

**Young People, Identity and the Media:
A Study of Conceptions of Self-Identity Among Youth in
Southern England**

Fatimah Awan

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate young people's perceptions of their own identities and how the media is used to shape their conceptions of self, with specific focus on the understandings held by young people themselves.

The relationship between media and identity is explored through an examination of previous work on ethnic minority representation in the media, and considered in relation to how representations impact upon audience members' formulations of identities and their social worlds. Conceptualisations of the audience, and approaches employed within audience research are critically evaluated, with particular reference to individuals' media consumption in the context of lived experience.

A discussion of creative and visual methods within social research introduces the methodology undertaken as part of this study. Young people aged 13 to 14, of contrasting class and ethnic backgrounds, drawn from schools across Dorset, Hampshire and London were invited to create identity collages using media materials that expressed 'how I see myself' and 'how I think other people see me', and provided their own interpretations of this work within unstructured interviews. The 111 identity collages produced and accompanying reflective commentaries formed a body of data upon which the findings of this thesis are based.

The analysis reveals that young people view their identities as complex, contradictory and diverse, and demonstrate a reflexive awareness of their own sense of self as a phenomenon which is personally constructed, continually revised and displayed to others. The study highlights the importance of role models, and how individuals understand their own identities, more strongly than previous studies of young people and the media. It suggests that the media functions as a resource young people use to conceptualise and formulate their present identities, as well as articulate possible future selves.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The election of a New Labour government in May 1997, after eighteen years of Conservative rule, signalled a new era of optimism for Britain promoted by their campaign promise that ‘things can only get better’. Following the party’s landslide victory, and during its first term in office, New Labour fostered their vision of Britain as a ‘young country’ (Blair, 1996) through emphasising the nation’s plurality, cultural diversity and dynamism in order to ‘rebrand’ Britain as a vibrant and progressive society; a strategy deemed necessary for Britain’s economic survival and success in an expanding globalised marketplace.¹ This attempt to re-imagine Britain as a modern and forward thinking nation exploited and was encompassed by the notion of ‘Cool Britannia’ – a phrase originally coined for a Ben and Jerry’s ice cream in April 1996, and appropriated by the media to characterise British popular culture as fresh and exciting after *Newsweek* in November declared London was the coolest capital city in the world (McGuire, 1996). For New Labour then, Cool Britannia would come to supersede the traditional ethos of ‘Rule Britannia’, through the party presenting an image of a new Britain focused on its potential as a creative culture: an image confirmed by a glamorous celebrity reception held at Downing Street in July 1997 which enabled the government to exhibit Britain as a youthful, fashionable, post-imperial country with cutting edge cultural industries and creative talent.² This initiative of rebranding British identity as Cool Britannia was further facilitated with New Labour’s establishment of Panel 2000 in April 1998 whose task, as Robin Cook (1998) stated, was ‘to replace a myth of an old Britain [a country in decline, consisting of castles and villages] with the reality of the modern Britain’ by producing a plan which would project new Britain globally as a sophisticated, multicultural³,

¹ During the late 1980s and 1990s British companies and public services were increasingly subject to privatisation and takeovers by international conglomerates, thus leading to a decline in the industrial prestige of ‘Britishness’.

² Indeed, the Cool Britannia phenomenon was characterised by the image of Noel Gallagher (of rock band Oasis) shaking hands with then Prime Minister Tony Blair.

³ It should be noted that during this period multiculturalism was commonly understood to mean that different cultural communities have the right to live their own ways of life independently, with no overarching thread binding them together. This contrasts with the more recent interpretation of multiculturalism which emphasises that all cultures should be

open and dynamic nation as well as a centre of innovation and creativity in the run-up to the millennium. In their report (Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 1998) Panel 2000 outlined five main themes that were believed to define Britain's character, these being reliability and integrity; creativity and innovation; free speech and fair play; openness to the world; and a unique heritage. Significantly, and of equal importance, during this period the Runnymede Trust set up a Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain in January 1998 to analyse British society's multi-ethnic future and propose ways of countering racial discrimination and disadvantage, in order to reconfigure Britain as a strong and multicultural nation.⁴

However, after a veritable boom period the Cool Britannia project – which appeared to engender a renewed sense of British pride, most famously epitomised by Geri Halliwell's iconic Union Jack dress – collapsed as it was unable to fulfil expectations, became an object of mockery and a source of internecine political conflict. Indeed, from its outset, concerns had been raised regarding Cool Britannia's worth and suitability as a nation-branding exercise because some felt it attempted to package something as complex as British identity as a consumer product, and demonstrated that the government prioritised 'style over substance' (Bayley, 1998); that is to say, Cool Britannia was dismissed as being merely a corporate marketing campaign that lacked any engagement and association with concrete principles. Furthermore, New Labour's vision of a new Britain would also have difficulty overriding the 'myth of an old Britain' as this was firmly entrenched within the national psyche and recognised internationally. Moreover, at the dawn of the 21st century Cool Britannia was increasingly accompanied by images of an 'uncool' nation plagued with crises including failing public services, football hooliganism, foot and mouth disease, and ongoing racist violence. In addition to these problems besetting Cool Britannia, the Runnymede Trust's report on *The Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain* published in 2000 cautioned New Labour that Britain would not develop as a multicultural society until past and current forms of racism were confronted and many of the cherished dominant narratives of the nation were radically revised through 'rethinking the national story'

open, self-critical and engage in dialogue with others, and argues a multicultural society must combine respect for diversity with shared common values such as equality and fairness (see Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain, 2000).

⁴ This report was launched by then Home Secretary Jack Straw in 1997.

– ideas later encapsulated within Cook’s (2001) now well renowned ‘chicken tikka masala’ speech.⁵ Consequently, following New Labour’s first term in office during which the party had heralded the birth of Cool Britannia, Tessa Jowell, then Minister for Culture, Media and Sport in a speech given in November 2001 (Jury, 2001), declared its death and consigned it to history stating that the idea had simply ‘missed the point’ as ‘You can’t distil our national character to a liking for designer water or retro lamps’. According to Jowell, although Cool Britannia had been a programme with sound intentions, its failure lay in its inability to recognise the diverse and continually changing nature of Britain, characterised by and open to external influences. As she remarked:

This country is just too complex and too varied. Cool Britannia was at least a well meaning attempt to codify what makes this country special. But it was, I’m sorry to say, doomed to inadequacy because it tried to codify a culture. And if you codify, you ossify (*ibid.*).

Importantly, in Britain the year 2001 not only witnessed the ‘demise’ of Cool Britannia but also marked a critical turning point for the notion of multiculturalism (an idea that New Labour were initially eager to promote), when over a few months events occurred that would expose this concept to new forms of criticism and attack. During the spring and summer of 2001 a number of disturbances broke out in towns and cities across northern England involving white and Asian⁶ youths in conflict with each other and the police. These clashes, provoked by racist mobilisations of the neo-fascist British National Party, first took place at Easter in Bradford, spreading to Oldham (26-28 May) – which experienced what were identified as ‘the worst race riots in Britain for 15 years’ (Carter, 2001) – Leeds (5 June), Burnley (23-24 June), Bradford (7 July) and Stoke-on-Trent (14 July), leading to such areas being designated as ‘racial hotspots’ (Harris, 2001). Whilst many attributed the causes of

⁵ In this speech Cook (2001) argued that Britain should be optimistic about the strength and future of British identity, drawing upon the nation’s most popular dish – chicken tikka masala – as an allegory for Britain’s history of absorbing and adapting external influences, thus illustrating its pluralistic character.

⁶ Throughout this thesis the term ‘Asian’ is used to refer to individuals whose family heritage originates from the Indian subcontinent. The term ‘black’ is employed to refer to individuals of African Caribbean descent and also in its political sense, therefore including both those of African Caribbean and South Asian origin.

these disturbances to deprivation, poverty, high unemployment and racism, the official government enquiry into the 'riots', the Cante report (Home Office, 2001), suggested that self-segregation by white and ethnic minority communities, whose lives did not appear to touch, let alone overlap, was the principal motivating factor behind this unrest.⁷ Furthermore, the report advocated *community cohesion* as a strategy for fostering respect and understanding of different communities as well as establishing a greater sense of British citizenship based on (a few) shared values, achieved through, for example, the twinning of schools, promoting dialogue amongst young people and encouraging interaction between various communities. Although these proposals were not intrinsically problematic, inferences that may be drawn from the report – which aimed to examine the *causes* of these 'riots' – are disturbing. As Farzana Shain (2003) pointed out, 'The implication is that racism is *caused* by segregation rather than *causing* it. The picture that emerges is of racism as being caused by the failure of particular groups to integrate' (p. vii, original emphasis).

Of equal significance, the Cante report was published in the wake of the September 11 2001 attacks on New York's World Trade Center with the following 'war on terrorism' being instrumental in centring world attention on Muslim culture and communities, and subsequent portrayals of Islam as an 'uncivilised threat' to global security providing a rationalisation for the war itself. As such, many have argued (e.g. Poole, 2002; Commission on British Muslims and Islamophobia, 2004; Abbas, 2005; Modood, 2005a) this situation has resulted in the demonisation of Muslims worldwide – aggravated by earlier media representations of Islamic fundamentalism during the Rushdie affair (1988-1989) and First Gulf War (1991-1993) which had produced anti-Muslim sentiments – leading to the word Muslim being equated with 'terror' and 'evil' as well as a belief that any individual who appears 'Muslim' may be subjected to hostile scrutiny, held under new terrorism laws and open to attack. Indeed, following the events of September 11 and the Cante report's publication in December 2001, David Blunkett (then Home Secretary) specifically focused on

⁷ Although the Cante report noted that segregation between different communities has always existed, it argued that the polarity between cultures within these northern towns and cities was a fundamental cause for concern. However, Riaz Ahmed – then deputy mayor of Oldham – maintained that the causes of such segregation were far more complex, stating that 'We all want to get rid of segregation, but it is how you do it. [Asian] People find themselves in extreme poverty and deprivation. They have no mechanism to fight out of that poverty and they end up in ghettos' (BBC Online, 2001).

arguments concerning religion and cultural practices in his statements about integration (see Brown, 2001), partially in order to support suggested new legislation on nationality, immigration and asylum. Blunkett's position rested upon his conviction that ethnic minorities must make more of an effort to integrate into British society, and called for immigrants to undertake oaths of allegiance to British social values and 'norms of acceptability' as well as the introduction of English language tests (echoing, despite Blunkett's denial, Norman Tebbit's (in)famous 'cricket test'). He further declared that cultural practices such as genital mutilation and enforced marriages with people from the Indian subcontinent were unacceptable in Britain arguing 'we don't tolerate the intolerable under the guise of cultural difference', adding multi-ethnic communities needed 'sensitivity rather than political correctness' (*ibid.*). Moreover, Blunkett claimed a healthy cohesive society required ethnic minorities not only 'to develop a sense of identity and a sense of belonging' invested in Britain, but must also ensure that future generations grew up 'feeling British' (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, what actually arises from Blunkett's pronouncement is a picture of an insular Asian, predominantly Muslim, separatist community who do not wish to learn English, hold onto conservative cultural practices and are unwilling to integrate with wider society. Furthermore, as Hassan Mahamdallie (2002) has asserted, 'Asians who have lived in this country for decades (and their British born offspring) [are recast] as foreigners who will only be tolerated if they forcibly assimilate "British norms" and become in Blunkett's words "more English"'.

Crucially these events threw the validity of multiculturalism into question with criticisms being levelled, not solely from within the government, but also by commentators working to an established anti-racist agenda who had importantly formerly supported the principle and not, as other left-wing critics, reduced this notion to 'saris and samosas' or a capitalist ploy which disguised class struggles (Modood, 2005b). For example Kenan Malik (2001), in an article written for a Commission for Racial Equality publication, claimed 'multiculturalism has helped segregate communities far more effectively than racism' and Hugo Young (2001) voiced his criticisms more explicitly, declaring multiculturalism 'can now be seen as a useful bible for any Muslim who insists that his religio-cultural priorities, including the defence of jihad against America, overrides his civic duties of loyalty, tolerance, justice and respect for democracy'. In addition Farrukh Dhondy (2001), an ex-Black

Panther political activist and pioneer of multicultural programming on British television, discussed an 'Islamic Fifth Column' which had to be exposed suggesting that the state 'need[ed] to redirect the effort and money that they have poured into race-relations and multiculturalism into a clearer, reasoned, energetic defence of the values of freedom and democracy'. These arguments, in keeping with Blunkett's position, maintain that a 'politically correct' multiculturalism has created fragmentation and separation between communities instead of fostering integration. Indeed Trevor Phillips, former chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, stated that although multiculturalism once had currency the concept was now no longer useful and out of date as it emphasises promoting ethnic uniqueness and fetishises difference rather than encouraging minorities to be British, further arguing that there is a vital 'need to assert ... a core of Britishness' throughout society (see Baldwin, 2004): a position enforced by the London bombings which were perpetrated by British born citizens in July 2005 which, as Tariq Modood (2005c) has said, 'has led many analysts, observers, intellectuals and opinion formers to conclude that multiculturalism has failed'.

More recently, and as a response to the London bombings, Gordon Brown – then Chancellor of the Exchequer – in a speech given to the Fabian society in 2006 (BBC Online, 2006) stressed the increased importance for promoting ethnic minority integration, announcing that Britain must develop 'a united shared sense of purpose ... without which no society can flourish'. In order to achieve this Brown called on British people to 'embrace the Union flag' and patriotism proposing that Britain should have a 'British Day', equivalent to the United States' Independence Day and France's Bastille Day, on which British culture, history, achievements as well as its unique values and ideas could be celebrated; whilst at the same time demonstrating New Labour's desire to re-establish itself as a party of strong national identity. Brown said that patriotism has, over time, come to be associated with right wing principles but claimed that the values on which Britishness is based are in fact grounded in 'progressive' ideas of liberty, fairness and responsibility. Therefore, Brown argued that the British flag needed to be reappropriated from the far-right British National Party, stating that 'Instead of the BNP using it as a symbol of racial division, the flag should be a symbol of unity and part of a modern expression of patriotism too ... We should assert that the Union flag by definition is a flag for

tolerance and inclusion' (*ibid.*). Brown's speech importantly placed the issue of what being British means centre stage within the public arena once more and encouraged dialogue on this matter, as Billy Bragg said:

I do think we need to talk about the issue of identity, about who we are. We live in a very multi-cultural society, perhaps the most multi-cultural in Europe. What actually binds us together? Well, interestingly the thing that binds us together is our civic identity which is Britishness (Bragg, quoted in BBC Online, 2006).

This study began during 2004 following the northern 'race riots', publication of the Cantle report, the events of September 11, calls for the end of multiculturalism as well as integration under the umbrella of 'Britishness' as outlined above, a period in which perceptions and understandings of identities, particularly ethnic identities, have become a more fraught issue. Thus, the present study arose from an interest in and amidst concerns regarding identity within the current political climate, and consequently the question of whether ethnicity is or is not in fact crucially important to identities today came to be an underlying theme informing this research. However, whilst much academic thinking continues to assert ethnicity (or other categories such as gender and class) as a key structural influence on identity (e.g. Andersen and Hill Collins, 1995; Holtzman, 2000; Dines and Humez, 2003; Lind, 2003), this study set out to explore the possibility that individuals' identities are more multi-faceted than previous research has suggested. Moreover, in order to help overcome some of the limitations of existing work which has relied upon research techniques that expect individuals to provide immediate verbal responses to things which are difficult to explain instantaneously and/or prioritise the researchers' preconceived agenda, the study engaged with 'new creative methods' (Gauntlett, 2007, p. 3). Therefore this study aimed to develop understandings of identities – specifically those of young people in contemporary British society – through examining how the media are used in the shaping of self-identity, by utilising an approach which affords participants *time* to *create* a metaphorical or symbolic artefact and *reflect* on it, in the hope that findings produced might both offer more nuanced and sophisticated insights into how individuals conceptualise and construct their identity as well as providing a useful and innovative method for future research projects. As such this study's original contribution to the field is apparent in the issues explored through inviting participants

to invest creatively in the research process, and in the various conclusions of this thesis.

Before proceeding with a detailed outline of this thesis it would perhaps be useful to establish how the concept of identity has been defined from a number of differing perspectives within sociological thought, by drawing upon Stuart Hall's (1992a) influential essay *The Question of Cultural Identity*. Within this work he asserts that identity has been imagined in three distinct ways which have come to dominate our thinking on this matter, these being: the Enlightenment subject; the sociological subject; and the post-modern subject. Hall states that in contrast to pre-modern societies in which identities were structured around traditional frameworks – principally religion – and people were not considered as unique individuals possessing their own identities, but rather a component of the 'great chain of being' (p. 281), he notes that the advent of modernity 'gave rise to a new and decisive form of *individualism*, at the centre of which stood a new conception of the individual subject and its identity' (*ibid.*, original emphasis). As such, Hall claims during the Enlightenment period this new conception of identity, which was grounded in the philosophy of René Descartes (1596-1650), no longer perceived individuals as part of the 'great chain of being' but as unique selves. Hence, in this formulation of identity the individual was regarded as an autonomous, rational, unified whole that was separate from others, with the capacity for independent thought and not bound by social positioning or tradition. As Hall explains:

The Enlightenment subject was based on a conception of the human person as a fully centred, unified individual, endowed with the capacities of reason, consciousness and action, whose 'centre' consisted of an inner core which first emerged when the subject was born, and unfolded with it, while remaining essentially the same – continuous or 'identical' with itself – throughout the individual's existence. The essential centre of the self was a person's identity (p. 275).

However, with the increase of industrialisation and urbanisation during the nineteenth century he observes the development of a more sociological conception of identity. As Hall notes, in this era society had become more directed by structures and organisations which shaped people's lives, and consequently 'The individual citizen

became enmeshed in the bureaucratic administrative machineries of the modern state' (p. 284). Therefore, he proposes that individuals were no longer perceived as unique and distinct from others; instead an individual's relationship with society was negotiated through 'group processes and ... collective norms' (*ibid.*) and as such identity was seen as being inextricably linked to, for example, social class, nationality and occupation. For Hall this conception of identity is advanced by the theory of symbolic interactionism, which claims that identity can only be constructed through interaction with others and an individual's self-concept is in part produced by how other people see them (see Mead, [1934] 1967; Jenkins, 1996). From this perspective, as Hall says:

[I]dentity is formed in the 'interaction' between self and society. The subject still has an inner core or essence that is the 'real me', but this is formed and modified in a continuous dialogue with the cultural worlds 'outside' and the identities they offer. Identity, in the sociological conception, bridges the gap between the 'inside' and 'outside' – between the personal and the public worlds. The fact that we project 'ourselves' into these cultural identities, at the same time internalizing their meanings and values, making them 'part of us', helps to align our subjective feelings with the objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world (1992a, p. 276).

Thus, within this framework, he claims that 'Identity thus stitches (or, to use a current medical metaphor, "sutures") the subject into the structure. It stabilizes both subjects and the cultural worlds they inhabit, making both reciprocally more unified and predictable' (*ibid.*). Although he identifies the value of this approach, Hall suggests that such sociological conceptions of identity have come to lack credibility in a postmodern world. In the postmodern world he notes that societies are distinguished by the presence of fragmented identities in which individuals no longer have a unified, singular sense of self, but rather consist of 'several, sometimes contradictory or unresolved, identities' (pp. 276-277). This fragmentation of identity is attributed to a number of factors including: the rapid pace of change in late modern societies; the growth of new social movements; the rise of identity politics; the impact of feminism; and the effects of globalisation. As such, he explains that individuals' identities are now regarded to be decentred as they do not have an essential or fixed core on which to locate themselves (see Bauman, 1996), and for 'the post-modern subject ... Identity

becomes a “moveable feast”: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us’ (1992a, p. 277; see also Hall, 1987, 1990). Furthermore he comments that the processes of globalisation have specifically come to exert ‘a pluralizing impact on identities, producing a variety of possibilities and new positions of identification, and making identities more positional, more political, more plural and diverse; less fixed, unified or trans-historical’ (p. 309). Consequently Hall concludes that this uncertainty and diversity which is symptomatic of the postmodern condition has resulted in certain groups attempting to create stable and unified identities by re-establishing and asserting their ethnicity (pp. 310-314). Therefore, in consideration of the understandings of identity provided by Hall, this study would perhaps align itself most closely with a symbolic interactionist approach as it aims to explore participants’ identities in relation to, not only how they see themselves, but also how they believe other people’s perceptions impact upon their self-concept. However it should be stressed that this study actually seeks to determine ideas about identity, and how this is understood by young people themselves, through the participants’ *own* interpretations of their work.

Since some theoretical foundations are clearly necessary for a serious consideration of the media’s role in shaping self-identities, Chapter 2 explores the issue of media representation specifically examining previous research on media representations of ethnic minority groups, and how existing representations impact on audience members. An emphasis on ethnicity as central to identity had been highlighted by previous literature, as well as the political discourses outlined above, although this dimension was found to be less crucial to self-identities as the study progressed. Chapter 3 moves on to provide a critical review of developments within audience research through an examination of the various theoretical paradigms that have been employed within this area in order to establish the numerous strategies which have been utilised for understanding audiences and their relationship with the media. The concern raised by a number of studies discussed in this chapter is the need for research to consider people’s media consumption within the context of lived experience and the necessity for advancing new methodological approaches in audience analysis. Continuing the theme of new methodological approaches, Chapter 4 evaluates a wider body of research which has employed creative and visual research

methods and establishes the potential benefits and advantages of such techniques. The chapter outlines the use of metaphors in social research, and foregrounds their value as a means of exploring individuals' identities and experiences. Chapter 5 introduces the collage-making exercise used within this study that invited young people aged 13 to 14 from seven secondary schools in Dorset, Hampshire and London to create and reflect upon a metaphorical representation of their own identity using media images and describes an analytical framework based upon principles provided by art therapy through which the results may be approached; whilst Chapters 6 and 7 analyse the data produced by participants focusing on how they conceptualise and construct their identities in terms of 'gender and individualism' and use the media as a resource to formulate their sense of self demonstrated through a discussion of 'role models'. Finally, Chapter 8 draws together the themes of this particular study and sets out a number of findings and conclusions about 'identities and audiences' and 'creative and visual research methods'.

Chapter 2: Representation

Following the work of many previous scholars who have emphasised the primacy of ‘race’ and ethnicity as a marker of identity (e.g. Entman and Rojecki, 2000; Holtzman, 2000; Jacobs, 2000; Downing and Husband, 2005), this chapter considers research that has examined media representations of ethnicity which we would correspondingly assume should have influenced the self-identities of participants within the present study. The chapter begins with a discussion of a number of studies that propose that media representations of ‘race’ and ethnicity are constructed in accordance with dominant ideological positionings which serve to shape and control how individuals understand others’, and their own, identities. This is followed by an examination of theoretical work on ethnic minority media representations which suggest that issues relating to under-representation and stereotyping remain an ongoing concern within popular culture. Finally, the chapter outlines how ethnic minority groups are engaging with and using the media to create ‘new ethnicities’. Although much of the literature discussed relates to the 1980s and 1990s, these studies remain seminal works which continue to inform thinking in this area.

2.1 Ideology and Representation

In his influential essay *The Whites of Their Eyes: Racist Ideologies and the Media* (1981) Stuart Hall proposes that the media, as a principal form of ideological dissemination, produces representations of the social world via images and portrayals. This manufactures a network of understanding that informs us ‘how the world is and why it works as it is said and shown to work’ (p. 11). Furthermore, he claims that we construct our understanding within an ideology, we ‘speak through’ ideology and that ideology enables us to ‘make sense’ of our social reality and our position within it. Hall asserts that ideologies become ‘naturalised’ and ideologically motivated representations mask themselves as ‘common sense’; within an ideology, politically constructed representations – such as representations of ‘race’ – are conveyed as being ‘given by nature’. This argument maintains that institutional representations enable us to classify the world in a system of categorisations of ‘race’. Hall suggests

that these categorisations are grounded in a series of alleged 'essential' characteristics that reinforce the naturalisation of such representations further. Thus, in Western societies the dominant white ideology naturalises its existence to such a degree that it renders itself 'invisible', yet remains a pervasive controlling force: as Hall reminds us, 'The "white eye" is always outside the frame – but seeing and positioning everything within it' (p. 14).

In agreement with Hall, a significant body of research suggests that the media, as a key transmitter of representations and as a major source of information within society, has the power to control and shape attitudes and beliefs held in the popular imagination (e.g. Cohen and Gardener, 1982; Ferguson, 1998). This is of particular relevance with regard to attitudes, beliefs and understandings concerning 'race'. For example, research by Karen Ross (1992) on white perceptions of ethnic minorities on television demonstrates that attitudes of whites towards non-whites are influenced by media representation. Her study revealed that although the white participants acknowledged stereotypical representations of ethnic minorities on television, they continued to attribute negative characteristics to ethnic minorities in real life. Ross therefore concludes that for a majority of white people who do not have direct experience of black culture, their attitudes will be grounded exclusively on media representations:

[F]or the white viewer, s/he knows about other white people through personal, first-hand experience as well as via media sources. S/he knows that the white deviant personality is not the norm, that most white people are law-abiding, child-loving, kind and caring individuals. S/he knows rather less, however, about ethnic minority communities and must rely much more on secondary experiences, most often vicariously derived from television (p. 31).

Thus, Ross' study indicates that the media play a key role in attitude formation as they select information the public receive, and that selection is ideologically motivated. Ross with Peter Playdon (2001) continued to develop this theme, stating 'If most media products are inscribed with the same set of cultural assumptions (and prejudices) because their producers share the same cultural experiences, then those underlying norms and values which may well be hidden but nonetheless exist, are

transmitted as an un-selfconscious truth' (p. xii). Therefore in this formulation, images of 'blackness' do not represent the social reality of being black, rather they position us into a 'way of thinking about blackness' (*ibid.*). Although Ross and Playdon note that different representations vary in their 'accuracy', they maintain that all representations are culturally constructed and positioned in a specific historical context.

Expanding on the issue of the media's determination of representations, Oscar Gandy (1998) proposes that the mass media are understood to be the most important shaper of contemporary society, usurping the role previously held by church, state and school, as directors of public understanding, thus becoming society's primary socialising agent (p. 24). However, he adds the media themselves do not have unlimited control over representation, as media products must comply with the requirements of advertisers, policy makers and the audience. He claims, therefore, that media images of 'race' do not reflect an accurate portrayal of the spectrum of black culture, and that these representations are those which comply with dominant ideological and economic imperatives.

The preceding theorists suggest that media representations are neither objective nor democratic, as not all groups in society are equally represented. Ethnic minorities, in particular, are marginalised by a white ideology that naturalises itself as 'common sense' and the norm. Specifically, Hall (1990) argues that the methods in which black people and their experiences are represented and subjugated under white ideology is not only a result of political and economic agendas, but also, in accordance with Edward Said's (1978) principle of Orientalism, functions to construct blacks as 'Other'. Furthermore, Hall claims that the insidious and 'invisible' nature of this ideology leads black people to understand *themselves* as 'Other':

It is one thing to position a subject or set of peoples as the Other of a dominant discourse. It is quite another thing to subject them to that 'knowledge', not only as a matter of imposed will and domination, by the power of inner compulsion and subjective conformation to the norm (1990, p. 52).

Therefore, as Hall demonstrates, representation not only affects the understanding of ethnic minority groups within society as a whole, but also how ethnic minority groups come to perceive their own identities. On this issue we must consider that identity is constructed *within* a cultural framework, as Kathryn Woodward (1997) says, 'Identities are produced, consumed and regulated within culture – creating meanings through symbolic systems of representation about the identity positions which we might adopt' (p. 2). We must also consider Hall's (1990) notion that identity is not necessarily 'fixed', but a fluid phenomena; 'Perhaps instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished historical fact ... we should think, instead, of identity as a "production", which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (p. 51)

2.2 Stereotyping

Establishing that the media have the power to dictate which representations of ethnic minorities are chosen and circulated in the public arena, research into minority representation has revealed two fundamental issues underlying the area: under-representation and stereotypical representation. It is suggested that through such representations, ethnic minorities continue to be subordinated in accordance with white ideological hegemony (see hooks, 1992). This is investigated by Hall (1997) who observes that although negative representations are circulated by contemporary media forms, they have been intrinsic in the development of contemporary Western culture. Hall demonstrates this case in discussing how black people became essentialised in terms of Enlightenment values, constructed from a hierarchy of racial categorisation which was intrinsic to Enlightenment thinking. In this system Hall notes how 'white' became synonymous with civilisation, 'black' with nature, identifying that physical features of black people were seen as semiotic indicators of underdevelopment and 'naturalness'. In such a system, blacks were 'reduced to a few essentials, fixed in Nature by a few, simplified characteristics' and 'were reduced to the signifiers of physical difference' (p. 249), promoting the concept of stereotypical representation which entered popular discourses of the Enlightenment and colonial periods. His argument maintains that these Eurocentric principles have remained within contemporary discourses and underpin current representations of 'race'. For

example, Ross (1996) identifies how stereotypical images of black people which were articulated in early film – ‘such as the happy slave, the noble savage and the entertainer’ (p. xxii; see also Bogle, 1994) – were adopted and perpetuated by television. She suggests that these representations conformed to white viewers’ preconceptions of black people, ‘of what blacks were and how they should behave’ (1996, p. 89). Furthermore, Ross claims that ethnic minorities are subjugated by media representations as, not only programme content, but specific perspectives and issues portrayed are dictated and chosen by white controllers. Thus, she states, stereotypical portrayals of ethnic minorities in the media bind ethnic minority representation in a system that prevents the development of ethnic minority characters and experience beyond the established stereotypes.

However, whilst Ross acknowledges that some “‘improvements” in images of black people in television’ (p. 113) and popular film had been made throughout the 1980s, as Andrew Pilkington (2003) asserts ‘such grudging admissions ... downplay the growth in both the volume and range of representations of minority ethnic groups’ (p. 190) exemplified by texts such as the film *My Beautiful Laundrette* (dir. Stephen Frears, 1985), the black sitcom *Desmond’s* (C4, 1989-1994) and Asian sketch show *Goodness Gracious Me* (BBC, 1998-2000). Therefore such representations ‘expands the *range* of racial representations and the *complexity* of what it means to “be black” [or Asian], thus challenging the reductionism of earlier stereotypes’ (Hall, 1997, pp. 272-273, original emphasis). Nevertheless, these images of ethnic minorities remain contentious and problematic, illustrated by Farzana Shain’s (2003) critique of the film *East is East* (dir. Damien O’Donnell, 1999) in which she argues ‘*East is East* ... was hailed as a success for race relations but ... reproduces familiar themes associated with the cultural pathology discourse of domestic violence, domineering fathers, passive Asian women and the East/West culture clash’ (p. 4, see also pp. 5-7).

2.3 Race Relations

The role of television was particularly pivotal in the dissemination of cultural representations of black people in British society, as the medium’s growth coincided with post-war immigration. In her analysis of representations of black and Asian

people on television, Sarita Malik (2002) illustrates how documentaries of the 1950s and 1960s contributed to the positioning of black people within the media as a social 'problem'. Malik links this with a number of factors including: changes in technology that freed programme makers from the studio and allowed them to film on location; the ideals of the Reithian project to educate and inform; and the liberal humanist agenda of social realist producers, who aimed to make sympathetic documentaries on 'race issues' with the aim of facilitating black assimilation into 'British' culture. This is of particular significance as integration and assimilation of 'immigrants' was to become the central theme of race relations policy. However, Malik's analysis reveals that the specific issues these programmes focused on – such as 'arrival', 'employment', 'housing', 'crime', 'miscegenation' and 'overcrowding' (p. 30) – in effect, framed blacks as social problem from their inception by reinforcing the binary of 'them' (blacks) and 'us' (whites).

The theme of 'black as problem' is not contained exclusively within 'factual' programming, but paralleled in comedy, as Marie Gillespie (2002) illustrates. Using Andy Medhurst's (1989) analysis of comedy in which he states that 'one of comedy's chief functions ... is to police the ideological boundaries of a culture, to act as a border guard on the frontiers between the dominant and the subordinate, to keep laughter in the hands of the powerful' (p. 16), Gillespie demonstrates how comedies of the 1960s and 1970s reflected anxieties over assimilation by integrating antagonisms between black and white characters as central components of the narrative. She proposes that this not only positioned blacks as a 'problem', but also as a 'threat' to national unity. For Gillespie, these positionings were a consequence of larger political concerns – most notably those voiced by Enoch Powell in his (in)famous 'Rivers of Blood' speech (1968) – which sought to deny diversity in favour of a collective 'British' identity grounded in essentialised notions of white English Britishness. Thus, according to Gillespie, race relations policy, in which assimilation was integral, fostered the abandonment of immigrant cultural identities.

The concepts of black as 'threat' and black as 'problem' are also apparent, as Jim Pines (1989) observes, in crime dramas. Pines notes that black criminals are involved in naturalised 'black' crimes; using examples of street crime and prostitution, and black heroes are similarly 'ghettoised', in that they are portrayed as agents of law

within black culture, dealing specifically with 'black' issues. Central to Pines' argument is his observation that, despite the liberal agendas of programme makers, by segregating specific social problems as 'black problems' these representations trap crime dramas into a race relations format. Hence, in contrast to perceptions that drama engaged with 'race' issues in a more sophisticated manner, Pines illustrates how similar representations to those found in comedy entered drama:

Although the presence of blacks in mainstream drama is often seen as an important break with the sitcom tradition, the conventions used to structure black imagery into the narratives have tended to revert to more popular (and often reactionary) racial and social stereotypes (p. 70).

Expanding on this issue Stephen Bourne (1989) focuses on the popular genre of British soap operas. The central focus of this analysis suggests that writers and producers of early soap operas omitted black and Asian characters, as their inclusion would disrupt the narrative framework of the storylines, by potentially revealing racist attitudes in established (white) characters. Furthermore, Bourne observes that when black and Asian characters entered the narrative schema, the characters remained marginalised to the plot structure, continued to be represented in stereotypical ways and were 'underused and undervalued' (p. 129).

The above examples indicate that stereotypical representations are evident in television, however these representations have also been proliferated throughout all forms of popular culture. For example, Clint Wilson and Felix Gutierrez (1995) have demonstrated how US advertising has been marked, first by exclusion of blacks and Asians and latterly by stereotypical representations. This analysis further identifies that when advertisers have targeted black consumers, 'racial pride' has been exploited to generate conspicuous consumption thus promoting essentialised notions of 'race' within the black community. Although Wilson and Gutierrez acknowledge that advertising in the 1990s had attempted to respond sensitively to racial representation by embracing a wider repertoire of black images, they maintain that these images continued to be framed within the 'white eye' (Hall, 1981).

Therefore representations of black people within popular culture remained firmly rooted within stereotypical roles, identified by Angela Barry (1992) as 'troublemaker', 'entertainer' and 'dependant'. Kobena Mercer (1989) states that this narrow repertoire of black representation results in the majority's belief that 'all black people are like that' (p. 3) whilst simultaneously denying diversity and difference within the black population. In addition to this, he stresses that a lack of alternative black imagery 'burdens each image with the role of being "representative"' (p. 4). This is of particular significance to ethnic minorities as media representations can impact negatively on the perception of ethnic minorities in social reality, as Simon Cottle (2000a) notes:

It is in and through these representations, for example, that members of the media audience are variously incited to construct a sense of who 'we' are in relation to who 'we' are not, whether as 'us' and 'them', 'insider' and 'outsider', 'coloniser' and 'colonised', 'citizen' and 'foreigner', 'normal' and 'deviant', 'friend' and 'foe', 'the West' and 'the rest' (p. 2).

This point can be demonstrated by Elizabeth Poole's (2001) study of British Muslims and the British press. Poole's study aimed to explore how British Muslims constructed meanings from press reports on Islam. Her study revealed that the British Muslims took an oppositional stance to negative portrayals of Islam, seeing these as ideologically motivated, while more sympathetic portrayals were assimilated into their 'common sense' perspective. However, although British Muslims approached media texts with their own interpretative frameworks, the participants believed that negative media coverage of Islam results in negative attitudes towards them by non-Muslims. Therefore the effects of media representation is felt to promote negative, limited portrayals that deny diversity within ethnic minorities whilst promoting the belief in whiteness as the norm and a unitary identity. However whiteness is not a homogenous culture, but a discourse that has been constructed through which it exercises and naturalises its power (Dyer, 1988; Gabriel, 2000).

2.4 Multiculturalism

Growing dissatisfaction with the race relations problematic and demand for increased black representations during the late 1970s prompted shifts in media and institutional policy at a time when 'black' was being rearticulated as a political, rather than racial category. This political rearticulation of 'black' was instigated by the American Civil Rights movement, which pressed for black liberation from subjugation and oppression. Rather than viewing black communities as a homogenous whole, recognition of difference and diversity were central tenets of multiculturalism. Thus, multiculturalism abandoned the ideals of assimilation and integration in favour of celebrating difference. This philosophy was most notably reflected in Channel 4's (1982) mandate to provide programmes for minority audiences. Channel 4 aimed to promote diversified black representations facilitated by an increase in independent productions as well as greater presence of black people in professional roles.

Although multiculturalism aimed to move towards a more equitable process of representation in principle, new more complex racist images were produced that not only propagated existing stereotypes but created new ones (Salaria, 1987). Ross (1996; see also Jhally and Lewis, 1992) cites *The Cosby Show* (NBC, 1984-1992) as an example; ostensibly a positive portrayal of African Americans on US television, the programme presents the audience with a black family as 'ordinary', and yet it disavows racism and oppression. *The Cosby Show*, she claims, locates success in individualism and personal achievement, thus depoliticising the programme and allowing audiences to dismiss black inequalities as personal failure. As Ross states, 'Cosby functions to "resolve" America's racial failures by successfully recoding *black* in positive terms and therefore countering a history of negative stereotyping' (1996, p. 103, original emphasis; see Real, 1989). On the same theme, Mercer (1989) identifies a paradox within *The Cosby Show*; the programme provides 'positive' representations of black people, while purporting white, middle-class, American values. As Mercer states, 'There is nothing specifically "black" about the culture and lifestyle of the Huxtables, and in this way, the positive image is revealed to be no more than an imitation copy of normative ideals' (p. 6). Thus, although attempts were made to counteract negative stereotypes with positive ones, these 'positive' images were still

stereotypical and dependent upon assimilation into the white norm. However, Mercer acknowledges that black writers and producers who have gained access to the means of representation are perceived to be token 'representatives' of the black community as a whole, and therefore bear the 'burden of representation':

If every black image, event or individual is expected to be 'representative', this can only simplify and homogenise the diversity of black experience and identities. In other words the burden of representation reinforces the reductive logic of the stereotype (p. 9).

This notion is also explored by Paul Gilroy (1983) who posits further problems with the depiction of 'positive blacks' within a multicultural framework. Using the example of Channel 4's all-black sitcom *No Problem!* (1983-1985), Gilroy states that the exclusion of politics within the narrative structure enabled the white audience to laugh *at* the black characters from a 'common sense' racist perspective. *No Problem!*, he claims, can be accused of this as the characters were portrayed as figures of 'blackness' without any reference to black social reality. Furthermore, Gilroy problematises the structure of multicultural programming, suggesting that specific programming for ethnic minority audiences is in itself an act of marginalisation that mirrors black people's lived experience. Thus, he maintains that multicultural programmes' focus on ethnic minorities' antagonisms and difference with white culture reinforces and cements the positioning of blacks as problematic 'Other'.

It should be noted that several commentators have stated that ethnic minority representation is motivated by economic imperatives rather than an intrinsic interest in black culture (Gandy, 1998; Valdivia, 2002). Cottle (2000b) maintains that multicultural programming is hindered, as its content has to conform to the agendas of a media industry subject to a 'Byzantine bureaucracy' (p. 103) and the constraints of a market economy. Furthermore he emphasises, in agreement with Gilroy (1983), that structural inequalities within society and the media industry neglect that minority status is not just a matter of numerical imbalance, but a structural imbalance in

political and economic power. 'Thus, multiculturalism, Cottle claims, fails to engage with these issues in favour of a celebration of difference.'⁸

These suggestions are supported by a study conducted in the mid 1990s by Ross (2001) who questioned ethnic minority audiences about the portrayals of ethnic minorities on television and how they would change these representations. The participants noted a limited range of available images and the continued marginalisation of ethnic minorities. The study revealed that ethnic minority characters were perceived as unrealistic and, not only peripheral to narratives, but also never truly integrated into the community. Furthermore, the participants expressed that the home life of ethnic minority characters did not acknowledge cultural authenticity, and felt that multiculturalism continued to circulate stereotypical portrayals homogenising blackness, as Ross summarises, “‘multicultural’ has come to mean cultural homogeneity, a proliferation of uni-cultures into which all their disparate and diverse voices, interests, views, identifications and practices dissolve into a formless mass of stereotypical essences’ (p. 12). Her participants rejected the ‘black as problem/threat’ discourses and stated that they did not require the replacement of negative stereotypes with positive stereotypes, but rather an acknowledgement of their diverse experiences within a realistic framework.

Therefore, the positive/negative binary framework can be seen to be difficult, as the above literature demonstrates, because it perpetuates stereotypical representation and fails to engage with systematic inequalities that are integral to the politics of representation. Hall (1992b) argues that identity and its representations cannot be reduced to a system of binary oppositions which continue to essentialise the black subject, and that identity/representations based on such must be rejected:

The essentializing moment is weak because it naturalizes and de-historicizes difference, mistaking what is historical and cultural for what is natural, biological and genetic.

⁸ It should be noted however that in more recent years television programmes such as the Asian comedy series *Goodness Gracious Me* (BBC, 1998-2000) – which was originally targeted at ethnic minority audiences – and its spin-off talk show *The Kumars at No. 42* (BBC, 2001-2006) have attempted to subvert racist stereotypes through comedy (Gillespie, 2002); nevertheless these programmes arguably continue to neglect the structural and economic disadvantages ethnic minority groups confront, which would appear to support Gilroy (1983) and Cottle’s (2000b) positions.

The moment the signifier 'black' is torn from its historical, cultural and political embedding and lodged in a biologically constituted racial category, we valorize, by inversion, the very ground of the racism we are trying to deconstruct (p. 472).

In his analysis Hall maintains that it is the diversity, not homogeneity, of black experience that should be the focus of enquiry. He claims that investigation into identity must be open to the numerous, and often contrary, factors instrumental in identity such as age, class and sexuality. Thus, in order to unpack the 'burden of representation' and open the area to more democratic representational frameworks a new, more nuanced schema of representation has been proposed.

2.5 New Ethnicities

Isaac Julien and Kobena Mercer (1988) claim that within media structures, limitation of diverse ethnic 'voices' constitutes a political problem. Firstly, an individual black writer or producer is perceived as a 'typified' representative of a specific culture. Secondly, minority 'voices' are contained within a 'majority discourse' that positions minorities ideologically via stereotyping. Hall (1989) suggests that when black people united under the political umbrella of 'black' to initially contest issues of representation, their two primary objectives were: 1. Black artists obtaining access to the rights of representation, and 2. Challenging prevailing representation and marginalisation through the creation of 'positive' black images. Hall states that the focus of this contestation was upon the 'relations of representation', whereas he proposes a move towards the 'politics of representation' which heralds the 'end of the essential black subject':

[B]lack is essentially a politically and culturally *constructed* category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural or transcendental racial categories and which therefore has no guarantees in nature. What brings this into play is the recognition of the immense diversity and differentiation of the historical and cultural experience of black subjects. This inevitably entails a weakening or fading of the notion that 'race' or some composite notion of race around the term 'black' will either guarantee the effectivity of any cultural practice or determine in any final sense its aesthetic value (p. 443, original emphasis).

Hall stresses that the end of the essential black subject will give rise to recognition of differences by acknowledging the multiple subject positions found within ethnic minorities.

These principles were also evident in black film-making practices of the 1980s. As Pines (1992) notes, black film-makers exploited opportunities for exploring black political and cultural issues in a manner which was sympathetic with Hall's recontextualisation of identity. According to Pines, these films not only challenged conventional modes of representation of minorities originating from the race relations and multicultural approaches, but also contested power relations that exist within mainstream cinema practice. Thus, subverting orthodox forms of film-making enabled a more sophisticated engagement with the complexities of ethnic minorities' experiences. An example of this practice is discussed in Mercer's (1988) analysis of film, in which he identifies two forms of black film-making: 1. Monologic film which follows the codes and conventions of mainstream cinema, differing only in content, for example *Blacks Britannica* (dir. David Koff, 1978) and *The People's Account* (dir. Milton Bryan, 1986), and 2. Dialogic film which challenges and subverts conventional cinematic codes in an attempt to eschew Eurocentric aesthetics, such as *Territories* (dir. Isaac Julien, 1984) and *Handsworth Songs* (dir. John Akomfrah, 1986). This latter mode he claims engages in critical dialogue with the film-making process itself, exposing conventional cinematic codes as a product of dominant white practices. By doing so Mercer proposes that the dialogic strategy politicises black film-making and constructs a counter-discourse to white hegemony by contesting the very notion of representation itself through acknowledging the various subject positions within black identity. For Mercer, this frees up positions from which the black film-maker can speak and creates an arena in which greater diversity can be articulated and the 'burden of representation' can be unpacked. However, it may be less appealing to mainstream audiences.

Hall argues that this radical rethinking of identity and representation, as exemplified through black film-making practices, will counter dominant discourses of nationalism and national identity (1987). He proposes that ethnicity is neither fixed nor permanent, and in so doing undermines monolithic and oppressive discourses grounded in categorisations of 'race'. However, Gilroy (1991) identifies a danger in

dismissing 'race' as a construct, arguing that the structures of power and subordination that affect social reality continue to be organised within a racial framework. Despite the apparent validity of Gilroy's position, Hall's proposal arguably remains credible as micro-level challenges – demonstrated for example by black film-making practices discussed above – contribute towards a destabilising of the macro-level ideas about 'race' and ethnicity.

2.6 Cultural Change

Globalisation and changes in technologies have seen a fragmentation of the nation state. It has been suggested that this has resulted in the re-emergence of discourses about 'purist' ethnicities and a new, more sophisticated form of racism. This racism 'seeks to present an (imaginary) definition of the nation as a unified *cultural* commodity which engages a national culture which is perpetually vulnerable to incursions from enemies within and without' (Ross, 1996, p. xii, original emphasis; see Gilroy, 1987). In an analysis of British newspapers Teun van Dijk (2000) demonstrates that this new racism is located in cultural, rather than biological, difference. Van Dijk suggests that this strategy functions through a process of 'positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation', i.e. their bad actions against our good ones (p. 38). Van Dijk concludes that this continuing pattern of representations instils negative perceptions and prejudices, thus perpetuating racism.

Although van Dijk's findings are pessimistic, various commentators have emphasised that cultural hybridity, produced by the same processes of globalisation and technological changes, is producing new syncretic cultures articulated through various media forms (Hebdige, 1987; Gillespie, 2000). For example, Roza Tsagarousianou's (2001) study on media usage by London's Asian and Greek-Cypriot communities found that although these communities expressed marginalisation and exclusion from mainstream culture, they demonstrated sophisticated patterns of consumption of media products which articulated their ethnic specificity as well as their inclusion into the 'mainstream'. As she states:

[Minorities] are clearly demonstrating that they expect to be treated in a way that acknowledges and accepts the fact that they are living in a different place (physically

and socially) and are attempting to negotiate their inclusion to the national community of their country of origin in ways that assert their difference, at the same time affirming their common elements with fellow nationals living in their home countries or in other diasporas (p. 30).

The issue of media usage and consumption within diasporic cultures, principally Punjabi youths in Southall, is also explored by Gillespie (1995). Gillespie engages with the uses which a variety of popular cultural forms are put to. In particular, her discussion of the Australian soap opera *Neighbours* (1985-present) raises some pertinent points. Her study identifies that although *Neighbours* did not represent the social reality of this audience, the participants used the programme as a metaphorical representation of their own experience. The Punjabi audience did not *identify* with the characters and situations in *Neighbours per se*, but *associated* the programme's content with their social world. For example, the participants recognised problems encountered by characters within *Neighbours* as reflective of their own experiences and used 'soap talk' as a strategy for resolving these dilemmas as well as bonding friendships, discussing subjects that would be taboo in parental company such as sexual attraction with friends, negotiating family relationships and arguing with parents for greater personal freedoms. According to Gillespie, then, *Neighbours* enabled this audience to compare their own lives with white culture on television, and she claims that this raised the participants' awareness of cultural difference which would in itself stimulate a move towards cultural change. Therefore, Gillespie concludes that within diasporic cultures 'media are being used to create new, shared spaces in which syncretic cultural forms, such as "new ethnicities", can emerge' (p. 208).

2.7 Summary

A survey of the literature suggests that media representations of ethnic minorities have been politically motivated by white ideology and it has explored methods that have been proposed as strategies for undermining this cultural dominance. The struggle for control of representation is a crucial one, as representation does not merely reflect reality 'as it is', but forms that reality in the social environment by shaping perceptions and understandings in the audience. As such it is imperative that

research continues to interrogate representation with a critical eye, in order to develop new, radical methods of representation. However, whilst inequalities prevail in representation, it is important to examine how individuals make sense of, and utilise existing representations in the construction of their identities. Therefore the next chapter moves on to consider the various approaches that have been employed in previous research to understand audiences and their uses of, and relationship with, the media.

Chapter 3: Understanding Audiences

Within everyday discourse the word ‘audience’ is commonly used unproblematically; however, this term is actually rather complex, and establishing its exact definition poses a number of conceptual difficulties for social research as ‘audience’ is fundamentally an abstract concept. Therefore, this chapter provides an overview of developments within audience research in order to understand how differing theoretical paradigms have conceptualised audiences. The discussion firstly addresses approaches that propose the media is a powerful force which has ‘effects’ on people’s behaviour, and moves on to consider perspectives which suggest individuals use media to satisfy psychological and social needs, thereby attributing audiences a more active role. Following this, the chapter details the seminal ‘Encoding/Decoding’ model which highlights that although media messages are embedded with a ‘preferred reading’, audience’s interpretations of these texts is dependent upon the individual’s assumptions and social context. As such, this model prompted shifts towards qualitative studies of audiences which the chapter explores through a discussion of more recent studies informed by feminist agendas and a focus on social uses of the media. The primary concern raised in these studies is the need for people’s media consumption to be considered within the context of their lived experience and for research to foster new methodological approaches in audience analysis. Thus, the chapter concludes by outlining in brief the potential benefits of creative audience research.

3.1 The Problem of Audience

In his book *Audience Analysis* (1997), Denis McQuail states ‘The word “audience” has long been familiar as the collective term for the “receivers” in the simple sequential model of the mass communication process (source, channel, message, receiver, effect) that was deployed by pioneers in the field of media research’ (p. 1). He suggests that this definition has been utilised in everyday discourse to refer to that which is, in reality, a diverse and complex principal subject, associated with numerous and often conflicting theoretical approaches. McQuail claims that as most audiences

of the mass media are not observable – apart from in fragmentary or indirect ways – conceptualising the audience remains problematic due to its abstract character. Furthermore, he notes ‘Audiences are both a product of social context ... and a response to a particular media provision’ (p. 2) and that these often overlapping spheres which influence media use are further compounded by an individual’s ‘time use, availability, lifestyle and everyday routines’ (*ibid.*). Thus, McQuail argues that although the term ‘audience’ is ostensibly clear in its definition, it is in fact, an ambiguous concept defined by variable and intersecting factors such as:

[B]y *place* (as in the case of local media); by *people* (as when a medium is characterized by an appeal to a certain age group, gender, political belief, or income category); by the particular type of *medium* or *channel* involved (technology and organization combined); by the *content* of its messages (genres, subject matter, styles); by *time* (as when one speaks of the ‘daytime’ or the ‘primetime’ audience, or an audience that is fleeting and short term compared to one that endures) (*ibid.*, original emphasis).

In agreement with these ideas, Shaun Moores (1993) asserts that the audience is not a homogeneous group that is easily identifiable for observation and analysis. Rather, Moores proposes a plurality of *audiences* – consisting of disparate groups categorised according to their reception of various media and/or by their social and cultural positioning (p. 2). Although this definition poses further conceptual difficulties, Moores highlights this by drawing upon Janice Radway’s (1988) work on the origin of the word ‘audience’ itself. In her analysis, Radway states that the term’s original definition referred to the act of hearing in face-to-face communication, in which individuals shared a direct physical space. In contrast to this, Radway says that in its contemporary usage the term is used to include consumers of electronic mediated messages. In this formulation, she notes that the audience is both distanced and dispersed, and consequently it becomes increasingly difficult to determine who or what constitutes the audience (p. 359). This point is consolidated by Moores’ statement that ‘The conditions and boundaries of audiencehood are inherently unstable’ (1993, p. 2; see also Dahlgren, 1998). However, if the notion of audience is ‘inherently unstable’ then, as Moores asserts, ‘how is it that we have come to accept the category of “the audience” as a self-evident fact?’ (1993, p. 2). Specifically, John

Hartley (1987) claims that the fabrication of the ‘audience’ is perpetuated by media industries and media academics for their own purposes: ‘in all cases the product is a fiction which serves the needs of the imagining institution. In no case is the audience “real”, or external to its discursive construction’ (p. 125). In opposition to this, Moores maintains that the audience has a ‘reality’, albeit emeshed in lived experience and elusive, and in accordance with Ien Ang’s (1991) argument, a differentiation must be made ‘between “television audience” as discursive construct and the social world of actual audiences’ (p. 13). In other words, Ang’s argument maintains that the economically motivated audience of the media industry is a discursive fiction, whereas the audience of social reality remains a legitimate object of study.

Developing this theme, Karen Ross and Virginia Nightingale (2003) identify five elements of media events that are sources of audience research interest, ‘the audience participants as individuals; the audience activities of the participants in the media event; the media time/space of the event; the media power relations that structure the event; and the mediatized information with which people engage’ (p. 7). They further suggest that ‘In all audience research, certain assumptions are made about what aspects of the media event are acting on audiences and about whether or not such “influence” is likely to benefit them [the researchers]’ (*ibid.*). Consequently, Ross and Nightingale claim that any consideration of the media and audiences will be partial rather than comprehensive. Thus, in order to understand how audiences have been conceptualised, it is necessary to consider the various theoretical paradigms employed in audience analysis.

3.2 Effects

Research by Herbert Blumer (1946) claimed that modernity had produced a new social form, the *mass*, which differed from the ‘group’ and the ‘crowd’ in that it was disparate, alienated, dispersed and lacked collective will or identity. Furthermore, he suggested that the mass were distanced from the sources of cultural production and subject to influence or control by external forces or interests, for example the media. Indeed, such concerns of effects on the mass were articulated as early as the aftermath of World War One. As Will Brooker and Deborah Jermyn (2003, p. 5) note, the

effectivity of propaganda as a weapon initiated studies that proposed a 'direct effects' model of understanding audience's responses to media messages. In this approach, human behaviour is seen to be conditioned by a stimulus-response model in which the media transmit messages that are unquestionably received by a passive audience. James Lull (2000) summarises this point stating, 'The first stage of media audience research reflects ... strong impressions of the ... media as powerful, persuasive forces in society' (p. 98).

Expanding on this issue, the role of the media as a tool of manipulation is an area explored by the Frankfurt School, principally, Theodor Adorno (1991; with Horkheimer, 1979). Adorno proposed that the mass media, or what he termed 'the culture industry', acts ideologically to control and contain the masses by 'craftily sanctioning the demand for rubbish it [the culture industry] inaugurates total harmony' (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1979, p. 121). According to Adorno, the culture industries produce 'standardised' products which, he maintained, nulls the audience into a docile state that precludes any critical or political engagement with culture and society. Thus, Adorno relegates the role of the audience to a passive mass unable to create 'authentic' meaning in the texts they consume. Although Adorno's ideas continue to have theoretical currency, a number of criticisms have been levelled against his work. For example, Ang (1985) claims that the 'ideology of mass culture' is highly reductive as it equates the popular with 'bad taste' and inferiority. Furthermore, Adorno failed to engage with any ethnographic study of *actual* audiences, or textual analyses of the cultural products he discussed (Brooker and Jermyn, 2003, p. 52). In addition, Ross and Nightingale (2003, p. 4) suggest that it is inappropriate to conceptualise the audience as *mass*. Instead they propose *formations* is more representative, as this indicates the social/cultural complexity of audience membership and that audiences do not exist solely in relation to the media.

3.3 Indirect Effects

Returning to the issue of effects, Robert Merton's ([1949] 1968) analysis of propaganda and persuasion conducted in 1949 revealed that media effects were not as predictable as supposed. His study identified that individuals could read texts at total

variance from the intended message of the producers. This 'boomerang effect', he claimed, could be produced when audiences compared a text's content with their own experience, and concluded that 'misreadings' were a result of an individual's social/cultural perspective rather than an inherent flaw in the message. The significance of Merton's work was that it established a relationship between social and lived experience and reading media texts. This principal was developed further by Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld (1955) who acknowledged the role of the social environment in the interpretation of media. Katz and Lazarsfeld proposed a 'two-step flow' theory, in which media messages were not transmitted directly to individuals, but mediated through 'influentials' or respected 'opinion leaders'. Furthermore, they 'found that opinion leadership does not operate only vertically from top to bottom, but also horizontally: there are opinion leaders in every walk of life' (Lazarsfeld, 1968, quoted in Brooker and Jermyn, 2003, p. 7). Consequently, Katz and Lazarsfeld questioned the status of the audience as a 'mass' of alienated individuals, rather they proposed the audience consisted of individuals involved in complex social networks. Thus, these studies indicated how the media functioned as a facilitator for social interaction and opened up the possibility of a more 'active' audience that the simple stimulus-response model denied. However, these works produced only observable and short-term results in terms of attitude changes in the audience. In addition, they failed to produce a theoretical response to media industry systems or to engage with macro-level culture and economic formulations (Hall, 1982).

Despite the problems highlighted regarding the 'effects' model, effects of media violence and the influence of the media on children remains a pertinent issue. Further difficulties arise in that there are disparities between the findings of the US and UK research. As Olga Linné and Ellen Wartella (1998) observe, US research indicates a causal link between media violence and violent behaviour in the audience, whereas UK research reaches contradictory conclusions – arguing that US research ignores social and economic factors. On this issue, David Gauntlett (1998, 2002) raises a number of criticisms with effects studies. Specifically he argues that they do not account for the audiences' complex engagement and interpretation of texts, and fail to acknowledge that other social and cultural influences on behaviour cannot be successfully isolated from media influences:

[I]solating one particular thing, such as TV viewing or magazine reading, as the cause of a person's behaviour is basically impossible. The idea that a bit of media content 'made' somebody do something will always seem silly, for the perfectly good reason that, as we all know, the influences upon any decision to do something are a complex combination of many elements, including previous experiences, opinions, values and suggestions from various sources (2002, p. 29).

3.4 Uses and Gratifications

Weaknesses in the effects model prompted the development of the uses and gratifications approach that was informed by Katz's (1959) statement that 'less attention [should be paid] to what media do to people and more to what people do with the media' (p. 2). This thinking enabled studies to investigate long-term attitude changes and the role of the active audience. Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch (1974) identified the focus of this approach as:

(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratification and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones (p. 20).

In this formulation, the audience use the media to satisfy psychological and social needs. Denis McQuail, Jay Blumler and J. R. Brown (1972) illustrated audiences could utilise the media to gratify a number of needs: diversion (escape and entertainment); personal relationship needs (social interaction); personal identity needs (character identification and value reinforcement); and surveillance needs (information accumulation). Thus, the uses and gratifications approach accommodated an understanding of audience members as active agents within a social network rather than fragmented individuals within a monolithic mass. Furthermore, the model acknowledges media content and how attitude change extends to include the audience's knowledge, behaviour, beliefs and value systems (Abercrombie, 1996, p. 141).

Although the uses and gratification approach opened up new and more ‘positive’ possibilities for audience research, a number of criticisms have been levelled against it as a tool of analysis. Nicholas Abercrombie (1996, p. 142) asserts that it is ‘too positive’ – crediting the audience with far more autonomy and control than they have in actuality. In addition, he states that the approach does not interrogate how audiences ‘create’ meanings in their interpretation of media texts. Virginia Nightingale and Karen Ross (2003, p. 6) identify that although the model foregrounds the active audience and its needs, it fails to engage with the concept of identity and identities being produced by culture. They question the approach further by noting that, although it prioritised the role of the ‘active audience’, it neglects the influence of social and cultural experience on the audiences’ readings of the media. Martin Barker and Kate Brooks (1998a, pp. 87-88) criticise the approach as it does not consider: needs generated *by* the media; the consequences of needs *not* being gratified; in some cases media contact may constitute a need in itself; it does not consider changes that may result from a need being satisfied nor does it acknowledge that some audience members use the media more than others. They further highlight the problem of gratification acting as a vicarious compensation for audience members’ ‘problems’, the method misunderstanding the media as a wilful aid to peoples’ ‘struggling’. As they explain:

‘[G]ratification’ means one and only one thing: it is a solution to a deficit in an individual which has been caused by problematic social experience. They talk of the media ‘compensating’ for problems, of audiences ‘feeling insecure’ and using the media as a result ... audience responses are constructed by much more than putative ‘needs’ seeking gratification (pp. 90-91).

3.5 Political Economy

In response to the uses and gratification model, studies emerging in the 1970s recognised that audiences should be considered as communities or cultures, rather than individuals. The political economy approach situated audiences within a theoretical framework that allowed for critical analysis of the media *and* media content. For example, James Halloran, Phillip Elliott and Graham Murdock (1970) aimed to develop ‘a comprehensive strategy which would include the study of the

mass media as social institutions and of mass communication as a social process, both within the wider social system' (p. 18). Halloran, Elliot and Murdock's study on news coverage engaged in analysis of both the production of, and responses to, media texts. They identified that reception and interpretation of media was influenced by the audiences' position in society (in this specific case – occupation), and that media texts were constructed and framed in accordance to media industry protocols. As Maxwell McCombs (1994) states, the media's structuring of news leads to what is termed 'agenda setting' in which the media 'may not be very successful in telling us what to think, but is stunningly successful in telling us what to think about!' (p. 27; see Cohen, 1963). The strengths of this approach to audience research was that it was grounded in social theory – focusing specifically on class and media representations – and recognised the role of the audience's social/cultural position in their interpretations (Ross and Nightingale, 2003, p. 34). However, a large number of the studies relied on quantitative methodologies, and a more nuanced theory which accounted for the subtleties in readings of media texts was developed by the encoding/decoding model.

3.6 Encoding/Decoding

In his seminal paper *Encoding/Decoding* (1980) Stuart Hall proposed that media producers 'encoded' meanings into media texts, which carry a 'preferred' reading intended for the audience. Incorporating a semiotic framework into his analysis, Hall claims that the active audience do not simply digest messages encoded by the producers, but 'decode' meanings from the media in accordance with *their own* social and cultural context. Thus, according to Hall, media texts are polysemic and can be read in a number of ways. However, Hall stresses that the encoding/decoding model does not claim that texts are open to an infinite number of interpretations as they remain 'structured in dominance'. Rather, the audience can adopt one of a number of stances when decoding a message: accepting the dominant reading; adopting an oppositional position – decoding a totally contrary message to that intended by the producer; or a negotiated position in which the preferred reading is accommodated without accepting its ideology. Although Hall does not deny that media messages

have effects, he reminds us that these effects are dependent upon the audience's *interpretation* of the text:

Before this message can have an 'effect' (however defined), or satisfy a 'need' or be put to a 'use', it must first be perceived as a meaningful discourse and meaningfully de-coded. It is this set of de-coded meanings which 'have an effect', influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological or behavioural consequences (p. 509).

Therefore, Hall's encoding/decoding approach demonstrated a number of advantages as a theoretical model: it enabled the media to be studied as a facet of, and a transmitter of, dominant ideology; it revealed how media messages were reworked by different social groups within society; it identified that although dominant readings were 'privileged', they were not dictated by media texts; it studied the audience in terms of their readings rather than their psychological needs; and emphasised the political rather than the personal. In addition, by focusing on 'discourses' it lessened the importance of any single text or media (Ross and Nightingale, 2003, pp. 37-38).

David Morley's (1980) study of *Nationwide* was an early example of the encoding/decoding approach being utilised to investigate audience reception of media texts. Through engaging with both reception of the programme's ideology and mode of address, Morley analysed the responses of a number of occupational groups according to class (including shop stewards, black students in further education, bank managers and apprentices) in order to monitor their acceptance or rejection of preferred meanings. His study attempted to illustrate how the participant's social positioning would influence whether they read *Nationwide* from a dominant, negotiated or oppositional position. Mapping each group's responses, Morley demonstrated that the audience's reactions were 'politically patterned'. Although the encoding/decoding approach enabled Morley to consider the study of 'audience talk' more thoroughly and investigate situations where 'talk is both produced and "normalised"' (Ross and Nightingale, 2003, p. 38), a number of problems are inherent in his findings. As Abercrombie (1996, pp. 143-144) notes, the study revealed it was too simplistic to describe the audience's reception of media within the prescribed categories of dominant, negotiated and oppositional readings. For example, the bank

managers accepted the ideological position of the programme but rejected its mode of address, whereas shop stewards were attracted by the popular format but rejected the ideological content. Even within the reading categories, complications were observed – the shop stewards and the black students both took oppositional stances; however, the shop stewards' opposition manifested itself as active dissent, whereas the black students totally disengaged from the programme. Furthermore, decoding cannot be evaluated solely in terms of the social, economic or class location of the audience; analyses of selected audiences' responses need to be questioned if members of the specific group would not usually engage with the selected media text; and, are there truly 'preferred' readings of texts, or are these projected onto the text by the researchers themselves (see Barker and Brooks, 1998a, pp. 93-97)?

Despite the above criticisms it should be stressed that Hall (1994) himself states his initial paper was intended as a proposal for new approaches and development – not a *fait accompli* solution:

I had in my sights the Centre for Mass Communications Research – that was who I was trying to blow out of the water ... [and if the model has] *any* purchase, now and later, it's a model because of what it suggests. It suggests an approach; it opens up new questions. It maps a terrain. But it's a model which has to be worked with and developed and changed (p. 255, original emphasis).

Likewise, Morley (1981), in his postscript to the *Nationwide* study, evaluates his own ideas and proposes further developments stemming from the belief that media readings cannot be reduced to social determinism. Furthermore, he suggests future studies should focus on genre and contextual based investigations grounded in audience's media consumption. Research, he claims, needs to consider media products that engage various cultures and subcultures, and establish patterns across genres:

[B]y translating our concerns from the framework of the decoding model into that of genre theory, we may be able to develop a model of text-audience relations which is more flexible, and of wider application ... it would involve us in dealing more with the relevance/irrelevance and comprehension/incomprehension dimensions of decoding

rather than being directly concerned with the acceptance or rejection of substantive ideological themes (p. 10).

3.7 Feminism

Changes in approaches to audience research prompted by the possibilities opened up by the work of Hall (1980) and Morley (1980) initiated a move towards qualitative studies of audiences. Specifically, this shift towards ‘audience ethnography’ can be observed in feminist research. Many of these studies took women’s readings of popular texts as their object of study; media texts considered were often those that had previously been attributed little critical worth – for example romance novels (Radway, 1987), teen magazines (McRobbie, 1982) and soap operas (Modleski, 1984; Geraghty, 1991). This approach not only enabled analysis of the pleasures and meanings gained by the readers, but was also instrumental in the popular being taken ‘seriously’ within academic study. The focus of these studies was not *what* was being read, but *how* and *why* the audience read it (Brooker and Jermyn, 2003, p. 213).

These ideas are evident in Radway’s (1987) analysis of women’s romance reading, in which she aimed to establish readers’ interpretations of these texts. However, Radway acknowledged during her research that she would have to investigate ‘the meaning of romance reading as a social event in a familial context’ (p. 7), i.e. the significance of reading *as an act* needed to be considered as well as the narrative content of the novels themselves. In her study, Radway demonstrated that the novels allowed readers to find pleasure in escape into the romantic fantasy, but of equal – if not more – significance was *the act* of reading constituted a ‘declaration of independence’. Thus, Radway stated that reading allowed the women to isolate themselves from their domestic situation, and argued that reading functioned as a form of resistance in that:

It is combative in the sense that it enables [the reader] to refuse the other-directed social role prescribed for them by their position within the institution of marriage. In picking up a book, as they have so eloquently told us, they refuse temporarily their family’s otherwise constant demand that they attend to the wants of others even as they act deliberately to do something for their own private pleasure. Their activity is

compensatory, then, in that it permits them to focus on themselves and to carve out a solitary space within an arena where their self-interest is usually identified with the interests of others and where they are defined as a public resource to be mined at will by the family. For them, romance reading addresses needs created in them but not met by patriarchal institutions and engendering practices (p. 211).

Therefore, Radway's work highlights that the examination of media texts must consider the environmental and social context in which pleasures and meanings are constructed. Her study also foregrounds a paradox in reception of popular texts; despite their often 'conservative content', their consumption can be simultaneously resistant to, and complicit with, dominant ideology.

Despite her acknowledgment of the many benefits of Radway's study, Ang (1988) raised a number of criticisms of the analysis. She opposed the assumption that reading romance fiction precludes a feminist standpoint, and suggested that Radway constructs an artificial division between herself as feminist/researcher and her study participants as interviewees/romance fans, claiming that the work is undermined by a 'form of political motivation, propelled by a desire to make "them" more like "us"' (p. 518). Furthermore, Ang criticised Radway's focus on 'the ideological function of pleasure' (p. 519) and proposed that *pleasure itself*, and its potential for empowerment, should be investigated. However Brooker and Jermyn (2003, p. 214) note that in the preface to the 1991 edition of *Reading the Romance*, Radway acknowledges the need for a more 'multi-focused approach' incorporating both ethnographic and textual analyses of popular texts, and the importance of eliminating the 'superior' position of the researcher in relation to study participants.

In her analysis of *Dallas*, Ang (1985) engaged as both fan and 'intellectual' with the intention of studying the pleasures evoked in viewing the programme from a non-judgemental perspective. Ang asserted that despite the programme's seemingly unrealistic nature, its appeal for many viewers lay in its *emotional realism* which articulated concerns and emotional states experienced by them, albeit in a melodramatic form. Other respondents reported that they gained pleasure from ironic viewing of the programme, distancing themselves from the text and any supposed ideological content. The significance of Ang's study therefore, was that it revealed

that each viewer had a 'more or less unique relationship to the programme' (p. 26) which could not necessarily be rationalised in ideological terms. Furthermore, the findings were based on statements produced by the audience *themselves*, in which the participants interpreted their own motivations and pleasures, rather than Ang solely projecting her interpretations upon them. For Ang, pleasure was a key area of contestation in feminist cultural politics, and argued that feminism must move beyond its view of women as 'passive victims' of mass culture, stating that pleasure and meaning are created by women in popular texts. However, Joke Hermes (1995) reminds us that researchers must be wary of 'the fallacy of meaningfulness' (p. 148) – the imposition of significance on a text that the readership does not share. As her study demonstrated, pleasure can be derived from a text precisely because of its undemanding and disposable nature.

3.8 Social Uses

Although the preceding theories differ in their findings, the underlying similarity between them is that they propose that researchers must engage with the audience and their use of media within the context of their everyday lives. This is demonstrated by feminist researchers who prompted a development towards a new formulation in which texts are not considered purely in terms of their interpretation, but also the domestic situation in which they are consumed (Modleski, 1984; Gray, 1992). For example, Dorothy Hobson (1982) in her ethnographic study of the soap opera *Crossroads*, demonstrated that women only *intermittently* engaged with the programme as they were simultaneously occupied by domestic tasks.

In his influential study *Family Television* (1986), Morley developed these ideas to approach the audience, not as individuals, but as a family or household, with the aim of exploring television watching as an activity. His interview sample consisted of eighteen white South London families, consisting of two adults with children drawn from working-class and lower middle-class backgrounds. Morley's principal findings were concerned with the manner in which family dynamics influenced how and what was watched – or 'the politics of the living room' (Cubitt, 1984) – and focused on issues such as who had control over programme choices. Men, he observed, watched

television in a more attentive manner than women and proposed that this is a result of men's lives generally being divided into 'industrial'/work time and home/leisure time, whereas the division for women is traditionally less clear. Morley attributes this to the fact that for women, the home constitutes a place of work irrespective of whether they are in employment or not and, consequently, women could only view television 'guiltily' or 'distractedly' (1986, p. 166). His study also found that men take greater control over what is watched, plan and select what they watch more than women, and while men watch more television than women, they talk about it less. Morley stresses that these gendered differences are not biologically determined, or in anyway intrinsic in male and female behaviour; rather they are grounded in the social construction of men and women and the division of responsibilities within the home and family:

Essentially the men state a clear preference for viewing attentively, in silence, without interruption 'in order not to miss anything'. Moreover, they display puzzlement at the way their wives and daughters watch television. This the women themselves describe as a fundamentally social activity, involving ongoing conversation, and usually the performance of at least one other domestic activity (ironing etc.) at the same time. Indeed, many of the women feel that to just watch television without doing anything else at the same time would be an indefensible waste of time, given their sense of domestic obligations. To watch in this way is something they rarely do, except occasionally, when alone or with other women friends, when they have managed to construct an 'occasion' on which to watch their favourite programme, video, or film. The women note that their husbands are always 'on at them' to shut up. The men can't really understand how their wives can follow the programmes if they are doing something else at the same time (p. 50).

Thus Morley states that researchers must consider the *context of viewing* as much as the *object of viewing*: the reception of media texts cannot be considered outside the context in which they are received.

On a similar theme, Lull (1980) researched the viewing habits of two hundred families in the context of their day-to-day routine; with researchers fully integrating themselves into the families' lives for periods up to seven days. His study identified two 'uses' of television within the home: *structural* and *relational*. Lull considered structural uses to be the manner in which television functions as an 'environmental

resource' – 'a companion for accomplishing household chores and routines ... a flow of constant background noise which moves to the foreground when individuals or groups desire' – and as a 'behavioural regulator', providing punctuation for domestic time and daily activities (pp. 201-202); whereas relational uses are the 'ways in which audience members use television to create practical social arrangements' (p. 202). Within relational uses, Lull identified four specific categories: 'communication facilitation', encouraging conversation and the articulation of themes discussed in programmes within the family; 'affiliation/avoidance', to promote family cohesion or conflict; 'social learning', such as transmission of information; and 'competence/dominance', the role of the television in facilitating arguments and expressing authority. Although Lull's study may be perceived as working within a uses and gratifications framework in order to investigate how 'audience members create ... practical actions involving the mass media in order to gratify particular needs' (p. 197), his work is significant as it focuses on viewing context and interpersonal dynamics within the family, rather than the individual viewers. Thus, both Lull and Morley's studies established the significance of television as a social resource (see Dickinson, 1998) and how viewing is dictated by, and reflects, power relationships within the family.

Although these approaches opened up contexts of media consumption for further consideration, a number of criticisms have been raised which must be considered. Ang (1989) criticises Morley's work stating that he distances himself in his role as researcher from the participant group:

Due to his academistic posture Morley has not deemed it necessary to reflect upon his own position of a researcher. We do not get to know how he found and got on with his interviewees, nor are we informed about the way in which the interviews themselves took place ... how did the specific power relationship pervading the interviewer situation affect the families, but also the researcher himself (p. 110)?

Furthermore, David Gauntlett and Annette Hill (1999) highlight that Morley's study is problematic as its discussions of gender roles can be interpreted as 'reinforcing rather than breaking down the gender distinctions which Morley himself is critical of' (p. 5). This point is acknowledged by Morley himself who notes his own limitations in the

afterword of *Family Television*: 'there is a tendency in the interviews to slide back towards a parallel analysis of "gendered individuals" rather than a fully fledged analysis of the dynamics of the family unit' (1986, p. 174). In addition, Morley's sample neglected to include representations from different social backgrounds, therefore failing to consider effects of class, gender and region on his findings. For example, he does not investigate whether gendered responses to media may vary depending on educational and class background (see Harindranath, 1998).

Returning to the issue of the role of television in social life, Roger Silverstone (1990) has argued that studies must investigate how television has become integrated into our everyday lives and central to our understanding of ourselves and the world. He therefore proposes that studies must undertake 'a methodological approach, or set of approaches, which sets the audience for television in a context of the world of everyday life: the daily experience of home, technologies and neighbourhood, and of the public and private mythologies and rituals which define the basic patterns of our cultural experience' (p. 245). However, Gauntlett and Hill (1999) observe that Silverstone is overhasty in his suggestion and, 'before we can begin to understand the symbolic, material and political structures in everyday life, it is important to consider what people have to say about their own experience of television and everyday life, and the practicalities of television in the domestic space' (p. 9), as demonstrated in their study *TV Living*. This work is notable due to the scale of the study; 500 participants each completing a diary three times a year over a five year period. Their approach incorporated a 'life analysis' of the participants as it 'assumes that through close study of people's everyday lives over time, we will acquire a picture of broader changes in society which are having an impact at the individual level' (p. 18). Thus, Gauntlett and Hill were able to identify, not only participants' changes in attitudes towards media, but also how personal life changes affected their interpretations of the media. Importantly, Gauntlett and Hill stress that they did not work from a recognised theoretical model, in order to allow their findings to be led by participants' responses, rather than imposing an agenda upon them.

3.9 Ethnicity

Expanding on the theme of factors that contribute to interpretations of the media, it is important to note that these will also be dependent on an individual's cultural positionings. As Jacqueline Bobo (1988; see also Jhally and Lewis, 1992) has highlighted, an individual can occupy a number of standpoints – such as black, working-class and female – all of which intersect and overlap in responses to media texts. For example, Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz (1993) aimed to investigate how the programme *Dallas* was received within different cultures. Conducting focus groups divided by ethnicity into American, Kibbutznik, Arab, Moroccan, Russian and Japanese participants, they analysed how each group discussed *Dallas* and their retelling of the narratives. Liebes and Katz identified how the various groups placed significance on different elements and themes within the story, reporting that Arabs and Moroccans displayed a tendency to retell the stories in 'linear' terms; focusing on a particular storyline told sequentially, whereas Americans and Kibbutzniks retold the stories in 'segmented' terms; detailing characters or relationships. In addition, the Russian participants displayed a tendency to engage in 'thematic' readings; focusing on abstracts such as ideology or politics. Liebes (1988) states that the linear retellings of the Arabs and the Moroccans, and the thematic retellings of the Russians are 'closed' as they presume a manipulative agenda inhabits the original narrative:

[T]he linear retelling ... correlates with a 'hegemonic' reading in which the reality of the story is unquestioned and its message is presumably unchallenged. The paradigmatic [thematic] retelling, on the other hand, is more likely to accompany an 'oppositional' reading (Hall, 1980; Morley, 1980), whereby critical awareness of an overall message surely sounds an alarm that the message may be manipulative (1988, p. 278).

On the other hand, she claims the segmented retellings of the Americans and Kibbutzniks are more 'ludic' (playful) and engage in speculations on future narrative possibilities. Thus, Liebes concludes, the segmented retellings are more 'open' and less confined by ideology or tradition.

However, Barker and Brooks (1998a) identify a number of methodological and ethical problems with Liebes and Katz's study. They note that although the researchers acknowledge *Dallas* as a polysemic text, they (Liebes and Katz) imply that there is a 'preferred' meaning. In addition, the study indicates that some groups are more susceptible to this 'preferred' meaning; Arabs were most at risk as they were 'less modernised'. Barker and Brooks highlight this as being not only inaccurate but deeply offensive, adding 'that because their groups were assembled on the basis of "ethnicity", what their transcripts reveal is going to be primarily an expression of that ... It also leads easily to political judgements which we do, indeed, find offensive – especially in the context of Israeli politics' (p. 99). Furthermore, Barker and Brooks illustrate how the study's own methodology can be used to undermine its own findings. In their analysis, Liebes and Katz conclude that the Arab participants are the most vulnerable to ideological deception and the Americans/Kibbutzniks are the most perceptive. However, as Barker and Brooks argue, the Arabs can be seen as the least vulnerable as this group are most aware of the programme's construction of Americanness and contest it on these grounds. It is the Americans (and Liebes and Katz), they claim, that are most deceived as they are unaware that their own 'ludic' approach renders them vulnerable to Americanist ideology (pp. 97-101).

In light of Barker and Brooks' criticisms, Liebes and Katz's analysis is seriously undermined by its use of ethnicity in its methodology. However, a more successful investigation that engages with ethnicity as its primary focus is Marie Gillespie's (1995, see also 1993) two year ethnographic study which explored how Punjabi youths in Southall used a variety of popular cultural forms in the construction of their social identity. Within this work Gillespie considered the Australian television soap opera *Neighbours*, and the pleasures and uses the youths gained from it – a media product from a culture seemingly very different from their own. She observed that *Neighbours* constituted a metaphorical, rather than literal, reflection of their own tight-knit communities and that the narratives facilitated social learning:

While young people regularly emphasize the *differences* between the soap world and their own cultural experience, in another sense they stress strong *parallels* between the soap world and the social world of Southall ... In certain respects, the soap opera embodies many of the characteristics of local life: the central importance of the family;

a density of kin in a small, geographically bounded area; a high degree of face-to-face contact; a knowable community; and a distinctive sense of local identity ... While young people's own families and those in their social networks provide their frame of reference about family life, soap families not only extend but offer alternative sets of families as reference groups by which young people can compare and contrast, judge and evaluate, and, in certain cases, attempt to critique and transform aspects of their own family (1993, p. 32, original emphasis).

In addition, Gillespie states that *Neighbours* enabled the youths to discuss sensitive areas by proxy with friends and family. The programme also, she maintains, gave the Punjabi audience insight into the 'other' culture of white teenagers and the effects of freedoms prohibited to the Punjabi's by the code of *izzat* (family honour).

Despite Gillespie's analysis identifying how the Punjabi youths appropriate television as a 'cultural resource', she fails to acknowledge that ideological conceptions of gender may be learnt from the programme (Gauntlett and Hill 1999, p. 217). Furthermore, although Gillespie makes a number of valid observations, her analysis focuses solely on Punjabi youths and does not explore the possibility that other ethnic groups may interact and negotiate with popular culture in similar ways. A danger inherent in her study then, is the implication that her findings are *representative* of Punjabi (and more generally Asian) youths as a whole.

3.10 Audience Power

Discussions of the preceding theories demonstrate how the audience have been attributed with a more active role in the decoding of texts. The notion of the 'active audience' is vigorously advocated by John Fiske (1987; 1989a; 1989b), who rejects any claim that audiences are 'cultural dupes' and that cultural product necessarily promotes capitalist ideology. Indeed, he abandons the term 'audience' as it implies a 'mass', in favour of 'reader' which acknowledges the individual's social positioning and shifting agendas and priorities. In addition, Fiske does not deny the pervasive force of ideology in society, but maintains that the individual's agency should not be underestimated. Fiske's argument is grounded in his belief that popular texts are polysemic in nature, open to multiple interpretations in order to gain a substantial and

varied audience. Although he does not dispute that media producers embed a preferred meaning in a text, he states that the ‘overspill’ of possible readings undermines the dominance of that message.

Drawing upon the ideas of Michel de Certeau (1984), who argued that people ‘snatch and grab’ media materials, reinterpreting them for their own uses, Fiske claims that consumers are engaged in ‘semiotic guerrilla warfare’ – ‘ripping’ or appropriating existing texts and inscribing them with their own meanings. For example, he illustrates how Judy Garland has been ‘ripped’ from her intended context of wholesome American woman, and given new meanings within gay culture (1989a). Thus, irrespective of the aims of the producer, Fiske argues that the meaning of a text is dependent on its interpretation by the consumer in relation to their lived experience:

[Cultural commodities], which we call ‘texts’, are not containers or conveyors of meaning and pleasures, but rather *provokers* of meaning and pleasure. The production of meaning/pleasures is finally the responsibility of the consumer and is undertaken only in his/her interests: this is not to say that the material producers/distribution do not attempt to make and sell meanings and pleasures – they do, but their failure rate is enormous (1987, p. 313, original emphasis).

Therefore, according to Fiske, texts are a ‘site of struggle’ between the intended meaning of the producer and the (often resistant) meanings interpreted by the consumer. In this formulation, he maintains that consumers actively create *their own* popular culture hence; the ‘consumer’ becomes ‘producer’. Furthermore, Fiske argues that such activity may constitute instances of ‘micro-rebellion’, the net effect of which acts to affect change at a structural level through small, incremental, incursions on dominant ideology.

A criticism that has been levelled at this work, as commentators have noted (Gauntlett, 2002, p. 28), is that it is over-optimistic in its claims that the audience can resist dominant ideology through uses of popular culture. Nevertheless, Fiske’s approach offers an alternative to deterministic models which continue to conceptualise the audience as ‘cultural dupes’, and his ideas have evident currency in theoretical approaches to fan culture. For example, Henry Jenkins’ (1992) studies of

fan culture identify numerous examples of the audience literally, rather than figuratively, becoming producers:

Fans produce meanings and interpretations; fans produce artworks; fans produce communities; fans produce alternative identities. In each case, fans are drawing on materials from the dominant media and employing them in ways that serve their own interests and facilitate their own pleasures (p. 214).

Rather than view fans as a particularly aberrant subgroup of the audience, Jenkins understands fans to be active and empowered readers reworking mainstream media texts to produce their own media materials. In some instances these works are transgressive, for example queer readings of *Star Trek* (Jenkins, 1985) and lesbian texts based on *Xena: Warrior Princess* (Gwenllian-Jones, 2003), but in any case they typically link the original narrative to some aspect or concern of the fan-producer.

However, Barker and Brooks (1998a) question the legitimacy of the notion of the 'active audience' in their book *Knowing Audiences: Judge Dredd, Its Friends, Fans and Foes*. They state that Fiske makes an error in his assumption that 'active' is synonymous with 'resistant', observing that an audience can *wilfully* seek passivity. Furthermore, they assert that the active/passive model of understanding the audience is redundant and propose that the position of the audience must be recontextualised in terms of the pleasure it gains, or fails to gain, from a text. Barker and Brooks outline a number of pleasures – or what they term 'vocabularies of involvement and pleasure' (p. 143) – and claim that audience members will predispose themselves to expect certain pleasures from a particular text. These 'V.I.P.'s fall into a series of patterns or positions; for example, writing specifically about the film *Judge Dredd* they identify:

1. The joys of being 'done to' by a film: the pleasures of being physically affected by a film, in terms of shock, excitement, pace.
2. The pleasures of the spectacle: pleasures gained from being awed by a film's novelty, scale and special effects.
3. Dredd's desserts: in this particular case, the audiences pleasure in seeing a comic strip hero 'where he belongs' on the screen.

4. Sylvester's measure: pleasure gained from the iconic presence of Sylvester Stallone in the film.
5. The magic of cinema: pleasure gained from the occasion and environment of seeing a film in a cinema.
6. The pleasures of talk and the dangers of 'sad': pleasures gained from discussing the film after it has been seen, as a social event – rather than being a 'sad fan boy' (see pp. 146-148).

Using this formulation, Barker and Brooks demonstrate how pleasures gained from a film are dependent upon the *particular* pattern adopted by the viewer; for example their study indicated that audience members adopting pattern 1 were disappointed by the opening of *Judge Dredd*, whereas those adopting pattern 3 'raved' about the film (p. 149).

Furthermore, Barker and Brooks argue that not only does the term 'active' need to be separated from 'resistant', but researchers need to investigate *kinds and degrees* of activity. To enable this they introduce the concept of *investment* in media texts to describe the measure to which 'people *care* about their participation or involvement in a leisure activity' (1998b, p. 229, original emphasis). For example, a low investor, they claim, will have little stake in a particular product; they may see a film merely to pass the time or to fulfil a social obligation. On the other hand, a high investor will have a more committed involvement with the text in question; this viewer may read relevant reviews and articles before seeing the film, and may engage in vigorous discussions after the event. Thus, by foregrounding the role of pleasure and investment in regard to media consumption, Barker (1998) specifically argues that rather than attempting to identify and categorise 'the audience', research must engage with what 'concrete audiences do and say with their media' (p. 190). This, he claims, will facilitate the 'study of the *actual* audience in lived experience' (*ibid.*, original emphasis).

3.11 Creative Audience Research

In an attempt to pursue the study of ‘actual’ audiences in lived experience, and create a methodology that will avoid many of the shortfalls of the research methods outlined above, Gauntlett (2004) proposes a strategy of ‘creative visual research’. In this model he suggests a ‘turn towards creativity, the visual and the imagination’ (p. 1) in the study of the audience and the media. Gauntlett states that previous studies have considered people as an audience of particular isolated texts, forms or genres; whereas, in lived experience, an individual is saturated by the output of multiple media sources. Furthermore, Gauntlett notes that popular media constitute a significant component of our experience and understanding: we are always media consumers and media inflected thinkers (p. 3). Gauntlett’s research is grounded in the audience, not reporting on media images or texts *per se*, but creating *their own* visual materials as a means of investigating their relationship with the media. In so doing, he claims to have overcome limitations of previous work; for example, instant and verbal/written responses are limited by their very nature, whereas the prolonged act of creation enables participants time and opportunity to reflect as well as express their responses without the stabilising confines of language. He further notes that visual materials are non-linear and therefore do not prioritise elements of the response. In addition, the production of visual media engages the participant in different cognitive processes that will produce new perspectives on the issues in question.

Taking note of feminist criticism of traditional research methods, Gauntlett states that the creative methods employed allow participants the opportunity to influence the research itself, rather than confining them within a predetermined structure. In this formulation, materials produced are not interpreted by the researcher, but by the participants themselves. Thus, the findings are a product of dialogue between researcher and participant, emerging not only from the creative product, but from the creative process itself. As Gauntlett says, this methodology enables ‘studying media and its place in the everyday world *through* working with people in the everyday world to make media productions’ (p. 15, original emphasis).

3.12 Summary

A survey of the literature suggests that conceptualisations of the audience vary significantly between theoretical paradigms. The chapter has outlined a number of critical perspectives on audiences and examined how understandings of the audience have been developed and revised. Furthermore, it identified that audience research must consider media consumption in the context of lived experience and highlighted creative audience research as a potentially valid and useful approach. Therefore, the following chapter goes on to look in greater detail at a variety of studies which use creative and visual research methods to explore the experiences and self-identities of individuals.

Chapter 4: Creative and Visual Research

In the preceding chapters the discussions of representations and audiences have sought to illustrate how these areas have been conceptualised: both in terms of their theoretical formulations and the understandings held by audience members themselves. However, many of the methods employed by the empirical studies mentioned previously remain grounded in participants producing instant verbal (or sometimes written) responses – usually within the artificial environment of an interview or focus group discussion – and/or lapse into privileging the researcher's interpretations as the 'authoritative voice'. Therefore, these approaches do not engage sufficiently with the role of media texts in *actual* lived experience and, as a result, the gulf between theoretical formulations and understandings held by audience members continues to be problematic. In order to facilitate a more holistic method of enquiry, this study seeks to readdress this balance by engaging participants in the creative production of visual materials that will be interpreted by the participants *themselves* as a strategy for interrogating the following research questions:

- How do young people utilise the media in the shaping of their self-identities?
- How do categories such as gender and ethnicity impact upon young people's formulations of their own identities?
- How can creative and visual research methods facilitate a greater understanding of young people's conceptualisations of their identities and relationships with the media?
- How can creative and visual research methods make a contribution to social research which explores individuals' identities and media audiences?

Thus, this chapter discusses a wider body of research which has specifically utilised creative research methods to examine individuals' attitudes, experiences and their conceptions of self. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a critical summary outlining the validity of principles proposed by creative research methodologies.

4.1 Creative Methods

Within recent years a number of studies have utilised creative research methods in order to explore attitudes and understandings held by audience members. The adoption of such techniques has arisen as a direct response to the perceived limitations of, and dissatisfaction with, established research methods. As David Silverman (2001, pp. 32-34) notes, criticisms of existing approaches have centred upon the reliability, anecdotal nature and validity of methods employed and data produced. Although he stresses the central significance of existing research methods within any given analysis, Silverman's discussion importantly identifies the susceptibility within the methodological frameworks to select specific examples of data which can, in turn, lead to a wholly subjective interpretation by the researchers (see pp. 219-257).

The search for an alternative methodological framework that would help overcome such limitations is evident in Ien Ang's influential study *Watching Dallas* (1985). The importance of this work was that it took the audiences of popular media as a valid object of analysis and did so by assessing the participants' *own* responses to the text. Ang achieved this by placing an advertisement in the Dutch magazine *Viva* inviting people to 'write and tell me why you like watching it [*Dallas*] ... or dislike it' (p. 10). In response to the advert she received forty-two letters which constituted the empirical material for her study. As discussed in Chapter 3 the analysis revealed that despite *Dallas*' ostensibly unrealistic nature, for many viewers its appeal lay in its *emotional realism* which articulated concerns and emotional states experienced by them, albeit in melodramatic form. For other viewers pleasure was gained by engaging in an ironic mode of viewing, distancing themselves from the text and any supposed ideological content. The significance of Ang's study therefore, was that it revealed that each viewer had a 'more or less unique relationship to the programme' (p. 26). As a method then, the production of written texts by respondents in this study arguably enabled Ang to attain a deeper insight into the participants' experiences of watching *Dallas*. However, as Ang herself stressed, the responses could not be considered representative for the *Dallas* audience as a whole or indicative of a particular social category – for example, women (p. 10). Furthermore, she claimed

that the letters could not be regarded as an unproblematic or straightforward expression of the writers' motives for loving or hating the programme:

What people say or write about their experiences, preferences, habits, etc., cannot be taken entirely at face value, for in the routine of daily life they do not demand rational consciousness; they go unnoticed, as it were. They are commonsensical, self-evident; they require no further explanations. This means that we cannot let the letters speak for themselves, but they should be read 'symptomatically': we must search for what is behind the explicitly written, for the presuppositions and accepted attitudes concealed within them (p. 11).⁹

Hence, in Ang's formulation, the letters themselves must be considered as texts produced within an ideological framework, and this framework comes to bear on the manner in which the respondents construct their letters as discourses on the appeal or rejection of *Dallas* as a popular cultural text.

