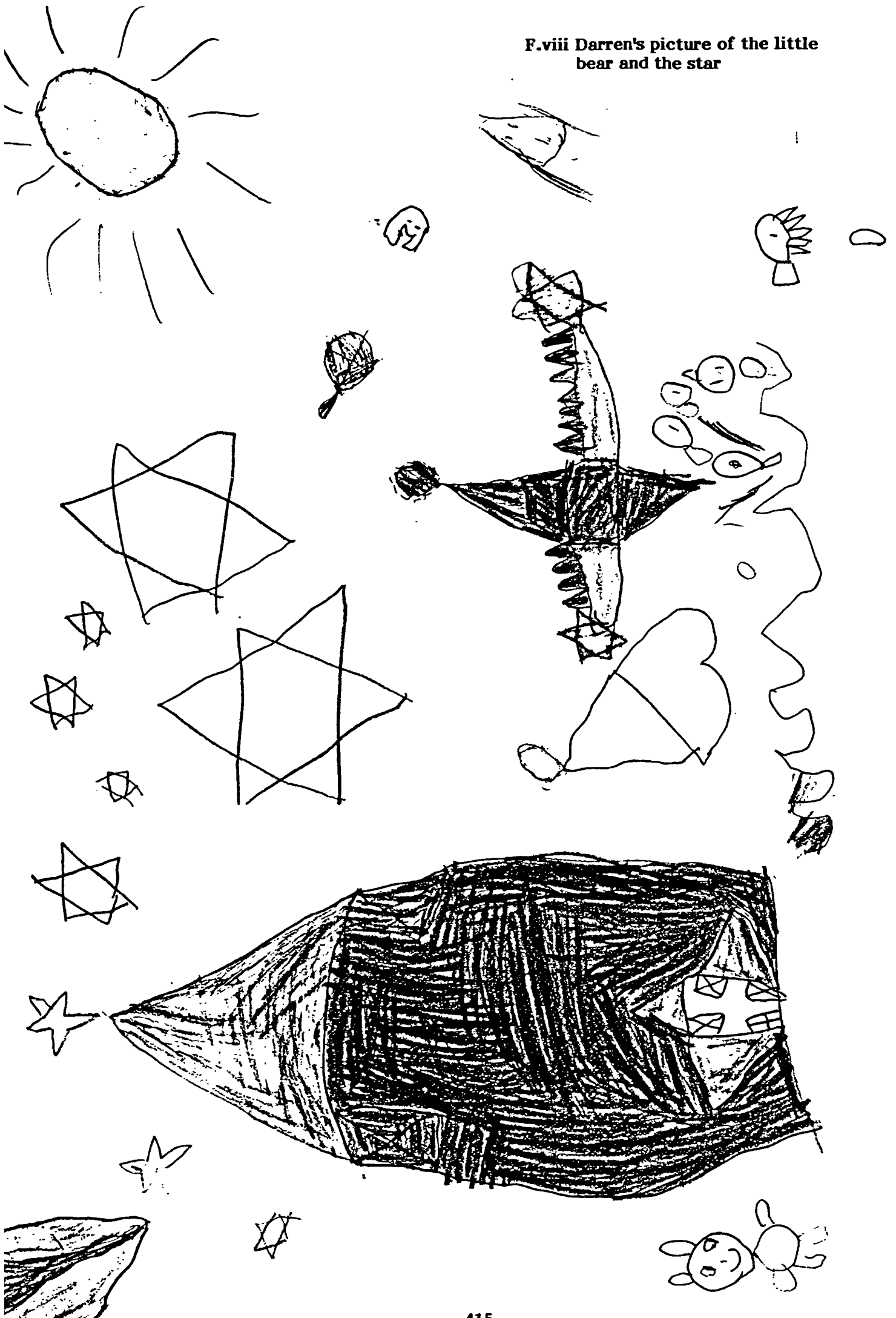
nary Language Record

G.i Maria's Primary Language Record:
Language and literacy conference
(Spring Term 1991)

Riverside primary School
S·E·16.

School Year
90 /91.

m

DoB

☐ Boy ☐ Girl

Summer born child. ☑

29·12·85.

es understood

Languages read

es spoken

Languages written

f any aspects of hearing, vision or coordination
the child's language/literacy. Give the source
of this information.

**Names of staff involved with child's language and literacy
development.**

Rowan Kyprios   Section 11 teacher.

t A To be completed during the Autumn Term

d of discussion between child's parent(s) and class teacher *(Handbook pages 12-13)*

arent(s) _____   Teacher _____

Date _____

d of language/literacy conference with child *(Handbook pages 14-15)*

is very confident about her work in school and is aware
ability. She enjoys "quiet reading time" best "cos I can read
books I like to read" e.g. So Can I , Where's Wally and books
by the clan. She felt that writing is the thing she is best at
"cos I can spell words." She does a lot of reading and
at home and told me that she learns a lot with her Mum
plays a lot of imaginative games at home with her elder
and younger sister involving complicated narratives and characters she
prefers reading or playing to watching T.V. Her favourite programme
is Tom and Jerry.