Developing the method of using written texts produced by audience members as a focus of analysis, David Gauntlett and Annette Hill (1999) employed this technique in order to 'consider what people have to say about their own experience of television and everyday life' (p. 9). As discussed previously (see Chapter 3) this project is notable due to its scale: a longitudinal study running from 1991 to 1996 in which 509 participants (dropping to 427) completed a diary three times a year on their media habits. In addition, these diaries were supplemented with the completion of standardised and open-ended questionnaires in which the participants documented not only their media use, but also personal reflections on their lives. Therefore this enabled the researchers to collate participants' thoughts on various issues raised within the diaries and ground these findings within the diarists' accounts of their own social worlds. In doing so, Gauntlett and Hill's study incorporated a 'life analysis' approach of the participants which 'assumes that through close study of people's everyday lives over time, we will acquire a picture of broader changes in society

⁹ It should be noted, as Gauntlett (2007) states, that 'Ang has no particular method with which to achieve this (informed guesswork notwithstanding). Attitudes which are *actually expressed* are fine ... But how do we find the "concealed" attitudes, the views which (by definition) are not included in the words actually written down? If "we cannot let the letters speak for themselves", then what *can* we do?' (p. 7, original emphasis).

which are having an impact at the individual level' (p. 18). Thus, they were able to identify not only participants' changes in attitudes towards media, but also how personal life changes affected their interpretations of the media. Importantly, Gauntlett and Hill stressed that they did not impose a theoretical framework upon their data specifically in order to allow their findings to be driven by the participants' responses themselves.

The above studies have highlighted how the production of written materials by audience members can be used to elicit a more comprehensive range of views and responses to media texts than would have been possible had the participants been required to give instant verbal responses. On a similar theme, the Glasgow Media Group have approached the issue of media influences by utilising such methods (e.g. Kitzinger, 1990; Philo, 1990). In their book *The Mass Media and Power in Modern Britain* (1997), John Eldridge, Jenny Kitzinger and Kevin Williams acknowledge that although audiences are able to articulate a critical awareness of media messages, this awareness does not negate the possibility of the media's *influences* (p. 160). To explore this notion, a research technique termed the 'news game' (p. 161) was devised in which 'research participants were actively engaged in trying to write and criticize a media report' (*ibid.*). In order to achieve this, participants were provided with materials such as news photographs and headlines, and asked to write an accompanying text that could take the form of a newspaper report, news broadcast script or a headline. A significant finding revealed in studies using this method was that although participants *apparently* presented their own perspectives on the issues in hand, in practice they replicated the ideological discourses predominant in the initial news reports.¹⁰ For example, in Kitzinger's study *Understanding Aids* (1993) participants were given thirteen photographs around which they produced a news

¹⁰ Importantly, a criticism of the 'news game' method is that when participants reproduced existing ideological discourses in their own media texts, they did so not because they agreed with these ways of thinking, but because they may have thought that this was what they were being *asked* to do. Therefore, researchers should consider such issues when devising and conducting exercises as well as in their conclusions. Furthermore, *discussion* with participants may assist their understanding of the exercise's aims and objectives, and thus benefit the research process.

report on AIDS that then became the focus of a group discussion.¹¹ In these reports it was found that the participants reproduced the terminology and attitudes circulated by the mainstream press, such as ‘promiscuous, irresponsible drug users or gay people’ and ‘innocent victims’ (p. 277). Furthermore, her analysis also highlighted the forcefulness of visual representations in the participants’ understandings of AIDS: ‘television and newspaper representations are, for many people, the lens through which they view the reality of AIDS. Media images of the visible ravages of disease thus form the template for their perceptions of the world and of the people in it’ (Eldridge, Kitzinger and Williams, 1997, p. 163). Consequently, according to Kitzinger, media representations may dictate how audiences perceive an issue, even though this may contradict ‘informed’ opinion and observations based on personal experience.¹² Thus, as the above study demonstrates, the use of strategies that integrate both the creative production *and* discussion of media texts can arguably provide the researcher with a more thorough understanding of the attitudes held by audience members – attitudes that may not have become apparent within more conventional interviews or focus group discussions.

Expanding on this theme Brent MacGregor and David Morrison’s (1995) study of the Gulf War sought to overcome limitations which they felt were imposed by purely focus group based research, believing that a research method was required that would bring ‘respondents into closer contact with the text ... enabling them to articulate their response in an appropriate manner’ (p. 143). This was achieved by appropriating the principles of the ‘news game’ method, in which they asked participants to edit existing audio-visual news footage to create ‘a report that you would *ideally* like to see on TV, not what you think others would like to see, not what you think journalists would produce’ (p. 146, original emphasis). Prior to editing the footage MacGregor and Morrison noted participants all claimed that they aimed to produce ‘an ideal, impartial, neutral account’ (*ibid.*) by selecting what they considered to be the more reliable material. Importantly, the researchers observed that although there was

¹¹ In Kitzinger’s discussion of research methods, she states that meaning cannot be determined by content analysis alone: ‘the meaning produced by the encounter between text and subject cannot be “read off” straight from textual characteristics’ (Morley, 1980, quoted in Kitzinger, 1990, p. 320).

¹² Although Kitzinger acknowledges the role of parody in some of the participants’ responses, these tend to conform to generic codes and conventions (1993, pp. 298-299).

considerable similarity between participants' comments made before and after editing, *crucial* nuanced differences were noted as a result of the editing process itself¹³: 'Positions articulated in discussion which would have been reported as definitive in focus groups were modified as a result of the active engagement with the text' (p. 147). Therefore, the employment of this method seems to have enabled MacGregor and Morrison to access more significant and meaningful results than would have been made available by traditional methods.¹⁴

In an attempt to move further beyond the reliance on interviews and focus groups in qualitative research, David Gauntlett's *Video Critical* (1997) aimed to evaluate audiences' responses by engaging participants in the *creation* of their *own* original texts, rather than the production of materials from, or reflecting upon existing sources. For this project, Gauntlett worked with groups of children from seven primary schools in which they used video equipment to make documentaries on the issue of 'the environment'. Initial group discussions between the researcher and students identified the predominance of television in informing the children's views on environmental matters (pp. 96-97). Gauntlett therefore maintained that the active involvement in the *process* of video-making provided a valid method of analysing the children's understanding of environmental concerns, as it engaged them in the procedures in which their own viewpoints were in fact constructed:

[W]here the audience have received most of their input on the subject from the mass media, as it was established was the case with the environment and children in this study, then the videos which they produce can be assumed to reflect their understanding of which issues and angles are the most pertinent and pressing; and this can be presumed to have been influenced by the media (p. 85).

¹³ For example, MacGregor and Morrison note that participants described one text as having 'an undesirable emotional tone' (1995, p. 147) but were unable to identify why this was the case. However, on engaging in the editing process, the participants were able to suggest how this affect had been created by presentation techniques.

¹⁴ Furthermore, MacGregor and Morrison state that this method is 'not a methodological solution looking for a research problem, but a real tool capable of producing significant results in any situation where tangible viewer contact with the text can unlock new insights into the dynamic of how audio-visual texts are read' (1995, p. 148).

Hence, this study recorded the children's conception of the impact of environmental issues on their lives and facilitated an understanding of how these beliefs were informed by media output. In its entirety then, this analysis enabled the researcher to amass a considerable body of ethnographic data through observation and discussions with the participants throughout the video production project, in addition to the completed videos themselves – which Gauntlett claimed can be read as 'constructed, mediated accounts of a selection of the perceptions of the social world held by the group members' (p. 93).

In agreement with the principles proposed by MacGregor and Morrison, Gauntlett highlights that initial discussions with participants are not necessarily indicative of their legitimate attitudes or beliefs, rather they act as what he terms a “‘brain dump’ of *potential* interests and concerns’ (p. 150, original emphasis). That is to say, much of the information generated during the initial group discussions will be misleading or superfluous, and it is only during the project's progression *itself* that these ideas are refined and thus more genuine opinions emerge. However, leaving the issue of the problematics of data collection aside, Gauntlett also proposes a number of fundamental advantages the video-making method can offer the participants. Firstly, he states that this method offers its participants a degree of media education, not only in terms of gaining basic film-making skills, but also in its ability to foster the development of a critical awareness which can, in turn, lead to more in depth and valuable information being made available to the researcher. In addition, Gauntlett adds that such methods constitute a significant departure from previously existing techniques, which confined the participants within a predetermined structure that only allowed for limited responses, by enabling the participants to influence the research process itself. Within such a framework, participants are able to construct a free and open response to the research brief which, although possibly intimidating to a conventional researcher, Gauntlett encourages as a productive strategy, stating that ‘the video project researcher celebrates their own inability to predict what will happen – a “risk” worth taking’ (p. 93). Finally, he asserts that the method can importantly empower its participants on a number of levels: the video production method enables the participants to engage in new modes of self-expression that transcend the possible restrictions of existing techniques grounded in written and verbal accounts; and through the opportunity to produce ‘alternative representations of themselves’ (p. 92)

it is hoped that the participants will gain a more affirmative sense of their own identities and that of their communities than those offered by conventional media representations, as Stuart Hall has suggested:

[I]t is important to get people into producing their own images because ... they can then contrast the images they produce of themselves against the dominant images which they are offered, and so they know that social communication is a matter of conflict between alternative readings of society (Hall, 1991, quoted in Gauntlett, 1997, p. 92).

It should be noted that a number of commentators have advocated the methodological advantages of visual and audio-visual research. For example, in Gerry Bloustein's (1998) study of how ten Australian girls constructed their gendered identities, the participants were invited to video record what they believed were salient elements of their lives in an attempt to investigate 'everyday lived experience ... *through their own eyes*' (p. 117, original emphasis). During this work she claimed that the film-making process facilitated an arena in which the girls were able to experiment with the way in which they represented their identities, whilst also paradoxically revealing the restrictions and difficulties encountered in their quest to articulate 'alternative selves' (p. 118). According to Bloustein then, the film-making process *as well as* the actual completed videos reflected the social/cultural frameworks and limitations impacting upon the girls' perceptions of themselves. Importantly, she claimed that the use of the camera empowered the participants, the camera becoming 'a tool for interpreting and redefining their worlds' (p. 117). Similarly research by Horst Niesyto (2000; see also Niesyto, Buckingham and Fisherkeller, 2003) has highlighted the ever increasing proliferation of media materials in young people's lives and how these are integral to the construction of social worlds and self-perception. In addition, he further noted that although there are a vast number of films that focus on youth which have provided the basis for critical analysis, very few of these films are produced by the young people *themselves*. In consideration of these factors, Niesyto developed a method which has been utilised within a number of projects in Germany where 'young people had the chance to express *personal images of everyday experience* in self-produced films' (2000, p. 137, original emphasis). Within these studies, Niesyto observed how different modes of filming revealed different

perspectives of representation. For example, the ‘collage-like video films’ gave insight into emotional and ambivalent aspects of identity through association and metaphor (p. 143) and this was a particularly rewarding mode of expression utilised by the participants he described as ‘marginal’, as in many cases their media literacy exceeded their competence in more conventional forms of expression, such as talking and writing (p. 144). Therefore this position shares many of the central tenets of Gauntlett’s approach, as Niesyto has stated:

In view of media’s increasing influence on everyday communication, I put forward the following *thesis*: If somebody – in nowadays media society – wants to learn something about youth’s ideas, feelings, and their ways of experiencing the world, he or she should give them a chance to express themselves *also* by means of their own *self-made* media products (p. 137, original emphasis)!

These principles are evident and further developed in the more recent international project ‘Children in Communication About Migration’ (CHICAM), which sought to explore the lives and experiences of migrant and refugee children in a number of European countries.¹⁵ To facilitate this researchers and media educators worked with groups of children, engaging them in the production of visual materials including animation, collage-making, photographic projects and video productions. These visual materials were then viewed and discussed with groups of children in other countries through the use of the internet. Thus, this method provided the researchers with a wealth of valuable data – or ‘thick description’ (Geertz, [1973] 1993) – generated not only from the products produced by the children, but also from observations, written reflections and discussions by both researchers and children throughout the entirety of the project. Hence, in this formulation verbal data is not abandoned in favour of the visual, rather they are considered as complementary factors:

In an era when audio-visual media play an increasingly influential role in children’s and adolescents’ perceptions, it is important that researchers not only rely on verbal approaches alone, but also give young people the opportunity to express themselves in

¹⁵ This project ran from November 2001 to October 2004. For further details see: <http://www.chicam.org>

contemporary media forms. Audio-visual data should not be considered an alternative to verbal data but rather a source of data with a different quality (Holzwarth and Maurer, 2003, p. 127).

The methodological principles underpinning such work are demonstrated in a significant body of work on children's media literacy undertaken by David Buckingham (1987, 1993a, 1993b, 1996, 2000, 2003). In his collaborative research with Julian Sefton-Green (1994), which discussed the pedagogic practices of Media Studies, they used a wide variety of methods in their analysis including observations, interviews, surveys, and importantly examined the students' creations of, and reflections upon their *own* media productions. In so doing, the students were not considered solely as consumers but also *producers* of popular culture. Furthermore, they questioned established Cultural Studies approaches to popular culture in which texts are symptomatically 'read', rather they considered students' material as a form of *social action* in relation to the environment in which it was created:

[W]hat students say about popular culture, and the texts they produce, are part of the process by which they construct their own social identities. Although this process, inevitably, is defined in terms of social power – for example, of social class, gender, ethnicity and age – we would see the meanings of these categories not as predetermined but as actively constructed in social relationships themselves (p. 10).

In addition, Buckingham and Sefton-Green rejected the notion of 'theoreticism' (p. 11) – the privileging of theory – rather they aimed to explore the interrelation between theory and lived experience. Consequently, they attempted to foreground their own position as researchers, thus revealing rather than disguising epistemological issues inherent in the power relations between researchers and the students, identifying themselves instead as '*participant observers*' (*ibid.*, original emphasis):

We are not simply explicating what young people are doing, or seeking either to defend them or to enable them to speak on their own behalf ... As teachers, we are not under any illusion that we can simply abolish these differences of power or knowledge. On the contrary ... they seem to us to be an indispensable aspect of the pedagogic process (*ibid.*).

An example that can demonstrate these points is their discussion on the issue of evaluation (pp. 145-165) which specifically focuses on the work of two GCSE Media Studies students, giving particular attention to 'the relationship between practical work and written reflection, and the students' own perspectives on this issue' (p. 146). Integral to this exercise was the production of posters by the students in which they expressed their identity, these in turn becoming the subject of written reflections. Buckingham and Sefton-Green report that the written feedback ostensibly appeared to be limited in scope, observing that one student did not comment upon the fact that the only image of a black person in his poster was his own (p. 157). Furthermore, they noted that the students themselves found the writing of a log a frustrating and pointless task (p. 160). However, Buckingham and Sefton-Green claimed that the written logs served as a springboard for revealing and valuable discussions with the students, claiming that the students themselves came to recognise the role of the written reflections as the project continued (pp. 159-162).¹⁶ Hence, they maintained that the combined process of production *and* reflection can uncover valuable information that was not made available by any one element alone. In this formulation, they argued that writing facilitates what they termed 'a "metacognitive" function' (p. 160), that is to say:

[The writing] made explicit those cognitive developments which are largely implicit in the production process itself. In other words, by writing things down in the log, the student 'translates' those understandings arrived at empirically into a more abstract, theoretical understanding of media production (pp. 160-161).

Therefore, this study demonstrated the value of research that exploits the interconnections between creative processes and evaluative reflections, a notion which is developed further in the following study.

David Buckingham and Sara Bragg's (2004) study of young people aged 9 to 17 aimed to explore their attitudes towards representations of sex and personal

¹⁶ As Michael, one of the students discussed says, 'There is a good point to it, 'cause after you've done a project, otherwise you've just enjoyed it, you haven't learnt anything and it's not until you sit down and write about what you've done you think "Oh! I've learnt that", and I've thought "Why did I do that?". It makes you think about what you've just done, otherwise it would just be copying out, basically' (1994, p. 162).

relationships in the media. To achieve this the researchers utilised a number of methods: the completion of a diary or scrapbook in which the children documented their personal responses to media representation; interviews where they expanded upon the statements made in their diaries; group discussions that centred around a selection of video clips; further interviews discussing extracts from tabloid newspapers and magazines; and finally surveys that extrapolated further information about their opinions and social lives (pp. 18-19). Importantly, Buckingham and Bragg state that 'Research is not a natural conduit that extracts the "truth" about a topic or about what participants "really" feel and think about it' (p. 17). Rather they acknowledge that their findings would be determined by the methods employed, the environment in which the study was conducted, relationships between the participants predating and developed during the research as well as their own chosen system of analysis. Ostensibly, although this position may appear to limit the potential scope of the research, it may in fact broaden the range of possibilities available to the researcher. As Buckingham and Bragg highlight, tasks were specifically arranged so they would prompt either 'personal' or 'public' responses from the participants' dependent upon the nature of the individual task, such as writing or speaking in a group (p. 22). Thus, by locating participants in varying discursive fields, they were more able to elicit 'different voices' which facilitated a more complex and arguably comprehensive understanding of the students involved.¹⁷ Furthermore, as Buckingham has noted elsewhere (1993c, p. 92), talk functions as a *social act*, that is to say talk is not merely a statement of held beliefs and attitudes, rather it is a behaviour or process which draws upon available cultural concepts to fulfil specific functions: 'people achieve identities, realities, social order and social relationships through talk' (Baker, 1997, quoted in, Buckingham and Bragg, 2004, p. 23).

In consideration of this, Buckingham and Bragg emphasise the significant role of reflexivity in their approach – 'that is the role of researchers in interpreting, representing and producing knowledge from the voices of research subjects' (2004, p. 38) – to promote an informed understanding of how their standpoints may influence

¹⁷ In their analysis, Buckingham and Bragg 'aimed at what Laurel Richardson (1998) has described as a "crystal" structure or a range of viewpoints, none of which is necessarily more transparent or true than any others, but where we can learn from the contradictions and differences between them to develop more complex ways of seeing issues' (2004, p. 22).

and impact upon the research process. Noting then how their methods have moulded their work, they assert that *all* research is limited by the methods applied. However, they maintain that their methods will enable researchers to gain a greater insight into children's understandings and uses of the media that are not provided by other techniques. This, Buckingham and Bragg state is due to the systematic, multi-faceted and holistic approach of their own work:

[R]eaders should be wary of the extent to which *all* methods necessarily constrain what research is able to show or prove ... We would strongly contest the idea that qualitative research is automatically more 'subjective' than quantitative research, or more subject to interpretation. The methods we have used enable us to be systematic and rigorous, both in ensuring the representativeness of the data we present and analyse, and in comparing material gathered through different methods and in different contexts (p. 41, original emphasis).

4.2 Visual Research

A significant feature demonstrated in a number of the above studies is their engagement with visual imagery and/or data within their methodological frameworks. Recently this interest in the study *and* use of images (for example, drawings, photography and video) to understand the social world is becoming more common in the social sciences as reflected in a small, but growing body of literature on visual research methods (Prosser, 1998; Emmison and Smith, 2000; Banks, 2001; van Leeuwen and Jewitt, 2001; Pink 2001, 2003; Knowles and Sweetman, 2004). Specifically, these texts emphasise that visual research is not an independent, self-contained approach; rather it is methodologically and theoretically diverse, utilising a variety of analytical perspectives (for example, anthropology, sociology and psychology) to study a broad spectrum of issues. Thus, in such formulations, visual research methods are regarded as complementary to existing approaches in the analysis of the production and analysis of visual imagery and, as Christopher Pole (2004) has suggested, have 'the capacity to offer a different way of understanding the social world' (p. 7). However, despite the potential value offered by visual research methods, the approach arguably remains marginal within existing qualitative practice.

In his discussion of image-based research, Jon Prosser (1998) claims that the limited status of images within social research is attributable to the employment of 'scientific' paradigms, as well as established qualitative strategies which give primacy to the written word. To support this view he notes that in a content analysis of ethnographic and methodological texts, minimal coverage (in some cases less than one percent) was given to visual methodologies (p. 98). Instead, Prosser asserts that the focus of these comments tended to highlight 'the drawbacks and limitations of using images in a qualitative enquiry' (*ibid.*) rather than the benefits such approaches could provide. As such, he states 'The impression I gained from mainstream methodological texts was that images were a pleasant distraction to the real (i.e., word-orientated) work that constituted "proper" research' (*ibid.*). Elaborating on this point, Prosser argues that in instances when images are included, the *manner* and *tone* of their use is further revealing. In terms of *manner*, he claims that a limited range of images are presented within texts, taking the form of black and white photographs or line drawings, which predominantly serve as illustrations of researchers, participants or objects under investigation. With regard to *tone*, Prosser maintains such texts suggest that images are constructed subjectively, distorting what they aim to represent, and therefore render objective analysis problematic. Thus, he proposes that the role of visual imagery within research is considered credible only in its supportive function to written accounts, and 'are unacceptable as a way of "knowing"' (p. 99) due to the perceived partial nature of their production making them unsuitable for effective analysis. In consideration of these factors Prosser stresses that methodological discussions give little credence to resolving such difficulties, and fail to emphasise how similar criticisms can be levelled against word-orientated research. Furthermore, he adds that although image-based research is actively being undertaken across a wide range of disciplines, it is precisely this diversification which limits the approach from articulating its position in opposition to orthodox methods. Despite Prosser's perspective appearing initially pessimistic, he observes that whilst such diversity reflects wider shifts in current qualitative practice, what *unites* image-based research is the principle 'that research should be more visual' (p. 109). He therefore concludes, 'The question remains – if we believe that Image-based Research is undervalued by the orthodox qualitative research community and that it can make a proportionately greater contribution to research, how is this to be achieved?' (*ibid.*).

In response to the concerns highlighted by Prosser, an increasing number of researchers have utilised a wide variety of visual methodologies in order to demonstrate the methodological advantages of such approaches. For example, in their analysis of curriculum development in health education, Noreen Wetton and Jennifer McWhirter (1998) identified that existing literature aimed at young children sought to convey complex health information symbolically through the use of cartoon characters. However, they argued that as the producers of these methods ‘fail to “start where the children are” in terms of the information, the language and the images they offer to children’ (p. 265), this resulted in the intended meaning of images being misinterpreted. As Wetton and McWhirter’s discussion of dental healthcare campaigns illustrated, when children attempted to decipher connotations behind ‘Suzy Sugar’ (a character promoting the dangers of sugar consumption), they responded with contradictory and confused readings.¹⁸ This, they claimed, was a consequence of the children mediating their understanding of the image through pre-existing knowledge structures. That is to say, although the children could associate smiling with kindness, they could not comprehend the wink and were therefore not capable of constructing a comprehensive interpretation of the image. To explore this notion further, Wetton and McWhirter invited 300 children aged between 4 and 11 to draw a picture of ‘Suzy Sugar’ based purely upon a verbal description of her personality and agenda. Importantly, their findings revealed that in every instance the artwork produced failed to resemble the original character or include any of its ambivalent traits. Thus, Wetton and McWhirter suggested that the use of drawings helps facilitate a deeper understanding of children’s perceptions of *their* worlds (see also Williams, Wetton and Moon, 1989a, 1989b). This method, which is termed the ‘draw and write’ technique, was originally developed by Wetton in 1972 as part of a research project which aimed to explore emotional literacy in 7-8 year old children. Significantly, this work established that although children could express particular emotions visually – using both drawing and writing – they lacked this ability when relying solely on written or spoken words:

¹⁸ Wetton and McWhirter observed that the children mistook the wink as a sign that ‘Suzy Sugar’ had something in her eye and thought her crossed legs indicated she needed to go to the toilet (1998, p. 267).

It became apparent that the children experienced and empathized with a wide range of emotions including anger, frustration, despair, remorse, guilt, embarrassment and relief as well as delight, enjoyment, excitement. The children differed only from adults in that they did not have the vocabulary to express themselves (1998, p. 273).

Hence, by foregrounding the children's *own* written and visual responses, Wetton and McWhirter stated that this approach can instruct curriculum developers on how children conceptualise health and safety issues. In addition, they argued that the combined process of drawing *and* writing enables researchers to access aspects of children's knowledge that eludes conventional techniques.

Developing the method of using drawings within health research, Marilys Guillemin (2004) employed this strategy in order 'to explore the ways in which people understand illness conditions' (p. 272). Noting how existing work has remained grounded in word-based approaches, she asserted that this limits the potential scope of meaning available to the researcher. Guillemin further observed that when drawings have been used in such studies, the use is primarily restricted to children due to the perceived constraints of their vocabulary. Her analysis therefore, sought to identify how women apprehended heart disease and menopause through the production of visual representations. This was achieved by Guillemin conducting initial interviews with the participants about their conditions, which simultaneously helped establish a rapport with the women prior to engaging them in the drawing exercise. Furthermore, she claimed that although the task was met with some hesitancy, following a period of reflection, participants were able to create powerful expressions of their illnesses. According to Guillemin then, this hesitancy was a result of words being privileged over images in the meaning making process:

Meaning making at an individual level is often word based. We primarily explain the way we feel and think by using words rather than images, and it is therefore not surprising that some participants had difficulty expressing themselves using images. Moreover, many participants were experiencing difficulties related to their illness conditions, difficulties that they were still coming to terms with and making sense of. Asking these participants to draw forced them not only to reflect on their illness condition but also to make sense of their experiences in a way that could be conveyed in pictorial form (p. 285).

Consequently, Guillemin highlighted that an interesting feature which emerged from the drawings was participants' ambiguous use of colour and metaphor.¹⁹ In light of this, she stressed the need for the women's *own* interpretations of their images to clarify what they aimed to disclose. However, acknowledging such subjectivity has raised questions regarding the validity of visual methodologies (and qualitative research in general; see Silverman, 2001), Guillemin rejected these notions arguing that 'the use of drawings as a research method expands our interpretations as researchers of the many, diverse ways in which illness can be understood and experienced' (2004, p. 286). Thus, by assimilating both visual and interview based research methods in her work, she demonstrated how this approach allows complex social issues to be evaluated with greater sophistication. Moreover, as Guillemin herself proposed, the technique grants participants who are more able to express themselves visually than in words a voice in social research.²⁰

The above studies have highlighted how the use of drawings can be used to elicit a broader and richer range of data than would have been possible through traditional word-orientated approaches. Expanding on this theme, Lorraine Young and Hazel Barrett's (2001) study of Kampala street children adopted similar strategies in an attempt to understand their 'socio-spatial geographies in relation to their street environments and survival mechanisms' (p. 142). Crucially they recognised that existing methods are not devised to provide an accurate reflection of the child's perspective, and fundamentally fail to allow them any influence on the research design and process.²¹ Therefore, Young and Barrett specifically aimed to develop procedures which fostered a high degree of child-led participation in order to produce 'research "with children" rather than research "about children"' (p. 144). In addition, they stated that as the majority of children in this study were illiterate with no basic

¹⁹ For example, Guillemin explains that a participant named Helen did not draw 'her heart or heart disease per se' (2004, p. 279); rather, Helen illustrated her frustration with the medical profession via a picture depicting someone with their hair on end.

²⁰ For an overview of the potential benefits offered by visual methodologies within health and illness research, see Harrison (2002).

²¹ As Young and Barrett explain, '[T]raditional social science research methods have been denounced as problematic because they rarely involve children in the research process. These methods are often based on positivist methodologies using questionnaire surveys for generating large quantities of statistical data' (2001, p. 142).

schooling, habitual substance abusers (which hindered their concentration) and had little time due to the demands of day-to-day survival, such factors had to be accounted for within their methodological framework. To accomplish this, the researchers utilised a number of visual methods which included drawing based exercises (mental and 'depot' maps, thematic and non-thematic drawings and daily time lines) as well as the production of photo diaries.²² In doing so, Young and Barrett argued that this generated significant advantages for both researchers and participants by *actively* engaging the children's enthusiasm for the tasks. Developing this point, they maintained that the participants found the art based exercises fun, as the realities of their existence denied them access to such opportunities. Furthermore, the practical nature of these activities facilitated an arena in which the children could communicate their thoughts freely, with time being given to consider and formulate their responses. Finally, the completed artworks served as effective prompts during discussion for gaining a greater insight into their lives. Indeed, Young and Barrett claimed that photographic images were particularly successful in this instance, as even the seemingly weakest pictures conveyed a wealth of information gained through the children's *own* interpretation of their photographs. For example, in the case of an image which ostensibly appeared to depict a general street scene, the researchers stated 'it was through discussion with the photographer that the main subject was identified. This resulted in a detailed description of a street child pick-pocketing which is not immediately obvious to the observer because the photograph is "busy" and distant' (p. 147).²³ This, they asserted, was aided by the children being able to take photographs independent of the researchers' influence and in areas inaccessible to them. Moreover, Young and Barrett identified that from participants' perspectives, the role of the camera was especially pertinent, as it not only introduced them to previously unavailable technology, but being given custody of equipment increased

²² In one exercise 22 children drew mental maps to detail places they went to during the day and 'depot' maps which showed where they and other street children visited regularly. Within another activity 23 children produced three thematic or non-thematic drawings of their own day-to-day experiences. Moreover, a further 22 children participated in a group exercise in which they created symbols to represent everyday activities, with each child taking a turn to place them on a daily time line to illustrate their typical day. In addition, 15 children produced a photo diary which consisted of pictures that they had taken over a 24 hour period of their activities and places they had visited.

²³ Indeed, the researchers note that in many cases the peripheral details revealed as much, if not more, information than the subject of the photograph itself (2001, p. 148).

their feelings of self-confidence and esteem. Thus, the use of visual methods seems to have enabled the children to maintain a degree of ownership over the research exercises and, as Young and Barrett explained, ‘proved to be particularly important for developing gainful insight into the street child’s urban environment from the child’s perspective’ (p. 142).

On a similar theme, Michael Schratz and Ulrike Steiner-Löffler (1998; see also Raggl and Schratz, 2004) used photographic images produced by children in an attempt to evaluate the ‘inner world’ (1998, p. 235) of school life from the pupils’ standpoint. This decision resulted from their belief that traditional research methods – such as interviews and questionnaires – are based on written and spoken language which, they claimed, young people had difficulty responding to. Consequently, in such formulations, Schratz and Steiner-Löffler further observed that this leads to the power balance within research processes becoming biased in favour of the (adult) researcher. In spite of this, they suggested that social science disciplines have continued to disregard the value of ‘the visual imagination’ (p. 237), citing Schratz and Rob Walker (1995) who stated ‘Despite an enormous research literature that argues to the contrary, researchers have trusted words (especially their own) as much as they have mistrusted pictures’ (p. 72). Thus, in their own work, Schratz and Steiner-Löffler sought to demonstrate the benefits of photo-evaluation by inviting participants to photograph what they ‘liked or disliked’ (1998, p. 235) about the school environment, these in turn providing the basis for group discussions. Importantly, their study indicated that the pictures instigated a dialogue amongst pupils and teachers about issues which had not formerly been discussed, including personal reflections of schooling. What is more, they proposed that participation in such activities has the capacity to effect *actual* change: ‘often initiatives are started by the pupils to change things they dislike (e.g., a group of 6th graders started a campaign to get a second “long break”’ (p. 245). In its entirety then, Schratz and Steiner-Löffler maintained that this method helps promote greater reflexivity on behalf of the participants, with the photographs offering a more holistic vision of the individual’s experience.

The use of photography as a research tool has been documented by a number of commentators (e.g. Harper, 1998; Prosser and Schwartz, 1998; Banks, 2001; Collier, 2001; Bolton, Pole and Mizen, 2004; Wright, 2004), and can be further illustrated in

Alan Radley, Darrin Hodgetts and Andrea Cullen's (2005) enquiry into how homeless people perceive their own lives. Departing from previous studies which, they claimed, give precedence to 'the multiple causes of homelessness' (p. 274) as well as issues of vulnerability and re-settlement, Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen argued such positions neglect the possibility 'that homeless people may have an active life' (*ibid.*; see also Dewdney, Grey and Minnion, 1994). Therefore, their study aimed to analyse how twelve homeless adults in London established a 'home' for themselves and survived on the city's streets.²⁴ To examine this, the researchers initially conducted interviews with participants through which they developed a contextual understanding of each person's life. This was followed by a photo-production project in which individuals were asked to photograph places and activities of personal significance, in order to 'collect a series of glimpses of the city as seen through their eyes' (2005, p. 276). On completion of this, Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen invited participants to discuss the images they had produced, identifying those that most effectively represented their experiences, and were encouraged to articulate reflections on their completed work including the actual practise of photograph taking itself. During this exercise, the researchers noted the use of cameras for recording social life was important for two reasons: firstly, the photographs detailed places associated with homelessness; and secondly, they featured public spaces both homeless and domiciled people use. As such, Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen asserted that the visual nature of this data produced an understanding of locations used by homeless people which would not have been made apparent by other methods. However, they claimed that photographs did not constitute an object of study in themselves, rather they served to engender communication, which itself became intrinsic in the analysis:

We used photography in this research so that homeless people could show us their world as well as interpret it. Rather than see the photographs as bounded objects for interpretation, they are better understood as standing in a dialectical relationship with the persons who produced them. Their meaning does not lie in the pictures, except in so far as this is part of the way people talk about them. To talk about the photographs

²⁴ Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen elaborate on this emphasising that homelessness 'is not just a passage through which people travel but a culture in which they engage to a greater or lesser degree. And because that culture is not separate from society but part of it, we need to conceptualise a way of envisaging the relationships of homeless people to others in the city' (2005, p. 275).

one has taken is to make claims for them – to explain, interpret and ultimately take responsibility for them (p. 278).

Hence, within such a framework, Radley, Hodgetts and Cullen claimed that the interview can be conceptualised as a *dialogic* relationship between researcher and participant, through which meaning is produced in a dialectic process, and therefore not imposed by either party.

In agreement with the principles outlined above, a wide body of video research has demonstrated advantages of combining discussion and visual productions (e.g. Downmunt, 1980, 2001; Pink, 2001, 2004; Noyes, 2004). For example, in a study conducted between 1998 and 2000, Ruth Holliday's (2004) exploration of queer performances employed video diaries in order to evaluate their potential 'for capturing some of the complex nuances of the representation and display of identities' (p. 1597). This was enabled by assigning participants video cameras and requesting them to detail how they represented themselves in differing everyday environments – 'work, rest (home), and play (the scene)' (p. 1598) – both verbally *and* visually. Holliday specifically achieved these aims by encouraging respondents to film themselves in the appropriate settings whilst wearing, discussing and commenting upon the suitability of their typical clothing for each occasion.²⁵ In doing so, she maintained that this approach allowed her to 'chart the similarities and differences in identity performances' (*ibid.*). Significantly, Holliday established that the use of video diaries helped amass information on 'identity performances' in ways that are unique to this method. On the one hand she suggested that, as opposed to a tape-recorded interview which can only express what the participants *say*, the video's provided a *visual illustration* that allowed for a more 'complete' image of self-representation; on the other, the act of making a video not only generated a visual representation, but these were also supported by the individual's *own* narrative. Moreover, Holliday stated that the *process* of video-making permitted participants to choose, alter and refine their

²⁵ Importantly, Holliday observes that in many cases the participants exceeded her expectations by displaying particular cultural products – such as books, CDs and clothing of specific importance – which conveyed deeper insights into their identities. This information, she states, can only be made manifest through the medium of video (2004, p. 1607).

presentations of self, thus affording them a more reflexive role within the research process:

Against other methods that focus on ‘accuracy’ or ‘realism’, then, this approach affords diarists greater potential to *represent* themselves; making a video diary can be an active, even empowering, process because it offers the participant greater ‘editorial control’ over the material disclosed (p. 1603, original emphasis).²⁶

4.3 Metaphor in Social Research

The increased focus on reflexivity within qualitative enquiry (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2005) has been central to developments in visual research methodologies and, it is argued, helps advance a fuller understanding of participants’ experiences of their social worlds. More recently the use of metaphor has emerged within social research as an effective means of exploring individuals’ experiences and identities. These ideas are highlighted in Russell Belk, Güliz Ger and Søren Askergaard’s (2003) analysis of consumer desire which engaged participants from Denmark, Turkey and the United States in a series of tasks to investigate ‘the thoughts, feelings, emotions, and activities evoked by consumers in various cultural settings when asked to reflect on and picture desire, both as their particular idea of a general phenomena and as lived experiences’ (p. 332). Within these exercises, a proportion of the participants were instructed to complete a journal detailing their own accounts of fulfilled/unfulfilled desires and interviewed on the issues raised; remaining participants undertook tasks specifically designed to provoke metaphorical representations of desire including: collage-making; drawing; and writing stories (*ibid.*). Although Belk, Ger and Askergaard acknowledged the journals and

²⁶ It should be noted that the issue of ‘empowerment’ within the research process remains a contested issue, as Gauntlett (1997) notes ‘it has been suggested that the notion of empowerment may represent little more than academics and teachers idealising their own position, and expecting [individuals] to desire the supposedly “powerful” knowledge of which they are the keepers’ (p. 92). For example, Buckingham and Sefton-Green (1994) state ‘While the idea that knowledge is power may be reassuring for those who possess educational capital, it may not necessarily be shared by those who lack economic capital’ (p. 209); nonetheless such criticisms should not be misunderstood as detracting from the validity of creative research projects. Moreover, as Gauntlett importantly asserts ‘whilst an affective variable such as “empowerment” is difficult to measure in any meaningful way, it is at least a possible outcome’ (1997, p. 93; for a summary of ‘video work as empowerment’ see pp. 92-93).

interviews provided valuable *descriptive* information, they maintained that the projective tasks revealed a greater depth of data. This is best exemplified in the collage-making activities, where participants not only represented what they desired, but also created metaphors for desire's dualistic nature by juxtaposing abstract images (p. 333-340). Therefore, they claimed the combination of metaphoric expressions *as well as* participants' explanations enabled them to construct a thematic portrait of desire that exceeded constraints of language, and would not have been possible through any one method alone:

We found the projective and metaphoric data to be very rich in capturing fantasies, dreams, and visions of desire. The journal and depth interview material was especially useful for obtaining descriptions of what and how desire was experienced. Although this is useful data, especially concerning the things people desire, it also showed some evidence of repackaging in more rational-sounding terms. Some informants found it difficult to elaborate on their private desires or did not want to reveal those desires. Hence, the projective measures sought to evoke fantasies, dreams, and visual imagination in order to bypass the reluctance, defence mechanisms, rationalizations, and social desirability that seemed to block the direct verbal accounts of some of those studied (p. 332).

Similarly, research by Brandon Williams (2002) on interprofessional communication in healthcare has highlighted the usefulness of metaphors within collage-making as a means for developing a more complex and comprehensive understanding of individuals. In this work he demonstrated how participants' creations and reflections in group environments helped facilitate an 'increased awareness of the different perceptions of shared issues' (p. 53).²⁷ For Williams then, collage acts as a 'communication tool' (*ibid.*) through which barriers to expression can be overcome. This, he stated, is strengthened as the value of collages resides in participants not feeling intimidated by their possible lack of artistic skill and, consequently, more

²⁷ For example, Williams notes that in a workshop on pain relief within cancer care settings, one doctor had used an image of a crying child with the word 'sad' placed next to this. Although other participants had initially interpreted this as a reflection of children suffering, the doctor explained that it was intended to represent her own helplessness and vulnerability when unable to offer assistance. Thus, Williams states, the exercise enabled greater empathy and understanding between participants from differing professions (2002, p. 55).

likely to engage with such tasks. Furthermore, he maintained that this reduction of anxiety promoted discussion, adding that ‘via the safety of metaphors’ (p. 56) the collage-making exercise itself eased free association and ‘open expression’ (p. 55) which enabled numerous attitudes, ideas and beliefs to be articulated: ‘Creating one’s own image allows for more possibilities, more unconscious associations, and more creative integration of parts into a whole’ (Carter, Nelson and Duncombe, 1983, quoted in Williams, 2002, p. 55).

These ideas are evident and further developed in Gauntlett’s (2007, see also 2006) more recent work that engages participants in *building* metaphorical constructions of their identities using Lego bricks.²⁸ This approach, he explains, derives from Seymour Papert’s theory of constructionism (see Papert and Harel, 1991) which maintains ‘that people learn effectively through *making* things’ (2006, p. 7, original emphasis), and argues against mind-body distinctions, claiming that our perceptions and experiences of the world are mediated bodily *as well as* mentally (see Merleau-Ponty, [1945] 2002). Therefore, within such a formulation, physical engagement with our environment activates alternative cognitive procedures to those triggered by purely cerebral activity. Thus Gauntlett claims, by building metaphors of their identities prior to discussion, participants are not only granted *time* to *reflect* on what they create, but this process engages a *different type* of thinking about the issue itself. In doing so, he suggests the exercise avoids problems inherent in approaches which aim to elicit an immediate reaction, by allowing a considered and reflective response to the research task. Importantly, Gauntlett adds, the method allows for a more complex representation of the concept that does not presume an individual’s identity is a fixed, discernable artefact which can be described in a linear manner, but acknowledges its multifarious, amorphous and changeable nature more suited to symbolic expression. Furthermore, he states that the *process* of building a Lego model is particularly appropriate in this instance as it entails improvisation and experimentation, hence providing diverse forms of conceptualisation, as Gauntlett explains ‘it’s an alternative way of gathering sociological data, where the expressions are *worked through* (through the process of building in Lego, and then talking about it) rather than just being spontaneously generated (as in interviews or focus groups)’

²⁸ This method was originally used for business and organisational consultancy purposes. For further details see: <http://www.seriousplay.com>

(2006, p. 5, original emphasis). Consequently, Gauntlett concludes that the method affords individuals time and opportunity to build a *whole* presentation of their identity (or snapshot anyway) that is exhibited ‘all in one go’ (2007, p. 183), and as such enables participants to establish a sense of ‘balance’ in their work.

4.4 Summary

A review of the preceding studies has demonstrated that creative and visual research methods offer unique methodological advantages for considering individuals’ identities and their relationships with the media. For example, Kitzinger’s (1993) analysis of media influences on people’s understanding of AIDS highlighted that although participants articulated a critical awareness of the media’s rhetoric, they replicated the dominant discourse of the medium. Thus, the use of the ‘news game’ technique enabled Kitzinger to elicit attitudes that may not have been uncovered by more traditional methods. Similarly, by asking participants to create original media texts, Gauntlett (1997) also revealed that participants were highly influenced by existing media coverage. However, the significance of this work was that it was the very process of the children’s *active engagement* in producing the videos that granted Gauntlett access to more comprehensive and worthwhile data. Furthermore, the methods employed not only benefited Gauntlett’s study but also, arguably, the participants involved, by attributing them with a degree of empowerment over their self-presentation and expression. Developing this point, Buckingham and Bragg’s (2004) work on young peoples’ attitudes towards sex and relationships in the media, specifically sought to draw out participants’ responses through the adoption of a variety of methods including diaries, interviews and group discussions. In doing so, the study facilitated a more complex and reflexive understanding of the students’ thoughts and beliefs. Expanding on this theme, Belk, Ger and Askergaard’s (2003) work revealed that metaphors could overcome the limitations of language to convey ambivalent emotional and intuitive responses, whereas Williams (2002) concluded that metaphors enabled participants to circumvent linguistic barriers and facilitated communication. In addition, Gauntlett’s (2007) more recent study, in which metaphors of personal identity are constructed using Lego, acknowledges this process

exercises different modes of thinking that can produce more nuanced representations of the self.

The above studies have then started to trace a trajectory of research that employs creative and visual methods in the process of their investigations. The researchers discussed have argued that these methodological approaches offer crucial and distinct benefits over alternative techniques, providing a rich and varied supply of data for analysis. Having outlined the potential merits and validity of creative and visual research methods, it is within this field that the present study intends to locate itself. The following chapter will therefore detail the aims and procedures of this study.

Chapter 5: Methodology

In the previous chapter the value and validity of creative and visual methods within social research was considered by looking at a number of studies that have employed such techniques. This chapter moves on to describe the aims of the present study, beginning with an outline of the methodological procedure and how this was informed. The chapter then discusses the sampling strategy as well as data-collection methods utilised within the study, and provides a detailed overview of the collage-making exercise and groups involved in this research project. Finally, the chapter sets out an analytical framework based upon art therapy principles through which the findings can be approached, and illustrates a range of the collages produced by the young people who participated in the research process.

5.1 Methodological Procedure

In order to explore young people's self-identities this study invited participants to produce two collages in which they were asked to express: 1. 'How I see myself' and 2. 'How I think other people see me'. The collages were created under similar conditions, where all participants were given the same instructions and had access to the same materials from which they could select images. In addition, the participants completed a brief questionnaire concerning their own perceptions of self-identity. This process was followed by a series of unstructured interviews between the participants and researcher²⁹, in which the participants discussed their own self-reflexive explanations of the collages that they themselves had created. It was anticipated that these procedures would facilitate a more extensive exploration of the participants' notions of identity through both the production of creative materials and the participants' *own* reflections on their work.

²⁹ In all cases, the researcher was myself. The fieldwork ran from September 2005 to January 2006.

5.1.1 Evolution of the Methodology

This study had initially aimed to recruit 14-16 year old schoolchildren (Year 10 and 11) as participants for this project. However, after consultations with a number of teachers in various schools, it became apparent that accessing this age group would be highly problematic, as these students were fully engaged in their GCSE work. Thus, the availability of Year 10 and 11 students would be restricted by timetabling/coursework demands and, in the view of the schools, the allocation of time to conduct research within scheduled teaching hours would not be feasible.³⁰ Instead, it was suggested that due to these limitations, a younger age group should be considered. In light of this, it was necessary to evaluate whether such a group would be able to understand the principal concepts behind the collage exercise. Jean Piaget's work on cognitive development was referred to (e.g. [1926] 2001; [1929] 1973; Piaget and Inhelder, 1969); here he identified that during what he termed the 'Formal Operational Stage' (11-12 years and beyond), children are capable of hypothetical thinking and can speculate about what may be *possible* rather than what is *actual*. According to Piaget's model then, children within this age band should demonstrate the ability to manipulate ideas and therefore engage with the creative and reflexive tasks required by this study.³¹ It should be noted here though that Piaget's position has been challenged by more recent work on cognitive development which questions whether children's development occurs in stepped stages (e.g. Flavell, Miller and Miller, 2002), and claims the approach both underestimates children's cognitive abilities (e.g. Bower, 1974; McGarrigle and Donaldson, 1974; Donaldson, 1978) and overestimates the development of formal operational thinking (e.g. Neimark, 1979; Dasen, 1994). However, as Patricia Miller (2002) states, 'Piaget's main claims concerned the sequence in which behaviours are acquired rather than the particular ages, which he thought would vary. Thus, showing that an ability emerged earlier than Piaget claimed is not necessarily damaging to his theory' (p. 85). In

³⁰ Running these sessions during after-school clubs was not considered practical as students' attendance could not be guaranteed and parental consent would be required. Furthermore, unlike Buckingham and Bragg's (2004) study, no financial incentive was offered to the participants.

³¹ A pilot study was run at Southampton Solent University with 12-13 year old pupils (Year 8) in June 2005 as part of a Widening Participation 'taster day'. In these sessions, the students demonstrated that they were capable of producing identity related collages.

addition, Piaget's (1972) own modifications of this theory suggested that although almost all individuals could develop formal reasoning, they did so only in relation to areas of specific importance to them, as demonstrated in Shawn Ward and Willis Overton's (1990) study which found that 12th grade students in American high schools could reason abstractly about relevant everyday issues and activities which they were already familiar. Rita Vuyk (1981) further highlights that Piaget's later work placed less significance on step-like stages, and moved towards formulating development as a progressive spiral: '[Piaget] now considers development a spiral and though one may call a stage a "detour of the spiral", this indicates that periods of equilibrium are relatively unimportant' (p. 192; see Piaget, [1975] 1985). Hence, in consideration of these factors, it was decided to involve Year 9 students (13-14 year olds) for the purposes of this research. Furthermore, the decision to focus solely on 13-14 year olds was made to ensure some level of consistency and comparability between the participants. Moreover, participating teachers at all of the schools involved in this study had stated that by this level children would be familiar with collage-making techniques, having undertaken identity related projects such as the construction of 'identity boxes' in which images used on inside and outside walls represented internal and external facets of the individual's self, and poster-collages that depicted pupils' own conceptions of their identity.

5.2 Sample and Data-Collection

5.2.1 The Sample

The selection of participants who would be involved in this study required consideration before the research commenced, but as David Silverman (2005) notes 'sampling is not a simple matter [and] the crucial issue ... seems to be thinking through one's theoretical priorities' (p. 136). Indeed, Alan Bryman (1988) has suggested that instead of following a statistical rationale, qualitative research accords with a theoretical logic, arguing 'the issue should be couched in terms of generalizability of cases to theoretical propositions rather than to populations or universes' (p. 90). However, it should be highlighted that Pertti Alasuutari (1995) has proposed that 'Generalization is ... [a] word ... that should be reserved for surveys

only. What can be analyzed instead is how the researcher demonstrates that the analysis relates to things beyond the material at hand ... *extrapolation* better captures the typical procedure in qualitative research' (pp. 156-157, original emphasis). The relationship between theory and sampling is further developed by Jennifer Mason (1996), who explains:

[T]heoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position ... and most importantly the explanation or account which you are developing. Theoretical sampling is concerned with constructing a sample ... which is meaningful theoretically, because it builds in certain characteristics or criteria which help to develop and test your theory and explanation (pp. 93-94; see also Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp. 27-34).

As one of the principal aims of the investigation was to explore how young people used the media in the conceptualisation and construction of their identities, it was deemed appropriate to select male and female participants from a variety of (class and ethnic) backgrounds to allow for a broad spectrum of responses, and therefore necessary to locate schools with diverse student populations. In order to achieve this a total of twenty-six schools were contacted from across the Dorset, Hampshire and London regions. Specifically, these schools consisted of either a multicultural or predominantly 'white' student cohort and were situated in both socially and economically deprived, as well as affluent areas. Although the study would have ideally liked to engage with young people from various locations throughout Britain, this was not feasible due to financial and time limitations, and would have been beyond the ability of a single researcher, thus accounting for the research being undertaken in Southern England. Furthermore, particular types of schools that were approached, these being private, religious, and single-sex boys' schools, stated that they did not accommodate researchers, and as such access to these institutions was not possible. Nevertheless, despite these limitations and constraints, such factors did not seem to impact negatively on the research project as a diversity of young people were represented in the final sample. Consequently, from this selection process seven schools were chosen, and these provided a combined total of eight groups for the project. During this stage, it was also emphasised to teachers that participating groups

should not be selected by ability; rather they should be generally representative of the student body.

5.2.2 The Schools

5.2.2.1 Cantell School, Southampton

Cantell School (Ofsted, 2004a) is a mixed comprehensive with 1217 pupils and received special college status for Mathematics and Information and Communication Technology in 2003. Educational standards are below average at entry, and approximately a quarter of the students have special educational needs. The school has a population that reflects the diverse ethnic origins and socio-economic mix of the community, which includes areas of considerable deprivation. In addition, amongst the student cohort are a number of refugee children and asylum seekers. Furthermore, a fifth of the pupils have English as an additional language. Like Millbrook Community School (detailed below), this school suffers from problems relating to the recruitment and retention of staff.

5.2.2.2 Kelmscott School, London

Kelmscott School (Ofsted, 2002a) is situated in Walthamstow, East London and attended by 938 pupils: a majority of these students coming from underprivileged backgrounds. The student population reflects the cultural diversity of the community, with nearly a third of the students having Pakistani origins. Furthermore children from Indian, black Caribbean and black African backgrounds are highly represented, as well as a small percentage of refugee children, principally from Albania. For many students then English is an additional language: Urdu, Punjabi, Turkish and Bengali being predominantly spoken. In addition, pupils' educational attainment at entry is below average with a high number of students being recognised as having special educational needs.

5.2.2.3 Millbrook Community School, Southampton

Millbrook Community School (Ofsted, 2002b) is a mixed comprehensive and has a small cohort consisting of 527 students, a proportion of which have been excluded from other schools. The school is located in an area which suffers from extreme deprivation, where very few adults gain any higher education experience and the majority of students' families encounter social and economic hardship. The pupils are almost exclusively from white UK backgrounds, with only a very small minority of the students coming from different ethnic groups. In addition, the school has a very high level of students with special educational needs (currently 60 per cent) and general standards of educational attainment remain below average. Furthermore students' behaviour, in many cases, is challenging and difficult for the teachers to control. These difficulties have resulted in low student aspirations and problems with the recruitment and retention of staff.

5.2.2.4 Oaklands Community School, Southampton

Being located within the same catchment area as Millbrook Community School, Oaklands Community School (Ofsted, 2004b) shares many similar characteristics. This school is a mixed comprehensive with 732 pupils, serving as an educational facility for both adults and children within its vicinity. On entry, students have well below average educational attainments, demonstrated by a significant number of pupils possessing the lowest levels of literacy and numeracy in Southampton. The proportion of students with special educational needs is also much higher than the national average. In addition, a majority of the student cohort are white British with very few ethnic minority students attending the school.

5.2.2.5 Regents Park Girls' School, Southampton

Regents Park Girls' School (Ofsted, 2002c) is a comprehensive situated in Southampton and has 1092 pupils from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. Attainment levels of students on entry are below average, however these rise to above average on leaving school. The student body consists of a broad range of cultures and faiths, with a fifth of the pupils having English as an additional language: Punjabi,

Urdu, Bengali and Gujarati being the first language of many students. Although the number of students with special educational needs is average, a disproportionate number of these students have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

5.2.2.6 Twynham School, Dorset

Twynham School (Ofsted, 2001a) is a mixed comprehensive with 1437 pupils whose educational attainment on entry is average. However, the number of pupils with special educational needs is marginally above average. The school's cohort is predominantly middle-class and almost exclusively white, with very few students from ethnic minority backgrounds. Furthermore, English is the first language for the vast majority of students.

5.2.2.7 Willowfield School, London

Willowfield School (Ofsted, 2001b) is a mixed comprehensive attended by 596 students. The school is located in Walthamstow, East London, an area which is marked by educational disadvantage and low socio-economic circumstances. Students' abilities on joining the school are below the national average, whilst the number of children with special educational needs and English as an additional language exceed the national average. This school consists of students from culturally diverse backgrounds: Pakistani pupils constituting the largest group, followed by white European, black Caribbean and black African.

The descriptions of ethnicity and class in the preceding summaries are somewhat crude; however they provide a broad picture of each school in question.

5.2.3 Data-Collection

Within this study the creative work produced by participants constitutes an integral component of the research process. Although this study would have benefited from allowing the children to create their own collages using *any* images of their own choosing, pragmatically this was not viable due to time and financial limitations, as

well as a vast majority of the schools simply not having the resources to accommodate such a request. Indeed, whilst the use of internet and colour printing facilities could have enabled participants to access a greater range of images, for most of the schools involved in this project such equipment was not easily available. Thus, each group was provided with twenty-five magazines and newspapers, all receiving the same edition of each title, from which they produced their collages.³² These publications were chosen as they offered a broad range of images from both mainstream and minority presses (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Magazines and newspapers used for collage-making activity

<i>All About Soap</i>	Fortnightly soap opera magazine outlining storylines and celebrity lifestyles
<i>Asian Times</i>	Weekly middle-market newspaper focusing on developments in Britain, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka
<i>Attitude</i>	A glossy monthly lifestyle magazine for gay men
<i>BBC Wildlife</i>	Monthly wildlife magazine
<i>Desi Xpress</i>	Weekly newspaper covering Asian entertainment and current affairs
<i>Diva</i>	A glossy monthly lifestyle magazine for lesbians
<i>Eastern Eye</i>	Weekly newspaper detailing UK and Asian news, sports, fashion and media
<i>Empire</i>	Monthly film magazine
<i>Glamour</i>	Young women's glossy monthly magazine covering fashion, beauty and celebrities
<i>The Guardian</i>	British broadsheet newspaper (Monday-Saturday)
<i>Heat</i>	Weekly celebrity gossip magazine
<i>Men's Health</i>	Monthly men's lifestyle magazine focusing on health, fitness and sex issues
<i>MK Milk</i>	Monthly Hong Kong youth lifestyle magazine featuring fashion, music and sports
<i>New Nation</i>	Weekly newspaper targeted at the black British community providing news, sports and entertainment coverage
<i>NME</i>	Weekly alternative music magazine
<i>Pride</i>	A glossy monthly lifestyle magazine for black women
<i>P2</i>	Monthly computer games magazine
<i>Shoot</i>	Weekly football magazine
<i>The Sun</i>	British tabloid newspaper (Monday-Saturday)
<i>The Telegraph</i>	British broadsheet newspaper (Monday-Saturday)
<i>Top of the Pops</i>	Monthly teenage popular music magazine featuring celebrity gossip and fashion/beauty advice
<i>Touch</i>	Monthly UK urban music magazine
<i>Unity</i>	Monthly inline skating and style magazine
<i>The Voice</i>	Weekly newspaper aimed towards the British African Caribbean community covering news, sport and arts
<i>Zoo</i>	Weekly men's magazine focusing on sport, sex and humour

³² Prior to the magazines and newspapers being distributed amongst students, the researcher asked participating teachers to identify any material that they considered inappropriate which was then removed. The content removed was similar for all groups and consisted of sexually explicit material (e.g. advertisements for phone sex lines, naked women in sexually provocative poses).

Therefore, despite the scope of material appearing arguably limited, the diversity of images within these texts helped overcome such restrictions. Furthermore, as the study progressed, this selection allowed the researcher to monitor which materials were being utilised and which ones were not. Moreover, the collages were accompanied by a questionnaire which aimed to elicit further information regarding how children envisage their own identities (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Questionnaire

➤ Name:

➤ Age:

➤ School:

➤ Are you: Male ☐ Female ☐

1. Ethnicity (please tick one of the boxes below)

White

British ☐

Irish ☐

Other White background ☐ (please give details:

Black or Black British

Caribbean ☐

African ☐

Other Black background ☐ (please give details:

Asian or Asian British

Indian ☐

Pakistani ☐

Bangladeshi ☐

Other Asian background ☐ (please give details:

Mixed

White and Black Caribbean ☐

White and Black African ☐

White and Asian ☐

Other Mixed background ☐ (please give details:

Chinese or Other Ethnic

Chinese ☐

Other Ethnic background ☐ (please give details:

2. How would you *usually* describe your ethnicity?

3. Can you think of *three words* that you would use to describe *how you see yourself*?

1.

2.

3.

4. Can you think of *three words* that you would use to describe *how you think other people see you*?

1.

2.

3.

Question 1 mirrors the format of many official ethnic monitoring forms, and sought to identify how students would categorise themselves within this framework; whereas questions 2, 3 and 4 were specifically designed as open questions to allow participants

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to offer any response they chose. Question 2 expands upon question 1 by enabling the participants to define their own ethnicity in order to establish how they articulate their identity. Finally, questions 3 and 4 relate directly to the collages, and aimed to encourage the participants to think reflexively about themselves and the work they produced.

Of course, a number of disadvantages have been attached to the use of questionnaires, as Ina Bertrand and Peter Hughes (2005) state:

- They provide simple answers to simple questions, so they cannot help to establish thick description or to understand process or social context.
- They depend upon the capacity of the researcher to ask unambiguous questions dependent on clear definitions, but in social and cultural research definitions are always influenced by the context.
- They depend upon the capacity of the respondent to answer, and their willingness to do so honestly, so questionnaire answers are always inherently unreliable.
- The simpler the questions, the less chance for misunderstanding, but also the more chance that respondents will assume that the questionnaire is not important and will not give it serious attention.
- There will always be a proportion of non-response or incomplete response: taking a larger sample than strictly necessary helps to reduce the effect of this, but may exacerbate bias (pp. 69-70).

Therefore, within the context of this study – which centres upon establishing young people's *own* understandings of their self-identities by allowing them the opportunity to shape the research agenda – the participants' responses to these questions were not analysed; instead the questionnaire was used as a strategy for encouraging participants to further reflect upon their identities. Nevertheless, this information could of course later be incorporated into a quantitative search for trends and patterns in the data if desired.

In addition to the above methods, unstructured interviews were conducted with the participants in which they reflected upon and offered interpretations of their own work. Interviewing and the data this produces has been criticised for a number of

reasons, including: participants may struggle to articulate their thoughts or feelings and/or may provide responses they believe the interviewer desires (Bertrand and Hughes, 2005, p. 74); the interview environment leads to a power imbalance in the research process which positions the interviewer above the interviewee (Holstein and Gubrium, 1997, p. 115); and, data provided by interviews is frequently misunderstood as a ‘window onto the world [rather than] the rhetoric of socially situated speakers, *not* an objective report of thoughts, feelings or things out in the world (Lindlof, 1995, p. 165, original emphasis). Within this study these problems were addressed through utilising techniques employed in art therapy, which are discussed later in Section 5.4. Furthermore, in relation to this study the interviews fundamentally served as a means through which the participants could voice thoughts and feelings regarding their identity collages on their *own* terms, and enabled the researcher to clarify any points by developing upon the young people’s responses. As such, the interviews did not explore themes pre-determined by the researcher, rather themes emerged out of the responses provided by the young people themselves. Consequently, the researcher did not evaluate the interviews using computer programmes for qualitative data analysis, for example NUDIST or NVivo, which although able to manage information effectively, cannot ascribe meaning to this material (see Miles and Weitzman, 1994; Seale, 2005). Instead, the researcher elected to adopt a fully ‘hands-on’, manual approach by immersing herself within the interview data, reading and re-reading the transcripts in order to become familiar with the participants’ voices. During this process themes which emerged in the data were identified, and headings describing the content of the students’ responses were assigned – a technique known as ‘open coding’ (Burnard, 1991). Following this, both the themes and the headings (along with the relevant interview extracts) were then grouped into broader categories, which provided the framework of the final analysis. Crucially, this method enabled the researcher to identify issues and concerns that had been expressed by the young people which would not have been recognised by computer software.

5.3 Overview of the Research Exercise and Groups

The collage-making activities were all undertaken within classroom environments during scheduled art lessons, and conducted by the researcher with a teacher present

(see Table 5.3).³³ Within these sessions the researcher briefly discussed the use of visual metaphors and elicited responses from the participants to ensure their understanding of this concept. This was achieved by showing the children a soap opera character they were familiar with – Demi from *EastEnders*³⁴ – and asking them to suggest specific words which other characters might use to describe her. On completion of this, the participants were then prompted to supply words that Demi could use to characterise herself. Having compiled a list of words, pupils were then encouraged to propose images which could represent the concepts *visually*, thereby enabling an understanding of metaphors and providing an illustrative example of the task itself. The students were then directed to create two collages to express: 1. ‘How I see myself’ and 2. ‘How I think other people see me’. At the end of this exercise pupils were given a brief questionnaire to complete, with the researcher assisting those students who were unable to do these themselves. Further time was made available by the schools during teaching hours for the unstructured interviews to take place, in which no teachers were present to ensure student confidentiality. Furthermore, to allow for a fuller understanding of the procedures, Table 5.4 details how the collage-making and interview process took place in each specific case:

³³ It should be noted that during these sessions the participating teacher was asked to refrain from intervening – which they agreed to and complied with – except in instances when the researcher requested assistance with difficult students.

³⁴ Prior to conducting the fieldwork teachers from all groups had stated that *EastEnders* was particularly popular amongst the student cohorts, with Demi being a familiar character for the participants due to their similar ages. Furthermore, Demi’s character attracted much attention at this time as the current storyline highlighted her role as a teenage mother and association with drugs.

Table 5.3: Lesson plan

Aim: This session engages students in collage-making activities through which they will express their identities using visual metaphors
Key Vocabulary: Visual representation, metaphors
Duration: 1 x 1 hour 40 minutes or 2 x 1 hour (dependent upon timetabling)
Procedure: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brief introduction and group discussion about the media• Group exercise to explain visual metaphor:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Image of Demi (from <i>EastEnders</i>) is shown and placed on board.• Image of Keith and Rosie (Demi's parents) is shown and placed on board next to Demi. Students asked 'what words would Keith and Rosie use to describe Demi?' (words are written on board). Process is repeated with Pauline (godmother to Demi's child) and Patrick (neighbour with no association to Demi).• Students asked to think of words that Demi would use to describe herself (written on board).• Students asked to substitute the words for images (to elicit visual metaphors).• Using the above, students are shown that they could create two collages from this.• Students asked to create two collages in which they express: 1. How I see myself, and 2. How I think other people see me (areas to consider elicited from students and written on board).• On completion of collage task, students complete questionnaire.
Materials: Sheets of card (A2) Magazines/Newspapers Scissors Glue Pens/pencils/markers (various colours)

Table 5.4: Time spent making the collages and interviewing

Group	School	No. of weeks	Collage-making	Interviews	Total hours
1	Cantell School	2	1 x 1h 40m	1 x 1h 40m	3h 20m
2	Kelmscott School	3	2 x 1h	1 x 2h	4h
3	Millbrook Community School	2	1 x 1h 40m	1 x 1h 40m	3h 20m
4	Oaklands Community School	3	2 x 1h	1 x 3h	5h
5	Regents Park Girls' School	2	1 x 1h 40m	1 x 1h 40m	3h 20m
6	Twynham School G1	4	2 x 1h	2 x 1h	4h
7	Twynham School G2	4	2 x 1h	2 x 1h	4h
8	Willowfield School	2	1 x 1h 40m	1 x 1h 40m	3h 20m

The eight groups produced a total number of 165 collages with the accompanying questionnaires. From this 111 interviews were conducted with the children, in which they discussed their work (the discrepancy between these two figures was due to either time limitations or student absenteeism). Table 5.5 and 5.6 provide a breakdown of these details in greater depth:

Table 5.5: Group details and work completed

School (Year 9 pupils)	Group size	Gender ratio	Collages produced (with questionnaires)	No. of interviews conducted	Collages (with interviews and questionnaires)
Cantell School	20	14 male 6 female	20	12	12 9 m/3 f
Kelmscott School	19	8 male 11 female	19	17	17 6 m/11 f
Millbrook Community School	14	7 male 7 female	14	13	13 7 m/6 f
Oaklands Community School	24	12 male 12 female	24	18	18 10 m/8 f
Regents Park Girls' School	21	0 male 21 female	21	15	15 0 m/21 f
Twynham School G1	24	12 male 12 female	24	11	11 4 m/7 f
Twynham School G2	21	13 male 8 female	21	12	12 5 m/7 f
Willowfield School	22	13 male 9 female	22	13	13 5 m/8 f

Table 5.6: Ethnic composition of groups

	Cantell School	Kelmscott School	Millbrook Community School	Oaklands Community School	Regents Park Girls' School	Twynham School G1	Twynham School G2	Willowfield School
<u>White</u>								
British	16	2	10	22	14	20	18	4
Irish	-	-	1	-	-	1	1	-
Other White background	1	1	-	-	1	1	1	-
<u>Black or Black British</u>								
Caribbean	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	4
African	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Other Black background	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
<u>Asian or Asian British</u>								
Indian	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Pakistani	-	8	-	-	1	-	-	7
Bangladeshi	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Other Asian background	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	1
<u>Mixed</u>								
White and Black Caribbean	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	1
White and Black African	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
White and Asian	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	-
Other Mixed background	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	2
<u>Chinese or Other Ethnic</u>								
Chinese	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Other Ethnic background	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-

Having detailed the background of the schools from which the groups were recruited, and overviewed the circumstances in which the work was created and interviews took place, the principles that will inform the analysis of the students' collages and their own responses to them will now be discussed.

5.4 Analysis and Interpretation

This study is centred upon visual materials in that its most evident product is the 111 collages that constitute the basis for the investigation. Confronted by such conspicuous visual artefacts, the researcher may have a tendency to focus exclusively upon an interpretive strategy grounded in visual communication theory (e.g. Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996; Rose, 2001; Sturken and Cartwright, 2001). However, as David Gauntlett (2004) states, such approaches are deeply problematic, as much work in this area purports to analyse how people use visual media in the context of their lived experience, but in practice imposes the authors' privileged 'reading' onto the visual text and presumes that these interpretations exemplify those of the audience as a whole (p. 5). In contrast, this study is concerned with *actual* people and their relationship with the media, specifically its impact upon their identities. Thus, the collage-making exercises are intended to explore how the participants use media images to articulate their own understanding of their identities: the collages becoming *visual conceptualisations* of the participants' identities and how they might be seen. Moreover, the task itself affords participants *time* to thoughtfully engage with and consider the exercise, rather than having to produce an instant linguistic response.

Therefore, in this study the participants are actively producing visual materials and engaged in an ongoing process of analysis throughout the course of the project. This position is informed by Gauntlett's (2004) discussion on creative visual research, which details how feminist criticisms of traditional methods have highlighted that participants have no impact on the direction or agenda of the research, instead acting merely as passive 'subjects' who provide data (pp. 8-9; see, for example, Roberts, 1981; Reinharz, 1992; Letherby, 2003; Hesse-Biber and Yaiser, 2004). He maintains that creative techniques help to overcome these limitations by proposing a more *dialogic* model which enables participants to shape and influence the research itself,

thereby ensuring that they are represented more effectively, rather than having researchers' interpretations projected upon them (2004, p. 9). Importantly however, Gauntlett does acknowledge that any analysis requires the researcher to take on an interpretive role, stating that 'researchers *always* have a job of interpretation to do' (p. 6, original emphasis), and suggests that a solution to the methodological problems of interpretation can be found in principles provided by art therapy – principles which lie at the heart of the present study.

Art therapy was primarily influenced by the psychoanalytic work of Sigmund Freud ([1900] 1997) and Carl Jung (1964) which maintained that imaginative products, for example dreams or works of art, articulate latent mental material, albeit in a codified form (see Edwards, 2004, pp. 27-32). Psychoanalysis then, claims that artworks can be read diagnostically to reveal desires and traumas that are represented in symbolic form. As such, this approach has been traditionally utilised by art therapists to explore psychiatric patients' mental and emotional conditions. A study which demonstrates this point, and specifically seeks to integrate psychoanalytic theory into the practice of art therapy, is that undertaken by Jacky Mahony and Diane Waller (1992) in which they aim to expose the traumas that have caused alcohol and drug abuse through an analysis of the patient's artwork. In this instance, they maintain that the production and analysis of the art constitutes the basis of treatment and acts as a foundation for further therapeutic work. Such techniques therefore, have been used to assess a broad range of emotional and psychological concerns (see Waller and Gilroy, 1992), including those that are particular to children (e.g. Klepsch and Logie, 1982; Di Leo, 1983; Koppitz, 1984; Matthews, 1999; Thomas and Silk, 1990), in which the artwork is interpreted by the therapist as a basis for their evaluation. More recently, as Gauntlett (2004) notes, art therapy has developed from this framework which privileges the therapists' interpretations, to a model that not only includes, but also begins with and relies upon the patients' *own* reflections on what is produced (see Case, 1990; Schaverien, 1990; Wood, 1990). Thus, this method is focused on a 'triangular relationship' (Figure 5.1) which aims to provide a more holistic understanding of the issues that concern the patient, rather than those prioritised by the analyst:

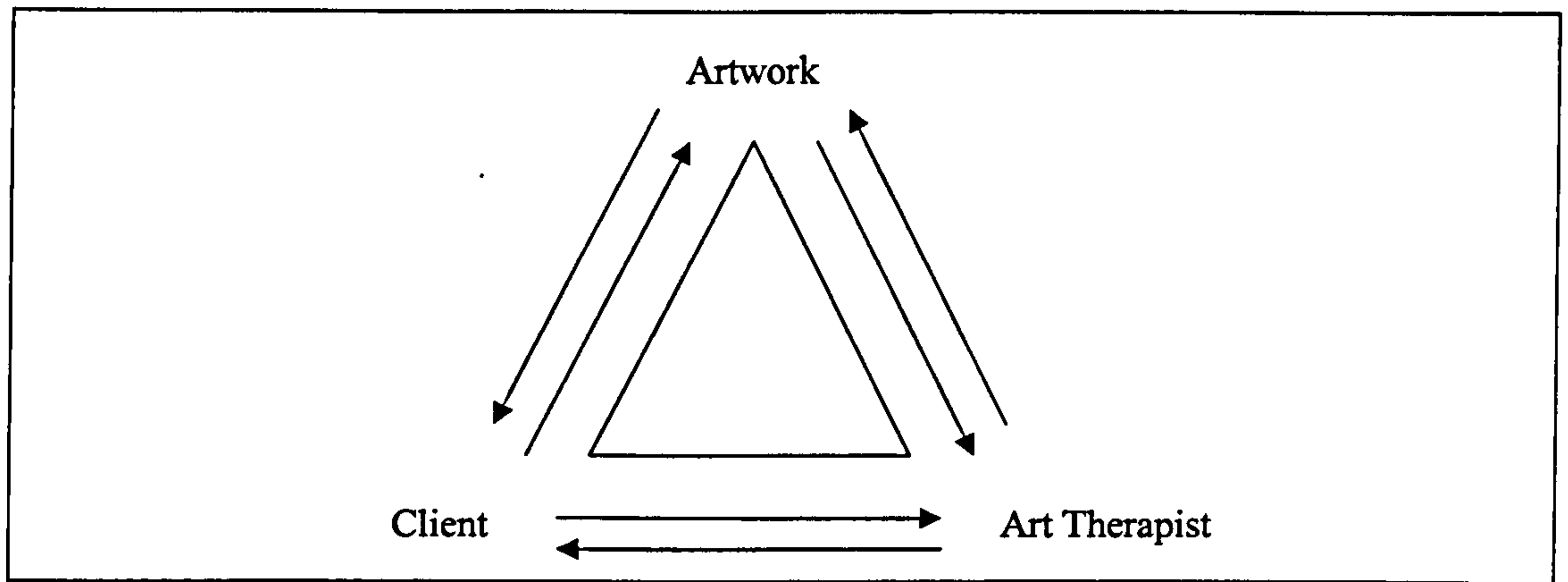


Figure 5.1: Triangular Relationship (from Edwards, 2004, p.2)

In such a formulation, as David Edwards (2004) has explained, ‘the therapeutic process in art therapy is primarily concerned with the dynamic interaction between the client, the artwork and the art therapist’ (p. 89) through which the interplay between client and therapist, or client and their creative work can be highlighted or de-emphasised at varying times. Furthermore, he adds that within an art therapy session the process of creating an image may be of therapeutic value to the client, whereas the relationship between client and therapist mediated by the artwork itself can predominate on other occasions. According to Edwards then, in the triangular relationship ‘greater or lesser emphasis may be placed on each axis (between, for example, the client and their artwork or between the client and the art therapist) during a single session or over time’ (p. 2). In doing so, he maintains that the therapist must remain aware of factors which come to bear on this dynamic, including accepting clients and their work, as well as fostering an open and expressive relationship through observing, reflecting and reacting to clients in a sensitive manner. This in turn, Edwards argues, can help enable an environment that may encourage more insightful images and responses to emerge. Developing this point, he proposes a number of areas for the art therapist’s attention whilst conducting sessions, these being: *‘The main themes to emerge during the session and how these were responded to ... The materials the client used ... How the client used the art materials ... [and] The client’s approach to the image making’* (pp. 89-90, original emphasis). In consideration of these issues, Edwards importantly stresses that the therapist’s work will then be informed by both a variety of theoretical approaches *and* responses derived from the client’s artwork, behaviour and feedback. Thus, although the

problematics of achieving ‘objective’ interpretations and analyses are not fully resolved, they are arguably acknowledged within this framework. Therefore, such a mixed-source approach may facilitate a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the participants’ intentions, and as such, may prove to be a valuable method that can be employed in all areas of creative research. This is a principle that will underlie the remaining chapters.

5.5 Introduction to the Collages

Before proceeding with a detailed discussion on the collages and their analysis (Chapters 6 and 7), it would seem appropriate to offer some examples which demonstrate a range of work produced (see also Appendix A). What becomes evident within these samples is the participants’ adoption of differing styles and strategies to depict visual conceptions of their identities. (Please note that the names of all participants in this study have been changed to ensure anonymity.)

In a number of cases the collages were packed with visual imagery, giving the work a more crowded appearance:



Figure 5.2: Betty’s Collage



Figure 5.3: Lucy’s Collage



Figure 5.4: Jason’s Collage



Figure 5.5: Malcolm’s Collage

Conversely some collages were notably bare, with very few images being used:



Figure 5.6: Alison's Collage

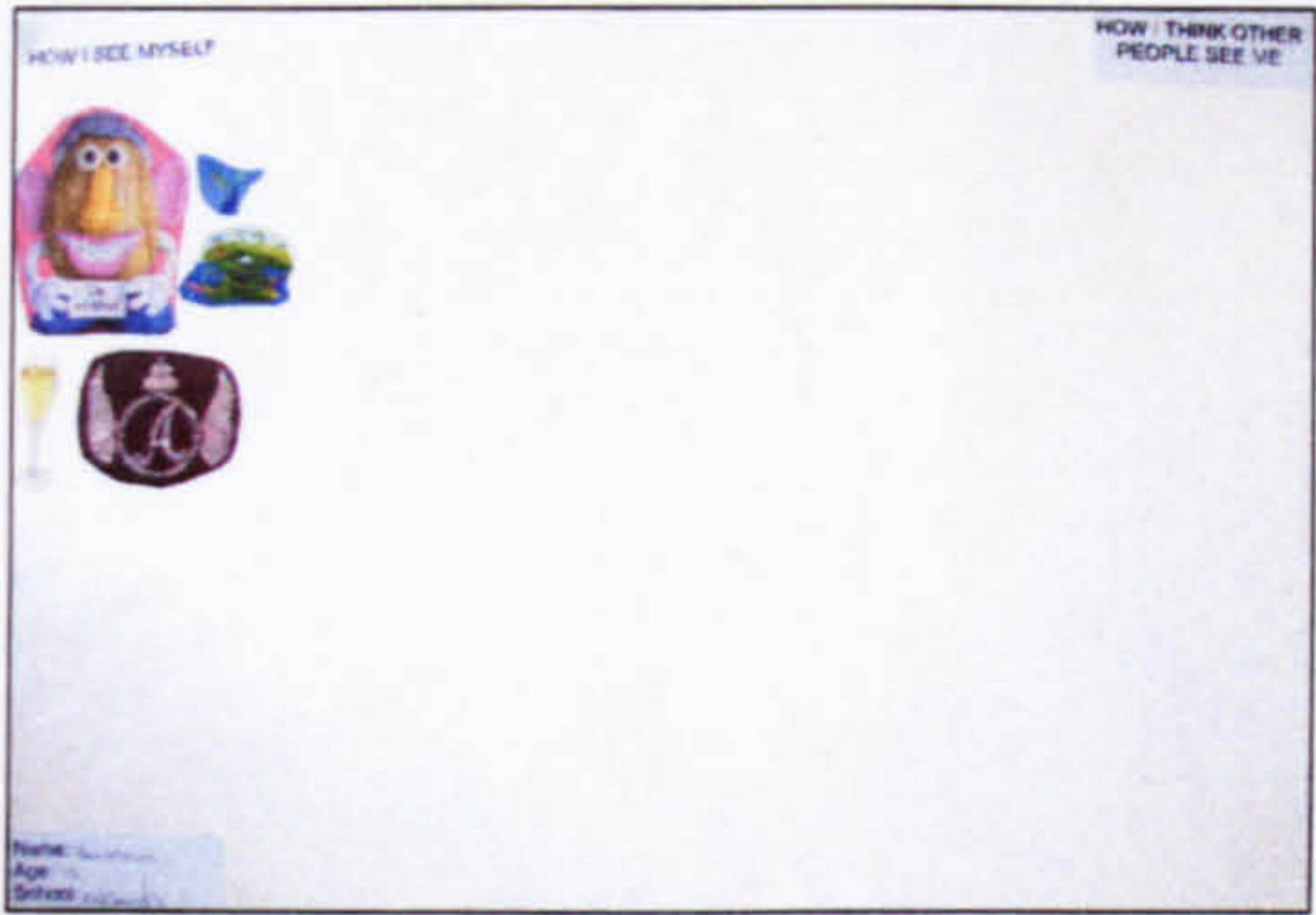


Figure 5.7: Kate's Collage

Some collages illustrated that the participants had solely drawn upon pictures to convey their ideas:



Figure 5.8: James' Collage



Figure 5.9: Zakirah's Collage



Figure 5.10: Darren's Collage



Figure 5.11: Rachel's Collage

In other instances, images were accompanied by printed text selected from the magazines and newspapers to express further facets of the individual's identity:



Figure 5.12: Carly's Collage

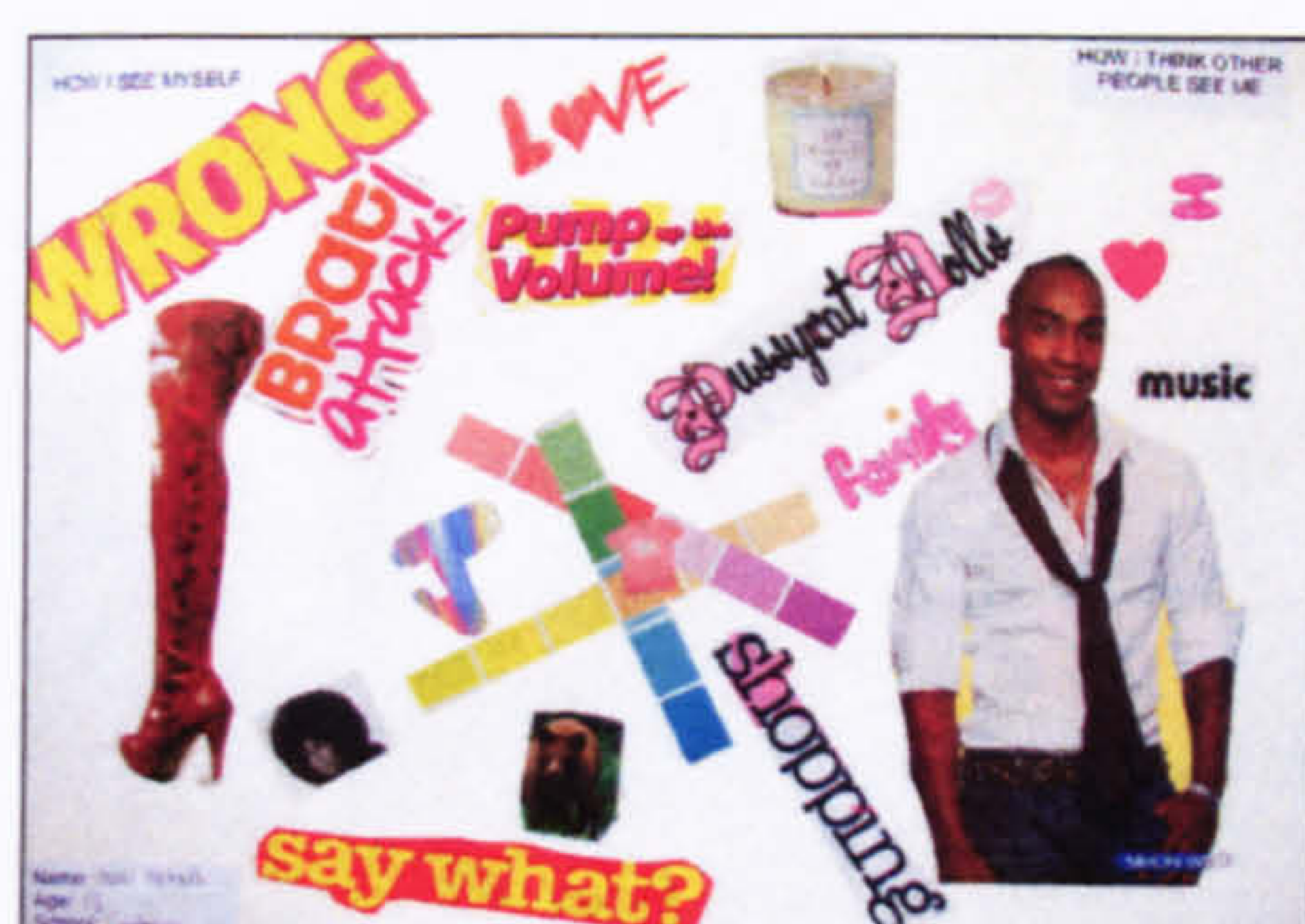


Figure 5.13: Josie's Collage

A number of participants supplemented the available imagery by including their own drawings and writing on the collage:



Figure 5.14: Sarah's Collage



Figure 5.15: Amelia's Collage



Figure 5.16: Pamela's Collage

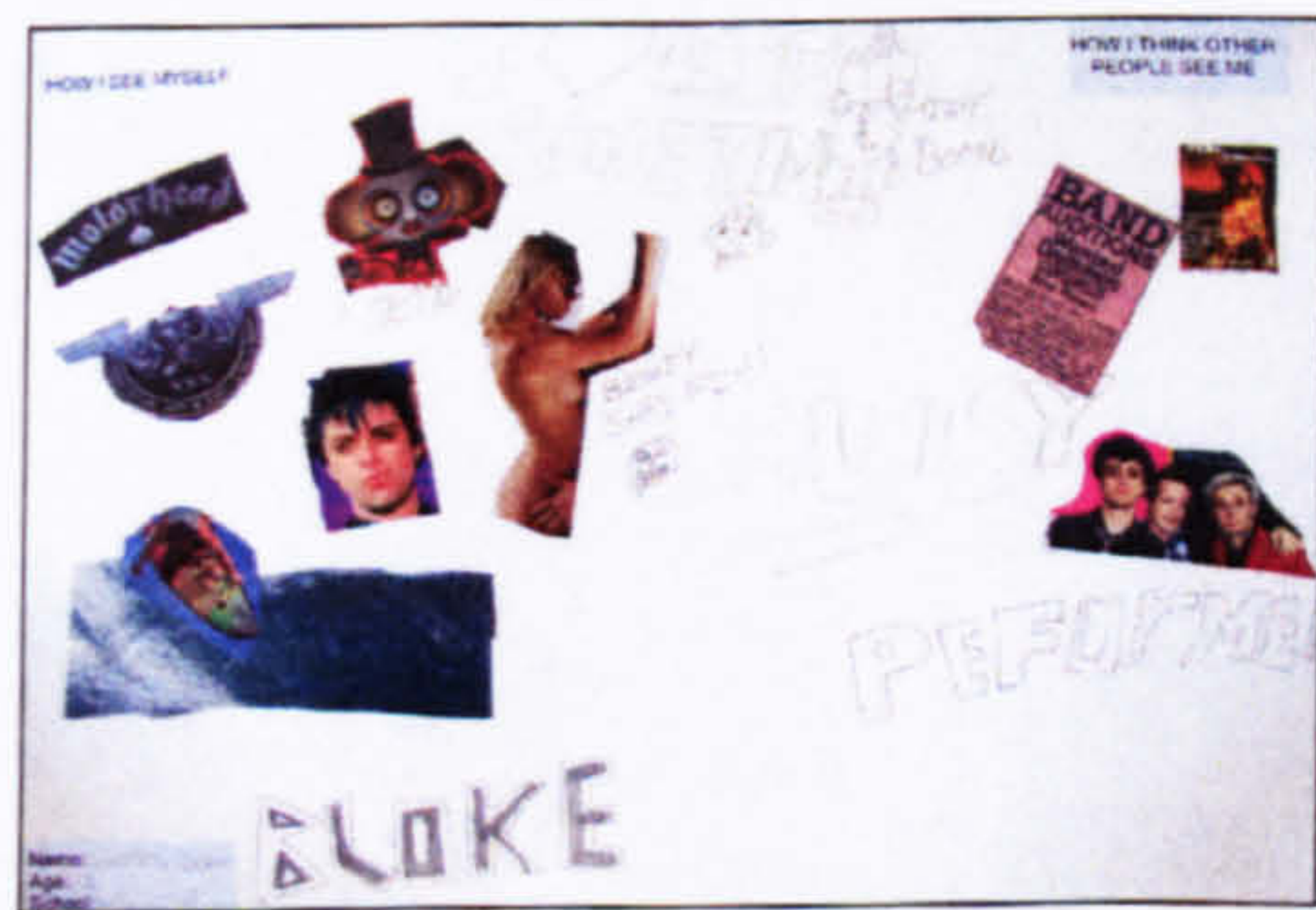


Figure 5.17: Carl's Collage

One participant specifically chose to draw the entire piece, rather than utilising any of the material supplied:



Figure 5.18: Keith's Collage

On a number of collages, distinctions between the two aspects of identity – ‘How I see myself’ and ‘How I think other people see me’ – were distinguished clearly:



Figure 5.19: Jake's Collage



Figure 5.20: Simone's Collage

In other instances, these categories merged together to produce a single overview of the participant's self-image:



Figure 5.21: Sabina's Collage



Figure 5.22: Qirat's Collage



Figure 5.23: Zahra's Collage



Figure 5.24: Christina's Collage

In addition, some work attributed greater or exclusive detail to one area of the collage:



Figure 5.25: Joe's Collage



Figure 5.26: Diana's Collage

Finally, other participants used a central feature to represent a point of intersection between the collages' two components:



Figure 5.27: Polly's Collage



Figure 5.28: Dean's Collage

5.6 Summary

Creative and reflexive processes, as discussed in Chapter 4, are integral to the present project, in which the participants' creation of collages and self-reflexive evaluations

will enable the students' voices to actively contribute to, and shape the analysis itself. As such, this enquiry complies with Gauntlett's (2004) position that the study of the media should not be artificially divided between 'theory' and 'practice'. Rather, he states, these two elements should aspire to be fully integrated to enable an understanding of the media in relation to lived experience through the critical production of media texts: 'studying media *by* making media' (p. 15, original emphasis). Here then, the principles proposed by art therapy, as outlined by Edwards (2004), can be seen to offer a credible and valid method of analysis. Similar to the process of art therapy then, the production of materials and interactions between researcher and participants facilitated by creative and visual research methods may generate richer and more rewarding data for analysis. It is this mixture of creativity and communication that the following two chapters turn to, which consider the collages produced in this study through the participants *own* interpretations of their work.

Chapter 6: Gender and Individualism

In this chapter, and the following one, a number of theoretical approaches which examine how individuals conceptualise and construct their sense of self and identity are reviewed alongside the participants' *own* interpretations of their collages. This chapter begins by outlining the work of Anthony Giddens which establishes how individuals living in late modern Western societies shape and understand their self-identity and reflexively create an ongoing narrative of the self. Therefore, the chapter moves on to look at how these narratives of the self were formulated and articulated by participants in terms of their gendered identities. In relation to masculinity concepts of 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'policing masculinity' are explored as well as research which identifies that a range of masculinities exist, and considered through the male participants' discussions of 'active' masculinity and sport. The chapter then turns to a variety of studies that highlight the notion of femininity as performance and evaluates more recent debates about the impact of 'girl power' discourse on girls' subjectivities. As such, ideas about the performative nature of femininity and girl power rhetoric are used to analyse the female participants' responses. Despite the focus on gendered identities, the chapter concludes with a discussion which foregrounds the notion that the principle of individualism in late modern societies prioritises the construction of a unique and successful self, and for participants this was understood as an equally important facet of their sense of self.

6.1 Giddens: Late Modernity

In order to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of how individuals construct and perceive their identities, Anthony Giddens (1984) has provided a useful framework which establishes the significant role played by self-identity in modern Western societies. This approach is grounded in his theory of structuration which conflates the work of Emile Durkheim ([1895] 1938) and Max Weber (1978), arguing that both macro-level forces (social structure) and micro-level activity (human agency) are interrelated. As such, Giddens importantly identified that although a social structure – including institutions, moral systems, and traditions – does exist,

this is reproduced through the repetition of acts by individual actors and, therefore liable to change in response to shifting patterns of attitudes and behaviours. However, as he notes, an individual's actions are moderated by social protocols in a process Giddens suggests is analogous with language use (Giddens and Pierson, 1998, pp. 10-12). In this formulation he claims that although language only exists in moments of communication, those who deviate from the set rules of grammar are met with strong resistance. Comparably, although the rules of social order are solely grounded in convention, people who do not comply with these codes and defy social expectations are met with similar hostility. Thus, according to Giddens, the behaviour of individual actors actively reproduces and reinforces a repertoire of expectations held by others, which constitutes the basis of social forces and in turn, determines social structure. As he explains, 'Society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do' (*ibid.*, p. 77). Developing this point, Giddens (1991) argues that the maintenance of shared conventions enables people to preserve 'a "faith" in the coherence of everyday life' (p. 38) and arguably explains why aberrant behaviour is regarded as a threat to an individual's sense of stability within society.

Expanding on this theme, Giddens claims that in contrast to pre-modern (traditional) societies, where individual roles and codes of behaviour are considered 'given' – being assigned by the rules of a specific culture – post-traditional societies prevail under the condition of late modernity in which all aspects of society, from government to intimate relationships, have become increasingly subject to reflection and examination. As a consequence, he asserts that post-traditional societies are marked by a heightened reflexivity and become conscious of their own construction. By doing so, 'in the post-traditional age, responsibilities and expectations become more fluid and subject to negotiation' (Gauntlett, 2007, p. 9; see Giddens, 1991, 1992). Significantly then, the centrality of reflexivity within post-traditional societies results in individuals having to confront how they conceptualise their own identities:

What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in the circumstances of late modernity – and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour (1991, p. 70).

In consideration of these factors Giddens proposes that self-identity is not composed of set characteristics, rather the individual reflexively creates an understanding of their own biography in the form of an ongoing narrative which aims to provide the social actor with a consistent sense of self, and yet may be revised in response to circumstance. Furthermore, he states that pride and self-esteem are grounded in 'confidence in the integrity and value of the narrative of self-identity' (p. 66), whilst shame originates from insecurity regarding the narrative's legitimacy:

The existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of the biography which the individual 'supplies' about herself. A person's identity is not found in behaviour, nor – important though this is – in the reactions of others, but in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*. The individual's biography, if she is to maintain regular interaction with others in the day-to-day world, cannot be wholly fictive. It must continually integrate events which occur in the external world, and sort them out into the on-going 'story' about the self (p. 54, original emphasis).

It should be noted, however, that the conditions of late modernity do not offer the individual a limitless set of possible identities from which they may select and adopt. Instead, Giddens states that the impact of capitalism has consequences for how individuals construct the project of the self. As Giddens says, 'Modernity opens up the project of the self, but under conditions strongly influenced by the standardising effects of commodity capitalism' (p. 96). Thus, whilst capitalism appears to provide a vast diversity of products through which individuality may be expressed and attained, the available options are dictated by market forces resulting in the project of the self being reduced to a limited range of consumer choices. This situation he regards as a subversion of the true quest for self. In addition, although Giddens acknowledges that people have the potential to respond creatively in their acts of consumption, he maintains that the reflexive project of the self 'is in some part necessarily a struggle against commodified influences' (p. 200), since identities available to 'purchase' under capitalism parallel notions of fixed identities within traditional societies and, therefore, become the object of questioning by reflexive individuals.

In the above discussion the role of consumerism highlights ways in which individuals living in late modernity are able to develop and articulate a *lifestyle*. For Giddens,

concepts of lifestyle are integral to the post-traditional era as individuals are compelled to make choices – albeit limited – in the absence of prescribed (traditional) roles: ‘The more post-traditional the settings in which an individual moves, the more lifestyle concerns the very core of self-identity, its making and remaking’ (p. 81). Importantly, he asserts that ‘lifestyle choices’ are not exclusive to realms of the privileged elite; rather *all* social actors must create and adopt a lifestyle – even though some possibilities may be restricted due to social positioning. Furthermore, Giddens stresses that the term ‘lifestyle’ extends beyond professional status and conspicuous consumption to encompass wider options, behaviours, attitudes and beliefs. Hence, lifestyles can be seen to function as patterns for guiding the narrative of self-identity, but do not determine specific life outcomes. In this sense then, lifestyle choices enable individuals to consolidate their personal narrative in a recognisable manner, helping them to establish ties with wider networks of similar people. Giddens’ position therefore foregrounds that questions regarding identity and lifestyle become an inescapable issue for the reflexive citizen living in late modern Western societies, and these concerns are augmented and reinforced by contemporary media.

The above concerns regarding identity and lifestyle choices are most prevalent in the articulation and understanding of gender roles. This discussion will therefore move onto examining changing conceptualisations of gender and identity, and how these were exemplified by the participants themselves.

6.2 Masculinity

In the previous section Giddens states that the transition from traditional to post-traditional societies has led to the questioning of social roles which were previously prescribed and taken-for-granted. This is particularly pertinent in the case of masculinity, where the changing nature of gender roles has resulted in what some commentators have termed a ‘crisis of masculinity’ (e.g. Faludi, 1999; Clare, 2000), characterised by changes in the labour market; changing family patterns; increased levels of violence, abusive behaviour and crime; higher rates of depression and suicide; as well as the impact of feminism and gay movements in popular discourse (Beynon, 2002, pp. 76-79). Whilst it is arguable whether such a ‘crisis’ actually

exists (*ibid.*, pp. 93-97), the evident instability of male identity within modern cultures, as Stephen Frosh, Ann Phoenix and Rob Pattman (2002) describe, ‘both reflects and contributes to the production of a parallel developmental “crisis” for boys, engaged in the process of identity construction in a context in which there are few clear role models and in which the surrounding images of masculinity are complex and confused’ (p. 1). However, before the issue of young men’s constructions of masculine identities is explored further, it would be useful to first examine the mechanisms through which masculinity is established and perpetuated.

6.2.1 Hegemonic Masculinity

It has come to be recognised that early accounts of masculinity within sociological research tended to focus on men’s position in relation to women, prioritising gender dynamics *between* these groups, with men being afforded power at the expense of women’s subordination (Connell, 2000). However, in more recent years, an ever increasing body of research on men and masculinities has indicated that masculinity can no longer be conceptualised as a fixed monolithic category, rather the concept is complex, fluid and subject to change (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001; Kimmel, Hearn and Connell, 2005). In acknowledgement of this, contemporary theorists have argued that instead of considering masculinity, a range of *masculinities* actually exists, each offering insights into the multifarious ways in which men ‘do male’ (Connell, 2000; Whitehead, 2002). Furthermore, a significant theme that has arisen in this work is the interplay of gender with other structural influences – such as class, ‘race’/ethnicity and sexuality – and how this impacts upon constructions of masculinity (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Sewell, 1997; Connell, 2000; O’Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002). In doing so, discriminations between dominant and subordinate forms of masculinity have been highlighted (Connell, 2000). As a result, the notion of hegemonic masculinity has emerged to help define how processes of masculinity and femininity are located and maintained within ideological frameworks. With regards to modern Western societies, ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity include whiteness, heterosexuality, economic success, ‘toughness, power and authority, competitiveness [as well as] the subordination of gay men’ (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002, pp. 75-76), and it is the possession of such attributes

which comes to be perceived as ‘successful ways of “being a man”’ (Beynon, 2002, p. 116).

In his influential text *Masculinities* (2000), R. W. Connell raises these specific points claiming that masculinities not only differ, but are in conflict and opposition within relations of power. Drawing upon Antonio Gramsci’s (1971) concept of hegemony – that describes the cultural processes by which a certain group in society is able to assert and maintain its dominance over others – he argues ‘At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted’ (2000, p. 77). However, Connell further suggests that “‘Hegemonic masculinity” is not a fixed character type ... It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable’ (p. 76). In consideration of this, he states that current constructions of hegemonic masculine ideals have led to the marginalisation and/or subordination of ethnic minority, homosexual and working-class masculinities. Moreover, for those groups of men who are unlikely to ever meet set hegemonic standards, he introduces the notion of *complicity* (p. 79) which suggests that these individuals recognise the doctrines of hegemony in order to profit from its structural inequalities ‘without the tensions or risks of being the frontline troops of patriarchy’ (*ibid.*). Thus, although Connell’s analysis acknowledges that men as a collective are afforded social, political and economic advantages due to the dominant position of their gender – benefits termed the ‘patriarchal dividend’ (*ibid.*) – he importantly identified that these advantages are not equal for all: ‘... in the United States, particular black athletes may be exemplars for hegemonic masculinity. But the fame and wealth of individual stars has no trickle-down effect; it does not yield social authority to black men generally’ (p. 81). In agreement with the principles proposed by Connell, a significant body of work has demonstrated how hegemonic masculinity asserts its authority and control over ‘alternative’ masculinities (Nayak and Kehily, 1996; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 1997; Epstein and Johnson, 1998). These studies suggest that patriarchy *expects* men to reject any behaviour deemed ‘feminine’ or aberrant to established masculine traits, and coerces them to behave within strict limitations or suffer social punishment. Furthermore, men are not only required to monitor their own behaviour, but to *police* the actions of others.

6.2.2 Policing Masculinity

The issue of ‘policing’ masculinity is central to a study conducted by David Buckingham (1993c), in which small groups of boys aged between 8 and 12 were interviewed about a number of films and television programmes in order to explore their relationship with these media.³⁵ In this work he notes that talk produced by the participants did not directly reveal data on this matter, rather it highlighted how the boys negotiated and articulated their own sense of masculine identity within a social context. That is to say, the interviews demonstrated how young men *performed* masculinity in the presence of, and for, others. In light of this, Buckingham suggests that: ‘Rather than regarding talk as a transparent reflection of what goes on in peoples’ heads, I have attempted to analyse talk as a *social act* which serves specific functions and purposes’ (p. 92, original emphasis). For example, during their conversations about ‘scary’ films (p. 99) he observes that individuals were inclined to discuss these in a bold and confident manner so they would be perceived positively by other boys. In addition, if participants displayed any supposed ‘feminine’ attitudes or asserted sexual sentiments, this behaviour would be regarded as a source of humiliation, and therefore subject to ‘policing’ by peers. To elaborate, any statements about identification with and/or admiration for female characters were ridiculed as expressions of inappropriate effeminacy, whilst appearing to ‘fancy’ them was considered a greater taboo. Thus, boys’ comments on such subjects were never fully expanded upon due to the ongoing process of ‘policing’ which prevented this, as Buckingham says, ‘there is a sense in which the boys are constantly putting themselves at risk – primarily of humiliation or ridicule by each other – and then rapidly withdrawing’ (p. 103). Hence, by foregrounding the discursive strategies through which masculinity is policed and enforced he concludes:

[M]asculinity is actively produced and sustained through talk. Far from being unitary or fixed, it is subject to negotiation and redefinition as the talk proceeds. Masculinity, we might say, is achieved rather than given. It is something boys *do* rather than something that is done to them – although, equally, it is something they can attempt to do to each other (p. 97, original emphasis).

³⁵ These interviews were originally conducted as part of a larger study which sought to explore children’s relationships with television (see Buckingham, 1993b).

6.2.3 Young Masculinities

More recently notions about how masculinity is *achieved* have become fundamental to considerations of young men's identities. For example, in their analysis *Uncertain Masculinities: Youth, Ethnicity and Class in Contemporary Britain* (2000) Mike O'Donnell and Sue Sharpe were concerned with exploring masculinity within the context of a changing social landscape, focusing on '[the way] boy's attitudes are gendered, and, in particular, how they come to think and behave as "masculine"' (p. 2). Furthermore their study importantly acknowledged, through reference to Connell's (2000) work, the influence of class and 'race'/ethnicity in informing conceptions of masculinity. In doing so, O'Donnell and Sharpe specifically aimed to understand how boys perceived themselves in relation to society's 'gender order' – 'that is, to the structure and culture of gender inequality at a macro level' (2000, pp. 9-10) – by questioning them about their views on a wide range of issues including school; families and relationships; work; and leisure. To achieve this, research was conducted during the mid 1990s with boys aged between 15 and 16 from four London schools.³⁶ In total, 262 boys completed questionnaires, from which 44 were interviewed along with three senior members of teaching staff. Moreover, the largest ethnic groups to participate were white, African Caribbean and Asians (mainly Indian and Pakistani from Sikh and Muslim faiths). Within these groups participants further represented diverse social classes, although patterns of class formations became apparent: African Caribbean boys tended to come from working-class backgrounds whereas African boys were predominantly middle-class (pp. 2-3).

A significant finding revealed in this study was that whilst many of the boys articulated statements about gender equality and anti-racist discourse, as promoted through school policies, this rhetoric was not necessarily supported by their everyday actions. This was most evident in the boys' engagement with sexist and racist jokes. Thus, the researchers identified that the boys were capable of maintaining contradictory attitudes and, in doing so, this reflected the *uncertain* nature of masculinity itself. In addition, their analysis also demonstrated that despite ideas pertaining to masculinity appearing cross cultural, such as interests in sport and

³⁶ Three of these schools had participated in a previous study conducted by Sharpe (1976) which explored teenage girls' thoughts and reactions on varying aspects of their lives.

music, ethnicity remained a powerful structural influence on constructions of masculine identities in the 1990s. As O'Donnell and Sharpe explained:

[W]hite English boys identified with the England national football team and even local football teams to an extent that the African-Caribbean boys rarely did. The African-Caribbean boys were much more likely to identify with individual black music or sports stars, or with American basketball in which there is a substantial black presence. For the Pakistani boys it was their internationally successful cricket team that was the favoured source of heroes. Indian boys were probably the most eclectic among the minority ethnic groups in the range of people and cultural practices and symbols with which they found some degree of expression and identity (p. 6).

Therefore by foregrounding the ways in which gender intersects with class and ethnicity, their work established no single dominant definition of masculinity, but rather numerous conceptualisations of masculinities and, as they suggested, is perhaps, 'an indication ... that traditional patriarchy is fragmenting' (p. 13). Consequently, this study helps illustrate how young men in contemporary Western society are negotiating their positions in a cultural climate where traditional male privileges are subject to challenge, but simultaneously, change is not occurring as rapidly as some might believe.

On a similar theme Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman (2002) aimed to provide an in depth examination into the 'emerging masculinities' (p. 5) of young men in contemporary society. In order to investigate this notion, 245 boys and 27 girls aged between 11 and 14 were drawn from 12 London secondary schools. These consisted of both private and state schools, four being single-sex (for boys) and eight co-educational. Initially, 45 group interviews (36 single-sex and 9 mixed-sex) were conducted with participants to establish their thoughts and opinions on the subject of 'growing up as a man' (p. 8). From this process, 71 boys³⁷ participated in unstructured individual interviews undertaken in two stages. In the first interview, boys were encouraged to reflect and expand upon issues raised within the group discussions by providing narrative accounts of their lives. The second interview, as the researchers explain,

³⁷ Within this study 78 boys were originally offered the opportunity to participate in a one-to-one interview. The discrepancy was due to student absenteeism or suspension (2002, p. 7).

‘explored repetition, contradictions and gaps in the material from the first interview ... and offered the respondent the opportunity to reflect and comment on the research process itself’ (*ibid.*). Furthermore, 24 girls were interviewed once individually regarding their views on boys, masculinity and gender relations. In doing so, this specifically enabled Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman to not only compare responses provided by boys and girls, but also avoid assuming that certain issues were of exclusive interest to boys. Thus, their use of this multi-method strategy helped facilitate a more holistic exploration of the ways in which masculine identities are constructed through social interaction by employing a ‘boy-centred’ (p. 4) approach – that is, it granted participants a voice within the research process, thereby attributing them with an active role. However, as Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman stress, the boys’ statements were not accepted uncritically as ‘transparent’ representations of themselves, instead they were analysed using psychoanalytic and social constructionist techniques to reveal how the boys skilfully navigated through ‘the gaps of discourse, the contradictions, silences and other absences’ (p. 5); and by doing so overcome limitations of more traditional methods which analyse talk as (conscious) articulations of latent conceptualisations of the self.

Within the study a wide range of topics were explored including how boys negotiate the limitations of hegemonic masculinity; boys talking about girls, and girls about boys; the racialisation of masculinity; policing masculinities through homophobia; the construction of masculinities in schooling; and boy’s relationships with their parents. The principal findings concerning the manner in which boys performed and structured their masculinities concurred with previous research (Mac an Ghail, 1994; Connell, 2000), in that it suggested:

1. Boys must maintain their difference from girls (and so avoid doing anything that is seen as the kind of thing girls do).
2. Popular masculinity involves ‘hardness’, sporting prowess, ‘coolness’, casual treatment of schoolwork and being adept at ‘cussing’.
3. Some boys are ‘more masculine’ than others. This involves both the racialised and class consciousness (2002, p. 10).

Importantly however, Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman's analysis was able to develop more nuanced understandings on this matter by maintaining, in accordance with O'Donnell and Sharpe (2000), that masculinity must be considered in relation to other structural influences (such as ethnicity and class), which therefore allowed multiple conceptualisations of *masculinities* to emerge. Moreover, by emphasising the performative nature of identity construction (see Butler, 1990), and its production within conflicts between hegemonic forces and personal anxieties, their study helped highlight ellipses and ambiguities seated in formations of masculine identities. As such, Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman were able to infer a number of propositions that contrasted with conventional thinking on boys, including:

1. Boys struggle to find a forum in which they can try out masculine identities which can be differentiated from the 'hegemonic' codes of macho behaviour;
2. Boys often have considerable fun together and on the whole have good relationships with parents;
3. Boys are very aware of their standing as socially and educationally problematic and resent this; and
4. Some boys suffer especially badly from the narrowness of conventional masculinities (2002, pp. 259-260).

In addition they observed that the participants performed different aspects of their masculinity within group and individual contexts. For example, in same-sex group interviews boys presented themselves as loud, humorous and misogynistic, positioning 'girls as weak, pathetic and immature' (p. 111), whereas in mixed group interviews they demonstrated identification with girls' concerns, an example being complaining about competitive sport (p. 138). Furthermore, in the individual interviews boys claimed that they could discuss personal issues 'seriously' (p. 32), such as their relationships with girlfriends, or anxieties about home, pets and bullying. This the researchers claimed produced "'softer" versions of masculinity' (p. 83), in which boys could speak freely about feelings and relations thereby '[refuting] popular notions of boys being emotionally illiterate' (p. 47). Thus, Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman argue 'simply talking about experiences helped many boys to consider what alternative ways of "doing boy" could be available to them' (p. 49).

6.3 Boys’ Talk

6.3.1 Heterosexuality, Homophobia and Geeks

The notion that there are multiple ways in which young men ‘do male’ is evident within the present study, as reflected through boys’ diverse conceptualisations of their own identities (see Appendix B). However, in line with previous findings (Connell, 2000; O’Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002), hegemonic ideals of masculinity remain prevalent throughout these accounts. This is most apparent in statements relating to sexuality, whereby boys had specifically utilised images of women (often naked or scantily dressed) as a means of asserting their heterosexuality³⁸:

- Interviewer:

Let’s start with how I see myself ...
- Brian T1:

Yeah ... I like girls [word ‘girl’ and image of girl in a bikini].
- Interviewer:

You’ve also got a picture of a girl there [how I see myself], why did you do that?
- Oscar O:

Because I fancy her.
- Interviewer:

Well, the first thing that strikes me is the picture of the girl and you’ve put ‘straight’ next to it [how I see myself].
- Martin W:

Yeah.
- Interviewer:

Would you like to explain why you put that there and what you are trying to say?
- Martin W:

That I like girls.
- Interviewer:

That you like girls?
- Martin W:

Yeah. Not all girls but most.

³⁸ Within the interview extracts participants’ names are accompanied by an abbreviation to indicate which school they attend: C (Cantell School, Southampton); K (Kelmscott School, London); M (Millbrook Community School, Southampton), O (Oaklands Community School, Southampton); R (Regents Park Girls’ School, Southampton); T1 (Twynham School, Dorset, Group One); T2 (Twynham School, Dorset, Group Two); and W (Willowfield School, London).

Martin's work is of significant interest as during the collage-making task itself, he had explicitly stated insecurity regarding his own sense of self-identity and expressed concerns about exposing this.³⁹ As a consequence, Martin delayed engaging with the exercise and on commencing, used it as an opportunity to 'have a laugh': deliberately seeking images that he believed would gain other boys' acceptance (for example, cars, music, women and sport). Therefore, within this context, Martin's overemphasis of his heterosexuality can be read as a *performance*, in which he ultimately seeks to win approval of others through allowing his behaviour to be policed by peers (Buckingham, 1993c). Furthermore, his comment stating he likes 'Not all girls but most' importantly indicates the exclusionary nature of patriarchal ideals, in its suggestion that only certain women are deemed an appropriate focus for desire – these (mainly) being white, slim, blonde-haired and blue-eyed (see also Appendix A.4.7; A.6.3; A.8.3). This point is also exemplified in the case of Joel – a white participant – who represents his heterosexuality by conforming to such notions (Appendix A.7.2), and yet paradoxically articulates a sexual preference for non-white women:

- Interviewer: OK and the other thing is women [how I see myself]. Now you've used women who are not wearing an awful lot//
- Joel T2: //yeah.
- Interviewer: Is it women and girls in general that you like, or can you give me an example of any women that you think are particularly nice?
- Joel T2: It's not just any group because you can get proper ugly people, like attractive women.
- Interviewer: So who do you class as an attractive woman?
- Joel T2: Jennifer Lopez and people like that.
- Interviewer: Can you give me a couple of other names maybe?
- Joel T2: I don't know loads of people.
- Interviewer: Like?
- Joel T2: Mariah Carey. I don't know people like that.
- Interviewer: What is it about them that you think makes them attractive and appealing to you?
- Joel T2: The way they look.
- Interviewer: Who do you think isn't attractive?

³⁹ These concerns were expressed to the teacher and researcher. Both parties reassured Martin and encouraged him to have an attempt at the task.

Joel T2: I don't know, er well it just, not like fat people, er.

Interviewer: Or are there any famous people that are described as pretty that you think, no they're not, I don't think they are//

Joel T2: //yeah Madonna I don't reckon.

Interviewer: What about Paris Hilton?

Joel T2: Yeah she's alright I guess.

Interviewer: She's alright but she's not on the same level as Jennifer Lopez or Mariah Carey?

Joel T2: Yeah yeah.

Interviewer: What about Beyonce//

Joel T2: //yeah she's good looking.

Thus, Joel's position arguably remains grounded in the fetishisation of the 'Other' as sexual object predominant within hegemonic discourse (see Hall, 1997). However, this mode of thinking was not solely restricted to women, but noticeable in the racialisation of black boys' masculinities as 'sexy' and 'cool' (Majors and Billson, 1992; Back, 1994; Sewell, 1997). These ideas are evident in the following comments made by a black participant:

Interviewer: What about these pictures [images of Beyonce and Lucy Pinder] here? Why have you placed these here [how I think other people see me]?

Andre W: Because that's how my friends say they see me. Someone who, like if they've got a magazine with girls in it then they'll call me and show me because they say that one day I'm going to grow up to be a porn star or something like that.

Interviewer: Is that how you feel?

Andre W: I'm not sure.

For another white boy, the imposition of an active sexuality prompted an equally ambivalent response:

Interviewer: And what about the picture of this girl [how I think other people see me]?

Jason C: Richard my best mate he says I'm obsessed by girls.

Interviewer: You're obsessed?

Jason C: Yeah he says.
Interviewer: And are you?
Jason C: Um, I don't know, I'm not sure.

Indeed, for many boys discussions about girls or sexuality resulted in feelings of discomfort and uncertainty and, as Buckingham (1993c) has suggested, were never fully expanded upon due to the perceived threat of 'putting themselves at risk' (p. 103). Instead, a common strategy employed to disrupt and halt these conversations was laughter:

Interviewer: Can you explain what pictures you've used and what the pictures mean to you?
Alfie W: ... I done this picture of people kissing and stuff because I thought (starts laughing).
...
Alfie W: And again I've just put another woman on it with a laptop.
Interviewer: Why is the woman there?
Alfie W: Everyone was doing it (laughing).

Interviewer: And you've got the word 'sexy' and the picture of the woman//
Mark O: //don't know just put it there.
Interviewer: You just put it there. So if you were going to use some words to describe//
Mark O: //I think I'm sexy, that's how I see myself, as sexy boy (laughing).
Interviewer: So if you were going to use some words to describe how you see yourself, what words would you use apart from sexy?
Mark O: I don't know (laughing).
Interviewer: What type of person do you think you are? How do you see yourself?
Mark O: Don't know (laughing).

Similarly, the use of humour as a method for deflecting embarrassment and awkwardness about such issues emerged:

Interviewer: You've also got a picture of a girl here, why have you put her there?

- Adrian O: I don't know, 'cause I thought that was quite funny and plus I fancy her.
- Interviewer: And what about, you've got a picture of boobs there, what does that represent?
- Jake T1: I just thought I'd be pretty funny, I put it on.
- Interviewer: Is that the only reason you put them on there, because you thought it would be funny?
- Jake T1: Yeah.

Whilst it is important to acknowledge that humour and laughter were utilised strategically as a means of obstructing dialogue on sensitive matters then, the possibility further motives may actually lie behind these responses should not be dismissed. For example, boys could have been deliberately engaging with the task in a playful and ironic way, using it as an opportunity to mock the activity, situation and/or researcher. Moreover, the inclusion of certain images – such as women's breasts – may imply a *knowingness* by boys who aimed to indicate their awareness regarding objectifying women in a problematic manner, and thus the exercise was transformed into a 'joke'.

Despite a number of participants arguably demonstrating an ironic awareness concerning attitudes towards women, this playfulness did not extend beyond heterosexual discourse. This point is best illustrated by Carl, who parodies his own 'blokeishness' and recognises ambiguities in his relations with women (fearing he may be seen as 'a perv'), but reverts to highlighting the validity of possessing hegemonic masculine attributes:

- Carl W: I used the word 'bloke' because I'm quite like, I speak in a cockney way.
- Interviewer: That's alright I speak in a cockney way.
- Carl W: Yeah, that's why I used it (laughing).
- Interviewer: Now, I've noticed on this [how I see myself] you've also got 'blimey she's fit' next to a nude woman. What does that mean and represent?

- Carl W: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Because, well the blimey bit was supposed to be added to the body bit, the cockney bit, and the words are supposed to be because, that's something I like (laughing).
- Interviewer: Do you think that the 'bloke' thing and the nude woman, if other people see you that way do you think they see that as positive or negative?
- ...
- Carl W: Other people would see it as positive and other people would see it as negative, it's like 50/50 really.
- Interviewer: What would influence what they thought; whether they thought it was a good thing or a bad thing? What do you think?
- Carl W: People might see it as a bad thing because like, I don't know, they might take it the wrong way as if I'm a perv maybe, but in some other way people would see it as me being straight, so that's the positive.

Hence, for some boys the centrality of heterosexuality remained fundamental to their constructions of masculine identities, and whereas no overt hostility towards homosexuality was manifested, undercurrents of homophobia prevailed:

- Interviewer: OK let's move onto this side, how I think other people see me ...
- Richard M: ... I also have a picture of Dafydd Thomas [*Little Britain* character] because he's gay and people sometimes see me as gay.
- Interviewer: Do you think people don't really see who you are, or how you really feel about yourself?
- Keith T1: Um, I don't know really because, well, the reason these two sides are different is because how people think and see me, I just sometimes act and talk to people, whenever I do a few things that they either decry me as one of those things [weird and freaky].
- Interviewer: Does that upset you?
- Keith T1: Not really because I know everybody is different and that doesn't worry me, but sometimes it does tick me off when other people call me gay because I'm not gay and it just really annoys me.
- Interviewer: So they mean gay as in homosexual?
- Keith T1: Yeah.

In the above instances, derogatory usages of the word ‘gay’ were levelled against boys who came to be perceived as not conforming to hegemonic masculine ideals: Richard for being overweight and unfashionable, and Keith for being a ‘loner’, disliking football and distancing himself from classmates (see Duncan, 1999). Importantly however, Keith problematises this notion in the following statement:

- Interviewer: Do you think being gay is a negative thing?
Keith T1: No because it doesn’t matter if you’re gay or not, you’re just normal and it’s basically your choice.

Therefore, in acknowledging homosexuality as a legitimate ‘lifestyle choice’, Keith arguably manages to subvert both the currency of gay as an insult and the dominance of hegemonic masculinity, through electing not to be as rigorously policed by his peers (Buckingham, 1993c). On a similar theme, some boys who displayed an interest in academic work were targeted for not complying with conventional conceptions of masculinity and categorised as ‘geeks’. These boys however refuted negative connotations associated with the term, rather they subverted ‘geekiness’ by equating it with cleverness, enabling them to construct an alternative masculinity through their assertion of intellectual ‘superiority’ over other boys (see Redman and Mac an Ghaill, 1997):

- Interviewer: Do you think that people are right to call you geeky?
Jack M: Yeah.
Interviewer: They are?
Jack M: Because I like to read.
Interviewer: So you think reading is geeky?
Jack M: No I don’t think reading is geeky, I think it’s for smart people.

6.3.2 Sport

A pervasive theme to emerge in boys’ discussions, similar to previous studies’ findings (O’Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002), was the integral role sport played within their everyday lives. For the boys, football in particular came to function as a cultural resource through which they constructed their

masculine identities; this was achieved not only through physical engagement with the sport itself, but also by participating in associated discourses. At its most apparent level, sport was used to signify ideas regarding activeness, and in doing so, aimed to denote the concept of an *active* masculinity⁴⁰:

Interviewer: What are you trying to express about how you see yourself?

Zak K: Well over there [image of trainers]//

Interviewer: //the trainers//

Zak K: //yeah I'm trying to express that I'm a sporty kind of person, I love sports (pointing to image of a football).

Interviewer: Do you want to start with how I see myself?

Azhar K: ... I like to play football and sporty, I like boxing and I'm sporty type of person, I like sports so I watch sports people.

Furthermore, for some boys the display of activeness was literally taken to an 'extreme':

Interviewer: What about this image of a person windsurfing?

Carl W: Well, I do a lot of extreme sports. I go down the skate park a lot to do skateboarding, and when it's summertime I go down to Swanage to do a bit of surfing and weight boarding and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Do you want to go through the pictures?

Christopher T2: OK well I've got lots of like sporty type like skiing and roller-skating and stuff 'cause I like to do a lot of activities, and not just mainly football and cricket, like extreme sports, and this the 'Danger Rocks' sign that's sort of like the surfy style but I'm quite dangerous, I'm willing to do anything if you know what I mean.

⁴⁰ Notions of active masculinity were further represented by many boys through the use of images from action films and computer games (e.g. Appendix A.1.4; A.1.9; A.4.15; A.7.12; A.8.4).

In emphasising this notion, boys demonstrated the importance and personal value they placed upon this ideal, as sporting prowess was considered to be rewarded with individual esteem:

- Interviewer: Going back to how you think other people see you, what do you think others think when they look at you and see someone who is really into football?
- Andrew O: They see me and my mates and they think 'oh they like football' because sometimes they see me and my mates playing.
- Interviewer: Do you think other people think that's a good thing or a bad thing that you are into football?
- Andrew O: Good thing.
- Interviewer: Why?
- Andrew O: Because you're out playing sports.
- Interviewer: So that's a good thing?
- Andrew O: Yeah.

Thus, discussions about sport appeared to provide the boys with an arena in which they could exhibit positive facets of their identities:

- Malik K: ... and the football, I like football I like playing it, the football and the ball are together, and I see myself as a good football player.
- Mark O: I've used this goalie 'cause everyone sees me as a goalie and I'm good and this one [image of a goalkeeper attempting to save a shot] is another goalie because I'm good at saving penalties.
- ...
- Interviewer: And you've got some basketball players there//
- Mark O: //because I like basketball and like another reason of how I see myself, too good, not quite good.
- Interviewer: OK, so let's start with how I see myself.
- Darren O: Yeah. People think I'm good at football [images of football players].
- Interviewer: Who is that [picture of a football player]?
- Darren O: Fowler.

Interviewer: Robbie?

Darren O: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: And he plays for?

Darren O: The man plays for Man City.

Interviewer: Is that the team you support?

Darren O: No.

Interviewer: Why have you chosen Robbie Fowler?

Darren O: 'Cause he's a good football player.

Interviewer: Are there any qualities that he has as a person that you share//

Darren O: //he's got skills.

Interviewer: What skills?

Darren O: The best football skills.

Interestingly, boys from middle-class schools attributed a further dimension to active masculinity, which focused on the principle of competitiveness. This may stem from the behaviour of these boys being more strictly regulated within classroom environments due to an onus on academic achievement (Connell, 1989), whilst sport in such schools, as James Messerschmidt (1994) observes, provides 'an environment for the construction of masculinity that celebrates toughness and endurance' (p. 87):

Interviewer: And then you've got these trainers and the basketball player and is that a sports logo?

Jake T1: Yeah.

Interviewer: What do they represent?

Jake T1: Well I like sport a lot, just saying that I like it a lot really.

Interviewer: Right and what is it about sport that you like?

Jake T1: Um like the competition and the physical side of it.

Interviewer: So you like competition?

Jake T1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is that because, is it more the taking part or is it about the winning for you?

Jake T1: Um, it's good; I like it if I win.

Interviewer: What is it about football that you like?

Joel T2: I don't know, I just support football really and I just like playing in a team.

...

Interviewer: When you play football is it the taking part that's important or is it the winning that is important to you?

Joel T2: The taking part, it's not just about winning is it really, but yeah, it's good to win.

In contrast to the ethos of competitiveness held by middle-class boys, one participant from a socially and economically disadvantaged background saw sport as offering opportunities for personal development through empowerment (an issue that was latent in similar boys' accounts). Jason's attraction to boxing was motivated by his belief that the sport would enable him to control and release frustrations as well as anxieties in a positive context. Boxing, therefore, constituted a constructive strategy which allowed this boy to negotiate his masculinity within the framework of sporting aspirations:

Interviewer: OK, what about this picture of the boxer?

Jason C: Because I like boxing and I've always wanted to be a boxer.

Interviewer: What is it about boxing that you like?

Jason C: To just take all your anger out and like respond powerfully, it's really good, and then afterwards you're really calm.

Interviewer: But is it taking your anger out on a person or just being able to take your anger out that you like?

Jason C: Just get my anger out that's better.

Interviewer: Just get your anger out?

Jason C: Yeah.

Sports' ability to provide aspirations for boys is further illustrated by Steve, whose identification with wrestlers as role models indicates his desire to conform to hegemonic ideals of masculinity – a point reinforced by him rejecting the 'feminine' sport of gymnastics:

Interviewer: What is it about wrestling that you like?

Steve O: I just like all the moves and some of the wrestlers.

Interviewer: What wrestlers do you like?

Steve O: Triple H I used to like The Rock, Ray Mistro.

- Interviewer: What is it about them though that you like?
- Steve O: Because Ray Mistro, because he's athletic and that's what I would like to be.
- Interviewer: So do you think that you are athletic?
- Steve O: In some stuff, not gymnastics.
- Interviewer: So do you aspire to be like them?
- Steve O: Yeah.

Developing this theme, and in accordance with O'Donnell and Sharpe (2000), ethnicity appeared to exert a degree of influence on sources of identification for some ethnic minority boys:

- Interviewer: I just want to go back to the sports people, you've used Amir Khan [how I see myself], do you think there are any qualities about him that you share?
- Azhar K: Yeah he's Asian and a boxer and that's what he does so, I like boxing yeah.
- Interviewer: Are there any qualities about Jermaine Defoe that you think are similar to how you see yourself?
- Andre W: I think we both score, I don't know, goals and we're both black.
- Interviewer: Do you identify with him because he is black?
- Andre W: Yeah, but it's not just that.

Significantly though, it should be noted that within ethnic minority boys' discussions about sport, the role of ethnicity in shaping masculinities was not as prevalent as some commentators (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) have suggested – implied by Andre's qualifier 'Yeah, but it's not just that'. Therefore, despite being given the opportunity to represent and articulate such concerns, the majority of ethnic minority boys chose not to.⁴¹ In doing so, this raises the problematic issue about whether ethnicity impacts upon ethnic minority children's constructions of their identities in manners previously conceptualised (a notion that will be discussed further in Chapter 7). Nevertheless, a wide body of research has

⁴¹ Within this study, the examples provided are the only instances in which this took place.

observed how ‘blackness’ is perceived as indicating a form of ‘super-masculinity’ by many white boys (Majors and Billson, 1992; Back, 1994; Sewell, 1997). For example, in his study which explored ‘how black boys survive modern schooling’, Tony Sewell (1997) states that black males are visualised in popular discourse as the exemplar bearers of ‘masculine’ traits, possessing toughness, sexual attractiveness, style and ‘authenticity’. Thus, he notes the contradiction that black boys are seen to embody all the key attributes of hegemonic masculinity, whilst at the same time, being positioned as a threat to these same norms:

Black boys are Angels and Devils in British (and American) schools. They are the heroes of a street fashion culture that dominates most of our inner cities. On the other hand they experience a disproportionate amount of punishment in our schools compared to all other groups (p. ix).

Expanding upon this dual positioning of black males, O’Donnell and Sharpe (2000) further claim that boys ‘borrow’ elements of other ethnic groups they construe as attractive, and to which they aspire:

Where heroes and style icons are ‘borrowed’ from another ethnic group, it is usually because the borrowing group itself aspires to possess the qualities expressed by them. Thus, elements in the related styles of ‘black macho’ (being hard), ‘black flash’ (being at the cutting edge of fashion – ‘sharp’) and ‘black cool’ (being ‘laid back’ – in effortless control) have been adopted widely by other ethnic young. The motive for imitation is more appropriation than admiration or identification, though these do sometimes occur (p. 3).

These points are clearly demonstrated by Aaron (a white participant), whose appropriations are made exclusively from black culture – in terms of fashion, music and sport – through which he aims to construct his own masculinity in terms of a ‘super-masculinity’ that, for him, is to be found in ‘blackness’⁴²:

⁴² Indeed, within this study a number of white boys utilised images of ‘blackness’ to exploit the notion of ‘super-masculinity’ (e.g. Appendix A.1.4; A.1.11; A.4.2; A.6.6; A.7.2). Interestingly, no white or black boys used images relating to Asian culture. This therefore arguably appears to support previous work (Cohen, 1997; Connolly, 1998) which has suggested that white and black boys do not draw upon such representations as they associate ‘Asianess’ with effeminacy and weakness. However, more recent shifts in the representation

- Interviewer: Do you want to start with how I see myself?
- Aaron O: I play basketball a lot, I'm quite good at it, I love like rap Sean Paul music sort of thing.
- Interviewer: What is it about rap music and Sean Paul that you like?
- Aaron O: It's just its good.
- Interviewer: Is there anything about Sean Paul, apart from his music that you like? Is there anything about his personality//
- Aaron O: //yeah like I like clothes they wear and all that with their clothes and stuff like that.
- Interviewer: So you like their fashion?
- Aaron O: Yeah.
- Interviewer: What about on the other side, on how you think other people see you?
- Aaron O: This is good basketball player, people see me as a good basketball player.
- Interviewer: You've got basketball on both sides, what does basketball represent? Apart from being a good player, is there anything else about the sport that//
- Aaron O: //well they wear like the stuff for trainers and all that and clothes they wear shorts they wear.
- Interviewer: So do you think that's quite a fashionable look?
- Aaron O: Yeah.

This same issue is less overtly illustrated by Keith, who is ostracised (being labelled 'gay', see pp. 117-118) for his dislike of football – a principal arena for the construction of hegemonic masculinity – despite his interest in some sports. In this instance, he 'borrows' from Chinese culture in order to construct an 'alternative' masculinity: representing his even-temperedness through the 'yin-yang' symbol and actively participating in martial arts. For Keith, this sport provides him with a physical means of protection against bullies and, as with other boys, a metaphorical defence for his own conception of masculinity:

of Asian boys from passive and hard-working to militant, aggressive religious fundamentalists (Saeed, 2004) may further account for why the white and black boys did not utilise images of 'Asianess', and might demonstrate their desire to disassociate themselves from these negative (Asian) attributes.

- Interviewer: So let's start with how I see myself.
- Keith T1: Well I used the yin-yang sign for balanced because most people would punch other people for insulting them but I don't, I keep my temper under control so that's why I'm balanced.
- Interviewer: And you've also put here that you do martial arts.
- Keith T1: Yeah, I do karate and self-defence so if anybody tries to attack me I can defend myself.

6.3.2.1 Girls and Sport

Within the interviews, although girls did not engage in discussions about sport to any great depth, some of their comments warrant a brief mention here. Ostensibly, for many girls the use of sporting images appeared to reflect their romantic associations with individual players as well as women's function in 'supportive' roles, and thereby promoted, in contrast to the boys' activeness, ideas of a passive femininity:

- Interviewer: Who is this picture of?
- Polly R: Theirry Henry.
- Interviewer: Is it because you like Arsenal that you used him?
- Polly R: No, I like him as well.
- Interviewer: In what way?
- Polly R: In another way.
-
- Interviewer: OK and what is 'Beattie' [word]?
- Jackie M: A football player.
- Interviewer: And what is it about him?
- Jackie M: I just like him.
-
- Michelle C: I've used a picture of a Liverpool football team because I see myself as quite a supportive person towards the team.

However, many of these girls were also adamant about emphasising their active participation in sport:

Lorna O: ... in this picture [image of a cricket player] I see myself as a sporty sort of person always playing sport.

Interviewer: ... you've got two girls playing//

Kendra C: //yeah 'cause I like playing sport ...

Lucy T1: I'm also I'm sporty so I put a sports person on to show that.

Helen T2: OK, I put sport on there 'cause I like play sport and I like sport.

In addition, and similar to the boys, some girls found sources of identification and aspiration in sport:

Carmel O: ... I've got Ronaldo and a couple of pictures of other footballers I look up to because I always see myself as inspirational trying to get my own goals and because I love football ... I've got Sean Wright-Phillips because I think that sometimes I want to be like him 'cause he's done so much with his life, he got adopted and he doesn't really know his other dad and like I don't see my dad often and he's been with other people and I'm with someone now different like my mum and her boyfriend, so I've been with quite a bit of people in my life.

Interviewer: You've also got a picture here of a lady playing football.

Ellie T2: Yeah that's Hope Powell the manager of the girls' England team.

Interviewer: Why have you used her?

Ellie T2: Because I like to play football and I want to be in the England team.

Interviewer: So do you identify or respect her, or see her as a role model?

Ellie T2: Yeah.

Interviewer: What about this [image of the Olympic symbol]?

Ellie T2: I put a picture of the Olympics, I drew that because I like sport and I want to be in the Olympics one day.

The above discussions therefore suggest that the girls did not embrace prescribed notions of passive femininity, but actively challenged these assumptions through their involvement with sport. This position is clearly articulated by the following

participants who recognise gender inequalities and reject the imposition of such passivity:

Interviewer: Do you want to go through the images?

Keira T1: Um yeah well it's not very girly obviously but a lot of it is like, I do a lot of motor sport and that and I play a lot of games and I'm also in the army cadets.

Sadie T1: ... I did that image [image of a female footballer] 'cause I love football, I think that girls who do football are really trying sort of thing, 'cause the girls are going round doing football even though the boys sort of say 'oh no you can't do that 'cause it's a boys' sport'.

6.4 Femininity

The preceding analysis begins to highlight that conceptions of masculinity and femininity within modern Western societies have been constructed in contrary ways. This point is succinctly summarised by David Gauntlett (2002) who explains that 'Masculinity is seen as the state of "being a man", which is currently somewhat in flux [whereas] femininity ... is not necessarily seen as the state of "being a woman"; instead, it's perceived more as a stereotype of a woman's role from the past' (pp. 9-10). He states that whilst men continue to invest their identities within a framework of masculinity – despite the term adapting in response to social changes – women are less inclined to locate their identities in accordance with conventional notions of femininity. Gauntlett suggests that for women this position may be attributable to a feminist agenda which did not specifically seek to redefine femininity but disavowed the concept, as it connoted passivity. Hence he claims traditional 'femininity is not a core value for women today' (p. 10)⁴³, rather enacting the 'feminine' constitutes a *performance* which women can adopt – possibly in order to achieve an objective, or perhaps in their pursuit of pleasure. Importantly however, Gauntlett asserts this does

⁴³ Gauntlett supports this notion by noting that school girls are no longer perceived as docile within education, due to them out-performing boys in terms of academic success; declining sales of Barbie dolls indicates that such a compliant image of women only appeals to very young girls; whilst the advent and success of assertive 'girl power' role models in popular culture signals a decisive move away from traditional femininity (2002, p. 10).

not imply that orthodox modes of thinking about femininity are redundant in contemporary society, as exemplified through assertions such as ‘she exudes femininity’; instead, he observes that these usages of the term acknowledge ‘the broadly “optional” role which femininity has today’ (*ibid.*). To demonstrate this point further, Gauntlett refers to discussions on Madonna (e.g. Lloyd, 1993; Schwichtenberg, 1993) which have illustrated how she foregrounds the performative nature of femininity as ‘masquerade’. For example, E. Ann Kaplan (1993) proposed that ‘[Madonna’s] image usefully adopts one mask after another to expose the fact that there is no “essential” self and therefore no essential feminine but only cultural constructions’ (p. 160). In consideration of these factors, he therefore maintains that traditional femininity is not an essential characteristic of the modern female subject, but one strategy employed amongst many within their everyday lives.

Developing this theme Beverley Skeggs (1997) conducted a longitudinal ethnographic study over twelve years with 83 British working-class women from North West England, in order to reinstate the importance of class analysis within discussions of gender, identity and power (see also Walkerdine, Lucey and Melody, 2001). Significantly in this work she identified that her participants’ relationship with femininity was highly complex, as whilst they rejected notions of passivity associated with the feminine role, these women aspired to the ‘respectability’ it afforded. Furthermore, as Skeggs states, the principle of women’s ‘divine composure’ was discarded in favour of them ‘having a laugh’: ‘They had knowledge and competencies to construct feminine performances but this was far removed from *being* feminine. They usually “did” femininity when they thought it was necessary’ (1997, p. 116, original emphasis). Indeed she explains, in the absence of alternatives these women felt compelled to adopt femininity as a means of attaining economic and cultural advantage. As such, for the female participants, femininity proved to be a locus of both pleasure and distress:

Their forays into femininity were immensely contradictory. Femininity offered a space for hedonism, autonomy, camaraderie, pleasure and fun whilst simultaneously regulating and generating insecurities. The women simulated and dissimulated but did not regard themselves as feminine ... Aspects of femininity are, however, something

which they have learnt to perform and from which they can sometimes take pleasure (*ibid.*).

6.4.1 New Sexualities and Popular Feminism

Within feminist research the issue of pleasure has been fundamental to reconceptualising popular culture in new ways (e.g. Modleski, 1984; Ang, 1985; Radway, 1987; Geraghty, 1991). This is particularly evident in studies relating to women's magazines (e.g. Winship, 1987; Hermes, 1995), where notions about femininity and the construction of (new) female subjectivities have been explored, most prominently by Angela McRobbie (1982, 1991, 1994, 1999, 2000). In contrast with her early work on *Jackie* magazine (1982) – which suggested that its content functioned to generate 'an ideology which deals with the construction of teenage femininity' (1991, p. 82)⁴⁴ – McRobbie reformulated this position in response to subsequent work that has demonstrated readers do not accept and/or produce meanings from magazines in a straightforward and simplistic manner (e.g. Frazer, 1987; Hermes, 1995; Currie 1999). As McRobbie states 'Frazer (1987) demonstrated (as did Beezer *et al.* 1986) my own earlier work about *Jackie* magazine wrongly assumed that ideology actually worked in a mechanical, even automatic kind of way' (1999, p. 50). In acknowledgement of this, she observes that early relations between academic feminism and popular women's genres have been marked by a polarisation of feminism on the one hand, and femininity on the other (p. 47; see also Stuart, 1990; Brunsdon, 1991). Moreover, although McRobbie notes that such standpoints continue to have theoretical currency (e.g. Walkerdine, 1990; Jackson, 1996) she maintains this opposition has 'loosened' in more recent years, as exemplified through women's magazines exhibiting an engagement with feminist values and ideas. According to McRobbie this became most apparent within magazines for older teenage girls during the late 1980s and early 1990s, when the demise of romance signalled a seismic shift away from conceptions of a docile femininity and superseded by 'a much more

⁴⁴ McRobbie's (1982) study of the teenage girls' magazine *Jackie* aimed to reveal the latent ideological agenda and content that she believed lay behind its innocent façade. Within her analysis, McRobbie highlighted that the magazine's content focused girls' attention on personal and emotional areas, and discussed relations between boys in romantic and depoliticised terms. Thus, for McRobbie, *Jackie* was significant as it was perceived as preparing girls for their adult roles and, in doing so, she claimed that the magazine had a shaping effect on girls' development into women.

assertive and “fun-seeking” female subjectivity (1999, p. 50). Thus, she introduced the concept of ‘new sexualities’ to refer to ‘images and texts which break discursively with the conventions of feminine behaviour by representing girls as crudely lustful young women’ (*ibid.*).

In her analysis McRobbie identifies that the editorial style of teenage girls’ magazines deliberately parodies tabloids and are therefore steeped in irony; for example, punning headlines such as ‘Yabba Dabba Drool: Men to Make Your Bed Rock’ (p. 53). As a consequence, she suggests that readers’ engagement with the content of such texts is taken lightly and not too seriously. For McRobbie then, this strategy facilitates the production of a ‘new form of ironic femininity’ (*ibid.*), which importantly enables readers to engage playfully with conventional feminine customs, whilst avoiding the subordinate status imposed by orthodox gender roles. Hence, by highlighting the extensive use of irony, parody and self-mockery, she argues that ‘the whole culture of femininity becomes more transparently self-reflexive’ (*ibid.*) within the pages of teenage girls’ magazines. Furthermore, McRobbie claims this issue is compounded as these magazines have assimilated feminist concepts or, at the very least, address its concerns:

[T]he place of feminism inside the magazines remains ambiguous. It has presence mostly in the advice columns and in the overall message to girls to be assertive, confident and supportive of each other. It is also present in how girls are encouraged to insist on being treated as equals by men and boyfriends, and on being able to say no when they want to (p. 55).

In addition, although McRobbie accepts that such magazines continue to operate within a heterosexual matrix (p. 57), she vehemently opposes feminist critiques which imply these texts perpetuate the subordination of women (e.g. Walkerdine, 1990; Jackson, 1996). Indeed, McRobbie stresses these arguments neglect that the magazines are not only consumed, but *produced* by women with no intrinsic interest in maintaining patriarchy. Instead, the active dismissal of passive femininity and licence to discuss desire openly constitutes a feminist advancement, as she states:

For writers like Stevi Jackson the magazines only provide girls with the same old staples of heterosexual sex, body anxieties and 'the old idea that girls' sexuality is being attractive and alluring' (Jackson, 1996: 57). So she is saying that there are no great advances here. What I would say in contrast is that feminism exists as a productive tension in these pages (1999, p. 55).

Elaborating on this theme, McRobbie suggests that young women have a 'desire to be provocative to feminism' (*ibid.*) since it has come to be recognised as 'both common sense and a sign of female adult authority' (p. 56). In doing so, she observes 'Young women want to prove that they can do without feminism as a political movement while enjoying the rewards of its success in culture and in everyday life' (*ibid.*). Moreover, she asserts that 'This dynamic of generational antagonism has been overlooked by professional feminists, particularly those in the academy, with the result that the political effectivity of young women is more or less ignored' (p. 126). Importantly however, McRobbie argues that the discourse of contemporary women's magazines can be read as an expression of what she terms 'popular feminism':

To these young women official feminism is something that belongs to their mothers' generation. They have to develop their own language for dealing with sexual inequality, and if they do this through a raunchy language of 'shagging, snogging and having a good time', then perhaps the role this plays is not unlike the sexually explicit manifestoes found in the early writing of figures like Germaine Greer and Sheila Rowbotham. The key difference here is that this language is now found in the mainstream of commercial culture – not out there in the margins of the 'political underground' (*ibid.*).

In view of these factors McRobbie raises a number of propositions that feminism must consider in order to establish a more productive dialogue with 'ordinary' women (p. 56), and stresses 'The danger for feminism is that it remains unwilling to recognise that there are now many ways of being a woman or girl in contemporary society' (p. 131).⁴⁵

⁴⁵ McRobbie's (1999) position has been criticised by a number of feminist commentators including Whelehan (2000) who states 'There may well be power in the use of irony and playfulness to argue a "feminist" position, but once the rebellion is over, there is a need to identify what connects or separates different wings of feminism' (p. 80). However,

6.4.2 Girl Power and Postfeminism

During the 1990s the prominence of ‘popular feminism’ within contemporary culture was made manifest by the emergence of a new discourse, most famously identified in the Spice Girls’ catchphrase ‘girl power’. For writers such as Sheila Whiteley (2000) the Spice Girls represented a significant ‘challenge to the dominance of lad culture ... [by introducing] the language of independence to a willing audience of pre- and teenage girls’ (p. 215).⁴⁶ She further suggests that although feminist rhetoric was familiar throughout society in the 1990s, the image of feminism was demonised within mainstream media and constructed as a militant movement hostile towards men and sex (see Faludi, 1991). Importantly Whiteley claims that this position was contested by the Spice Girls, who turned it on its head⁴⁷:

The impact of the Spice Girls ... was to provide a new twist to the feminist discourse of power and subjectivity. By telling their fans that feminism is necessary and fun, that it is part of everydayness, and that girls should challenge rather than accept traditional constraints – ‘What you looking at boy? Can you handle a Spice Girl?’ – they sold the 1990s as ‘a girl’s world’ and presented the ‘future as female’ (2000, pp. 216-217).

The girl power ethos, as Christine Griffin (2004) explains, was a celebration of independence, self-belief, valuing female friendships (above and beyond the pressure to get, or be concerned about, a boyfriend) and ‘appeared to promise an all-female world of fun, sassiness and dressing up to please your (girl) self’ (p. 33). In this formulation she states that the concept of girl power exploits and reiterates facets of earlier feminist discourse and, in doing so, has come to be situated as ‘postfeminist’. For Griffin, girl power rests on the assumption that girls are boys’ equals, and should therefore be regarded as such. However, she asserts that this supposition *assumes* that

Whelehan’s claim appears to be based on a fundamental misreading of McRobbie’s argument as it ignores her calls for feminism establishing a greater dialogue with women.

⁴⁶ This ‘language of independence’ was most clearly articulated by Destiny’s Child in their song ‘Independent Women Part 1’, which stressed the importance of women’s financial self-sufficiency: ‘All the honeys makin’ money, I depend on me’.

⁴⁷ The importance of feminism was expressed by the Spice Girls (1997) themselves, who stated (albeit problematically) that ‘feminism has become a dirty word. Girl Power is just a nineties way of saying it. We can give feminism a kick up the arse. Women can be so powerful when they show solidarity’ (p. 48).

girls are *already* equal to boys. Thus Griffin maintains that the world itself is instantaneously configured as intrinsically 'postfeminist' (Wilkinson, 1999), in which feminism may be considered redundant and outmoded, and where overt political challenges to boys or patriarchal systems is no longer required of girls (Sharpe, 2001). Consequently, she concludes:

It is not so much a question of whether Girl Power is or is not feminist, but that the discourse(s) through which 'girl power' is constituted operates to represent feminism as simultaneously self-evident and redundant, thereby silencing feminist voices through a discourse that appears as 'pro-feminist' (2004, p. 33).

Griffin's work therefore highlights contradictions inherent in girl power/postfeminist discourse (see also McRobbie, 2000, 2001, 2004), and such issues within feminist circles have become the focus of more vociferous attacks. For example, in her discussion of the Spice Girls Imelda Whelehan (2000) states '*Girl Power!* is a "manifesto" in the loosest sense in that although it contains nothing resembling a political programme, it encourages young women to follow their own aspirations and seek self-definition by example' (p. 48, original emphasis). Nevertheless, her analysis reduces the notion of girl power to a capitalist enterprise in which young girls are encouraged to imitate their role models through the consumption of commercial products. In doing so, she suggests the rhetoric of 'individualism' and 'diversity' expressed by the band is not disseminated to their fans. Furthermore, for Whelehan, the Spice Girls promoted an image of femininity located in (sexual) attractiveness, as she states:

Role models are normally those who inspire to excel in their chosen field; but this homage that manifests itself as imitation does nothing to dismantle the association of female success with a very rigid definition of femininity. Worse still, it does nothing to reassure young girls about their bodies; perversely, starvation becomes a message of empowerment to these young people as they make the association between stardom and skinniness (p. 49).

In light of the issues raised by Griffin (2004) and Whelehan (2000), it would appear that feminism has cause for concern. However, Ann Brooks (1997) problematises

such propositions arguing that postfeminism is not apolitical, claiming that it 'is about the conceptual shift within feminism from debates around equality to a focus on debates around difference. It is fundamentally about, not a depoliticisation of feminism, but a political shift in feminism's conceptual and theoretical agenda' (p. 4). These debates around difference, she explains, importantly acknowledge that the category 'woman' is not a homogenous group, but divided along class, culture, 'race' and sexuality lines. As such, Brooks notes that the collective 'woman' as an identity becomes destabilised.

The criticisms raised specifically by Whelehan (2000), mentioned above, are contradicted in the work of Bettina Fritzsche (2004), whose analysis sought to investigate whether 'pop feminist' bands – such as the Spice Girls – could provide forms of empowerment for teenage women and young girls. To facilitate this she conducted interviews with girls aged between 10 and 17 years old from a number of rural and urban locations in Germany, focusing 'not on the girls' reflections about the band, but rather on their actions as fans' (p. 156). Importantly, Fritzsche discovered that her participants identified with the Spice Girls for a variety of reasons including: imitating band members allowed girls 'to negotiate social expectations about the way girls are expected to move and display their bodies' (p. 157); the promotion of self-confidence was appealing to shy girls (*ibid.*); the discourse of self-assertiveness helped girls reject conventional social norms (p. 159); and the band enabled girls to mediate their relationships with boys (pp. 158-159). Furthermore, she states that a majority of girls stressed no desire to emulate their icons; instead they aimed to develop their *own* individual style. Fritzsche therefore claims that the Spice Girls did not constitute either positive or negative role models for the promotion of feminist perspectives in young girls, but operated as a 'toolbox' from which fans can draw upon to construct their own identity:

Fan culture offers them the opportunity to take a playful approach toward questions of self-representation, self-confidence, and heterosexuality, which can be, but does not necessarily have to be, used for resistance. In this respect the Spice Girls can be regarded as a source of empowerment for their fans. They are very much associated with the subject position of a strong, self-confident, and successful female teenager, and offer an attractive point of reference for their cultural activities (p. 160).

Jessica Taft (2004) has further examined notions of girl power in order to understand its relationship with young girls' political selves. In her analysis she suggests that although the discourse of girl power originated in politically motivated movements – most notably 'riot grrrl' and third wave feminism – its appropriation and commercialisation by mainstream culture throughout the 1990s resulted in a formulation of girlhood which precluded girls' political subjectivity. Despite these reworkings of girl power discourse impeding on girls' political engagement, Taft asserts that 'organisations for girls were constructing their own meanings of Girl Power and challenging these barriers to girls' social and political engagement' (p. 69). For example, in her discussion on the Girl Scouts' 'Camp Ashema' (New England, USA) she identified that the group actively encouraged an interrogation of gendered power relations within their course programmes. One method employed to achieve this, as Taft explains, was the policy of daily 'cool chats' (p. 75), in which small groups of girls accompanied by a staff member discussed 'girl focused' topics such as gender stereotyping with the aim of '[encouraging] girls to think critically about the ways social forces influence their own lives' (*ibid.*). Moreover, to inspire girls' activism the camp promoted 'collective girl-decision-making' (*ibid.*) when establishing agendas for their group. This she states granted girls power within the decision-making process and, by doing so, situated them 'as capable and active decision-makers rather than passive consumers of the camp experience' (p. 76). Thus, Taft's work successfully demonstrates that girl power can both function as a means of depoliticising young women, and a strategy for facilitating new modes of resistance to dominant feminine ideals.

6.4.3 The New Female Subject

In the second edition of her book *Feminism and Youth Culture* (2000; see also 2001) McRobbie asserts that 'young women in Britain today have replaced youth as a metaphor for social change ... [and] are now recognised as one of the stakes upon which the future depends' (2000, pp. 200-201). This she argues is attributable to New Labour rhetoric, in which young women's educational success has been proclaimed to indicate the establishment of a new meritocratic society, whilst a continued emphasis on the relationship between femininity and consumption brands young women as

exemplars of consumer choice. Furthermore, McRobbie states the increased advocacy of female (competitive) individualism signifies a 'new gender regime' that proposes to liberate women from traditional gender restraints and afford them new modes of agency. As she explains:

[S]liding into place almost unnoticed ... is a New Right vocabulary which celebrates female success in the marketplace, which punishes failure as individual weakness, and which boldly advocates competitive individualism as the mark of modern young womanhood. This discourse appeals to young women by connecting success in work with traditional success in body and appearance. Indeed the former promises to lead to the latter, since a good job brings girls into the heartland of consumer culture and all its bodily benefits (2001, p. 371).

Developing these ideas, in more recent years, McRobbie (2004) has considered 'new ways of being young woman' within a postfeminist context. In this work she claims that 'through a complex array of machinations, elements of contemporary culture are perniciously effective in regard to the undoing of feminism' (p. 3). Moreover, McRobbie adds, 'by means of the tropes of freedom and choice which are now inextricably connected with the category of young women, feminism is aged and made to seem redundant' (*ibid.*; see also Griffin, 2004). To demonstrate this she offers a critical reading of the film *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001), and suggests 'it marks the emergence of a new cultural norm, which can be understood in terms of postfeminism' (2004, p. 3). Significantly then, for McRobbie, postfeminism comes to be constituted as a notion which utilises feminist principles by taking 'feminism into account' and yet, at the same time, constructs feminism 'as having already passed away' (p. 4). For example, in her discussion of a Wonderbra advertisement – which (in)famously featured model Eva Herzigova looking down at her enhanced cleavage accompanied by the text 'Hello Boys' – she states that the image and text work 'by provocatively enacting sexism' whilst simultaneously 'playing with those debates in film theory about women as the object of the gaze (Mulvey, 1975), and even female desire (De Laurentis, 1987; Coward, 1994)' (2004, p. 7). By doing so, McRobbie maintains that such representations have produced generational differences amongst women, as young girls, along with their male peers, are now conversant with the use of irony and understand the 'joke' rather than becoming angered by these types of

imagery (see also McRobbie, 1999). Her analysis therefore proposes that postfeminism demands young women to be 'free' (2004, p. 8), and although 'the new female subject' is 'gender aware', she becomes 'despite her freedom, called upon to be silent, to withhold critique in order to count as a modern, sophisticated girl' (p. 9).

On a similar theme Anita Harris (2004a) examines girls in relation to key areas of their lives – including consumption, power, school and work – in order to explore how 'young women are being constructed as a vanguard of new subjectivity' (p. 1). Within this work, and in agreement with McRobbie (2004), she maintains that:

[T]his new interest in looking at and hearing from girls is not just celebratory, but is, in part, regulatory as well. There is a process of creation and control at work in the act of regarding young women as the winners in a new world. In holding them up as the exemplars of a new possibility, we also actively construct them to perform this role (2004a, p.1).

For Harris then, young women living in late modern societies have become constructed as ideal models for a new form of subjectivity. This, she states, has resulted for two principal reasons: firstly, 'changed economic and work conditions combined with the goals achieved by feminism have created new possibilities for young women'; and secondly, 'new ideologies about individual responsibility and choices also dovetail with some broad feminist notions about opportunities for young women, making them the most likely candidates for performing a new kind of self-made subjectivity' (p. 6). These ideas are clearly evidenced by Harris in her analysis of what she terms the 'can-do' and 'at-risk' girls, in which these contrasting discourses come to focus on girls' power, or concerns over the troubles they experience. To illustrate this notion she discusses the spheres of work, consumption and motherhood, which she identifies as significant sites for young girls' identity work, and demonstrates how young women are coerced into being self-disciplining and -regulating; for example, through the promotion of delaying motherhood (pp. 23-25). Thus, Harris argues, in such a formulation young women are compelled to take responsibility for their own successes or failures.

6.5 Girls' Talk

6.5.1 Traditional Femininity

Within the present study issues pertaining to femininity were prevalent throughout girls' accounts. For example, when discussing conceptions of their own identities, many girls ostensibly demonstrated that they invested heavily in traditional notions of femininity. This theme was typically articulated by utilising a recurring series of tropes – including animals/nature, colours, fashion imagery as well as conventional metaphoric representations for the 'feminine', such as 'angels', 'love hearts' and 'princesses' – and appeared to reflect the assumption that 'girlie' femininity is an innate characteristic of their selves:

Interviewer: Right and what about the D&G and the [perfume]//

Karen K: //to show that I'm girlie and the biscuit is to show that I'm sweet.

Kate O: ... I chose a really colourful bird because I'm colourful, I chose a glass of champagne because I think myself very bubbly and I chose like the necklace with an 'A' on it because I think I'm an angel and I chose that one, the one with the two frogs, because its got loads of colours and colourful like me.

Indeed, within girls' discussions a number of principal concepts emerged which came to be regarded as conveying quintessential components of their 'feminine' properties, these being: cute; nice; kind; loving; and caring:

Interviewer: Who is this a picture of?

Amelia W: Dougie from McFly, because he's cute and so am I.

Interviewer: Do you think there's anything about her character that you think you share with her [Kelly Clarkson]?

Sheila R: She's a nice person.

Michelle C: ... And like the horse actually, um resembles me because I'm a kind person by whole.

Interviewer: Is there anything about these animals that you think you share?

May R: I think dolphins and manatees are very like, they give lots of love, they love their families and they have special ways to greet their families and stuff and I'm similar, you know.

Sarah M: Like the heart is for a lot of loving, and that's [image of flowers] for, that's like loving.

Significantly one participant when expressing a caring attribute foregrounds her belief that this is an essential characteristic ascribed by gender:

Christina T1: I think I'm, I can be quite horrible and quite nasty and stuff but people say I'm not like that but they say I'm like nice and stuff and I always try and help people and stuff and all that and all the teachers say I try and help people but that just comes naturally to me and I don't do it just to do it, I do it 'cause it just comes to me to do that maybe 'cause I'm a girl.

Interviewer: So it's just in your nature?

Christina T1: Yeah yeah.

The issue of caring is notable, as a majority of girls chose to represent this notion by utilising images of babies and children. In doing so, this arguably reinforces commonly held convictions that women aspire to fulfil a maternal role:

Interviewer: ... I'd like to start with this picture of the young black girl. Why is that there?

Lisa M: Because I love little kids and just like little babies and everything and it just shows that I care about all the younger ones.

Interviewer: ... You've used a picture of a little baby, a black child, a little boy. Why is that there?

Sarah M: Just to show I'm caring and I love children and other people think that I'm good with children.
Interviewer: Other people think you're good with children?
Sarah M: Yeah they think I'm caring.

Daniya K: Well that one, the top one//
Interviewer: //the baby//
Daniya K: //the baby means I'm caring.

Sadie T1: Also that one, I love that picture//
Interviewer: //babies//
Sadie T1: //and I love little kids and I love having my little cousins around
...
Interviewer: And we've got another kid's picture.
Sadie T1: And that's another thing 'cause I enjoy looking after my brothers and teaching them and stuff and telling them about what I know and stuff.

This focus on girls emphasising the relationship between caring and children would appear to reflect wider trends observed by Sue Sharpe (1994). Within this work, a development of her previous analysis (1976), she sought to explore teenage girls' attitudes and expectations regarding various aspects of their lives. In relation to careers, Sharpe notes that a well represented choice for young women during the 1970s were occupations which entailed working with children, and adds that this 'was even more popular nearly twenty years later' (1994, p. 297). Therefore, despite the 1990s being marked by an ethos of individualism (see McRobbie, 2000, 2001, 2004) Sharpe's participants' motivations, as girls in the previous era, remained grounded in altruism, as she explains 'the reasons they gave for choosing a possible job or career tended to endorse non-material values such as helping or meeting people, rather than earning money' (1994, p. 301). However, Sharpe further states that as caring careers are still predominantly undertaken by women this continues to support the 'traditional feminine stereotype' (p. 297). This notion is evident within the present study, as demonstrated by the participants' responses, quoted above, about caring for children.

Although the girls' statements may appear to enforce orthodox understandings of 'feminine' attributes, Maryum's collage specifically indicates that these conceptions are not as clear-cut as an initial reading might presume:

Maryum K: These two people [image of two men] is for friendship, that is for calm [image of a man sitting] sitting there is for calm, that's for kind [image of a man's face], that's for gentle [image of a man's face], that's for quiet [image of a man with head tilting], and that's a little cat for cute, that's for princess [word], that's for gentle [image of Winne the Pooh], that's for pretty [image of a toy duck], that's for angel baby [word], and that's another one for cute [image of a kitten], that's for angel and for cuddly [image of a care bear].

Despite establishing her identity through continual references to traits associated with femininity, Maryum illustrates a number of these elements using images conventionally interpreted as masculine. This idea is clearly exemplified by her visually depicting kindness, gentleness and quietness with pictures of men. Thus, Maryum's work helps highlight that, for the participants, femininity is an ambiguous concept, a point further evidenced by Debbie's comment:

Interviewer: And what about this [image of pink colours] because you've used//
Debbie T2: //oh, I was thinking about being in the army for a while but then I don't want to because you have to wear green and you get shot.

Whilst it is possible to suggest that her use of pink and motives for rejecting a career in the army are affirmations of a passive feminine self, this remark remains problematic for two reasons. Firstly, Debbie's statement may have been made with ironic intent, enabling her to engage with notions of traditional femininity in a playful way (McRobbie, 1999); secondly, the decision not to pursue a violent military occupation, generally considered a male preserve, may constitute a deflation of masculinity itself, and can arguably be considered an expression of female assertion. However, when discussing the various facets of their identities in relation to femininity, some girls experienced greater difficulty than others. Interestingly, these girls felt able to articulate characteristics associated with conventional notions of

femininity freely, but appeared to initially resist elaborating on any factors that deviated from these norms. For example, Anna is willing to reveal her emotional vulnerability and neglects detailing a contrary image in her work. Furthermore, in this instance, Anna's intentions are only clarified through the intervention of a third party who assists in verbalising her thoughts:

- Anna O: ... I've got a picture of Little Mo from *EastEnders* because she's very emotional, I've got a picture of Shelley from *Coronation Street* because she's emotional and easily hurt and I've got a picture of a little princess because I think I'm a little princess.
- Interviewer: You've also got a little devil there as well, what does that mean?
- Anna O: Um (long pause), I don't know.
- Lorna O: Maybe 'cause you're like quite naughty sometimes at home? You see yourself as quite naughty at school and that?
- Anna O: Sometimes, yeah yeah.

It should be noted that Anna's reluctance to identify herself as 'naughty' may be attributable to her viewing the researcher as an authority figure, and therefore not wanting to present her identity in a 'negative' light. However, the fact that this image was included in the collage arguably implies that she considers this an integral element of her character and wanted to communicate this. In addition, although it might be suggested that Anna is merely complying with her friend's explanations, her emphatic agreement would appear to contradict this. Nevertheless, Anna's desire to focus on 'acceptable' feminine conventions possibly illustrates the pressure on girls to conform to such norms. Thus, in contrast to the emphasis placed upon femininity as a core quality of identity within numerous girls' accounts, only one boy explicitly acknowledges possessing a 'feminine' side:

- Interviewer: Let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've only got a couple of pictures here, one of E.T. and one of My Little Pony, why have you used them?
- Oscar O: Because people, I think people might see me as an alien because sometimes I'm a bit weird or that's what other people think and I don't know, the little pony it's just pink, and people think I have a feminine side.

Interviewer: Why do you think other people think you're weird?

Oscar O: I don't know sometimes how I act really.

Interviewer: Do you think you act weird?

Oscar O: No.

Interviewer: What about the feminine side, do you think you've got a feminine side?

Oscar O: Well a little bit, but most of the time I just wanna laugh really and it's, and like try and make everybody laugh.

Interviewer: Do you think other people see that, the feminine side, as a good thing or a bad thing?

Oscar O: Well in-between.

Interviewer: When might it be a good thing and when might it be a bad thing?

Oscar O: Well, well like, like I said it might cheer people up because it's funny but like a bad thing, they might not want to be around me because like, like they just want to do that bully stuff all that stuff.

For Oscar then, being perceived as feminine comes to be fundamentally tied to his 'alien' status and behaviour being labelled 'weird', therefore locating him as aberrant. Moreover, Oscar problematises this situation further, as he himself somewhat trivialises femininity by rendering it as a source of humour. Nevertheless, the recognition of this trait by others leads Oscar to conclude that he may be socially excluded and victimised, with specific reference to bullying indicating that this behaviour is being 'policed' by peers (Buckingham, 1993c). This policing of boy's behaviour could explain why many of the male participants did not articulate any supposed 'feminine' characteristics in relation to their identities. Indeed, when these ideas were broached within a few boys' discussions, the participants employed evasive strategies. These boys either rejected conforming to such notions outright, or juxtaposed them by immediately asserting their masculinity, arguably demonstrating their possession of masculine hegemonic ideals:

Steve O: Yeah, *Madagascar* [animated film] because my mum says I'm cute.

Interviewer: Do you think you're cute//

Steve O: //no, not really.

Noah C: Well that's to show that I'm caring [image of a tiger] and I've got a gun.

Interviewer: You're caring, OK, but why have you got a gun?

Noah C: Well I can get a little bit violent.

Interviewer: You've also got loving here, is loving on this side [how I see myself]?

Jack M: Yeah.

Interviewer: So you see yourself as//

Jack M: //loving, and I've got a hurricane 'cause hurricanes are destructive and when I'm angry I'm like a destructive path, like kick everything out like.

In spite of the preceding argument offering a credible explanation of the boys' responses, it is also possible to suggest that such juxtapositioning signifies they feel more able to express – albeit visually, in most cases – their contradictory characteristics with greater ease than girls.⁴⁸

6.5.2 Consumption and Independence

A prevailing theme to emerge within girls' discussions was the important role consumption played in constructions of their identities. For the girls, fashion specifically came to function as a means of asserting an independent sense of self:

Interviewer: And what about these images [images of fashion items]?

Pamela W: I like going out shopping and thing and buying clothes for me.

Daniya K: The ring and watch means that I like shopping for things that suit me and I'm fashionable and yet I'm also into fashion, and the make-up I like wearing make-up kind of thing.

⁴⁸ This position would appear to support Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman's (2002) assertion that boys can articulate "softer" versions of masculinity' (p. 83) and are emotionally literate.

- Michelle C: ... I've used this woman [Kelly Rowland] because she's quite fashionable and I see myself as a fashionable person.
...
- Interviewer: Now on this side [how I think other people see me] you've used a picture of Cat Deeley ... and the New Look logo ...
- Michelle C: I think other people see me as a trendy and fashionable person so they know that I like to go and buy clothes and things like that.
- Rose T1: ... I really like fashion and shoes so that was the basis between them two [image of a female model and boots] ...
- Interviewer: ... Let's start with the girl in the coat [how I think other people see me].
- Rose T1: Well people always tell me that I have a cool like dress sense and I thought that was quite cool.

The issue of young women as consumers has been explored by Harris (2004b) who suggests, in agreement with principles proposed by McRobbie (2000, 2001), that 'it is primarily as consumer citizens that youth are offered a place in contemporary social life, and it is girls above all who are held up as the exemplars of this new citizenship' (2004b, p. 163). In her analysis she highlights that this situation has resulted due to a problematic meshing together of feminist and neoliberal ideologies concerning individualism and individual choice. Furthermore, Harris notes that the discourse of girl power has come to represent itself as reflecting 'young women's citizenship status and entitlements' through advocating notions of independence, agency, equality and power, and yet 'teaches that rights and power, that is, citizenship, are best enacted through individual choices in the market' (p. 167). Thus, she argues empowerment and consumption are perceived by young women as being inextricably linked, and 'Young women are thereby constructed as powerful actors in the marketplace who enact their new opportunities for independence and control by purchasing products and displaying a consumer lifestyle' (p. 166). This point is best illustrated by Saira whose emphasis on, and appropriation of, designer brands not only functions to exhibit her independence, but also articulates future intended career plans:

- Saira R: ... I've got Burberry, Estee Lauder, Chanel and Dior which means I'm a fashion mark, so I'm really fashionable and I buy like this kind

of stuff. I like make-up and stuff and I like to be fashionable and be myself and that's why I put some marks, fashion marks on there.

Interviewer: Are designer labels important to you? Is the name of a product important to you?

Saira R: Well it depends; it depends if it's good or not because sometimes you can just buy cheap ones.

Interviewer: As in?

Saira R: You know just cheap fashion marks but//

Interviewer: //what is cheap fashion to you?

Saira R: I don't know, if you buy from Primark and stuff but everybody shops from Primark like, but anyway I just like them [designer brands] because that's what I am about, yeah.

Interviewer: So it's just purely for the name?

Saira R: Yeah. I'm planning to be a fashion designer and that's why I like them.

Hence, for some girls fashion was integral to conceptions of their identities, by enabling them to convey notions of independence and individuality; whilst for others fashion heightened their own sense of 'powerlessness' and remained an aspiration, the attainment of which signified 'success' (Harris, 2004a):

Interviewer: What about this picture of lots of magazines?

Claire O: Yeah every time I go shopping I have to buy a magazine especially the soap ones.

...

Interviewer: Have you got a favourite character that you identify with?

Claire O: What I'm more really actually doing is I see the young like girls my age on the programmes and I'd like to be fashionable like them sort of thing.

Interviewer: So you'd like to be fashionable. Do you think that you are fashionable?

Claire O: Some of my stuff is but not really.

...

Interviewer: So you think other people see you as fashionable, and although you've put fashionable on how you see yourself, you don't think that you maybe are as fashionable as//

Claire O: //other people//
 Interviewer: //other people see you.
 Claire O: That's because I've got some nicer clothes in how other people see me but I see myself as a bit dull really.
 Interviewer: So you see yourself as a bit dull?
 Claire O: Yeah.

Therefore, despite the impact and pervasiveness that girl power discourse exerts on girls' construction of their identities, its influence was not totalising. For example, Balqis – who identifies herself as Muslim – adheres to girl power ideals, but is importantly able to negotiate these alongside her religious beliefs (Fritzsche, 2004):

Interviewer: So you've got the woman to show you wear a hijab [headscarf]. What about this, the woman [image of a model]?
 Balqis K: Because I like going out and shopping 'cause I'm like fashionable and I like jewellery and I like, I like being me.

Indeed, within the interviews a number of Muslim girls raised fashion and by association notions of independence as a significant facet of their identities, whilst *also* articulating the centrality of religion in their conceptions of self:

Saira R: The first one is my religion [image of Arabic text] which is, it's got my god's name on which means I'm Muslim and that's the most important thing my religion ...

...

... I like to be fashionable and be myself and that's why I put some marks, fashion marks on there.

Jamila K: ... I done Islamic writing, Arabic writing, which represents I'm a Muslim ... and clothes which represents I'm fashionable and individual and like to do my own thing.

Interviewer: So which side is 'Muslim' [word] on?

Zahra W: It's in the middle [of the collage] because I'm Muslim.

...

- Interviewer: Are there any pictures that you would have liked to have put on your collage that you didn't have a chance to get?
- Zahra W: ... I would have put Beyonce 'cause she's fashionable and independent and so am I.

Thus, the above comments importantly appear to problematise claims which suggest that Muslim youth create 'psychological distance' between themselves and non-Muslims through their religious practices (Jacobson, 1998) and/or are caught between two cultures (Anwar, 1976, 1998; Watson, 1977) experiencing a 'culture clash' (Pugh, 2001); instead these participants arguably demonstrate that they are able to navigate their identities between two seemingly contrary discourses.

6.5.3 Beauty and Confidence

The centrality attributed to fashion within girls' conceptualisations of their identities, as discussed above, was paralleled by a marked interest in notions of physical beauty. These concepts have been interrogated by McRobbie (1991, 1994) in relation to teenage girls' magazines who notes, in contrast to other feminist writers (Walkerdine, 1990; Jackson, 1996), that such texts do not directly compel women into a normative feminine ideal. Rather, readers purchase magazines which correspond with how they perceive themselves, and the ideas and values they possess. In spite of this, her analysis identifies that physical attractiveness – and the means by which it can be achieved – have constituted an ever increasing (rather than decreasing) focus of contemporary girls' magazines: 'There is more of the self in this new vocabulary of femininity, much more self-esteem, more autonomy, but still the pressure to adhere to the perfect body image as a prerequisite for the success in love which is equated with happiness' (1994, p. 165). Although McRobbie acknowledges that there is 'a greater "fun" element' (1991, p. 175) within beauty and fashion features compared to similar magazines of the past, she also recognises 'There is of course an undeniable element of regulation' which remains visible through 'the implicit assumption that beauty routines are a normal and inevitable part of being female' (*ibid.*). In doing so, McRobbie states that this 'pave[s] the way for a woman's status and identity to become synonymous with her physical attractiveness' (*ibid.*). Furthermore, she claims that the process of selling women idealised versions of themselves through

consumption both paradoxically ‘anchors femininity’ whilst ‘unsettling and undermining’ it simultaneously: ‘If there is always another better look to be achieved or improvement to be made then there is no better way of doing it than introducing a note of uncertainty and dissatisfaction’ (p. 176).

These ideas are evident within the present study, in which issues about beauty were a predominant feature of many girls’ discussions. In the following extract Zakirah demonstrates this point explicitly by not only foregrounding appearance as a fundamental aspect of her identity, but stresses its significance through highlighting beauty as an obsession:

- Zakirah K: ... With the mirror I was trying to express how obsessive sometimes I can be.
- Interviewer: Obsessive about?
- Zakirah K: Like my hair and stuff.
- Interviewer: So your looks or is it everything?
- Zakirah K: Just my looks.

Whilst Zakirah’s comments may denote the importance of beauty, this same statement could also be seen to express her own bodily anxieties by placing an onus on ‘looks’. Indeed, anxieties in relation to attractiveness surfaced repeatedly throughout the girls’ accounts:

- Interviewer: ... Is there anything else about Mariah Carey and Kelly Clarkson that you like?
- Diana R: They’re pretty.
- Interviewer: They’re pretty. And is that how you see yourself as well?
- Diana R: Um, I’m not sure.

This feeling of uncertainty, seemingly generated by anxieties over conceptions of beauty, was evident both in how girls perceived their own identities as well as perceptions they believed others held. For example, although the following participants are able to articulate that they see themselves as ‘pretty’ and ‘beautiful’,

possibly expressing a sense of inner confidence, their responses become somewhat stifled when asked to elaborate on what other people might think:

Jasmine K: ... I think I'm pretty.

Interviewer: You've used Mariah Carey for that?

Jasmine K: Yeah.

...

Interviewer: You've put Mariah Carey there do you think other people think you're pretty?

Jasmine K: Some people.

Interviewer: Like who?

Jasmine K: Um (long pause, no response given).

Rachel W: This means [image of a black model] I think I'm sexy, this one [image of a black girl] Rachel is beautiful so I think that I'm beautiful.

...

Interviewer: Are there any things here that you think you are that you think other people don't?

Rachel W: Yeah (pointing to image of a black model).

Interviewer: So you think you're beautiful and you don't think other people think you're beautiful?

Rachel W: Some people do.

Interviewer: Some people do?

Rachel W: Yeah.

Interviewer: But not most people?

Rachel W: Um, no.

For some girls, however, considering the issue of beauty revealed deeper anxieties about appearance made manifest by their denial of possessing such attributes:

Interviewer: When wouldn't they be the same [how I see myself and how I think other people see me]?

Sheila R: Like the star and the beauty and it's on there and stuff like that.

Interviewer: So you don't see yourself as a star and beautiful?

Sheila R: No.

Interviewer: What does the flower mean to you?

Alison O: It represents like pretty and stuff but I don't, I don't think that I'm pretty so I kind of like that stuff but I'm not.

Interviewer: So you like the prettiness but you don't see yourself as pretty?

Alison O: No.

Interviewer: What about those pictures [how I think other people see me]?

Amanda R: Some people say I'm like very pretty and some friends say I'm good enough to be a model kind of thing so I put that down ...

Interviewer: So you've put that you think other people see you as pretty, good enough to be a model. Do you think in how you see yourself that you feel you are good enough to be a model?

Amanda R: No//

Polly R: //well you should.

Amanda R: I don't, I just put it down because that's what other people say but I don't think I am.

Amanda's comments are of particular interest, as although she recognises that other people view her as physically attractive – emphasised by Polly's interjection 'well you should' – she does not acknowledge this quality within herself. This position may be clarified with reference to her previous remarks:

Amanda R: ... I'm just about fashion really and I like also see myself as the best sometimes really so.

Interviewer: You see yourself as the best sometimes, when wouldn't you see yourself as the best?

Amanda R: I don't know, when someone else is better than me, I don't know. I see myself as the best sometimes just, I don't know, I'm confused now.

Despite demonstrating a degree of confidence about herself, as indicated through her statement 'I like also see myself as the best sometimes', Amanda's emphasis on 'sometimes' illustrates that this is thrown into question when she feels 'someone else is better than me'. For Amanda then it is arguably fashion which comes to define these boundaries, and in doing so would appear to correlate with McRobbie's (1991)

argument that the attainment of a 'better look' is motivated by 'uncertainty and dissatisfaction' (p. 176). Nevertheless, whilst anxieties regarding physical attractiveness remained prevalent within girls' responses, it is important to note that, at the same time, they also articulated notions of confidence in relation to their identities:

Interviewer: What is it about them [images of Beyonce, Lemar and Mario] that you identify with?

Saira R: I like their character, they're very confident and they've tried very hard to get to this point so I think yeah they've tried best very hard in life to get this yeah, and I just think she's [Beyonce] very pretty and yeah.

Interviewer: And so her [Beyonce] prettiness, do you think that's something you share with her?

Saira R: Well I do have self-confidence; I do think I'm a bit pretty but not that much.

The assertion of confidence is later reiterated by Saira more forcefully, who interestingly uses a female celebrity's image that she admits to disliking, but specifically identifies with for symbolising this value:

Interviewer: Who is this person here?

Saira R: That's a girl from the Pussycat Dolls [Melody Thornton].

Interviewer: And why is she there?

Saira R: I don't like her but I just put her there because she's got this like self-confidence and I think people see me as I've got self-confidence really.

An image of the same band member is also employed by another participant to demonstrate that whilst ostensibly she may appear to display a passive feminine attribute, this convention becomes undermined when she asserts her confidence:

Interviewer: And who is this [image of Melody Thornton from the Pussycat Dolls]?

Polly R: I don't know.

Interviewer: What is it about her that you identify with?

Polly R: She looks quiet but she's not, that's what, that's what people say about me.

Interviewer: She looks quiet but she's not?

Polly R: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing?

Polly R: That's a good thing.

Interviewer: Why?

Polly R: Because you need to be loud.

Interviewer: Why would you need to be loud?

Polly R: So people can hear you, shows like you're confident and stuff.

Interviewer: Shows that you're confident?

Polly R: Yeah.

Thus, the articulation of confidence arguably enables Polly to feel that she has a valid 'voice' and highlights her awareness – through playing with conventions – that femininity is a performance (Skeggs, 1997; Gauntlett, 2002). Hence, in keeping with Fritzsche's (2004) position, Saira and Polly's responses would seem to indicate that girls, on the whole, did not want to imitate successful female celebrities, instead these figures functioned as cultural resources from which they could construct their own identities. Therefore, as discussed previously, although concepts of confidence and independence in young women have been tied to girl power discourse and dismissed for being mere rhetoric (Whelehan, 2000; Griffin, 2004), within this study many girls were adamant about expressing these qualities which appeared to provide them with a sense of autonomy:

Interviewer: What do all of these different faces mean?

Pamela W: That one says I'm confident [image of a girl in a yellow top].

Interviewer: Is that how you think other people see you, as confident?

Pamela W: Yeah.

Interviewer: So if you were going to use some words to explain the pictures and how you see yourself, what would you use?

Rose T1: Arty, daring, chic and confident. Yeah I am confident, I do a lot of drama and acting and stuff so.

Interviewer: You've got independent [word]//
 Debbie T2: //because I like doing stuff by myself and being independent and I'm confident too.

Carmel O: I've got Kat Slater [*EastEnders* character] because I'm always feeling confident in myself like she does.
 ...

Interviewer: Do you think there's a difference though between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

Carmel O: Kind of, I don't think people see me as confident all the time.

Interviewer: But you think you are//

Carmel O: //yeah, I am.

Significantly, in two instances where girls stated that they were not confident, this notion was still represented as a facet of their identities which other people perceived:

Interviewer: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

Nancy T2: Yeah.

Interviewer: What do you think the difference is?

Nancy T2: I think like some people see me, 'cause I don't obviously like, I think they think I'm quite loud 'cause I do talk quite a lot so I think they think that but I'm not if you know what I mean.

Interviewer: Do you think it's more, when they hear you express yourself, do you think that maybe they think that you're confident?

Nancy T2: Oh no, I'm not confident at all.

Interviewer: But do you think other people think you are?

Nancy T2: Yeah, but when they get to know me they know I'm not, 'cause I work quite hard and that's why I worry a lot.

Interviewer: Who is this lady?

Daniya K: It's just a lady who, who's like, she's sticking her head out kind of like, she's like, I can't explain it well.

Interviewer: She's quite proud//

Daniya K: //proud, yeah confident, confident.

Interviewer: And that's how you think other people see you//

Daniya K: //other people see me.

Interviewer: But do you feel proud and confident and like you can speak your own mind?

Daniya K: No.

Interviewer: But you think other people see you as quite a confident person?

Daniya K: Yeah.

...

Interviewer: And other people think you're a lot more confident and assertive//

Daniya K: //yeah//

Interviewer: //and maybe a stronger person than you actually feel that you are//

Daniya K: //yeah, yeah, I'm like shy and quiet.

Consequently, whilst these statements can be read as an ultimate failure of girl power discourse for not empowering these girls with self-confidence, it could be argued that they may exploit girl power strategies – such as declarations and performances of independence and assertion – to construct a façade of confidence which is utilised in their interactions with others within their everyday lives.

6.5.4 Gender (In)Equality

The preceding analysis helps demonstrate that for these girls femininity remains an ambiguous concept and their relationship with it is highly complex. Although the girls appear to conform with conventional feminine attributes, they simultaneously articulate assertions of girl power discourse. However, whilst some feminist theorists, such as Griffin (2004), suggest that the notion of girl power *assumes* that girls are *already* equal to boys and should therefore be treated as such, within girls' accounts this belief was not evident. For example, in their discussions relating to sport and activities both Sadie and Keira foreground the pervasive influence of sexism within society. Moreover, despite not explicitly identifying themselves as feminists, their comments clearly engage with feminist criticisms of gendered inequalities and, most importantly, recognise that equality is yet to be achieved (Jowett, 2004):

Sadie T1: ... I did that [image of a female footballer] 'cause I love football, I think that girls who do football are really trying sort of thing, 'cause

the girls are going round doing football, even though the boys sort of say 'oh no you can't do that 'cause it's a boys sport'.

Interviewer: So do you feel strongly about girls having equal status//

Sadie T1: //yeah, yeah, very strongly.

Interviewer: Do you think that girls and women in society now have equal status or do you think there's more that has to be done?

Sadie T1: There's more that has to be done yeah I think even though it's like they say you have equal rights, but it's just coming into practice.

Interviewer: Oh and you said you were a member of Army Cadets.

Keira T1: Yes, yeah yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think that people find that an acceptable thing for girls to do?

Keira T1: No they don't. Some of the people at the army don't find it because they're just, out of all sixteen of us there are four girls and the rest of them are boys, and some of the boys they don't involve you because they don't think that you should be there.

Interviewer: On what basis?

Keira T1: The fact that you have to run around on a field with a gun and the fact that girls shouldn't do that, they should stay at home and do things like cooking and cleaning and things.

Interviewer: So do you feel that people are being quite sexist towards women or do you think that's just a bad experience?

Keira T1: There's a few that think that girls shouldn't be in it, like some give leeway and say well they can try it and if they don't like it then obviously they're gonna quit, but most people just put you down straight away.

Interviewer: Do you ever have that in any other areas of your life though, where you feel because you're a girl you shouldn't be doing something or you're expected to behave in a certain way//

Keira T1: //yeah, in like the rally sport that I do, it's you and the services and there's no other girls in my league so you get, if you try and talk to someone like a boy driver they can like step back a bit and think 'mmm do you know anything' kind of thing, and then of course you get to know everyone and then they're alright, but a lot of people don't think yeah should she be in this league and so on and so forth.

- Interviewer: Do you feel you have to prove yourself as a woman; do you feel like you have to work harder?
- Keira T1: Yeah, I do, to get people to understand that, you're not a girly girl walking around in pink you don't walk around and go to town and think about girly things which, I normally don't, but when you do something like that [motor sport] you have to persuade people like boys, and that you have to persuade them lots, you're not what they think.

Interestingly, it should be noted that whilst rejecting sexism Keira reiterates sexist stereotypes of 'femininity'. Although this is problematic her discussion does importantly highlight an awareness of, and resistance to, gender inequalities within contemporary society.