/3/91 (Spring Term)

ding Samples (reading in English and/or
de reading aloud and reading silently across the curricul

	8/11/90	18/4/91	21/6/91
book/text (fiction or tion)	So can I	The Big Toe	seeing
'unknown text	Known	Known	unknown
ig procedure used: l assessment/running niscue analysis	Informal	informal.	informal
Impression of the eading: lence and degree of endence ement in the book/text ay in which the child he text aloud	M. has this book at home. She read confidently with expression	Confident. Read with expression. Commented on print getting large.	Read confidently and independently
es the child used ading aloud; ng on previous ience to make sense of ok/text [obscured] semantic/syntactic/ o-phonic cues ting rrecting several strategies or lependent on one	✓ ✓ Remembered the book well and focused on print with 1-1.	Good 1-1. focusing on print when she got to 'away' down the road she left out 'away' and came on. When I asked her later why she had left that word out she said she didn't know what it said but she knows the other!	Read this unseen passage very well. Read for meaning e.g. said "seeing" for sight Stopped a few times when she didn't know the word and went for me to support her. Self-corrected at other times.
esponse to the book/ ial response response standing, evaluating, iating wider ngs)	Said this is her favourite book. She likes the monsters and finds it very funny.	Enjoyed story. Said she found it scarey and liked to do the 'voice'.	Understood the text and enjoyed the photographs.
s sample shows e child's development ler: ices/support needed r development:	M is making very good progress. She becomes familiar with books v. quickly and notices individual words. Provide lots of unfam. books/texts like this.	Good understanding of print and meaning. Progressed well Encourage to notice repeated words, word patterns etc.	Has become a confident and fluent reader. Needs to read regular with adults to provide good model. Introduce longer books

idicators that the child is moving into reading

4 Writing Samples (writing in English an
'Writing' to include children's earliest attempts at writing

Dates	24/1/91.	4/10/90	4/6/91.
Context and background information about the writing: • how the writing arose • how the child went about the writing • whether the child was writing alone or with others • whether the writing was discussed with anyone while the child was working on it • kind of writing (e.g. list, letter, story, poem, personal writing, information writing and recording) • complete piece of work/ extract	Writing about claywork done with visiting artists. Discussion 1st with other children & teacher Worked alone. Thought carefully about what she wanted to write. Complete piece of work.	Work in response to "Where the Wild things Are" read to class. Worked alone.	Writing in response to "Mrs. Plug the Plumber" read to class. Worked alone.
Child's own response to the writing:	She was pleased with her writing and proud of her attempted spellings.	Pleased with work. Keen to show me names of her sister + brother.	Wrote more than usual for this type of writing. Enjoyed writing and was pleased with outcome.
Teacher's response: • to the content of the writing • to the child's ability to handle this particular kind of writing • overall impression	I was very pleased with this piece of writing. M. is applying what she knows about phonics together with her sight vocabulary.		M. is writing more and more fluently. She concentrated well on this piece and had a clear idea of what part of the story she wanted to write about.
Development of spelling and conventions of writing:	Wrote "the, and" correctly. "roarts" for artists	Strings of letters + siblings names.	Many known spellings + application of phonics knowledge for invented spellings. Hasn't used full stops.
What this writing shows about the child's development as a writer: • how it fits into the range of the child's previous writing **Experience/support needed to further development:**	M. is making very good progress as a writer. She has only recently stopped writing random string of letters and is now able to apply her knowledge to what she writes. Encourage her to develop a bank of known words & use invented spellings	Draw attention to print — initial sounds, separate words.	M. is now a confident and fluent writer. She likes to learn how to spell words correctly, but is also confident about inventing her own spellings. She works v. independently never asking for help until she has finished. Provide meaningful & challenging opps. for extending her writing

g *(Handbook pages 29-34)*

mment on the child's progress and development as a writer in English and/or other community languages: the degree
ence and independence as a writer; the range, quantity and variety of writing in all areas of the curriculum; the child's
and involvement in writing both narrative and non-narrative, alone and in collaboration with others; the influence of
n the child's writing; growing understanding of written language, its conventions and spelling.

*has made quick progress in her development as a writer, moving
writing in strings of letters (sep '90) to being a confident writer
invented spellings based on a knowledge of phonics as well as
r of known spellings. She really enjoys writing and takes great
in her progress. M responds very quickly when aspects
writing are drawn to her attention e.g. when we talked about
words being separate. She enjoys working independently and
chooses to work in the writing area, where she makes books
cards.*

periences and teaching have helped/would help development in this area? Record outcomes of any discussion with
cher, other staff, or parent(s).

re of head teacher and all teachers contributing to this
of the record:

oservations and Samples

G.v Maria's Primary Language Record:
Talking and listening diary of
observations 1990 – 1991

extra pages where needed

: M   Year Group:
                                  R (Sep.)

lking & listening across the
culum: diary of observations

ary below is for recording examples of the
 developing use of talk for learning and for
:ting with others in English and/or other
unity languages.