6.6 Individualization: Revisiting Late Modernity

Within the previous sections, boys' and girls' discussions about their identities would seem to indicate that they conceptualise these in highly gendered ways. However, a focus on articulating notions of 'individualism' did emerge in participants' accounts, which appeared to cut across such gender differences. Before exploring these comments in greater depth it would be useful to revisit issues raised by Giddens (1991) at the beginning of this chapter, and outline how conditions of the late modern era have impacted on young people's experience. As Andy Furlong and Fred Cartmel (1997) claim, 'Young people today are growing up in a different world to that experienced by previous generations – changes which are significant enough to merit a reconceptualization of youth transitions and processes of social reproduction' (p. 6). Developing this point, Harris (2004a) explains that 'This "different world" is marked by both social and economic characteristics that have forced a fundamental reassessment of the material with which young people are able to craft their identities and forge their livelihoods' (p. 3). That is to say, the period of late modernity is defined by its social and economic separation from (industrial) modernity. To elaborate, Harris notes that modernity was distinguished by a number of features, these being manufacturing based capitalism; centralised governmental control; social relationships built upon shared commonalities regarding class, community and

location; and, during the post-war period, the establishment and growth of a welfare state, as well as socially motivated political movements. In contrast to this, she explains that the late modern era is characterised by networks of capitalist global economies and increased privatisation within welfare and public service sectors. As such, the concept of deindustrialisation – ‘the contraction of large scale manufacturing and the expansion of global communications, technology and service sectors’ (*ibid.*) – becomes central to economic systems in late modernity, as Harris states:

Across these and other industries, full-time ongoing employment has been replaced by part-time, casual, temporary, and short-term contract work. Markets, corporations, and production are increasingly globalized, a process fueled by the information revolution, the capacity to move capital and information around the world instantaneously, and changes in national regulations about trade, ownership, movement of capital, and offshore production.. Along with this trend nation-states have retreated from industrial regulation of both transnationals and small businesses, and public policy often employs the language of individual responsibility and enterprise bargaining to fill the gap left by deregulation (pp. 3-4).

Furthermore such economic conditions, she explains, have coincided with the emergence of, and move towards, a new ethos of ‘competitive individualism’ (see also McRobbie, 2000, 2001, 2004) in which people are expected to produce their own opportunities for success within their lives. At the same time, it has been suggested that notions of predictability and stability, which were distinctive elements of modern societies, have come to be superseded by a growing sense of uncertainty and risk (Giddens, 1991; Beck, 1992). Indeed, Ulrich Beck (1992) proposes that the conditions of late modernity create what he terms a ‘risk society’, whereby people are becoming increasingly conscious of dangers which exist within the world they live in:

Risk may be defined as a systematic way of dealing with hazards and insecurities induced and introduced by modernization itself. Risks, as opposed to old dangers, are consequences which relate to the threatening force of modernization and to its globalization of doubt. They are politically reflexive (p. 21, original emphasis).

As a consequence, individuals today are more anxious about the avoidance of risks, such as nuclear war or environmental disasters. This situation is further compounded,

as within late modernity social identities and ties have become weakened. Thus these factors may lead to the late modern subject feeling alienated from others; for example, due to the increased diversity of family structures; the ephemeral nature of communities; and the dissolution of social organisations (Harris, 2004a, p. 4).

Expanding on this theme, the collapse of shared social ties and relationships, which previously assisted people in understanding their identity and position within social life, has resulted in risks having to be managed on an individual basis. Therefore, in the absence of traditional structures of support and patterns for living, individuals must become reflexive and make choices as they are compelled to construct their own narratives of self-identity. Hence, in this formulation the process of 'individualization' enables people to determine their own biographies unimpeded by conventional structures of thinking, through proposing to offer opportunities for choice, personal liberty and actual independence. However, these possibilities for achieving autonomy and self-actualization remain grounded within conditions that restrict many individuals, as Beck (1992) explains:

The individual is indeed removed from traditional commitments and support relationships, but exchanges them for the constraints of existence in the labor market and as a consumer, with the standardizations and controls they contain. The place of *traditional* ties and social forms (social class, nuclear family) is taken by *secondary* agencies and institutions, which stamp the biography of the individual and make that person dependent upon fashions, social policy, economic cycles and markets, contrary to the image of individual control which establishes itself in consciousness (p. 131, original emphasis).

For example, in his discussion of youth lifestyles Steven Miles (2000) states that the image of young people living within late modern societies is:

... one of increased independence, self-determination and self-realization. But as discussions of risk illustrate, the conditions within which these apparently positive developments are occurring are actually taking place in a world which in some respects is quite possibly less secure than it has ever been before. Young people do not have the sort of support from the more formal youth groups (and indeed subcultures) that they

may once have had, which in itself leaves them increasingly isolated, and such isolation opens them up to the psychological pitfalls of individualization and self-blame (p. 68).

During the traditional era then, as Harris (2004a) explains, young people were constructed as society's dependents who were expected to follow 'experts' instructions, in order to contribute towards a developing framework of national cohesion and prosperity as fully fledged citizens. Thus, the characteristics for an ideal youth were explicitly defined. In contrast to this, she maintains, young people are now expected to achieve success through the establishment of unique, self-made identities by 'making their own choices and plans to accomplish autonomy' (p. 6). Furthermore, Harris argues that youth are not only impelled to control their own biographies, but encouraged to exhibit this for examination by others. In doing so she asserts that 'The obligation of youth to become unique individuals is therefore constructed as a freedom, a freedom best expressed through the display of one's choices and projects of the self' (*ibid.*). Therefore, in consideration of these points, the role played by contemporary media within late modern Western societies comes to be especially pertinent in the lives of young people today, by acting as a cultural resource from which they can negotiate their identities. This issue is clarified by Miles (2000) who states '... the mass media plays a particularly significant role in young people's lives as a resource from which they can structure their lifestyles or at least from which they construct opinions about what lifestyles might be *deemed* to be appropriate' (p. 69, original emphasis).

6.7 Boys' and Girls' Talk

6.7.1 Individualism: I Am What I Am

The notion that youth should work towards achieving success through establishing a 'unique' identity (Harris, 2004a) was clearly evidenced within the present study. For many participants this idea was most forcefully articulated in assertions which maintained that they 'stood out' from others:

Interviewer: And what does that represent [image of a cheetah]?

Carl W: That I stand out in a crowd.

Kashif K: I've used that George Bush picture because he stands out like, you know that's how people see him sort of like how he sees himself, yeah, he stands out more and like me.

Rita R: I chose that one [image of the Eiffel Tower] because it's like the Eiffel Tower stands out and I like to stand out.

Interviewer: And you've also got the words//

Natalie M: //‘saucy’//

Interviewer: //‘saucy’ and ‘pussycat’. Why are these words here?

Natalie M: I don't know I just saw them in the paper and they, they kind of stand out from the rest of the writing.

Interviewer: So//

Natalie M: //I like things that stand out like I stand out.

Interviewer: So it's not so much the words and what they mean//

Natalie M: //no. They're the words that are big and bold and they make it stand out.

In Natalie's case specifically, she not only claims to be distinctive, but also draws upon the figure of Charlotte Church as a means by which her own autonomy may find expression:

Interviewer: What about the picture of Charlotte Church?

Natalie M: She's a famous person and some people have their like an idol to look up to.

Interviewer: Do you identify with Charlotte Church?

Natalie M: Yeah. I don't agree with the stuff in the press it's just//

Interviewer: //with what stuff in the press?

Natalie M: Like they say that she's bad and I just like Charlotte Church.

Interviewer: What is it about her that you identify with and look up to?

Natalie M: Her singing.

Interviewer: Just her singing? What about her fashion and the way she looks?

Natalie M: ... Yeah, she doesn't want to act like anyone else.

Interviewer: Is that a quality that you like about Charlotte Church? Is that what you see in yourself?

Natalie M: Yeah. I'm not told to do what anyone else I just do what I want to do.

Natalie's sense of autonomy is made apparent by her highlighting an identification with the singer based on her non-conformist attitudes to looks and behaviour. This perception of Charlotte Church then, for Natalie, comes to embody the ideal that success can be attained through individuality and making her own choices. Similarly, many girls utilised images of female pop stars, who were usually seen as positive role models, to foreground shared attributes which centred upon 'originality' and 'uniqueness':

Interviewer: What is it about them [Gwen Stefani and Joss Stone] that you identify with?

Fiona T1: Well Gwen Stefani and Joss Stone are really unique and that's what I thought of me.

Interviewer: And you've also got a picture of Gwen Stefani. What does she mean to you?

Amelia W: Original and, original and different but in a good way like me.

Annabel R: ... I picked out that picture [image of Bjork] because it's different and I like to be different, I don't like to be like everybody else.

An emphasis on difference is further expressed by the following participant, who believes it enables her to transcend conventions in matters of music and fashion. Moreover, by stating that friends share similar music tastes with each other she (un)knowingly positions her identity in opposition to mainstream thinking and reiterates her self-made individual status:

Interviewer: You've got a white zebra standing amongst other zebra's, what does that represent?

Rose T1: People think that I stand out from the crowd a lot and think I'm different and stuff like that so.

Interviewer: In what way do they think you're different?

Rose T1: Well, I don't know, they just think like I sort of break the boundaries with like fashion, the way I am and music and all that, because I have quite a lot of friends that are into R&B and hip hop but they don't judge you on what you listen to, I listen to totally different stuff to them like Franz Ferdinand but yeah so, I try to be my own person.

Rose's remarks would appear to presume that her 'unique' sense of self is independent of commercial influence. However she fails to acknowledge that her 'alternative' identity remains grounded within the choices of consumerist lifestyles available, most notably through the media, as demonstrated by Rose's reference to the popular mainstream band, Franz Ferdinand. This suggestion does not imply that young people are unable to engage creatively with products made available to them (see Willis, 1990), but rather that their identities' remain constructed within the confines of consumerism, as Miles (2000) observes:

The paradox lies in the fact that young people often appear to be convinced that they as individuals are able to be unique, they can choose who they are as a person and choose to get out of mainstream culture ... Teenage consumers only have personal choices in the context of the parameters laid down for them by cultural industries and thus consumer lifestyles can never be entirely unique (pp. 143-144).

Despite this, Miles' work on young people and their consumption habits importantly demonstrated that they were 'fully conversant with both the pervasiveness and the limitations of a consumer lifestyle, and are prepared to live with such limitations for the everyday benefits it provides' (p. 144). This point is illustrated in the cases of Carl and Jimmy who, although somewhat contradictorily seek to assert their individuality through associations with sub-cultural groups, foreground the accessibility of being able to adopt identities by purchasing consumer products:

Carl W: ... I used, well, the Gothic 3 monkey from the advert [3 Mobiles] because like, I don't want you like putting names on me, but a lot of people see me as a Goth, but I also see myself as a Goth so I'm pretty much in both spaces.

Interviewer: What does being a Goth mean to you or what does it mean?

Carl W: Well to other people it means you worship the devil, but I don't think that, I just think you wear some clothes and you're automatically a Goth, there you go.

Jimmy W: Mosher is like a, it's a bit like Carl said like a Goth but it's in a different way. It's more of a different style, like electronic rock it's not heavy metal, but it's the way you dress, music you listen to, the way that you sort of style yourself out.

Thus, the above discussion begins to highlight that notions of individualism were integral to how participants conceptualised their own identities, epitomised by Polly's assertion 'I used words "I am what I am" because I am what I am basically'. Such ideas were further demonstrated through statements in which participants appeared to augment their sense of autonomy by promoting concepts relating to assertiveness. This was most commonly articulated by participants placing an onus on their 'freedom' and 'loudness' to indicate that they possessed an independent character and 'voice':

David M: The little tiger means, I don't know, free and loud and you know do what you want to do.

...

Interviewer: What about the eagle?

David M: The eagle represents freedom.

Interviewer: Freedom?

David M: Yeah and you know same as the tiger really.

Natalie M: I like that picture [image of a dove] most of all because//

Interviewer: //the picture of the dove//

Natalie M: //yeah because I'm a free spirit so I like doing and saying wild things.

Interviewer: Wild things.

Natalie M: Trying new stuff.

Jack M: I've got a dinosaur 'cause they're quite loud and I think people see me as quite loud.

Charlotte T1: ... Chrissie Watts [*EastEnders* character] 'cause she's like a bit of a, she's quite loud ain't she and I feel that I'm loud.

This point is also illustrated within the following accounts, whereby participants' emphasis on exerting autonomous identities arguably comes to enforce their feelings of individuality more overtly:

Interviewer: And what about Kat Slater [*Eastenders* character]?

Jason C: Oh she, like she like *EastEnders* if it didn't have someone like Kat Slater it would be really plain, like if I like didn't have a lot of my friends around I think it would be really plain and boring.

Interviewer: So you think Kat Slater is quite plain?

Jason C: No, she's really fiery and she's really good 'cause I like that.

Interviewer: Oh, so she's kind of similar to how you feel. She's quite a fiery person//

Jason C: //yeah, and like she's not afraid to do anything.

Interviewer: So you like her assertiveness//

Jason C: //yeah//

Interviewer: //and that she's a bit//

Jason C: //yeah, she's not really quiet she's not afraid to say anything she just comes out with it.

Interviewer: Who is this woman?

Emily K: Um, I forgot her name, I can't remember, but Kanye West is my idol because he like speaks his mind and I speak my mind.

Interviewer: What about 'I'll speak out' [words]?

Carly R: Because I'm quite opinionated and I say my views, I put my views out straight away.

David M: I've got a picture of Tony Blair because he's like all powerful like me.

Interviewer: In what way do you think you're powerful?

David M: My voice. I'm very opinionated.

The comments made by David are of particular interest here, as he directly equates his assertiveness with power and, in doing so, would therefore seem to support the belief that individualism will grant him greater agency through which success can ultimately be achieved. Indeed the importance of agency was a pervasive theme within many participants' responses, in which they actively asserted their own standpoints over those of others, and consequently served to reinforce the children's status as individuals:

Interviewer: So do you think how you see yourself and how you think other people see you are the same thing?

Annabel R: I think it would be different but I didn't do anything there because I don't really care how other people see me because I think my opinion matters most, and if they don't like how I am then that's just tough really that's how I am.

Natalie M: I don't know what other people think of me.

Interviewer: Does that bother you//

Natalie M: //not really.

Carmel O: ... And I don't know what else other people think of me 'cause I don't really care what they think about me, it's what I think about myself.

Nevertheless, in spite of such forceful assertions, some participants went on to express that the influence of family and friends remained fundamental to how they perceived themselves⁴⁹:

Natalie M: ... I don't care what other people think sometimes.

Interviewer: Sometimes, you keep saying sometimes. When would you care?

Natalie M: When I most care like, when you're asking what your friends think and they're not giving you an honest opinion and they think it's a joke or if you really ask them if they do care.

⁴⁹ This notion correlates with work conducted by Miles (2000) in which peers 'appear[ed] to be the most fundamental influence on young people's lives [and] friendship plays a key role in how young people perceive themselves' (p. 134).

Carmel O: I care about what my mum says what my family says and like my closest best mate which is only one, I've known her like eleven years I take in what she says.

Importantly however, for the participants, such influences did not detract from the significance of creating an individual successful self, the pursuit of which was displayed through assertions of achievement, ambition and hard work:

Zakirah K: With the award picture what I tried to express was that how I'm always like winning awards and stuff.

Carly R: ... I showed the target because I'm, I like to be ambitious and I like to hit my target basically so in school or anything and I did the mountain with a person on top because I'm ambitious and, yeah so I just wanted to show that.

Interviewer: So what else is it about him [Jermaine Dafoe] that you identify with?

Andre W: On the pitch he's hard-working like me.

Interviewer: And is that something you see in yourself as well?

Andre W: Yeah.

Interviewer: If you had more time are there any pictures you would have liked to have put on the collage?

Andre W: Maybe an athlete. Maybe put an athlete on both sides.

Interviewer: What would the athlete mean to you? What would it represent?

Andre W: Hard-working and being good.

6.7.2 Creativity and Aspirations

Within the interviews some participants discussed creative activities and talents, through which they appeared to make manifest a desire to display their conceptions of a unique, self-made and individual identity. Interestingly, in many cases, these conversations focused on participants' engagement in acts of artistic expression which, it is possible to suggest, came to be a metaphorical representation for their own constructions of the (ongoing project of the) self:

Robert O: I've got a Max Power Great White [car] which is, I think it shows that I can, well I like building stuff and making things, it shows that I can customise and think about things and can create new stuff.

Joe C: There's various music things like the MP3 player and the guitar and stuff because I'm in a band and I like writing music a lot, I'm doing new songs all the time.

Interviewer: Why have you used Snoop Doggy Dog?

Amira K: He's good at rap and stuff and I'm always writing and always like thinking about new stuff to write.

Interviewer: And what about all this Manga?

India R: Because I draw Manga I've got a book full of different characters that I like to draw dedicated like a couple of months at the moment to it, then I'm thinking about a story for it which I'm gonna write and which is gonna turn into a book so yeah.

Interviewer: So what are you trying to express about how you see yourself?

India R: I don't want to sound big-headed but I'm talented.

Interviewer: Talented in what way?

India R: Well I can sing, I can draw, I can play the piano and I've got quite a few friends that think the same as well.

Such considerations pertaining to creativity and its symbolic portrayal of the construction of identity as a self-aware and autonomous process – best illustrated by Robert's remark 'I can customise and think about things and can create new stuff' – helps foreground the increasing significance that reflexivity plays within the children's lives. As noted previously, Giddens (1991) states that the centrality of reflexivity within late modern Western societies results in questions regarding identity and lifestyle becoming an everyday dimension of social life, which are reinforced by contemporary media. Moreover, as traditional roles – which were formerly prescribed and taken-for-granted – begin to diminish, individuals consequently reflect more upon their lives and aspirations. This issue was apparent within participants' discussions, as demonstrated by the following accounts:

Interviewer: What about the Brad Pitt head?

Richard M: I think I resemble Brad Pitt in many ways and the body that I have there I think is exactly the same except mine has a few more packs on there (laughter in room).

Interviewer: Right. Thinking about this side, about how you see yourself, now I know you've been laughing but are these things that you genuinely think you are, or are they things that you aspire to, that you want to be like?

Richard M: Well David [pupil] told me to say yes to that I think I am, but I think I aspire.

...

Interviewer: So inside you aspire to be fashionable and have a body like that and look like Brad Pitt?

Richard M: Yes.

Interviewer: Let's go to the picture of Arnold Schwarzenegger, is that how you see yourself?

Oscar O: Well, well he's like my hero and that's how I see myself like in a few years.

Interviewer: In a few years?

Oscar O: Yeah that's what I see myself as.

Interviewer: And what is it about Christian Ronaldo that you identify with?

Adrian O: He's skilful and he like moves with the ball and he does skilful tricks.

Interviewer: So do you think you're quite a skilful person?

Adrian O: No not really, I try to be but not really.

Interviewer: So would you like look up to him and aspire to be like him?

Adrian O: Yeah.

Interviewer: So one day you would like to be able to say that's how I see myself?

Adrian O: But not Portuguese.

Interviewer: So is there part of you that sees yourself as identifying with Mariah Carey, or do you see her somebody that you look up to and aspire to be like?

Sarah M: Aspire to be like.

Interviewer: In what ways?

Sarah M: Just like pretty and a singer and things like that.

Interviewer: You've also got a picture here of a lady playing football.

Ellie T2: Yeah that's Hope Powell the manager of the girls' England team.

Interviewer: Why have you used her?

Ellie T2: Because I like to play football and I want to be in the England team.

Interviewer: So do you identify or respect her, or see her as a role model?

Ellie T2: Yeah.

Interviewer: What about this [image of the Olympic symbol]?

Ellie T2: I put a picture of the Olympics, I drew that because I like sport and I want to be in the Olympics one day.

Significantly, it should be noted that these statements appear to remain delineated along gender lines. For example the boys' aspirations were essentially grounded within notions of physicality, these being masculinity, sporting prowess and toughness, which can therefore be read as their desire to possess hegemonic masculine attributes (Connell, 2000). Indeed as detailed earlier, Richard specifically is perceived as not conforming to such ideals and because of this becomes victimised by his peers (see pp. 117-118). Furthermore, David's influence over Richard's responses ('well David told me to say yes') would indicate that his behaviour is subject to 'policing' by other boys (Buckingham, 1993c). Moreover, the attainment of set hegemonic standards is highlighted by Adrian who, although he aspires to such values, places emphasis on his 'whiteness' and, in doing so, foregrounds this as a precondition of hegemonic masculinity. In the case of girls, aspirations tended to either be directed by traditional 'femininity', or constitute an outright rejection of these principles. This is clearly exemplified within the above extracts in which Sarah utilises the image of Mariah Carey to express that she would 'like [to be] pretty and a singer', whereas Ellie undermines 'feminine' conventions by articulating her aspirations through sport. Interestingly, these same themes also emerged within participants' discussions of their career aspirations:

Interviewer: What do you want to do?

Robert O: I want to be a lawyer.

Interviewer: Why do you want to be a lawyer?

Robert O: It has really good pay and it's got loads of industries involved with to do with it.

Interviewer: And you've//

Dale T2: //Colin Farrell that's because he does action films and I like action films so I would like to be an action actor.

Interviewer: I've noticed a picture of Trinny and Susannah, why are they there?

India R: Because my friends and myself are a bit like them and we want to be like interior fashion designers when we're older so they're like our idols.

Interviewer: And you've also got some babies here.

Christina T1: Yeah because I like children and stuff and I'd like to work with children and stuff I think yeah, and like I want to have children when I'm older as well.

For the boys their intended future professions focused on jobs which, once again, seemingly embodied hegemonic masculine ideals. For instance, Robert's goal of being a lawyer is motivated by a desire to achieve power, authority and economic success, and Dale's attraction to becoming an 'action actor' is embedded in notions of physicality. In contrast to this, many girls envisaged careers that are typically associated with 'feminine' interests, as illustrated by India and Christina aspiring to work within the spheres of fashion and childcare. However, not all girls shared such sentiments and articulated aspirations for working within traditionally male dominated professions, such as medicine and science, which possibly reflects, as Sharpe (1994) states, 'the slow pace of movement away from the traditional stereotype of women's work' (p. 298):

Leah T2: ... I chose the doctor because I want to be a doctor when I get older.

May R: ... I want to be a marine biologist as I'm interested in water life.

6.7.3 Individualization Failing?: There's Nothing Special About Me

The preceding discussions indicate that for participants within this study, notions of individualism were fundamental to how they conceptualised their own identities. Moreover assertions of autonomy, individuality and aspirations were perceived as a means through which success can ultimately be achieved. However, despite many boys and girls claiming a unique sense of self, some participants specifically chose to identify themselves as 'normal':

Interviewer: ... What type of person would other people think you were?

Randeep C: I'm just a normal boy.

Interviewer: What type of person are you trying to say you are then? How do you see your identity, what are you trying to express about it here?

Sabina R: I'm a normal person.

Although it could be suggested that these comments may indirectly reflect the participants' individuality precisely because they elect not to label themselves as 'distinct', this argument is problematised when considering the actual children who expressed such sentiments. These children were predominantly from areas of economic and social deprivation, and because of this are arguably aware of their identities being positioned 'on the margins'. As a consequence, these participants' articulations of 'normalness' can therefore be read as a negation of their 'outsider' status. For example, Callum maintains that he is 'average' whilst observing that other people view him in a lesser light:

Interviewer: Do you think there's a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself?

Callum O: Yeah.

Interviewer: What's the difference?

Callum O: I think I'm average.

Interviewer: You think you're average?

Callum O: Yeah.

Interviewer: Do you think other people think that you are average?

Callum O: No.
Interviewer: What do they think?
Callum O: Small.
Interviewer: Is that below average?
Callum O: Yeah.
Interviewer: So they think you're small and you think you're average?
Callum O: Yeah, I'm average.

Thus, Callum's emphasis on being 'average' may indicate his desire to be recognised as equal to others (the same as, rather than below, their level), a notion also evident within the following participant's account:

Alison O: ... I'm just a normal girl who's just normal, I'm not nothing special.
Interviewer: Where's the normal girl?
Alison O: That one [image of Kelly Clarkson].
Interviewer: Is that Kelly Clarkson?
Alison O: Yeah but I couldn't find anything else.
Interviewer: So it's not Kelly Clarkson that you like//
Alison O: //no but normal//
Interviewer: //she's a normal girl for you?
Alison O: Yeah.
Interviewer: Why is she a normal girl for you?
Alison O: I don't know she's just, she's just, well there's nothing special about her and there's nothing special about me either so.

Crucially, then, the above comments foreground concerns that the process of individualization, as Miles (2000) stated previously, can result in feelings of isolation and self-blame (p. 68). Consequently, the participants' remarks may indicate that individualization fails to offer equal opportunities and possibilities for all young people living within late modern Western societies.

6.8 Summary

This chapter has highlighted that the decline of tradition in late modern Western societies has resulted in individuals having to confront how they formulate their own

identities. The chapter has outlined a number of critical perspectives on masculinity and femininity and explored the participants' own understandings of their gendered selves. Furthermore, the chapter identified that whilst ideas about gender played an important role in how participants conceptualised and constructed their identities, notions of individualism constituted an equally significant element of their conceptions of self. Therefore, the next chapter moves on to consider in greater detail how the participants understand and negotiate their sense of self through an examination of how they utilise the media in the shaping of their self-identities with a specific focus on role models.

Chapter 7: Role Models

This chapter considers how individuals living in late modern Western societies utilise the media as a resource through which they conceptualise and construct their sense of self. Within the present study this notion was most apparent in participants' accounts of media celebrities and pop stars as role models. The chapter therefore outlines how the concept of role models has been understood and defined from differing perspectives, and goes on to examine a number of studies which have sought to establish the relationship between role models and young people's identity formation, emphasising the significance of ethnicity and gender in their formulations. Following this, the chapter explores how participants use role models in the shaping of their self-identities and discusses a variety of complex processes through which this was achieved.

7.1 Media and Identity

In his book *Media, Gender and Identity*, David Gauntlett (2002) explores the role of mainstream media within people's everyday lives to examine how self-identities are shaped through media use in contemporary Western societies. Significantly, his analysis highlights that in such societies widely-held conceptions of the self have changed, now recognising identity as a more fluid and malleable phenomenon than previously conceived. Consequently Gauntlett notes that whilst earlier models of media research proposed that popular culture was a 'backwards-looking force' (p. 247), coercing individuals into prescribed traditional roles and hostile to social change, he suggests that it may now be more applicable to conceptualise the media as an – albeit limited – 'force for change' (p. 248). To illustrate this point, Gauntlett's work identifies how conventional representations of women as housewives and menial workers has been superseded by images of successful, self-reliant 'girl power' icons; whereas ideals associated with masculinity including toughness, competitiveness and tenacity (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002, pp. 75-76) have become unsettled through a new found focus on men's need for advice, their emotional well-being, and the 'crisis of masculinity' (Faludi, 1999; Clare, 2000).

However, he crucially asserts that this situation has not resulted in the demise of gender classifications, but 'these alternative ideas and images have at least created space for a greater diversity of identities' (2002, p. 248). Thus Gauntlett suggests that within a capitalist context, popular media facilitates 'the desire to create *new* modes of life' (*ibid.*, original emphasis) and, in doing so, demonstrates a disregard for tradition by encouraging individuals to formulate their identities beyond the confines of orthodox norms.

Elaborating on this issue Gauntlett claims that the conditions of late modernity not only allow space for a greater diversity of identities to arise, but 'the construction of identity has become a *known requirement*' (*ibid.*, original emphasis). In this formulation he explains individuals are compelled to make identity and lifestyle choices, regardless of whether such possibilities are restricted by cultural and economic circumstances or comply with existing conventions. Developing this point, Gauntlett draws upon the work of Ulrich Beck (2002) who has argued that people in contemporary Western societies aim to 'live their own lives' yet these are simultaneously 'an experimental life' (p. 26) since declining traditions have produced an environment in which uncertainty and risk predominate and all aspects of existence require maintenance and revision. As such, Beck further stated 'inherited recipes for living and role stereotypes fail to function' (*ibid.*) and individuals must therefore construct their own models for living. In light of this Gauntlett's analysis importantly concludes that ideas about identity and lifestyle available in the mass media can be seen to function as cultural resources through which individuals can conceptualise their self-identities:

Magazines, bought on one level for a quick fix of glossy entertainment, promote self-confidence (even if they partly undermine it at the same time) and provide information about sex, relationships and lifestyles which can be put to a variety of uses. Television programmes, pop songs, adverts, movies and the Internet all also provide numerous kinds of 'guidance' – not necessarily in the obvious form of advice-giving, but in the myriad suggestions of ways of living which they imply. We lap up this material because the social construction of identity today is the *knowing* social construction of identity. Your life is your project – there is no escape. The media provides some of the tools which can be used in this work (2002, pp. 248-249, original emphasis).

Expanding on this theme, John Thompson (1995) has considered 'the self, experience and everyday life in a mediated world' (p. 207) in order to investigate the role of communication media within modern societies and its impact on processes of self-formation. In this work he states that the self constitutes a 'symbolic project' in which individuals actively create a meaningful sense of self by appropriating and incorporating available symbolic materials into a consistent narrative of self-identity. Importantly however, Thompson asserts that these materials from which individuals construct their identities are not equally accessible to all, and their use remains conditional upon the particular circumstances of people's lives. Despite this, Thompson claims individuals' narratives are revised over time as they assimilate new experiences and symbolic materials throughout their daily lives, and thus redefine their identities accordingly. As he explains, 'We are all the unofficial biographers of ourselves, for it is only by constructing a story, however loosely strung together, that we are able to form a sense of who we are and of what our future may be' (p. 210).

In his analysis Thompson identifies that before the emergence of mass media, symbolic materials utilised by people as tools for self-formation were gained through processes of face-to-face interaction. Therefore within this context he suggests individuals' identity construction was restricted by their immediate locale and personal interactions with others. Thus Thompson maintains knowledge was limited to 'local knowledge', transmitted orally and modified by pragmatic concerns: 'The horizons of understanding of most individuals were limited by patterns of face-to-face interaction through which information flowed' (p. 211). In contrast to this he argues such conditions have radically changed with the growth of communication media, in which individuals' self-formation is increasingly reliant upon availability of 'mediated forms of communication' (*ibid.*). Within this framework Thompson proposes 'local knowledge' has become augmented and supplanted by new modes of 'non-local knowledge' provided through the media, which enables individuals to obtain information beyond their particular social worlds, as he says, 'Individuals' horizons of understanding are broadened; they are no longer limited by patterns of face-to-face interaction but are shaped increasingly by the expanding networks of mediated communication' (*ibid.*). For Thompson then, this increased accessibility to 'non-local knowledge' and a greater array of symbolic materials facilitated by communication media enhances the reflexive project of the self. That is to say, by offering

individuals a more diverse range of mediated materials the media function as a resource that individuals can exploit and incorporate reflexively into their narratives of self-identity. Moreover, as people encounter an ever growing number of symbolic materials that may be drawn upon for constructing the self, he states ‘individuals are continuously confronted with new possibilities, their horizons are continuously shifting, their symbolic points of reference are continuously changing’ (p. 212). Hence, by highlighting new opportunities for self-formation opened up through the proliferation of symbolic materials, Thompson suggests individuals experience greater difficulty reverting back to models of understanding grounded in tradition and specific locales.

Developing these ideas, Thompson argues that growing media output not only serves to enrich the reflexive project of self-formation, but can also have detrimental effects on this process. Specifically he notes that the expansion of mass media fosters a new type of interactive relationship which Thompson terms ‘mediated quasi-interaction’ (p. 218). Within this framework he claims that for many people engagement in mediated quasi-interaction constitutes one facet of their everyday social actions. Indeed, Thompson explains that although mediated symbolic materials provide individuals with a variety of resources from which they can construct their identities these are not used in isolation; instead they operate in conjunction with materials gained through face-to-face interactions with others – such as friends and family members – in their daily lives. Nonetheless, he claims in some instances individuals establish a great dependence on mediated symbolic materials and, by doing so, such materials function ‘not so much [as] a resource that individuals draw on and incorporate reflexively into their projects of self-formation, but rather an object of identification to which individuals become strongly and emotionally attached’ (*ibid.*). In consideration of these factors Thompson identifies two elements of mediated quasi-interaction that are fundamental to understanding the character of personal relationships created via the media: firstly, as mediated quasi-interaction is dispersed across space and time this helps facilitate the development of new types of intimacy with people in other locations, allowing for ‘intimacy at a distance’ (p. 219); secondly, due to the non-dialogical quality of mediated quasi-interaction this intimacy is non-reciprocal in nature, that is it does not entail the reciprocity required by face-to-face interaction. According to Thompson then ‘distant others’ encountered through

mediated quasi-interaction can act as ‘regular and dependable companions who can provide entertainment, offer advice, recount events in distant locales, serve as a topic of conversation and so on’ (p. 220) in a manner which evades the demands and responsibility of a reciprocal relationship. Thus, he maintains that the appeal of intimacy formed through mediated quasi-interaction rests on its ability to grant individuals latitude in determining the conditions of engagement and character of ‘distant others’. Hence in foregrounding the processes through which self-formation becomes interwoven with mediated symbolic materials and new forms of intimacy produced by mass media, Thompson concludes:

The growing availability of mediated experience thus creates new opportunities, new options, new arenas for self-experimentation. An individual who reads a novel or watches a soap opera is not simply consuming a fantasy; he or she is exploring possibilities, imagining alternatives, experimenting with the project of the self (p. 233).

The preceding discussion helps demonstrate that contemporary media acts as a resource through which individuals conceptualise and construct their sense of self in late modern Western societies. Within the present study this notion was evident in participants’ accounts of media figures – most notably pop stars – as role models. This analysis will therefore move onto considering the concept of role models, and how these were utilised to articulate and explore children’s understandings of their identities.

7.2 What Is A Role Model?

In the previous section Thompson (1995) states that the development of mass media has produced mediated quasi-interaction which promotes new forms of non-reciprocal intimacy with ‘distant others’. Within this framework these ‘distant others’ function as symbolic materials from which identities are constructed, and may accordingly constitute role models that individuals can employ as tools to negotiate their narratives of self-identity. However, as Gauntlett (2002) notes, whilst the concept of role models is frequently used in popular discourse, commonly conceived as “‘someone to look up to”, and someone to base your character, values or aspirations upon’ (p. 211), the term itself remains ambiguous and lacking strict definition.

Comprehension of the impact of role models on people's behaviour and identities is limited. Indeed John Jung (1986) has argued that although the idea of role models has been popularly accepted by individuals and psychologists as a significant social influence, his review of psychological and sociological texts revealed numerous literature concerning roles, but no allusion to role models. Thus, according to Jung a fundamental problem which arises in existing work on the role model concept is its frequent confusion with modelling *per se*. Modelling, as he explains, 'refers to the influence of observed behavior on an observer (Bandura & Walters, 1963) [and] is usually measured in terms of increased similarity of the behavior and attitudes between the model and the observer' (1986, p. 527). Therefore, Jung states that modelling is specific to particular behaviours – such as language acquisition – which may be learnt through imitation of a model; in contrast, he claimed role modelling pertains to behaviours applicable to particular social roles, for example mother, professor and entertainer. Hence, Jung's discussion highlights the complex character of roles, suggesting that they involve a *relationship* established between individuals such as pupil and teacher, or entail an explicit set of functions exclusive to a position or profession. Moreover, he maintained that facets of social identity including age, gender and ethnicity are additionally perceived as principal elements of role. Thus, in light of this, Jung claimed that role models are understood as 'someone who demonstrates the appropriate behavior for a specific role or relationship with another person' (p. 528) and further observed that they are assumed to exercise influence over those individuals who deem them appropriate, 'although it is not entirely clear what criteria should be used to determine appropriateness' (*ibid.*). Furthermore he claimed these ideas regarding role models are particularly pertinent within popular conceptions of public and media figures' influence on youth, in which role models are assumed to affect – or have the capacity to affect – people despite an absence of definite evidence to assess this assumption. As such, Jung asserted the process of role modelling has been accepted unproblematically and without question:

Even psychologists may determine the influence of role models based on self-report from subjects (Basow & Howe, 1980; Bell, 1970). No attempt is made to verify such information or to show how it leads to actual influences on attitudes, beliefs, or behavior. Nonetheless, from self-report data, investigators conclude or imply that these role models in fact affected the subjects (1986, p. 529).

Therefore, in consideration of these factors, Jung's analysis proposed an alternative formulation for conceptualising role models. In this formulation he argued that individuals are active agents who select role models from a number of available choices that may then perform a motivational function which augments '*already existing tendencies*' (p. 526, original emphasis), rather than solely eliciting new patterns of behaviour within passive subjects. Consequently, for Jung the value of role models lies not simply in their 'learning function' (*ibid.*), but in their possible ability to inspire and motivate people, as he stated 'perhaps role models are important not because they teach observers how to behave but because they inspire observers to want to learn to behave in certain ways or to assume certain roles' (p. 533). Importantly then, his work identified that role models can potentially act as an incentive for individuals to challenge perceived limitations and boundaries to achievement, and – in the instance of minority groups – may provide figures who undermine stereotypes openly held in the public domain (pp. 533-534).

In the above discussion the role of individuals as active agents is highlighted by their ability to make selective choices from alternative role models available to them; however, the issue of how role modelling specifically functions remains unclear. This point is elaborated upon by Gauntlett (2002) whose work identifies six role model types to demonstrate their distinguishing qualities and possible points of identification for individuals. These he categorises as follows:

1. The 'straightforward success' role model: individuals such as sports people, media personalities and politicians who have achieved success within their specific discipline;
2. The 'triumph over difficult circumstances' role model: people who achieve success by prevailing over adversity;
3. The 'challenging stereotypes' role model: figures who challenge traditionally prescribed roles, expectations and assumptions;
4. The 'wholesome' role model: those who are perceived as 'clean living' and therefore deemed an appropriate example for young people to follow;
5. The 'outsider' role model: individuals who reject social conventions and are therefore spurned by mainstream society; and

6. The family role model: this group includes both personal family members and celebrity parents who are admired (pp. 214-215).

Importantly, Gauntlett notes that although these categories outline types of people and forms of behaviour which come to constitute role models, the manner in which role modelling operates on a psychological level persists in evading clarification. Indeed, in response to a survey of social psychology texts within this field, he states – in agreement with points raised by Jung (1986) – that current understandings of the issue is limited to social learning theory which proposes that ‘people learn behaviour by observing it in others – such as role models – and will repeat the behaviour if it is reinforced – in other words, if it seems to have a positive outcome, or other people appear to appreciate it (Burr, 1998; Malim and Birch, 1998; Pennington, Gillen and Hill, 1999; Brannon, 2001)’ (2002, pp. 215-216). Nevertheless, Gauntlett claims in spite of the theoretical simplicity of this approach, this formulation may still have some currency regarding role modelling despite being apparently simplistic and under-researched.

Developing this theme Margaret Nauta and Michelle Kokaly’s (2001) analysis of role models’ influence on students’ academic and career decisions accords with Gauntlett (2002) and Jung (1986), in that they proposed ‘the defining characteristics of role models and exactly how they influence various aspects of the career development process remains somewhat unclear’ (2001, p. 81). In addition they noted that although varying definitions of role models are evident in existing psychological literature, a general consensus shared by these explanations is that ‘role models are other persons who, either by exerting some influence or simply by being admirable in one or more ways, have an impact on another’ (p. 82). Furthermore within this study Nauta and Kokaly provide an overview of previous work which evaluates how role models may impact on individuals’ career development, and in doing so it becomes apparent that, as Gauntlett argues ‘social learning theory is indeed as deep as it gets’ (2002, p. 216) despite the concept broadening to encompass not only modelling behaviours but ‘whole lifestyles’. That is to say, in relation to Nauta and Kokaly’s study, students did not merely select role models whose behaviour they could imitate and emulate, but also those who provided support and guidance within their everyday lives (2001, p. 95). Moreover, in initial research they identified that 81 per cent of the

students surveyed were able to cite famous people as role models and give reasons for these choices, leading Nauta and Kokaly to suggest the significance of such figures and that their influence should not be disregarded (pp. 84-86). However, since the researchers instructed participants to identify a role model who was famous, Nauta and Kokaly's proposition that such figures are highly influential is questionable, as students may not have attached *actual* significance to these choices. This position is further compounded when taking into consideration 63 per cent of the students within this study stated that a parent was, overall, their most influential role model.

7.3 Who Are Children's Role Models?

The issue of young people's role model choices and their influence is central to a study conducted by Kristin Anderson and Donna Cavallaro (2002), who noted that during identity development children may draw upon role models as a source of guidance: not only seeking to emulate figures who demonstrate particular abilities and characteristics, but also because 'he or she may see *possibilities* in that person' (p. 161, original emphasis). Furthermore they stated that whilst parents and family members can act as significant role models for children – especially in early childhood – additional influences, including the mass media, provide an important source of heroes for young people too.⁵⁰ As such, Anderson and Cavallaro's analysis sought to investigate how the mass media impacts on children's selections of role models. To achieve this, 95 girls and 84 boys aged between 8 and 13 from ethnically diverse backgrounds were surveyed on '[who] you look up to and admire. These might be people you know, or they might be famous people or characters. You may want to be like them or you might just think they are cool' (p. 164). Moreover, participants elaborated upon their responses within small group discussions, detailing the reasons for these choices. Importantly their findings revealed that children's role

⁵⁰ It should be noted that within existing literature the terms role model and hero are frequently used interchangeably. For example, whilst Anderson and Cavallaro distinguish between these titles, defining 'role models ... as known persons (e.g. parents, teachers) and heroes ... as figures who may be less attainable or larger than life' (2002, p. 161), they stated as both types of figures are relevant to their study, the terms can be used alternately. This point is further evident in Bromnick and Swallow's (1999) research, who often employ the terms role models and heroes interchangeably, yet also utilise 'mentors' (p. 118) within their work. Thus, irrespective of which term is used the fundamental meaning is arguably synonymous.

model choices were, to a degree, dependent upon the participants' ethnicity and gender (pp. 164-168). For example, although the majority of respondents elected an individual they knew personally as a role model (65 per cent), Anderson and Cavallaro identified crucial variations on this matter between different ethnic groups: a higher proportion of African American and white children chose someone they knew from their own ethnic group (70 per cent and 64 per cent respectively) than Asian American (35 per cent) and Latino (49 per cent) children. Thus, according to the researchers, a lack of Asian American and Latino representations in the media may have indicated that these ethnic groups would be more inclined to locate role models from within their personal worlds; however, paradoxically 'Perhaps Asian American and Latino children have internalized a message that they should not look up to fellow Asian Americans or Latinos as role models, or it may be a byproduct of assimilation' (p. 164). Similarly, in instances when media figures were chosen as heroes a demonstrably higher percentage of African American and white participants selected role models who shared their ethnicity (67 per cent for each), whereas Asian American (35 per cent) and Latino (28 per cent) children did not. Indeed, the analysis highlighted that Asian American and Latino respondents were more likely, in fact, to adopt white media heroes (40 per cent and 56 per cent respectively). Consequently, Anderson and Cavallaro proposed that this situation has possibly resulted from the preponderance of white and – to a lesser extent – African American media figures, as well as an under-representation of Asian American and Latino people within mainstream culture. In addition to differences grounded in ethnicity, they further observed that the children's responses were somewhat gendered; for example whilst 67 per cent of girls named a person they knew as a role model, only 58 per cent of boys did so. Moreover, children predominantly chose same-gender role models – evident across all ethnic groups and particularly forceful for boys. Hence, in consideration of these factors Anderson and Cavallaro suggested that since males are featured more habitually within the media as film stars, musicians and professional athletes 'girls may have a smaller pool of potential role models from which to choose' (*ibid.*; see also Signorielli, 1993, 2001). However the researchers also acknowledged that a contributing factor to this finding may be 'girls in this study reported watching less television than the boys did and so may have known fewer characters' (2002, p. 164). Furthermore boys' reluctance in selecting female role models, they argued, could be attributable to such figures being perceived as lacking social power and

prestige.⁵¹ Nevertheless, despite the significance of popular culture in providing children with media heroes illustrated within this study, Anderson and Cavallaro's analysis highlighted that overall participants cited a parent most commonly as their role model. In doing so this enabled the researchers to identify qualities that children ascribed to specific role models, these being nice, helpful and understanding for parents, and skills for media figures. Therefore by foregrounding the ways in which ethnicity and gender impact upon as well as influence children's' role model choices, Anderson and Cavallaro concluded:

The mass media are hindered by a narrow view of gender, and by limited, stereotyped representations of ethnic minorities. Parents and educators must take pains to expose children to a wider variety of potential role models than popular culture does ... Doing so affirms for the children that their race and gender are worthy of representation. A variety of potential heroes and role models allows children to appreciate themselves and the diversity in others (p. 168).⁵²

On a similar theme Jack Balswick and Bron Ingoldsby (1982) aimed to assess the kinds of heroes and heroines adolescents selected most frequently, as during adolescence they stated youth seek an individual identity less determined by family influence, and therefore public figures become a salient resource of materials from which young people can construct their identities.⁵³ To explore this notion 1092

⁵¹ This finding is further supported by Gibson and Cordova (1999) who suggested that although boys are more likely than girls to adopt same-sex role models, they tended to identify and emulate those figures who are considered powerful. Thus, the researchers stated that boys would only be likely to identify with and imitate a female role model only if this figure is viewed as occupying a position of power.

⁵² The issue of presenting youth with a greater diversity of role models has been explored most prominently within educational research (e.g. Solomon, 1997; Zirkel, 2002), in which it is suggested that if ethnic minority children have access to same 'race'-gender heroes this enables young people to perceive greater future possibilities for themselves and increases their investment in achievement-orientated goals. However, research has also indicated the psychological pressures this places upon ethnic minority role models as they are expected to fulfill such responsibilities for being 'the multicultural and antiracist expert in their schools' (Solomon, 1997, p. 405). Furthermore, Allen (1994) argues that the employment of ethnic minorities to serve role model functions is fundamentally flawed, as it ignores these individuals' full capacities beyond this remit, and by locating such expectations on specific cultural groups may actually result in stereotyping of 'cultures and identities' (p. 194).

⁵³ Indeed, French and Pena's (1991) analysis of children's hero play claimed that although 4-6 year olds locate role models within family members and identifiable occupations, older

students from eleven high schools in North East Georgia (USA) completed questionnaires about 'Who are your heroes and heroines currently?' (p. 245), with responses being assigned to one of the following categories: 'religious, music, actor or actress, literary-scholar, government, sports, comic, family member, and friends' (*ibid.*). Significantly the findings identified that 'heroes are much more likely to be chosen than heroines' (p. 246), as demonstrated by participants selecting heroes in preference to heroines by a ratio of 3 to 1 and, crucially, this pattern remained unaltered when respondents' sex and 'race' were taken into account. Furthermore, Balswick and Ingoldsby observed that in instances when participants named heroines these tended to be personal idols, whereas males rather than females predominated as public figures by a 7 to 1 ratio. Indeed within this study public heroes including sport, actor, music and comic personalities were selected by students most frequently, and although public heroines such as actresses, musicians and sportswomen featured, these figures ranked significantly lower in comparison; moreover, family heroines constituted the only kind of heroine to achieve a high ranking (pp. 246-248). Consequently the researchers asserted these 'results are not surprising' (p. 248) given within the public sphere men's participation in professional roles exceeds that of women.⁵⁴ However, Balswick and Ingoldsby further claimed that this differential between men and women's involvement in public professional roles is not as prominent as the disparity demonstrated by their findings. Thus, they suggested, male role models appear to take precedence over females as an influence on adolescent identity formation (p. 249), and may reflect inherent sexism embedded within wider societal attitudes:

We must conclude that – even given the presence of females in public roles – adolescents are more likely to perceive of male professionals in an adorational light than female professionals. Perhaps the actress or female musician can be held up as a sex symbol, but the latent sexism in our society prevents her from being accepted as a

children increasingly select heroes from fantasy characters available through television, videos and comics.

⁵⁴ This argument concurs with Allen's (1994) discussion on her personal experiences within education as an African American woman, who stated that the lack of professional female (black) role models resulted in having to emulate white male professors as models for academic success. Thus, Allen suggested that girls identify with both male and female role models, specifically due to men occupying more leadership positions (pp. 184-186).

legitimate professional in a more serious light. This is not to say that male actors and musicians are not viewed as sex symbols also, but that they may more easily gain respectability for their professional abilities, thus being more readily accepted as a hero (p. 248).

The above studies have highlighted the relationship between children's identity formation and role models, specifically foregrounding the importance of ethnicity and gender in this process. This issue is further explored by George Assibey-Mensah (1997) whose analysis investigated the 'impact of African-American male youths' perceptions of role models on their personal development' (p. 242). In this work, having outlined the various socio-economic disadvantages African American youth confront (pp. 242-243), he proposed 'youths' perceptions of a role model as one capable of being looked to and/or emulated can provide a positive stimulus for their future' (p. 243) in a number of ways, including: encouraging children to become more productive and successful individuals; enhancing children's sense of self-worth and self-esteem; assisting children in becoming responsible and law-abiding citizens; and inspiring children to set and achieve goals (*ibid.*). Therefore, according to Assibey-Mensah, 'the perceptions and values often associated with role models can help mold their [children's] personal development in a society in which problems plaguing their existence continually lead to their inability to live to their fullest human potential' (*ibid.*; see also Bryant and Zimmerman, 2003). In consideration of these points, and to examine his ideas further, Assibey-Mensah conducted a nationwide survey with 4,500 African American male students aged 10 to 18 between January 1994 and December 1995. To facilitate an understanding of participants' perceptions of role models and who these role models are, youth responded to the following questions outlined in a questionnaire: 'Who is your role model?' and 'What does your role model do for a living?' (1997, p. 244). Furthermore, to assist participants with their responses students were instructed that they could choose people who may be allocated within one of the following categories: educator, athlete and any other celebrity (*ibid.*). A significant finding demonstrated in this study was that across all age groups athletes and sports stars were overwhelmingly the most popular choice of role models, ranging from 85 per cent for 10 year olds to 98 per cent for 18 year olds; followed by film and television celebrities, ranging from 15 per cent for 10 year olds to 6 per cent for 17 year olds; moreover, none of the respondents selected an educator

as their role model (*ibid.*).⁵⁵ Hence, Assibey-Mensah asserted that children recognised role models as sports and entertainment figures because they observed them regularly within their daily lives, whilst an absence of black academics in the media may account for respondents not adopting educators as inspirational figures (p. 245). As such he stated, for the students ‘African-American males in high-salary jobs symbolize their perception of the essence of the American dream. This major finding indicates that with popularity goes visibility, hence a popular and visible African-American male’s idolization by almost all the respondents’ (*ibid.*). Indeed, he noted that although 95 per cent of youth identified people they regarded as role models, the respondents did not perceive these individuals as figures whose professional career paths they aimed to emulate and pursue. For example, the basketball player Michael Jordan was named by many respondents as a role model they idolised, yet playing professional basketball was not aligned with their future career aspirations. Thus, in this formulation, Assibey-Mensah claimed that for participants the image of Michael Jordan simply came to signify financial success (p. 244) although we might speculate that status and respect are also significant factors. Therefore, in emphasising the incongruity of youths’ perceptions of role models and their career ambitions he argued a tension arises between participants’ ‘interpretation of a role model and their future professional wishes or aspirations’ (*ibid.*). Consequently, Assibey-Mensah concluded within this study children fundamentally misunderstood the meaning and purpose of role models, and were unaware of figures that could provide appropriate, productive inspiration and motivation in their lives (p. 249).

7.4 Heroes and Self-Identity

In their exploration of young people’s heroes and their relationship to identity development, Rachel Bromnick and Brian Swallow (1999) claimed that the suitability of children’s role model choices remains an abiding concern for adults. This concern, they stated, stems from the belief that young people are suggestible to modelling themselves on ‘teen idols’ deemed inappropriate by adults (see Griffin, 1993). However, Bromnick and Swallow highlighted that this position is problematic

⁵⁵ These findings appear to accord with those of Anderson and Cavallaro (2002) and Bromnick and Swallow (1999) whose studies both noted a high proportion of male participants selecting sports stars and entertainers as role models.

through drawing upon previous research conducted by Cyril Simmons and Winnie Wade (1984, 1985a, 1985b, 1987, 1988) which sought to develop understandings of young people's values. Within this work Simmons and Wade (1984) identified that 44 per cent of children could communicate ideals – such as aspirations for physical attractiveness and popularity, materialistic desires, honesty, friendliness and kindness – without reference to a role model. Moreover, an additional 19 per cent of their participants actively discarded the 'ideal other' as a concept outright, stating that they would only want to be themselves. Thus, Simmons and Wade termed this the 'myself' choice which, they proposed, challenged existing conceptualisations of youth as being susceptible to the adoration and influence of famous individuals; rather, they argued the 'myself' choice was an expression of participants' high self-worth, personal happiness and stable sense of self. It should also be noted that Bromnick and Swallow identified that the 'myself' choice maybe a consequence of declining traditional values within late modern Western societies in which a 'value gap' (Baumeister and Muraven, 1996) is created and 'has been filled by the self, with major values based on self-interest and self-actualisation. Individuals therefore have to look much deeper into their self in order to make moral decisions, add value to their lives and make it meaningful' (1999, p. 119). Thus, to investigate this notion further Bromnick and Swallow undertook research with 244 children (111 girls and 133 boys) aged between 11 and 16 from a comprehensive school within the North of England, in which participants provided responses to an eight item questionnaire. This questionnaire, they stated, was 'designed to allow participants to express freely their least and most ideals in terms of persons and concepts, their hopes and fears and personal philosophies in life' (p. 120) with two questions specifically becoming the focus of analysis: '(1) "If you were able to choose to be somebody else who would you choose ..." ... (2) "The famous person I admire the most, or the person I think of as my hero is ..."' (*ibid.*).

Significantly Bromnick and Swallow's findings concurred with Simmons and Wades' (1984), in that the 'myself' choice was evident in 23 per cent of participants responses and particularly demonstrated by older girls (1999, pp. 122-123). This, they claimed, indicated that these children were content to be themselves despite being offered the opportunity of being somebody else. Furthermore, when participants did cite heroes Bromnick and Swallow noted that these seemed diverse, lacking any shared

consensus. However, they observed that the majority of heroes discussed were selected from clearly defined groups: sporting personalities and athletes for boys, and entertainers and pop stars for girls (p. 126). In light of this Bromnick and Swallow suggested ‘that whilst there is a need for young people to express their individuality, there is also a desire for them to share common values with their peer group’ and youth are therefore ‘walking a tightrope between individualism and collectivism’ (*ibid.*). By doing so, they added ‘what appears to an adult as being a sign of conformity (e.g. being a fan of the Spice Girls) might be seen by the young person themselves as a mark of their individuality’ (*ibid.*). Hence, in conclusion Bromnick and Swallow’s analysis importantly illustrated that children were able to identify with famous people whilst maintaining a separate sense of self-identity, but simultaneously these hero choices appeared to mirror their gender identities:

There was a strong admiration of famous males by boys and girls, supporting society’s emphasis on men in public life and the lack of famous female role models. It appeared acceptable for the young women to admire a man but not vice versa. Playing, watching and talking about sport was a very prominent feature of these developing young men, with nothing appearing of comparable cultural or symbolic importance in the lives of the young women ... [Thus] ... in order to appreciate young people’s developing identity both micro and macro levels of influence on individuality must be appreciated (p. 127).

7.5 Role Models and Identity

7.5.1 Identification, Aspiration and Inspiration

The notion that youth utilise role models as resources from which they can conceptualise and construct their identities emerged as a prevailing theme within this present study. Indeed, participants’ differing accounts not only reflected a diversity of media figures as role models, but demonstrated that they actively used these in order to articulate various thoughts and facets of their selves. Ostensibly, the principal uses that these role models served were that they provided children with sources of identification, aspiration and inspiration. For example, figures that facilitated identification did so by expressing characteristics and/or concerns which the young

people recognised within themselves as well as their own social worlds. This point is illustrated in the case of Josie who identifies with Whitney Houston as she believes they both share a calm nature and the songs reflect her own experiences:

- Interviewer: And if you had more time are there any other images that you would have used?
- Josie T2: If I could have found one I'd probably have one of Whitney Houston 'cause I like to sing her songs and stuff and she's like an icon type thing.
- Interviewer: Why is she an icon? Apart from her music, is there anything about her as a person that you identify with?
- Josie T2: Like the words in some of her music and stuff they speak to me, the way she's so calm and she's like a role model for me.

Whilst the above example offers an instance of explicit identification with a role model, for other participants this relationship appeared to be more ambiguous and complex. In the following extract Sean highlights this notion explicitly, making both direct identifications and ambivalent associations with Morrissey. On one hand Sean aligns himself with qualities of personal integrity and 'mystery' he sees within the singer; yet on the other, has not adopted vegetarian ideals and is 'private' selectively:

- Interviewer: Let's go back to the picture of Morrissey. What exactly is it about Morrissey and his music that you like?
- Sean M: I like the way he, the way he writes and how it means things to him, that's important for me.
- Interviewer: And are there any particular songs or albums or messages that you get from Morrissey that really stand out for you?
- Sean M: Yeah there is like one of them *Meat is Murder* that is getting cross about killing animals and things, it's not very nice and things and that's what made most people become vegetarians.
- Interviewer: Are you a vegetarian?
- Sean M: No.
- Interviewer: So you're not vegetarian but you respect//
- Sean M: //I respect his view of it.
- Interviewer: What is it about Morrissey's character that you like?

Sean M: I like the fact that he keeps himself to himself and he keeps himself as a mysterious and private person.

Interviewer: As a mysterious person.

Sean M: Yeah.

Interviewer: And do you think that is a good quality or bad quality?

Sean M: Good quality because you don't want anyone to know anything about you.

Interviewer: Do you feel you share that with Morrissey?

Sean M: Kind of.

Interviewer: In what way?

Sean M: In sometimes I keep myself to myself and am private but not always, but mainly yes so it's kind of the same thing.

Interviewer: When wouldn't you?

Sean M: When I'm trying to get to know people and things like that I suppose.

Significantly then, these comments exemplify the equivocal character of some participants' relationships with their role models, and indicates that identifications can occur to varying degrees and on numerous levels. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that these children did not accept role models in their entirety; rather they appropriated particular traits of value as tools for expressing identity. By doing so, this would appear to concur with Bromnick and Swallow's (1999) assertion that 'young people were able to admire a famous person without identifying with them *per se*' (p. 126). Moreover, the intricate features of this relationship were further evident in role models not only functioning as identifications for participants' current selves, but as vehicles through which they could articulate their future aspirations (an issue raised previously within Chapter 6, pp. 170-172):

Lucy T1: ... I've got Beyonce 'cause I kind of idol her, she's like really pretty and her hair's always nice and I've always liked her.

...

Interviewer: Just going back to Beyonce you said you really like her and thought she was pretty. What is it about her that you think you identify with?

Lucy T1: She's so outgoing and like she's got her mind set on her dancing and I've got my mind set on dancing and singing, and she does that all the

time and I sing and dance all the time, that's what I want to do that's why really.

Interviewer: Let's go to the picture of Arnold Schwarzenegger, is that how you see yourself?

Oscar O: Well, well he's like my hero and that's how I see myself like in a few years.

Interviewer: In a few years?

Oscar O: Yeah that's what I see myself as.

Interviewer: So do you think that's a good image, to want to be like that?

Oscar O: Yeah, yeah like quite muscley like Arnold Schwarzenegger yeah.

Interestingly, and in accordance with previous research (Balswick and Ingoldsby, 1982; Bromnick and Swallow, 1999; Gibson and Cordova, 1999; Anderson and Cavallaro, 2002), the above participants' role model choices are seemingly influenced by their gender. For example Lucy elects a female pop star and specifically foregrounds notions of physical beauty, which arguably suggests her aspirations are guided by conceptions of traditional 'femininity'. In contrast, Oscar selects a film action hero and ex-sports star who is synonymous with ideals of 'masculine' physicality and possibly reflects his desire to attain attributes associated with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 2000). This assumption is reinforced when considering comments made previously by Oscar, in which he states his possession of 'feminine' characteristics has led to him being alienated and labelled as 'weird' (Chapter 6, pp. 143-144). Therefore Oscar's aspirations of achieving a 'muscley' physique can be read as an attempt to revoke negative perceptions about his identity, and this emphasis on acquiring a hyper-masculine façade may be understood as a performance in which he seeks to gain the approval of others (Buckingham, 1993c). However, although these role models choices appear to be determined by the participants' gender identities, on closer inspection their responses do not wholly conform with conventional gendered positionings. For instance, despite Oscar's role model signifying aspirations for the attainment of hegemonic values, his motives for making this selection are principally grounded in physical appearance – and by extrapolation desirability – qualities assumed as belonging to the 'feminine' preserve. Furthermore, whilst Lucy identifies beauty as one dimension of her role model's

appeal, this becomes secondary to them providing aspirations for career success and promoting assertiveness. Indeed, this position is apparent within other girls' accounts (Chapter 6, pp. 171-172), whose role model choices more overtly reject aspirations directed by traditional notions of 'femininity'; and in doing so appears to problematise existing research (Balswick and Ingoldsby, 1982; Bromnick and Swallow, 1999; Anderson and Cavallaro, 2002) which places emphasis on gender differences without taking into consideration the specific reasons participants utilised such figures:

- Interviewer: You've also got a picture here of a lady playing football.
Ellie T2: Yeah that's Hope Powell the manager of the girls' England team.
Interviewer: Why have you used her?
Ellie T2: Because I like to play football and I want to be in the England team.
Interviewer: So do you identify or respect her, or see her as a role model?
Ellie T2: Yeah.

In spite of any supposed differences delineated along gender lines, participants' discussions about aspirations revealed that, for both boys and girls, ideas pertaining to 'relevance' and 'attainability' were fundamental factors in informing their choice of role models. This issue has been explored by Penelope Lockwood and Ziva Kunda (2000; see also 1997) who proposed that if individuals select role models which share similar characteristics and abilities as their own, these figures become more relevant to the self and can thus promote positive feelings as people presume such achievements will be possible for themselves. In addition the researchers claimed that if a role model's success appears attainable individuals will be inspired, believing that they too can 'achieve a similar level of success' (2000, p. 150). As Lockwood and Kunda stated:

The impact of a relevant star will depend on the perceived attainability of the star's achievements. If these achievements seem attainable, one can imagine an equally successful future self and thus draw inspiration from the star's accomplishments. If, however, the star's success seems out of reach because one has already missed the chance of achieving comparable success, because one believes one's abilities cannot improve, or because one is reminded of one's own limitations, then the inspirational impact of the role model will be undermined, and one may feel demoralized rather than inspired (p. 166).

The above principles are best illustrated by Christopher's discussion of Green Day, in which his immediate identification with this band rests on shared musical styles and status as musicians, consequently enhancing their relevance for him. By doing so, Green Day not only come to embody Christopher's aspirations of musical achievement – 'because they've done something with their life' – but also confirm his belief that he too can attain success within this field:

Interviewer: So let's move on to//

Christopher T2: //yeah I play the guitar and um, and yeah I put that there for musician. I'm into rock, heavy rock, I like playing it like, like Green Day.

Interviewer: What is it about Green Day that you like?

Christopher T2: I think the songs that they do and how they do it are good and stuff like, it's like rocky style but yeah, I like the loudness of it and how it is.

Interviewer: And what do you think about the members of Green Day?

Christopher T2: I see them like, I look up to them because they've done something with their life that's special and stuff and like, like they are very big stars and that's going into like my musician style, I really like the band so I'm going to be a rock musician too.

Moreover, what becomes prominent within this account is although the band act as aspirational figures for Christopher, they also actively inspire his musical ambitions. Indeed, the idea of role models as sources of inspiration was a recurring theme within participants' discussions, and highlighted the ways in which such figures were utilised for both realising personal aspirations as well as guiding their thoughts and everyday actions.

Interviewer: I've also noticed that you've not used any pictures of celebrities or film or television programmes. Why is that?

Rose T1: I try and be my own person, I don't really follow a certain person.

Interviewer: So you just really prefer to be your own person and don't want to follow somebody?

Rose T1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is there anybody that you think is a positive role model for you?

- Rose T1: Yeah, Nicole Ritchie and Johnny Depp.
- Interviewer: What is it about them//
- Rose T1: //well Johnny Depp he's like really different, he's a really good actor he got me into acting he inspired me to do that ...
- Interviewer: And what about Nicole Ritchie?
- Rose T1: She's just really cool, I like the way that she, she like got over all her addictions and all that that she used to have and yeah, quite cool.

In the above example Rose's admiration for Johnny Depp's acting abilities leads her to explicitly identify him as an inspiration. More significantly however these remarks indicate that the actor directly motivated Rose's decision to pursue acting as a personal and professional interest, exemplified by her assertion 'he got me into acting he inspired me to do that'. These comments would therefore appear to support Jung's (1986) proposition that role models serve '*motivational functions*' (p. 533, original emphasis), a point further supported when considering notions of individuality expressed by the participant. For Rose, an element of the media figure's inspiration resides in his perceived status as being 'really different', and this quality of 'difference' that she recognises within the role model is arguably exploited as a means through which Rose communicates her own sense of individuality. Moreover, Rose's belief that she possesses an individual identity is made manifest in her refusal to follow celebrities, preferring instead to 'be my own person', and thus possibly demonstrates the 'myself' choice in practice (Simmons and Wade, 1984; Bromnick and Swallow, 1999).⁵⁶ Furthermore, whilst Johnny Depp articulates concrete ambitions and ideals which inspire the participant, her adoption of Nicole Ritchie functions in a more abstract manner. This figure's inspirational value is not grounded in any skill or ability, rather having recovered from drug abuse, for Rose, Nicole Ritchie personifies the ethos of overcoming personal difficulties and, by doing so, may come to qualify as, what Gauntlett terms (2002), a 'triumph over difficult circumstances' role model (p. 214). Hence from this it is possible to infer that the principle of prevailing over adversity constitutes an ethic which underpins Rose's conceptions of her identity and personal philosophy.

⁵⁶ An onus on having a 'unique' individuality was a recurring theme within Rose's interview, as illustrated in her previous remarks about music and fashion (Chapter 6, pp. 163-164).

Thus, the preceding discussions begin to highlight that identification, aspiration and inspiration were intrinsic elements of participants' relationships with their role models. Importantly, however, these facets did not work to a linear pattern, but rather operated in multifarious and compound ways. This position is clearly articulated by the following participant, quoted earlier, who expresses aspiration and inspiration through Ronaldo whilst forcefully identifying with Sean Wright-Phillips:

Carmel O: I've got Ronaldo and a couple of pictures of other footballers I look up to because I always see myself as inspirational trying to get my own goals ... I've got Sean Wright-Phillips because I think that sometimes I want to be like him 'cause he's done so much with his life, he got adopted and he doesn't really know his other dad and like I don't see my dad often and he's been with other people and I'm with someone now different like my mum and her boyfriend so I've been with quite a bit of people in my life.

7.5.2 Integrity

Research by Daniel Anderson *et al.* (2001) on role model choices and body image has asserted that the mass media become increasingly significant as children enter adolescence, because they provide young people with possible heroes and, importantly, 'sources of values and behaviours to emulate' (p. 108). Within their work the researchers stated that many respondents identified with entertainment figures and used these as a basis for self-comparison which resulted in negative evaluations of themselves (p. 116). However, within the present study participants demonstrated that they engaged with role models' values, rather than utilising them as a focus of critical (physical) self-comparison. Indeed, a pervasive theme to emerge within participants' discussions is that the concept of integrity was fundamental to children's associations with their role models. These notions of integrity were expressed in various ways, but essentially foregrounded the importance participants placed on standing up for beliefs and values as well as adhering to a moral code.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Significantly, notions of integrity were not just communicated through role models, but also in the participants' assertions of specific principles; for example, opposing animal cruelty (see Jason, Appendix B.1, p. 292; Nancy, Appendix B.7, p. 410).

This point is illustrated in the case of Jimmy, whose admiration for Tupac specifically arises from him being perceived as an embodiment of these ideals:

- Interviewer: If you had more time to work on this what other pictures would you have put on?
- Jimmy W: ... I would put a couple more bands.
- Interviewer: Like which bands?
- Jimmy W: I would have put Tupac on it because he's a good guy I look up to him.
- Interviewer: In what way is Tupac a good guy?
- Jimmy W: Because he was like, he stood up for what he thought was right and then he got all the way through stuff and then he explained it in like songs and stuff and I thought that was really good.
- Interviewer: Because some people saw Tupac as a bad guy because he was a bit of a gangster type and he was involved with guns. Didn't he end up getting shot?
- Jimmy W: But the only reason he got shot was because he stood up for what he thought was right. I think that he was like really brave in what he did. I think he deserves a lot more respect than he probably does get.

For Jimmy, Tupac's integrity is explicitly located in his commitment to maintaining a moral standpoint, despite this (in)directly leading to the rapper's death. Moreover, in identifying Tupac as a figure who overcame hardship and articulated these experiences within his music, the participant arguably comes to see this as an expression of honesty and courage. In doing so Jimmy's remarks suggest these values are of significance to him, implied by his statement 'I think he deserves a lot more respect' – a similar point being raised previously within Sean's discussion on Morrissey (pp. 192-193) – and further indicates that such qualities are not sufficiently valued by others, qualified in the assertion 'I think he deserves a lot more respect *than he probably does get*'.⁵⁸ Interestingly, the virtue of honesty Jimmy recognises within

⁵⁸ Interestingly, both sides of Jimmy's collage had identical images apart from the inclusion of an eye on how he perceived his own identity, which signified an 'awareness' that the participant felt others did not see in him (Appendix A.8.4). Thus, this possibly reflects Jimmy's belief that he is able to identify valuable qualities in people that may go unnoticed by others.

Tupac is further revealed as an integral element of role models in other participants' accounts:

- Interviewer: I've noticed a picture of Trinny and Susannah, why are they there?
- India R: Because my friends and myself are a bit like them and we want to be like interior fashion designers when we're older so they're like our idols.
- Interviewer: Your idols. So do you think they are positive role models?
- India R: Yeah.
- Interviewer: What is it about them that you like and identify with?
- India R: They're like honest about you know people, what they think people look like and how they can be improved.

India's comments demonstrate that Trinny and Susannah not only provide her with career aspirations, but more importantly, the appeal of these figures as role models seemingly resides in their possession – and display – of honest values: values she believes have the capacity to effect positive change. This appreciation of honesty is also alluded to within the following extract by Jason, who contends that his role model exhibits 'fair play' and, in doing so, can be read as reflecting the participant's convictions on moral conduct. Furthermore in expressing uncertainty about his role model's name, Jason inadvertently suggests that it is precisely the *values* that this wrestler represents which take precedence over any celebrity status:

- Interviewer: OK and who is this image [image of a wrestler]?
- Jason C: Yeah, I like him.
- Interviewer: Who is he?
- Jason C: I don't know his name I think its The Rock. 'Cause he's like my wrestling hero, he's not a dirty fighter he's a clean fighter that's good.
- Interviewer: So even within fighting there are still rules//
- Jason C: //yeah, some people like get a big chain and hammer and all that but he's a really clean fighter.

An emphasis on role models' values rather than their status is additionally evidenced by the following participant. Like Jason, Malcolm has difficulty recalling the name of

his media figure, yet maintains an association based principally upon a supposed sharing of political principles. This is exemplified by Malcolm surmising that as he agrees with Damon Albarn's position regarding Live 8 his opinions will accord on all other issues:

- Malcolm C: I've used those two [images of a guitar and Gorillaz] because I like music and I look up to them.
- Interviewer: What is it about the Gorillaz that you look up to?
- Malcolm C: I think they're a good band and also the singer, um//
- Interviewer: //Damon Albarn.
- Malcolm C: Yes him, has lots of political views that I agree with.
- Interviewer: Such as?
- Malcolm C: Stuff like the Live 8 thing he said they should have had more multicultural bands and I agreed with that.
- Interviewer: You agree with//
- Malcolm C: //his views about Live 8 and how that was run and everything.
- Interviewer: What about his other political views?
- Malcolm C: I don't know but I assume he's good like that across most stuff that I don't agree with.

Indeed the importance of integrity in role models was most prominently highlighted by participants frequently employing politics and political figures, conspicuously Martin Luther King, on several occasions⁵⁹:

- Interviewer: Who would you have put for example [how I see myself]?
- Carl W: I would have put, well if there was in a magazine, someone who I think who is a hero and like who has won the Nobel Peace prize because he stood up for what he believed in and that would be Martin Luther King.

⁵⁹ Notably, participants also drew upon political figures who they did not regard as role models and represented oppositional values to their own, for communicating personal principles as well as highlighting a perceived lack of integrity within these individuals. For example, George W. Bush and Tony Blair were used to express anti-Iraq war sentiments (see Appendix B.1, pp. 295, 297).

- Interviewer: If you had more time to work on your collage are there anymore pictures that you would have liked to have put on there?
- Richard M: Yes, I would have put a picture of Martin Luther King.
- Interviewer: Why?
- Richard M: He was a hero because he stood up for what he believed is right.
- Interviewer: And which side [of the collage] would you have put that on?
- Richard M: In the middle.
- Interviewer: In the middle?
- Richard M: Yes.

Significantly, although both Carl and Richard are white and may ostensibly appear to lack any similarities with their chosen role model, this factor did not preclude identification occurring on a deeper structural level, as Lockwood and Kunda (2000) have explained: 'mismatches on surface attributes may be overcome if deeper, structural parallels between individuals and a role model are highlighted. If one perceives these deeper shared patterns, one may be influenced by a superficially dissimilar role model' (p. 168). Thus, the common concern with integrity enables both participants to adopt Martin Luther King as a legitimate role model, and consequently, this figure comes to function as a metaphorical representation of their own ideals. For instance, Carl maintains that attaining integrity is the pinnacle of achievement, indicated by reference to the Nobel Peace prize; whilst the value of integrity for Richard is illustrated by him giving it a central position within his work, suggesting that this quality is core to how he sees himself as well as how others view him. Crucially, it should be noted that Richard's identification with Martin Luther King raises some difficult issues, as within the interview this participant had stated he engaged in using racist discourse:

- Interviewer: Also the Hitler image and 'cruel at times' [words], when can you be cruel? Or do you feel you're a cruel person?
- Richard M: ... To Prateech [pupil], I admit I will admit I am a bit racial to him at times I have been.
- Interviewer: Why are you racist to him?
- Richard M: I don't know I've just been like, if I've been sat next to him I've said to David [pupil] before he smells of curry or something just mucking around which, if you think about it you know it is out of order but at

the same time it was just a funny thing to say but it doesn't mean anything.

Thus, Richard's assertions that his racist remarks are 'funny' and 'don't mean anything' concurs with previous research (Back, 1991, 1993, 1996; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002) which suggests that racist name calling is performed under the guise of 'jokey "cussing"' (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002, p. 171) and, as Les Back (1991) has explained, 'leads to the use of racist language followed by a denial that these words mean what they stand for in a wider usage i.e. "but it don't mean nothin..."' (pp. 35-36). Moreover, Back's (1993) research on 'race, identity and nation within an adolescent community in South London' identified that:

[Whilst] black and white youth ... operate within an inclusive set of locally based identities and social relationships (p. 230) ... The Vietnamese are actively prevented from entering this 'multi-ethnic constituency'. Perhaps it is the Vietnamese who pay the price for the dialogue which occurs between black and white young people. The simple fact that Vietnamese young people are prevented from entering the nation, as defined within the neighbourhood, means that they incur the full wrath of the new racism which defines 'outsiders' in terms of 'cultural' difference (p. 228).

Therefore, Richard's comments arguably evidence a 'cultural racism' grounded within cultural difference rather than skin colour, which has been specifically directed towards Asians in recent times (see Modood, 1992, 1997, 2005a), and although his association with Martin Luther King may rest on shared values, this account remains deeply problematic.⁶⁰ Interestingly, the image of Martin Luther King to signify integrity is further demonstrated by Jake – a dual heritage child living in a predominantly white area – who specifically cites this figure as an example of a positive black role model:

Interviewer: For you then, in the media are there any positive black role models?

⁶⁰ Indeed, further evidence of cultural racism was indicated within Richard's interview in which he described himself as Chinese whilst mimicking a Chinese accent, claiming it was 'funny' (Appendix B.3, p. 331). The only other instance where a participant arguably displayed cultural racism emerged in Darren's account in which he employed an image of a Japanese footballer, describing him as a 'Japannie' (said in a stereotypical accent) and associated this figure with humour, not football or sport (Appendix B.4, p. 348).

Jake T1: Yeah there is some, I don't know his name, it's Ladley King or something, I don't know his name.

Interviewer: Who is he?

Jake T1: He like spoke up about like the black people's needs and stuff like that; like they should be equal and stuff like that.

Interviewer: Oh, Martin Luther King.

Jake T1: That's it, yeah.

Importantly this account raises wider concerns, in that although Jake's misnaming of Martin Luther King can be regarded as secondary to him identifying with the figure's values, it may instead result from under-representation and under-exposure of positive black role models within mass media, thus signalling a need for greater representation (Anderson and Cavallaro, 2002; Younge, 2002; D'Souza and Clarke, 2005). However, participants within multicultural environments revealed that they were capable of selecting non-white role models from mainstream culture with ease; for example, demonstrated previously in the cases of Jimmy (p. 199) and Carl (p. 201), and exhibited by Emily (a black participant) who draws upon Kanye West to articulate personal principles as well as a source for black identification:

Emily K: ... Kanye West is my idol because he like speaks his mind and I speak my mind.

Interviewer: I've also noticed that you've used a lot of images of black people.

Emily K: Yeah.

Interviewer: Now, for example, if I changed these pictures so they weren't images of black people and I maybe used white people or Asian people or Chinese//

Emily K: //yeah//

Interviewer: //would it still have the same meaning?

Emily K: Yeah, I don't think the colour matters so much.

Interviewer: You don't think so.

Emily K: No, but for him [Kanye West], like some of the things he says, the way he sings about like life I don't think that could be a white man.

Interviewer: I don't know what Kanye West sings about.

Emily K: I can't explain it like.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

- Emily K: Right he sings for black people sometimes but the rest of them if you changed them it would work, yeah it would work.
- Interviewer: It would work except for Kanye West?
- Emily K: Yeah.

Emily's remarks initially foreground that her immediate association with the singer is grounded in a mutual ethos of 'speaking their minds', but this figure also comes to embody – at times – broader issues relating to black people's experiences. Crucially, Emily's observation that many images of black people within the collage are interchangeable with various other ethnicities, indicates that she does not consider 'blackness' to be an essential all-encompassing facet of her self, supported by the assertion 'I don't think the colour matters so much'. Despite this, the participant's emphasis on Kanye West highlights she believes *some* experiences are particular to black people, and in doing so Emily arguably demonstrates that although her identity does not reside exclusively in 'blackness', being black remains *one* significant element of her identity. Moreover, whilst the participant notes that Kanye West 'sings for black people' she qualifies this with 'sometimes', signifying that his appeal has broader scope. Hence Emily (un)knowingly inextricably links this singer's relationship with 'blackness' to her own, thus enforcing the idea that 'blackness' is not a totalising identity, nor the sole motive for identification – a similar notion having been made by Andre in his discussion of Jermaine Defoe within Chapter 6 (p. 123).

A significant point raised in the above discussion is that Emily's sense of self was not located within a single (black) identity, rather by making this fact explicit she (un)knowingly identifies this constitutes one facet of her character. Therefore this example comes to illustrate that the participants did not conceive their identities as unitary, but instead conceptualised them as multi-faceted and diverse.⁶¹ Hence, the participants were arguably not restricted to selecting role models in accordance with overt similarities – such as 'race'/ethnicity, sexuality or gender – but demonstrated that they specifically chose figures with shared or respected values. Thus, this factor

⁶¹ This notion is clearly articulated by Alfie who states 'I see myself as loads of things' (Appendix B.8, p. 425), and also demonstrated in Charlotte's remark 'I've got loads of like sides to myself (Appendix B.6, p. 403).

may account for the comparative ease by which participants from multicultural environments were able to select role models based upon values as, for them, diversity is not only intrinsic to their identities, but also to their lived experience and social worlds.

7.5.3 Authenticity

The preceding discussion indicates that for participants within this study their role model choices and relationships with them were grounded in notions of integrity. Moreover, a theme which became apparent within the participants' discussions was that an important marker of integrity appeared to be 'authenticity'. That is to say, figures adopted tended to be those who articulated a legitimate and genuine account of their experiences – whether these be political or personal. Indeed, the notion of authenticity has been explored by Allan Moore (2002) in his analysis of how this concept is constructed within popular music discourse. Within popular music he argues that authenticity is constructed by a performer's ability to convey unmediated expressions of their experiences and circumstances which, in turn, the audience interpret as an articulation of their own emotions and environment:

Particular acts and sonic gestures (or various kinds) made by particular artists are interpreted by an engaged audience as investing authenticity in those acts and gestures – the audience becomes engaged not with the acts and gestures themselves, but directly with the originator of those acts and gestures. This results in the first pole of my perspective: *authenticity of expression*, ... [which] arises when an originator (composer, performer) succeeds in conveying the impression that his/her utterance is one of integrity, that it represents an attempt to communicate in an unmediated form with an audience (p. 214, original emphasis).

Thus, Moore's work maintains authenticity is a value constructed within the practices of production and consumption in popular music, rather than an objective or intrinsic quality that artists embody. Furthermore, he states that this quality of authenticity is confirmed and bestowed subjectively by the audience to indicate their own authentic character. Although Moore's argument is credible and evident within participant's accounts, the constructed nature of authenticity becomes irrelevant, as importantly

this quality remained a principal vehicle through which children explored and expressed their identities:

- Interviewer: You've not actually used many images of famous people//
- Nancy T2: //yeah, I didn't have enough time.
- Interviewer: But if you could, are there any people that you think you would have put on, that you look to who you think are role models?
- Nancy T2: Have you heard of um, I've completely forgotten her name now.
- Interviewer: What's she in?
- Nancy T2: She's got like; she had brown hair now she's got blonde hair.
- Interviewer: Kelly Clarkson?
- Nancy T2: That's it; I like her music a lot.
- Interviewer: What is it about Kelly Clarkson that you like and identify with?
- Nancy T2: 'Cause on her videos when she sings it's not like she just stands there, it's like she expresses how she's feeling in the words that she says, she actually expresses herself in the video she's not like just standing there singing it.
- Interviewer: Is there anything else about her, not just her music but the type of person that you think she is//
- Nancy T2: //I think she's quite happy because I watched an interview and she seemed quite happy and bubbly but I don't know if it's just for show, but she did seem happy and what not so I think she's being true, so that's good.

Significantly, Nancy's inability to recall the celebrity's name may signal, as discussed previously, that her relationship with this figure is based upon shared values rather than admiration for Kelly Clarkson's status. Indeed, the participant's remarks highlight that this singer's foremost appeal specifically resides in her principle of self-expression. For Nancy, this principle of self-expression is further affirmed by her belief that Kelly Clarkson's songs reflect *actual* emotional experiences, reinforced through that artist's visual performances and public persona presented within interviews. As such, the participant arguably comes to perceive this singer's character and articulations of personal reality as sincere, therefore demonstrating authenticity. However, Nancy herself casts doubt on the concept of authenticity, exemplified by her statement 'I don't know if it's just for show'; but immediately contradicts this

proposition, reverting back to Kelly Clarkson as an authentic figure by asserting ‘I think she’s being true, so that’s good’. Thus, the participant’s reaffirmation of her role model’s authenticity may be read as a strategy through which she aims to validate her own experiences and values⁶², an idea made manifest within Annabel’s account outlined below:

- Interviewer: Why have you got Green Day there?
- Annabel R: Because I like their music and look up to them ’cause they’re cool.
- Interviewer: Is it just the music that you identify with or is it anything about them?
- Annabel R: Well that one [Billie Joe Armstrong] has been like through a lot, like his dad died when he was young and he expressed himself in music and I respect that and that’s how I see myself.

Like Nancy, Annabel considers Billie Joe Armstrong’s music to be a genuine expression of his personal experiences, and in doing so comes to see this figure as authentic; however, in contrast to Nancy, she authenticates the legitimacy of her role model by grounding him and his music in *actual* rather than perceived reality. Hence, in expressing respect for the singer’s ability to confront his difficulties and identifying with them – ‘I respect that and that’s how I see myself’ – Annabel, like Nancy, employs this role model as a means by which her own values and experiences are confirmed.

Thus, the above discussions begin to demonstrate that some participants conceptualised role models as embodying notions of authenticity, whose articulations of experience, emotional responses and values were, in turn, utilised by these young people as vehicles through which they validated their own. However, in other instances participants revealed that they did not use role models as a resource through which their own realities were represented; rather in recognising authenticity within role models, this appeared to prompt them into appropriating such approaches as a tool for self-expression. For example, in the following extract Carmel regards 50

⁶² This idea is seemingly reinforced when considering Nancy’s previous comments about lacking self-confidence (Chapter 6, p. 155), which arguably demonstrates that her appropriation of Kelly Clarkson and notions of ‘Girl Power’ discourse displayed by this figure are utilised strategically to construct a façade of confidence as well as reaffirm the participant’s own values.

Cent's music as a medium he employs to communicate his life story that she accepts as authentic without question, but more significantly Carmel adopts the artists' form of rapping as a method to voice her own experiences:

- Interviewer: As a person do you think that you identify with him [50 Cent] at all?
Do you think you share any//
- Carmel O: //yeah he raps about his personal life and it's good so I do rap. I just sing about my personal stuff as him, so he sings about his stuff and I sing about my stuff and I think I'm like him sometimes, like speaking about personal stuff in life.

In addition, the participants' accounts illustrated that they not only utilised role models to convey and confirm their immediate experiences and values, but also drew upon these figures in order to interrogate and explore external worlds:

- Jake T1: ... the 50 Cent logo like the favourite like singer person I like, like look up to you know.
- Interviewer: What is it about 50 Cent that you like? What is it about him or his music that you identify with?
- Jake T1: It's just like good music and it like tells stuff but like, in like rap kind of thing.
- Interviewer: What sort of stuff? What do you mean?
- Jake T1: Like in different places, like towns and stuff like different people and like kind of telling other stories, like telling his own and other people's stories.
- Interviewer: So he's telling his life story and other people's?
- Jake T1: Yeah yeah.
- Interviewer: And why do you like that?
- Jake T1: I just think its good how like he expresses himself and it makes you think about different places and different people and stuff.

Interestingly, whilst Carmel's relationship with 50 Cent was based upon expressions of *personal* experience, as noted previously, Jake conversely appears to exploit this same rapper as an instrument for investigating *external* realities. Indeed, the participant's remarks highlight this figure does not merely focus on himself, by

emphasising 50 Cent tells ‘his own and other people’s stories’, which accordingly leads Jake to possibly believe that these representations present him with varying authentic worlds beyond his own reality. By doing so, Jake’s association with his role model may seem less self-directed than those of the above participants in that he engages with 50 Cent on both a personal as well as social level; yet, this situation is conceivably more complex when taking the participant’s particular circumstances into consideration. As detailed earlier in this chapter Jake is a dual heritage child living and attending school within a predominantly white middle-class environment, and had further expressed feelings of alienation due to encountering episodes of racism.⁶³ Thus, in light of this it is credible to suggest that the participant’s discontent with his restricted milieu impels him to search for potential future alternatives, as offered for Jake within 50 Cent’s music because ‘it makes you think about different places and different people and stuff’. Importantly therefore, this role model arguably enables Jake to negotiate his identity and a position for himself within the social world. Similarly the following participant seemingly uses his role model as a stimulus for reflection, as he perceives Eminem’s songs to be authenticated narratives of personal and social reality. However, whilst both Jason and Jake utilise notions of the external world as a means for self-reflection; Jake aspires towards locating himself socially, whereas Jason’s motives are more introverted – limited to achieving a greater understanding of himself:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Interviewer: | What is it about Eminem that you identify with? |
| Jason C: | Because he talks about his life and people and all that. |
| Interviewer: | Why is that a good thing? |
| Jason C: | Because it makes me think what I do during the day. |
| Interviewer: | It makes you think// |
| Jason C: | //what I done in the day, why I have done things and all that. |

⁶³ This participant was not willing to discuss these incidents whilst being recorded but had confided in the researcher that he frequently found himself subject to racist bullying as well as name calling – namely ‘nigger’ and ‘mongrel’ – at school by other white pupils. Furthermore, Jake stated that although he reported these events to teachers the individuals responsible for such actions had not been reprimanded, thus enforcing his belief that this school actively ignored and turned a ‘blind eye’ to racism. Indeed, Jake’s concerns about racism were supported by an incident the researcher experienced, in which a white student mimicked an Asian accent whilst walking past her. This episode was relayed to a staff member who questioned the male student about this matter. Despite this, the individual was not disciplined by the teacher as she stated he was imitating a Swedish, not Asian, accent.

7.5.4 Being 'Normal'

Within the interviews some participants highlighted that a primary appeal of their role models lay in them exhibiting qualities associated with being 'normal'. Significantly, these notions of 'normalness' appeared to operate in a symbiotic relationship with the concept of authenticity: that is, these participants were not only drawn to figures who they perceived as articulating authentic expressions of personal and social experiences, but also those which embraced a shared familiar reality on an experiential level. These ideas are clearly illustrated by the following participant who seemingly constructs Kelly Clarkson as an authentic artist in stressing that this singer writes her own music and controls its production: which for Keira, in ostensibly evidencing 'girl power' virtues, qualifies the figure as a 'positive role model for girls' like herself. Keira's initial point of identification with her role model is arguably founded upon a belief that this figure is a 'normal' individual, implied by the statement 'she's very down to earth' and also supported in the secondary status she attributes to Kelly Clarkson's music, describing it as 'quite good'. In doing so, the singer's attraction for Keira may reside in that she conceptualises this figure as a genuine and independent woman who, despite having celebrity standing and privilege remains firmly grounded within a pragmatic reality – thus demonstrating 'normality':

- Interviewer: Interestingly, you've spoken about rock music which is quite male dominated//
- Keira T1: //yeah, yeah//
- Interviewer: //so are there any female figures in rock that you particularly identify with?
- Keira T1: Kelly Clarkson.
- Interviewer: What is it about Kelly Clarkson that you identify with?
- Keira T1: She's very down to earth and her music is quite good and she like puts something into the music as well so she has the rock behind her.
- Interviewer: When you say she always puts something into her music, I'm not sure what you mean?
- Keira T1: She writes it and then she'll sit there and she'll have like session guitarists and session drummers and that, and she gives them like a sample of what she thinks sounds good, and then she might change it or keep it like that, so she puts a rock effort into the music as well.

Interviewer: So do you think that she has a lot of control over what she is doing?
Keira T1: Yeah, a positive role model for girls like me.

On a similar theme Natalie's comments, in the following extract, apparently indicates that she considers her role model both an authentic and 'normal' figure illustrated by the participant placing an emphasis upon Charlotte Church's non-adherence to conventional expectations of stardom, beauty and behaviour as well as this singer 'just look[ing] like herself'. Furthermore, in recognising Charlotte Church's disregard for custom and directly identifying with this in order to express individuality (see Chapter 6, pp. 162-163), Natalie paradoxically utilises the role model's 'normalness' to signify her own sense of uniqueness:

Interviewer: What about the picture of Charlotte Church?
Natalie M: She's a famous person and some people have their like an idol to look up to.
Interviewer: Do you identify with Charlotte Church?
Natalie M: Yeah. I don't agree with the stuff in the press it's just//
Interviewer: //with what stuff in the press?
Natalie M: Like they say that she's bad and I just like Charlotte Church.
Interviewer: What is it about her that you identify with and look up to?
Natalie M: Her singing.
Interviewer: Just her singing? What about her fashion and the way she looks?
Natalie M: Yeah, she doesn't look exactly like a pop star I think she just looks like herself she just doesn't make herself look like what anyone wants her to. Yeah, she doesn't want to act like anyone else.
Interviewer: Is that a quality you like about Charlotte Church? Is that what you see in yourself?
Natalie M: Yeah. I'm not told to do what anyone else I just do what I want to do.

The principle of individuality being conveyed through role models who displayed 'normal' characteristics and authenticity is also evidenced by the following participant. Interestingly, as discussed previously, Rose perceives Johnny Depp as a figure who exhibits an authentic individuality, which further appears to be located within his possession of 'normal' qualities, demonstrated by her assertions that he

avoids media attention and is instead 'just a regular family guy'. Thus Rose's identification with this actor, and values of authenticity and individuality she believes he embodies, can be read as being dependent upon her conviction that he exists in the same 'normal' world as herself⁶⁴:

Rose T1: //well Johnny Depp ... he's not into all the like media stars he's like just a regular family guy and likes to stay out of the whole spotlight.

In contrast to the above participants who used role models that they felt personified 'normal' values as a means of expressing their independence and individuality, Jake specifically draws upon his to articulate political concerns about black acceptance within contemporary British society:

Interviewer: Is there anyone around today who you think is a good positive role model for black people and black children?

Jake T1: Simon Webbe.

Interviewer: Simon Webbe?

Jake T1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Why do you think he's a good role//

Jake T1: //he's like just a normal person who hasn't done anything wrong, like he just sings really, just normal.

Interviewer: Yes.

Jake T1: Yeah, 'cause like, it's like, everyone knows him like he's not English, like everyone knows him they don't say anything about him.

⁶⁴ Interestingly, whilst Rose is a dual heritage child of Chinese and white descent, attending the same school as Jake, she expressed no incidents of encountering racist bullying or abuse. This may have resulted from a reluctance to discuss such issues with the researcher, or alternatively, her 'difference' is not perceived as 'threatening' by others: a factor which could be attributed to Rose's *actual* ethnicity not being overtly recognisable. Thus, despite whether the participant experiences racism in this environment or not, she demonstrated an awareness of being 'different' from those around her. This point was clearly exemplified by Rose's insistence in the interview that she was 'half Chinese and half English' and 'not ashamed of who I am, so I just say it' (Appendix B.6, p. 391), which appears to indicate that racism by fellow white students was primarily motivated by skin colour 'difference'. Importantly, therefore, Rose's acknowledgement of her 'difference' from other children may arguably have underlain and instigated the participant's assertions of individuality and 'uniqueness' – a point supported when considering that within this study these sentiments were expressed most forcefully by this participant. However, in utilising Johnny Depp to symbolise her 'individuality' and identifying with his 'normal' qualities, this possibly signals the participant's desire for 'normalness' through which complete acceptance can ultimately be achieved.

Significantly, in identifying Simon Webbe as a positive black role model for being 'normal' and not having 'done anything wrong' the participant reveals his opinion that perceptions of black people are overwhelmingly negative and aims to challenge this with a representation of 'blackness' which he feels is not considered the norm. This situation is clarified by previous issues Jake raised within the interview, in which his collage demonstrated that he believed other people viewed him negatively on the basis of skin colour alone. According to this participant such (mis)understandings are primarily propagated by the mass media whose portrayals of 'blackness' continue to circulate images of black people as violent gangsters or subjugated 'slaves' whilst neglecting different qualities they possess, and also suggests misrepresentation is experienced by other ethnicities; ideas made explicit in Jake's following statements:

Jake T1: 'Cause like a lot of what you see on TV or in like films and stuff like that, a lot of like of the black people are more gangster types.

...

... like rap music and stuff like that like people show like black people shooting people or on like X-Box games if its, like on *Grand Theft Auto* where you go and shoot people it's a black person it's not a white person, it's like the black people who do the shooting kind of thing.

...

Like black people are gangsters kind of thing, like if they [other people] think about it that's what's gonna probably come into their head 'cause they see a lot of it like in the media and in TV and that as well, but then other things they will think as well.

Interviewer: Like?

Jake T1: Like slaves and stuff like that. Like a lot of black people are slave's, like from ages ago.

...

It [the media] doesn't really show any like nice like black people, they don't really focus on it they just focus on like all the things that black people do wrong.

...

Sometimes they [the media] show like, Asians, they're like saying a lot about like Asian people and stuff like, Iraq people they're showing a lot about them as well, because like of what Saddam

Hussein done, like saying like all of them are like that but they're not, it's a bit harsh.

For the participant, these notions are arguably compounded when considering his immediate locale which, as stated previously, lacks ethnic diversity and from Jake's position is marred by an inherent racism. Therefore, in consideration of these factors, Simon Webbe's function as a role model for this participant seems to operate on two fundamental levels: firstly, the lack of diversity within Jake's social environment leads him to conceptualise this role model as a figure who provides a source for black identification; and secondly, the participant grounds this black identification in Simon Webbe's 'normalness' which Jake specifically utilises as a method for countering racist stereotypes of 'blackness' that he believes are widespread within mass media as well as his daily life. Significantly then, Jake's identification with this role model appears to oppose Assibey-Mensah's (1997) claims that black male youths essentially misunderstand the meaning and purpose of role models by only seeing them as signifying financial success. Indeed, whilst this participant explored external realities and possible future selves through the rapper 50 Cent as a result of personal social circumstances (pp. 209-210), Jake's construction of Simon Webbe as an authentic 'normal' black individual – because 'he hasn't done anything wrong' – is seemingly employed in order to validate internal principles and affirm his current self.⁶⁵ Moreover, although this participant ostensibly draws upon Simon Webbe as a figure who embodies 'normal' qualities through which he aims to transcend conventional representations of black people, in describing his role model as 'not English' – when Simon Webbe actually is – Jake unintentionally conflates the concept of 'Englishness' with 'whiteness'. In doing so the participant's remarks importantly come to reflect an unknowing internalisation of dominant racist discourse in which, as Tariq Modood (2001) has explained, "English" has been treated by the new Britons as a closed ethnicity rather than an open nationality' (p. 77). Furthermore this discussion highlights that an apparent dichotomy emerges between ethnic minority participants'

⁶⁵ Jake's emphasis on 'normalness' seemingly parallels those of other participants from disadvantaged areas who identified themselves as 'normal', an issue discussed within the preceding chapter (pp. 173-174). Despite Jake's comparative privilege in relation to these participants he similarly perceives his identity being located 'on the margins', and by doing so, arguably utilises notions of 'normalness' – as they did – to negate any 'outsider' status: a strategy which Rose also possibly employs (see p. 213).

conceptualisations of identity, dependent upon whether they are located within an ethnically diverse or predominantly white area. For example, as mentioned previously, Emily's relationship with Kanye West demonstrated that 'blackness' was not the sole basis of identification; rather this role model acted as a metaphoric representation of 'black' constituting one element of her self and therefore not a totalising identity. Conversely, Jake's association with Simon Webbe specifically resides in this figure portraying a 'normal' representation of black people to counter negative stereotypes, and consequently the participant raises his black identity to a primary level of significance by using it as the exclusive motive for identification.

Expanding on the issue of racism raised within Jake's accounts, it should be noted that his twin sister Josie – who attends the same school – expressed similar sentiments. Although not discussing role models directly, the participant utilised an image of the actress Marsha Hunt to articulate her Jamaican heritage which, for Josie, was most clearly communicated through this figure's afro hairstyle. Despite this usage initially appearing to conform with racist ideologies that reduce black people 'to the signifiers of physical difference' (Hall, 1997, p. 249), Josie's appropriation of the afro was instead specifically motivated by a desire to take pride in her ethnicity: a position that concurs with Modood, *et al.*'s (1997) findings within the fourth national survey on ethnic minorities, in which 'Caribbeans ... are increasingly seeking to express a new sense of ethnicity through their clothes and hair' (p. 328). However, the participant's reflections on this image importantly revealed that she had once worn this hairstyle, but racist bullying by others denied such expression and, in doing so, can be read as preventing Josie from asserting her own sense of (black) identity, a notion affirmed by the participant's emphatic response when asked if she would like her afro back. Interestingly, Josie's remarks further indicate that although she identifies racism as endemic within her life, the participant seemingly negotiates with this racist discourse, exemplified in statements such as 'I'd always comeback with a comeback', which may possibly be a strategy Josie specifically employs to weaken racist rhetoric whilst simultaneously acknowledging its existence:

Interviewer: Her name is Marsha Hunt. Why have you used this picture?

Josie T2: Because of my origin 'cause I have a natural afro, a huge afro, and it's just like my origin like Jamaican, half Jamaican.

...

Interviewer: And also the picture of hair that you've used is that something that people point out to you as well?

Josie T2: Yeah, yeah, 'cause it's always, 'cause I used to come school with my afro and then I got really badly bullied and stuff like all the time people like, afro afro, like being really horrible about it and like throwing stuff at my hair and stuff like that.

Interviewer: So would you, at some point, still like to have your afro back?

Josie T2: Yeah. 'Cause I liked it I just liked it but now it just, I got bullied for like since I was in Year Seven.

...

Interviewer: I've noticed, like when I spoke to your brother, it is very evident that you are the only non-white person in your class. Is the bullying related to//

Josie T2: //some of it is because I get some like 'oh go back to Pakistan' and 'go away you Paki' and stuff like that and I say get your facts right, I'm not from Pakistan I'm from Jamaica type of thing, I'd always comeback with a comeback.

...

Interviewer: Are you aware of it though, being in a school where you're not surrounded by many children from diverse backgrounds, are you aware that you are different from other people or does that only happen when somebody says something//

Josie T2: //yeah 'cause I see myself as like a friend to everyone but there is occasionally, if I get in a ruck with someone they say something racist and then I'll be like well you couldn't have been a true friend anyway if you can turn round and think something like that, so.

Significantly then, the participant's discussion illustrates that she recognises a lack of diversity contributes to her being labelled as different and living with the perpetual threat of racism rearing its head. Therefore, Josie's position seems to concur with research by Back (1993) in which 'young black people ... understand the ambiguity of their links with white peers and "live out", or negotiate, the boundaries of those links' (p. 225). Furthermore, he observed that 'There is always a potential for racist materials to be utilised strategically by whites as a means of gaining an advantage, or hurting black peers. As a result the location of black peers as "insiders" is always

contingent upon the absence of racist talk and practice' (*ibid.*). Moreover, it should be reiterated that both Josie and Jake are actually dual heritage children of Caribbean and white descent, yet this duality is apparently overlooked within their white environment and instead the participants' 'blackness' functions to continually mark them out as 'other' – thus arguably explaining Josie and Jake's close associations as well as emphasis on possessing a 'black' identity. However, this association with 'blackness' may also be fostered by findings proposed in Barbara Tizard and Ann Phoenix's (2002) work on mixed parentage young people who stated that dual heritage children 'living with white parents only' – as Josie and Jake do – 'was significantly related to being affiliated to black people [in popular culture]' (p. 126).

7.5.5 Negative (Black) Role Models?

The issue of black representation was a latent theme within some white participants' discussions of negative role models, and appeared to enforce concerns that perceptions of black people still remain largely stereotyped and reductive (see Chapter 2). However, this notion was not as clearly defined as an initial reading might suggest, with participants' remarks demonstrating complex and varying responses on the matter of black portrayals. Furthermore although the participants' comments at times displayed undercurrents of racist discourse, a significant difference seemed to emerge between how 'blackness' was conceptualised by young people in predominantly white areas and those from multicultural ones. For instance within the following extract, Keira – a participant from the same white locale as Josie and Jake – specifically cites R&B (rhythm and blues) artists generically as an example of negative role models. Interestingly, despite Keira not overtly identifying these figures as black, this assumption is indicated by her selecting a genre in which black individuals prevail. Moreover, in unequivocally associating R&B – and by extension black people – with drug taking as well as violence the participant unintentionally essentialises black culture and individuals as 'bad': a point arguably illustrated by Keira's inability to name a particular singer in support of her opinion. In addition the participant's assertions that such artists promote aggressive behaviour in people is regarded as a direct product of R&B singers' videos as well as music, and for Keira, these ideas are further confirmed by information she believes the mass media provide:

- Interviewer: Who do you think is a negative role model?
- Keira T1: I think that the people in R&B take drugs or hit people and are bad.
- Interviewer: Are there any artists or musicians that you can name specifically?
- Keira T1: Not off the top of my head no, but you hear of it a lot of the time on TV and in magazines or it's due to their videos and their music that people react the way they do.
- Interviewer: What do you mean?
- Keira T1: You get like, like if you look at R&B if you look at that, a lot of singers will be in the news because they've hit someone or done something and of course the young people turn around and think that looks good yeah I'll try that being a R&B singer means you can hit people, whereas you can't so a lot of people think it's right if they do it but it's not.

Thus, Keira's statements seem to imply she conceives of black people in stereotypical and racist terms, and would apparently support Jake's argument, discussed previously, that the media propagate negative representations of 'blackness'. Nonetheless, it could possibly be suggested that this participant's (mis)understandings of these media representations may actually result from Keira's lived experience in which the lack of ethnic diversity impacts upon and influences how she perceives such figures and, in turn, black individuals. Indeed, whilst Keira's account arguably highlights that she broadly identifies black figures as signifying 'badness' and therefore generalises them as constituting negative role models, in contrast, white participants from multicultural environments employed such representations to specifically indicate negative perceptions they felt other people held of themselves:

- Interviewer: And you've got 50 Cent [how I think other people see me].
- Scott C: Yeah 'cause people say, they say like you're naughty, robbery.
- Interviewer: So he represents that you're a bit of a yob and you're a bit of a thug//
- Scott C: //only people who don't know me.
- Interviewer: Do you think 50 Cent's is a thug and a hoodlum?
- Scott C: No he's playing at angry.
- Interviewer: But do you think he's a positive or negative role model?

Scott C: A negative role model but I don't know him that much I don't know what he's done apart from in his videos, but he's playing though, playing at ultra-macho.

The discussion of 50 Cent – a black rapper – in Scott's interview above not only conveys his opinions about others viewing him as lacking positive characteristics, but significantly, by drawing upon this particular image the participant appears to demonstrate an understanding that these representations are commonly conceptualised as symbolising negative qualities. Nevertheless although Scott seemingly recognises that these perceptions of 'blackness' are grounded within stereotyped conventions, he simultaneously uses this very discourse to communicate his own thoughts as well as identify 50 Cent as a negative role model, which can therefore be read as the participant's acceptance of racist ideologies. Importantly however, Scott's emphasis on 50 Cent's public persona as 'play', arguably disrupts notions that the participant complies with stereotypical conceptions of black people as he may in fact perceive this figure's performances in an ironic manner. This point is clearly exemplified by Scott's assertions that 50 Cent is 'playing at angry [and] ultra-macho' in which he further demonstrates some awareness of male 'blackness' being constructed as a form of 'super-masculinity' (Majors and Billson, 1992; Back, 1994; Sewell, 1997); thus the participant's rejection of this figure's exaggerated masculinity can possibly be seen as Scott's unwillingness to conform with such ideological thinking. Consequently it is credible to suggest that the participant's relationship with 50 Cent is riddled with ambiguity in which he both exploits ideological constructions of 'blackness' whilst distancing himself from this position by acknowledging these representations as ironic. Hence, the ambiguity that characterises Scott's associations with this figure may be produced by his experience of living within a multicultural environment, in which he encounters ethnic diversity daily and is therefore able to negotiate what are perceived as negative representations without necessarily accepting them, nor projecting stereotypes onto black people as a whole – as Keira seemingly proposed.

On a similar theme, the following participant states black rap stars' images would be employed to illustrate his belief that other people view him as possessing delinquent traits; however Joe, unlike Scott, forcibly asserts that such stereotypical conceptualisations of 'blackness' are misguided and incorrect, demonstrated by his

refusal to categorise these figures collectively as violent and remark ‘not all rappers are bad you know’. Furthermore, when prompted to provide an example of a ‘bad’ rap artist the participant cites a specific individual and factual instance, which leads Joe to conceive of this figure negatively – and in turn, a ‘negative role model’ – rather than, as in Keira’s case, basing assumptions on broad generalisations. Thus, the participant’s discussion seemingly highlights his non-acceptance of racist discourse whilst concurrently acknowledging some portrayals of black people can be reductive ‘because that’s how they’re shown sometimes’ and, in doing so, possibly indicates Joe’s ability to see beyond commonly held conceptions that these figures are solely detrimental (Bonneville *et al.*, 2006, pp. 12-13).⁶⁶ Therefore the participant’s position arguably reveals that perceptions of such representations are determined, in part, by environmental context: Joe’s multicultural milieu enables him to negotiate media representations with his *actual* understandings of ethnic minority individuals and cultural materials he experiences in this social world:

Interviewer: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have added to your collage?

Joe C: On this side [how I think other people see me] I would probably put like black rappers because most people think young people are into rap ‘cause we’re all gangsters and that.

Interviewer: So do you think rappers represent violence and everything bad?

Joe C: No, some are, but that’s ‘cause that’s how they’re shown sometimes, but not all rappers are bad you know.

Interviewer: Can you give me an example of a rapper who is bad though?

Joe C: There was that guy from So Solid Crew he got done for having guns. It’s not cool for kids to see that sort of thing, like their idols being put in prison, but they’re not all like that you know.

⁶⁶ An awareness that the media can propagate stereotyped portrayals of ‘blackness’ was also evidenced within Carmel’s account who, as discussed previously, regards rap as a positive medium for communicating personal experiences and maintains that this image should be conveyed to dispel negative representations:

Interviewer: So do you think that’s a good thing that rap does//
 Carmel C: //yeah they should show them things because otherwise they get across the wrong way and they’re not what they’re made out to be like portrayed in the public.

7.5.6 Ambivalence

Within the previous sections participants' discussions indicate that role models were utilised in highly complex ways and, as such, these figures functioned as cultural resources from which young people could conceptualise, construct and articulate diverse elements of their selves. Moreover the participants' comments highlighted that diversity is not only indicative of their identities, but also a quality they came to acknowledge within those they identified as role models. Importantly however, such diversity was not always perceived as operating in a complementary manner but at times gave rise to conflict, made manifest by participants' recognition of ambivalence within their role models, most notably the 'good/bad' dichotomy. Thus, the good/bad dichotomy arguably signified contested aspects of participants' own identities and in mediating this conflict through role models enabled them to negotiate ambivalence they observed within their selves:

- Interviewer: But what is it about him [Eminem], apart from his music, do you think there's anything about his personality that you share?
- Diana R: No because he's quite rude actually.
- Interviewer: So he's quite rude, but you also look up to him?
- Diana R: Yeah.
- Interviewer: Do you like him because he's rude?
- Diana R: No but that's the whole point of rap and I'm rude sometimes but I don't like to be and try not to be.
- ...
- Interviewer: You said you think rap music and Eminem is rude and you can be rude sometimes, do you think that that's a good thing or a bad thing?
- Diana R: Quite bad actually, I try not to be rude and that.
- Interviewer: Quite bad?
- Diana R: Yeah.
- Interviewer: In what way?
- Diana R: Swearing and stuff.
- Interviewer: Is there anything good about rap music and Eminem that you identify with?
- Diana R: It speaks about life and Eminem is mainly speaking about his experiences.

Interviewer: So that's a good thing?

Diana R: Yeah, because it's telling people about what he's been through and that's what I try and do.

Interestingly, whilst Diana initially rejects identifying with Eminem 'because he's quite rude actually' the participant's relationship with this role model appears to be grounded within him embodying an ambivalence she views in her own identity, that is represented by his use of obscene language and expressions of 'authenticity'. Therefore in discriminating between this figure's perceived positive and negative attributes Diana seemingly mediates her ambivalent character by aiming to contain 'rude' behaviour and aspiring towards constructing an authentic sense of self. Similarly Steve's remarks, outlined below, indicate that his role models symbolise an ethical conflict as they simultaneously personify violence and the virtue of moral support, which consequently leads this participant to constitute these figures as both 'bad' and 'good'. Thus, in recognising the good/bad dichotomy within these role models Steve arguably appropriates them as a *moral compass* that enables this participant to negotiate his identity in relation to oppositional values they represent for him⁶⁷:

Interviewer: Do you think they [wrestlers] are good role models or bad role models?

Steve O: Well a bit of both, why because they are violent and they teach others to look after each other.

Interviewer: So do you think the violence is good or bad?

Steve O: Bad.

Interviewer: So when might they not be a good role model?

Steve O: When they are violent and don't fight fair.

Interviewer: So overall do you think they are quite good?

Steve O: Yeah because they teach others to look after each other and that's how you should be with your friends.

Importantly then the above comments further demonstrate that participants within this study were capable of actively distinguishing between differing aspects of their role

⁶⁷ A similar example of wrestlers embodying the good/bad dichotomy was also demonstrated by Adrian (see Appendix B.4, p. 368).

models' characters and, in doing so, seemingly problematises claims which imply children passively accept 'negative' principles and as such require 'suitable' inspirational figures (Assibey-Mensah, 1997; Bonneville *et al.*, 2006, pp. 12-13). For example Jake, who as discussed previously employed 50 Cent in order to investigate external worlds and future selves, explicitly identifies this figure as neither positive nor negative but 'in the middle, like people are'; hence possibly reflecting his belief that such contradiction is an inherent feature within all individuals whilst, at the same time, allowing Jake to mediate an identity through isolating elements in this role model he admires:

- Interviewer: Because the thing is, 50 Cent also has quite a bad reputation//
Jake T1: //yeah//
Interviewer: //because he acts at times like a bit of a gangster type//
Jake T1: //yeah.
Interviewer: So do you think that people like 50 Cent are positive or negative role models?
Jake T1: I think they're like kind of in the middle, like people are.
Interviewer: In what way//
Jake T1: //like shooting and stuff, obviously that's wrong but like, he's like, made his way up kind of thing to be like singing and famous and stuff like that and achieved something with his life.

Therefore, Jake and Steve's accounts would appear to accord with work by Bettina Fritzsche (2004; discussed in Chapter 6), whose analysis aimed to explore whether young girls could gain 'empowerment' from 'pop feminist' bands. Importantly Fritzsche identified that bands such as the Spice Girls were neither positive nor negative role models, but operated as a 'toolbox' which individuals could draw upon to construct their identities. Moreover, in accordance with the preceding accounts, Jason's subsequent comments also acknowledge that his role model encompasses both good and bad traits. Furthermore by distancing himself from Eminem's supposed drug taking habit he instead utilises this figure's narratives of personal experience as a method for arguably exploring and resolving his own inner ambivalence:

- Interviewer: But do you think there is anything bad about Eminem?

Jason C: He is really because he sort of carries stuff around with him like he takes drugs and that's bad.

Interviewer: So you don't agree with that//

Jason C: //no I don't agree with taking drugs and smoking, but I like his music.

Interviewer: But you like his music because he's talking about his life//

Jason C: //yeah he's talking about life and all that.

Interviewer: And that makes you think about your own life//

Jason C: //yeah all the things that I've done wrong and don't want to do again.

Significantly however, role models not only functioned as a means by which participants attempted to address internal contestation, but also apparently came to signify an expression of their external realities. As the following extract demonstrates, Noah's ambiguity appears to arise from a conflict he feels is integral to himself and his environment which may therefore indicate that role models, for some participants, metaphorically represented an ambivalence that is symptomatic of their identities and social worlds:

Interviewer: So we'll start with 'how I see myself'. Let's start with Darth Vader, why have you used Darth Vader?

Noah C: Not really sure of himself.

Interviewer: Not really sure of himself.

Noah C: Mmm.

Interviewer: Why is Darth Vader not really sure of himself?

Noah C: He's stuck in-between two worlds.

Interviewer: What worlds are those?

Noah C: Good and bad, like ours.

Thus, the above discussions help to highlight that by conceptualising their identities in relation to role models participants within this study made, as Gauntlett (2002) notes, 'decisions and judgements about their own way of living (and that of others)' (p. 250). However, the participants importantly did not seek to 'copy' these figures directly, rather they adopted relevant facets of role models to assimilate into their constructions of the (ongoing project of the) self. Hence, in light of this, for these participants role

models operated as what Gauntlett terms '*navigation points* [which enable them to] steer their own personal routes through life' (*ibid.*, original emphasis).⁶⁸

7.6 Summary

This chapter has identified that the participants utilise role models not only as a means through which they conceptualise and construct their current sense of self, but also as a strategy for exploring future possible identities. Furthermore, in contrast to the studies discussed which stress the importance of same 'race' and gender heroes, this analysis highlighted that these factors were not crucial to participants' relationships with their role models. Instead, this inquiry revealed that the participants adapted and/or negotiated their role models in accordance with their aspirations, values and social context. These insights into how young people formulate their self-identities and those outlined previously on gender and individualism, as well as the various theories considered, are drawn together in the final chapter to suggest a number of conclusions about identities, audiences and creative and visual research methods.

⁶⁸ It should be noted that Gauntlett further states 'A person's general direction ... however, is more likely to be shaped by parents, friends, teachers, colleagues and other people encountered in everyday life' (2002, p. 250). This notion was evident within the present study in which some participants expressed that family and friends' influence was integral to how they conceptualised their own identities (Chapter 6, pp. 167-168; see also Miles, 2000: p. 134).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Confronted with 111 distinct identity collages and accompanying reflective commentaries, it is feasible that the theoretical foundations underpinning this research may be overlooked. In these works a great diversity of images, texts and styles creatively articulated the varying attitudes, interests and concerns of young people from different backgrounds. However, this study initially opened with a discussion of media representation – specifically focusing on ethnic minority groups – progressing on to an exploration of audience research paradigms, and examined the validity of creative and visual methods within social research. This concluding chapter will consider the possible contributions of this research project in relation to these fields, and the credibility of its methodology as discussed in Chapter 5. Furthermore, it will aim to develop broader conclusions based on the interview analyses undertaken within Chapters 6 and 7 to assess young people's relationship with media and how it is utilised in the construction and conceptualisation of their identities. The findings are grouped into two categories: 'Identities and Audiences' and 'Method'.

8.1 Identities and Audiences

The following findings are based on the responses of the 111 young people engaged in this study. Despite these participants not constituting a scientifically constructed representative sample, their conceptualisations of identity have been examined in sufficient detail for us to be confident about the reliability of these points. Whilst the themes which emerge could be explored further in future research, this study was specific to these young people living in a particular time and within certain locations. Therefore although presenting suggestive evidence, this study does not make generalising claims.

8.1.1 Understanding Identity

The current study found, in agreement with David Gauntlett's (2007) Lego identity study, that the concept of identity was readily accepted by all participants, as was the

ability to represent a sense of self in multiple ways using different media, for instance through identity collages. Despite this, some individuals initially articulated concerns regarding *how* they could portray their identity in such a manner, expressing uncertainties over what to represent and which images to employ. Nevertheless, a fundamental finding is that participants *understood* the exercise, assuming they possessed an identity that could be depicted in various creative ways. Thus, participants' capacity to consider and convey their identities provides support for positions which claim individuals in late modern Western societies conceptualise self-identity as an ongoing project that is constructed and continually revised, as Anthony Giddens (1991), Ulrich Beck (1992), John Thompson (1995) and Gauntlett (2002) argued (outlined in Chapters 6 and 7). Therefore, rather than being a theoretical abstraction contained within academic discourse, identity is a phenomenon entrenched within people's everyday practices and lives. Moreover, the fact that these participants from varying backgrounds were able to engage with the collage-making exercise with comparative ease further appears to validate Thompson's (1995) argument which maintained individuals actively create a meaningful sense of self by appropriating and incorporating symbolic materials into a coherent narrative of self-identity. Hence, participants were able to represent their sense of self through the collages as it involved them in a process that was analogous to their strategies of identity construction.

8.1.2 Gendered Identities

Looking at specific aspects of identity, we saw in Chapter 6, that gender was central to participants' conceptualisations of their identities. Although the participants appeared to construct a sense of self in accordance with traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, on closer reading their comments demonstrated that they did not wholly conform to these gendered positionings. For the boys, and in agreement with previous research (Connell, 2000; O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002), ideals associated with hegemonic masculinity within modern Western societies such as toughness, power and competitiveness, featured as prevalent themes throughout their accounts. These ideas were primarily articulated through the boys' assertions of heterosexuality and sport, the latter

particularly serving to signify their perceptions that they possessed active masculine attributes including prowess and courage. Such hegemonic conceptions of masculinity were further enforced by these participants utilising a procedure David Buckingham (1993c) identified as 'policing', in which boys are required to not only monitor their own behaviour but also the actions of others. In this study two policing strategies were clearly evident, each of which was employed to have a decided effect: firstly, when discussing girls within a sexual context the boys adopted humour as an evasive technique for deflecting feelings of embarrassment and discomfort, as well as halting conversations to avoid placing themselves 'at risk' of ridicule by peers; secondly, homophobia was invoked to marginalise boys that were seen as not complying with hegemonic masculine ideals, a finding revealed by two participants who remarked other people perceived them as 'gay'. Furthermore, whilst a small minority of boys did portray supposed 'feminine' traits on their identity collages, for example 'cute' and 'loving', in discussions these participants either rejected such qualities outright or countered them with an affirmation of hegemonic masculine values. Therefore, the ongoing process of policing masculinity exhibited by the boys indicates that their masculine identities are, to use Buckingham's words, 'achieved rather than given' (p. 97) and constituted a *performance* which was enacted for themselves as well as others, most overtly displayed by one participant who over-emphasised heterosexuality to disguise expressing insecurities regarding his own sense of self-identity (Chapter 6, pp. 112-113).

Despite the dominance of hegemonic masculine ideals apparent in boys' formulations of their identities it should be noted that a range of *masculinities* emerged within these discussions, similar to previous studies' findings (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002). For instance, sport was utilised by middle-class boys to construct a gendered identity grounded in the ethos of competitiveness, whereas working-class boys conceptualised a masculinity based upon empowerment gained through self-actualisation; for example, this was demonstrated by one participant who used boxing as a strategy for channelling frustrations and anxieties in a positive context (Chapter 6, p. 122). Moreover, two boys actively subverted hegemonic masculine ideals by discarding pejorative usages of the words 'gay' and 'geek', and in doing so made manifest alternative conceptions of masculinity. In addition, arenas which initially appeared to facilitate the assertion of hegemonic values worked in

more ambivalent ways: sport did not merely operate as a resource which enabled notions of active masculinity to be communicated, but also functioned as a metaphorical defence for hegemonic *and* alternative masculinities; an emphasis on heterosexuality served to affirm the boys' attainment of hegemonic masculine attributes, however these same assertions were made *ironically* in some cases to deliberately parody, whilst simultaneously problematising, conventional notions of masculinity – although this play was limited within a heterosexual discourse. Thus, the boys' identity collages and discussions highlighted that they did not completely adhere to conceptions of hegemonic masculinity, nor as a result did they show signs of experiencing a 'crisis of masculinity'. Instead, these participants demonstrated that they were capable of expressing their contradictory characteristics – albeit visually – and were able to maintain conflicting attitudes which exposed the ambiguous nature of masculinity itself. Consequently, the boys' conceptualisations of their identities may indicate that traditional notions of masculinity are gradually becoming destabilised; nonetheless, conventional masculinity is still utilised as a point of reference from which they can accept or reject principles in order to negotiate their own conceptions of masculinity. Therefore, as a greater proliferation of masculinities begin to emerge and establish themselves as a significant presence, it seems likely that traditional masculinity will eventually become somewhat outmoded and less useful for boys in contemporary society.

Similar to the boys, the girls' accounts appeared to demonstrate that they conceptualised their identities in terms of conventional gender roles and attributes. For example, many of the girls employed images such as love hearts and angels to metaphorically represent their femininity and emphasised traits including cute, kind, caring and supportive to stress they possessed 'feminine' qualities. Thus, these participants seemed to indicate that traditional notions of femininity were intrinsic to their understandings of their identities. Nevertheless, despite ostensibly conforming with orthodox gender ideals, the girls' discussions revealed that these conceptions were more ambiguous and complex; as some participants illustrated their 'feminine' properties using pictures of men, whilst other girls adopted an ironic and knowing mode of address within their work which enabled them to engage playfully with conventional femininity – a strategy promoted by teenage girls' magazines, as identified by Angela McRobbie (1999). Furthermore, within the identity collages the

girls utilised a broad range of visuals to articulate differing aspects of their identities, yet some participants were hesitant about discussing and elaborating upon any elements which deviated from traditional feminine standards. As such, these moments of self-censorship may reflect the girls' acceptance of patriarchal discourse which expects them to adhere to established gender norms. However, the inclusion of contrary images within the girls' identity collages seems to suggest that they recognised conflicting characteristics as *equally* valid aspects of their (feminine) identities and wanted to communicate this. Therefore the tension which arises between the girls' conceptions of their identities and traditional notions of the 'feminine' highlights that conventional femininity is not an inherent quality of their selves; rather femininity is constructed as a performance which the girls can employ for their own purposes within everyday life, supporting findings noted previously by both Beverley Skeggs (1997) and Gauntlett (2002).

In light of the undetermined nature of femininity the girls within this study aimed to articulate their *own* identities through consumption, specifically fashion. For these participants being perceived as having a fashionable persona was a strategy through which they sought to convey their own sense of autonomy to others, a position inevitably influenced by the success of 'girl power' rhetoric. Nevertheless, as various commentators have argued (e.g. Whelehan, 2000; McRobbie, 2001; Harris, 2004a), the girl power approach raises wider concerns as it may constrict girls' political effectivity by leading them to believe that empowerment and success can only be achieved through acts of consumption and physical attractiveness. Indeed, this idea was apparent in some girls' accounts for whom a lack of fashionable status and anxieties about beauty appeared to be equated with their own feelings of powerlessness. It should be noted however, that whilst bodily anxieties and concerns about fashion remained recurring themes throughout participants' discussions, *at the same time* the girls asserted notions of confidence and independence promoted by girl power regarding their sense of self even in instances when they felt these qualities were not a facet of themselves. Therefore, the display of confidence and independence which were central to many girls' conceptions of identity suggests that the performative character of femininity enabled them to not only enact traditional ideas of the 'feminine', but challenge these same principles by undermining feminine conventions. Moreover, for participants girl power discourse did not exercise

complete control over the manner in which they conceptualised themselves, rather these girls were able to *actively* negotiate a number of (sometimes competing) discourses simultaneously to inform their identity construction – as demonstrated by some Muslim girls. Consequently the girls revealed that their relationship with femininity was deeply intricate as they both invested in notions of conventional femininity whilst concurrently affirming girl power principles. Importantly, this engagement with girl power did not, as suggested by previous studies (Griffin, 2004; Harris, 2004a; McRobbie, 2004; Taft, 2004), serve to depoliticise and silence these young women, instead it appeared to provide them with a vehicle to explore and voice their identities, as well as enabling them to recognise gender inequalities and contest sexist discourse. Thus, the girls demonstrated that they were not passive and/or politically naïve, and may indicate that whilst femininity remains an ambiguous concept feminist values have become, for girls living in late modern Western societies, in certain ways fundamental to how they conceptualise their identities.

8.1.3 Unique Identities

As noted above, the participants' discussions demonstrated that notions of gender were integral to their conceptions of identities; however, these were accompanied by forceful assertions of 'individualism' by both boys and girls which seemed to transgress any gender differences, as outlined in Chapter 6. These articulations of individuality were most frequently conveyed by the participants expressing originality and uniqueness as well as emphasising autonomy through highlighting assertiveness – principally employing concepts of 'loudness' and 'freedom' – to signify they had an independent character and 'voice'. Furthermore, for some participants their individualism and self-made status was paradoxically constructed through the appropriation and consumption of commercial products (as Miles, 2000, has observed), nevertheless this did not preclude the fact that they could utilise these items creatively to communicate a sense of individuality. Thus, individualism was equated by the participants with an empowering agency, through which they believed a successful self could be achieved; lending support to the argument that, in late modern Western societies, youth are now *compelled* to gain such success through the establishment of a unique identity of their own making and encouraged to exhibit their

choices and projects of the self for examination by other people, as argued by Anita Harris (2004a). Indeed, this point was clearly evidenced within some participants' discussions of involvement in artistic activities, whereby creative processes metaphorically represented their own productions of the self, and such engagement illustrated a desire to create as well as display conceptions of a unique self-made identity: claims that can be made of the identity collages themselves. Nevertheless, despite the overwhelming number of articulations about possessing unique, self-made identities it is worth noting that a minority of participants – all of whom were from deprived areas or ethnic minority individuals living within predominantly white environments – elected instead to foreground their 'normal' status, possibly as a strategy for negating their liminal positioning. Therefore these participants indicated an (un)knowing awareness that opportunities for attaining autonomy and empowerment proposed by the ethos of individualism are not equally available to all. Consequently discussions about 'individuality' and 'normalness' revealed that both boys and girls actively considered their identities in a self-aware manner, underlying the centrality of reflexivity within these young people's lives, and further implied issues pertaining to individualism played as significant a role as notions of gender in the participants' conceptualisations of their identities. Thus, the participants' identity collages and discussions suggested that no single facet of their identities took precedence over another, rather these elements *collectively* constituted their conceptions of self – a point which is developed in the following section.

8.1.4 Ethnic Identities

In consideration of previous work on ethnic minority representation which argued that mainstream media portrayals had a negative impact on minority groups (see Chapter 2), the role of ethnicity in shaping participants' conceptions of identity may have been expected to surface as a prominent theme within the identity collages and discussions. However, this was – maybe somewhat surprisingly – not the case, yet simultaneously revealed intricate and nuanced insights into these children's understandings of ethnic identities. Indeed, a significant finding demonstrated within this study is that ethnicity *did not* appear to be a key structural influence on ethnic minority participants' constructions of their identities, in contrast to results proposed by earlier

research projects (O'Donnell and Sharpe, 2000; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2002). For instance, comments by some black participants from ethnically diverse environments illustrated that whilst black identification was a factor of their relationships with sports and media figures, this did not constitute the sole motive for these associations. Therefore, these participants' discussions highlighted that although 'blackness' remained a fundamental aspect of their identities, being black was not conceptualised of as a totalising identity signalling, as Hall (1989) has stated, the 'end of the essential black subject' (p. 443). Accordingly, by not situating their sense of self within a unitary (black) identity these individuals' articulations foregrounded that they conceived their identities as complex and diverse – such diversity also being an inherent feature of their day-to-day experiences and multicultural worlds. Nevertheless, within ethnic minority participants' responses an important dichotomy emerged between their accounts: for those participants living in multicultural areas ethnicity was perceived as *one* element of their self-identity; conversely, children who resided within a predominantly white environment elevated their ethnic identity to a primary position as what seemed to be a consequence of their immediate locale, believing skin colour difference was responsible for other (white) people's negative perceptions of themselves. Hence, these young people utilised specifically selected black media personalities who they viewed as positive figures not only as a source of black identification – as ethnic minority participants in multicultural settings did – but *also* to counter stereotypes, negate outsider status and assert their ethnic heritage. In this context then, such strategies appeared necessary for these participants in exclusively white locales as a means of challenging what they considered limited and negative representations of 'blackness' which, it emerged through discussions, were regarded as being principally propagated via mass media representations of 'blackness': representations that came to be seen as influencing the white majority's (mis)understandings of black individuals (as outlined in a number of studies discussed in Chapter 2).

The above concerns raised about black representation were made manifest within some white participants' responses; however, further differences arose between how young people from predominantly white areas and those living in multicultural environments conceptualised 'blackness'. For example, when discussing black R&B musicians as negative role models one participant from a white locale unintentionally

equated their negative perceptions of these artists with black people collectively, a position which appeared to be informed and directed by representations of 'blackness' circulated through mass media discourses – a finding reflected and argued in Karen Ross' (1992) work on white perceptions of ethnic minorities on television (see Chapter 2). Nevertheless, this argument importantly neglects the possibility that such (mis)understandings may actually result from a limited experience of ethnic diversity within this social context, rather than being an effect of the media representations themselves. Indeed this point is arguably supported when taking into account that some white children from multicultural areas *deliberately* employed images of black rap stars to illustrate that they were perceived by others in a negative light, whilst simultaneously acknowledging such media portrayals were not necessarily intrinsically derogatory and reductive. By doing so, these participants seemed to demonstrate an awareness of stereotyping and the ability to use such representations in an ironic manner, which highlighted their refusal to conform with negative notions about 'blackness' unproblematically. Therefore these discussions indicated that the participants' perceptions of ethnic minority representations were determined, to some degree, by their social worlds: with diversity intrinsic to multicultural milieus facilitating participants' negotiations of media representations alongside their *actual* understandings of ethnic minority individuals and cultural products encountered daily in these environments; and a lack of diversity within the almost exclusively white area producing and perpetuating stereotyped notions of ethnicity, resulting in ethnic minority participants in this locale feeling isolated, labelled as different as well as subject to racism, thus heightening these young people's associations with their ethnic identities.

Despite the broader understandings of ethnic identities and their representations fostered by diversity within multicultural areas, importantly this does not suggest that racism was precluded from such environments. This was clearly apparent in one white male participant's responses who articulated overtly racist comments about a fellow pupil of Indian descent, but maintained these remarks were merely, to use Stephen Frosh, Anne Phoenix and Rob Pattman's (2002) words, 'jokey cussing' (p. 171) in an attempt to disavow and distance himself from any accusations of offence – the same strategy also employed by white participants within Les Back's (1991, 1996) previous research on South London adolescents and Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman's

(2002) study of young men in contemporary society. Furthermore, assertions of racism by some white participants in this study appeared to emerge in two distinct forms: Asian participants being subject to a ‘cultural racism’ grounded within notions of cultural difference (Modood, 1992, 1997, 2005); whilst black participants were subject to prejudice based upon skin colour and physical difference (Hall, 1997), with black boys specifically being racialised as the embodiment of a ‘super-masculinity’ and labelled as ‘sexy’ and ‘cool’ (Majors and Billinson, 1992; Back, 1994; Sewell, 1997). Moreover, this situation was compounded when noting that only white participants within the study specifically utilised images of St George’s Crosses, Union Jacks and United Kingdom maps on their identity collages to affirm a sense of Englishness⁶⁹, which may indicate they conflated notions of Englishness with whiteness, thus implying, as Modood (2001) has argued, that ‘English has been treated by the new Britons as a closed ethnicity rather than an open nationality’⁷⁰. This point was supported by some white participants who elected to identify themselves as British, emphasising its more inclusive character, although these remarks continued to carry connotations of a unified *white* nation.⁷¹ Hence, these factors may explain why the majority of ethnic minority participants within interviews described themselves *solely* in terms of their ethnic heritage⁷², or for some Muslims

⁶⁹ Although one British-Pakistani participant included an image of the UK map on their identity collage (Appendix A.2.2), this was not employed to assert ‘Englishness’, but instead to express that they were born in England; however, this participant also emphasised England was ‘my country’ which may further indicate their defiance against racist nationalist discourses that deny ethnic minority inclusion. Similarly, two dual heritage children used the Union Jack/George Cross to express part of their heritage (Appendix A.5.13; A.6.1), nevertheless, as the British-Pakistani participant, these individuals utilised these images to signify they were ‘born here’.

⁷⁰ This concept was also demonstrated within an ethnic minority participant’s account, in which they illustrated the power of this racist discourse by communicating an unknowing internalisation of these ideals (see Chapter 7, p. 215).

⁷¹ This point is demonstrated by the following extract:

Interviewer:	Why would you say British and not English?
Christina T1:	Because like Great Britain is like the whole country and I see myself as part of the community, and English is like just one bit and it’s like kind of like separated, if you say Britain it’s kind of joined so like more people <i>like me</i> are in Scotland, Wales and stuff and like Great Britain is like one country, it’s not divided.

⁷² Whilst some ethnic minority participants described themselves using hyphenated terms such as British-Asian, this was to express the fact that they were born in England with

their religion – in contrast to what was presented in their identity collages – either as a means of asserting their (trans)ethnic identity to politically challenge racist discourses and/or because they felt alienated and excluded from using English/British as an identity they can claim for themselves due to racism. Despite this, ethnic minority children's identity collages and discussions *did* demonstrate that these participants conceptualised ethnicity as constituting *one* fundamental element of their self-identity which were negotiated alongside other aspects of their selves which were seen as equally significant.

8.1.5 Role Models and Self-Identity

The role of contemporary media within late modern Western societies as a resource from which individuals can conceptualise and construct identities was discussed in Chapter 7, where it was suggested that people appropriate 'symbolic materials' provided by the media reflexively into their narratives of self-formation (Thompson, 1995). Within the study this concept became apparent through participants' utilisation of media figures as 'role models' in their conceptions of self. However the term role models, as Gauntlett (2002) noted, is freely employed within public discourse despite a lack of consensus regarding what this phrase actually means or how role models might impact on individuals' attitudes and identities, with current understandings limited to social learning theory which – put simply – asserts that people learn behaviour through observation. Nevertheless, useful definitions of role models were traced in the work of John Jung (1986) and Kristin Anderson and Donna Cavallaro (2002) who proposed that 'role models are important not because they teach observers how to behave but because they *inspire* observers to want to learn to behave in certain ways or to assume certain roles' (Jung, 1986, p. 533, my emphasis). As such these figures not only provide a 'learning function' (Jung, 1986, p. 526) but individuals 'may see *possibilities* in that person' (Anderson and Cavallaro, 2002, p. 161, original emphasis).

At a fundamental level these ideas were demonstrated within the participants' discussions in which they expressed notions about identification, aspiration and

'British' appearing to be used simply to indicate their legal status (a similar finding demonstrated in previous research: see Modood *et al.*, 1994).

inspiration as integral elements of their associations with role models. Importantly, though, the participants' accounts further revealed that they adopted *specific* traits of role models as a means to articulate their self-identity rather than accepting these figures as a whole, supporting findings by Rachel Bromnick and Brian Swallow (1999) that argued young people may admire a famous individual whilst not strictly identifying with them. For instance the concept of integrity was a prominent theme raised within many participants' responses about their role models, and highlighted that this attribute was a value they identified with: implying that this virtue itself – instead of the celebrity – was intrinsic to these participants' relationships with their role models and indicating that they possessed or aimed to attain this ideal, similar sentiments underlying discussions centred upon the issue of authenticity. Significantly, in these conversations participants' comments foregrounded that they not only selected and identified with media figures who were seen as embodying the quality of authentic expression, but also employed the role models' authenticity as a vehicle through which their own personal values and experiences could be communicated and validated, as well as a strategy for exploring external realities. Therefore, role models enabled these participants to consider their own identities and social worlds by acting as a tool for self-reflection; however, this was dependent upon the participants understanding their role model as 'normal', that is someone who shared a familiar reality on an experiential level. Thus, for these participants, role models operated as a cultural resource from which they could conceptualise, construct and convey diverse aspects of their identities, with diversity also coming to be regarded as a key constituent of the role models themselves. Nevertheless, these participants did not always view the diverse elements of their selves as functioning harmoniously with one another but acknowledged that diversity could at times give rise to conflict, made evident within discussions which highlighted an awareness of ambivalence in role models – and by association their own identities – manifested through the 'good/bad' dichotomy. Consequently by negotiating the 'good/bad' dichotomy in role models, these young people were afforded a method that provided them with a means to mediate ambivalence they perceived within their selves as well as their social worlds. Moreover, in identifying ambivalence within role models participants demonstrated they recognised both positive and negative aspects of these figures and were able to actively discriminate between such qualities, problematising claims which suggest that children are passive and susceptible to role models'

influence, and may further reinforce the suggestion that this contradiction is a typical characteristic of the human condition.

In light of the above, it seems likely that role models did not exclusively perform a positive or negative function, or operate as figures individuals sought to imitate directly; rather role models acted as a 'tool kit' which enabled participants to utilise specific facets of these figures within the formations of their self-identities (as argued previously by Gauntlett, 2002 and Fritzsche, 2004). Thus, by thinking about their selves in relation to role models these figures facilitated participants' constructions of their own models for living and served as, to use Gauntlett's (2002) words, '*navigation points* as individuals steer their own personal routes through life' (p. 250, original emphasis); although it should be noted that family, friends and other people encountered within daily life probably continue to play a more crucial role in shaping individuals' identities. Indeed this latter factor may account for why Asian participants did not make reference to role models in their identity collages and interviews. Whilst this could be attributed to an under-representation of Asian figures within the media, as these discussions have demonstrated, these individuals identified with *values* not celebrities *per se*; therefore it is feasible that family, cultural and religious values exerted a greater significance on their conceptions of self⁷³ – as was highlighted by some Muslim girls' comments in Chapter 6 which emphasised the centrality of religion in their identities. Hence, these discussions extend considerations of role models beyond the confines of ethnicity and gender; and perhaps begin to develop understandings of the *processes* through which role models function.

8.1.6 The Complexity of Audiences

In Chapter 3 we saw that although audiences are recognised in existing literature as diverse – consisting of disparate individuals from different social and cultural

⁷³ It should be emphasised that within this study a number of Asian publications were provided to the participants from which images of Asian celebrities could have been selected had they wished to (for a full list of magazines and newspapers supplied see Chapter 5). Furthermore, these participants lived in multicultural environments where a great abundance of cultural media products were available to them, but despite this they did not mention these or name any Asian role models when offered the opportunity to do so within the interviews.

backgrounds with varying interests (Moore, 1993) – much research continues to discuss ‘audiences’ generically appearing to suggest this is acceptable as long as the concept of diversity has been acknowledged. Furthermore as Gauntlett (2004) noted, previous studies have conceptualised people as an ‘audience’ in terms of their relationship with particular texts, forms or genres, disregarding that within everyday life individuals are saturated by and consume multiple media products. Therefore, in order to develop more considered understandings of the role of media within peoples’ lives research must embrace, as Martin Barker (1998) argued, the ‘study of the *actual* audience in lived experience’ (p. 190, original emphasis) as work by, for example, David Morley (1986), Janice Radway (1987) and James Lull (1990) discussed in Chapter 3 demonstrated. Nevertheless, despite accounting for the social context and issues in which media are used, such studies neglect – to return to Gauntlett’s (2004) point above – that individuals do not encounter single texts in isolation, but as one element amongst a wide range of media within their day-to-day existence. Consequently, research must engage with the social context and issues relating to people’s media use, *and* understood in relation to the fact that individuals consume numerous as well as varied media rather than one solitary product. By doing so, it not only becomes apparent that audiences consist of diverse individuals but each individual within themselves is complex, contradictory and diverse – a notion that this study has attempted to address.

8.2 Method

An underlying theme central to this study has been about the potential benefits of creative and visual methods within social research. The following findings expand upon results produced by previous studies outlined in Chapter 4, and specifically this research project, as detailed in Chapters 5 to 7.

8.2.1 Reflection and Creativity

As noted in Chapter 4, creative and visual methods afford participants *reflective time* to consider their thoughts and feelings *before* producing a response: which can importantly help engender more insightful and nuanced research results.

Significantly, this does not imply that individuals are incapable of generating immediate feedback to researchers' enquiries; rather these answers may not provide an entirely authentic or fully valid representation of people's more exact attitudes and emotions. As we saw in Chapter 4, David Buckingham and Julian Sefton-Green's (1994) work on pedagogic practices within media studies demonstrated that the combined process of creative production *and* reflection facilitated a more in depth understanding of children's media literacy by allowing young people *time* to evaluate their own conceptions, enabling them to construct meaningful responses. Therefore, by engaging participants in creative tasks for a set duration, creative and visual research methods grant individuals time to gestate their ideas and formulate an indirect response instead of being compelled to develop an instant answer to direct questions using words. Indeed this inextricable link between creative processes and reflection was illustrated by one participant, quoted in Chapter 6, who said 'I can customise and think about things and can create new stuff' (p. 169).

Furthermore, as we are unable to form an immediate understanding of other people's identities, this must be achieved through interpreting materials they produce – such as talk, clothing and personal objects – over an extended period. Importantly, creative and visual research methods can function as a 'short-cut' in this procedure by purposefully inviting individuals to create an artefact as a particular element of the research exercise. To interpret these non-linguistic products participants are requested to supply their *own* interpretations of their work using language; however, language is only reintroduced *following* time engaged in the non-verbal reflective process of making items that convey frequently intricate arrangements of thoughts and feelings, and thus this approach accommodates a more holistic appreciation of issues which concern the participants.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ As discussed in Chapter 5 this study would have ideally liked to, and benefited from, granting participants access to *any* images of their own choosing within the construction of their identity collages to enable freedom of expression facilitated through, for example, the use of internet and colour printing facilities. However, this was not possible due to time and financial restraints as well as most schools simply lacking the adequate resources to cater for such a request. Despite this, these limitations did not seem to have a significant impact on this study; nevertheless future research projects should consider such issues and endeavour to broaden the scope of materials available to participants, which would afford individuals greater opportunity to determine their own forms of self-expression, as well as producing more rich and fruitful information for analysis.

8.2.2 The Value of Metaphor

Within social research concepts such as identity, audiences and representation frequently form the focus of study, however as these phenomena are *abstract* concepts researchers become confronted with the difficulty of determining how to acquire information on these matters: often resorting to methods that depend upon individuals formulating and articulating their ideas in words which may prove demanding for participants, as empirical studies mentioned in Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrated. Metaphors can therefore provide a powerful alternative to the strictures imposed by formal language; as both Horst Niesyto (2000) and Brandon Williams (2002) suggested, outlined in Chapter 4, metaphors offer participants a strategy through which thoughts and feelings can be communicated that they may struggle to put into words, and facilitate freer and associative forms of 'open expression' (Williams, 2002, p. 55).

This study exploited and developed the value of metaphors in social research by directing participants to create a metaphorical collage on how they conceptualised their identities. In these works constituent elements of the collages functioned as metaphors to represent aspects of participants' identities, but the completed pictures operated as a metaphor on another plane through revealing contradictions, relationships and patterns within the *whole* image. This was made possible as the task itself required participants to produce an entire visual representation of their identity 'all in one go' (Gauntlett, 2007, p. 183), with individuals' reflections on their collages exploring each image independently whilst moving towards an explanation of what was shown by the overall piece. Consequently, viewing the collage enabled participants to consider their whole presentation of identity in relation to their responses to the constituent parts; the metaphors providing participants with an opportunity to express and share creative interpretations of their personal and social worlds.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ The above discussions suggest considerable scope for future research based both on the information collated over the duration of this study and in terms of potential new research conducted using creative and visual methods. For example, the identity collages produced and accompanying reflective commentaries offered a rich and abundant source of material on children's conceptions of their identities for analysis and, of course, young people's attitudes to any other issue could also be effectively explored in a similar fashion. Furthermore, the

8.3 In Conclusion

The notion of identity has been fundamental to this study, but this concept remains ambiguous, abstract and difficult to define. Consequently, within academic thinking identity has at times lapsed into being conceptualised in terms of broad categorisations such as gender, class and ethnicity. In contrast, this study aimed to explore the issue of identity through identifying how it was understood by young people *themselves*; and was struck by the relative clarity with which children from diverse backgrounds were capable of imagining and communicating ideas about their own self-identity to other individuals. Furthermore, in producing a number of findings on young people's identities and how these may be examined, this study has specifically proposed a creative and visual research method which afforded participants reflective time to consider their identities by inviting them to construct a metaphorical representation of it in collage form. This process required participants to reflect upon their own identity whilst leafing through a variety of visual texts, thoughtfully rejecting and selecting images which, when brought together, expressed the diverse aspects of their selves as a unified whole. Moreover, the medium of collage itself was straightforward, requiring no serious artistic skill, which most participants enjoyed for this reason, and accordingly these young people could create an artwork that they were pleased with to varying degrees – although this approach could obviously utilise a variety of different creative materials and techniques.

The identity collages produced were often intricate as well as complex, and it became increasingly apparent that the process of cutting and pasting images came to metaphorically represent the act of constructing the ongoing project of the self and

methodology employed in this study could be further refined by undertaking a statistical content analysis of the images utilised within these collages themselves: a method that this research project has not engaged with but may produce rewarding data given the 111 identity collages created, and facilitate a move towards a mixed method approach. In addition, the identity collage – or a number of identity collages – could be created by each individual over an extended period and within various contexts, such as school and home, to see if different 'voices' emerged (however this would obviously be dependent upon sufficient time and resources being made available). Moreover alongside the individual interviews, group discussions could be held in which children talk about their own work and that of others to establish whether different concerns are raised within a group environment. As such, information provided by these diverse methods would be a useful addition to existing material, although these strategies should importantly work together in a complementary manner, rather than any one element determining the research process and findings.

exhibiting this to the external world. It was also possible to see that the role of the media emerged as a resource individuals used to conceptualise and formulate their own current sense of self, and articulate aspirations for a future identity. As such, each individual was a biographer creating their own narrative of self-identity, telling unique stories about their own identities and social worlds, stories which have many chapters to come.