э different kinds of interaction (e.g. raising
эns, planning an event, telling a story,
эing an investigation, drawing conclusions
vidence....)

ιe child's experiences and confidence in
ng social dimensions of talk (e.g. initiating a
sion, listening to another contribution, silent
эment in activity, qualifying former ideas,
·aging others.....)

ιtrix sets out some possible contexts for
·ing talk and listening across the curriculum.
·ations made in the diary can be plotted on the
to record the range of social and curriculum
ts sampled.   (Handbook pages 37-39)

LEARNING CONTEXTS	SOCIAL CONTEXTS				
	pair	small group	child with adult	small/large group with adult	
collaborative reading and writing activities			MAR.		
play, dramatic play, drama & storying	MAR.				
environmental studies & historical research					
maths activities					
design, construction, craft & art projects		JAN.	FEB.		
science activities					

and lum areas	Observations and their contexts
/· /91	Building structure out of rolled newspaper in collaborative activity w/ 3 other ch. "This is going to be a kind of frame. That's going to be the bottom." - Had a lot of gd. ideas, tried to impose these on other ch. — rather bossy. Argued a lot with Aimee. Made the activity into an imaginative game. Referred to bks. for ideas
5/2/91	Building w/ Lego after looking at pics. of bridges [1st made simple bridge structure. Then made garden —v. symmetric & particular in pattern. Then made miniature town]. "I don't like drawings any more 'cos this is going to be the fastest model and that puppet [had brought in puppet from home] is for this." Sang to self and made up rhymes as she worked "It's hard to choose, just to lose". Talked to me. Realised I was writing & began to tell me spellings.
-1/3/91	Playing w/ dolls houses w/ L . Describes setting "This is the chair where they have breakfast". Sets up story to draw L. into game. Says what the character will say, then says it in the characters voice. More scene setting, less voices than L.

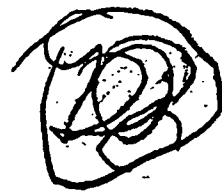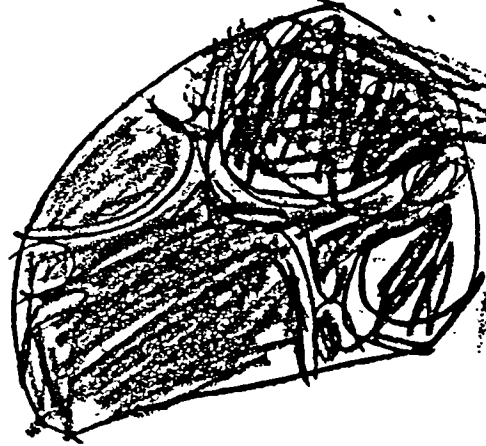G.vi 'When this mum laid an egg that was the baby'. Text dictated on Maria's first day at school
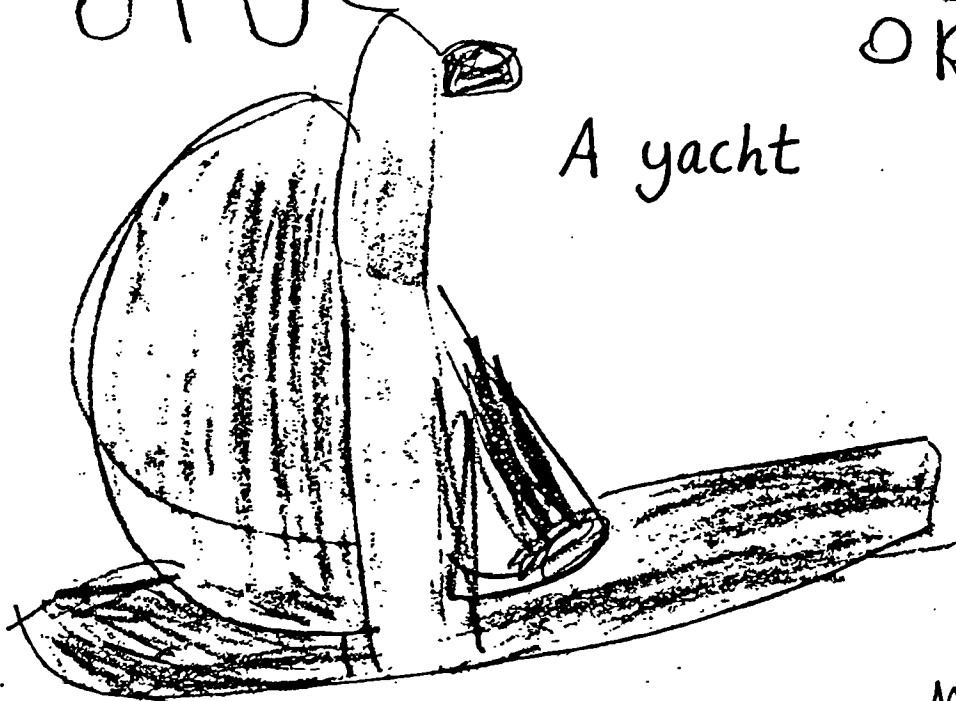
LVISAOAotf^FO