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Appendix A: Collages

Appendix A.1: Cantell School



A.1.1: Michelle



A.1.2: Sapan



A.1.3: Jason



A.1.4: Malcolm



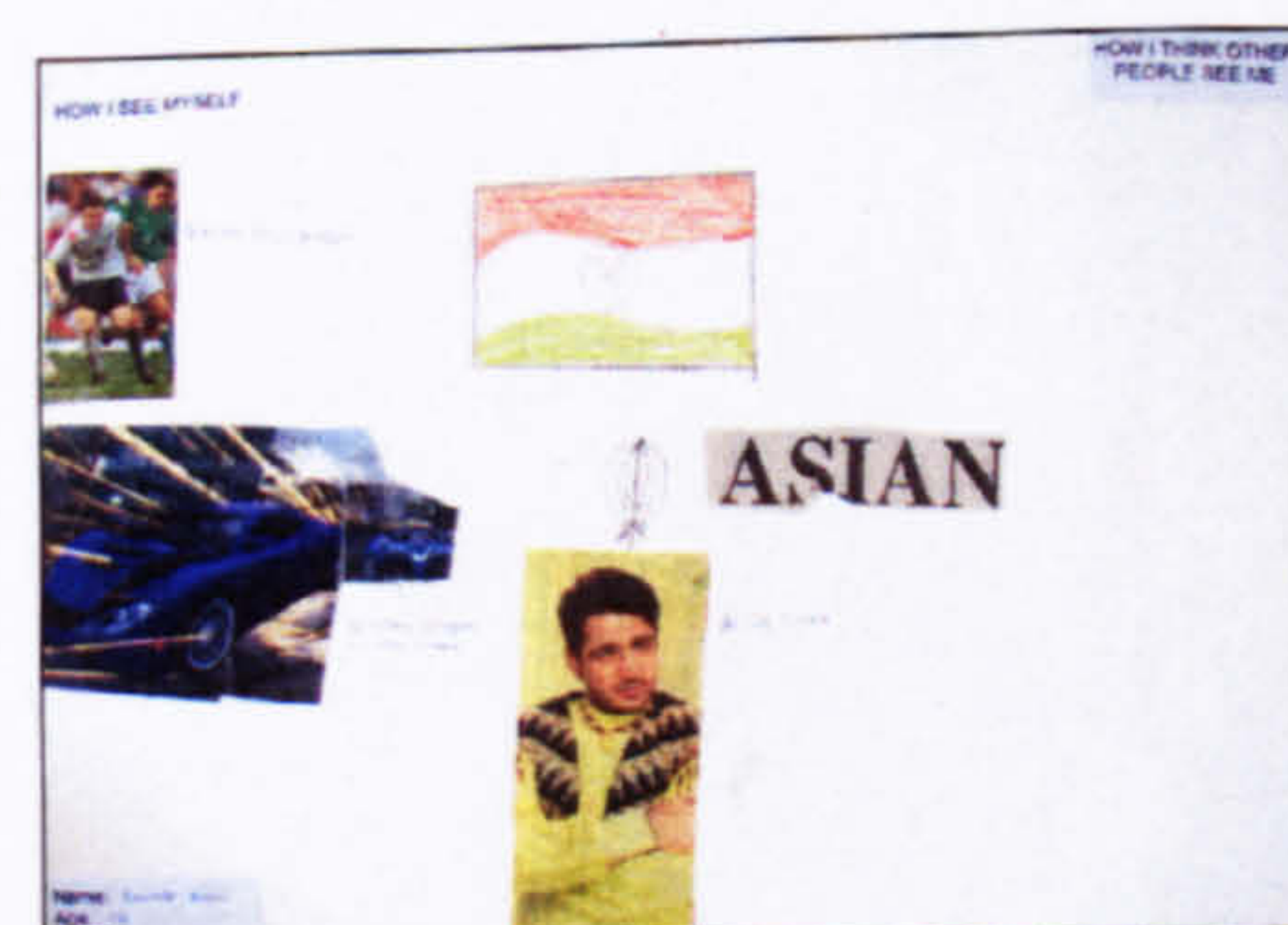
A.1.5: Joe



A.1.6: Faiza



A.1.7: Kendra



A.1.8: Randeep



A.1.9: Peter



A.1.10: Samuel



A.1.11: Scott



A.1.12: Noah

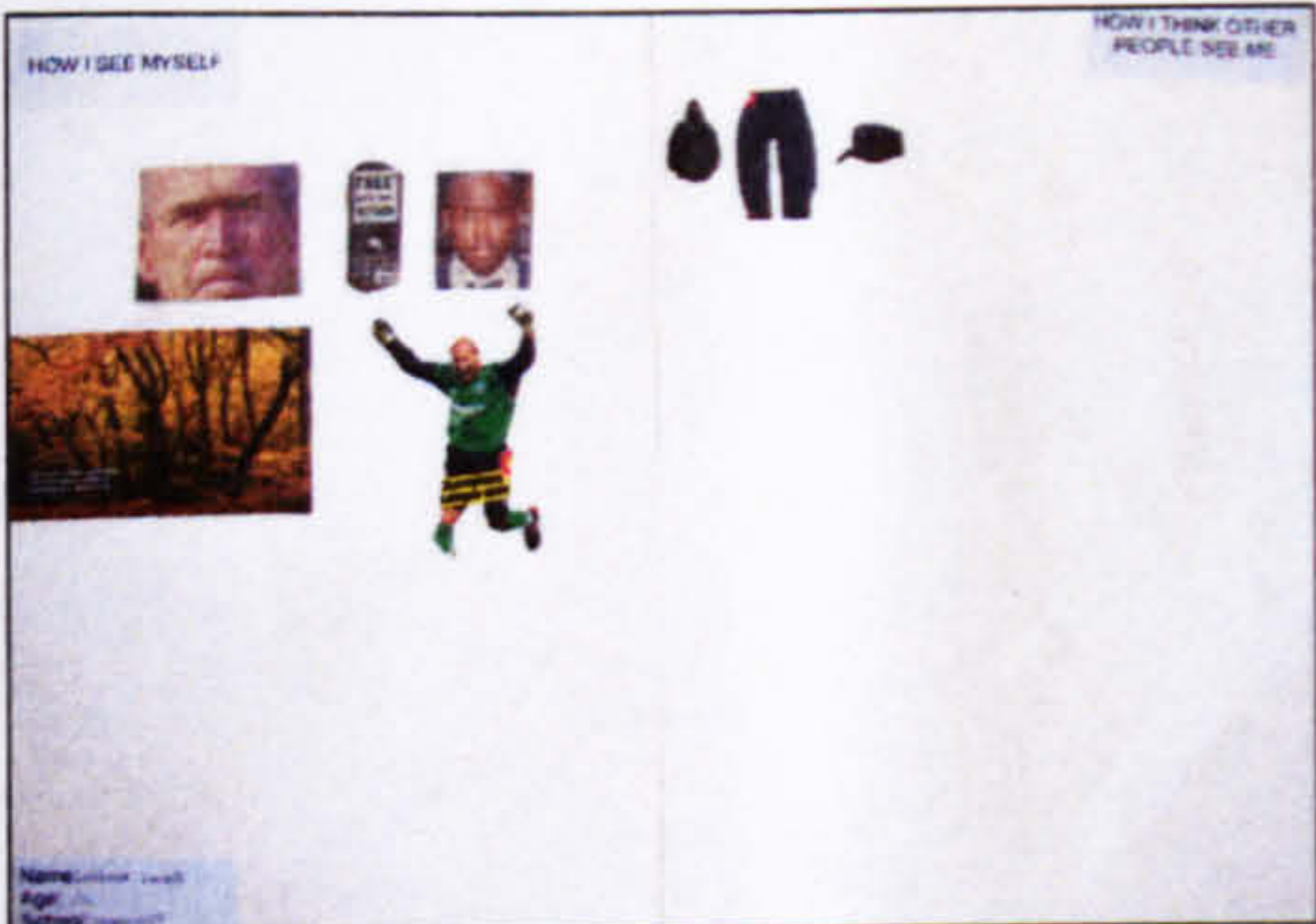
Appendix A.2: Kelmscott School



A.2.1: Karen



A.2.2: Azhar



A.2.3: Kashif



A.2.4: Zakirah



A.2.5: Emily



A.2.6: Maryum



A.2.7: Nasif



A.2.8: Malik



A.2.9: Joyce



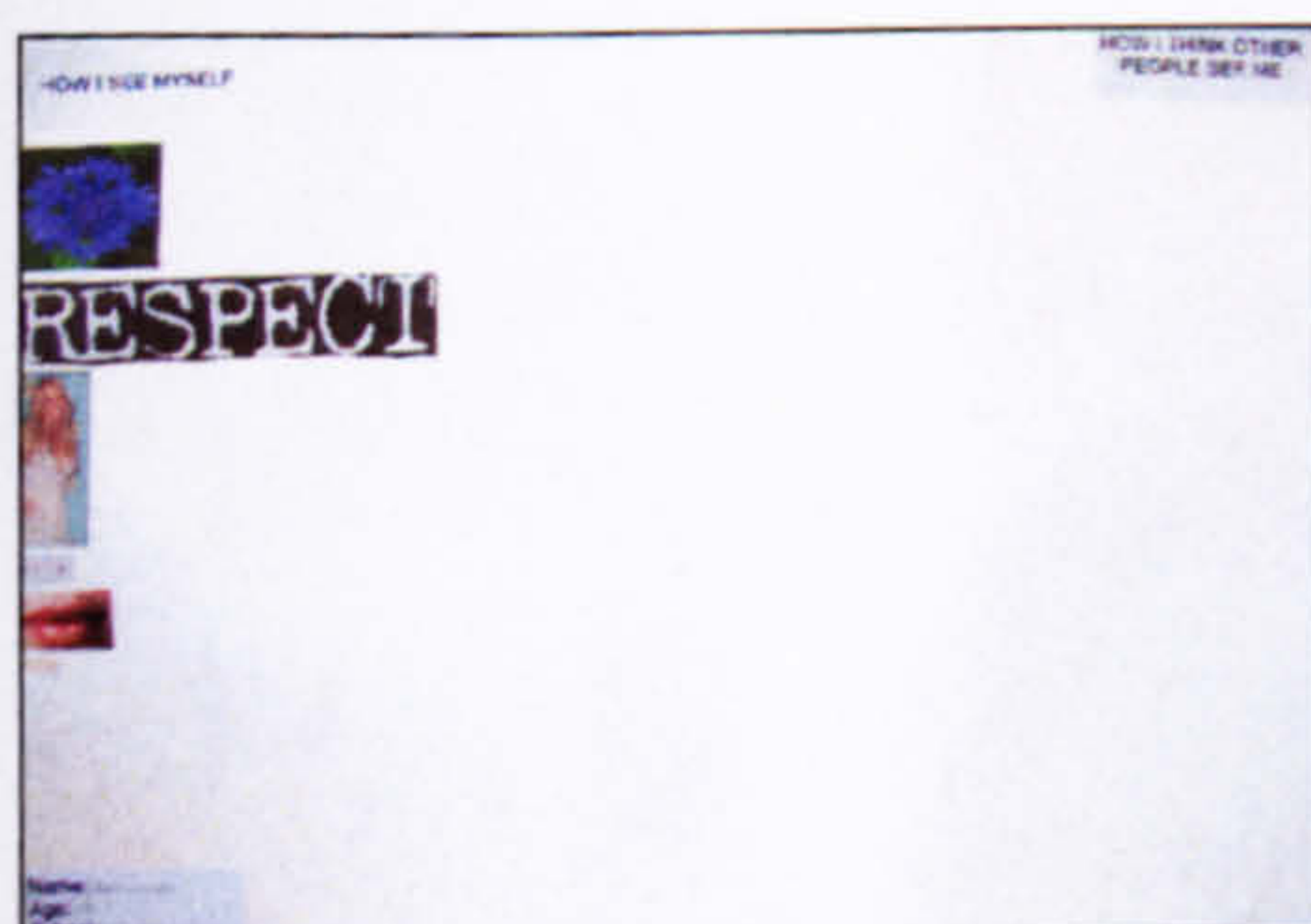
A.2.10: Zak



A.2.11: Balqis



A.2.12: Jamila



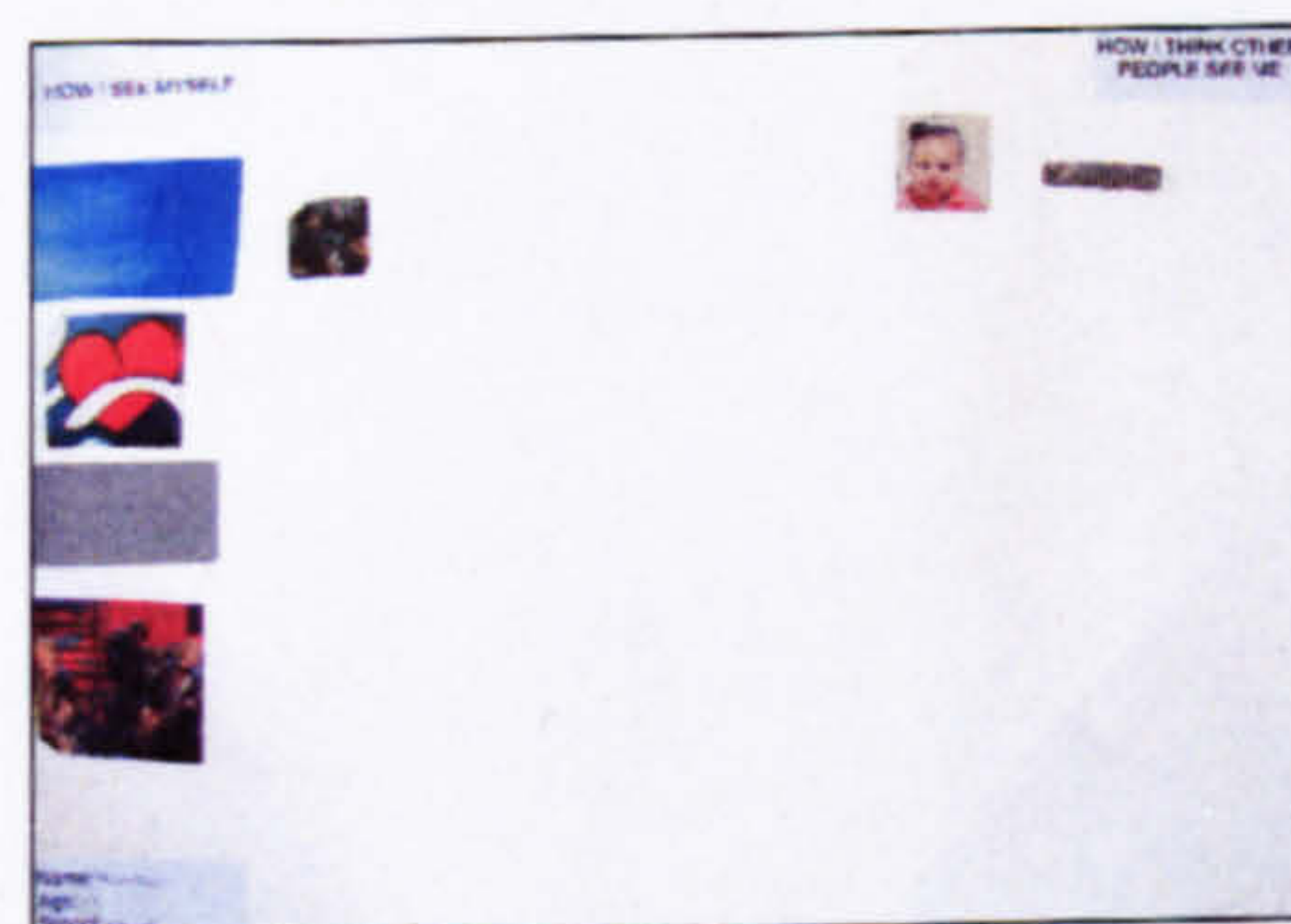
A.2.13: Jasmine



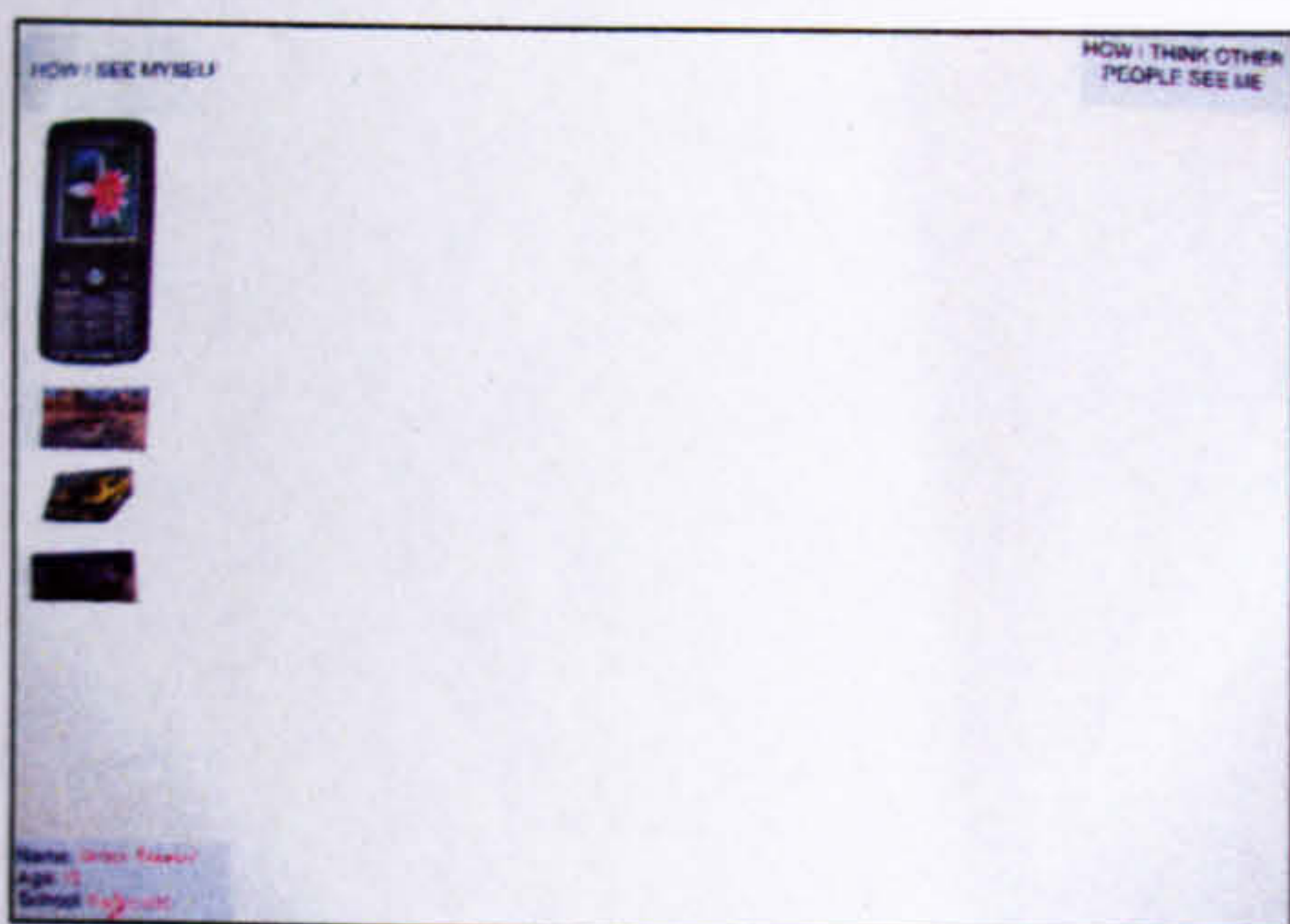
A.2.14: Ghazal



A.2.15: Daniya



A.2.16: Amira



A.2.17: Henry

Appendix A.3: Millbrook Community School



A.3.1: David



A.3.2: Richard



A.3.3: Dan



A.3.4: Sean



A.3.5: Dean



A.3.6: Jane



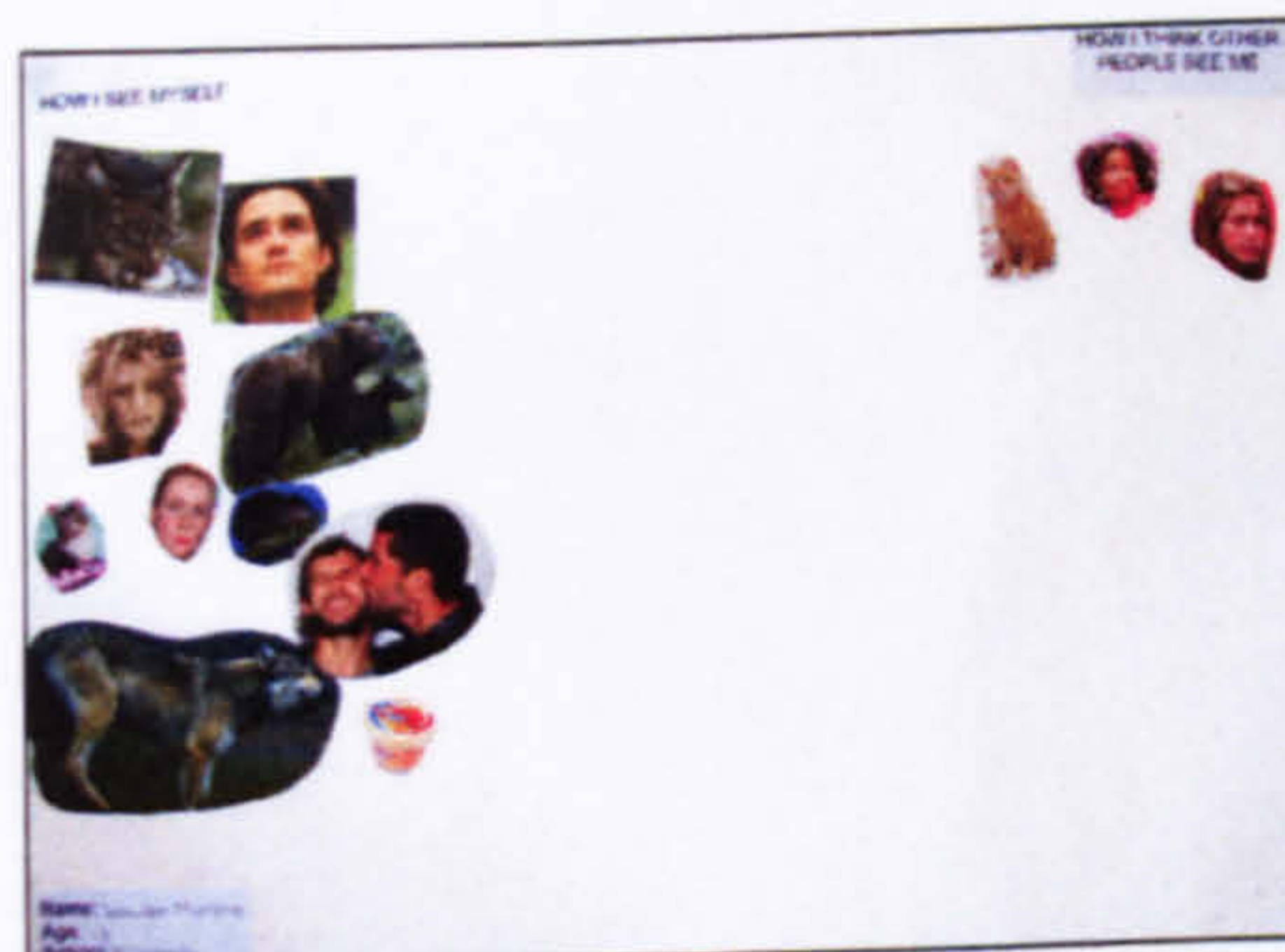
A.3.7: Natalie



A.3.8: Lisa



A.3.9: Sarah



A.3.10: Laura



A.3.11: Jackie



A.3.12: Jack



A.3.13: Josh



A.4.9: Kate



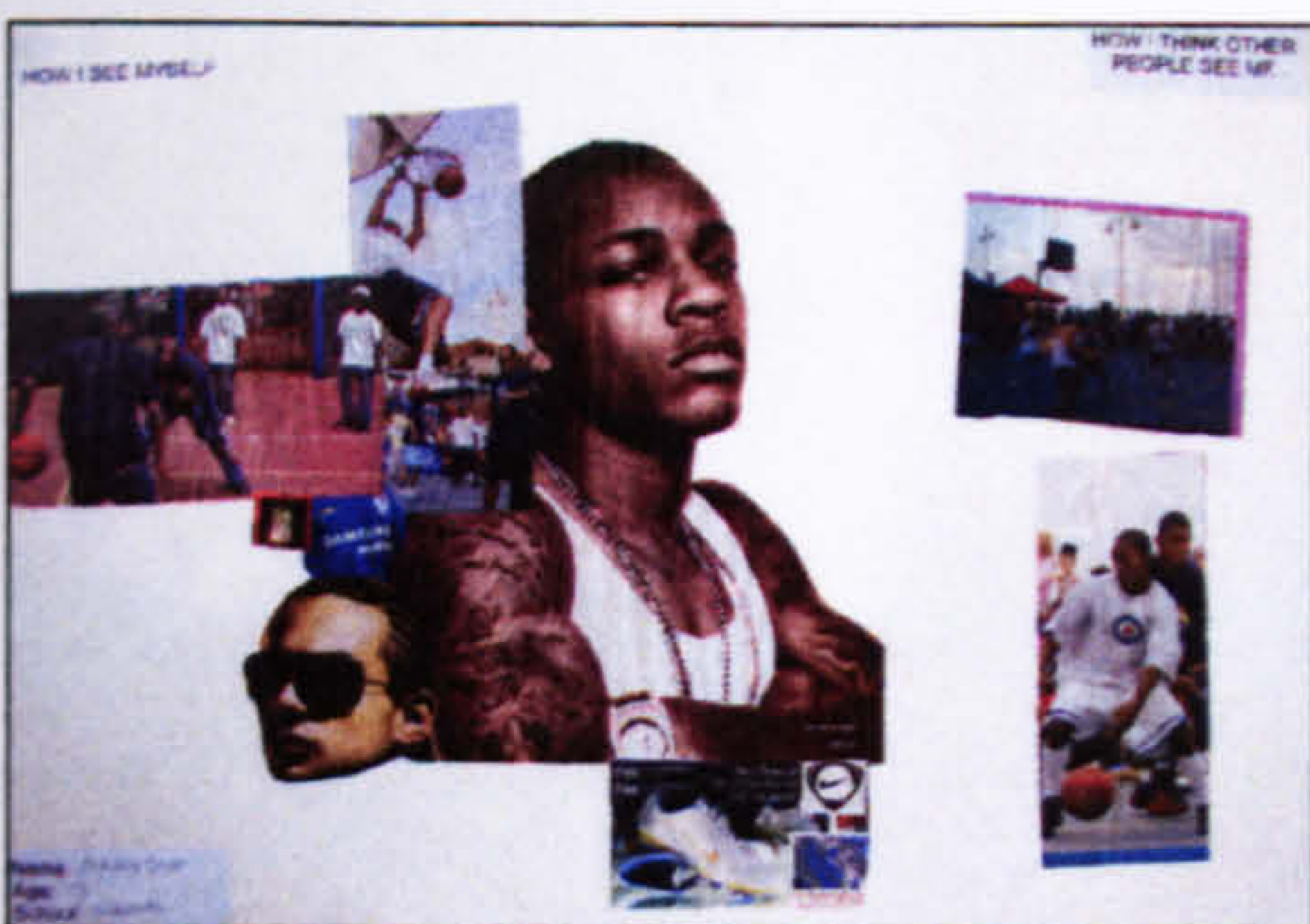
A.4.10: Queenie



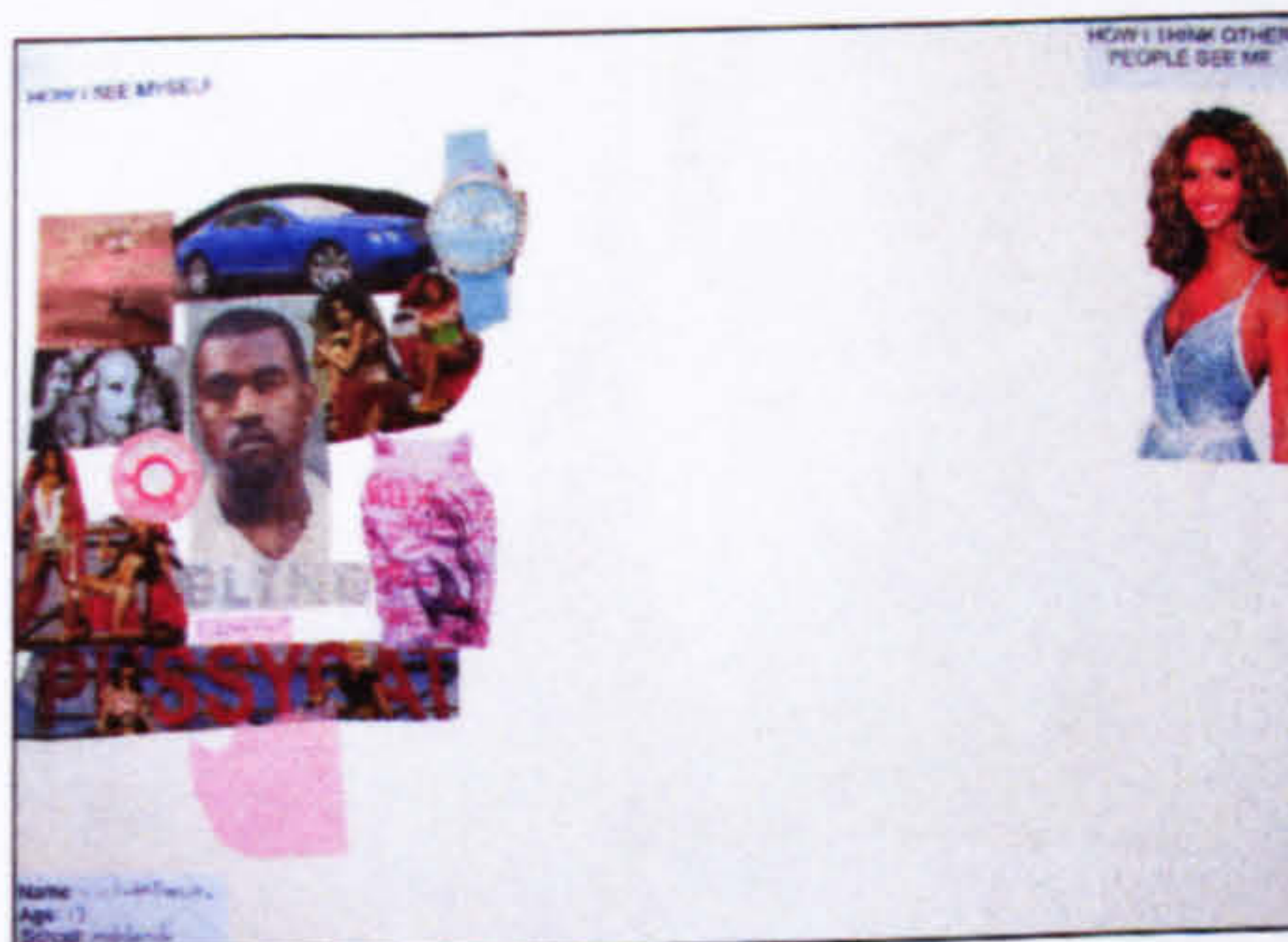
A.4.11: Lorna



A.4.12: Anna



A.4.13: Aaron



A.4.14: Celine



A.4.15: James



A.4.16: Carmel



A.4.17: Callum



A.4.18: Adrian

Appendix A.5: Regents Park Girls' School



A.5.1: Diana



A.5.2: Saira



A.5.3: May



A.5.4: Linda



A.5.5: Cathy



A.5.6: Janice



A.5.7: India



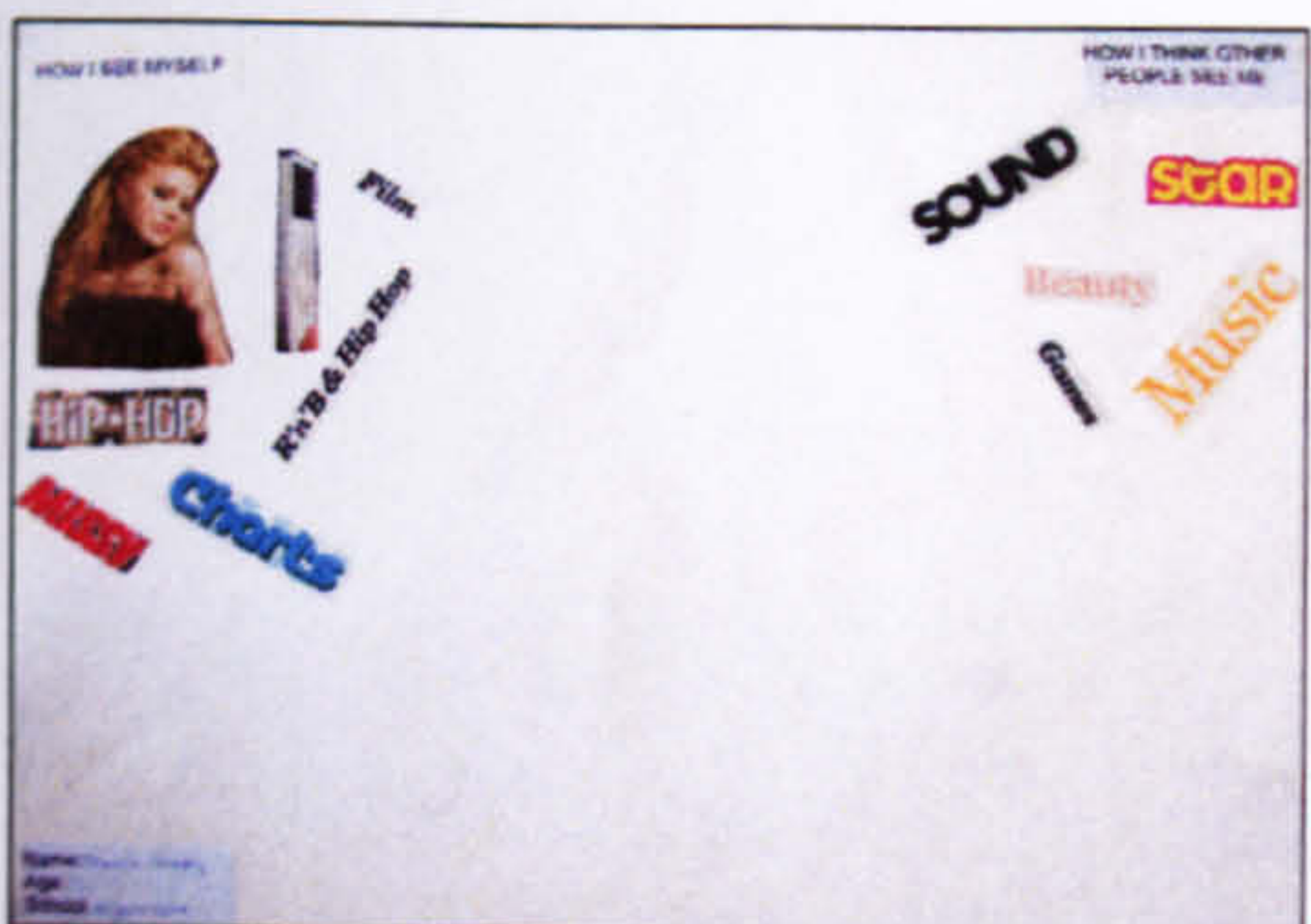
A.5.8: Sally



A.5.9: Polly



A.5.10: Amanda



A.5.11: Sheila



A.5.12: Sabina



A.5.13: Carly



A.5.14: Rita



A.5.15: Annabel

Appendix A.6: Twynham School Group One



A.6.1: Jake



A.6.2: Rose



A.6.3: Brian



A.6.4: Keira



A.6.5: Lucy



A.6.6: Tim



A.6.7: Sadie



A.6.8: Fiona



A.6.9: Keith



A.6.10: Charlotte



A.6.11: Christina

Appendix A.7: Twynham School Group Two



A.7.1: Christopher



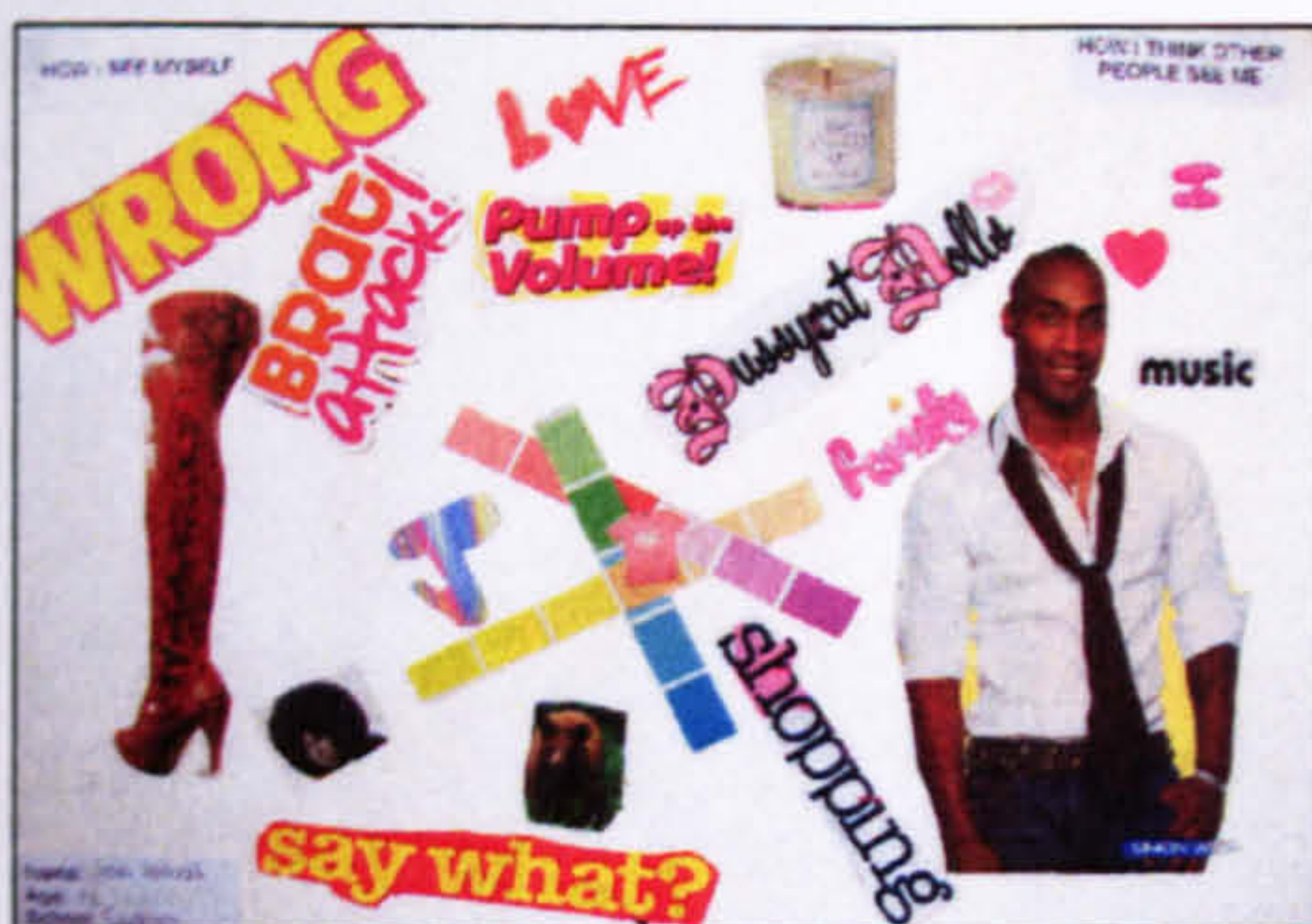
A.7.2: Joel



A.7.3: Helen



A.7.4: Nancy



A.7.5: Josie



A.7.6: Damon



A.7.7: Ellie



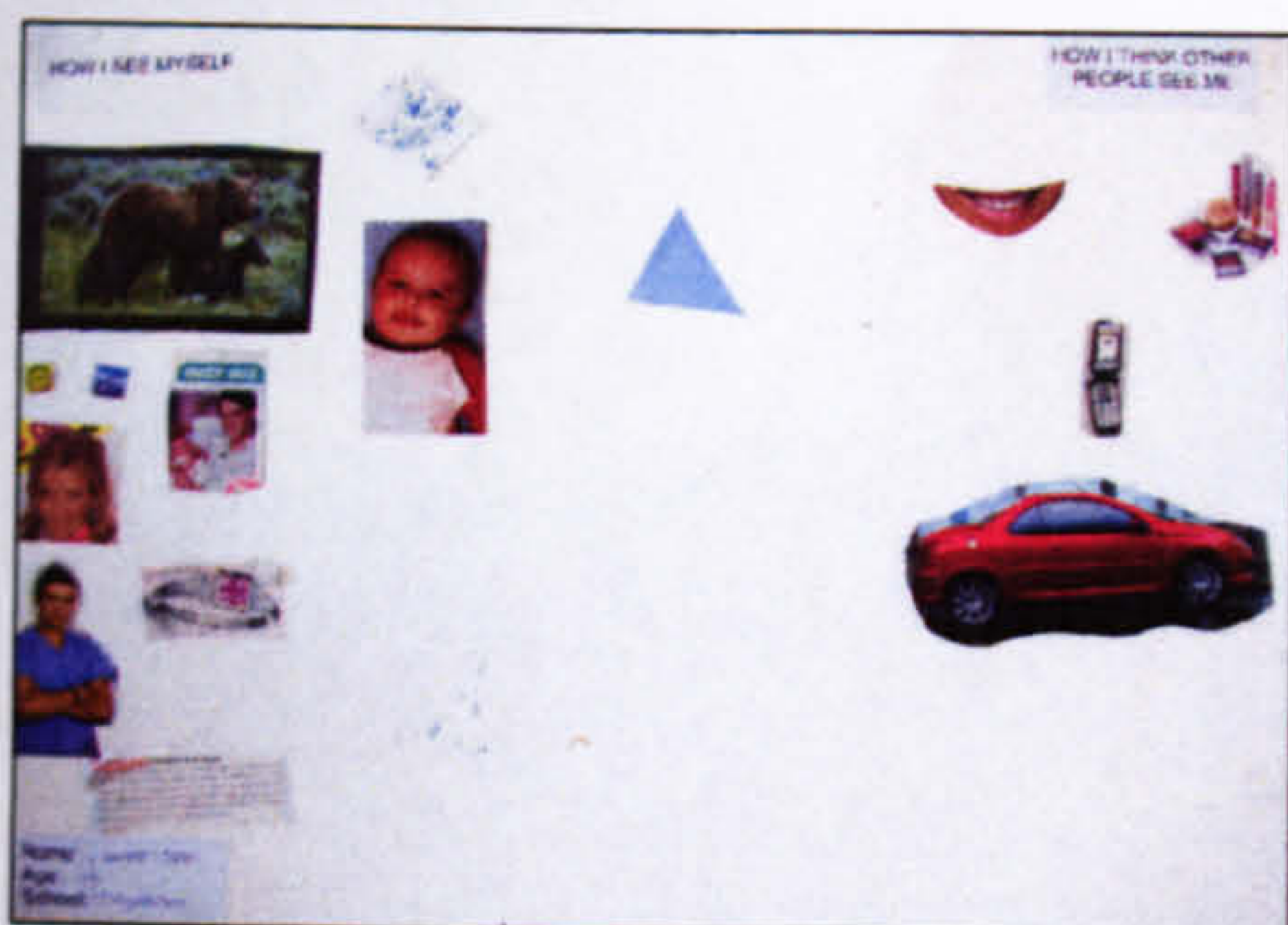
A.7.8: Debbie



A.7.9: Betty



A.7.10: Dale



A.7.11: Leah



A.7.12: Jacob

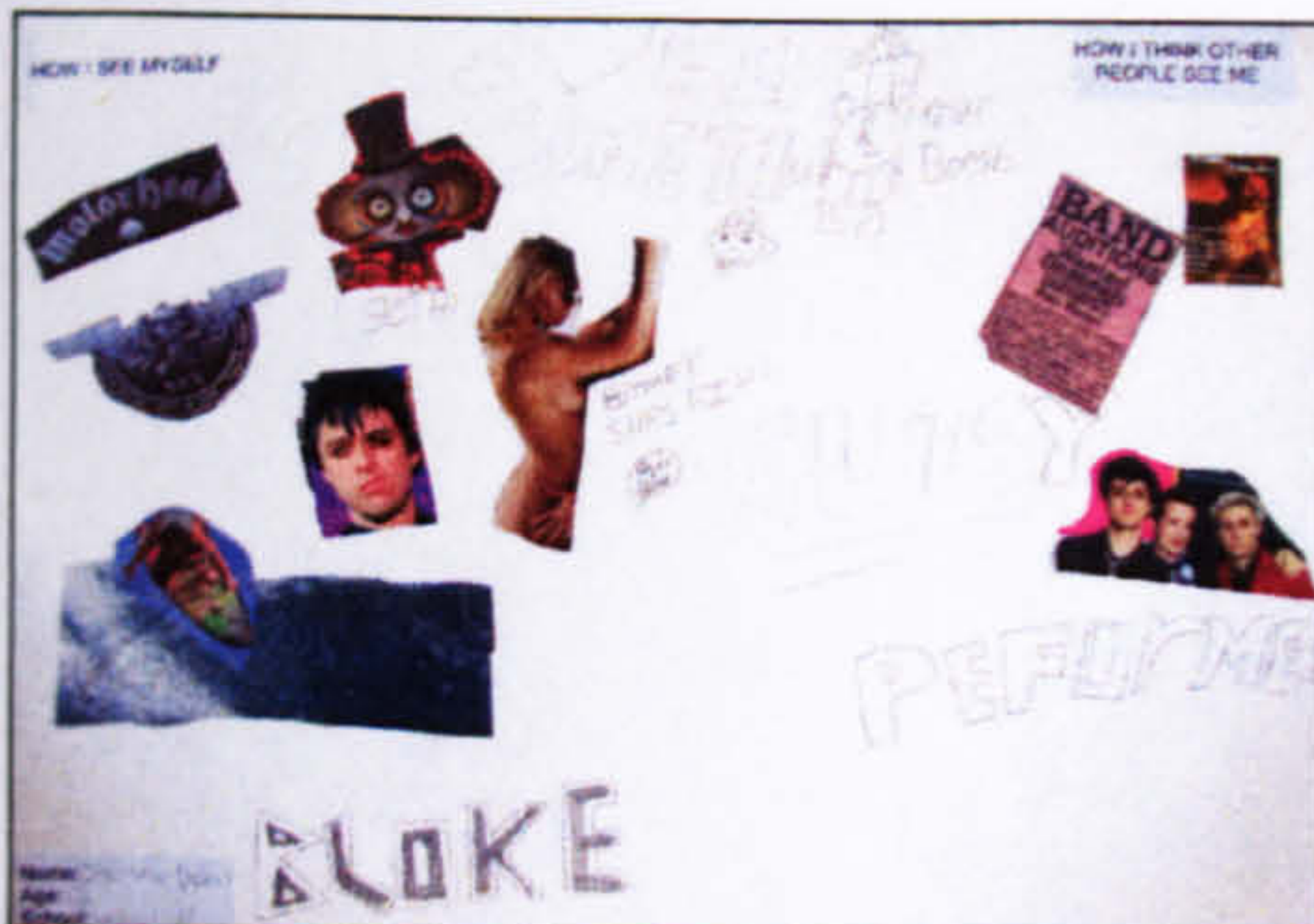
Appendix A.8: Willowfield School



A.8.1: Alfie



A.8.2: Andre



A.8.3: Carl



A.8.4: Jimmy



A.8.5: Amelia



A.8.6: Pamela



A.8.7: Rachel



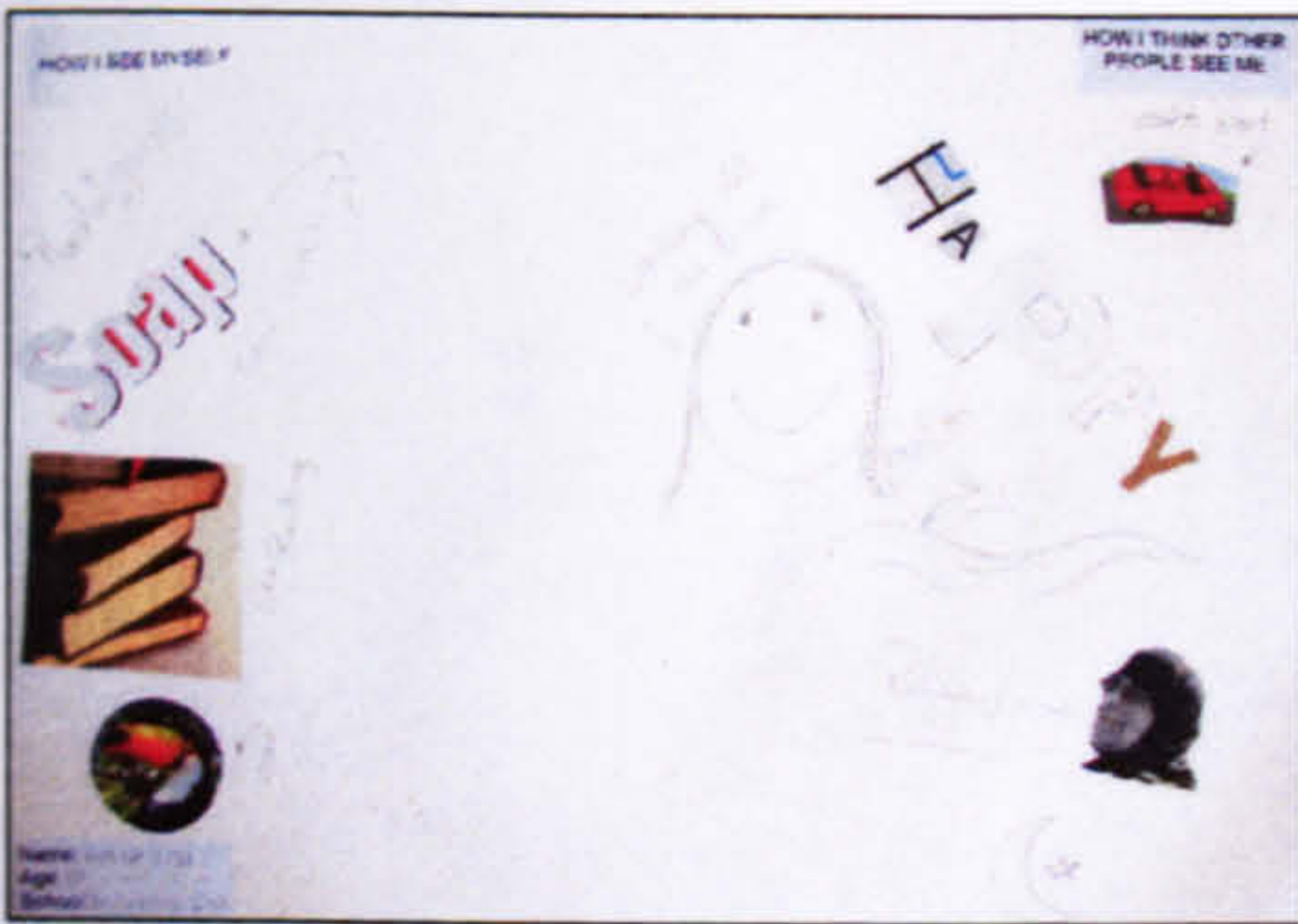
A.8.8: Zahra



A.8.9: Aisha



A.8.10: Qirat



A.8.11: Husna



A.8.12: Simone



A.8.13: Martin

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

Appendix B.1: Cantell School

(M=Michelle, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Let's begin with 'how I see myself'. Can you just go through the pictures that you've used and explain what pictures you've used and why you've used them?
- M: Yeah. I've used this woman [Kelly Rowland] because she's quite fashionable and I see myself as a fashionable person. I've used a picture of a Liverpool football team because I see myself as quite a supportive person towards the team. I put a love heart because I'm quite a loving person. I also put a laptop because I like to explore things and try new things.
- I: What about the pictures of Kat, Alfie [*EastEnders* characters] and, is that Lemar?
- M: Bow Wow.
- I: Let's start with Kat and Alfie, why have you used them?
- M: Because Kat, erm Alfie's quite cheery and he makes people smile sometimes so I just like Alfie, and I also have a temper to so I put Kat.
- I: And what about Bow Wow?
- M: I put him because I like him (laughs).
- I: So if you were going to sum up how you see yourself, what words would you use that the pictures are trying to express?
- M: Creative, fashionable, quite a happy person, quite tempered sometimes, powerful, respectful.
- I: OK, you said that you can have a temper//
- M: //yeah//
- I: //sometimes//
- M: //yeah.
- I: When you say get a temper do you mean you get angry?
- M: Yeah.
- I: What types of things make you angry?
- M: My sister borrows stuff from me and, um, sometimes I don't get things my own way.
- I: Sometimes you don't get things your own way.
- M: Yeah.
- I: Can you give me an example?
- M: Like if I was quite tired and just don't want anybody staying and something like that, and I can't go out late.
- I: OK.
- M: Yep.
- I: Now on this side [how I think other people see me] you've used a picture of Cat Deeley, a horse and the New Look logo and a phone. What are you trying to express on this side?
- M: I think other people see me as a trendy and fashionable person so they know that I like to go and buy clothes and things like that.
- I: So, you've got fashion on both sides//
- M: //yeah//
- I: //do you think though that there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- M: There's a few differences I think and there's a few same, 'cause like some people know I'm fashionable and some people don't but I think some people see me as quite a trendy person and like, I like different things.

I: How do you think other people see you differently to how you see yourself? You said that there are some differences, so apart from the fashion, what else?

M: Some people think I'm quite a calm person but I can actually have quite a temper.

I: So they think you are quite calm?

M: Yeah but I didn't actually find a picture for that yet. And like the horse actually, um resembles me because I'm a kind person by whole.

I: OK, so it's really the temper//

M: //yeah.

I: So if you were going to use a picture to represent temper, what would you use?

M: I would put either put a cat, I think also I'd put, um, maybe like some [inaudible].

I: And if you had more time, are there any other pictures that you would have put onto your collage?

M: I would have put more on how I see myself and go into more details like my feelings and that I can be quite an emotional person and friendly.

I: And what would you use to represent emotional and friendly?

M: Maybe two characters in quite a emotional scene or something.

I: Is there anyone that you think of in particular when you think of emotional?

M: Maybe Kat and Zoe [*EastEnders* characters] or somebody like that.

I: So, because of Kat and Zoe's relationship?

M: Yeah.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

M: Like I come from like all different backgrounds, different like, different types of families.

I: But if I asked you what your ethnicity is, how would you describe yourself?

M: English.

I: You say English.

M: Yeah.

I: Do you ever say British?

M: No.

I: Do you know//

M: //I don't know why.

I: So you just say English, you don't know why.

M: Yeah. I just say English.

I: OK, that's brilliant.

(S=Sapan, aged=13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've just done one collage yes [how I see myself]?

S: Yeah.

I: Can you just go through the images and words you've used and explain what you are trying to express with them?

S: I've got a picture of this game [image of a computer game] because I really like playing games a lot, and I'm a Hindu that's why I put a symbol.

I: What is this a symbol of?

S: Hindu.

I: This says Hindu?

S: No it's Ohm.

I: Ohm.

S: Yeah.

I: So you've got the word 'Hindu' and you've got the Ohm symbol, and you've also got//

S: //the flag//

I: //the Indian flag.

S: Yeah.

I: What about Darth Vader [*Star Wars* character]?

S: I just like films a lot.
 I: Why did you choose Darth Vader?
 S: 'Cause that's kind of like the films which I like, action films.
 I: Action.
 S: Yeah.
 I: And who are these two people [image of Indian actors]?
 S: They're just like Indian actors.
 I: And why have you used them there?
 S: 'Cause I like often look at, watch Hindi films.
 I: Hindi films.
 S: Yeah.
 I: Are these famous Hindi actors?
 S: Yeah, they're kind of like top.
 I: What about this cricket bat?
 S: I quite like sports and cricket.
 I: So you like sports and cricket as well?
 S: Yeah.
 I: Now, going back to these actors, who is this guy?
 S: I've forgot his name. That's Ashwaria [image of Indian actress].
 I: Now on this collage there is a lot about being Hindu and the fact that you are from India. Is that very important? Are you trying to express that you feel more closely connected to being Indian?
 S: Yeah.
 I: Could you explain a little?
 S: I just quite like watching films actually and I'm Hindu.
 I: Is your culture important to you?
 S: Yeah.
 I: It is.
 S: Yeah.
 I: Now on this side, 'how I think other people see me', you've not got any pictures. Is that because you don't think there is a difference or because you didn't have time?
 S: I didn't have time and I didn't kind of like know how other people see me.
 I: Do you think that if you had more time to work on this and you had time to think about it, do you think how you see yourself would be the same as how you think other people see you?
 S: No, it would be, they wouldn't like kind of like see me as like playing games and into films.
 I: So what do you think they [other people] would see you as?
 S: I don't know.
 I: What do you think people think when they see you? How do you think they see you?
 S: Kind of like average not that much.
 I: So average.
 S: Yeah.
 I: Do you think you're average?
 S: No, not that much.
 I: No.
 S: No.
 I: Do you think you're more than average?
 S: Yeah.
 I: So do you think if I took away the Indian flag and the Hindu symbol that the whole collage would have a different meaning? (long pause) Were you born in this country?
 S: Yeah.
 I: But there is no British flag. So let's say, for example with the flags, why did you choose to use the Indian flag instead of the British one? Why did you choose to put Hindu?

S: I would have put England as well but I didn't have time, but Indian because my parents come from that country.

I: So your parents come from India but you were born here?

S: Yeah.

I: So how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

S: Indian.

I: You'd say Indian?

S: Yeah.

I: So you'd say Indian even though you were born here [England]?

S: Yeah.

I: Yeah?

S: Yeah, well not exactly.

I: Why not exactly?

S: 'Cause like I was born from here but I'm still Indian.

I: Why are you still Indian?

S: Because my parents come from India and I often go there.

I: So do you identify more with being Indian than with British or English?

S: Yeah.

I: Is it important for you to let people know that you are Indian?

S: Not that much, but still kind of like would like people to know that I'm Indian so.

I: OK brilliant.

(J=Jason, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: So Jason, are these two separate collages or one?

J: They're separate.

I: Shall we start with 'how I see myself'?

J: Yeah.

I: Do you just want to go through the images and explain why you've used them, what you are trying to express?

J: Well I've got the gun because I get really fiery and angry, I got like the calm [image of a person in silhouette] because I like to be calm you know like at home, I chose like the mini motor because I like being fast and rushing, I don't like animal cruelty that's why I got the zebra, there's some games I like [image of a wrestler] like wrestling and I like Triple X, a good film like stuff I like, I like alcohol.

I: You like alcohol?

J: Yeah.

I: How old are you?

J: Thirteen.

I: But you like drinking?

J: Yeah not like//

I: //why do you like drinking?

J: 'Cause I just like, it's just nice to have different drinks and it's nice and I like the taste.

I: How much do you drink?

J: Oh I drink one bottle a week, only like Bacardi Breezer one of them.

I: With your friends or with your family//

J: //with my mum.

I: With your mum//

J: //yeah with my mum's permission.

I: OK, what about this picture of the boxer?

J: Because I like boxing and I've always wanted to be a boxer.

I: What is it about boxing that you like?

J: To just take all your anger out and like respond powerfully, it's really good, and then afterwards you're really calm.

I: But is it taking your anger out on a person or just being able to take your anger out that you like?

J: Just get my anger out that's better.

I: Just get your anger out.

J: Yeah.

I: So we've got a mobile phone there//

J: Yeah 'cause I like keeping (mumbles).

I: You like?

J: Keeping up-to-date stuff on the phone.

I: OK and who is this [image of a wrestler]?

J: Yeah, I like him.

I: Who is he?

J: I don't know his name I think its The Rock. 'Cause he's like my wrestling hero, he's not a dirty fighter he's a clean fighter that's good.

I: So even within fighting there are still rules//

J: //yeah, some people like get a big chain and hammer and all that but he's a really clean fighter.

I: And what about Kat Slater [*EastEnders* character]?

J: Oh she, like she like, *EastEnders* if it didn't have someone like Kat Slater it would be really plain, like if I like didn't have a lot of my friends around I think it would be really plain and boring.

I: So you think Kat Slater is quite plain?

J: No, she's really fiery and she's really good 'cause I like that.

I: Oh, so she's kind of similar to how you feel. She's quite a fiery person//

J: //yeah, and like she's not afraid to do anything.

I: So you like her assertiveness//

J: //yeah//

I: //and that she's a bit//

J: //yeah, she's not really quiet she's not afraid to say anything she just comes out with it.

I: And finally on this side you've used a flag of England.

J: Oh because that's my home country.

I: Your home country. If you were going to use some words to describe the feelings that you are trying to express in all these pictures, what words would you use?

J: Like really, that's how I feel I am.

I: So what types of words would you use?

J: Like ambitious and I like get on with things and that.

I: You're ambitious, you like to get on with things. You can be quite calm?

J: Yeah calm when I really want to be.

I: And quite angry?

J: Yeah.

I: What makes you angry?

J: Teachers.

I: Just teachers?

J: And people like, time is just sitting there going really slow and all that and it gets really frustrating and I find that makes me really angry.

I: What about [image of a zebra]//

J: //oh, animal cruelty I hate that.

I: What is it about cruelty to animals that//

J: //they kill them to test them and like make-up and that, and I think that's really wrong.

I: Why is it wrong?

J: Because it's not fair like that they're dying and that just so we can get a lipstick like what won't last very long.

I: So do you think there can ever be a time where you can test on animals and it would be alright?

J: Um, no I don't think there can.

I: Not even for medicine?

J: For medicine that's different, for make-up I//

I: //so for cosmetics//

J: //no, medical yeah I understand that, but make-up no.

I: OK let's move onto how you think other people see you. Do you want to go through the pictures again and//

J: //that big like devil because everyone says like I'm fiery or I can get really angry loads and the little devil because the teachers say to me, Miss Staines will say she always calls me a little devil.

I: You've also got a picture [image from animated film *Madagascar*] of//

J: //oh yeah, because I'm a family person.

I: So what's that from?

J: *Madagascar*, yeah I like that film.

I: And you've also got pictures of sport, like the cars and the football.

J: Yeah 'cause I like my cars 'cause I love my cars and Man Utd and Saints and England.

I: And what about the picture of this girl [how I think other people see me]?

J: Richard my best mate he says I'm obsessed by girls.

I: You're obsessed?

J: Yeah he says.

I: And are you?

J: Um, I don't know, I'm not sure.

I: So we've got fiery and angry and the devil which is here [how I see myself] as well, but do you think that there is a difference between how you think other people see you//

J: //yeah.

I: What's the difference?

J: Because Samuel thinks I'm like that there [angry and fiery], so he thinks I've never got a quiet side to me, but I have, I've got like a really quiet side to me and I've got a really angry side.

I: So you think other people only see the angry side?

J: Yeah.

I: So why do you think other people don't see the quiet side?

J: Because I get wound up really easy, you know I'm always annoyed.

I: You're always annoyed//

J: //yeah//

I: //but you have got a quiet side?

J: Yeah, yeah.

I: Do you usually, when you're at home//

J: //yeah, I'm really quiet and I just go and play PlayStation and listen to music.

I: What type of music?

J: R&B.

I: R&B.

J: Yeah and Eminem.

I: What is it about Eminem that you identify with?

J: Because he talks about his life and people and all that.

I: Why is that a good thing?

J: Because it makes me think what I do during the day.

I: It makes you think//

J: //what I done in the day, why I have done things and all that.

I: But do you think there is anything bad about Eminem?

- J: He is really because he sort of carries stuff around with him like he takes drugs and that's bad.
- I: So you don't agree with that//
- J: //no I don't agree with taking drugs and smoking, but I like his music.
- I: But you like his music because he's talking about his life//
- J: //yeah he's talking about life and all that//
- I: And that makes you think about your own life//
- J: //yeah all the things that I've done wrong and don't want to do again.
- I: If you had more time are there any extra pictures that you would have put on?
- J: Yeah I would have like to have put some more calm pictures on because I do like to be calm.
- I: You would have like to have put more calm pictures on.
- J: Yeah, because I do like being calm. I am calm at home a lot but when I'm at school I get really angry, but at home I'm really calm and relaxed.
- I: What do you think it is about outside that makes you angry? Is it just people?
- J: Yeah it's when people get in the way and that and like in school, and I just barge past, I hate waiting around.
- I: It's the waiting around, you can't stand it?
- J: Yeah waiting around, like just get on with things.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- J: I'm not religious but I do believe in my country.
- I: So would you say that you were British or English?
- J: I'm English.
- I: You would say you were English?
- J: Yeah.
- I: Why would you choose English over British?
- J: Because British that's a really big place, like I'm in England and I know it's the football team as well, 'cause British that's Scottish as well.
- I: So English is like//
- J: //yeah my home//
- I: //your home and more specific//
- J: //yeah.
- I: What does being English mean to you?
- J: Like England's got their own football team and all that, and England is just like a separate name, your standard.
- I: What do you mean your standard?
- J: Because British is just like a totally different flag innit', England and British totally different flag. I find English means a lot more.
- I: English means a lot more.
- J: Yeah.
- I: Why does it mean a lot more?
- J: 'Cause we use it a lot more, it's more common. British, that sounds wrong.
- I: OK, that's brilliant.

(M=Malcolm, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: OK Malcolm, are these two separate collages or are they one?
- M: That one [how I see myself] is what I like doing, whereas that one [how I think other people see me] is how I think people see me.
- I: So let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you just want to go through the images and explain why you've used each image, what you are what you are trying to express with them?
- M: I've used those two [images of a guitar and Gorillaz] because I like music and I look up to them.
- I: What is it about the Gorillaz that you look up to?

M: I think they're a good band and also the singer, um//
 I: //Damon Albarn.
 M: Yes him, has lots of political views that I agree with.
 I: Such as?
 M: Stuff like the Live 8 thing he said they should have had more multicultural bands and I agreed with that.
 I: You agree with//
 M: //his views about Live 8 and how that was run and everything.
 I: What about his other political views?
 M: I don't know but I assume he's good like that across most stuff that I don't agree with.
 I: OK, I know you relate to Damon Albarn and his politics, but what is it about that the music that you specifically like?
 M: I think it's different but still interesting and not sort of annoying it's a, it's cool but it's not annoying and you can listen to it anytime without it being annoying.
 I: So it's kind of like the fact that it's not mainstream, run of the mill//
 M: //yeah it's relaxed and sort of guitar driven.
 I: You've got a little picture of *The Simpsons* [cartoon] there.
 M: Yeah, that's just because I like *The Simpsons* really, it's funny.
 I: OK.
 M: I've got two games because I like playing PlayStation 'cause its fun. I've got a picture of George Bush with a red line across his face because I disagree with the way that he does things.
 I: Such as?
 M: Such as the war in Iraq for example.
 I: Why do you disagree with that?
 M: Because I don't think its fair or the right way to go about things.
 I: What//
 M: //just violence you know what I mean.
 I: So you don't agree with war or violence?
 M: No, and I don't think that was the right time to use it either.
 I: When would have been the right time to use it?
 M: I don't know, I think they were ill-informed and rushed into it.
 I: OK, and who are these guys [image of a black model and Michael Jackson]?
 M: Well that one [image of a black model] it's because I think he looks pretty stylish and chilled out, and I put in Michael Jackson because he's an amazing dancer, he's just cool.
 I: You think Michael Jackson is cool?
 M: Not nowadays, but I think he was cool when he did all his amazing dancing and that's why he's an icon, but not anymore.
 I: So are you using him on the basis that he is cool?
 M: Yeah.
 I: So if you were going to use a few words to sum up what you are trying to express with the images, like we've got cool, what other words would you add to that?
 M: Relaxed and not popular in terms of mainstream what everybody likes, and not unhappy because I'm always sort of grateful. I don't like really miserable stuff.
 I: So are you quite a content person?
 M: Yeah, yeah I'm happy with my life kind of thing.
 I: So let's move on to how you think other people see you.
 M: Well those two [image of a black man with scarf over mouth and a black and white model] it's about, I think people might see me as threatening when I'm walking down the street with my friends and things 'cause we shout a lot and talk loudly and I sort of like maybe look threatening to other people.
 I: And you've also got the word 'shifty' there.
 M: Yeah.

- I: Is that because you think people might think you are a bit of a shifty character?
- M: Yeah, when we're sort of walking down and sort of shouting and being loud and what we're doing and everything.
- I: Because the people that represent threatening are the black guy with the Union Jack around his mouth and, do you know who this person is [black and white image]?
- M: No, but I just thought he was sort of//
- I: //why does he look threatening?
- M: Because he's in black and white and he's sort of standing there, he looks sort of like he's gonna, I don't know he just looks like, like threatening and out there.
- I: And what about this guy [image of a black man], why is he threatening?
- M: 'Cause he's got his arms crossed and he's all sort of, um threatening looking.
- I: OK, let's move onto this man with flowers round his neck. What does he mean?
- M: He's like that because I'm meant to be laughing a lot of the time and he's sort of wearing bright clothes which I don't normally wear bright clothes I sort of act in a sort of happy, laughing, jolly sort of way which is how he's dressed.
- I: And what about these pictures of the skater and the t-shirt ['if you see anyone else wearing this t-shirt I must be dead']?
- M: Well I like skating and I like skating in public places although not much anymore, but I still do it now and again and I thought that was a cool t-shirt.
- I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- M: Yeah that's much more, how I think other people see me is much more a sort of outward appearance, whereas that [how I see myself] is what I like to do and how I like to be.
- I: So you said other people might see you as threatening, do you think you are threatening?
- M: I don't personally think I am threatening but I must seem very loud and shouting and things.
- I: Right, so do you think when other people look at you they see you as somebody who is interested in politics and who is quite relaxed and removed from the mainstream, not part of the mainstream and who thinks a bit differently?
- M: Yeah, yeah but only if they know me and everything.
- I: But what if they don't?
- M: If they don't know me they just think I'm another person that's just being sort of annoying and threatening and everything.
- I: Does that annoy you, that fact that people think about you that way?
- M: Sometimes but not really I just see it as, well I don't really know them or anything so it's no big deal I suppose.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- M: I'd say I was British or English.
- I: Which one of them do you usually use?
- M: I'd use British because some of my family is from Wales.
- I: So you'd use British because//
- M: //it includes everyone in my family.
- I: OK, brilliant.

(J=Joe, aged 14, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: So let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through the images you've used and explain what you are trying to express with each of them?
- J: There's various music things like the MP3 player and the guitar and stuff because I'm in a band and I like writing music a lot, I'm doing new songs all the time. There's a picture of Jimmy Carr because I think I'm quite funny. A mobile phone is there because I'm in contact with my friends quite a lot, like quite outgoing. There's a picture of an eye because I'm a visual learner. I don't like Tony Blair because he's

bad because he went to war and all that. There is a comic book because I like comics I like reading a lot. There's a watch because I'm always on time.

I: Right, Tony Blair you said he's a bad man.

J: Yeah.

I: Why is he a bad man?

J: Because he took us to war and I don't think that was the right decision.

I: So you think it wasn't the right decision. By making that statement do you see yourself as quite a political person?

J: Yeah.

I: What other political issues do you feel quite strongly about?

J: Um, I'm not really sure really.

I: What is it about Tony Blair that really annoys you? Is it just the war thing or is there anything else?

J: It's mainly the way he goes about things, the way he does things.

I: And how does he//

J: //I don't think he puts much thought into what he's doing.

I: He doesn't put much thought//

J: //no, he just goes ahead with what he thinks should happen and doesn't think about it long-term.

I: So he doesn't think about the long-term and he doesn't really listen to the public?

J: Yeah.

I: OK, the music, I've noticed that you've got Franz Ferdinand and Chris Martin from Coldplay. Now I'm assuming that you really like these bands//

J: //yeah//

I: //but what is it about these bands that you identify with?

J: It's their music mainly, it's about how they like play music.

I: But what is it specifically, what is it that their music expresses that you can identify with? Is it just the fact that they play their own instruments or is it more than that?

J: Yeah, yeah as I said they play their own instruments, they play what they want to play like their emotions or what they were thinking about at the time when they make the song.

I: So that's important, that people are expressing their emotions and are what we call real musicians?

J: Yeah.

I: Moving onto the eye, you said that you learn visually.

J: Yeah.

I: What do you mean by that?

J: I like looking at diagrams and like statistics and stuff like that rather than just reading a book and, it's like the same thing with the comics I like pictures with the words.

I: Right OK. And Jimmy Carr, you said that he's quite funny and that you see yourself as quite funny. Why do you see yourself as quite a funny person?

J: Because I think I'm quite laid back and quite open about things as well.

I: Let's move onto 'how I think other people see me'.

J: Well there's the 'fraud' [word], for instance lots of older people think that they, you know, like kids are like bad people, people who steal, people who do things like that.

I: Right.

J: And they think that we're rebels, so we're all rebels and we're all out to cause trouble and stuff.

I: And that's how you think other people see you?

J: Yeah, yeah because people have said it to me before.

I: And what about the 'suffering' [word]?

J: Well that's just wound up with the whole thing it's like they [other people] see, because lots of people live in council places and stuff like that and people think they're suffering and they're feeling bad about themselves.

I: Do you live in a council estate?

- J: Yeah my mum, with my mum I do.
 I: And what about the red?
 J: That's just to represent anger.
 I: So do you think that other people are justified to see you that way, or do you think that is a completely incorrect image of how you see yourself?
 J: I think that's an absolute incorrect image 'cause I'm not like that, I'm not a bad person.
 I: So you think other people, because of your upbringing, see you as a bad person because of living on a council estate?
 J: Yeah.
 I: So there's a huge difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 J: Yeah.
 I: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have added to your collage?
 J: On this side [how I think other people see me] I would probably put like black rappers because most people think young people are into rap 'cause we're all gangsters and that.
 I: So do you think that rappers represent violence and everything bad?
 J: No, some are, but that's 'cause that's how they're shown sometimes, but not all rappers are bad you know.
 I: Can you give me an example of a rapper who is bad though?
 J: There was that guy from So Solid Crew he got done for having guns. It's not cool for kids to see that sort of thing, like their idols being put in prison, but they're not all like that you know.
 I: And just finally, if someone asked you your ethnicity, what would you usually describe yourself as?
 J: British probably.
 I: Would you say British or English?
 J: I'd say British.
 I: Why would you say British?
 J: Because I've got a Welsh background and Scottish background as well.
 I: So British is more inclusive?
 J: Yeah.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(F=Faiza, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Is this one big collage or is it two?
 F: It's big one.
 I: One big one?
 F: Yes.
 I: So do you want to go through the pictures and explain why you've used them?
 F: First of all I'm talking about Somalia. I'm from Africa, my parents born there.
 I: Were you born there?
 F: No I'm born in Sweden.
 I: In Sweden.
 F: Yeah, and my parents and my cousins are from Somalian and I'm from Somalian.
 I: But born in Sweden.
 F: Yeah.
 I: And how long have you been here [England]?
 F: I've been here one year and seven months. That thingy shows real life, and real life shows about my family, the lines that I come from, my cousins and lots of things.
 I: OK.
 F: This is a movie; this is like a new comedy that comes on.

I: *That's So Raven.*

F: Yeah and I like that one because I watch twice movie. And this girl and boy it's like a family show, a friendship and that lot things.

I: OK.

F: And them two girls are like friends and I got in the middle the family.

I: You've got the family and why is this here [images if female boxers]?

F: Because they're fighting about the family.

I: Is it fighting in the family or fighting over the family?

F: Fighting over the family.

I: Who is fighting over the family then?

F: Both of them.

I: Why are they fighting?

F: I'm just making an example.

I: Yes.

F: She's like fighting for the baby, she's fighting for the little girl and they're like family, and she wants the boy and she wants the girl. They're fighting having fun, that sort of thing.

I: OK.

F: Allah means like it's my religion, it says Allah in Arabic. And Linda//

I: What is her name?

F: Linda I think.

I: Lindsey Lohan?

F: Yeah.

I: Why do you like her?

F: I like her dress and her hair.

I: You like her hair?

F: Yeah.

I: So you think she's pretty?

F: Yeah.

I: And you've also got pictures of women with headscarves on, is that because that links with the religion?

F: Yeah.

I: So what about this picture here [image of Chinese girls]?

F: It's a presentation of China like the new phones like coming out, they're like making new phones like a camera phone.

I: So looking at this, the country that your parents come from is very important to you. Is it important for you to say that I'm Somalian?

F: Yeah.

I: And also your religion is featured quite a lot. Is that very important to you?

F: Yeah, it's very important for me.

I: Why is it so important?

F: I like to like say how it's like, how important like my family is being like from Somalia and Muslim, that's more important to me, how my family thinks about what's important.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

F: Well if they like asked me where I come from I would say Somalian but I'm not born there, I'm born in Sweden.

I: So what do you see yourself as? Do you see yourself as Somalian or Swedish?

F: Somalian.

I: But what about now you live in Britain? Do you feel British?

F: Yeah a bit.

I: So what one would you choose to describe yourself?

F: Somalian.

I: Why would you go for Somalian?

F: Because I like Somalian house I live there and every person I know lives there.

I: OK thanks.

(K=Kendra, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: OK Kendra, let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you just want to go through the pictures and explain what you are trying to express?

K: OK I see myself as a family person [image of a family] 'cause like I'm always with my family and that and then that one//

I: //little Mo [*EastEnders* character]//

K: //yeah sometimes like, well most of the time, I can be like all really angry.

I: Really angry?

K: Yeah.

I: Do you think Little Mo is angry?

K: Yeah.

I: OK.

K: And that one [image of a smile], don't know like, like a joyful person and the phone 'cause I like keeping in contact with people.

I: What about, who is this person?

K: Warren.

I: Warren who?

K: I don't know he's the fella out of *Coronation Street*.

I: What are you trying to express with him?

K: That I'm sometimes happy.

I: That you're sometimes happy.

K: Yeah.

I: And what about Lee Ryan?

K: Yeah I love singing.

I: So you love singing. Do you think Lee Ryan is a good singer?

K: Yeah.

I: And the cat I love cats, and perfume I like smelling really nice.

I: And what about, he's another one from *Coronation Street* but I can't remember his name though?

K: Oh, Sean.

I: That's it.

K: It's another I just stuck him down.

I: So you just stuck him down?

K: Yeah.

I: Do you think he's quite a happy person?

K: Yeah.

I: And what's this here? You've got the word 'art' and you've got two girls playing//

K: //yeah 'cause I like playing sport and I like art.

I: So if you were going to use some words to describe what the pictures are trying to express what type of words, like we've got happy, would you use that the pictures are trying to express?

K: Kind, angry.

I: What makes you angry?

K: When people like pick on my family and me.

I: When people pick on your family. Let's move across to how you think other people see you. You've got a picture of Cat Deeley and another woman there, what do they represent?

K: They are like both happy girls which means like I'm always happy and everything.

I: You're always happy. And you've got the perfume, what does the perfume and the car represent?

K: The car like, people say that I'm like a sporty person and I like sometimes like smell.

I: So do you think there is a difference between the two sides? Do you think there's a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself?

K: Yeah.

I: What is the difference?

I: I think I've got angry and like people just think that I'm happy all the time.

I: Why do you think people don't see the angry side of you?

K: 'Cause I don't show it.

I: So when do you show it?

K: I just like sit there grumpy.

I: But do you do that in front of other people or do you do that maybe at home or on your own?

K: At home.

I: What types of things make you angry? You said about your family being picked on, what else?

K: When other people take the mickey out of me.

I: Take the mickey out of you.

K: Mmm.

I: Why don't you get angry in front of them [other people]?

K: I don't know, don't know, well if I get angry or whatever and start shouting at them I'll get done by my teachers and other people.

I: So basically if you do it, then you know there's going to be a consequence to your actions?

K: Yeah.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

K: British.

I: Why would you choose British over English?

K: Don't know.

I: Where are your parents from?

K: England.

I: OK, that's brilliant.

(R=Randeep, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

I: You've just done one collage [how I see myself]?

R: Yeah.

I: Do you want to go through the pictures and explain why you've used them?

R: I've used that//

I: //football//

R: //yeah 'cause I like playing sport and the Indian flag because my mum and dad's from India.

I: OK and you enjoy playing computer games because you've got pictures of cars from games.

R: Yeah.

I: Who is this man?

R: Gurdas Maan.

I: Who is that?

R: He's a famous Indian singer.

I: So why have you used him?

R: Because he's part of Asia, he come to my dad's wedding.

I: OK and you've also used the word 'Asian' and what's this?

R: A symbol, a khanda.

I: Is that Sikh?

R: Yeah.

I: So you're Sikh?

R: Yeah.

I: So on 'how I think other people see me' you've not done any pictures.
R: Yeah.
I: Do you think, if you had more time, do you think how other people see you is the same as how you see yourself?
R: Don't know.
I: What type of person do you see yourself as?
R: Sporty.
I: What else, because you've done your religion and Asian, why have you used them?
R: To show that I'm a more religious person.
I: To show that you are religious.
R: Yeah.
I: So it's an important part of your life. Is your religion important to you?
R: A bit.
I: A bit?
R: Yeah.
I: Why only a bit?
R: Because like Indian people go to the temple but I don't go that much.
I: You don't go that much, OK. What type of person would other people think you were?
R: I'm just a normal boy.
I: Just a normal boy. And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
R: British and Asian.
I: British and Asian.
R: Yeah.
I: Do you always say British and Asian?
R: No.
I: So what do you usually say?
R: Indian.
I: So you describe yourself as Indian?
R: Yeah.
I: Were you born in this country?
R: Yeah.
I: But your parents are from India?
R: My dad and my mum's from India.
I: But you still call yourself Indian. Do you think//
R: //both.
I: You're both but you usually say Indian?
R: Yeah 'cause I have to speak you know like Punjabi at home with them.
I: Is it important for you that other people know where you are from?
R: Probably, 'cause like English people like think he's an Asian so.
I: What do you mean by that//
R: //just 'cause I'm a coloured person so they would think as soon as they look at me like I'm a religious person.
I: English people will look at you and think what?
R: Like 'cause I'm coloured they [other white people] would probably think that I'm a religious person.
I: What type of religious person?
R: Everything, any like a Hindu or Muslim.
I: So you say Indian to make clear what you are?
R: Yeah.
I: OK brilliant.

(P=Peter, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've only done this side, 'how I see myself', do you want to go through the pictures and explain what you are trying to represent?
- P: Er yeah (long pause), OK.
- I: So let's start with Arnold Schwarzenegger why have you used him?
- P: Because he's a gun man.
- I: A gun man.
- P: Yeah.
- I: And what about the beaver?
- P: Um calm.
- I: Calm?
- P: Yeah.
- I: And what about, is that a trainer?
- P: Yeah.
- I: What is that for?
- P: Um I don't know, I don't know I've forgotten what it is I did for running or something.
- I: OK and then you've got games, is that because you like computer games?
- P: Yeah.
- I: Now on this side [how I think other people see me] you haven't done anything.
- P: Yeah.
- I: So you see yourself as quite a calm person but then you've got the gun to?
- P: I think I'm both of them really.
- I: But what are you trying to say with the guns? What do the guns represent?
- P: Er (long pause), just see myself as it.
- I: You just see yourself as it?
- P: Yeah.
- I: This is how you see yourself; do you think other people see you in the same way?
- P: Don't know.
- I: And if I asked you your ethnicity, how would you usually describe yourself?
- P: I'm British.
- I: You're British. Would you say British or English?
- P: English.
- I: Why would you say English?
- P: I just say it.
- I: You just say it.
- P: Yeah.
- I: OK thanks.

(S=Samuel, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've done two separate collages, so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you just want to go through the pictures and explain what you are trying to represent?
- S: OK then yeah. Well I picked a Darth Vader and the Luke Skywalker [*Star Wars* characters] theme because um, I thought was my step-dad was my dad and I just found out from my mum who my real dad is, so I cut that out.
- I: So you only just found out who your real dad was?
- S: Yeah.
- I: And somebody else has been raising you?
- S: Yeah.
- I: Right//
- S: //and then I picked that [UK map] because I live in Britain and then picked them [image of a Southampton footballer] because I live in Southampton and I like football and I picked him because //

- I: //who is that?
- S: That's Freddie Ljungberg who plays for Arsenal and I picked him because well, I didn't really know myself when I found out who my real dad was so I thought well Freddie Ljungberg he's foreign and he plays for an English team and he's like, he's been put down loads and loads of times by the press and all that so I thought like well we're kind of both outcasts so about the same 'cause we like (pause).
- I: Go on.
- S: Um, well I didn't know myself at the time because I didn't know who my real dad was and all that because my mum said like your dad ain't your dad and stuff like that and I thought OK what's going on, then I read in the newspaper that Freddie Ljungberg was being put down by the press and he, and he was saying a lot that he was sacked and hired, sacked and hired from the boss and it's the same thing, that loads of big surprises a big thing and what you can't expect and what you should expect.
- I: Right OK.
- S: And I got the car because um, because I really like driving because I go to Go-Karts a lot and it's a big hobby of mine.
- I: So if you were going to use some words to express what the pictures are trying to say, what words would you use?
- S: For?
- I: How you see yourself.
- S: What, just for each picture?
- I: Just in general. Like do you think you're quite happy or sad or confused or//
- S: //um, I'm kind of confused but happy about it.
- I: Confused but happy about it//
- S: //yeah 'cause I know that I'll find out and I know that I won't be confused for much longer. Like just to say I'll find out.
- I: About?
- S: About what I'm confused about.
- I: And what is it that you're confused about?
- S: Um my dad and like what he's like and he's got kids and anything like that.
- I: Right. So let's move onto how you think other people see you. Now on this side you've just got a picture of a zip over a mouth and then 'what on god's green earth' in words. What are you trying to express?
- S: With the zip well I'm very talkative and people usually like to shut me up so I put the zip over the mouth and what on god's green earth is well um, I've got a reputation for being really random and people usually say what's he doing and things like that so it's usually just like a major question of what I am.
- I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- S: Um no.
- I: Do you think, like maybe do you think there are things here [how I see myself] that other people don't see, or do you think that there are maybe things that other people might see that are not how you see yourself? Do you understand?
- S: Yeah, yeah, because I am like very secretive I don't talk about personal things I just talk about what other people think and what's just happened and the new stuff so I don't usually like tend to waste time talking about me 'cause I don't really think it's relevant at any of the time. I don't want to talk so I just think.
- I: So, what I think you're saying is that other people don't really know the emotional side of you?
- S: No not really because, well like I don't like to cry in public or anything like that so that's kind of an emotional secret, um I don't like being hurt. It doesn't matter if somebody calls me a name because I'll either take it, you know call them a name back and, well, I don't want them to know what hurts me 'cause I don't want them to

- see me cry or hurt so I don't want them to like see me 'cause I just want to remain random so.
- I: So it's easier because it's like a defence//
- S: //yeah//
- I: //because you're random and they don't know your weak points, they can't get to you, they can't hurt you.
- S: Yeah.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- S: Well um, I've heard that my dad is Irish so I'll be in between English and Irish.
- I: But if somebody asked you now, how would you usually describe your ethnicity, what would you say?
- S: I'd say I'm English.
- I: You'd say you're English, but would that change if your dad was Irish? What would you say then?
- S: Well I'd say, well I haven't known him and he didn't know that he was my dad so that's a massive revelation for both of us, and well he just wants to get on with his life and I want to get on with my life but we want to know each other at the same time so I don't think we are going to inter-lock that well, I just think that we are going to be friends.
- I: OK//
- S: //but not as far as like I would change my religion, which I don't have, I'm like heathen I don't have a religion I don't go by anything, so if he is Catholic I will just say well OK my dad is Catholic I don't care.
- I: So it wouldn't impact on you?
- S: No.
- I: OK brilliant.

(S=Scott, aged 14, male; I=interviewer)
 (//=overlap)

- I: Are these two separate collages?
- S: Yeah.
- I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through the images and explain what you are trying to express with them?
- S: Well this [drawing of a flag] is national identity, the Union Jack because I'm English, and I used two people playing guitars because I like guitars.
- I: OK so you like guitars. What sort of music do you like?
- S: Um, well, um rock, indie.
- I: What is about rock and indie that you like? Because here you've got Franz Ferdinand, what is it about their music that you like?
- S: I like the blend of hard and soft sounds with the bass and then you get guitars in overdrive and then you get drums which are like a boom and then you cymbals as well which are like shhh.
- I: But don't you get the same sounds in pop music?
- S: Not really 'cause you get like synthesizers and things in music, pop music.
- I: Let's move onto the rabbit. What are you trying to express with that?
- S: That's how I think I act towards other people.
- I: In what way?
- S: Sort of like nice.
- I: And what about that [image of a smiling mouth], is that happy?
- S: Yeah.
- I: And what is that?
- S: That's running 'cause I like athletics.
- I: OK, let's move onto 'how I think other people see me'. Now this is significantly different to the other side, so let's start with [image of a woman with big hair]//
- S: //bad hair. I had my hair cut at the weekend and that's what I had, massive bad hair.

I: So what about B.A. Baracus, what is he there for?
 S: Mr T, because um, you get people saying to me quite a lot you know because I'm big and stuff, Mr T.
 I: And you've got 50 Cent's [how I think other people see me].
 S: Yeah 'cause people say, they say like you're naughty, robbery.
 I: So he represents that you're a bit of yob and you're a bit of a thug//
 S: //only people who don't know me.
 I: Do you think 50 Cent's is a thug and a hoodlum?
 S: No he's playing at angry.
 I: But do you think he's a positive or negative role model?
 S: A negative role model but I don't know him that much I don't know what he's done apart from in his videos, but he's playing though, playing at ultra-macho.
 I: And Mr Blair, why have you used him?
 S: Because he wears suits and that represents to me nerdiness.
 I: So you see yourself as a nerd?
 S: Mmm.
 I: So do you think that there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 S: Yeah.
 I: What would you say is the biggest difference or biggest differences?
 S: Um.
 I: Like here [how I see myself] you've got happy and nice and that doesn't feature on how you think other people see you. Do you think that's because other people just don't see that side of you?
 S: No, not until they talk to me and get to know me//
 I: //right//
 S: //as myself rather than just as what they think I am.
 I: So do you think that if people were just to look at you their assumptions would be completely incorrect about you?
 S: Yeah.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 S: English.
 I: Do you always say English?
 S: Yeah.
 I: Why do you say English, because you have got the British flag there?
 S: I don't know it's just something I do by instinct.
 I: It's just something you do by instinct.
 S: I come from England.
 I: So it's because you come from England it's just instinctual to say I'm English?
 S: Yeah.
 I: OK brilliant.

(N=Noah, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: These are two separate collages yes?
 N: Yeah.
 I: So we'll start with 'how I see myself'. Let's start with Darth Vader [*Star Wars* character], why have you used Darth Vader?
 N: Not really sure of himself.
 I: Not really sure of himself.
 N: Mmm.
 I: Why is Darth Vader not really sure of himself?
 N: He's stuck in-between two worlds.
 I: What worlds are those?
 N: Good and bad, like ours.

I: OK.
 N: Er.
 I: OK let's go through these pictures.
 N: Mmm.
 I: Why have you used a picture of a dormouse?
 N: Er, for fascination.
 I: Fascination?
 N: Fascination and cute, cuddly.
 I: And the cute and cuddly, like the little tiger here?
 N: Well that's to show that I'm caring [image of a tiger] and I've got a gun.
 I: You're caring, OK, but why have you got a gun?
 N: Well I can get a little bit violent.
 I: You can get violent. What makes you violent?
 N: Well my, my brother.
 I: Your brother.
 N: Yeah he's annoying.
 I: What is it about him that is annoying? (pause) Or is it just lots of things?
 N: Yes many things.
 I: OK and you've also got a picture of *Jaws* [film poster], what is that there for?
 N: Shark, horror films, I like very gory horror films.
 I: Why do you like gory horror films?
 N: Not to sure.
 I: Do you get scared when you watch them?
 N: Sometimes.
 I: Sometimes. So do you like being scared?
 N: Mmm, it's pretty fun.
 I: It's funny.
 N: Mmm.
 I: And you've also got a car and football boots; let's start with the car what is that expressing//
 N: //I like driving; I like cars, fascination with cars.
 I: And what about the football boots? Do you like sport?
 N: I like sport and that's why really.
 I: And then on how you think other people see you, you've got football boots again and then you've got a big flag of England. Why have you done that there, the picture of the flag?
 N: Well it's just to show someone, well, part I like and, I just not really sure.
 I: You're not sure.
 N: Mmm.
 I: So if I//
 N: //fascination of football.
 I: OK so if I asked you how would you usually describe your ethnicity, what would you say?
 N: English.
 I: OK thanks.

Appendix B.2: Kelmscott School

(K=Karen, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Do you want to just go through your collage [how I see myself] and explain what pictures you've used and why you've used them?
- K: The crossword is I think I'm intelligent, and the Alex Ferguson one 'cause he demands a lot from the players to show that I'm demanding.
- I: Right.
- K: The Paris Hilton one 'cause I can imagine her to be quite selfish.
- I: Paris Hilton?
- K: Yeah so the phone that says I talk a lot.
- I: OK.
- K: And the woman [image of a woman wearing a tiara], I like people to run around for me 'cause I don't like to do a lot for myself.
- I: Right and what about the D&G and the [perfume]//
- K: //to show that I'm girly and the biscuit is to show that I'm sweet.
- I: Now you've not done anything on 'how I think other people see me', why//
- K: //'cause I think they see me the same way, how I see myself.
- I: So really this could be one big collage?
- K: Yeah.
- I: Do you think that there are any differences between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- K: I think they might see me as quite quiet.
- I: Do you think you're quiet?
- K: No.
- I: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have added to this collage?
- K: I might have done a few more on how other people see me.
- I: Such as?
- K: Crying and funny.
- I: And what would you use to show that?
- K: A timid person and um, I don't know what else.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- K: White.
- I: Do you always say white?
- K: Yeah.
- I: Ok that's brilliant.

(A=Azhar, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've done two separate collages.
- A: Yeah.
- I: Do you want to start with 'how I see myself' and go through the pictures and explain what they are and what you are representing with them?
- A: Well this is how I see myself. I've got a England country because that's where I'm from and I've got a football player because I like to play football and sporty, I like boxing and I'm sporty type of person, I like sports so I watch sports people. Here, I also peaceful person [image of a boat on a river] and I see myself also as serious, so I got political person here [image of George Bush] and I think I'm very loud [image of a tiger] and I like serious stuff so I got guns here.
- I: So you like serious stuff and you've used guns to represent that?
- A: Yeah.

I: I just want to go back to the sports people, you've used Amir Khan [how I see myself], do you think there are any qualities about him that you share?

A: Yeah he's Asian and a boxer and that's what he does so, I like boxing yeah.

I: OK//

A: //I like him.

I: What is it about him that you like?

A: He's a boxer and I like the way he fights so.

I: Now let's move onto how you think other people see you. What do these pictures mean?

A: Well I've used clothes to indicate that people see me that I like wearing clothes and that, and people like me like wearing clothes like.

I: And what about this monkey and the game?

A: I've got the monkey because people sometimes think I'm a bit cheeky at times just like a monkey and I like, people think I like games a lot so I put games on there.

I: Now on this side, on 'how I think other people see me', you've put down that people think that you're cheeky and that you like games and you like clothes.

A: Yeah.

I: But on how you see yourself you've put the politician and the guns that you say represent the serious side of you. Do you think that other people see that side of you?

A: No, there are two sides of me, like sometimes I'm all serious and sometimes I'm more funny and sometimes I see myself as all serious, but mostly I'm more like cheeky and a funny character that's why I put that there.

I: Do you think that there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

A: Yeah because like normally I'm serious to myself and not to other people, to other people I'm funny and to myself I'm like more serious.

I: Why do you think that is?

A: Because I like to joke with other people and with myself I'm normal like.

I: But do you think other people see the serious side of you then? Do you think that they understand that side of you?

A: I don't think they really know that I'm that serious, that's why I won't put my pictures there [how I think other people see me].

I: And what are you serious about?

A: Just like in life I'm serious like, whatever I do like at home or anything no joking about, but with other people I joke around.

I: If you had more time are there any extra pictures that you would have put on?

A: Yeah over here I would put other pictures like//

I: //on how you think other people see you//

A: //yeah I would have put like, I would put more like peaceful stuff over here, maybe other people see me more as a peaceful kind of person.

I: What would you use to represent peaceful?

A: I'd be like sea and, sea and waves and that with a beach and that, a river.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

A: I'd say I'm Asian British, that's how I describe myself.

I: Do you always say Asian British to describe yourself?

A: Yeah.

I: You do?

A: Yeah.

I: Is that how you see yourself?

A: Yeah.

I: Is it important for you to say the British part?

A: Yeah it's important that.

I: Why is it important?

A: Because I'm born in England and that's my country.

I: So is it important for you to let people know that you were born in this country//

A: //yeah//
 I: //that although you're Asian//
 A: //yeah it's important to say that I'm British.
 I: Why is it so important?
 A: That's where I was born, that's my country so.
 I: So that's your country?
 A: Yeah but I'm also Asian and loving my parents so I'm Asian British. Yeah, I see myself as that.
 I: OK, that's brilliant.

(K=Kashif, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: If we start with 'how I see myself', can you go through the pictures and explain why you've used them and what you are trying to represent with them?
 K: I've used that George Bush picture because he stands out like, you know that's how people see him sort of like how he sees himself, yeah, he stands out more like me.
 I: Can we go back to George Bush. What does George Bush represent, what are you trying to express with George Bush?
 K: It's like his face looks like a bit angry.
 I: So you see yourself as a bit angry?
 K: Yeah that's with him; he's a bit angry like that.
 I: OK, what about this person, who is he?
 K: Gus in *EastEnders*.
 I: Why have you used him?
 K: Because he looks like a bit happy.
 I: Happy?
 K: Yeah he's like a happy person.
 I: So he represents that you see yourself as quite a happy person.
 K: Yeah.
 I: What about the pictures of the forest and the footballer?
 K: The footballer looks like happy because he's probably, like probably made a goal or something, and the forest because, don't look like the forest that much.
 I: So basically, you see yourself as quite a happy person but you're also quite angry//
 K: //yeah.
 I: Now on how you think other people see you you've just used a few pictures of clothing. What do they represent?
 K: Like how people see me like, like some people like, mmm like I can't explain.
 I: You can't explain. Do you think there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 K: A little bit I think.
 I: What's the difference?
 K: It's like how people wear, like what sort of clothes do they wear, how they're looking.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 K: I'd say I'm like Pakistani.
 I: You would say Pakistani?
 K: Yeah.
 I: Were you born in this country?
 K: Yeah I was born over here; yeah I was born over here.
 I: But you would say I'm Pakistani?
 K: I would say that.
 I: Would you ever call yourself British or do you usually say Pakistani?
 K: I'd say British or Pakistani.
 I: What one do you think that you identify with more? What one do you think describes who you are more?

K: Pakistani.
I: Pakistani. OK that's brilliant.

(Z=Zakirah, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

I: You've done two separate collages yes?

Z: Yeah.

I: Can we start with 'how I see myself'?

Z: Yeah.

I: Do you want to go through each of the images that you've used and explain why you've used them and what you are trying to express?

Z: With the award picture what I tried to express was that how I'm always like winning awards and stuff. With the apple I tried to express how I was eating healthily and keeping to good diet and stuff. With the watch I was trying to express how organised I was, everyday. With the mirror I was trying to express how obsessive sometimes I can be.

I: Obsessive about?

Z: Like my hair and stuff.

I: So your looks or is it everything?

Z: Just my looks.

I: OK.

Z: With the clothes I was trying to express like how creative I can be and stuff.

I: What about the guy who is reading *Touch* [image of a man reading a magazine]?

Z: Yeah I was trying to express how good I can read and that I like, enjoy reading everyday.

I: OK.

Z: With the spider like how, how like tall I feel and stuff.

I: How?

Z: Tall like I feel.

I: How does the spider represent//

Z: //spiders like long legs, that's how I feel with long arms and legs.

I: Right.

Z: And with the coffee bit how hyper sometimes I can get, and this woman [image of a black woman] trying to express how long my hair can be.

I: So let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've used a picture of a girl in a long coat and a pretty model, what do they represent?

Z: How tall she is and how tall I feel, the girl wearing the coat.

I: And who is that guy [image of a black man]?

Z: He's a famous rapster.

I: Why have you used him?

Z: Because he looks serious and that's how I think people see me.

I: And what's this thing above it? Is that hair?

Z: Um yeah hair. Like how beautiful people like see my hair is.

I: So do you think other people see you as beautiful?

Z: Um sometimes.

I: Do you see yourself as beautiful?

Z: Yeah.

I: You do.

Z: Yeah.

I: Do you think there is a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself? Because here on this side [how I see myself] you've got creativity and you like reading and about the awards and the achievements, but that's not on that side [how I think other people see me]. Do you think other people see that side of you?

Z: Yeah sometimes they do.

I: When would they?
 Z: When I've been like, when I receive letters at home and stuff saying that I've achieved good in some lessons, like when I'm in class and stuff and I've been doing good work and the teacher like says it across the class then that's nice.
 I: Do you think there are any differences between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 Z: Um not really, not that much difference.
 I: If there's not that much what is the difference? What do you think the biggest difference is?
 Z: The biggest difference is about the serious, how serious people see me.
 I: So you think people see you as a lot//
 Z: //yeah//
 I: //more serious than you are. Why do you think that is?
 Z: Because of how I act like everyday I come to school and stuff, they see probably the serious side of me and they just think, they just judge me like the way I look.
 I: If there was more time, are there any other pictures that you would have put on your collage?
 Z: Yeah on how other people see me.
 I: What would you put?
 Z: Think I'd put more serious faces there.
 I: More serious faces?
 Z: Yeah 'cause that's the impression that people see of me.
 I: And you don't think that's the right impression?
 Z: No not really.
 I: And just finally, how you would usually describe your ethnicity? What do you usually say?
 Z: Mixed race.
 I: Mixed race?
 Z: Yeah.
 I: Do you always say mixed race?
 Z: Um yeah, I use that.
 I: Were you born in this country?
 Z: Yes.
 I: Do you ever say I'm British or I'm English, or do you usually say I'm mixed race?
 Z: Usually I say that I'm mixed race, some people know that I was born in this country so that makes me English.
 I: But you don't//
 Z: //no//
 I: //you don't say English?
 Z: I just say that I'm mixed race.
 I: Brilliant. Thank you.

(E=Emily, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've just done one collage yes?
 E: Yeah.
 I: Is this just how you see yourself or is it all one?
 E: How I see myself, yeah.
 I: Do you want to go through the images and explain why you've used them and what you are trying to represent with them?
 E: Babies 'cause I like, I like babies yeah and the t-shirt because it has two people hugging and I'm caring at times.
 I: It has two people arguing?
 E: Hugging.
 I: Hugging oh and you're caring sometimes.

- E: Yeah. 50 Cent's 'cause his swearing and I swear to a lot can't help it, and them two people at the bottom 'cause I'm quite laid back at times and, yeah that one with the baby because sometimes I talk rubbish yeah and babies talk rubbish and phones because I'm really chatty yeah.
- I: Who is this woman?
- E: Um I forgot her name, I can't remember, but Kanye West is my idol because he like speaks his mind and I speak my mind.
- I: Now you've not done anything on how you think other people see you.
- E: Yeah.
- I: Do you think then that how you see yourself is the same, or did you not do that because you didn't know how to or that there wasn't enough time?
- E: 'Cause there wasn't enough time.
- I: If you were going to do that side, do you think there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- E: Not really.
- I: No. Do you think there are any differences?
- E: A bit.
- I: Like?
- E: I don't think there is actually.
- I: So you think that how you see yourself is//
- E: //yeah//
- I: //that's how other people would see you//
- E: //yeah.
- I: If you had more time and there were any other pictures you could add, what types of pictures would you have added?
- E: I don't think I would add anymore, I don't think I would. A funny person maybe 'cause I find myself funny, that's about it.
- I: I've also noticed that you've used a lot of images of black people.
- E: Yeah.
- I: Now, for example, if I changed these pictures so they weren't images of black people and I maybe used white people or Asian looking people or Chinese//
- E: //yeah//
- I: // would it still have the same meaning?
- E: Yeah, I don't think the colour matters so much.
- I: You don't think so.
- E: No, but for him [Kanye West], like some of the things he says, the way he sings about like life I don't think that could be a white man.
- I: I don't know what Kanye West sings about.
- E: I can't explain it like.
- I: What do you mean?
- E: Right he sings for black people sometimes but the rest of them if you changed them I think it would work, yeah it would work.
- I: It would work except for Kanye West?
- E: Yeah.
- I: And just finally, how you would usually describe your ethnicity? What do you usually say?
- E: Well if you asked me I would say my mum's from St. Lucia and my dad's Jamaican, but if you ask me about me I say I'm Caribbean.
- I: You would say you were Caribbean?
- E: Yeah.
- I: Were you born in this country?
- E: Yeah.
- I: Why do you choose to say Caribbean over maybe British or English?
- E: I don't know 'cause it's, all of my family is Caribbean, my mum was born there my dad was born in the Caribbean so.

I: So that's what you identify with?
E: Yeah, yeah, yeah.
I: OK brilliant.

(M=Maryum, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)
(//=overlap)

I: Is this one collage [how I see myself]?
M: Yeah.
I: OK can you go through the images and explain why you've used the images and what they mean to you, what you are trying to express with them?
M: The two people [image of two men] is for friendship, that is for calm [image of a man sitting] sitting there is for calm, that's for kind [image of a man's face], that's for gentle [image of a man's face], that's for quiet [image of a man with head tilting], and that's a little cat for cute, that's for princess [word], that's for gentle [image of Winnie the Pooh], that's for pretty [image of a toy duck], that's for angel baby [word], and that's another one for cute [image of a kitten], that's for angel and that's for cuddly [image of a care bear].
I: OK you've got Amir Khan. Why have you used him?
M: For a boxer, because I'm into fighting a little bit as well.
I: And you've got//
M: //this is a spaceship [image of *Dhoom* poster], and that's because I like motorbikes so that's like all my mates like motorbikes as well that's a motorbike, and that [image of a man and woman] is for a person that I like.
I: You've not done anything on the other side [how I think other people see me], so do you think how you see yourself is the same as how you think other people see you?
M: A little bit.
I: Where is the difference?
M: It's like maybe they see a little bit more difference.
I: In what way?
M: About, I see myself as pretty and like maybe they don't.
I: So you see yourself as pretty and you think other people maybe don't.
M: Yeah.
I: I've also noticed on your collage that you've used a lot of Asian people.
M: Yeah.
I: Why is that? (pause) Let's say, for example, if I changed these pictures and put white or black people, would it still have the same meaning for you?
M: Yeah.
I: It would?
M: Yeah.
I: But why did you choose Asian people instead of//
M: //because people had cut out everything when I was looking and that.
I: So it's got nothing more to do with you identifying more with Asian//
M: //no nothing to do with that. I would have used white people, I just couldn't find the meaning behind them.
I: So you couldn't find the meaning behind the images of white people but you could find the meaning of//
M: //like if I did find them they didn't have nothing to do with friendship or something like that.
I: But what I mean is, you couldn't find the meaning with white images but you could see the meanings in the images of the Asian people?
M: Yes.
I: So the meaning, what you wanted to express, were they clearer in the pictures of//
M: //yes//
I: //the Asian people that you looked at?
M: They was.

- I: And you couldn't find them same meanings in the images of//
M: //if I could I did, but then other people took those as well, but other people took those images that I wanted and stuff like that.
I: OK. So you feel no type of connection with pictures of the Asian people?
M: No.
I: Why do you think the other people picked the images of the white people?
M: 'Cause then they'd have something linked to like, to link it with them.
I: Like?
M: Like they maybe want something to do with kind or meaning behind it so they took it.
I: But why would they take the pictures of the white people? Like you've got friendship there, why do you think that they wouldn't be able to use that for friendship?
M: They wouldn't. It's just that if whoever finds it you take it quick innit.
I: Er//
M: //like my other mate she did take it and she got some like that as well but she mostly got white as well and we shared some and she goes to me just take what you get.
I: And how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
M: Asian.
I: Do you say Asian?
M: Pakistani.
I: Pakistani. Do you ever describe yourself as English or British?
M: I would say I'm Asian British.
I: But do you say Asian British or Pakistani?
M: Because I'm Pakistani as well, but if they [other people] proper wanting details then I'm Pakistani and British.
I: But what do you usually say?
M: Pakistani.
I: So you usually say Pakistani?
M: Yeah.
I: So you don't usually say British?
M: No 'cause I'm Pakistani.
I: Why do you say Pakistani rather than British or English?
M: Because my family is Pakistani and my background is here I say Pakistani, and if they say where were you born then I say British I'm London, I was born in London.
I: So do you identify more, do you see yourself more as Pakistani than//
M: //British no. I say as much as I'm British, I'm British 'cause I was born here and I'm Pakistani 'cause my mum and dad are Pakistani.
I: But what I mean is, why do you call yourself Pakistani when people ask you?
M: Because that's what I am.
I: You're Pakistani?
M: Yeah.
I: OK that's brilliant.

(N=Nasif, aged 14, male; I=interviewer)
(I=interviewer)

- I: You've just done one collage haven't you [how I see myself]?
N: Yeah.
I: Do you just want to go through the pictures and explain what they represent?
N: OK the first picture is of a man that is, because he seems like gets something I really like doing it, and the picture of the motorbike is because I like driving.
I: You like driving?
N: Yeah. And the picture of these two video games 'cause I like playing video games, and the footballs because I like football, and the phone is because I have many friends, and the gun that's to shoot right down because I really like shooting.
I: You like shooting?

N: Because I've got a pellet gun at home.
 I: You've got a pellet gun?
 N: Yeah.
 I: If you were going to use some words to describe yourself, what words would you use?
 N: Interesting and a good footballer.
 I: Do you think you're violent?
 N: No not that much.
 I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you//
 N: //no not really.
 I: So you think this could be one collage?
 N: Yeah.
 I: No differences?
 N: No I don't think so.
 I: So you think what you see is what you get?
 N: Yeah.
 I: Do you think that there's anything about you that other people don't see?
 N: Like driving, driving cars.
 I: OK and just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 N: I'd say I'm Asian British.
 I: Do you always say I'm Asian British?
 N: Mmm.
 I: Where are your parents from?
 N: Pakistan.
 I: But you say Asian British?
 N: Yeah 'cause I was born here.
 I: So it's important for you to say that you're British?
 N: Yeah.
 I: Do you ever call yourself Pakistani?
 N: Yeah sometimes.
 I: Like when?
 N: Mmm I don't know, can't really remember but sometimes I do.
 I: Not all the time?
 N: No, not all the time.
 I: So what do you call yourself//
 N: //I normally call myself Asian British.
 I: OK that's brilliant. Thanks.

(M=Malik, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: So Malik is this one collage or two collages?
 M: Two collages.
 I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to explain what you are trying to represent with each picture?
 M: The monkey, I see myself as a cheeky person and I act a bit silly and I use light guns and explosions and everything [image of a man firing a gun], and the football, I like football I like playing it, the football and the ball are together, and I see myself as a good football player. The car well I would dream of having a very big car so that's how I see myself.
 I: Now under how you think other people see you you've just used a lion//
 M: //yeah//
 I: //what does that mean?

- M: 'Cause people see me as a really like happy and kind person and everybody says that to me as well and like in this case the lion looks happy so it represent me, how other people see myself, how other people see me.
- I: So you think people see you//
- M: //yeah, yeah//
- I: //as a happy and kind person//
- M: //yeah.
- I: Do you think there are any differences between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- M: Not exactly, well there are a bit.
- I: Like?
- M: I wear like kind of rap style clothes but I don't see myself as a gangster, but then other people do because of the clothes I wear and I don't really want them to think that because it's a difference there.
- I: So you think that when people see you wearing them clothes they make the assumption that you're a gangster?
- M: Mmm but I don't see myself as a gangster, but other people do because of the clothes I wear.
- I: OK, if you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have added onto this?
- M: Well I would have added like other happy pictures because, as I told you, people see me as a happy person and, yeah I would have added things like football and cars and stuff because I'm kind of chatty I chat a lot I'm very talkative, and yeah all those things.
- I: Do you think that there is anything about how you see yourself that other people don't see?
- M: No.
- I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- M: Asian British.
- I: Do you always say Asian British?
- M: Most of the time.
- I: What would you say if you didn't say that?
- M: Pakistani.
- I: Pakistani. What one do you use more often?
- M: Asian British because I'm Asian and I was born in Britain.
- I: When do you say Pakistani then?
- M: I don't usually say it because I'm half half, I'm Gujarati and half Pakistani. I'm Asian and I'm British born so I regard myself as Asian British. If you're born in Pakistan or other places then people would regard them as Pakistani.
- I: OK that's brilliant.

(J=Joyce, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Shall we start with 'how I see myself'? Do you just want to go through each of the images that you've used and explain why you've used them, what you are trying to represent, what you are trying to express? So let's start with the picture of the car.
- J: I've used the car because I can um (long pause).
- I: What are you trying to say? (pause) OK let's move on, let's go onto Peggy Mitchell [*EastEnders* character].
- J: I don't like her because sometimes I'm grumpy and she's always grumpy.
- I: And what about [image of a rat]//
- J: //that when I'm at home I can like be really rude and stressful and everything.
- I: And what about this picture of the girl with the baby?
- J: 'Cause I like babies a lot.
- I: And what about this girl [image of a boxer]?

J: 'Cause I like boxing and everything like that.
 I: OK so let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've only put two pictures there. You've got one picture of Demi [*EastEnders* character] and then you've got a picture of a little girl. What are you trying to say with them?
 J: Well, shy.
 I: You look shy?
 J: Yeah.
 I: So you think other people see you as shy. Is that how you see yourself?
 J: Sometimes, it depends who I'm around.
 I: It depends on who you're around?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Do you think then there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 J: Yeah.
 I: What's the difference?
 J: When I see myself, I'm really rude and when other people see me they see I'm kind and shy.
 I: You see yourself as rude?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Why do you see yourself as rude?
 J: Because my friends and me are like rude yeah and, it's just a bit, it just carries around with me.
 I: And if you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have put on?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Like?
 J: That side [how I think other people see me] I don't know.
 I: You don't know.
 J: No I'm not sure.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 J: I'm half English and half Irish.
 I: So do you always say half?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Do you ever say I'm English and that's it?
 J: No.
 I: Why do you always say I'm half Irish and half English?
 J: Because some people they um, some people think that if you speak their language it sounds like you're boring because you say you're English you're boring.
 I: Ok that's brilliant.

(Z=Zak, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Let's go through the pictures on 'how I see myself', do you want to explain what you are trying to represent with them. What you are trying to express about how you see yourself?
 Z: Well over there [image of trainers]//
 I: //the trainers//
 Z: //yeah I'm trying to express that I'm a sporty kind of person, I love sports (pointing to image of a football).
 I: What about the mobile phone?
 Z: I like talk a lot on the phone and stuff.
 I: So you're quite a chatty person?
 Z: Yeah.
 I: And what about this [image of a car]?
 Z: I just love cars.
 I: You just love cars.

Z: Yeah.
 I: So on this side [how I think other people see me], is this a collage?
 Z: Yeah, 'talk to the hand' [words].
 I: What does that mean?
 Z: Other people think I'm kind of rude.
 I: Other people think you're rude. Do you think you're rude?
 Z: Sometimes.
 I: Like when would you be rude?
 Z: Like, just like if I'm mucking about with my mates I might say a rude thing or a couple.
 I: Do you think that there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 Z: Um not that much.
 I: Not that much. So where is the difference?
 Z: Er (long pause).
 I: Like where might they differ?
 Z: I'm not sure.
 I: You're not sure. So do you think how you see yourself is how other people see you? Do you think that both sides are the same?
 Z: Um yeah.
 I: But you're not sure?
 Z: I'm not sure.
 I: And just finally how you would usually describe your ethnicity? (pause) You've written India here//
 Z: //yeah//
 I: //but how would you describe yourself if somebody asked you?
 Z: Asian British.
 I: Would you always say Asian British?
 Z: No, it's like if some old man come up to me maybe.
 I: So when would you use that and when wouldn't you use that?
 Z: With friends and stuff.
 I: What would you say with friends?
 Z: Paki.
 I: You'd describe yourself as a Pakistani?
 Z: Yeah, with friends then innit.
 I: So when you're with friends or with Asian people//
 Z: //everyone thinks I'm Paki.
 I: So is that why you just say//
 Z: //no they just assume it.
 I: But what would you call yourself?
 Z: Asian British or say I'm from England.
 I: You would say that you're Asian British?
 Z: Yeah.
 I: But when you're with your friends you describe yourself as Pakistani?
 Z: No, they just think I'm Paki I don't describe myself, if they ask me I'll say Asian British.
 I: Why wouldn't you say I'm Indian?
 Z: I don't know, just.
 I: What you identify with more, the Asian or the British?
 Z: Both.
 I: You see yourself as both?
 Z: Yeah.
 I: OK that's great.

(Balqis, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to just go through the pictures and explain why you've used them and what you're trying to express? So let's start with this flag.
- B: I draw it because, er, I Pakistani and my parents and stuff like that.
- I: And you've got a cricket player here//
- B: //because I like cricket.
- I: You like cricket.
- B: Yeah that's why.
- I: What about this woman here [image of a Muslim woman]?
- B: Wear hijab, because I wear hijab and that meant I cover me.
- I: So you've got the woman to show you wear a hijab [head scarf]. What about this, the woman [image of a model]?
- B: Because I like going out and shopping 'cause I'm like fashionable and I like jewellery and I like, I like being me.
- I: Let's go onto how you think other people see you. You've put 'angry', 'quiet' and 'funny' [words]. Why have you used these here?
- B: Because sometimes I might be angry at home and outside and just quiet at school and funny at home that's why I put it here.
- I: Is this how you see yourself though?
- B: Er.
- I: Do you see yourself as angry?
- B: Yeah a little bit, but I don't think I'm angry every time but other people think I'm angry.
- I: And you've put Allah in the middle//
- B: //because I'm Muslim and I want to put it there that's why.
- I: So that's important for how you see yourself and//
- B: //yeah.
- I: Do you think there's a difference between the two sides?
- B: Yeah a little bit because I think I'm like quiet and funny but other people think I'm rude and this thing but just at school because, because you know like I'm new in this country?
- I: Yeah.
- B: And then other people bully me and that's why I a bit angry.
- I: So because they bully you?
- B: Yeah.
- I: Why do they bully you?
- B: Because I can't speak properly English and I'm Pakistani, many people like think that I'm Muslim and Pakistani and that's why they curse me.
- I: OK and just finally I asked you what your ethnicity is and you said Pakistani. You were born in Pakistan?
- B: Yeah.
- I: How long have you been in England?
- B: Twelve months.
- I: Twelve months. Would you ever call yourself British?
- B: I don't, I don't want to because I don't like this country that's why.
- I: You don't like this country?
- B: Yeah.
- I: Do you think there is a difference between Pakistani people like you who were born over there, and Pakistani people who were born over here?
- B: Yes bit different because in this country some people, er, know like don't care about religion, in Pakistan it's been this way but in some cities like very hard, very religious people in Pakistan that's why.
- I: So you think the Pakistani's here, you don't have anything in common?

- B: Many things are common but like, er, you know in this country the children don't like respect teachers and parents but in Pakistan it's very big thing, we respect people and teachers and parents, we have to, don't act with no good people who think like this.
- I: OK and even the Pakistani people here you think don't//
- B: //no, many people do that but many people don't care about it.
- I: Many people don't care about it.
- B: Yeah.
- I: OK that's brilliant.

(J=Jamila, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to explain what you are trying to express and represent with the images?
- J: Yeah I've done the heart yeah which represents loving and I've done the little baby that represents caring, and I done Islamic writing, Arabic writing, which represents I'm a Muslim, and I done a lady like happy 'cause I'm always happy and clothes which represents I'm fashionable and individual and like to do my own thing.
- I: OK, and what about how you think other people see you? You've got a parrot, a butterfly and a little child who looks happy. What are trying to express with them?
- J: Well I done a parrot 'cause most people think I'm a bit chatty with them, and butterfly which like I always fly around I'm always in different places at once yeah, and I done a little kid smiling which I'm always joking.
- I: OK, now on how you see yourself you've got religion because you've used text from the Quran//
- J: //yeah//
- I: //but on how you think other people see you you've not done that. Do you think that other people see you as religious?
- J: No.
- I: Why not?
- J: I don't know just, I don't know because mostly people don't think I'm Muslim because I look different, they think I'm Indian or something, Hindu.
- I: Do you think there's a difference then between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- J: A bit.
- I: What is the difference?
- J: The fluttering around and the chatty, I don't think I'm that talkative but most people think I talk a lot.
- I: Most people do.
- J: Yeah.
- I: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have put on?
- J: Er, I don't know.
- I: You don't know?
- J: Yeah I would have put a Hindu symbol which might represent other people thinking I'm Hindu 'cause mostly when I come here everyone asks if I'm Hindu first.
- I: Does that bother you?
- J: No they think they, like when they know me and stuff like.
- I: So it's not that big a deal?
- J: No.
- I: OK and just finally how you would usually describe your ethnicity? What would you usually say?
- J: Asian British.
- I: Do you always say you're Asian British?
- J: No, mostly I'm Bengali.
- I: Bengali.
- J: Yeah.

I: So you don't say Asian British you usually say Bengali//
 J: //sometimes.
 I: But do you usually say Bengali//
 J: //yeah.
 I: Why is it important for you to say I'm Bengali?
 J: 'Cause that's what I am.
 I: So that's what you identify with//
 J: //yeah//
 I: //more//
 J: //yeah.
 I: Is it more important for you to say I'm Bengali than it is for you to say I'm British?
 J: Er.
 I: Is it more important for you to express to people that you're Bengali?
 J: No it's not that important.
 I: But if it's not that important then why is it important for you to say I'm Bengali?
 J: Um, tricky question, um.
 I: Why do you even say I'm Bengali?
 I: Um.
 I: There's no right or wrong answer.
 J: So other people know where I'm from and what I am.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(J=Jasmine, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've just done one collage yes [how I see myself]?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Can you explain to me why you've used these pictures and what they represent? So can we start with the flower?
 J: I like to smell flowers so that's why I put the picture there, and I have 'respect' [word]. I think I'm pretty.
 I: You've used Mariah Carey for that?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Do you think Mariah Carey is pretty?
 J: Yeah.
 I: And what about the lips?
 J: I like make-up.
 I: You like make-up.
 J: Yeah.
 I: Now you've not anything on how you think other people see you, why is that?
 J: I didn't have time to finish it.
 I: If you did have time more time to work on it, do you think that both sides would be the same or do you think that they would be different? .
 J: Not the same.
 I: What type of differences would there be? (pause) Like what types of things do you think other people might see you as that you think, that isn't how I really am//
 J: //quiet.
 I: Quiet.
 J: Yeah.
 I: What else? (long pause, Jasmine shrugs) You can't think.
 J: Mmm.
 I: You've put Mariah Carey there do you think other people think you're pretty?
 J: Some people.
 I: Like who?
 J: Um (long pause, no response given).

I: OK, and just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity? What would you usually say?

J: I'm Indian.

I: Were you born in this country though?

J: Yeah.

I: But you'd say I'm Indian?

J: Yeah.

I: Always?

J: Yeah.

I: Do you ever say I'm British or do you ever say that I'm British Asian or do you always say I'm Indian?

J: Indian.

I: You say you're Indian. Is it important for you to let people know that you are Indian? Like do you get annoyed if people call you Pakistani?

J: Yeah.

I: Why?

J: I don't know.

I: OK, thanks.

(G=Ghazal, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've done two little collages, so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to explain what images you've used and why you've used them?

G: Yeah I used a dog and a person and a person holding a dog because like to show that I'm kind of caring like that, I've done a chocolate I've done that 'cause I love chocolate.

I: OK.

G: I've done McDonald's like chips and burger for McDonald's, I like going to McDonald's and eating their burgers, and I've done a lady with a big smile I done this because that shows I'm always happy.

I: So let's go onto how you think other people see you. You've just used a picture again of a lady smiling. Is that the same, because people see you're happy//

G: //yeah people see me as happy.

I: And what about the watch, what does that represent?

G: When I went through the magazine I found this watch then I thought that's a bit fashionable.

I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

G: Not that much.

I: So where would the differences be?

G: Um.

I: Like do you think there's anything about how you see yourself that you think other people just don't see//

G: //no not really.

I: So you don't think there's a difference?

G: No.

I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

G: Whenever they [other people] ask me I say Turkish 'cause my parents are from Turkey and I don't really say British or something like that.

I: So were you born over here?

G: Yeah.

I: You were born over here but you say//

G: //I say I'm Turkish.

I: Why is it important for you to say I'm Turkish instead of saying I'm British or I'm English?

- G: So that people can exactly know where I'm from and like what place of the world I'm from and that's all.
- I: So do you identify more with being English or with being Turkish?
- G: Turkish.
- I: Turkish.
- G: Yeah.
- I: OK that's brilliant.

(D=Daniya, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've done two collages so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Can you just explain what the images mean to you, what you're trying to express with them?
- D: Well that one, the top one//
- I: //the baby//
- D: //the baby means that I'm caring. The ring and watch means that I like shopping for things that suit me and I'm fashionable and yet I'm also into fashion, and the make-up I like wearing make-up kind of thing. The girl who is like smiling looks like she's shy so sometimes I'm shy and stuff, and that one's [image of a brown haired woman] happy I'm mostly happy.
- I: OK and what about on how you think other people see you because you've just used a picture of one lady and a bird.
- D: The bird makes you feel like I'm really, you know birds they fly off everywhere innit and they're adventurous and like people think I'm really adventurous just like my friends think that and like, like I don't know how to explain but like they think I'm loud like I speak a lot I say all my feelings out.
- I: Who is this lady?
- D: It's just a lady who, who's like, she's sticking her head out kind of like, she's like, I can't explain it well.
- I: She's quite proud//
- D: //proud, yeah confident, confident.
- I: And that's how you think other people see you//
- D: //other people see me.
- I: But do you feel proud and confident and like you can speak your own mind?
- D: No.
- I: But you think other people see you as quite a confident person?
- D: Yeah.
- I: So do you think that there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- D: Yeah 'cause I'm not really adventurous like going off to places and, and.
- I: And other people think you're a lot more confident and assertive//
- D: //yeah//
- I: //and maybe a stronger person than you actually feel that you are//
- D: //yeah, yeah, I'm like shy and quiet.
- I: OK and just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- D: I would describe myself as Pakistani like.
- I: You would say Pakistani?
- D: Yeah 'cause that's my culture and like my parents were brought up there like I was brought up here but still I respect my faith.
- I: So is it important to you to say I'm Pakistani?
- D: Not really.
- I: But then why do you say it?
- D: 'Cause, 'cause when people see me they think that I'm Pakistani 'cause I look Pakistani yeah and stuff but I call myself like both like British and Pakistani, 'cause like I was brought up here and I speak this language, but also for one or two years I was brought up there and speak that language so.

I: But when people ask you, you do usually say I'm Pakistani?
 D: Yeah.
 I: You do?
 D: Yeah.
 I: Is there one that you feel more than the other? Do you feel more British than Pakistani or more Pakistani than British//
 D: //more Pakistani.
 I: You feel more Pakistani than British?
 D: Yeah.
 I: OK thanks.

(A=Amira, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: OK Amira you've done two collages, so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to explain what pictures you've used and why you've used them?
 A: I've used that [image of blue colour] 'cause I think I'm a bit, I'm in a good mood at times and the grey like I can be a bit horrible when I'm in the mood.
 I: OK.
 A: And there's a heart because I'm caring and that is [image of a bank] because I like the music and, I don't know.
 I: What about that, is it a rapper?
 A: Yeah, Snoop Dog.
 I: Why have you used Snoop Doggy Dog?
 A: He's good at rap and stuff and I'm always writing and always like thinking about new stuff to write.
 I: Let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've just used the word 'glamorous' and a picture of a baby, what do they//
 A: //people think of me like cute and glamorous and I look nice and I can be caring at times.
 I: OK//
 A: //but I also look like an ordinary person and happy.
 I: You've just said that you think you look like an ordinary person, but it is also very obvious that you are religious because you are wearing a headscarf//
 A: //yeah//
 I: //do you think that people think about that when they see you? Do you think they might look at you and think she's Muslim or do you think that isn't what they see first? What do you think that they see?
 A: Yeah I think they do see that I'm Muslim because of my headscarf and the way I look and that but I'm not really sure.
 I: Do you think when people look at you then that they see the headscarf as a good thing or a bad thing?
 A: They see it as a good thing 'cause they know that I'm religious and you're part of your religion and you know what your religion is about.
 I: So you think that when people see that that's a positive thing?
 A: Yeah.
 I: Do you think there are any differences between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 A: Um.
 I: Not just from what you've done but what you think.
 A: Um (long pause), I don't know. How do you mean, how other people think of me?
 I: Yes. (pause) Do you think they have an impression of you, like when they see you, that is maybe not how you see yourself?
 A: Yeah, but they might have a different opinion to me as in that I can be horrible at times but other people might think that I can't be because I'm Pakistani but I can be kind and caring and stuff like that, that's what I think.

- I: And just going back to 'how I see myself'. Your religion is obviously important to you because you do wear the headscarf, but you've not put anything about that under how you see yourself.
- A: I don't really see myself 'cause, I don't really see myself as religious 'cause I don't really do I always have stuff yeah.
- I: So it's just so normal, who you are, you don't think about it?
- A: Yeah I don't really think about it 'cause I don't, OK it is important to me like that. I don't think of what others, not like one of the main that I think about it a lot.
- I: Right. And just finally how you would usually describe your ethnicity?
- A: Asian or Pakistani.
- I: What one would you usually use?
- A: I'd say Asian, I'm an Asian.
- I: You would say Asian, or Pakistani sometimes?
- A: Yeah.
- I: So when would you say Pakistani and when would you say Asian?
- A: If people ask me as in like where do your parents come from and like what culture you are I always say yeah I'm Pakistani but like if somebody, like if people look at me and say what type of race and stuff are you I say that I'm Asian and stuff.
- I: Were you born over here though?
- A: Yeah I'm British Asian.
- I: But do you always say British Asian?
- A: No I don't.
- I: Do you identify with British or do you identify with being Asian?
- A: I would say Asian, I'm just an Asian.
- I: That's what you identify with most?
- A: Yeah.
- I: Yeah?
- A: Yeah.
- I: OK that's brilliant.

(H=Henry, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

- I: You've just done one collage yes//
- H: //yeah//
- I: //'how I see myself'. Do you just want to explain to me why you've used each of the pictures, what you are trying to express about yourself with them? So let's start with the mobile, why did you use the mobile?
- H: Because I, I like it.
- I: You like the mobile.
- H: Yeah.
- I: OK and what about, you've got pictures of cars. Why did you use pictures of cars?
- H: Because I like cars and I like racing.
- I: So if I was going to use some words to describe the type of person that you see yourself as, how you see yourself, what words would you use?
- H: Um.
- I: Like do you think you're loud, angry, fun or hard-working or, how do you see yourself?
- H: I think like hard-working and not loud.
- I: Not loud.
- H: No.
- I: So quiet.
- H: Yeah.
- I: Now you didn't do anything on the other side, do you think that when other people see you//
- H: //yeah//

I: //do you think the way they see you is the same way as how you see yourself? (pause)
Like when they look at you do you think that they see someone who is quiet?

H: Yeah.

I: You do.

H: Yeah.

I: Do you think that other people might think something, like they might think something about what type of person you are that you don't feel you are?

H: Yeah.

I: Like what?

H: I don't know.

I: And just finally I asked you about your ethnicity and you said Bulgarian.

H: Yeah.

I: Were you born here or were you born in Bulgaria?

H: In Bulgaria.

I: You were born in Bulgaria.

H: Yeah.

I: So how long have you been here? How many years or months?

H: One and seven.

I: Nearly two years?

H: Yeah.

I: Do you say you are Bulgarian or do you think that you are British? What one do you feel more?

H: Bulgarian and British.

I: You feel both?

H: Yeah.

I: What are the differences, do you think there is a difference between being Bulgarian and British?

H: Yeah.

I: What's the difference?

H: I like my country more, and I like it more here.

I: So do you miss your country?

H: No not that much.

I: You don't miss your country that much, but it's important for you to say you are from Bulgaria so people know where you are from?

H: Yeah.

I: OK that's brilliant.

Appendix B.3: Millbrook Community School

(D=David, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: So let's start with your collage David. Do you want to just explain what pictures you've used on the 'how I see myself' side and what they mean to you, what they represent?
- D: OK I've got a picture of Gordon Brown who is like the Prime Ministers PA or whatever it is, and he wants someone dead he wants to be//
- I: //he wants who dead?
- D: Tony Blair.
- I: OK.
- D: I've got a picture of Tony Blair because he's like all powerful like me.
- I: In what way do you think you're powerful?
- D: My voice. I'm very opinionated.
- I: Why?
- D: Because, because//
- I: //do you think Tony Blair is opinionated?
- D: Sort of, but he lies a lot as well.
- I: He lies a lot.
- D: Yeah.
- I: About?
- D: Policies.
- I: So do you think he's a good figure or a bad figure?
- D: Probably a bad one.
- I: But that's part of how you see yourself?
- D: Yeah. And this little assassination guy here has some, load of guns, I'm gonna grow up to be a murderer.
- I: A murderer?
- D: Mmm.
- I: What about the puppy though and the heart and the penguin, because they're quite soft compared to the other images?
- D: The penguin is just my favourite animal so.
- I: Why is it your favourite animal?
- D: Don't know, just is. And the little 'break my heart' [words] thing, I don't know why I put it on there I just kind of stuck it on there.
- I: Does it mean anything to you?
- D: No. And the little puppy just, that's just I've got dogs.
- I: That you've got dogs?
- D: Mmm.
- I: And what about the 'touch' [word]?
- D: It's all shiny and stuff like that so, yeah it's kind of loud.
- I: Loud?
- D: Yeah.
- I: Does the word touch represent anything for you? Is there a reason why you chose that word?
- D: No.
- I: So it was the shininess?
- D: Yeah.
- I: Let's move onto 'how I think other people see me'. Let's start off with the image of the tiger, the fly and the eagle. What do they mean?
- D: The little tiger means, I don't know, free and loud and you know do what you want to do. And the crazy wacky fly thing represents madness and freaky looking.
- I: Freaky looking?

D: Yeah, and mad.

I: What about the eagle?

D: The eagle represents freedom.

I: Freedom?

D: Yeah and you know same as the tiger really.

I: OK and what's this image [image of a little monkey] here?

D: It's a monkey.

I: A monkey. What does a monkey mean to you?

D: It represents my Chinese year, monkey, the year of the monkey.

I: And we've got Dracula here.

D: Dracula represents kind of like evil.

I: What was that?

D: Evil.

I: Evil in what way?

D: Because I can be really sound, but then if someone gets on the wrong side of me I can be nasty and evil.

I: You can be sound but//

D: //yeah, but then if they get on the wrong side of me I can be evil.

I: You've also got the word 'wild' here four times why is that?

D: I don't know, just wild, it just wild. More wild.

I: Now I've noticed on this side, on how you think other people see you, you've actually used quite a lot of images from nature, like animals. Why is that?

D: I've just always liked nature so you know, like animals have a lot in common with people really don't they personality wise.

I: Animals have a lot in common with people personality wise?

D: Yeah.

I: Do you think there's a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself?

D: A bit yeah but then//

I: //in what way?

D: Because like, I don't know really just, I don't know.

I: Because here [how I think other people see me] you've put down evil and quite freaky and wild. Do you think they are positives, that they are good things that people see in you, or do you think that people see them as bad things?

D: People, some people may see them as bad things and some people may see them as good because like maybe like the teachers and stuff see me, you know, like as wild or something like that, see me as bad and stuff like that but really I'm just a kid trying to have some fun and they don't understand that so.

I: If you had more time are there any extra pictures that you would have put on your collage?

D: Yeah.

I: Like?

D: Loads.

I: Such as?

D: Just some different pictures of, maybe some more animals and stuff like that.

I: And just one more thing, I noticed on how you see yourself you've put down a picture that you said represented murder.

D: Yeah.

I: Why do you see that as part of how you see yourself?

D: Because, like, because sometimes I get really angry and stuff like that and I feel like killing people like Richard [pupil].

I: OK, just one more question, how would you describe your ethnicity?

D: British.

I: Is that how you always describe your ethnicity?

D: Yeah.

- I: That's excellent. Thank you.
- (R=Richard, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)
(//=overlap)
- I: Richard, let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to discuss the images you've chosen?
- R: I have an image of some fashionable people because to myself I think I'm very fashionable. I also have a picture of something saying 'I want a f***ing baby' [words] because it's funny and I see myself as a humorous person (laughter in room).
- I: What about the Brad Pitt head?
- R: I think I resemble Brad Pitt in many ways and the body that I have there I think is exactly the same except mine has a few more packs on there (laughter in room).
- I: Right. Thinking about this side, about how you see yourself, now I know you've been laughing but are these things that you genuinely think you are, or are they things that you aspire to, that you want to be like that?
- R: Well David [pupil] told me to say yes to that I think I am, but I think I aspire.
- I: You aspire to//
- R: //except that one.
- I: Except the humorous one.
- R: Yes.
- I: So inside you aspire to be fashionable and have a body like that and look like Brad Pitt?
- R: Yes.
- I: OK let's move onto this side 'how I think other people see me'. Would you like to go through the images here?
- R: Well I have a picture of Matt Lucas on one of his sketches of Andy [*Little Britain* character] the matey in the wheelchair because I think people find me quite funny at times. Also have some words saying 'lots on his plate' because I think people see me as fat. I also have a picture of Dafydd Thomas [*Little Britain* character] because he's gay and people sometimes see me as gay. I have a picture of Kat Slater [*EastEnders* character] because she's feisty and people think I'm feisty, and then I have a picture of Hitler because people think I am cruel at times to certain people.
- I: And you've also written in the middle. What does this say?
- R: 'Me, myself and I' and 'King Richard'.
- I: Now looking at your collage there's quite a difference between this side [how I think other people see me] and how I see myself. What do you think on the whole people see you as?
- R: Um.
- I: Do you think they have a high opinion of you or a negative opinion?
- R: A bit of both, it depends on who it is. Some people have a low opinion.
- I: Such as who?
- R: People like Prateech, Hannah Pond [pupils] and people I don't like, and some people such as David [pupil] has a positive image about me.
- I: And you've also used images of women to show fashionable [how I see myself].
- R: Yeah.
- I: Why did you choose to women and not images of men?
- R: Because I couldn't find any men that looked fashionable.
- I: You couldn't find any men that looked fashionable?
- R: No. Not like that anyway (laughing).
- I: Also the Hitler image and 'cruel at times' [words], when can you be cruel? Or do you feel you're a cruel person?
- R: Sometimes to Hannah Pond [pupil] yes because we don't get along so I quite a lot cruel to her and she's cruel back. To Prateech [pupil], I admit I will admit I am a bit racial to him at times I have been.
- I: Why are you racist to him?

- R: I don't know I've just been like, if I've been sat next to him I've said to David [pupil] before he smells or curry or something just mucking around which, if you think about it you know it is out of order but at the time it was just a funny thing to say but it doesn't mean anything.
- I: OK. If you had more time to work on your collage are there anymore pictures that you would have liked to have put on there?
- R: Yes, I would have put a picture of Martin Luther King.
- I: Why?
- R: He was a hero because he stood up for what he believed is right.
- I: And which side [of the collage] would you have put that on?
- R: In the middle.
- I: In the middle?
- R: Yes.
- I: And what else?
- R: I cannot think at the moment, I can only think of Martin Luther King.
- I: Also, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- R: Richard come from China (mimicking Chinese accent).
- I: Why do you say Chinese?
- R: Because it's funny (mimicking Chinese accent) .
- I: Where are your parents from?
- R: British, Britain (mimicking Chinese accent).
- I: They are both British?
- R: Yeah (mimicking Chinese accent).
- I: But you say Chinese?
- R: Yeah (mimicking Chinese accent).
- I: And you say Chinese because?
- R: It's funny (mimicking Chinese accent).
- I: It's funny?
- R: Yeah (mimicking Chinese accent).
- I: So you regard being Chinese as being funny? You think being Chinese is funny?
- R: I think if teachers say where come from I'll always say Chinese and put on an accent because I think it's funny at the time.
- I: OK, thank you.

(D=Dan, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: So Dan, could you start with 'how I see myself' and just explain what images you've used and why?
- D: I've used, um//
- I: //what's this an image of?
- D: PlayStation portable because I like playing like games and on PlayStation.
- I: And you've also got an image of an eagle there.
- D: Because I'm not like, I don't really talk much but I normally just watch so.
- I: So you don't really talk much and you just observe//
- D: //yeah.
- I: So is that why you've got the word 'quiet' there?
- D: Yeah, quiet.
- I: Now let's go onto 'how I think other people see me'. You've not used any images you've only got the words 'quiet' and 'tall'. Why is that?
- D: Because probably people don't really know me that much because I don't speak (pause).
- I: Let's move back to 'how I see myself'. If you could have put more images on this to express how you see yourself what types of things, if you had more time, would types of things would you have put down?
- D: Um (long pause), I don't know.

I: Because so far all I can see is that you like PlayStation and that you're quiet and that you observe. Is there any more to how you see yourself?
 D: (long pause) I don't know.
 I: You don't know?
 D: (long pause) No.
 I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 D: English.
 I: OK, thanks Dan.

(S=Sean, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Sean, would you like to start with 'how I see myself' and just go through the pictures please?
 S: I've got pictures of PSP and controllers because I like gaming.
 I: PSP and//
 S: //controllers .
 I: Controllers. Because?
 S: Because I like gaming and things like that.
 I: Gaming?
 S: Yeah.
 I: OK.
 S: And I've got pictures of cars and the word 'Porsche' because cars runs in my family and I like cars. I've got a picture of Morrissey because I like his music and I like that type of music and things and I've got the colour black because that's my favourite colour.
 I: Let's go back to the picture of Morrissey. What exactly is it about Morrissey and his music that you like?
 S: I like the way he, the way he writes and how it means things to him, that's important for me.
 I: And are there any particular songs or albums or messages that you get from Morrissey that really stand out for you?
 S: Yeah there is like one of them *Meat is Murder* that is getting cross about killing animals and things, it's not very nice and things and that's what made most people become vegetarians.
 I: Are you a vegetarian?
 S: No.
 I: So you're not vegetarian but you respect//
 S: //I respect his view of it.
 I: What is it about Morrissey's character that you like?
 S: I like the fact that he keeps himself to himself and he keeps himself as a mysterious and private person.
 I: As a mysterious person.
 S: Yeah.
 I: And do you think that is a good quality or bad quality?
 S: Good quality because you don't want anyone to know anything about you.
 I: Do you feel you share that in common with Morrissey?
 S: Kind of.
 I: In what way?
 S: In sometimes I keep myself to myself and am private but not always, but mainly yes so it's kind of the same thing.
 I: When wouldn't you?
 S: When I'm trying to get to know people and things like that I suppose.
 I: OK let's move over to 'how I think other people see me'. Can you just explain what is there for me please?

S: I put the word 'queen' because some people say I'm posh because to do with my family and everything.

I: And what's the 'evil' [word] there for?

S: Well some people say that I'm evil sometimes so.

I: In what way? Or do you understand why they say that?

S: Yeah I understand why they say it but they're just messing about sometimes.

I: So they are usually saying it just because they are messing about?

S: Yeah, or they are annoyed at me.

I: So it's just a sort of a form of abuse that they are throwing at you, like a name that they are calling you?

S: Yeah.

I: What about this little picture here [image of flies]?

S: Well most people say I'm annoying so I put pictures of flies because people find them annoying.

I: Do you think you are annoying?

S: Sometimes, not always though.

I: If you had more time to work on this collage are there any other images that you would have liked to have put down?

S: Yeah pictures of animals and things like that.

I: Pictures of animals and things like that. What types of animals?

S: Not sure about that.

I: What would the animals mean and which side would they go on?

S: They'd go on both sides.

I: And what would they be used to express, why would you be using them?

S: Just need to express the way I am.

I: Can you give me an example?

S: Intelligent and things.

I: Intelligent and things.

S: Yeah.

I: I've also noticed that, apart from Morrissey, you haven't used many images of media celebrities or films or programmes. Why is that?

S: Because I don't tend to watch things like that, I'm not interested.

I: So is Morrissey the only person who you feel you can relate to and expresses part of you?

S: Yeah and other singers like that.

I: Such as?

S: Nick Cave.

I: Nick Cave. So if you had an image of Nick Cave you'd have maybe put an image of him next to Morrissey?

S: Yeah.

I: Just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

S: British.

I: Do you always say British?

S: Yeah.

I: That's brilliant. Just one more question about 'posh' [how I think other people see me], do you think when other people see you as posh that's a positive or a negative?

S: I'm not sure, it depends how they aim it at me.

I: How they aim it at you?

S: Yeah, the sound when they're angry you know or something or they're just messing about.

I: So it depends on the context, when they say it and how they say it to you?

S: Yeah.

I: Do you see yourself as posh?

S: Not really.

I: No?

S: No.
I: OK that's brilliant. Thanks.

(D=Dean, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've got a few images under 'how I see myself'. Could you explain these ones first please?
D: I've got the PSP, I'm into gaming. 'Loud but quiet' [words] because I'm quite loud, sometimes quiet. Blue is my favourite colour.
I: I've noticed in the middle you've got a picture of, I think he's a Chinese man. Why have you used that?
D: People sort of normally call me Chinese.
I: People//
D: //Chinese. They call me Chinese.
I: They call you Chinese. Why do you think they call you Chinese?
D: Because of my Asian background.
I: You've got an Asian background?
D: Yeah.
I: Do you think when people call you Chinese that they are saying it in a positive or a negative way?
D: I'm not sure. More like they're just asking.
I: They're just asking?
D: Yeah.
I: So what else does that picture represent [image of a Chinese man]? What are you expressing with that?
D: I'm not sure.
I: You're not sure?
D: Yeah.
I: Does that picture reflect how you see yourself?
D: Yeah. Long hair, glasses, Asian.
I: Long hair, glasses, Asian. What about his dress?
D: Normally wear shirts, I used to wear a tie a lot and jacket//
I: //and a?
D: There's a jacket.
I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
D: British, but I have a lot of Asian background.
I: In what way do you have an Asian background?
D: I'm not sure what it is.
I: You're not sure of//
D: //yeah.
I: But you always call yourself British?
D: Yeah.
I: Would you ever feel, in a situation, you might use the word Asian to describe yourself?
D: No, not unless I was talking about my parents or something like that.
I: So when you're talking about your parents you use the word Asian, but when you talk about yourself you say British?
D: Yeah.
I: That's excellent. Thank you very much.

(J=Jane, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Now you've done two different collages here. Can we start with 'how I see myself'? Can you just explain what these pictures are and why you chose them, what they mean to you?

J: Because they're my favourite animals really.

I: Right, so you've used a picture of a tiger, a cheetah and some wolves, but why are they your favourite animals? What is it about them that you like?

J: Just nice (laughs).

I: They're just nice?

J: Yeah.

I: Do you think the animals represent anything, any type of qualities that you like?

J: Cheetah's fast, I like that.

I: Cheetahs are fast.

J: Yeah.

I: What I'm trying to say is are there any qualities that these animals have that you can also see in yourself? Like you just said you think Cheetahs are fast//

J: //yeah, I'm a fast runner.

I: You're a fast runner.

J: Yeah.

I: Is there anything else about these animals//

J: No.

I: OK, let's move onto 'how I think other people see me'. Would you just like to explain what we have here?

J: Most people think I'm fun and stuff.

I: Most people think//

J: //think I'm fun and everything.

I: And you've got the word 'fun' here. You've also got this picture here [cartoon] which looks like it's been taken from a Chinese or Japanese cartoon. Why have you used this picture?

J: Because I draw like that. That's how I draw.

I: So you feel that other people see you as quite an arty-type of person?

J: Yeah.

I: You've also got the word 'calm' here. Why do you think other people see you as calm?

J: Because I don't get stressed sort of really.

I: You don't get stressed?

J: No.

I: And you've written down that you're a 'good friend' [words]. Now in amongst the arty and the good friend and the calm and the fun, you've also written [word 'weird']//

J: //because people think I'm weird.

I: Because people think you're weird?

J: Yeah.

I: Why do you think people think you are weird?

J: Well because like, I do stuff differently.

I: What do you mean by stuff?

J: Act different.

I: Act different. Do you think that you act differently?

J: Yeah, to most people yeah.

I: But do you think that you're acting differently is weird?

J: Not to me no.

I: Not to you?

J: No.

I: You just said that if you act differently people think you are weird. Now do you think on the whole that if people behave like that, say I have a group of people and one person is acting differently//

J: //they wouldn't call me weird no, but they just do think I'm weird.

I: OK. If you had more time are there anymore pictures that you would have put down?

J: Yeah.

I: Such as?
 J: I don't know I couldn't find any.
 I: But is there anything else you would have liked to have expressed about how you see yourself, because here you've got your favourite animals. Is that all as you see yourself as?
 J: No.
 I: So what else would you have liked to have put there?
 J: Kind and nice so.
 I: Kind and nice?
 J: Yeah but I couldn't find anything.
 I: If you could, can you think of any images that you would have used to represent kind and nice?
 J: No, I couldn't think of anything that I could put for that sort of thing.
 I: I've also noticed on your collage that you've not used any pictures of films or famous people. Is there a reason for that?
 J: No.
 I: No?
 J: I just didn't.
 I: You just didn't.
 J: No I couldn't find any.
 I: You couldn't find any you liked?
 J: Yeah.
 I: And just finally, how do you describe your ethnicity? (pause) You wrote British, is British how you always usually describe yourself?
 J: Yeah I come from here so I just say that.
 I: You were born in England?
 J: Yeah.
 I: So you call yourself British?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Where are your parents from?
 J: My dad is from Singapore and my mum is from here.
 I: Your dad is from Singapore and your mum is from here.
 J: Yeah.
 I: So your dad has an Asian background.
 J: Yeah.
 I: Do you ever call yourself Asian?
 J: Don't think it. No, I do know I've got sort of like Asian sort of, but don't like to describe myself as it.
 I: You don't describe yourself as that you describe yourself//
 J: //no I just say one thing.
 I: Say one thing?
 J: Yeah.
 I: British?
 J: Yeah.
 I: OK that's brilliant. Thanks.

(N=Natalie, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)
 (//=overlap)

I: You've done two collages here. Let's start with 'how I see myself', would you like to just talk through the images?
 N: I like that picture [image of a dove] most of all because//
 I: //the picture of the dove//
 N: //yeah because I'm a free spirit so I like doing and saying wild things.
 I: Wild things.
 N: Trying new stuff.

I: OK and what about the squirrel there?

N: I like animals.

I: You like animals?

N: Yeah and I like nature.

I: What about the picture of Charlotte Church?

N: She's a famous person and some people have their like an idol to look up to.

I: Do you identify with Charlotte Church?

N: Yeah. I don't agree with the stuff in the press it's just//

I: //with what stuff in the press?

N: Like they say that she's bad and I just like Charlotte Church.

I: What is it about her that you identify with and look up to?

N: Her singing.

I: Just her singing? What about her fashion and the way she looks?

N: Yeah, she doesn't look exactly like a pop star I think she just looks like herself she just doesn't make herself look like what anyone wants her to. Yeah, she doesn't want to act like anyone else.

I: Is that a quality that you like about Charlotte Church? Is that what you see in yourself?

N: Yeah. I'm not told to do what anyone else I just do what I want to do.

I: OK let's move onto this image of a little black girl. Why have you used this here?

N: Because it's a little kid and I like, I don't know I just thought it was cute and I think I'm cute.

I: And you've also got the words//

N: //'saucy'//

I: //'saucy' and 'pussycat'. Why are these words here?

N: I don't know I just I saw them in the paper and they, they kind of stand out from the rest of the writing.

I: So//

N: //I like things that stand out like I stand out.

I: So it's not so much the words and what they mean//

N: //no. They're the words that are big and bold and they make it stand out.

I: And that follows through I assume in the mobiles and the 'loud and proud' [words]?

N: Yeah.

I: What are you trying to say with loud and//

N: //I'm very loud and I don't care about if I'm quiet it's just that I'm very, Jane [pupil] will tell you I'm loud.

I: What was that?

N: I'm loud.

I: You're loud?

N: Yeah and I don't mind people saying you have to be quiet, I can be quiet sometimes but I prefer being loud and out with what I think with other people.

I: OK let's move onto this side; how you think other people see you. Now it's interesting because you've not used any pictures you've just used words, so would you like to go through the words?

N: I think I'm sometimes calm, I'm not always I'm normally very angry sometimes. Sometimes I feel mental and I can be wicked and I can just make all my friends laugh if they're grumpy. I'm spoilt sometimes, sometimes like my friends spoil me and my parents, I'm a brat to them and I can really care for people if they're really upset I can help them.

I: So you're loving?

N: Yeah.

I: On this side [how I think other people see me] if there were any pictures that you could have used here, what pictures would you have used?

N: Something that stands out, like other people standing in the background and someone standing right in the middle looking really unusual.

I: I've also noticed apart from Charlotte Church you've not used any other pictures of famous people. Why is that?

N: I'm not really into famous people. I don't look at the gossip, I just like sometimes being quiet with the gossip.

I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you.

N: A little bit of difference yeah.

I: What is the difference?

N: Um.

I: What would you say is the difference?

N: About the famous people?

I: No, just overall//

N: //I don't know, there's not much difference.

I: So do you think there is not that much of a difference?

N: I don't think there's not a lot of difference they're the same kind of yeah, I think that both sides are nearly the same.

I: Both sides are nearly the same?

N: Yeah.

I: Is that how you feel, that both sides are the same? Or do you think that there are differences that maybe there are things in how you see yourself that other people don't see, or that there are things that other people see that you don't see in yourself?

N: No I think other people see me as I don't see myself, sometimes I don't see or hear what other people think of me.

I: Sometimes you don't?

N: I don't know what other people think of me.

I: Does that bother you//

N: //not really. I don't care what other people think sometimes.

I: Sometimes, you keep saying sometimes. When would you care?

N: When I most care like, when you're asking what your friends think and they're not giving you an honest opinion and they think it's a joke or if you really ask them if they do care.

I: OK and just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

N: British.

I: British.

N: Yeah.

I: You always describe yourself as British?

N: Yeah.

I: Just so I know, what does being British mean to you? What is British?

N: I don't know, it's just I think where you're born that's where you must put your ethnicity.

I: So it's where you are born?

N: Yeah.

I: And?

N: I don't know it's just where you're born and where you grow up and I've been brought up in Britain.

I: OK that's excellent. Thank you.

(L=Lisa, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've done two separate collages here. Can we just start with 'how I see myself' and can you just explain what pictures you've used and why you've used them?

L: Well I've used these two pictures to explain what type of music I'm into.

I: Who are they?

L: That's 50 Cent and that's The Game.

I: The Game?

L: Yeah.

I: OK.

L: And a love heart to show that like I care and I'm loving and everything and a candle to show that I can relax and like I'm really peaceful.

I: Yes, peaceful.

L: And a little tiger as well, animals and Man United as well they're my favourite team.

I: Is it tigers specifically that you like or is it//

L: //it's like every animal but tigers just show its like, I don't know, just tigers.

I: What is it about tigers that you like?

L: That how they're so vicious but they look so cute at the same time.

I: Do you think that there are any qualities about a tiger that reflect how you see yourself? Have they got any characteristics or qualities that you think you share?

L: Well everyone thinks I can be nasty when I wanna be and practically I won't change.

I: Now just going back to 50 Cent and The Game, what type of music is it that you are into?

L: I like rap music and R&B and everything like that.

I: Rap music and R&B.

L: Yeah.

I: If you could have put anymore pictures onto this side [how I see myself], what pictures would you have used?

L: Um.

I: Or are there any that you would have used?

L: Not really.

I: No?

L: No.

I: OK we'll move onto this side, 'how I think other people see me'. I'd like to start off with this picture of the young black girl. Why is that there?

L: Because I love little kids and just like little babies and everything and it just shows that I care about all the younger ones.

I: And why did you use that picture of that girl in particular?

L: Because she just caught my eye and she's like very pretty and everything so.

I: And we've also got Britney Spears. Why is Britney Spears there?

L: Well one of my friends said that whenever she listens to Britney Spears I just come into her head so I thought well if that's what she sees me as and I put it there.

I: What do you think it is about Britney Spears that makes your friend think about you?

L: Well I like singing and Britney Spears altogether so.

I: Do you think that's a good thing being thought of as Britney Spears?

L: Yeah.

I: What characteristics does she have that you think are good, so you don't mind if people see you as//

L: She's pretty and like she's famous and she just like, she's good at acting good at singing and everything like that so.

I: You've also got the words 'loud' and 'funny'. Why do you think other people see you as loud and funny?

L: Because I'm always laughing at like everything I say and like joke about everything and I'm always shouting a lot as well so.

I: Do you think that there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

L: Yeah.

I: What are the differences?

L: Well, I'm loud and thing but they [other people] just don't see the side of me that my family does.

I: Because here [how I see myself] I noticed that you've got the candle and you've got the heart so that's actually quite, as you said, quite calming and relaxing and loving,

and that doesn't seem to feature on this side [how I think other people see me]. Do you think that that's the biggest difference?

L: Yeah.

I: Does it ever bother you that other people don't see that?

L: Sometimes.

I: When would it bother you?

L: Sometimes I just think about it and realise that no-one else can see it. It makes me think.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe ethnicity?

L: English.

I: On your form you wrote British, but which one would you usually use?

L: English.

I: You'd say English.

L: Yeah.

I: Why would you use English as opposed to British?

L: I don't know it's just, I think it's easier to say because British sounds posh.

I: British sounds posh?

L: Yeah.

I: And English?

L: I don't know.

I: What does being English mean to you?

L: That I'm alright with that.

I: That you're//

L: //I'm alright with that but//

I: // you're alright with that?

L: Yeah, but I've got Welsh in me as well.

I: But you don't mention that?

L: No I don't want anybody to know I'm Welsh.

I: Why not?

L: Because of their reputation?

I: What is their reputation?

L: Um (laughter).

I: So you call yourself English?

L: Yeah.

I: That's excellent.

(S=Sarah, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to talk through some of the pictures that you've used? Let's start with Mariah Carey.

S: I have a picture of her because I like her music and stuff like that, her voice and listening to music.

I: You've also got a flower and a heart there. What do they mean?

S: Like the heart is for a lot of loving, and that's [image of flowers] that's like loving for, that's like loving.

I: OK so the flower is also for loving?

S: Yeah.

I: Who is that [image of Nikki Sanderson]?

S: Candice.

I: Candice from *Coronation Street*.

S: Yes.

I: Why did you use a picture of her?

S: To show that I'm, I think I'm quite trendy in clothes that I wear and she's got trendy clothes on.

I: Let's go back to Mariah Carey. Now you said you like her music, is there anything else about her as a person that you like?

S: Pretty, I don't know.

I: When you see her in interviews or you see her talk, do you think that she's a nice person?

S: Yeah.

I: Why do you think she's a nice person?

S: I don't know.

I: So you just like her, you like her music. Do you like her fashion?

S: Yeah.

I: So is there part of you that sees yourself as identifying with Mariah Carey, or do you see her as somebody that you look up to and aspire to be like?

S: Aspire to be like.

I: In what ways?

S: Just like pretty and a singer and things like that.

I: Pretty and singing.

S: Yeah.

I: OK let's move onto 'how I think other people see me'. You've used a picture of a little baby, a black child, a little boy. Why is that there?

S: Just to show I'm caring and I love children and other people think that I'm good with children.

I: Other people think you're good with children.

S: Yeah they think I'm caring.

I: You're caring.

S: Yeah.

I: We've also got a butterfly here and some more flowers. What do these mean?

S: I've put more flowers 'cause other people think I'm loving and a butterfly because I'm quiet out with my mates most of the time I'm quiet.

I: You're quiet?

S: Yeah.

I: Let's go to Sharon Osbourne.

S: People say I can be cheeky sometimes and I think Sharon's quite cheeky so I put a picture of her.

I: And we've got Jordan as well. Is it Jordan here or Katie Price that you think other people see you as?

S: Katie. People think that I'm pretty and I, I just put a picture of her because I think she's quite pretty.

I: Is there anything else about her, any other characteristics that her or Sharon Osbourne have, like anything about their personality, that you think people look at you and they see that in your personality as well?

S: Don't know.

I: Because I've noticed here you've used a picture of Sharon Osbourne. Now Sharon Osbourne can be quite loud but you've got the picture of a butterfly and//

S: //yeah that's from I'm quiet when I'm with my mates and that, but then sometimes I can be cheeky and I thought Sharon's quite cheeky.

I: Right and you've also, in the middle, you've got words explaining what all the images mean. Now do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how other people see you?

S: I don't know.

I: Because I've noticed here you've got loving on both sides, we've got pretty on both sides, we've not got the fashionable on how you think other people see you. Do you think other people see you as fashionable?

S: Yeah.

I: You do?

S: Yeah.

I: But we've not got the relaxing?
 S: Because like when I'm at home alone and that I'm a lot relaxed and when I'm with my mates and things like that I'm not like it, I don't relax and stuff.
 I: So do you think that other people don't see that side of you?
 S: No.
 I: They don't.
 S: No.
 I: Is that because you don't want them to or because//
 S: //I don't know, I just prefer to be on my own.
 I: You just//
 S: //prefer to be on my own when I'm like relaxing.
 I: If you could add any more pictures to this what pictures would you add and why?
 S: I don't know.
 I: You don't know?
 S: No.
 I: Just finally, how do you usually describe your ethnicity?
 S: English.
 I: English. Do you always say English?
 S: Yeah.
 I: Do you ever describe yourself as British?
 S: No.
 I: Why not?
 S: I just don't.
 I: You just don't.
 S: English comes into my head first.
 I: OK that's brilliant thanks.

(L=Laura, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)
 (//=overlap)

I: Do you want to start with 'how I see myself'?
 L: Yeah.
 I: What do the images mean?
 L: Well I've got like the cat and the bird because sometimes, you know I get a little you know, don't feel as you know as happy as you normally do. If I get upset about something I sometimes take it out on other people.
 I: So that's the cat and the bird. You've also got some more pictures of nature like the bears and the wolves and the other little cat and the beaver, what do they all represent?
 L: Well the bear was like have babies and things it's I, I do like being in a group and if I'm with my friends and that I just I'm more socialised with family and that, more comfortable being in a group.
 I: And what about the wolves?
 L: Sometimes like a wolf will sometimes go by itself and I like to be alone, I don't feel as tatty and that, you'd rather just sit by yourself.
 I: What about these pictures, is that Orlando Bloom?
 L: Yeah.
 I: What does Orlando Bloom mean?
 L: I don't know, I just like him (laughs).
 I: What about this image [image of Kelly Clarkson]? Who is it?
 L: Kelly Clarkson I think.
 I: Why have you put there?
 L: I just like, I like her singing and most of her songs are like basically what she does and things.
 I: What she does?
 L: Just singing and everything.

I: OK and what about her [image of Catherine Tate]?

L: Don't know what her name is but she does a comedy sort of thing so//

I: //am I bothered [catchphrase of comedian]?

L: Yeah (laughing). Sometimes I sort of feel as though I could be quite funny and then other times you know.

I: What does this mean [image of a man kissing another man on cheek]?

L: I sort of, I care about my friends and everything.

I: What about this pot of yoghurt?

L: I don't know, I can't remember, I had a reason I can't remember now.

I: Let's just move to this side [how I think other people see me]. We've got Jennifer Aniston, why is she there?

L: It's not really because of her it's because of the face she's making, like because I thought sometimes people can see me as quite moody sometimes and like you know one minute you're happy and the next minute your like nah//

I: Quite moody?

L: Yeah.

I: Right. What about the girl in the middle [image of Raven Baxter]?

L: Oh she does like a humour thing as well. I just thought people can see me as funny sometimes.

I: Do you think she's pulling a funny expression there, do you think that's a funny face that she's pulling?

L: I don't know, not really, but she has this show that's funny so.

I: She has this?

L: Show.

I: Who is it?

L: I don't know what her name is, I think yeah, I don't know what her real name is but she has this show called//

I: //That's So Raven.

L: Yeah.

I: What about the cat again on this side?

L: Well I like cats and like all animals as well but, some people said to me I don't know why that I remind them of a cat for some reason and I thought oh well I might as well put it down.

I: What do you think it is about a cat//

L: //I don't know.

I: You don't know?

L: No.

I: If there were any more pictures you could have put on this side [how I think other people see me], what would you have put?

L: I'd have put, sometimes people can see me as all caring sometimes.

I: Caring?

L: Yeah and I don't know.

I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

L: No.

I: You don't?

L: No.

I: So you maybe would have had similar images on both sides?

L: Yeah.

I: So it could have been one big collage?

L: Yeah.

I: And just finally, how do you describe your ethnicity?

L: I normally go full detail about what I'm half this or something.

I: OK but what would you usually say?

L: I'd usually say that, I'd go into a big story about it.

I: You put English on your sheet.
 L: No I put Irish on the sheet.
 I: You ticked White Irish, but you put that you describe yourself as English.
 L: Yeah.
 I: Now if somebody asked you your ethnicity, would you usually just say I'm English?
 L: Yes I'd have to whether I just say the whole story without that I just say nah I say England.
 I: But do you see yourself as English?
 L: No.
 I: What do you see yourself as?
 L: Irish mainly.
 I: Irish mainly.
 L: Yeah.
 I: So why do you just say English?
 L: Well I think if you're Irish it's easier to say you're English 'cause you live in England so.
 I: So it's just easier for you?
 L: Yeah.
 I: OK that's brilliant. Thank you.

(J=Jackie, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Can we start with 'how I see myself'? Would you like to explain what pictures you have used and why?
 J: I used Lethal Bizall 'cause he's loud and everyone says I'm loud and that's how I see myself and then gobby.
 I: What about Eminem?
 J: Just like his music.
 I: You just like his music. Is there anything about him that you think//
 J: No.
 J: No?
 J: I used a phone because I always talk.
 I: Who is this [image of Sarah Michelle Gellar]?
 J: Sarah Michelle Gellar because she's skinny.
 I: Because she's skinny. And we've also got 50 Cent and 'love' [word], what are you trying to say here?
 J: I just like 50 Cent's music and love for loving.
 I: OK and what is 'Beattie' [word]?
 J: A football player.
 I: And what is it about him?
 J: I just like him.
 I: OK let's move onto 'how I think other people see me'. Who is this?
 J: That's her [Sarah Michelle Gellar] again.
 I: Sarah Michelle Gellar//
 J: //yeah because skinny.
 I: And what about these things here, you've got the words 'dancing' and 'girl' and 'cheeky', is that how you think other people see you? What do you mean by the 'dancing'?
 J: I don't know.
 I: We've also got a picture of an eye here, why did you use that?
 J: I just thought other people see you and I just thought I'd do that.
 I: And what does the//
 J: //make-up.
 I: Make-up. Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

J: No.
 I: If you had more time are there anymore pictures that you would have liked to put on?
 J: I would have liked to have put some more pictures on there [how I think other people see me] but I don't know which ones.
 I: But would they be different to how you see yourself?
 J: Some of them probably.
 I: And what areas would that be?
 J: People probably think I'm shy, I don't know the way I talk or something.
 I: Are you shy?
 J: No.
 I: But you think other people think you are shy?
 J: Yeah.
 I: Just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 J: British.
 I: Do you always say British?
 J: English.
 I: English. Which one, English or British?
 J: English.
 I: English. Why would you say English and not British?
 J: Just England.
 I: What do you mean?
 J: Um (laughter and pause).
 I: You would just say English?
 J: Yeah.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(J=Jack, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: I notice on how you see yourself you have a big tiger here. What does the tiger mean?
 J: Laziness because it looks like he's laying down.
 I: Laziness?
 J: Mmm.
 I: What about these other pictures?
 J: I used a fox as sly as I'm kind of sly sometimes and the crocodile has got a big mouth, sometimes I'm big mouthed.
 I: Sometimes you're big mouthed?
 J: Yeah.
 I: You've also got loving here, is loving on this side [how I see myself]?
 J: Yeah.
 I: So you see yourself as//
 J: //loving, and I've got a hurricane 'cause hurricanes are destructive and when I'm angry I'm like a destructive path, like kick everything out like.
 I: You kick everything out of your way?
 J: Yeah I punch it and that lot.
 I: You punch it?
 J: Yeah go mental.
 I: You go mental. Right, so let's move onto this side, how you think other people see you. Would you like to explain what these images are?
 J: I've got a dinosaur 'cause they're quite loud and I think people see me as quite loud. I've got 'geeky' because I like to read and people think people who like to read are geeky.
 I: OK.
 J: And I've got the seven dwarfs because the film's funny and people think I'm funny.
 I: People think you're funny.

J: Mmm.
 I: Do you think there's a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself?
 J: Yeah.
 I: What is the difference?
 J: I think I see myself as almost perfect in that kind of way.
 I: Do you think that these [images on how I see myself] are almost perfect though?
 J: Some of them are.
 I: Such as?
 J: The sly and the loving.
 I: Why is sly perfect?
 J: Because sly, it's like you can get away with things and not many people can do that.
 I: OK so you think that's a good quality?
 J: Mmm.
 I: If you had more time are there any pictures that you would like to add?
 J: Yeah.
 I: What ones?
 J: I'd like to add on this side [how I see myself] say a book.
 I: A book.
 J: Yeah.
 I: Do you think that people are right to call you geeky?
 J: Yeah.
 I: They are?
 J: Because I like to read.
 I: So you think reading is geeky?
 J: No I don't think reading is geeky, I think it's for smart people.
 I: OK so you would have liked to have put a book on how you see yourself, what about on this side [how I think other people see me]?
 J: No I don't think so.
 I: No?
 J: No.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 J: English.
 I: Do you always say English?
 J: Yeah.
 I: OK brilliant.

(J=Josh, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Let's start with how you see yourself. What pictures have you used and why?
 J: I use this [image of a beach pagoda] because I like fresh place, the beach.
 I: OK and you've got a trainer.
 J: Yeah because I think people won't go into the town without using their shoes.
 I: People?
 J: Won't go into town without using their shoes.
 I: Won't go to town without their shoes. And you've also got a singer here. Do you know who this singer is [image of Jamiroquai]?
 J: No.
 I: Are there any singers that reflect how you see yourself, which you can identify with?
 J: Yeah but these are Filipino.
 I: So Filipino singers, there is no-one in the charts here//
 J: //no.
 I: And you also see yourself as loving and there's caring and friendly and you like your food.
 J: Yeah, I love my food.

I: OK let's move onto this side, on how you think other people see you you've just used words and we've got 'serious', 'highbrow', 'friendly' and 'shy'. Why didn't you use pictures here?

J: Because I can't explain much more in pictures I think I can explain it in words.

I: Do you think that how you think other people see you is how you see yourself?

J: Not really.

I: What's the difference?

J: Because I see myself as loving, caring, friendly and here I think they see me as shy, serious, highbrows.

I: Why do you think that is?

J: Because I'm shy really, I'm shy.

I: You're shy?

J: Yeah but sometimes I'm highbrows.

I: Highbrow?

J: Yeah.

I: What do you mean by highbrow?

J: I think sometimes I have a greater knowledge than the other people.

I: Greater knowledge than the other people.

J: Yeah.

I: If there were anymore pictures you could put on, what pictures would you use?

J: No, no, I think I've put it, I have put it on.

I: You have put on everything?

J: Yeah.

I: And you describe yourself ethnicity as//

J: //Filipino.

I: Were you born in the Philippines?

J: Yeah. I was born there.

I: OK that's brilliant, thank you.

Appendix B.4: Oaklands Community School

(D=Darren, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Are these two separate collages or are they one?
- D: They're separate.
- I: OK, so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to talk through what pictures you've used and why you've used them, what they mean to you?
- D: Yeah. People think I'm good at football [images of football players].
- I: Who is that [picture of a football player]?
- D: Fowler.
- I: Robbie?
- D: Yeah, yeah.
- I: And he plays for?
- D: The man plays for Man City.
- I: Is that a team you support?
- D: No.
- I: Why have you chosen Robbie Fowler?
- D: 'Cause he's a good football player.
- I: Are there any qualities that he has as a person that you share//
- D: //he's got good skills.
- I: What skills?
- D: The best football skills.
- I: Right let's move onto this picture [image of a Japanese footballer], who is he?
- D: A Japannie.
- I: A Japannie?
- D: Yeah.
- I: And why have you used him?
- D: 'Cause, 'cause I like laughing.
- I: Because?
- D: I like laughing (laughing).
- I: You like laughing?
- D: Yeah.
- I: But he's got a football top on as well, so is he a good footballer?
- D: Yeah//
- I: //he is//
- D: //he plays for a team.
- I: So why did you use him? Is it more to do with the football or is it to do with the laughing//
- D: //laughing.
- I: OK and what about this [image of a headless footballer]?
- D: I support Manchester United.
- I: Because you like, they're your favourite team?
- D: Yeah, yeah.
- I: And you've got this picture of [image of a car]//
- D: //a rally car.
- I: Why have you used that?
- D: Because I like rally cars and I like watching it.
- I: OK, so if you were going to sum up//
- D: //yeah//
- I: //how you see yourself, if you were going to use words to describe what these pictures are trying to express, what words would you use?
- D: How I see myself really.
- I: But how is that? What type of person do you think you are?

D: A funny person.
 I: Funny//
 D: //and like sports person.
 I: Sports person.
 D: Yeah.
 I: So sports are really important to you?
 D: Yeah.
 I: Why are sports so important to you?
 D: Because I like watching it all the time, I like football.
 I: What is it about sports that you like, is it//
 D: //football, it's interesting.
 I: Is it just the game though or do you respect the fact that they have to work hard to become good footballers?
 D: They have to work hard to get to be good football players.
 I: OK, let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've just used a picture of Science here from *Big Brother*, why have you used a picture of him, what are you trying to say?
 D: Because he always acts funny.
 I: Because he always acts funny?
 D: Yeah.
 I: So you think other people see you as quite a funny person?
 D: Yeah.
 I: Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing?
 D: Good thing, well, don't know really people can find it annoying.
 I: People find it annoying sometimes?
 D: Yeah.
 I: When would they find it annoying?
 D: When I keep being funny, the thing is it carries on, I carry on being funny then it carries on then they get annoyed with me.
 I: If you had more time are there any pictures that you would add to either collage?
 D: No.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 D: I'm half Scottish.
 I: But when people ask you, do you say I'm half Scottish or I'm British?
 D: I'm half Scottish.
 I: You always say I'm half Scottish because your mum is from Scotland?
 D: Yeah.
 I: OK that's great.

(M=Mark, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Which side do you want to start with?
 M: That one [how I see myself].
 I: OK so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through each of the pictures and explain why you've chosen them, what they represent?
 M: I've used this goalie 'cause every sees me as a goalie and I'm good and this one [image of a goalkeeper attempting to save a shot] is another goalie because I'm good at saving penalties. That [image of Amir Khan] because I, I always fight.
 I: So you fight a lot?
 M: Not a lot but sometimes.
 I: So you see yourself as a fighter?
 M: Not really but I fight sometimes.
 I: Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing//
 M: //bad thing.
 I: Why is it a bad thing? (long pause) Why do you fight?

M: Because people pick on me.
 I: So you//
 M: //they try and bully me and think I won't do nothing.
 I: So you don't fight if it's not provoked, you fight if somebody is bullying you?
 M: Yeah yeah.
 I: What about that picture of the fish?
 M: Because I like fishing and that's how I see myself, as a fisherman.
 I: What is it about fishing that you like?
 M: Catching big fish and it's peaceful.
 I: It's peaceful.
 M: Yeah you can just, you can just sit there.
 I: What about the//
 M: //mini motor because I've got one and I like them.
 I: And you've got some basketball players there//
 M: //because I like basketball and like another reason of how I see myself too good, not quite good.
 I: Quite good at?
 M: Basketball.
 I: And you've got the word 'sexy' and the picture of the woman//
 M: //don't know just put it there.
 I: You just put it there. So if you were going to use some words to describe//
 M: //I think I'm sexy, that's how I see myself, as sexy boy (laughing).
 I: So if you were going to use some words to describe how you see yourself, what words would you use apart from sexy?
 M: I don't know (laughing).
 I: What type of person do you think you are? How do you see yourself?
 M: Don't know (laughing).
 I: Because here you've got fighting//
 M: //I love myself.
 I: You?
 M: Love myself.
 I: OK, because here you've got two quite different things. You've got the fighter and the violence, but you've also got that next to fishing and you said fishing is peaceful. Do you think you've got a calm side and an aggressive side as well?
 M: Mmm.
 I: OK let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've got a picture of a footballer there//
 M: //yeah that's because it's the team I support.
 I: Which team is that?
 M: Celtic.
 I: And what about the picture of the car and the football?
 M: I like football including goals.
 I: Do you think other people see you as good at football?
 M: Yeah.
 I: And what about, you've put 'music' [word] down, why is that there?
 M: Because I always listen to music, whenever my mates come round I always put my music on.
 I: So do you think that could have all been one collage?
 M: Yeah.
 I: If you had more time are there any other pictures you would have put on?
 M: Yeah.
 I: Like?
 M: A rugby player, a foot on a ball.
 I: So it's more sport?
 M: I'd have put a rugby ball on there.

I: So sport is quite important to you?
M: Yeah.
I: What is it about sports people and sport that you like?
M: That there's good rugby players, good football players, good boxers and good hardcore singers.
I: What makes something good for you though?
M: Practice.
I: Practice. Do you think that's part of who you are? If you practice at something you've got to be quite hard-working//
M: //yeah//
I: //and determined, do you think that that's how you see yourself?
M: Yeah.
I: Do you think that that's how other people see you as well?
M: Yeah a bit.
I: When wouldn't they? What type of people wouldn't see you as hard-working?
M: Not many people.
I: Who wouldn't?
M: Some teachers, some people, some students.
I: But do you think you're hard-working?
M: Yeah.
I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
M: White British.
I: Do you always say you're white British?
M: Yeah 'cause I'm white and I'm British.
I: Do you ever say English?
M: Yeah sometimes. Well mainly most of the time.
I: You say English more than you say British?
M: Yeah.
I: So would you say white English or English?
M: White English.
I: Is it important for you to say the white?
M: No, I'd just say English.
I: OK that's brilliant.

(R=Robert, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've done two separate collages yes?
R: Yeah.
I: Let's start with how you see yourself.
R: I started the day just colouring some red area surrounded by some blue colouring. I think that shows that I bundle up loads of anger inside of me but I don't actually shout or use it or get angry.
I: Right.
R: I just got a PSP because most people probably see me like geeky and clever and stuff 'cause I like computers and stuff like that.
I: OK.
R: I've got a Max Power Great White [car] which is, I think it shows that I can, well I like building stuff and making things, it shows that I can customise and think about things and can create new stuff.
I: OK.
R: I've got a Coke can because I think Coke is something that go round on their own. They don't go round, you can get single can or multi-pack can't you?
I: Yes.
R: And I think I'd just be like a single can just on my own and no-one else around me really.

I: Right.

R: I've got loads of business men in a bank, I think that shows, well it shows that I'm kind of like boring, it shows that I'm not interesting to most people.

I: So you see yourself as boring//

R: //yeah. I've got lights because mostly inside I feel bubbly and happy but like that shows how it can change because it can just, it can't just be sticky all the time, it can change.

I: So you've left it [the picture] part unstuck to the paper because although you feel bubbly it's not secure?

R: Yeah.

I: So if you were going to use some words to describe how you see yourself, what words would you use?

R: Boring.

I: Why do you see yourself as boring?

R: Because I, people have fun in class and people talk about stuff, I just get on with my work.

I: And do you think that's boring?

R: Yeah.

I: If you're talking about being in a classroom situation, do you think being boring then is a good thing or a bad thing?

R: Well if you're not boring you can make friends and have fun, if you don't you just get on with your work and that's it really. Nothing good comes out of just getting on with my work yet so.

I: Nothing good has?

R: No.

I: But you do still//

R: //yeah//

I: //get on with your work?

R: Yeah.

I: OK let's move onto how you think other people see you.

R: Well at first I've got loads grey round the side to show boring and stuff. I've got politicians because that's a possible thing that probably people, when I'm older people will probably see me as a kind of political person.

I: Why would they see you as a political person?

R: Because with the grey I'll come out with some job where I wear a suit and stuff and they probably think I was a political person, interesting person just from the image.

I: OK.

R: The street planner and coordinator that's what, it's really weird but I think that's what people think going on in my head, that's what people think.

I: What do you mean street planner and coordinator going on in your head?

R: It's like really busy stuff all the time, I think that's what people think.

I: That there's a lot going on in your head?

R: Yeah always a lot because now I'm mumbling and it shows that I think about a lot of things.

I: OK.

R: That one [image of a politician] I don't know who, but it's just that one again, the politician guy. Chatterbox, I never shut up [images of mobile phones]. I get on with my work and stuff like that, I get on with my work and settle down but out of lesson time I just talk and talk and talk I don't shut up.

I: OK.

R: The area in London, Trafalgar Square?

I: Piccadilly Circus.

R: Yeah shows busy, really really busy.

I: Your head is busy?

R: Yeah, just stuff going through it all the time. Can't stop thinking about anything.

I: What don't you stop thinking about?

R: Doing homework, work, school, everything. I just think about all the time for some reason.

I: Is that a good thing or a bad thing//

R: //bad thing.

I: Why is it a bad thing?

R: Because I can't just think about one thing, it just won't clear out of my head.

I: So what do you want to be able to think about?

R: I want to think about what I'm doing. Sometimes I think about what I'm going to plan, so in D.T. [design and technology] I think about what plan I do, a 3D model of it in my head, then I think about one point of it then it just carries on continuously and it's just like my head hurts thinking about loads of other things.

I: So do you worry a lot?

R: Yeah.

I: And do you think other people see you as a worrier?

R: Yeah.

I: And you think that's a negative?

R: Yeah.

I: Do you think that that could ever be a positive?

R: No because I think about it all the time and most times I forget things as well.

I: You forget things?

R: I like, I think about it too much.

I: So what about these two pictures here [image of a newspaper and careers exhibition advertisement]?

R: I'm very good at English, I like English, I like it a lot a lot so showed newspaper and just writing and stuff like that.

I: Do other people see you as a writer?

R: Yeah yeah. Jobs and careers and prospects that's the one thing that, my teacher has been going really on at me about thinking about my jobs and careers and stuffs and prospects and I think that other people see me as someone who really thinks about jobs, careers and prospects, about the future.

I: So other people see you as//

R: //what it is is every picture starting from the first collage and the second collage just shows I think a lot, in my head I'm always thinking about it.

I: Do you think much about your future//

R: //yeah yeah.

I: In what sense?

R: Well what I'm gonna be when I'm older what I'm gonna do when I'm older.

I: Do you worry about that?

R: Sometimes.

I: Why do you worry?

R: Because, well I just worry about it, no reason, I just worry.

I: Do you know what you want to do?

R: Yeah.

I: What do you want to do?

R: I want to be a lawyer.

I: Why do you want to be a lawyer?

R: It has really good pay and it's got loads of industries involved with to do with it.

I: So what words would you use to describe how you think other people see you?

R: A boffin.

I: A boffin?

R: Yeah.

I: Do you think that there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

R: Yeah.

I: What's the difference?
 R: Because people don't see me, people can't see me think and I don't think they think I can be creative and stuff.
 I: So why don't you think they see that side of you?
 R: Because I don't show it really, I'm only always working and just mainly working all the time.
 I: Why don't you show it to other people?
 R: Because I haven't had the chance.
 I: You haven't had the chance?
 R: It just doesn't get any chance, you can't really see. I customise things in my head and I build things, that don't sound right.
 I: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have put on either side of the collage?
 R: No.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 R: British.
 I: Do you always say British or do you say English?
 R: Well when I say what I really am I'm quarter English, an eighth Spanish, an eighth American and quarter Turkish Cypriot and a quarter Irish.
 I: OK so why do you say British?
 R: Because I'm in Britain and it's a quarter equals most other things.
 I: So you see yourself as British?
 R: Yeah I'm in Britain and it's a quarter of what makes up my identity along with other things.
 I: So it's easier for you to say you're British?
 R: Yeah.
 I: OK thank you.

(C=Claire, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)
 (// = overlap)

I: Is this one big collage or is it two?
 C: Two.
 I: Let's start with 'how I see myself' then. Do you just want to go through each of the pictures and explain what you're trying to express with them?
 C: I've always liked horse-riding and stuff to do with horses and my cousin has got a horse and we go and see it and I just love horses and next year I might be getting one.
 I: What is it about horses that you like?
 C: It's sort of my hobby really, I just enjoy like leading them and stuff because I haven't been that keen on riding but I've ridden twice before I went to a riding school but I've always liked looking after them.
 I: What about this picture of lots of magazines?
 C: Yeah every time I go shopping I have to buy a magazine especially the soap ones.
 I: What is it about the soap ones that you like? Why are soaps so important to you?
 C: I don't know really I just like soaps, I like watching them and seeing what's happening in them.
 I: What's your favourite soap?
 C: They all are, *EastEnders* would be probably but all of them really.
 I: Have you got a favourite character that you identify with?
 C: What I'm more really actually doing is I see the young like girls my age on the programmes and I'd like to be fashionable like them sort of thing.
 I: So you'd like to be fashionable. Do you think that you are fashionable?
 C: Some of my stuff is but not really.
 I: Not really?
 C: Yeah some of it is.
 I: Some of it.

C: Yeah.

I: What about this little picture here, you've got R. Kelly?

C: Oh yeah I love R. Kelly.

I: What is it about R. Kelly that you like?

C: His music really.

I: Is there anything about him as a person that you identify with?

C: I don't know really.

I: OK let's move onto the other side, on how you think other people see you, you've got a picture of some t-shirts.

C: It's not like, my friends said to me I asked them how they see me and they said very fashionable and yeah just like wearing fashionable clothes really.

I: So you think other people see you as fashionable, and although you've put fashionable on how you see yourself, you don't think that you maybe are as fashionable as//

C: //other people//

I: //other people see you.

C: That's because I've got some nicer clothes in how other people see me but I see myself as a bit dull really.

I: So you see yourself as a bit dull?

C: Yeah.

I: Why do you see yourself as a bit dull?

C: I don't know really, because all my friends, I don't know but, the reason is I don't really want to say it actually but, yeah.

I: OK that's fine. So if there were any more pictures you could add to these collages, what pictures would they be?

C: Yeah. How other people see me I'd probably add a few to that.

I: Like?

C: More on quiet and caring and stuff.

I: Do you think you're quiet and caring?

C: Caring yeah.

I: But not quiet?

C: No. I'm more quieter at school than I am at home.

I: So do you think you people see a different side of who you are, and your family see a different side?

C: Yeah I think.

I: Do you wish you were not-so-quiet around other people?

C: Not really I quite like being quiet really but, you know, and then I've got some pink here and I just love pink and with the clothes and things.

I: So pink is your favourite colour?

C: Yeah pink and lilac.

I: Why do you like pink and lilac?

C: That's what goes, I just like them really.

I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity? (pause) You wrote British but do you always say British//

C: //no English.

I: You always say English?

C: Yeah.

I: Why do you choose English instead of British?

C: It's probably because I'm used to England because it's our country so that's why I just say English because I come from England.

I: So it's English because you come from England?

C: Yeah.

I: OK that's excellent.

(A=Alison, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: OK Alison. Could you just go through the pictures and explain to me why you choose them and what you they represent? So let's start with 'how I see myself'.
- A: Well I done a warning sign because sometimes when, when I'm at home and that and I'm just normal sometimes I can just break out and have a teenage rage at home so, and a flower because I like that kind of that flower stuff and that.
- I: What does the flower stuff mean to you though?
- A: It represents like pretty and stuff but I don't, I don't think that I'm pretty so I kind of like that stuff but I'm not.
- I: So you like the prettiness but you don't see yourself as pretty?
- A: No.
- I: OK what about the monkey?
- A: Because I'm quite cheeky at home and I'm usually grounded and stuff so quite cheeky and that and then that Cancerian sign because that means quite a lot to me because like my nan's Cancerian as well and she, she kind of knows all that kind of stuff but kind of means a lot to me, then a lion because sometimes I'm quite laree and shouting and stuff. I'm just a normal girl who's just normal, I'm not nothing special.
- I: Where's the normal girl?
- A: That one [image of Kelly Clarkson].
- I: Is that Kelly Clarkson?
- A: Yeah but I couldn't find anything else.
- I: So it's not Kelly Clarkson that you like//
- A: //no but normal//
- I: //she's a normal girl for you?
- A: Yeah.
- I: Why is she a normal girl for you?
- A: I don't know she's just, she's just, well there's nothing special about her and there's nothing special about me either so.
- I: Ok let's move onto how you think other people see you.
- A: Yeah well I put a cat on there because I'm quite like loving and that, I put a heart as well to represent that. I put Max and Paddy [comedy characters] because they're really funny//
- I: //who are they?
- A: Max and Paddy because I, because everyone says I'm quite funny and I'm a bit of a clown so.
- I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you.
- A: Yeah.
- I: What's the difference?
- A: Well 'cause on the other side [how I see myself] I'm quite like, I show myself more and that, and when other people are around I'm not that, I'm not always open like that, not always talking and that.
- I: If you had more time are there any more pictures that you would have added?
- A: Just stuff that says that I'm intelligent so I would like put a pencil there.
- I: Do you see yourself as intelligent?
- A: Yeah.
- I: Do you think other people do?
- A: Yeah.
- I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- A: I'm just British, just white.
- I: Do you say British, white or English?
- A: Usually English but sometimes you know 'cause there's quite a lot of like who are just white, so I just say white.
- I: You just say white?

A: Yeah.

I: OK that's brilliant.

(S=Steve, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

I: OK let's starts with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through the pictures and explain what they mean to you?

S: I've got a PS2 there because I think I'm spoilt, I've got a mini motor because I think//

I: //mini?

S: Motor because I think I'm quite cool and that [image of *Mortal Kombat* computer game] because I'm spoilt again, that [image of WWF wrestlers] because I like that sort of stuff and I like watching it.

I: You like wrestling?

S: Yeah, *Madagascar* [animated film] because my mum says I'm cute.

I: Do you think you're cute//

S: //no, not really.

I: What is it about wrestling that you like?

S: I just like all the moves and some of the wrestlers.

I: What wrestlers do you like?

S: Triple H I used to like The Rock, Ray Mistro.

I: What is it about them that you like?

S: Because Ray Mystiro, because he's athletic and that's what I would like to be.

I: So do you think that you are athletic?

S: In some stuff, not gymnastics.

I: So do you aspire to be like them?

S: Yeah.

I: Do you think that they [wrestlers] are good role models or bad role models?

S: Well a bit of both, why because they are violent and they teach others to look after each other.

I: So do you think that the violence is good or bad?

S: Bad.

I: So when might they not be a good role model?

S: When they are violent and don't fight fair.

I: So overall do you think they are quite good?

S: Yeah because they teach others to look after each other and that's how you should be with your friends.

I: So let's move over to how you think other people see you.

S: I is a banana because I is always funny and I always mucked around, and I'm a SWAT.

I: Do you think you're a SWAT?

S: Yeah.

I: Do you think you're funny?

S: Yeah sometimes.

I: When aren't you funny?

S: When I'm a SWAT mainly.

I: So could that be one big collage really?

S: No because other people see me as that actually that and I'm not really [inaudible].

I: If you had more time are there any extra pictures that you would have put on?

S: No not really.

I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

S: English.

I: Do you always say English?

S: Yeah.

I: OK brilliant.

(O=Oscar, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you just go through the pictures and explain what they are and why you've used them?
- O: Well I've got a mobile phone because I like to talk on my phone a lot, I've got somebody's big mouth because I don't ever shut up, I've got the Union Jack because I like love this country and I've got loads of like colourful flowers and stuff because like of the colourful side and I've got the wrestling things because I'm really into wrestling and there's loads of sports things there because I like sport like football, baseball, swimming and that and there's a games console called PSP because I like to go on the PSP and Arnold Schwarzeneger he's got loads of muscles and I'm doing weights and I want to get loads of muscles to.
- I: You've also got a picture of a girl there [how I see myself], why did you do that?
- O: Because I fancy her.
- I: Let's go to the picture of Arnold Schwarzenegger, is that how you see yourself?
- O: Well, well he's like my hero and that's how I see myself like in a few years.
- I: In a few years?
- O: Yeah that's what I see myself as.
- I: So do you think that's a good image, to want to be like?
- O: Yeah, yeah like quite muscley like Arnold Schwarzenegger yeah.
- I: Let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've only got a couple of pictures here, one of E.T. and one of My Little Pony, why have you used them?
- O: Because people, I think people might see me as an alien because sometimes I'm a bit weird or that's what other people think and I don't know, the little pony it's just pink, and people think I have a feminine side.
- I: Why do you think other people think you're weird?
- O: I don't know sometimes how I act really.
- I: Do you think you act weird?
- O: No.
- I: What about the feminine side, do you think you've got a feminine side?
- O: Well a little bit, but most of the time I just wanna laugh really and it's, and like try and make everybody laugh.
- I: Do you think other people see that, the feminine side, as a good thing or a bad thing?
- O: Well in-between.
- I: When might it be a good thing and when might it be a bad thing?
- O: Well, well like, like I said it might cheer people up because it's funny but like a bad thing, they might not want to be around me because like, like they just want to do that bully stuff all that stuff.
- I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- O: Well only a little bit.
- I: What is the little bit?
- O: Well like, well like lots of people know I'm really into the wrestling and the sport and the games consoles, but like not a lot of people think I've got a colourful side and like the two Union Jacks, like I love this country and stuff, but I don't think people see that, they just see me as like, from them pictures they just see me as a wrestling fan, a sports fan and a games console fan.
- I: Why do you think they don't see the colourful side of you?
- O: (long pause) I'm not quite sure.
- I: If you did show other people that you loved your country how would you do that?
- O: I don't know, I'd probably just like wear a Union Jack sign or wear a flag or have the song somewhere or something.
- I: Why don't you do that?
- O: Well I don't, I don't really see the point at the moment because I'm only like thirteen, maybe if it was a bit later on like maybe.

- I: If you could add on more pictures are there anymore you would have added on?
 O: (long pause) Not any that I can think of, if I was like looking at a few pictures then I might see one and then I might think yeah I'm kind of like that but like that's really all I could think of at the moment.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 O: Yeah British white.
 I: Would you say British white or do you say English//
 O: //no English white.
 I: English white. Do you always say the white or do you just say English?
 O: I, I usually just say English.
 I: Just say English//
 O: //yeah English or British but mostly English.
 I: Why do you choose English over British?
 O: I, I don't really know it's kind of like if I'm chatting if I had to choose like London and Southampton I would pick Southampton because it's where I come from if you know what I mean.
 I: Yeah. OK that's brilliant.

(A=Andrew, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through the images and say what they mean, what they represent, what you are trying to express with them?
 A: Well a mobile because always text people, picture of *Little Britain* because I watch like comedy programmes on TV and picture of music because I like listen to music and the other two because I like cars and bikes.
 I: So if you were going to use some words to describe how you see yourself what words would you use, what are you trying to say with those pictures?
 A: Like communicating because it's got mobile.
 I: You like communicating with people?
 A: Yeah.
 I: All people?
 A: Depends.
 I: On?
 A: Whether I like them or not.
 I: OK let's move over to how you think other people see you. Would you like to go through the pictures there?
 A: Well football because I'm always out with my mates playing football, and *Goal* a picture of the new film out about football, that [Crazy Frog] (long pause) yeah.
 I: What about the 'No to Crap' [words]?
 A: Because people see me as very unfriendly I don't stick up for people.
 I: OK.
 A: And the other picture of a car because I like them [inaudible].
 I: So do you think how you think other people see you is the same as how you see yourself?
 A: A tiny bit.
 I: A tiny bit, in what way?
 A: Because I've got a car in both of them like them two and that.
 I: Going back to how you think other people see you, what do you think others think when they look at you and see someone who is really into football?
 A: They see me and my mates and they think 'oh they like football' because sometimes they see me and my mates playing.
 I: Do you think other people think that that's a good thing or a bad thing that you are into football?
 A: Good thing.
 I: Why?

A: Because you're out playing sports.
 I: So you think that's a good thing?
 A: Yeah.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 A: English.
 I: Do you always say English?
 A: Yeah.
 I: Why do you say English?
 A: Because that's where I come from.
 I: OK thanks.

(K=Kate, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I= Have you just done one collage?
 K: Yeah this is all I've done.
 I: Do you just want to go through the pictures and explain why you've used them and explain what they represent about how you see yourself?
 K: OK well I chose Mr Potato Head [toy character] because I find myself really funny, I chose a really colourful bird because I'm colourful, I chose a glass of champagne because I think myself very bubbly and I chose like the necklace with an 'A' on it because I think I'm an angel and I chose that one, the one with the two frogs, because it's got loads of colours and colourful like me.
 I: If you had more time to work on this, do you think how you see yourself and how you think other people see you are the same or would they have been different?
 K: I think that side [how I think other people see me] would have been different.
 I: In what way?
 K: It would have different things on it because some people think different things and others.
 I: Like what sort of things would you have put on there?
 K: Well I tried to get something to represent annoying because my mum thinks I'm annoying.
 I: What sort of things, or what would you use to represent that?
 K: I don't know.
 I: And just finally, how you would usually describe your ethnicity? (long pause)
 Because you wrote down that your ethnicity was other black background, but if somebody asked you what would you say?
 K: Erm, English.
 I: So would you say you're English?
 K: Yeah.
 I: Would you always say that?
 K: Yeah.
 I: OK brilliant.

(Q=Queenie, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Do you want to go through the pictures on how you see yourself and explain what they represent?
 Q: Well I've used that phone one because I'm always on the phone and I'm really chatty and everyone says I'm really chatty and then I used that picture [image of Raven Baxter] because I always watch TV, and that music one I like music and I always watch it so.
 I: You've got a picture of Jessica Simpson, why have you used a picture of her?
 Q: She's quite fashionable and I like clothes and stuff.
 I: Is it her fashion that you like or is there anything else about her that you like?
 Q: Just her fashion really.

I: Just her fashion?
 Q: Yeah.
 I: And you've also got a picture of, is that Kylie Minogue?
 Q: Oh no, it's the candle.
 I: So it's not Kylie Minogue, it's just the candle?
 Q: Yeah.
 I: What are you trying to say with the candle?
 Q: I used the candle because I'm really relaxed.
 I: You've got coffee there as well, why is that there?
 Q: Just like because I'm always like wide awake, I like coffee so.
 I: So you think you're quite an alert person?
 Q: Yeah.
 I: OK now on how you think other people see you you've not got much apart from 'Daddy's Girl' [words], what is that?
 Q: Oh it's just a little sticker that says Daddy's Girl.
 I: So is that how you think other people see you?
 Q: Yeah my mum thinks I am because I always go to him for stuff.
 I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 Q: No, not really.
 I: So if you were going to use some words to explain what you are trying to express with the images, what words would you use?
 Q: I don't know.
 I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 Q: English.
 I: Do you always say English?
 Q: Yeah.
 I: Do you ever say British?
 Q: Yeah sometimes.
 I: What one do you use more?
 Q: English.
 I: Why do you say English rather than British?
 Q: I don't know, just.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(L=Lorna, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

I: OK let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to talk through the pictures you've used and why you've used them//
 L: //yeah. I've used these animals because I think I, well always with my friend and that so whatever happens, I've used Cheryl Tweedy who I think, I like her clothes and fashionable and that and I've used this PlayStation because I think that I'm like always playing games and in this picture [image of a cricket player] I see myself as a sporty sort of person always playing sport. In this picture with the girl smiling I think I'm always smiley//
 I: //who is that girl?
 L: She's from *EastEnders*, Sonia's friend [Naomi]. A picture of a phone, I've used a phone because I'm always on the phone and always chatting and that and I've used a tele 'cause I'm always watching tele.
 I: So let's move onto how you think other people see you. Would you like to go through them pictures?
 L: Yeah I've used this lady again because other people might think that I'm quite sporty as well.
 I: OK so sporty is on both sides.

- L: Yeah and I've used this one 'cause I really like watching DVD's and videos and that, I've used the bag because I always love to go shopping, I've used Peggy Mitchell [*EastEnders* character] 'cause she looks worried in that picture and I'm always like worrying and I've used this girl, I don't know who I can't remember who, because it's actually at a party and I love going to parties.
- I: So do you think that there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- L: Not really, not really different.
- I: There's not?
- L: No.
- I: So if you had more time and you could add pictures, what pictures would you add?
- L: Well I'd probably get another one like that [image of a girl at a party] and put that over there [how I see myself]. I'm not sure what I would do.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- L: English.
- I: Do you always say English?
- L: Yeah I don't say British because none of my family are from anywhere else in Britain and I'm not from part of anywhere else in Britain, I am English.
- I: Right OK, that's brilliant.

(A=Anna, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Do you want to go through the pictures on how you see yourself?
- A: I've got a picture of Lee Ryan because he's got the same starsign as me, I've got a picture of Little Mo from *EastEnders* because she's very emotional, I've got a picture of Shelley from *Coronation Street* because she's emotional and easily hurt and I've got a picture of a little princess because I think I'm a little princess.
- I: You've also got a little devil there as well, what does that mean?
- A: Um (long pause), I don't know.
- Lorna: Maybe 'cause you're like quite naughty sometimes at home? You see yourself as quite naughty at school and that?
- A: Sometimes, yeah yeah.
- I: Let's move onto how you think other people see you.
- A: I've got a picture of that big mouth because people think I've got a big mouth, I've got a picture of that [heart with wings] because my mum and everything think I'm a little angel, I've got a picture of a loveheart because some people think I'm loving.
- I: Now on this side [how I think other people see me] you've put that you are a loud-mouth, but on this side [how I see myself] you put that you are quite a worrier and easily hurt. Do you think other people see that side of you?
- A: No.
- I: Is that because you don't let them//
- A: //yeah.
- I: Why is that?
- Lorna: You've probably only cried about once in school for the past three years haven't you? 'Cause I haven't seen you cry much.
- I: Why do you think other people don't see that side of you?
- A: I don't know.
- I: Do you think it's a good thing that other people don't see that side of you//
- A: //yeah.
- I: Why is it a good thing?
- A: I don't know just don't want other people, it's embarrassing.
- I: And if you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have added?
- A: I don't know.
- I: You don't know.
- A: Fashionable maybe, I'd have put it on what other people think of me, more on there.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 A: English.
 I: English.
 A: Yeah.
 I: OK brilliant.

(A=Aaron, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)
 (//=overlap)

I: Is this one big collage or two?
 A: Two really.
 I: Do you want to start with 'how I see myself'?
 A: I play basketball a lot, I'm quite good at it, I love like rap Sean Paul music sort of thing.
 I: What is it about rap music and Sean Paul that you like?
 A: It's just its good.
 I: Is there anything about Sean Paul, apart from his music that you like? Is there anything about his personality//
 A: //yeah like I like clothes they wear and all that with their clothes and stuff like that.
 I: So you like their fashion?
 A: Yeah.
 I: What about on the other side, on how you think other people see you?
 A: This is good basketball player, people see me as a good basketball player.
 I: You've got basketball on both sides, what does basketball represent? Apart from being a good player, is there anything else about the sport that//
 A: //well they wear like the stuff for trainers and all that and clothes they wear shorts they wear.
 I: So do you think that's quite a fashionable look?
 A: Yeah.
 I: Do you think other people think that's a fashionable look?
 A: Depends if they like basketball.
 I: So if you were going to use some words to describe how you see yourself, what words would you use?
 A: Funny and sporty.
 I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 A: No.
 I: There's not?
 A: No.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 A: English.
 I: You would say English. Do you always say English?
 A: Yeah.
 I: OK brilliant.

(C=Celine, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)
 (//=overlap)

I: Shall we just start with 'how I see myself'? Can you go through they pictures and explain what they mean to you?
 C: My favourite person is I like Kanye West. I like them [image of the Pussycat Dolls] clothes.
 I: You've also got a picture of Danni Minogue here, why have you used her?
 C: Because I like her dress.
 I: You just like her fashion. And you've also got the word 'bling', what does bling mean?
 C: I don't know (long pause).

I: OK on how you think other people see you you've just got one picture of Beyonce. What are you trying to express? What does Beyonce represent?

C: People say that my hair looks like hers.

I: So people say that you're hair is like Beyonce's.

C: And people say that that's the kind of clothes that I wear.

I: So fashion features on both sides. Do you see yourself as quite fashionable?

C: A little bit.

I: Do you think other people see you as fashionable.

C: I don't know.

I: If you had more time are there any extra pictures that you would have put on?

C: Yeah.

I: Like?

C: I don't know.

I: You don't know. And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

C: Caribbean.

I: Would you say Caribbean? You wrote down English. What one do you usually say?

C: I don't know, both.

I: Both. So if I asked you what your ethnicity is now, how would you answer that?

C: I'm half English and half Caribbean.

I: Do you always say I'm half English half Caribbean?

C: Yeah.

I: OK thanks.

(J=James, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Are these two separate collages or one?

J: One I think.

I: Do you want to go through each of the pictures and explain what they represent, what they mean to you? (long pause) Well you've got a lot of games pictures, a lot of PS2's, a lot of *Mortal Kombat* [computer game] and characters, why have you used them? (long pause)

J: I don't know.

I: You don't know.

Carmel: James you always come into school saying you played games until like ten, eleven o'clock at night.

I: Why did you choose them pictures?

J: I don't know.

Carmel: James there's no-one in here, you do it in front of everyone else but it's only me, it's only me here Jesus.

I: So what words would you use to describe how you see yourself? (long pause)

J: Not really sure.

I: You don't want to speak?

J: No.

I: OK we'll leave it.

Carmel: Why don't you just wait until Adrian comes down because if Adrian comes down//

I: //no, it's alright we'll leave it. He doesn't have to talk if he doesn't want to.

(C=Carmel, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Have you done one collage or two?

C: I've done loads of that [how I see myself] and a little bit of this [how I think other people see me].

I: Shall we start with 'how I see myself'? Do you want to go through the images and explain what they represent, what you are trying to express with them?

- C: I've got a Kat Slater [*EastEnders* character] because I'm always feeling confident in myself like she does, I've got Ronaldo and a couple of other footballers I look up to because I always see myself as inspirational trying to get my own goals and because I love football and just Chelsea because I've always supported them daily. I've got Sean Wright-Phillips because I think that sometimes I want to be like him 'cause he's done so much with his life, he got adopted and he doesn't really know his other dad and like I don't see my dad often and he's been with other people and I'm with someone now different like my mum and her boyfriend so I've been with quite a bit of people in my life. I've got Spectacular Pretty Ricky and 50 Cent 'cause I love his music and I love just phat rhythms music like rap and everything.
- I: Right.
- C: I don't know why I put Mario in this 'cause I've got his birthday, I'm on the same day as his birthday so I put him down, I've got Randy Orton 'cause I just love wrestling and I love, like not fighting and being a little scally or anything, love wrestling with my little sister like play-fighting 'cause we always see that and we get bored and sometimes just play-fight. But that's all the pictures I've got on there. And I put that DVD down 'cause I'm always watching DVD's.
- I: Right, you've put 50 Cent down on how you see yourself to represent that you like that type of music//
- C: //yeah//
- I: //but do you think you share anything else with him, because 50 Cent has maybe got a bad reputation for being a bit of a gangster//
- C: //no I ain't like him.
- I: Is it just the music you like?
- C: Yeah.
- I: As a person do you think that you would identify with him [50 Cent] at all? Do you think you share any//
- C: //yeah he raps about his personal life and it's good so I do rap. I just sing about my personal stuff as him, so he sings about his stuff and I sing about my stuff and I think I'm like him sometimes, like speaking about his personal stuff in life.
- I: So do you think that's a good thing that rap does that//
- C: //yeah they should show them things because otherwise they get across the wrong way and they're not what they're made out to be like portrayed in the public.
- I: What about how you think other people see you? You've just used a picture of a phone//
- C: //yeah 'cause as soon as I get out of school as I'm walking home with my friends I'm always on the phone like my mum rings me, my dad texts me, my little sister texts me, friends in London text me, so I'm always texting.
- I: Do you think there's a difference though between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- C: Kind of, I don't think people see me as confident all the time.
- I: But you think you are//
- C: //yeah, I am. I always do a lot of things on my own at home.
- I: Like?
- C: I don't think other people see me as like feeling a bit stronger, like I am, I've overcome a lot in my life like moving house and loads like that.
- I: And if you could have added anymore pictures to that collage, what pictures would you have added?
- C: I would have had a phone over there [how I see myself] because I know I'm always on my phone and I'm using up my credit, over there [how I think other people see me] I think I would have put someone that speaks out a lot 'cause I'm always doing that 'cause I like chatting and I'm always chatting get told off for chatting. I think I'd put on some kind of like, something stupid stuff 'cause sometimes it just comes out and I think it sounds right. And I don't know what else other people think of me 'cause I don't really care what they think about me, it's what I think about myself.

I: So you don't care about other peoples opinions, you just care about yourself?
 C: Yeah.
 I: Is that everybody else?
 C: I care about what my mum says what my family says and like my closest best mate which is only one, I've known her like eleven years I take in what she says. But not like all like, if those said I don't think you're strong, I would like I don't think I'm strong just think I'm confident and feeling a bit better about whatever you say, just goes in one ear and out the other as my mum says to me.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity//
 C: //English.
 I: Do you always say English?
 C: Yeah.
 I: Do you ever say British?
 C: Sometimes if I'm over in like on a team they have a hotel they say we're from Auckland 'cause that's all around the world, I say I'm from England but I don't tend to say I'm English I tend to say I'm British.
 I: Why?
 C: I don't know they're the exact same really, sometimes I only use English sometimes I only use British.
 I: Do you think they are the same thing?
 C: Sometimes.
 I: When aren't they?
 C: I don't know.
 I: You don't know.
 C: No. I think I've always thought like saying 'cause English and British, British is all around the country and so is English 'cause English is in many parts of the world, and you can't really say that sometimes can I 'cause loads of people speak English and they're not from England so I can just say I'm British 'cause I'm United Kingdom I'm from there.
 I: OK brilliant.

(C=Callum, aged 14, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Do you want to go through the pictures on 'how I see myself' and explain what pictures you've used and why?
 C: I've used Amir Khan's picture 'cause I hope to be a boxer and I've used Liverpool celebrations because I like Liverpool [football team].
 I: You've also got this here though and you've put the word 'dumb'//
 C: //yeah I class myself as dumb.
 I: So you see yourself as dumb?
 C: Yeah.
 I: And what's this [image of percentages in a head]?
 C: That's just like people thinking I'm brainy but I'm not basically.
 I: So people think you're brainy but you think you're dumb?
 C: Yeah.
 I: And what is it about boxing, why do you identify with that? Why do you see yourself as a boxer?
 C: I don't know, I just like it.
 I: You just like it?
 C: Yeah and I do it with Golden Ring in Shirley [boxing club].
 I: OK let's go onto how you think other people see you, you've got a picture of Hitler and a picture of a cartoon. Why have you used a picture of Hitler?
 C: 'Cause I think people like take advantage of me, in a way they do but I like he hit people for no reason basically.
 I: He hit people for no reason?

C: Yeah.
 I: So why does Hitler represent that for you?
 C: 'Cause he killed loads of people and I hit loads of people basically.
 I: Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing//
 C: //bad.
 I: So do you think other people see you as a good person or a bad person?
 C: Sometimes good sometimes bad.
 I: When would they see you as bad?
 C: When I hit someone.
 I: Do you think that's good or bad?
 C: Bad.
 I: But you still do it?
 C: Yeah.
 I: Do you think there's a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself?
 C: Yeah.
 I: What's the difference?
 C: I think I'm average.
 I: You think you're average?
 C: Yeah.
 I: Do you think other people think that you are average?
 C: No.
 I: What do they think?
 C: Small.
 I: Is that below average?
 C: Yeah.
 I: So they think you're small and you think you're average?
 C: Yeah, I'm average.
 I: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have put on?
 C: Like a, a little bit of a paper boy, I'd have put that on there to say that I was a good paper boy.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 C: British.
 I: Would you say British or English?
 C: Depends where I am.
 I: Can you explain that?
 C: Yeah if I was like in Spain I would say I'm British but if I'm over here I'm English.
 I: Why would you say British in Spain and English over here?
 C: 'Cause my mum says I'm part Irish and British is to do with Ireland and all that and I don't sound like I've got an Irish accent, I sound English over here.
 I: OK thanks.

(A=Adrian, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Do you want to start with 'how I see myself' and explain what pictures you've used?
 A: The 3 monkey I think that's my funny side and my weird side 'cause it looks weird. Christian Ronaldo that's my favourite player and I've got some lips here 'cause I'm a bit mouthy sometimes and I like the Gorillaz 'cause that's the sort of music I like in style and that's like my naughty side [image of a boy with gun] the picture of the boy//
 I: //with the gun//
 A: //yeah with a gun. And that's like the things that I like cars and smart person.
 I: You've also got a picture of a girl here, why have you put her there?
 A: I don't know, 'cause I thought that was quite funny and plus I fancy her.

I: So you see yourself as someone who is quite funny, a little bit naughty, a little bit different because the Gorillaz music is a little bit different, quite mouthy?

A: Yeah.

I: What about how you think other people see you?

A: I don't know. I like wrestling and fighting.

I: But do you think other people see you as a fighter? Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing?

A: It's good and bad, but I think it's a bit of a bad thing.

I: Why do you think it's a bit of a bad thing?

A: 'Cause it's like if someone is annoying you, you could just say stop it but I would just turn round and punch them and that's a bad thing.

I: When would that be a good thing though?

A: If someone is like pushing you trying to beat you up.

I: So if they are bullying you//

A: //yeah//

I: //or starting it then it's OK?

A: Yeah.

I: What else is there about how you think other people see you?

A: That's [image of a wrestler] my nutty side, I do jump on the garage.

I: So you think other people see you as quite nutty?

A: Yeah.

I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

A: They're about the same, but yeah they're about the same.

I: So it could be one collage?

A: Yeah.

I: Is there anything about yourself that you think other people don't see?

A: I don't know.

I: If you had more time are there anymore pictures that you would have liked to put onto it maybe?

A: No not really, a bit more wrestling.

I: What is it about wrestling that you like?

A: I don't know it's quite funny.

I: It's quite funny?

A: Yeah.

I: But fighting is a bad thing, but do you think the wrestlers are bad for fighting?

A: No not really.

I: Are there any wrestling characters that you really like?

A: Yeah.

I: Like who?

A: I like Eugene, he's funny.

I: Do you like him because he's funny?

A: Yeah and he's nutty.

I: Is he out of control nutty?

A: Yeah.

I: Do you think that's a good thing?

A: No it's quite funny.

I: So it's just purely for the funny side?

A: Yeah.

I: And what is it about the Gorillaz music that you identify with? What is it about their music that expresses who you are?

A: It's got like a good beat, it's not like really slow music, it's always got a good beat on it.

I: A good beat.

A: Yeah, like catchy.

I: And what is it about Christian Ronaldo that you identify with?
A: He's skilful and he like moves with the ball and he does skilful tricks.
I: So do you think you're quite a skilful person?
A: No not really, I try to be but not really.
I: So would you like look up to him and aspire to be like him?
A: Yeah.
I: So one day you would like to be able to say that's how I see myself?
A: But not Portuguese.
I: But not Portuguese. So it's important for you to hold onto the English//
A: //yeah, I'm English at heart.
I: Do you feel more English, more Irish or both?
A: I'm a bit of English and Irish, I live in England but my name is Irish.
I: So how would you usually describe yourself?
A: English.
I: English, but you don't ever say Irish?
A: No not really.
I: OK that's brilliant thanks.

Appendix B.5: Regents Park Girls' School

(D=Diana, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Now you've just done a 'how I see myself' collage. Do you want to talk through the images you've used and why you've used them, what they mean to you?
- D: Well I like colours, you know like happy cheerful colours and I'm friendly you know, loveable.
- I: What about the pictures here of Mariah Carey and//
- D: //and Kelly Clarkson.
- I: Why have you used them?
- D: I like their songs.
- I: You like their songs. Is there anything else about Mariah Carey and Kelly Clarkson that you like?
- D: They're pretty.
- I: They're pretty. And is that how you see yourself as well?
- D: Um, I'm not sure.
- I: What about this guy [Billie Joe Armstrong], who is he?
- D: He's off Green Day, I like his songs to.
- I: You like his songs, and Eminem?
- D: Yeah.
- I: And J. Lo?
- D: Yeah.
- I: Apart from liking their songs, what else do they mean to you?
- D: I like them you know. Well my best friend fancies him.
- I: Who Eminem?
- D: Yeah.
- I: But what is it about him [Eminem], apart from his music, do you think there's anything about his personality that you share?
- D: No because he's quite rude actually.
- I: So he's quite rude, but you also look up to him?
- D: Yeah.
- I: Do you like him because he's rude?
- D: No but that's the whole point of rap and I'm rude sometimes but I don't like to be and try not to be.
- I: Do you like rap music?
- D: It's OK. It's not my favourite kind of music.
- I: What's your favourite kind?
- D: Kelly Clarkson, pop music.
- I: You said that you think rap music and Eminem is rude, and you can be rude sometimes, do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing?
- D: Quite bad actually, I try not to be rude and that.
- I: Quite bad?
- D: Yeah.
- I: In what way?
- D: Swearing and stuff.
- I: Is there anything good about rap music and Eminem that you identify with?
- D: It speaks about life and Eminem is mainly speaking about his experiences.
- I: So that's a good thing?
- D: Yeah, because it's telling people about what he's been through and that's what I try and do.
- I: Let's move on. You've got this picture here of a cartoon guy with funny hair. What does that mean?
- D: He's off this programme called *Dragonball*.

I: Called?
D: *Dragonball*.
I: So why did you use the picture of him there?
D: Because I like him because he's a good guy.
I: He's a good guy?
D: Yeah he's extremely strong and fights off all the bad guys.
I: In what way is he a good guy?
D: Because he fights off all the bad guys.
I: He fights off all the bad guys. Now I've noticed that you didn't do a collage here on this side, how you think other people see you, why is that?
D: Because I think it's you know, both.
I: So you think how you see yourself is how you think other people see you?
D: Yeah.
I: If you had more time are there any other pictures you would have added to your collage?
D: No.
I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
D: English.
I: English?
D: Yeah.
I: So you would usually call yourself English not British?
D: Yeah English.
I: OK that's brilliant.

(S=Saira, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Can we start with how you see yourself? Do you just want to go through each of the images and explain what they mean?
S: The first one is my religion [image of Arabic text] which is, it's got my god's name on which means I'm Muslim and that's the most important thing my religion. And the next picture [image of a watermelon] is my favourite food, a watermelon because I really like it and then it's my favourite artists [images of Beyonce, Lemar and Mario] I've got loads.
I: Who are they?
S: Beyonce, Lemar and Mario.
I: What is it about them [images of Beyonce, Lemar and Mario] that you identify with?
S: I like their character, they're very confident and they've tried very hard to get to this point so I think yeah they've tried best very hard in life to get this yeah, and I just think that she's [Beyonce] very pretty and yeah.
I: And so her [Beyonce] prettiness, do you think that's something you share with her?
S: Well I do have some self-confidence; I do think I'm a bit pretty but not that much.
I: So not as pretty as Beyonce?
S: No. Well the second pictures I've got Burberry, Estee Lauder, Chanel and Dior which I'm a fashion mark, so I'm really fashionable and I buy like this kind of stuff. I like make-up and stuff and I like to be fashionable and be myself and that's why I put some marks, fashion marks on there.
I: Are designer labels important to you? Is the name of a product important to you?
S: Well it depends; it depends if it's good or not because sometimes you can just buy cheap ones.
I: As in?
S: You know just cheap fashion marks but//
I: //what is cheap fashion to you?
S: I don't know, if you buy from Primark and stuff but everybody shops from Primark like, but anyway I just like them [designer brands] because that's what I am about, yeah.

I: So it's just purely for the name?

S: Yeah. I'm planning to be a fashion designer and that's why I like them.

I: OK, let's move onto how you think other people see you.

S: Other people see me they probably think if I'm wearing fashionable clothes they think I'm fashionable and I'm happy because I'm always smiling and, I don't know if they think I'm too pretty or not, I'm not too sure about if they see I've got too much self-confidence that I do seem nice.

I: What is it about you that you think they will see//

S: //personality.

I: So your personality reflects, it shows your self-confidence?

S: Yeah. Well I'm very much into accessories and stuff so I'm very blingy.

I: Bling?

S: Yeah.

I: What is being bling?

S: It's where like, me being, me picturing stuff you know like accessories, bling.

I: Is there a way you have to behave to be bling or is it just a look?

S: I don't know, I think it's just a look.

I: Who is this person here?

S: That's a girl from the Pussycat Dolls [Melody Thornton].

I: And why is she there?

S: I don't like her but I just put her there because she's got this like self-confidence and I think people see me as I've got some self-confidence really.

I: Now I've noticed on your collage that the two sides are actually quite similar, apart from the fact that you've used religion on how you see yourself//

S: //yeah but people, because sometimes when people ask me what my religion is and when I say Muslim and they like wow I didn't expect you to be a Muslim because I don't look like it, and that's why I don't think people see me as a Muslim.

I: What do you think people expect you to look like if you say you are a Muslim?

S: I would not put so much make-up on and, I don't know, just the scarf thingies that they put on.

I: So is that a positive or a negative view of Muslims?

S: No, that's not negative, I wouldn't say it's a negative but they expect you to wear long tops and you know//

I: Burkha?

S: Yeah and all that stuff, but my parents and everything my family says when I'm ready to wear it like that headscarf stuff I can wear it.

I: And would you?

S: Yeah.

I: Right. How would you usually describe your ethnicity?

S: Well I'm Swedish but my mum and dad are from//

I: //you were born in Sweden?

S: Yes, and my mum and dad are from Iraq, so that's kind of like different.

I: OK.

S: I lived in Sweden my whole life and then moved to England, but my parents have lived in like their childhood they spent it in Iraq so I don't know what I am really.

I: Do you think you identify with them being from Iraq at all?

S: Yeah well it's like my nationality it's where my parents and my family come from.

I: But you've written down Swedish?

S: Yeah. I know, I just wrote down my parents are Iraqis the other side because I don't know really if I'm essentially Swedish or Iraqi but I just wrote Swedish because that's where I was born.

I: So you're not sure?

S: No.

I: What makes it so confusing?

- S: I don't know really. It's just that some people say if you're born in a country you come from it and some other people say wherever your parents come from you come from that country to, and I don't know if I'm both or just one.
- I: What do you think you are though?
- S: I think my really real thing I come from is Iraq but I'm born in Sweden and everything so I don't know really, that's what I think.

(M=May, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Do you want to just talk through each of the images and explain what they mean and why you've used them?
- M: I like dogs they're my favourite well my favourite pet's to have so I put that there and I just thought they were really cute so I put them over, there and I want to be a marine biologist so I'm interested in like water life. Manatees are my favourite animal so I swam with them when I went to Florida two weeks ago so I like them. I'd like a swimming pool in my house.
- I: Why have you used a picture of an otter?
- M: Because they're really cute, it's a bit like my dog.
- I: And you've also got some penguins?
- M: Yeah, they're cute.
- I: You've said that you're very animal orientated, but what is it about nature and animals that you specifically like?
- M: I wouldn't say I'm really into nature it's just the animals. I don't know how to explain.
- I: Do you think any of these animals have characteristics or qualities that you share?
- M: I think dogs are quite, they know, they are very aware.
- I: Do you see yourself as a person who is quite aware and alert to what's going on?
- M: Not really no.
- I: No?
- M: No.
- I: Is there anything about these animals that you think you share?
- M: I think dolphins and manatees are very like, they give lots of love, they love their families and they have special ways to greet their families and stuff and I'm similar, you know.
- I: So you've got symbols here that represent calm and peaceful here but you've not used, as opposed to the other people's collages, images of famous people.
- M: Oh no I wouldn't no, I'm not keen on celebrities a lot of the time.
- I: Which celebrities would you have put though//
- M: //I would have put Mariah Carey because I think she's really good.
- I: What is it about Mariah Carey//
- M: I think she's really pretty and confident and I don't know if she's been around a long time she's kind of I don't know.
- I: Do you think that you're pretty and confident as well? Do you think you share that?
- M: Not really, I don't know, I'm not like I'm not very confident really and I'm like a bit shy.
- I: So when you look at Mariah Carey is that somebody you aspire to be like?
- M: Not really I just like her music and everything; I don't really like to be like her or anything.
- I: Is there anyone else?
- M: I like Pussycat Dolls and Kanye West; I like all sorts of music.
- I: Now on this side, how you think other people see you, you've not put any pictures. Is that because of time?
- M: Yeah.
- I: If you had more time do you think that that collage would be different to how you see yourself?