You know what is Max's things.

G.vii 'You know what is Max's things'
an early text that Maria writes
for herself, which bears little
relation to what she says

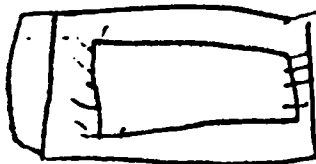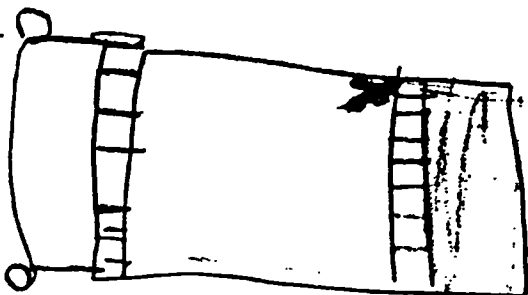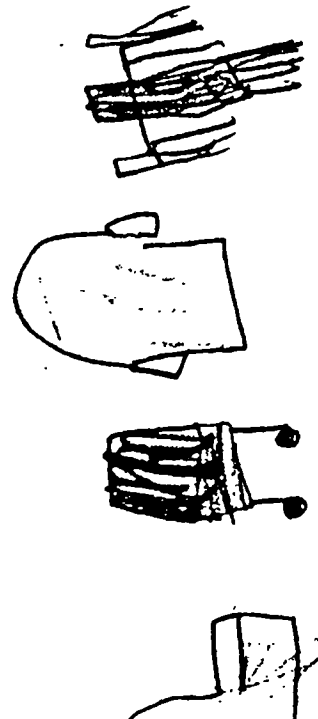RaCHIb

rSHlbHHICCBCr-AISI

OItC

ORa

A yacht

4/10/90

M

422

peag ei the
the bedroom.
This is

This is the kitchen.
thl ei the
KOOPEN.

Jan 1991.

yyly ei the
BEQMIRY

This is the bedroom.
tyOR the lkal
This is the living-room.

423

One Day

G.ix 'Once there was a baby that love
his mummy': a text from April 1991
which shows Maria's rapid progress
in writing

They

was a PaBy

That Love He's

his

mummy

clothes

Coloiasu

and

One shoq

was he

favourite Shoq

29/4/91.

7.7.92.

One day I went to see my friend Alanna and she had turned into a grapefruit.

Alanna said "a Wich Tundde me into a grapefirut"
witch   turned   into   fruit

"Why" I aksde "beusckces She wanted my house" "are" I said
asked   because   Quick

"She's comdng" "Who'? "the Wich of cosev."
                        witch course

I put Alanng in the Cobed. I got in too.
              cupboard

The with went on her broomstick but I tide
                              hopping mad and tied

Axedenly turnder herself into a frog.
accidently turned herself

So we went to the park and I did not Notis
                                          ce

Alanng was herself agneo again.

TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Table 2

Figure 3. Stimulus for Drawing Copy Task (Person)

35

Figure 2. One Stimulus for Drawing Completion Task (Other Object)

34

Table 3

Age in Weeks of Onset for Levels of Representing Human Action[a]

| | Subjects | | | | | | | | |
| | Boys | | | Girls | | | | | |
Levels	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5	6
Level 1: Passive agency	76	70	84	76	69	90	68	66	68
Level 2: Independent agency	105	112	98	113	116	111	124	123	112
Level 3: Perception and sensation	113	112	137	121	132	111	124	114	112
Level 4: Emotion, obligation, social relation	133	112	137	132	121	142	142	121	150
Level 5: Cognition	210	184	184	132	197	202	158	154	162

[a] Ages of onset are presented in terms of weeks in order to give a clearer picture of the ordinal nature of this development.

Table 4

The children's talk: References to multiple worlds.

C
WIDER EXPERIENCED WORLD OF PEOPLE, PLACES, OBJECTS, EVENTS
(task-related)

B

ONGOING SOCIAL WORLD

(Involving others in
one's own task)

(Involving oneself
in others' tasks)

A

IMAGINARY WORLD
(task-involved)

Talk   Pictures   Text