- M: Yeah because I don't really share like anything with people I just keep like that, I like well I share it with my family but I don't really say that I'm interested in like marine biology and stuff because I'm just usually quite quiet about that and then they [other people] probably see me as like just kind and so I like shopping so they probably think I'm very keen on shopping.
- I: So they wouldn't see//
- M: //they wouldn't see me as, I don't think they'd see me like that [how I see myself] and my best friend would but I don't think other people would.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- M: I'm English and British.
- I: Which one would you usually say?
- M: English.
- I: Why would you usually say English and not British?
- M: Because I'm not like, both of my parents are from England but my mum's parents are kind of from Poland and apart from that my dad and everyone in the family is English so I just want to put English because I don't really, I don't really class myself as Polish because I'm not really Polish I was born over here.
- I: OK that's brilliant.

(L=Linda, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: This is quite unusual. Do you want to just talk through what you are trying to express with this collage?
- L: Inside I tried to put kind of dark colours like red like anger, hatred and I kind of hide those feelings, and I arranged those colours I put colours blue and yellow and orange to show happy on the edge.
- I: So the colours are symbolising your different moods and you always try and contain your anger and hatred?
- L: Yeah I'm not, I'm not really an angry person but when I've got, whenever I do I just get annoyed and I don't get angry. My best friend she gets angry very easily and she always does something about it, but like when I get angry I just kind of lock it in myself or like draw pictures or hide it because I don't like people knowing that I can get quite angry sometimes.
- I: So you always keep it bottled up.
- L: Yeah.
- I: Do you think anger is a negative or a positive emotion?
- L: Negative.
- I: Is it always negative?
- L: It's a, I like to see myself as a kind of conscious person that's why I try not to let any people see it.
- I: OK. You've used a picture of a cat, which is one of the few images that you have used, and you've also used the words 'dream', 'think' and 'time'. Do you want to explain why you used those?
- L: Well the cat, I have a cat and it's, he's always like a good listener even though he doesn't answer or anything but he's also quite kind of free so I think that's how I'd more like to be, kind of not like any boundaries keeping me.
- I: Do you think you're a good listener?
- L: Sometimes.
- I: When aren't you a good listener?
- L: Probably if I've had a situation before which went badly, so if I've had a big argument and then I'd be kind of not really focused.
- I: Now you've only done one collage, how you see yourself, do you think that how you think other people see you would be the same?

- L: Well I kind of mixed it into this one because the happy and calm and like cheerful turns round the darker colours and it would be what other people see me from the outside but not the inside.
- I: Do people ever see the inside?
- L: Sometimes, like I know my best friend Holly does.
- I: But on the whole people don't?
- L: No.
- I: If you had more time, how would you have developed this picture further?
- L: I think I'd try and get slightly more candid pictures, so kind of represent that sometimes I'm really confused.
- I: Confused over?
- L: Anything, it can be anything.
- I: Anything?
- L: Yeah, like maybe when I'm trying to do my work.
- I: Do you know what images you would use?
- L: No, but if I saw them I'd probably know.
- I: OK. How would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- L: English or British, if me and a group of friends had been like talking about old England or something we'd describe British kind of in a dramatic way or something but if people ask me then just English.
- I: What do you mean by old England?
- L: Say in the Victorian times they used to be all posh and so you do usually say British in like a posh accent.
- I: So do you think saying British is trying to be posh?
- L: No, it's kind of like a doing it to my friends in an old English accent then if a new person would say I'm from here I would just say I'm British, English sorry.
- I: So you would say English?
- L: Yeah.
- I: OK, thanks.

(C=Cathy, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

- I: Can we start with how you see yourself, would you like to explain what you are trying to represent with the pictures?
- C: That one [image of a man jumping] I'm quite active and I like sport so I put that one because I think that represents that. I like having fun and I put 'September' [word] because that was the month that my birthday's in and 'mood' [word] I'm not sure why I put that one down and for this one [cartoon image of a woman in bikini] I put the beach because I like the summer and going to the beach.
- I: You've also got a picture of the UK//
- C: //because that's where I come from.
- I: And chocolates?
- C: My favourite.
- I: OK, we'll move onto how you think other people see you. It's less busy than the other side, you've just got the words 'shy', 'creativity' and an image of a cartoon drawing.
- C: I think my parents see me as someone like that because like I have an attitude.
- I: In a good way or a bad way?
- C: Like at home when I'm like arguing like with my parents they think that I have an attitude, so like a teenager with their hands on their hips. And put shy because lots of people think I'm shy and people think I'm quite creative a person.
- I: Do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- C: I'm not sure, I think so.
- I: In what way?

C: I don't know.
 I: I've also noticed that you've not used any pictures of famous people. If you had more time, are there any extra pictures that you would have put on?
 C: I don't know. I don't know which ones I would have found. So I would have put on more pictures if I had more time but I don't know what ones.
 I: You don't know which ones?
 C: No. I was just like looking through and anything that caught my eye.
 I: And just finally, I asked you how you would usually describe your ethnicity. What would you usually say?
 C: That I'm British.
 I: Do you always say that you're British, because some people say English?
 C: Yeah, I'd say English.
 I: You'd say English?
 C: Yeah.
 I: Which one?
 C: I'd probably say that I'm English because that's the language.
 I: Because that's the language?
 C: Mmm.
 I: I don't really say British but I'd say English.
 I: So you think that British and English are the same thing?
 C: Yeah.
 I: But then why would you usually say English?
 C: I don't know because I'd always say English.
 I: OK, that's brilliant.

(J=Janice, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(// = overlap)

I: Do you want to talk through the pictures that you've used for how you see yourself?
 J: I put that on there [images of Green Day members] because I like Green Day and I like watching TV and some people say I look like Nemo [animated character].
 I: Who is Nemo?
 J: A fish.
 I: Do you think you look like Nemo?
 J: No.
 I: Let's go back to this [images of Green Day], what is it about Green Day that you like?
 J: I like their music.
 I: Is there anything about their characters or their personalities that you think you share?
 J: No.
 I: No?
 J: No.
 I: So it's just their music that you like?
 J: Yeah.
 I: You've also used some words there, 'strong' and 'gossip'. Do you think you're strong?
 J: I don't know.
 I: You don't know?
 J: No.
 I: So what does the word 'strong' there mean, why is it there?
 J: Because I put it on.
 I: OK let's just go to the other side. You've used the words 'funny', 'nice' and 'kind'. Is there anything else that you would add to that side if you could?
 J: I don't know.
 I: You don't know?
 J: No.

I: Do you think how you think other people see you is the same as how you see yourself?
 J: Yeah.
 I: So it could be one big collage?
 J: Yeah.
 I: And how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 J: English.
 I: Do you always say English?
 J: Yeah.
 I: OK, thanks.

(I=India, aged 13, female; In=interviewer)
 (//=overlap)

In: Is this one big collage?
 I: Yeah.
 In: I've noticed a picture of Trinny and Susannah, why are they there?
 I: Because my friends and myself are a bit like them and we want to be like interior fashion designers when we're older so they're like our idols.
 In: Your idols. So do you think that they are positive role models?
 I: Yeah.
 In: What is it about them that you like and identify with?
 I: They're like honest about you know people, what they think people look like and how they can be improved.
 In: Do you want to go through each of the pictures and what it means?
 I: I love animals basically and I like to give money to the RSPCA because a lot of animals that people just leave, you know don't treat right, so that's why I've put them. I like her [image of Catherine Tate] she's so funny.
 In: Do you know her name?
 I: Yeah Catherine Tate I think it is. '3' [number] is my lucky number.
 In: What about this picture of Fearne and Reggie [television presenters]?
 I: I love Reggie and I think they look nice together.
 In: What about this picture of a baby, what does that mean?
 I: I adore little babies and because I've got several sisters, younger ones, I like having them close but yeah, I haven't seen them for ages so.
 In: And what about all this Manga?
 I: Because I draw Manga I've got a book full of different characters that I like to draw dedicated like a couple of months at the moment to it, then I'm writing about a story for it which I'm gonna write and which is gonna turn into a book so yeah.
 I: So what are you trying to express about how you see yourself?
 In: I don't want to sound big-headed but I'm talented.
 In: Talented in what way?
 I: Well I can sing, I can draw, I can play the piano and I've got quite a few friends that think the same as well.
 In: Now you've only done one collage. Do you think how you see yourself is how you think other people see you? Do you think there is a difference between the two?
 I: If there is a difference it would be quite slight I think.
 In: Where would the difference be?
 I: Not with what I can do but my personality.
 In: But what part of your personality would they see different?
 I: Well my friends would see me as quite a funny like sort of person, but then the people that I don't get on with would think like differently, and then normal people would think that I'm quite shy and all that like you know if I was walking down the street because I'm like in my own little world, but then with my friends I'm different so.
 In: And how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 I: Probably English.

In: English?
 I: Yeah, because I was born here I would say English.
 In: Because here you've written British and that you're grand-dad is from Trinidad and your dad is mixed. What does mixed mean?
 I: Well his mum is British and his dad is from Trinidad.
 In: OK but you would describe yourself as//
 I: //English.
 In: Why would you use English?
 I: Because I'm not connected to that the Trinadian part of my family if you know what I mean, because I've never actually met my grand-dad.
 In: OK.
 I: Because he [dad] don't know where he is and I've never actually met him, and so I'm just connecting with my English side of my family.
 In: So have you got anything in common with Trinidadian culture?
 I: No because I've never been you know introduced to that culture or anything.

(S=Sally, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Your collage is quite abstract.
 S: Yeah.
 I: Do you want to just go through what the pictures represent?
 S: Yeah, it's meant to be one big collage. I couldn't really see how other people see me, I didn't do the other side.
 I: That's fine.
 S: Most of the patterns because that's like I'm colourful, then I put Wallace and Gromit [animated characters] I like them like big fan. I put the pancakes there because I eat for England.
 I: OK.
 S: And I like animals that's why I put like the otter and the butterfly, yeah and I think Nellie the Elephant because I'm colourful and I'm always smiling, yeah and I think I'm colourful yeah.
 I: You've not used any pictures of celebrities, or sports stars, or politicians, why is that?
 S: I don't know. I don't know really.
 I: Do you think if you had more time//
 S: //probably yeah.
 I: Probably. Who for example, or what else would you put down on your collage?
 S: I don't know.
 I: You don't know?
 S: Yeah not really.
 I: So you feel that there's no difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 S: No, no.
 I: OK and how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 S: British or English.
 I: Which one would you usually say?
 S: Either of those not a definite one.
 I: Are there different situations that you might be in where you would feel that one would be better to use rather than the other?
 S: I don't know.
 I: You don't know?
 S: No just say one or the other.
 I: OK, thanks.

(P=Polly, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

- I: Is this two separate collages or one collage?
- P: One collage.
- I: Do you want to just talk about what pictures you've used and why?
- P: I used words 'I am what I am' because I am what I am basically.
- I: And what are you?
- P: Annoying I think.
- I: Annoying?
- P: Yeah.
- I: In what way?
- P: Like loud and stuff like that.
- I: OK and who are these pictures of?
- P: I like people and Arsenal and people see me as cute so I put this picture [image of a baby].
- I: Who is this a picture of?
- P: Thierry Henry.
- I: Is it just because you like Arsenal that you've used him?
- P: No, I like him as well.
- I: In what way?
- P: In another way.
- I: And who is this [image of Melody Thornton from the Pussycat Dolls]?
- P: I don't know.
- I: What is it about her that you identify with?
- P: She looks quiet but she's not, that's what, that's what people say about me.
- I: She looks quiet but she's not?
- P: Yeah.
- I: Do you think that's a good thing or a bad thing?
- P: That's a good thing.
- I: Why?
- P: Because you need to be loud.
- I: Why would you need to be loud?
- P: So people can hear you, shows like you're confident and stuff.
- I: Show that you're confident?
- P: Yeah.
- I: And when would it be good to be quiet?
- P: When you're in a test and stuff like when you have to be quiet otherwise you'd get your paper ripped up.
- I: OK and what are them pictures on that side [how I think other people see me]?
- P: Because some people think I'm a brat so I put 'brat attack' [words] and I like basketball because I play basketball.
- I: Do you think you are a brat?
- P: Yeah.
- I: Do you think that being a brat is a good thing or a bad thing?
- P: No, no actually I don't think I'm a brat but people say I am so.
- I: Why do you think people think you are a brat?
- P: Because they say I'm spoilt but I'm not.
- I: Why would they say that you're spoilt?
- P: Because they say I have everything but I don't.
- I: What haven't you got?
- P: Things that I want like a PS2 I ain't got one of them, I want one but I ain't getting one.
- I: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have put on?
- P: Pictures of smiley faces and stuff.
- I: Of smiley//

P: //faces.
 I: What would you be trying to say?
 P: That's I'm cheerful and happy most of the time.
 I: Most of the time?
 P: Yeah.
 I: Why only most of the time?
 P: Well actually nearly always, but sometimes I have my bad days and get stressed.
 I: You get stressed?
 P: Yeah.
 I: OK. How would you usually describe your ethnicity//
 P: //black British.
 I: Do you always say you're black British?
 P: Yeah, people don't usually ask me what I am. When I write things down that's what I write.
 I: You write black British?
 P: Yeah.
 I: Would you ever just write British?
 P: Yeah but (pause), I'm not exactly white so.
 I: So do you think being British means, do you think that if you just wrote British people would think that you were white?
 P: No they could think that you were Asian or something.
 I: They could think you were Asian?
 P: No, no they could think you were Asian or black or mixed race.
 I: Oh, so do you write black British because you want to make it clear//
 P: //yeah//
 I: //that you are black//
 P: //yeah.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(A=Amanda, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Would you like to just go through your images and explain that they mean to you?
 Are they two separate collages?
 A: Yeah.
 I: OK so let's just work through these ones first [how I see myself]?
 A: That one [image of a woman with stereo] is for dancing to music because I like dancing to and music and having fun.
 I: OK.
 A: That one ['feel like dancing'] is for dancing as well and that one ['hilarious'] sometimes I think I'm really funny and I'm just about fashion really and I like also see myself as the best sometimes really so.
 I: You see yourself as the best sometimes, when wouldn't you see yourself as the best?
 A: I don't know, when someone else is better than me, I don't know. I see myself as the best sometimes just, I don't know, I'm confused now.
 I: Confused about?
 A: Don't know, hadn't really thought about it before so.
 I: What about those pictures [how I think other people see me]?
 A: Some people say I'm like very pretty and some friends say I'm good enough to be a model kind of thing so I put that down and then I just think people say I'm cheeky and I thought that looked quite cheeky looking so I put that down and then the same with that the 'hot' and the 'fit' one as well practically same as the 'model' really.
 I: So you've put that you think other people see you as pretty, good enough to be a model. Do you think in how you see yourself that you feel you are good enough to be a model?
 A: No//

Polly: //well you should.
A: I don't, I just put it down because that's what other people say but I don't think I am.
I: If you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have put on?
A: I don't know like [inaudible].
I: Can you give me any examples?
A: How other people see me like emotions and stuff.
I: How do you think they do see you?
A: Happy sometimes and not happy the other.
I: OK and how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
A: I'd say white British.
I: White British? You've written English.
A: English, British English yeah.
I: Which one would you usually say British or English?
A: I'd probably would usually say English.
I: English?
A: Yeah.
I: Why would you say English over British?
A: To get the point across and say that I'm English.
I: What point?
A: Just to say I'm English really.
I: So you would say you're English?
A: Yeah.
I: OK that's great.

(S=Sheila, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: You've done two collages here, so shall we start with 'how I see myself'?
S: I like music that's why I've got like R&B hip hop and hip hop there and I love films and I like Kelly Clarkson there.
I: What is it about Kelly Clarkson that you like?
S: The way she sings and how she dresses and stuff like that, she's good at singing and she's got a very good fashion sense.
I: Do you think there's anything about her character that you think you share with her [Kelly Clarkson]?
S: She's a nice person.
I: Let's move onto how you think other people see you. You've just used words here do you want to explain why you've used these words?
S: My family think that I'm loud so I've got 'sound' and they know that I like music I love my music, they think that I like games they know that I like games OK and they think that I'm a star they think I'm beauty.
I: Do you think there's a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself?
S: Not really, a bit same but//
I: //a bit the same?
S: Yeah.
I: When wouldn't they be the same [how I see myself and how I think other people see me]?
S: Like like the star and the beauty and it's on there and stuff like that.
I: So you don't see yourself as a star and beautiful?
S: No.
S: Just going back to how you see yourself, what is it about hip hop and R&B music that you like in particular, why is that your favourite music?
S: Because I like the people that sing them, rhythm, the rhythm of the music and like how hip hop and R&B people like dress.
I: OK and just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

S: English.
I: Do you always say English?
S: Yeah.
I: OK thanks.

(S=Sabina, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)
(//=overlap)

I: Is this one big collage?
S: Yeah.
I: Do you just want to go through the images and what they mean and represent to you?
S: I've got Thierry Henry because I support Arsenal and I've got a phone on there because I like my phone and just basically stuff that I like.
I: So it's all stuff you like?
S: Yeah.
I: Why have you got a picture of a boxer [image of Amir Khan]?
S: I like watching his matches.
I: Is it just his matches that you like watching or is there anything about him that you like?
S: Not really him just like his boxing.
I: I don't mean do you fancy him what I mean is, are there any characteristics of his personality that you like?
S: He's a nice person innit.
I: He's a nice person. In what way is he a nice person?
S: Just like the way he is.
I: This is Beyonce and this is, who is he?
S: Joe.
I: Why have you used them?
S: Because they just, they like famous people who can sing and stuff. I like music.
I: You like their music?
S: Yeah.
I: What does this image mean [drawn image of a cigarette with cross through it]?
S: I don't like people's smoke, I just don't like smoking, smell none of it.
I: OK. You're from Southampton yeah//
S: //mmm//
I: //and you've got a picture of *EastEnders* there, why is that there?
S: I'm not from Southampton I'm from Bradford but I just like watching *EastEnders*.
I: What type of person are you trying to say you are then? How do you see your identity, what are you trying to express about it here?
S: I'm a normal person.
I: Do you think there's a difference between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself?
S: Yeah.
I: What is the difference?
S: They see me as like calm and stuff and I just like get stressed basically.
I: They see you as calm?
S: Yeah it's just that having a laugh and stuff.
I: Having a?
S: Laugh, you know when you laugh? But I don't know, it seems happy its very colour there's not much difference.
I: So you're not calm?
S: No. Yeah I can be at times, but I have my ups and downs.
I: You have your ups and downs?
S: Yeah.
I: Just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
S: Asian.

I: Do you always say Asian?
 S: I do. If I have to say Pakistani but like if you've got to like//
 I: //if you've got to?
 S: If you've just got to like say what you are, like if you're sitting in a room//
 I: //sitting with?
 S: A load of Indians and you can't exactly say Asian because like you clarify what you are so I say Pakistani.
 I: Do you only say Pakistani when you're around other Asian people?
 S: Otherwise it's just Asian innit.
 I: So who would you just say I'm Asian to?
 S: White people or just when you've got to fill out shit.
 I: OK thanks.

(C=Carly, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Carly, you've done two separate collages?
 C: Yeah yeah.
 I: Do you want to start with how you see yourself and just explain what pictures you've used and why you've used them?
 C: I've used the UK flag because that's where I was born here and I just wanted to show that. I showed the target because I'm, I like to be ambitious and I like to hit my target basically so in school or anything and I did the mountain with a person on top because I'm ambitious and, yeah so I just wanted to show that. I wrote well had the word 'heaven' with a question mark next to it because I'm not really sure what I believe in, heaven or not, and I just wanted to show that, and I showed the picture of the confused person because I'm confused with my friends with their sexuality and stuff like that I just wanted to show so//
 I: //you're sorry?
 C: My friends and like their sexuality like, how do I explain it, because they're like always coming to me because I feel like I'm like the advice person and with friends they come to me with their problems.
 I: In what way are they confused about their sexuality?
 C: Well I've got a friend and she doesn't know if she's like in-between if you understand what I mean (laughter).
 I: Do you mean she doesn't know if she's lesbian or//
 C: //yeah yeah and she's always talking to me about it because she's confused so I put the confused face because I'm the agony aunt of the group.
 I: Now what about the word 'race' and this image here [image of African children]?
 C: I put that because my dad is African and my mum is English and I wanted to put that I belong to both groups, like I'm African and English at the same time yeah so I wanted to put a picture of that there.
 I: OK let's move onto how you think other people see you.
 C: I put the angry face because I think people can see I'm quite bossy and get quite stressed sometimes. I put the sun because I think that some people see me as a happy person.
 I: What about 'I'll speak out' [words]?
 C: Because I'm quite opinionated and I say my views, I put my views out straight away. And I put the power button because I think people see me as quite tuned in to a, if you're talking about an issue I get quite tuned into it and put my views across.
 I: Do you think that both sides of the collage are the same? Do you think how you think other people see you is the same as how you see yourself?
 C: Slightly, in one way the whole ambitious thing is one but in another way I think, happy side I think I'm quite a happy person like I think that's how other people see me.
 I: So you do think they are the same?

- C: Yeah I do actually yeah.
 I: Yes?
 C: Yeah.
 I: I've just noticed a picture of Pete Doherty on how you see yourself, what does that mean?
 C: It was just like the cigarette because I don't like smoking or anything like that so I did it with a cross through it.
 I: So if you had more time are there any pictures that you would have added to the collage?
 C: What to any side?
 I: Didn't you just say how you think other people see you is how you see yourself?
 C: Yeah I would have, I would have put more of the same pictures on either side because I think they're quite different.
 I: What is the biggest difference do you think between both sides?
 C: I haven't put my sort of emotions on this side [how I see myself] I put what I see people think of me, how emotionalised on this side [how I think other people see me] but none on this side I just put what I'm into really and, yeah that's what I've really put if that makes sense.
 I: So you would have put more emotions on how I see myself?
 C: Yeah yeah.
 I: You would have maybe have used the same images for both sides or done one big collage?
 C: Yeah I could have done one big collage actually because I think they're quite the same so.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 C: British because that's where I was born but I sometimes I say I'm mixed race as well.
 I: What one do you usually say?
 C: English.
 I: English or British?
 C: British or English really, more British.
 I: Why more British?
 C: I probably say that because I'm more part of, I don't know the, I don't know how to describe it, more part of the UK just, I don't know.
 I: What do you mean by more part of the UK?
 C: I just think of, like UK is a whole big country so I just say yeah I'm British like that because I'm yeah, well I do say I'm English but I'm more British.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(R=Rita, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

- I: Shall we start with 'how I see myself', do you just want to explain what pictures you've used and why?
 R: Well I've used her because she's like smiling and I'm sometimes happy and I like going out into the country and having lengthy walks and I did that one because I like animals.
 I: And who is that a picture of [image of a woman shopping]?
 R: I like shopping.
 I: So overall you see yourself as quite a happy person, who is quite peaceful and calm and enjoy shopping?
 R: Yeah.
 I: OK let's go onto how you think other people see you. What do these pictures mean?
 R: I chose that one [image of the Eiffel Tower] because it's like the Eiffel Tower stands out and I like to stand out. I'm like sometimes happy and sometimes sad and sometimes annoyed and I'm not sure why I put them but I just like them so I (long pause).

- I: Do you think that there's a difference then between how you think other people see you and how you see yourself, because this one [how I think other people see me] seems to focus on emotions a lot more than this side [how I see myself]? (long pause) Like here [how I think other people see me] you've put that you stand out and other people might think that you're angry or sad, so is there a difference between these two sides?
- R: A little bit of a difference because of different like emotions on either sides.
- I: What are the differences with the emotions? Like on this side [how I see myself] you've put that you're happy but you've not done this on the other side. So do you think other people don't see you as happy?
- R: Sometimes they do sometimes they don't, because sometimes I'm really stressed out and sometimes I'm not so.
- I: So what emotions would be in how you see yourself that other people would rarely see?
- R: Happy probably.
- I: So you feel you're a lot more happy than other people think?
- R: Yeah.
- I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- R: British.
- I: Do you always say British?
- R: Sometimes, like sometimes I say English because like I'm like in England.
- I: What one do you use more often?
- R: Probably British.
- I: British. OK thanks.

(A=Annabel, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

- I: Would you like to pick out some of the pictures you feel express how you see yourself?
- A: I picked 'Unity' [word] because I think like when people are upset people should I think people should come together and help each other. I picked out that picture [image of Bjork] because it's different and I like to be different, I don't like to be like everybody else.
- I: So the picture of the girl with the red mask on her face. I've noticed Green Day//
- A: //oh yeah.
- I: Why have you got Green Day there?
- A: Because I like their music and look up to them 'cause they're cool.
- I: Is it just the music that you identify with or is it anything about them?
- A: Well that one [Billie Joe Armstrong] has been like through a lot, like his dad died when he was young and he expressed himself in music and I respect that and that's how I see myself.
- I: And you've also got words like 'pride' and 'the killers', why are they there?
- A: The Killers is a band and I like their music and words, I love pride, I think are my personality like wild and stuff.
- I: What about Japan?
- A: Japan I like that country.
- I: Have you been there?
- A: No but I got the drawings of like that thing.
- I: So you like the Manga style cartoons?
- A: Yeah.
- I: On how you think other people see you//
- A: //that's nothing there I just//
- I: //just doodling?
- A: Yeah.

I: So do you think how you see yourself and how you think other people see you are the same thing?

A: I think it would be different but I didn't do anything there because I don't really care how other people see me because I think my opinion matters most, and if they don't like how I am then that's just tough really that's how I am.

I: But do you think there's a difference?

A: Yeah I do.

I: What would the difference be?

A: Well I don't know really I don't really know how they see me. I think that a lot of people think that I'm a nice person but like everybody's got different opinions so some people might not like some people would like me I'm not really sure.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

A: British or English.

I: Which one would you usually say?

A: I'd say English.

I: OK thanks.

Appendix B.6: Twynham School Group One

(J=Jake, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Is this one collage or two separate collages?
- J: Kind of two separate ones.
- I: So let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through each of the pictures and explain why you've used them, what you are trying to express, what they represent? Let's start up here with this flag.
- J: OK I'm like half English and half Jamaican, it's like my mum is English and I was born here so that shows that and my dad's Jamaican so just put like what I am.
- I: So the mixture of two sides as one?
- J: Yeah.
- I: And then you've got these trainers and the basketball player and is that a sports logo?
- J: Yeah.
- I: What do they represent?
- J: Well I like sport a lot, just saying that I like it a lot really.
- I: Right and what is it about sport that you like?
- J: Um like the competition and the physical side of it.
- I: So you like the competition?
- J: Yeah.
- I: Is that because, is it more the taking part or is it about the winning for you?
- J: It's good; I like it if I win.
- I: OK and what about these pictures here because you've got, what is that an ipod?
- J: Yeah.
- I: What does that represent?
- J: Like that I like music and the 50 Cent logo like the favourite like singer person I like, like look up to you know.
- I: What is it about 50 Cent that you like? What is it about him or his music that you identify with?
- J: It's just like good music and it like tells stuff but like, in like rap kind of thing.
- I: What sort of stuff? What do you mean?
- J: Like in different places, like towns and stuff like different people and like kind of telling other stories, like telling his own and other people's stories.
- I: So he's telling his life story and other people's?
- J: Yeah yeah.
- I: And why do you like that?
- J: I don't know I just think its good how like he expresses himself and it makes you think about different places and different people and stuff.
- I: Because the thing is, 50 Cent also has quite a bad reputation//
- J: //yeah//
- I: //because he acts at times like a bit of a gangster type//
- J: //yeah.
- I: So do you think that people like 50 Cent are positive or negative role models?
- J: I think they're like kind of in the middle, like people are.
- I: In what way//
- J: //like shooting and stuff, obviously that's wrong but like, he's like, made his way up kind of thing to be like singing and famous and stuff like that and achieved something with his life.
- I: So he's both at the same time?
- J: Yeah.
- I: And what about, you've got a picture of boobs there, what does that represent?
- J: I just thought I'd be pretty funny, I put it on.
- I: Is that the only reason you put them on there, because you thought it would be funny?

J: Yeah.

I: OK you've also got the word 'Twynham' which is your school//

J: //yeah.

I: How do you feel about your school? Do you enjoy it here?

J: Yeah, it's OK.

I: In what way is it part of how you see yourself?

J: It's just generally like what I do most of the time, I go to school. That's what I do I might as well put it in there.

I: OK and let's move on to how I think other people see me. You've got a trainer again, well it's the same trainer just a different colour//

J: //yeah//

I: //does that represent sport again?

J: Yeah.

I: You've also got a gun and//

J: //it's like a diamond thing//

I: //a diamond and graffiti. What do they mean?

J: Like gangster stuff, it's like a lot of black people are gangsters and stuff and they like do drugs and stuff like that.

I: And you've got the picture of a gangster here?

J: Yeah.

I: Do you think other people see you as a gangster?

J: Like their first reaction is like, because of my colour they could think like that.

I: Why do you think that they would think that though?

J: I don't know.

I: Where would they get them ideas from? Where would they get the idea that black people are all gangsters?

J: 'Cause like a lot of like you see on TV or in like films and stuff like that, a lot of like the black people are more gangster types.

I: What type of other people do you think would think of you, or could think of you that way if they saw you?

J: Just like random people, I don't know.

I: Is that something you're aware of on a daily basis, that when people see you they might//

J: //yeah. They could like, if they're thinking of it like, they could think loads of different things and that's like the first thing I came up with.

I: So there's a massive difference between how you think other people see you//

J: //mmm//

I: //and how you see yourself?

J: Yeah.

I: Going back to this side [how you think other people see you]. Are you very conscious of your, like you said that the media build up the image of black people as gangsters//

J: //yeah//

I: //do you think that that's getting better, that they are moving away from it? That there are more positive images of black people, or do you think that it's still quite bad and black people are still shown in a negative way?

J: They are still shown, it's still a little bit.

I: Can you give me some examples?

J: Um.

I: Any films or programmes or music or anything where you think//

J: //like rap music and stuff like that like people show like black people shooting people or on like X-Box games if its, like on *Grand Theft Auto* where you go and shoot people it's a black person it's not a white person, it's like the black people who do the shooting kind of thing.

I: For you then, in the media are there any positive black role models?

J: Yeah there is some, I don't know his name, it's Ladley King or something, I don't know his name.

I: Who is he?

J: He like spoke up about like the black people's needs and stuff like that; like they should be equal and stuff like that.

I: Oh, Martin Luther King.

J: That's it, yeah.

I: How do you think that this side [how I think other people see me] will change so people don't think of black people in a negative way?

J: I don't know 'cause like one time in everyone's life they're gonna like think something like that it's just, I don't know.

I: What think something like?

J: Like Black people are gangsters kind of thing, like if they [other people] think about it that's what's gonna probably come into their head 'cause they see a lot of it like in the media and in TV and that as well, but then other things they will think as well.

I: Like?

J: Like slaves and stuff like that. Like a lot of black people are slave's, like from ages ago.

I: So do you think people aren't given enough positive or they're not given the correct information about black culture and//

J: //yeah//

I: //do you feel that it only focuses on like that they were either slaves or that they're all gangsters now//

J: //yeah//

I: //that it just goes from one negative to the next?

J: It [the media] doesn't really show any like nice like black people, they don't really focus on it they just focus on like all the things that black people do wrong.

I: When you say they who do you mean?

J: Like the media and stuff like that.

I: So they just focus on all the stuff that black people, that they think are doing wrong.

J: Yeah.

I: Do you think that those things that they show, like people being gangsters, also apply though to white people and other people from other ethnicities?

J: Um yeah sometimes.

I: Why do you think though that they only show black people in that way?

J: Sometimes they [the media] show like, Asians, they're like saying a lot about like Asian people and stuff like, Iraq people they're showing a lot about them as well, because like of what like Saddam Hussein done, like saying like all of them are like that but they're not, it's a bit harsh.

I: So you think that they're also labelling people//

J: //yeah//

I: //in Iraq now//

J: //yeah.

I: Do you think they do the same to white people in the media?

J: I don't hear much about it really but don't know they might do.

I: They might do.

J: Yeah, I don't hear much about it though.

I: Is there anyone, because you mentioned Martin Luther King//

J: //yeah.

I: Is there anyone that is around today who you think is a good positive role model for black people and black children?

J: Simon Webbe.

I: Simon Webbe?

J: Yeah.

I: Why do you think he's a good role//

- J: //he's like just a normal person who hasn't done anything wrong, like he just sings really, just normal.
- I: Yes.
- J: Yeah, 'cause like, it's like, everyone knows him like he's not English, like everyone knows him they don't say anything about him.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- J: I'm half Jamaican and half English.
- I: Do you always say half?
- J: Yeah. I'm half Jamaican and half English.
- I: OK that's excellent, thank you.

(R=Rose, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've done two separate collages, so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through the images and explain what they are and what you are trying to express?
- R: Sure OK. Well I really like art and fashion, that was the basis of it really, I like this photo [image of a woman applying make-up and party girls] because I like to party and I'm a bit of a poser, but I'm sort of like 'cause I'm quite down if people want, and I like people to say stuff to my face you know I don't like people talking about me behind my back, it's like go on do it [image of a heart with 'break my heart'], and then I really like fashion and shoes so that was the basis between them two [image of a female model and boots], and that one [image of a collage of girls] I just really love the picture I don't know why, there's just something about it that I really like.
- I: Right.
- R: Don't know, just a collection of photos, I really like photography.
- I: And what does this word say?
- R: Well I was gonna, there's a quote and 'she reads too many fashion magazines' and I was gonna finish that so.
- I: So if you were going to use some words to explain the pictures and how you see yourself, what would you use?
- R: Arty, daring, chic and confident. Yeah I am confident, I do a lot of drama and acting and stuff so.
- I: So let's move onto how you think other people see you.
- R: Yeah.
- I: Now you've used black and white pictures here. You've got one picture of zebra's and another of a girl. Let's start with the girl in the coat [how I think other people see me].
- R: Well people always tell me that I have a cool like dress sense and I thought that was quite cool, and she's laughing and I'm usually quite happy and making people laugh so that was that.
- I: You've got a white zebra standing amongst other zebra's, what does that represent?
- R: People think that I stand out from the crowd a lot and think I'm different and stuff like that so.
- I: In what way do they think you're different?
- R: Well, I don't know, they just think like I sort of break the boundaries with like fashion, the way I am and music and all that, because I have quite a lot of friends that are into R&B and hip hop but they don't judge you on what you listen to, I listen to totally different stuff to them like Franz Ferdinand but yeah so, I try to be my own person.
- I: So do you think that there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- R: Not, there's not much of a difference I don't think.
- I: So where would the difference be?
- R: I'm not sure.

- I: What do you personally feel because we've got fashion and standing out from the crowd and that's evident in these images, but if you were to pinpoint any differences what do you think they would be?
- R: Um, I think people when they, if they first see me they think that I'm gonna be a bit of a bitch and that I'm over-confident and have a big ego and all this.
- I: Why do you think they'd//
- R: //I think because I do a lot of acting, I don't know, I know I have quite a serious face sometimes so I think that people think I'm like giving them evils and all this but I'm not really, quite a nice person to get along with quite funny.
- I: I've also noticed that you've not used any pictures of celebrities or film or television programmes. Why is that?
- R: I try and be my own person, I don't really follow a certain person.
- I: So you just really prefer to be your own person and don't want to follow somebody?
- R: Yeah.
- I: Is there anybody that you think is a positive role model for you?
- R: Yeah, Nicole Ritchie and Johnny Depp.
- I: What is it about them//
- R: //well Johnny Depp he's like really different, he's a really good actor he got me into acting he inspired me to do that, he's not into all the like media stars he's like just a regular family guy and likes to stay out of the whole spotlight.
- I: And what about Nicole Ritchie?
- R: She's just really cool, I like the way that she, she like got over all her addictions and all that that she used to have and yeah, quite cool.
- I: OK and just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- R: Half Chinese and half English.
- I: Would you always say you were half Chinese and half English, or is there ever a situation where you might just say I'm Chinese or I'm English?
- R: Well I don't think so I mean the question doesn't really crop up so much I don't think, but I'm not ashamed of who I am, so I just say it.
- I: Is it important for you to, if people do ask, is it important for you to not deny the Chinese//
- R: //yeah//
- I: //Chinese part of you, if you get what I'm driving at?
- R: Yeah, yeah.
- I: Would you feel right if you in saying I am English?
- R: Well it wouldn't feel wrong but I am half Chinese as well so, you know, I just don't see a problem with it so I just say that.
- I: OK that's brilliant. Thank you.

(B=Brian, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through the images and explain what you are trying to express with them?
- B: Yeah, I like music [Pussycat Dolls sign] I like films [*Gladiator* sign] and I'm from England [image of UK map], I like girls [word 'girl' and image of girl in a bikini] and I like sport [image of a footballer].
- I: What is it about sport that you like in particular?
- B: Golf.
- I: But what is it about, do you just enjoy watching it or is it//
- B: //I like playing it and stuff and just having fun just.
- I: Right, OK. Also the music, what type of music do you like?
- B: Rap.
- I: What is it about rap that you like?
- B: I don't know, I just do.
- I: You just do?

B: Yeah. I like the music.
 I: Who is your favourite rapper?
 B: Eminem.
 I: Eminem.
 B: Yeah.
 I: What is it about Eminem that you like?
 B: His music.
 I: Yes, but what is it about his music that, why is his music in your eyes better than//
 B: //his lyrics.
 I: So why do you like his lyrics? Why do you identify with his music, why do you find it appealing?
 B: Um, I don't know I just, I don't know really, I don't know.
 I: OK let's move onto how you think other people see you. Do you want to go through the images there?
 B: I'm quite quiet and kind and er.
 I: You've got a picture of a guy with a gun.
 B: Yeah probably brave and sporty.
 I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
 B: Yeah.
 I: What's the difference?
 B: Um, there isn't really is there.
 I: But do you feel there is a difference?
 B: Not really.
 I: So you think the way you see yourself is exactly the same as the way you think other people see you?
 B: Yeah.
 I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 B: I'm English.
 I: You're English.
 B: Yeah.
 I: Do you always say English, do you ever use British?
 B: No I just say English.
 I: Why would you use English and not say British?
 B: Because I usually say English, OK, I don't know, I just always say I'm English.
 I: OK brilliant.

(K=Keira, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: So Keira, you've just done 'how I see myself'.
 K: Yeah.
 I: Do you want to go through the images?
 K: Um yeah well it's not very girly obviously but a lot of it is like, I do a lot of motor sport and that and I play a lot of games and I'm also in the army cadets.
 I: Right.
 K: I'm bit of a rock chic with the guitars and Motorhead and that and the Status Quo and that and of course I'm also into like technology with downloading things from the internet and that.
 I: And you've also got a picture here of scenery [image of a lake].
 K: Yeah.
 I: What does that mean?
 K: It's kind of like um photography, a lot of the places you go to do motor sport and that you get a lot of like in Scotland.

- I: Going back to the music that you like, because you said you are a bit of a rock chic, what is it about that type music that you like? What is it about that type of music that you identify with?
- K: Well I'm a guitarist so it's obviously with guitar and solo and beats and things.
- I: Right OK. So what types of bands do you really like, because you've got Motorhead and Status Quo, would they be rock 'n' roll bands that you really like?
- K: Yeah.
- I: What is it about them in particular though, because there are lots of rock bands like them, what is it about them in particular that you really like? So let's start with Status Quo, what is it about their music and them that you identify with?
- K: Well it's like a free type of music with like, it can be simple and difficult and it can also be like, like Status Quo music is quite upbeat and it's quite a joy to listen to and then of course with them playing it as well they put personality into it as well.
- I: So, you think that they've got//
- K: //yeah, they've got quite a lot of personality.
- I: And what about Motorhead?
- K: They're just like a proper, a proper rock band kind of thing. Heavy rock, yeah, yeah, it's a lot of heavy rock which is quite good.
- I: You've used the phrase rock chic//
- K: //yeah//
- I: //what is being a rock chic?
- K: Being into rock music and guitars and things that people associate with rock like legends.
- I: And what is, apart from the musical style, what is it about rock that you like? What is it specifically about rock, what do you think rock music in general expresses or what do you think you identify with?
- K: I don't know really.
- I: Because some people might say, for example, it sounds all the same, it's just the same old beat, it's just guitars.
- K: Yeah but a lot of people, I have a different taste in music, you could like ask most of the people in my class and they'd say R&B or pop or stuff that's in the charts nowadays whereas I don't hang with that stuff 'cause I go like the legend rock artists rather than up-to-date people.
- I: What is it about up-to-date people, why is it that you can't engage with that, that you don't identify with that in the same way you do with rock?
- K: Because I don't find it very interesting to listen to, R&B sounds all the same and like some of the pop and all dance stuff sounds mainly the same as well. With rock you can get like slow rock or melodic rock or hard rock and there are actually different types, whereas other people would see it as it sounds all the same but personally I don't.
- I: Right OK. Now on how you think other people see you, you've not done anything. Is that because of time or//
- K: //yeah I didn't start until late in one of the lessons.
- I: If you did have time, what type of images would you have put in how you think other people see you?
- K: Mainly the same.
- I: Mainly the same.
- K: Yeah.
- I: Would there be any differences?
- K: Um I'm not sure really.
- I: Do you think how other people see you is exactly the same as how you see yourself?
- K: I don't know, it's difficult, no I don't know.
- I: Is there anytime where you think somebody might look at you and think something that you just don't feel about yourself?
- K: Um (long pause).

I: Oh and you said you were a member of the army cadets.

K: Yes, yeah yeah.

I: Do you think that people find that an acceptable thing for girls to do?

K: No they don't. Some of the people at the army don't find it because they're just, out of all sixteen of us there are four girls the rest of them are boys, and some of the boys they don't involve you because they don't think that you should be there.

I: On what basis?

K: The fact that you have to run around on a field with a gun and the fact that girls shouldn't do that, they should stay at home and do things like cooking and cleaning and things.

I: So do you feel that people are being quite sexist towards women or do you think that's just a bad experience?

K: There's a few that think that girls shouldn't be in it, like some give leeway and say well they can try it and if they don't like it then obviously they're gonna quit, but most people just put you down straight away.

I: Do you ever have that in any other areas of your life though, where you feel because you're a girl you shouldn't be doing something or you're expected to behave a certain way//

K: //yeah, in like the rally sport that I do, it's you and the services and there's no other girls in my league so you get, if you try to talk to someone like a boy driver they can like step back a bit and think 'mmm do you know anything' kind of thing, and then of course you get to know everyone and then they're alright, but a lot of people don't think yeah should she be in this league and so on and so forth.

I: Do feel you have to prove yourself as a woman; do you feel like you have to work harder?

K: Yeah, I do, to get people to understand that, your not a girlie girl walking around in pink you don't walk around and go to town and think about girlie things which, I normally don't, but when you do something like that [motor sport] you have to persuade people like boys, and that you have to persuade them lots, you're not what they think.

I: Interestingly, you've spoken about rock as well but rock music which is quite male dominated//

K: //yeah, yeah//

I: //so are there any female figures in rock that you particularly identify with?

K: Kelly Clarkson.

I: What is it about Kelly Clarkson that you identify with?

K: She's very down to earth and her music is quite good and she like puts something into the music as well so she has the rock behind her.

I: When you say she always puts something into her music, I'm not sure what you mean?

K: She writes it and then she'll sit there and she'll have like session guitarists and session drummers and that, and she gives them like a sample of what she thinks sounds good, and then she might change it or keep it like that, so she puts a rock effort into the music as well.

I: So do you think that she has a lot of control over what she is doing?

K: Yeah, a positive role model for girls like me.

I: Who do you think is a negative role model?

K: I think that the people in R&B take drugs or hit people and are bad.

I: Are there any artists or musicians that you can name specifically?

K: Not off the top of my head no, but you hear of it a lot of the time on TV and in magazines or it's due to their videos and their music that people react the way they do.

I: What do you mean?

K: You get like, like if you look at R&B if you look at that, a lot of singers will be in the news because they've hit someone or done something and of course the young people

turn around and think that looks good yeah I'll try that being a R&B singer means you can hit people, whereas you can't so a lot of people think it's right if they do it but it's not.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

K: I'm Australian.

I: You're Australian.

K: Mmm.

I: Were you born here?

K: No I was born in Adelaide in Melbourne.

I: How long have you lived here?

K: Thirteen years so I came here when I was really young.

I: So you've lived here most of your life?

K: Yeah.

I: But you still call yourself Australian//

K: //yes.

I: Would you ever call yourself English or British?

K: Um, if I had to yeah, a lot of people have like grudges against the Australian for some reason, or like after the cricket (laughs), but sometimes if you don't feel like people are going to like you because your nationality then you say yeah I'm English.

I: So if you feel like people are going to respond badly to the fact that you are saying you are another//

K: //change it//

I: //will say you're English.

K: yeah.

I: Has that ever happened to you?

K: Um yeah a couple of times, it's like you sit down in lessons and they go through who are you and where do you come from and so on and so forth and you always say England. If people found out you're an Ozzy you get, I don't know, you get labelled in the way that you should speak in an Australian accent and you should know everything about Australia and you should live over there and not here and so on and so forth and then they say why don't you go back and you say well because the rest of my family live here.

I: That's brilliant, thank you.

(L=Lucy, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Are these two separate collages or one//

L: //um yeah they are two.

I: They're two. OK do you want to start with 'how I see myself' and go through the images and explain what you are trying to express, what they mean to you?

L: Well I've got a loads of make-up on there and it's 'cause I do use a lot of make-up and who I am really, I've got straighteners 'cause I straighten my hair and I've got Beyonce 'cause I kind of idol her, she's like really pretty and her hair's always nice and I've always like her. Some of my friends have said that the way I act is like Jessica Simpson so I put her in there so I thought OK then so, gossip I like a bit of gossip. I like kids so I put that there and I'm also I'm quite sporty so I put a sports person on to show that. I'm English so I put England up there.

I: And who are these, the Pussycat Dolls?

L: Yeah, the Pussycat Dolls.

I: Why are they//

L: //well their music is good they're really good at singing and I like singing and they do dancing as well and I like dancing to so.

I: Just going back to Beyonce you said you really like her and thought she was pretty. What is it about her that you think you identify with?

- L: She's so outgoing and like she's got her mind set on her dancing and I've got my mind set on dancing and singing, and she does that all the time and I sing and dance all the time, that's what I want to do that's why really.
- I: And Jessica Simpson you said people say you act like her, in what way?
- L: In the way I dance and sometimes I can be a bit stuck up and, there's a programme on TMS about Jessica Simpson's life and I always watch it with my friends and she acts a bit stuck up so it's like, in like the stuck up way sometimes you can be like that.
- I: So if you were going to use a few words to sum up how you see yourself, what type of words would you use?
- L: I'm quite outgoing and saucy and I really like dancing but I can be a nasty, stuck up and selfish.
- I: Now moving on to how you think other people see you, do you want to//
- L: //yeah I put 'bitch' [word] because I'm like in a group of six people and we're all like really bitchy to each other sometimes and we always say that and I think I can be a bit of a bitch. I can be a little brat because in a way I'm quite spoilt, but yeah I think sometimes I'm a bit of a brat the way I act.
- I: Spoilt by?
- L: Spoilt by my mum really. 'Party people' [words] I like going to parties and stuff like that so I put that there, 'style' [word] I like to have my own style, 'loud' [word] I'm really loud I know I'm loud 'cause of what I do, wrong, I'm always like wrong like if people ask me a question I get it wrong and I know I'm wrong I just get a lot of things wrong.
- I: Does that frustrate you, that you get things wrong?
- L: Sometimes 'cause sometimes it makes me feel a little bit stupid but then sometimes I don't really mind 'cause that's who I am, and I put the picture of the baby there 'cause I can be quite babyish and stuff like that and I don't actually know why I put that there because//
- I: //the word 'gay'//
- L: //yeah I think everyone told me to put it up there and they said oh you're gay like that and I was like OK, 'cause someone said to me you're gay today like that and I was like OK I'll put it up there.
- I: Gay as in?
- L: Not as in actual gay, like lesbian gay, gay as in like happy//
- I: //happy//
- L: //yeah happy and stuff like that.
- I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- L: Um yeah I do.
- I: What are the major differences?
- L: People don't really notice that I dance and sing a lot, well all my friends in the class do and stuff like that and the bit about bitch, loud and stuff like that I think about that in myself as well as other people so I think I agree with them on that kind of thing.
- I: So you actually agree with what you think//
- L: //yeah//
- I: //how you think other people see you//
- L: //yeah.
- I: If you had more time are there anymore images that you would have added?
- L: I'd put a picture of my family up there 'cause I quite like being with my family and I'm quite like family orientated really.
- I: And I just want to go back to the make-up because you've used a picture of Estee Lauder which is obviously a brand we all know//
- L: //mmm//
- I: //when you use make-up is the brand important to you or//

- L: //not particularly but 'cause I've got so much make-up I've spent so much money on make-up and I thought because that's quite expensive as well, I put that there to show that I do use like a lot of make-up and it does add up to quite a bit of an expense.
- I: And just finally I asked you how you would usually describe your ethnicity, what would you usually say?
- L: Well I don't know really 'cause I'm stuff of my mum and my dad and my dad's Irish my mum's Italian and I'm English so, and I don't, so that would make me quarter Irish, quarter Italian and half English.
- I: So if somebody asked would you say I'm a quarter this I'm a quarter that, or would you just say I'm English or I'm British or, what one would you usually say?
- L: I'd say I'm like quarter this quarter that.
- I: Is it important to you to say I'm a quarter Italian, I'm a quarter Irish, is it important//
- L: //yeah it is because I quite like people to know that I'm not all English, not like that there's anything wrong with English but just like them to know my background though.
- I: Why is that, do you know?
- L: Well me and my friends are like that we tell, if anyone asks, we tell them what really it is and then they actually know what it is, tell them the truth really.
- I: OK that's brilliant. Thanks.

(T=Tim, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Tim, are these two separate collages or one?
- T: They're two.
- I: They're two and you've got a section in the middle?
- T: Yes.
- I: Shall we start with 'how I see myself'? Do you want to just go through the images and explain what you are trying to express with each of them?
- T: That's for playing guitar, that's 'cause I like reggae music and that's 'cause I like music as well//
- I: //Bob Marley//
- T: //no, it's Hendrix (laughs).
- I: Sorry.
- T: That's sleepy, 'cause the tiger's like asleep, and that's sheepish and I've got like a cleft lip and palette that's like when you get when you're born and she's got one as well.
- I: Who is that?
- T: Carmit from Pussycat Dolls.
- I: Right.
- T: And that's calm//
- I: //so the image of the woman doing yoga.
- T: Yeah.
- I: We'll move on to how you think other people see you. Do you want to go through these images?
- T: That's loud, happy and that's crazy and that's 'cause I had long hair when I was doing the collage, and that's 'cause I like food and that's 'cause I like sport and that's mad.
- I: You've got the mad and the sporty person and the food in the middle//
- T: //yeah.
- I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- T: Yeah.
- I: What is the difference?
- T: Sometimes I act differently when I'm on my own and sometimes I act differently when I'm with other people.

- I: Right because on this side [how I think other people see me] you've got stuff like loud and mad, but on this side you've got calm, on how you see yourself.
- T: Yeah.
- I: Do you think that other people see that side of you, because here [how I see myself] you've got calm and sleepy and sheepish, do you think other people see that side of you or do you think they only really see one side of you?
- T: Sometimes so.
- I: If you had more time are any other images that you would have liked to have added?
- T: Probably not.
- I: OK and just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- T: British.
- I: Do you say British or do you say English?
- T: English.
- I: Which one would you usually use?
- T: English.
- I: Why would you say English and not British?
- T: 'Cause British is Scotland, Wales, and Ireland and England, but I'm just from England.
- I: So you just say//
- T: //English.
- I: To put across the fact that you are from England?
- T: Yeah.
- I: OK brilliant.

(S=Sadie, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've just done one side?
- S: Yeah.
- I: OK you've done 'how I see myself', do you want to just go through each of the images and explain what you are trying to express with them?
- S: Yeah, I love design and I love sort of interior design and I love how colours go together and I love interior design and designing houses. I did that [image of a female footballer] 'cause I love football, I think that girls who do football are really trying sort of thing, 'cause the girls are going round doing football even though sort the boys sort of say 'oh no you can't do it 'cause it's a boys' sport'.
- I: So do you feel strongly about girls having equal status//
- S: //yeah, yeah, very strongly.
- I: Do you think that girls and women in society now have equal status or do you think there's more that has to be done?
- S: There's more that has to be done yeah I think even though it's like they say you have equal rights, but it's just coming into practice.
- I: Right.
- S: I hate McDonald's, I hate junk food, I'm a really sort of healthy person, I'm a vegetarian and that's what I was trying to represent, same as that [image of a burger with cross through it].
- I: Why are you vegetarian?
- S: I think it's wrong, wrong to kill, kill things that, I think it's wrong to kill things and I don't think it's fair that we should kill, but I don't mind people who don't have the same opinion as me 'cause everyone has a choice but personally I don't want to.
- I: And what is it about McDonald's specifically that you don't like?
- S: I just hate junk food.
- I: So it's junk food full stop//
- S: //yeah, full stop I can't stand it.
- I: What about this picture of Tony Blair here?

S: Yeah I'm quite left wing I enjoy sort of left wing politics, I mean if I had to choose I'd probably go for Labour even though my dad's really right wing.

I: What for you defines right wing and left wing?

S: I don't know but I agree with more of their points [Tony Blair and Labour]//

I: //like, can you give me an example//

S: //that everyone is entitled to free health care, that everyone is entitled to free education, even though I think sometimes though some of the things are wrong I mean I think I'm more, I think I agree with the Conservative's points on the Europe EU and Europe I prefer their policy on that.

I: Right OK.

S: Also that one, I love that picture//

I: //babies//

S: //and I love little kids and I love having my little cousins around.

I: And the butterfly?

S: Nature and nature's sort of there [image of cliffs].

I: Does that tie in with//

S: //yeah and I'm also quite calm and that's sort of calming but if someone pushes me I can be quite annoyed and stuff.

I: And we've got another kid's picture.

S: And that's another thing 'cause I enjoy looking after my brothers and teaching them and stuff and telling them about what I know and stuff.

I: I've noticed that you've got a picture of Billy and Chrissie from *EastEnders*.

S: Yeah I think I try and be sort of, I don't really talk about my emotions a lot and I don't sort of, I try and be sort of hard and that reminded me of Chrissie sort of like keep things behind closed bars 'cause you don't have any friends around and I think that's quite like me, but also I've put Billy there because he's pushed around quite a lot and I'm quite easy to not manipulate but sort of//

I: //people can take advantage of you//

S: //yeah yeah at times.

I: Now if you had time, because there's nothing under how you think other people see you, if you had time to create a collage here would the two sides be different?

S: Yeah.

I: In what way?

S: I think people see me, I think that sort of picture of Billy would come up a lot more and I think people see me as a lot more sort of academic sort of try and do science and maths and English even though I'm rubbish at English. I think people see me as odd and quite a strange person sort of like, I don't know.

I: Why do you think that is?

S: I sort of, um very, I have quite strong beliefs and I think a lot of people have got to get through.

I: Do you think other people think that if you are very strong in your beliefs, do you think people see that as a positive or a negative thing?

S: I don't know 'cause I'm willing to listen to other people's point of view and I'm willing to compromise, but I think sometimes people just get into the habit that I won't be able to compromise and they can't talk to me about a subject.

I: So if you were going to use images to represent that, can you think of any images that you might use?

S: Um (pause) not talking, um someone sort of standing out and different, a bit strange.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

S: English.

I: English. Do you always say English?

S: Um I don't know, I think I'd say I'm English but I don't know why. I know I'm from Britain I am British but I don't know I'd just say English I think it's more local than British.

I: So it's about being more specific//

S: //yeah it's not really that much difference I think, I don't know.
I: That's brilliant.

(F=Fiona, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)
(//=overlap)

I: Is this one collage or two separate collages?
F: One collage.
I: One collage. Do you want to go through the images and explain what you were trying to represent and express with the images and the words?
F: Well my family think I'm quite a funny person and I thought Ant and Dec were quite fun so I put a picture of them down, my dad thinks I'm loyal so I stuck a picture of a dog and a Crazy Frog represents 'cause I'm quite annoying sometimes so, and I like children so I stuck a picture of a child on there.
I: You've got a picture of Gwen Stefani and also Joss Stone, what are you trying to say with them?
F: I'm not quite sure I thought it was quite um, they're really like kind people.
I: Kind in what way?
F: I'm not sure, um.
I: What is it about them [Gwen Stefani and Joss Stone] that you identify with?
F: Well Gwen Stefani and Joss Stone are really unique and that's what I thought of me.
I: OK and that's Leanne Battersby [*Coronation Street* character]. Why have you got her there?
F: I can be quite harsh and bitchy sometimes and I think that's what she's like so.
I: And you've also got Kat Slater [*EastEnders* character]//
F: //yeah yeah//
I: //so they represent//
F: //the horrible side of me.
I: The horrible side//
F: //yeah.
I: And who is this [Sean from *Coronation Street*]//
F: //he's from *Coronation Street* he's funny.
I: Is that the gay character//
F: //yeah//
I: //I can't remember his name//
F: //Sean I think yeah.
I: So he's there because//
F: //same like funny and you know quite adventurous and stuff so.
I: And you've got words as well like 'confident', 'adventurous', 'bubbly' and 'talkative'. You've also got a Coke can here with a big cross, what's that?
F: I don't like it; I don't really like that sort of thing.
I: Why is that? Do you mean Coke that you don't like?
F: Yeah and like all fizzy and like that. I'm quite a healthy person I think and I'm showing that I don't eat loads of rubbish, but I've got chocolate there (laughs).
I: What about//
F: //clumsy.
I: Oh, it's a glass knocked over.
F: Yeah.
I: And you've also got Betty Boop [cartoon character]?
F: I don't know, I think it's something my mum said but I can't remember what she said now.
I: And you've also got the//
F: //yeah to show//
I: //the flag to show your//
F: //yeah, my country.

I: So do you think that how you see yourself is the same as how you think other people see you//
 F: //yeah//
 I: //or do you think there are any differences?
 F: No they're really similar.
 I: They are?
 F: Yeah.
 I: And just finally how you would usually describe your ethnicity, what would you usually say?
 F: British.
 I: Would you say British or English?
 F: Not sure yeah I think English.
 I: It's what you would usually say?
 F: Yeah English.
 I: So why would you say English and not British?
 F: I'm not sure, I'm not sure actually.
 I: OK that's great.

(K=Keith, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Keith, you've done two separate collages but you've drawn the images. Now why didn't you use any of the images that were supplied?
 K: Because none of the images seemed to suit me.
 I: Why is that, because there was quite a wide variety?
 K: Because, because some of them were like sports and pop star magazines and I'm not really interested in those kinds of things like cars.
 I: OK, what types of images would you have liked? Are there any magazines or books or programmes that you would have liked images from?
 K: Well I like images from the paranormal and things weird because I like to investigate those sorts of things because I'm interested in the paranormal.
 I: So let's start with 'how I see myself'.
 K: Well I used the yin-yang sign for balanced because most people would punch other people for insulting them but I don't, I keep my temper under control so that's why I'm balanced.
 I: And you've also put here that you do martial arts.
 K: Yeah, I do karate and self-defence so if anybody tries to attack me I can defend myself.
 I: And what do these two mean?
 K: Well I used the Irish flag because I'm lucky because I have a loving family and I'm used to getting through most of my life with luck and my family, I come from Ireland and we're an Irish family basically.
 I: And you've also got that you like basketball. What is it about basketball that you like?
 K: Well I just like playing it for fun and it's the kind of sport I can get into not like football I hate football.
 I: What is it about football that you dislike?
 K: Well I don't quite understand the rules very well and when it comes to somebody kicking the ball towards me it either hits me in the face or in other places.
 I: And you're also interested in the paranormal and you're double-jointed. What is it about the paranormal that you identify with?
 K: Well I'm interested in the fact that, in the paranormal like ghosts and everything, because some things can't be explained and others can and that's why I'm interested in the paranormal because there's some spirits on the other side trying to communicate with us and that helps me believe that there's an afterlife, life after death, so I won't actually have to worry about death after that.

- I: OK, let's move on to how you think other people see you. You've written 'funny', 'different', 'normal', 'weird' and 'strange'. Now normal and weird and strange, don't they go against one another?
- K: Um yeah.
- I: So what do they//
- K: //well weird as in, when it comes to like football and everything which is the sport I hate I'd just like to sit back and read a book that's why people would call me weird, and freaky because I do like my double-joints, and normal because I sometime stay with the crowd and other people.
- I: In what type of situations would you stay with the crowd?
- K: Well, if I'm like talking with my friends while we're walking along and everything I just act like I'm doing my own thing and that's why I defer as normal.
- I: You've written the word 'disgusting' here as well, what do you mean by that?
- K: Well if you had a pencil case I would show you but you don't have one with you right now.
- I: Right.
- K: But disgusting like double-jointed thumb and I can make my hands go really far back.
- I: Do you think people don't really see who you are, or how you really feel about yourself?
- K: Um, I don't know really because, well, the reason these two are different is because how people think and see me, I just sometimes act and talk to people, whenever I do a few things that they either decry me as one of those things [weird and freaky].
- I: Does that upset you?
- K: No because I know everybody is different and that doesn't worry me, but sometimes it does tick me off when other people call me gay because I'm not gay and it just really annoys me.
- I: So they mean gay as in homosexual?
- K: Yeah.
- I: And they are saying that in a negative way?
- K: Yeah.
- I: Do you think that being gay is a negative thing?
- K: Not really because it doesn't matter if you're gay or not, you're just normal and it's basically your choice.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- K: Ethnicity, um, I would say I'm Irish because my family, because my family they're Irish because I come from an Irish family I would be declared as Irish but I can't here because I live in Britain so I'm declared as English.
- I: So if somebody asked you what would you say?
- K: I would say I'm Irish but I live in Britain.
- I: Were you born here?
- K: Well yes I was born here but I do come from an Irish family.
- I: And it's important for you to maintain that.
- K: Yeah.
- I: OK that's brilliant.

(C=Charlotte, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've done two separate collages//
- C: //yeah//
- I: //so shall we start with 'how I see myself'?
- C: Yeah.
- I: I'd just like it if you could go through the pictures and explain what you're trying to express with each of the images.
- C: I put Converse there because like I wear them quite a lot and um, and I've put like um//

I: //Green Day//

C: //Green Day 'cause I really like them and I've put that [image with colours] 'cause like loads of colours it's 'cause I'm quite bubbly and I've got loads of like sides to myself sort of thing, not like in a nasty way, I've put an eye because like people see me as quite I'm quite nosey and I like watching and Chrissie Watts [*EastEnders* character] 'cause she's like a bit of a, she's loud ain't she and I feel that I'm quite loud.

I: I just want to go back to Green Day, now you obviously like their music//

C: //yeah.

I: What is it about them though that you identify with?

C: 'Cause like I've got a guitar and everything as well I like playing that type of music it's not just them I like punk music and that it's like their type of music, their sort of like I look up to them.

I: Why do you look up to them?

C: 'Cause I think they're really good at playing music and that and I like to play music.

I: So do you think they are positive role models?

C: Yeah yeah.

I: What type of positive things do you think that they do, or how in your eyes are they positive?

C: Well I don't know, they're not very positive they're quite moody actually but it's just like their music and everything.

I: OK let's move on to how you think other people see you, do you want to explain//

C: //yeah I put like Christine Aguilera 'cause everyone sees me that I'm like her just 'cause I look like her.

I: So it's nothing to do with personality?

C: No it's just 'cause people see me, they think that. Like when they see me 'cause I wear make-up a lot, they probably think I like the Pussycat Dolls.

I: And do you?

C: No I hate them.

I: Why do you hate them?

C: I don't know my sister likes them I just don't like their music really much.

I: So you're not really into pop?

C: Um well it depends, I do like some pop music but I just don't like Cat Dolls//

I: //them//

C: //yeah. I've got jewellery 'cause like I wear quite a lot of jewellery and I like accessories and I quite like that picture it's like black and white it's plain and then inside you can see it's colourful [image of an eye], and people see me as a plain and boring person but inside I'm sort of wacky and thingy and weird like that.

I: So do you think how you think other people see you is completely different to how you see yourself//

C: //yeah.

I: Why do you think that is?

C: At school like I haven't got many friends so and like people see me and I don't really walk around like I would when I'm with my friends, I'm quite quiet in front of like other people in the school and that's probably why.

I: Does it bother you that other people don't see what you are trying to express, like how I see myself?

C: Yeah.

I: It does bother you?

C: Yeah.

I: Do you think there's anything you can do to get over that?

C: Not really no, I don't know.

I: You don't know.

C: No.

I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity, what would you say?

- C: I'd say that I was English but if I had to go into more detail I'd say I'm like half Welsh.
- I: Half Welsh.
- C: Yeah.
- I: But you say you're English?
- C: Yeah.
- I: Were you born in England?
- C: Yeah I was born in England and my dad's Welsh.
- I: Do you consider any part of yourself Welsh or do you consider yourself completely English?
- C: I consider myself sort of bit Welsh because of my dad but if somebody came up to me in the street I would just say I was English 'cause that's where I was born and most of my family are English so yeah.
- I: OK brilliant.

(C=Christina, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

- I: Is this one big collage or two?
- C: It kind of all blended into one because how I see myself and how other people see me is like same thing.
- I: So do you just want to go through the images and explain what you were trying to express with each of them?
- C: Yeah. Well on that one [word 'respect'] there's like, I like treating people with like respect and I think they should have the same respect as everyone else so I put that one there.
- I: And you've got Patsy Kensit there, why have you used her?
- C: Because in *Emmerdale* she's like quite bitchy and I can be quite bitchy sometimes but not, if I said something I will say it to someone not behind their backs I think that's harsh.
- I: And you've also got some babies here.
- C: Yeah because I like children and stuff and I'd like to work with children and stuff I think yeah, and like I want to have children when I'm older as well.
- I: And then next to the children you've got some guns//
- C: //oh (laughs) I didn't mean to put that there it's just like the last one I done, but I don't think gun crime is right and stuff and I don't think they should give it to people 'cause people shouldn't die without a reason.
- I: So you are actually anti-gun?
- C: Yeah yeah.
- I: And you've got a picture of the UK and Ireland.
- C: Yeah.
- I: Why is that?
- C: Because I come from Britain and stuff and I'll probably always live in Britain only 'cause I like it.
- I: What about the tiger?
- C: Well I'm quite nice and stuff but people say if I get like aggressive I get like quite, not like aggressive and stuff, but I can get quite angry and feisty and stuff yeah.
- I: And you've got water//
- C: //because I can be like quite calm and stuff and I'm like, my star sign is like Aquarius so I put that 'cause it's like water.
- I: And you've got a patchwork elephant//
- C: //because some people say I'm like quite bright and colourful and bubbly and stuff and that's how I am.
- I: And you've got the word 'bubbly' as well.
- C: Yeah.
- I: Now you've got some cleansing wipes and the words 'hair heaven', what is that?

- C: Because I want to be a lawyer when I'm older but if I had a second job it would be like beauty and hair and stuff because I always do like my sister's hair and everybody's hair and stuff and I just enjoy doing people's hair and like beautician and stuff so I'd like to do that.
- I: What does the 'Jam Festival' [words] mean?
- C: Oh it's meant to be like music and stuff 'cause I like quite a lot of music.
- I: So do you think that there are any differences between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- C: I think I'm, I can be quite horrible and quite nasty and stuff but people say I'm not like that but they say I'm like nice and stuff and I always try and help people and stuff and all that and all the teachers say I try and help people but that just comes naturally to me and I don't do it just to do it, I do it 'cause it just comes to me to do that maybe 'cause I'm a girl.
- I: So it's just in your nature?
- C: Yeah yeah.
- I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- C: I'd probably say I'm English probably, or British.
- I: Which one would you most probably use?
- C: British.
- I: Why would you say British and not English?
- C: Because like Great Britain is like the whole country and I see myself as part of the community, and English is like just one bit and it's like kind of like separated, if you say Britain it's kind of joined so like more people like me are in Scotland and Wales and stuff and like Great Britain is like one country it's not divided.
- I: OK that's brilliant. Thanks.

Appendix B.7: Twynham School Group Two

(C=Christopher, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: You've done one collage, 'how I see myself'.
- C: Yeah.
- I: Do you want to go through the pictures and explain what you are trying to express with each of these images?
- C: OK well I've got like lots of like sporty type like skiing and roller-skating and stuff 'cause like I like to do a lot of activities, not just mainly football and cricket, like extreme sports, and this the 'Danger Rocks' sign that's sort of like the surfy style but I'm quite dangerous, I'm willing to do anything if you know what I mean.
- I: Right.
- C: So I'm willing to like do, well explore into different things, and here see the hair gel I've got, I just like I usually have my hair spikey I haven't got it at the moment but usually I have my hair all spikey and like that's what most people, I did that on both sides 'cause I thought people see me as like with hair, hairstyle yeah. And I've got Australia a map of Australia because I really like Australia I've been there once and I just like the whole cultural stuff in Australia.
- I: What is it about Australian culture that you really like?
- C: Um they, I'm not really sure I just like the like the animals I like kangaroos and stuff and I like they've got good surfing there and their cricket team's really good.
- I: Right and you've also got the word 'cheating' as well as the English flag there, what does the word cheating represent?
- C: Well um, um, I'm not really sure why I put that there I just, um, yeah I don't know why I put that there.
- I: So let's move on to//
- C: //yeah I play the guitar and um, and yeah I just put that there for musician. I'm into rock, heavy rock, I like playing it like, like Green Day.
- I: What is it about Green Day that you like?
- C: I just think the songs that they do and how they do it are good and stuff like, it's like rocky style but yeah, I just like the loudness of it and how it is.
- I: And what do you think about the members of Green Day?
- C: I see them like, I look up to them because they've done something with their life that's special and stuff and like, like they are very big stars and that's going into like my musician style, I really like the band so I'm going to be a rock musician too.
- I: OK so let's move on to how you think other people see you//
- C: //yeah//
- I: //now you've just got the word 'chatty' there, why have you just used that word?
- C: Well I've used chatty, I'm always talking and stuff and I'm really friendly and stuff so I just like chatty, I talk a lot usually to my friends.
- I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- C: I don't think so really I just, um, no I don't think so at all, the way other people see me is//
- I: //the same//
- C: //yeah.
- I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- C: English.
- I: English. Do you always say English?
- C: Yes.
- I: Do you ever say British?

C: No 'cause most of my family, like I have a few other relatives in like Scotland and Ireland and stuff but I'm mainly English so, but it depends in what way I'm British like my parents are from England so that's how I see myself.

I: Right OK, brilliant.

(J=Joel, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Is this one collage or is it two separate collages?

J: It's like kind of, no it's a bit of both I think.

I: You've got quite a few images.

J: Yeah.

I: Do you want to go through the images and explain what you are trying to represent and express with them?

J: Well the football is obviously 'cause I kind of like football quite a bit, I quite like into fashionable clothes and I like women.

I: So you've really got sport, fashion and women.

J: Yes.

I: What about this guy with the hand over his face?

J: Because of the fashion symbol there.

I: And you've got the England flag.

J: That's like the country that I was born in.

I: What is it about football that you like?

J: I don't know, I just support football really and I just like playing in a team.

I: When you play football is it the taking part that's important or is it the winning that is important to you?

J: The taking part, it's not just about winning is it really, but yeah, it's good to win.

I: And also the fashion, is it important for you to wear designer clothes? Is the name important?

J: Yes.

I: Why?

J: I don't know it just is, I'd just rather wear something like that instead of something from Tesco's or something like that.

I: Are there then, even within designer labels, are there certain names you'd class as cool and certain names that you don't class as cool//

J: //yeah.

I: So what would be a cool designer to wear?

J: Armani, things like that.

I: What is it about them that you think is cool?

J: It's just, it's just the name it's just fashionable everyone knows who they are and things like that.

I: So it's because everyone knows the name//

J: No it's just fashionable innit.

I: What if I had an Armani top//

J: //yeah//

I: //and I had exactly the same top but it didn't have the label Armani on it. Would it still be cool?

J: Erm yeah but it would, I don't know that's a difficult question, I don't know but I think it would be better if it had the label, I don't know it just would in my eyes.

I: Do you wear designer clothes//

J: //yeah//

I: //outside of school?

J: Yeah.

I: You do.

J: Yeah.

I: All the time?

J: Pretty much yeah.

I: How does that make you feel? Do you think people see you in a different light when you have designer clothes on?

J: I don't know it's just how people see me 'cause that's what I just wear pretty much all the time so that's how people see me.

I: OK and the other thing is women [how I see myself]. Now you've used women who are not wearing an awful lot//

J: //yeah.

I: Is it women and girls in general that you like, or can you give me an example of any women that you think are particularly nice?

J: It's not just like any group because you can get proper ugly people, like attractive women.

I: So who do you class as attractive as an attractive woman?

J: Jennifer Lopez and people like that.

I: Can you give me a couple of other names maybe?

J: I don't know loads of people.

I: Like.

J: Mariah Carey, I don't know people like that.

I: What is it about them that you think makes them attractive and appealing to you?

J: The way they look.

I: Who do you think isn't attractive?

J: I don't know, er well it just, not like fat people, er.

I: Or are there any famous people that are described as pretty and you think, no they're not, I don't think they are//

J: //yeah Madonna I don't reckon.

I: What about Paris Hilton?

J: Yeah she's alright I guess.

I: She's alright but she's not on the same level as Jennifer Lopez or Mariah Carey?

J: Yeah yeah.

I: What about Beyonce//

J: //yeah she's good looking.

I: She's good looking.

J: Yeah.

I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

J: Yeah probably.

I: Where would the differences be? What would it be?

J: Well it's a person's point of view isn't it?

I: But if you were going to explain it to me, can you think of maybe something that somebody else might think of you that you think that's not how I see myself?

J: Er, quite like, I don't know bossy, I don't know.

I: Bossy.

J: Yeah.

I: Do you think other people see you as bossy?

J: Yeah they could do I don't know, I don't really know how other people see me.

I: OK and just finally how you would usually describe your ethnicity//

J: //English.

I: Do you ever say British?

J: Say if I went on holiday and they asked what region like nationality I'd probably say English, no British actually yeah.

I: What's the difference between English and British?

J: I don't know it's just some people say English and some people say British, it's like some people say tomato and some people say tomato.

I: Are they both the same thing?

J: Yeah.

I: They are?
J: Mmm.
I: OK cool.

(H=Helen, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)
(//=overlap)

I: Is this one collage or is it two separate collages?
H: Two kind of like, in the middle there's mixing.
I: So let's start with how you see yourself. Do you want to go through the images and explain what you're trying to express and represent with each of the images?
H: OK. I put sport on there 'cause I like play sport and I like sport. I like gossip and to others I like talking about people.
I: Right.
H: I put a picture of the country where I live in and a circle round the bit Bournemouth and that. I put a picture of London because I go up there quite a bit, and I put a picture of pink GHD's [hair straighteners] because I can't live without them and a picture of a cat 'cause I like cats and River Island 'cause I like I love River Island.
I: You said you like talking about other people//
H: //yeah.
I: What is it about that that you like and enjoy?
H: Don't know, just like talking about people.
I: Do you think that's it's OK to talk about people in a gossipy way if you're saying bad things about them?
H: Not really but.
I: You still do it.
H: Yeah.
I: So you are quite into fashion and you like clothes//
H: //yeah.
I: Is it important for you to feel like you are a fashionable person and taking care of the way that you look?
H: Er yeah kind of.
I: Let's move on to how you think other people see you. Do you want to explain them images and what you are trying to represent?
H: Yeah, I put 'attitude' [word] because I think that sometimes I can have a bit of an attitude towards other people.
I: Right.
H: And I think some people think I'm a bit gobby as well. I put a picture of *Friends* [American sitcom], because I'm like always with my friends.
I: You've put a picture of?
H: *Friends*.
I: Right.
H: I'm always on the run and can't sit still for ages, and I put like sparkly so it's like bubbly sort of thing.
I: Right, and in the middle you've put 'I am what I am' [words]. So do you feel that this could be one collage?
H: Yes.
I: Do you think how you think other people see you is how you see yourself?
H: Yeah.
I: Or do you think there's a difference?
H: I think it's mainly same really.
I: Do you think that there are any differences though, like if you had more time to work on this [how I think other people see me] do you think that there would be any differences between the two sides?
H: Yeah definitely if I had more time.
I: What do you the differences would be?

H: I don't know, um, I'm not sure.
 I: You're not sure.
 H: No.
 I: OK and just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 H: British.
 I: Now do you always say British or do you say English?
 H: Either.
 I: Either.
 H: Yeah.
 I: What one do you use more often?
 H: Probably English.
 I: English.
 H: Yeah.
 I: Is there a difference between English and British or are they the same?
 H: They're the same, I think so. I think they're the same, just two words the same.
 I: So it's just two different words for the same thing?
 H: Yeah.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(N=Nancy, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

I: Is this one collage or is it two?
 N: Probably one.
 I: Do you want to go through the images and explain what you are trying to express with them?
 N: Yeah the dog is that I don't like animal cruelty because like underneath it it's a bit like he's really lonely and everything 'cause I don't like how animals are treated like when they've make-up tested on them.
 I: Right.
 N: I think I'm quite happy, I like listening to music, I just like the brightness of the flower I think I'm quite like, not bright like clever but//
 I: //bright as in an uplifting character//
 N: //yeah yeah I like my mobile, I really want that car when I'm older and that's where I live [image of UK map]. I think I respect people and that, and I'm quite calm//
 I: //so you've used the candle to represent calm//
 N: //yeah, and I gossip quite a lot about things like what you see on tele and that lot and I think people can trust me like if they want to say something like that no-one else wants to know, I keep a secret and that lot so.
 I: Right. You've mentioned animal cruelty//
 N: //yeah//
 I: //which you think is not acceptable, why do you think it's wrong?
 N: 'Cause no-one likes it when kids are treated badly so why should animals be treated badly because, I know they haven't obviously got the same feelings as us but they know when the owners are doing something horrible to them when they haven't done anything wrong, like little children, like you know the NHS I think it is//
 I: //yes//
 N: //they get treated, children go there 'cause they get treated badly so why should dogs get treated badly as well.
 I: Also you said that you like music, what music in particular do you most identify with?
 N: Pop.
 I: Are there any artists in particular that you//
 N: //not really, just like any kind of music, not rock, I don't really like rock.
 I: What is it about rock that you don't like?

N: It's that head banging if you know what I mean, there's not like a lot of singing it's just like music like noise.

I: So what is it about pop that you like?

N: Some of the words and that are quite good.

I: Now I've noticed on your collage//

N: //yeah//

I: //I sort of get the impression that you're quite a happy, bubbly type of person//

N: //yeah//

I: //but what I've noticed is there is not anything here which suggests maybe you get a little bit angry//

N: //yeah I couldn't find anything.

I: If you had more time or if there were other things that you wanted to express on this about yourself//

N: //yeah//

I: //what types of things would you put down?

N: I do get angry sometimes.

I: What sorts of things make you angry?

N: Animal cruelty if you see it on tele or like children, you know you see those children adverts that don't have homes that makes me upset and angry, I don't understand why they like do that, people do that to animals and their children.

I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

N: Yeah.

I: What do you think the difference is?

N: I think like some people see me, 'cause I don't obviously like, I think they think I'm quite loud 'cause I do talk quite a lot so I think they think that but I'm not if you know what I mean.

I: Do you think it's more, when they hear you express yourself, do you think that maybe they think that you're confident?

N: Oh no, I'm not confident at all.

I: But do you think other people think you are?

N: Yeah, but when they get to know me they know I'm not, 'cause I work quite hard and that's why I worry a lot.

I: Why don't you let other people see that side of you?

N: 'Cause I don't want them to think that I'm like stupid or a whimp, 'cause I get worried about a lot of things.

I: So, it's like you keeping that side to yourself//

N: //yeah but my mum knows that I get worried and I talk to her about it if I have any problems and that lot and some of my friends I do, people I don't know I don't say it straight away but I wait until I get to know them.

I: So it's like a defence//

N: //yeah, yeah 'cause like if they think I'm not very clever they might not like me but all my friends obviously they like me because they know I'm not.

I: Do you think if somebody didn't think you were clever and didn't like you off the back of it//

N: //yeah//

I: //do you think a person like that would be worth knowing at all//

N: //no not at all, they should like me for who I am not what I'm gonna do, like my work and that lot.

I: But do you think it always works out that way?

N: No, 'cause like mostly you're really upset if somebody doesn't like you so, 'cause you can't probably be as clever as they are.

I: You've not actually used many images of famous people//

N: //yeah, I didn't have enough time.

I: But if you could, are there any people that you think you would have put on, that you look to who you think are positive role models?

N: Um.

I: Or somebody that you look to that you think I aspire to want to be like that.

N: Have you heard of um, I've completely forgotten her name now.

I: What's she in?

N: She's a singer, I don't know her name.

I: What does she look like?

N: She's got like; she had brown now she's got blonde hair.

I: Kelly Clarkson?

N: That's it; I like her music a lot.

I: What is it about Kelly Clarkson that you like and identify with?

N: 'Cause on her videos when she sings it's not like she just stands there, it's like she expresses how she's feeling in the words that she says, she actually expresses herself in the video she's not like just standing there singing it.

I: Is there anything else about her, not just her music but the type of person that you think she is//

N: //I think she's quite happy because I watched an interview and she seemed quite happy and bubbly but I don't know if it's just for show, but she did seem happy and what not so I think she's being true, so that's good.

I: And just finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

N: I'm English.

I: If you had the choice between English or British, what would you say?

N: English, yeah.

I: Do you think there's a difference though between English and British?

N: Yeah I think so.

I: What do you think the difference is?

N: Is it just, aren't they like, 'cause British is the whole country, no it's not, am I wrong?

I: What do you think? There's no right or wrong answer.

N: No I don't know.

I: Are you going to say that you think British is the whole country including Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, whereas England is just England//

N: //yeah//

I: //so with England you are being more specific//

N: //yeah//

I: //about what country you come from//

N: //yeah.

I: OK that's brilliant.

(J=Josie, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Is this one collage or is it two separate collages?

J: It's just one big collage like what I am like and like how people see me.

I: OK so let's start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to go through the pictures and explain what you are trying to represent with them?

J: The candle's for quite calm 'cause like I'm not, I'm not like relaxed all the time but I'm relaxed in a way. The colours because I'm quite colourful I wear quite colourful clothes and stuff outside of school. The bear is because some people think I'm vicious but I'm not, because they're always like go on have a fight with her and see who wins but I don't do that.

I: Why do you think that they think you're vicious?

J: Because I'm quite big and tall and yeah.

I: Right OK, but you're not vicious.

J: No.

I: Are you violent at all? Do you think you're an aggressive violent person//

J: //no//

I: //or do you think that's how people see you?

J: I think not aggressive and violent but I think they think that I'm quite like vicious in a way.

I: But you disagree with that.

J: Yeah.

I: OK.

J: That's because I'm family orientated [word 'family], I do a lot of stuff with my family.

I: And you've also got the words 'wrong' and 'brat attack', what do//

J: //cause like wrong, um whenever my mum says something that I think is wrong I go wrong like that so I just put that up there and then brat attack 'cause my mum is always saying like I'm a little brat and stuff.

I: What about this boot? What's that for?

J: Um 'cause I'm quite tall it's quite a big heel and I like shoes, I do like my shoes.

I: And what about this picture of, do you know who this lady is?

J: No.

I: Her name is Marsha Hunt. Why have you got this picture?

J: Because of my origin 'cause I have a natural afro, a huge afro, and it's just like my origin like Jamaican, half Jamaican.

I: And you've got a picture of Simon Webbe as well, why is that there?

J: 'Cause I love my music I'm always listening to music if its on in my room or I'm doing homework on the computer or something I always have to blaring out at full blast and that's why I've got 'pump up the volume' [words] as well.

I: Right. So do you think that, because there is quite a mixture, do you think that there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

J: Yeah.

I: What's the difference?

J: Well people, 'cause I'm tall and not that skinny as other people then they might think that I'm the bear and quite, quite vicious and that but I'm not really like that, everyone has there moment when they feel like killing someone but I wouldn't go out and just randomly hit someone. If I'm angry I try and talk it through first and then like see how it goes from there type thing if you are still friends or break up or whatever.

I: Do you think that it's just your size, your height //

J: //yeah//

I: // that makes people think about you in that way//

J: //yeah 'cause I recently gone on a school trip and this girl came up to me and said apparently you want to hurt me, what have I done wrong? So someone has obviously said that I wanted hurt her for no reason.

I: And also the picture of hair that you've used is that something that people point out to you as well?

J: Yeah, yeah, 'cause it's always, 'cause I used to come to school with my afro and then I got really badly bullied and stuff like all the time people like, afro afro, like being really horrible about it and like throwing stuff at my hair and stuff like that.

I: Why do you think that they were, why were they bullying you? Just because of the afro?

J: I don't know.

I: Do you think if you had big hair and it wasn't an afro that they would have bullied you?

J: I don't know I'm not quite sure, but it's because I did have a huge afro, a bit like that, and like I just got the mick taken out of me constantly.

- I: OK if you didn't have people taking the mick out of you and bullying you because of that, do you think that you would still be happy enough to wear your afro, to have your afro?
- J: Yeah.
- I: So would you, at some point, still like to have your afro back?
- J: Yeah. 'Cause I liked it I just liked it but now it just, I got bullied for like since I was in Year Seven.
- I: I've noticed like, when I spoke to your brother, it is very evident that you are the only non-white person in your class. Is the bullying related to//
- J: //some of it is because I get some like 'oh go back to Pakistan' and 'go away you Paki' and stuff like that and I used to say get your facts right, I'm not from Pakistan I'm from Jamaica type of thing, I'd always comeback with a comeback.
- I: Yes.
- J: I hate racism and if anyone says something then I'll go say something back.
- I: Are you aware of it though, being in a school where you're not surrounded by many children from diverse backgrounds, are you aware that you are different from other people or does that only happen when somebody says something//
- J: //yeah 'cause I see myself as like a friend to everyone but there is occasionally, if I get in a ruck with someone they say something racist and then I'll be like well you couldn't have been a true friend anyway if you can turn round and think something like that, so.
- I: And if you had more time are there any other images that you would have used?
- J: If I could have found one I'd probably have one of Whitney Houston 'cause I like to sing her songs and stuff and she's like an icon type thing.
- I: Why is she an icon? Apart from her music, is there anything about her as a person that you identify with?
- J: Like the words in some of her music and stuff they speak to me, the way she's so calm and she's like a role model for me. Then like on the pictures, love and family stuff.
- I: OK and just finally, how would usually describe your ethnicity? What would you usually say?
- J: Well I'd say my mum's English and my dad was Jamaican or is Jamaican, I don't know I haven't met him.
- I: Do you always explain that my mum is English//
- J: //yeah or sometimes I just say I'm half Jamaican and if I'm in a rush I say half Jamaican.
- I: Do you ever just say I'm English or British, or do you always make a point//
- J: //yeah I always make a point//
- I: //why do you do that?
- J: I don't know, it's just that I always have 'cause my mum brought me up to know that I was Jamaican so it's just been something that's been with me type thing, and some people they always think like with the wars going on they think you're a terrorist type thing and I'm not and they always think stuff like that so I make a point of telling them I'm Jamaican and then they're fine with it. Don't know why but.
- I: Is it important for you personally, apart from letting people know, do you feel like it's important for yourself to say this is part of who I am?
- J: Yeah 'cause people when they come round to my house they only see my mum and I look nothing like my mum at all so they might, like they think how comes she's that colour and stuff so I always make a point of saying that my dad was Jamaican.
- I: Right OK. That's brilliant.

(D=Damon, aged 14, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Are these two separate collages or one?

D: Yeah.

I: Let's start with 'how I see myself', do you want to go through the images and explain what you were trying to express?

D: OK, I'm a bit silly sometimes, I like a good bit of humour, I like technology, um and I like music and all that sort of thing quite a lot.

I: And who is that, is it Eminem?

D: No.

I: What's that there for?

D: I don't know it was already in that picture.

I: Oh right.

D: And so is that [image of men in white].

I: What does that one big image represent?

D: Um just loads of things like that sort of style I sometimes wear.

I: How would you describe the sort of style? Is it skateboardy or street or urban?

D: I don't know, I just wear what I want when I want and when I feel like it really.

I: Right. So if you were going to use some words to summarise the images and to explain how you see yourself, what types of words would sum up the collage about how you see yourself?

D: Um silly, like to be up-to-date, um kind of weird and that's about it I guess.

I: OK let's move on to how you think other people see you because that's a complete contrast because you've only used three things. Do you want to just go through them and explain why you've used them?

D: Well that one//

I: //the spade//

D: //because I'm kind of clumsy and that because//

I: //the Japanese cartoon//

D: //because most of the time I am weird and that's [word 'bastards'] what some people usually think of me.

I: What, that you're a bastard?

D: Yeah.

I: Why is that image weird?

D: Because of the funny faces that they're pulling and everything.

I: So do you think how you think other people see you is how you see yourself, or do you think there are any differences?

D: It's kind of hard to understand what people think of you because you're not them I guess.

I: But what do you think?

D: Um probably.

I: Probably?

D: That they kind of do have a bit of a resemblance between how I see myself and how others see me.

I: So you think they are the same?

D: Kind of most likely, yeah probably.

I: If you had more time are there any other images that you would have used?

D: Probably found another silly one because I'm always like falling over or something or other or like doing something like embarrassing or something.

I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

D: I think just British.

I: Do you say British or do you say, because some people say British and some people say English?

D: Um it depends where you come from in some parts of England like in London I know they say I'm British and in the country they say I'm English.

I: So what do you say?

D: British.

I: Why do you say British?

D: Shorter than English (laughs).

I: Is that the only reason?
 D: Probably yeah and it sounds better than English.
 I: What is the difference, because you said in London they say British?
 D: It's kind of London slang I guess.
 I: So do you think saying English is posher?
 D: Yeah much.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(E=Ellie, aged 14, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Is this one big collage or is it two separate collages?
 E: One big collage.
 I: Can you just go through the images and explain what you are trying to express and represent with them?
 E: This one I drew a map, I cut out a map of England and circled round where I live. That one [word 'gossip'] because I do like to gossip and I like those crisps//
 I: //what crisps are they, are they potato heads//
 E: //yeah Walkers.
 I: You've also got a picture of Sharon Osbourne, why did you use//
 E: //only because I like the *X Factor*.
 I: You've also got this picture here of a lady playing football.
 E: Yeah that's Hope Powell the manager of the girls' England team.
 I: Why have you used her?
 E: Because I like to play football and I want to be in the England team.
 I: So do you identify or respect her, or see her as a role model?
 E: Yeah.
 I: What about this [image of the Olympic symbol]?
 E: I put a picture of the Olympics, I drew that because I like sport and I want to be in the Olympics one day.
 I: What about these ones? You've got 'strops' and 'saucy' [words]//
 E: //yeah I just thought that they were fun.
 I: And what about the giraffe?
 E: I liked *Madagascar* [animated film] the film and he's my favourite character in it.
 I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 E: English white.
 I: Would you say English and white?
 E: I would just say English.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(D=Debbie, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: So is this one big collage or did you do two different collages for each section?
 D: One.
 I: Do you want to just go through each of the images and explain what you were trying to express with them?
 D: Um.
 I: You can start wherever you want.
 D: That one [image of a dancer] I just like the picture and like sometimes I can be a bit over dramatic, it's the way that she's posing it's dramatic.
 I: And what about these colours, what are they for?
 D: Well I like colours, yeah I just like the colours they look nice.
 I: And you've got a picture of Kat Slater [*EastEnders* character] there.
 D: Yeah, it's 'cause sometimes I can be a bit bitchy.
 I: And what's this one [cartoon image of a bubble]?
 D: I don't like the pollution.

I: You don't like pollution. You've also got a picture of Peggy Mitchell [*EastEnders* character] looking like she is crying, what is that for, what are you trying to express?

D: I don't know I forgot.

I: OK and what about Little Mo [*EastEnders* character]?

D: She's really happy person most of the time.

I: And what about all of these images here because they are quite nature orientated, what are you trying to express with them images?

D: Well with that owl it's like I like going first 'cause it makes you feel sort of like you don't have to do anything sort of thing and the elephant 'cause I remember lots of things and then the that one 'cause I thought it looks a bit like my nose and then the seal because its flubbery and then the flower because of my name.

I: And what about the mountain with the rainbow over it?

D: I just liked it and it looked sort of steady sort of thing.

I: Steady.

D: Mmm.

I: And what about this [image of pink colours] because you've used//

D: //oh, I was thinking about being in the army for a while but then I don't want to because you have to wear green and you get shot.

I: And you've also got some words on there, can you explain why you've used them? You've used 'what' and 'one in a mill' and 'independent'. What does the 'what' mean?

D: Well I like asking a lot of questions about things and generally what or why.

I: OK and what is this 'one in a mill', why did you use that?

D: Because, I don't know.

I: You've got independent [word]//

D: //because I like doing stuff by myself and being independent and I'm confident too.

I: What about this picture here, is it a picture of a cross?

D: Yeah.

I: What is that there for?

D: Well I'm a Catholic.

I: You're Catholic. So is religion important to you?

D: In some ways.

I: When is it then and when isn't it?

D: Well it's the same as all religions, it's not important when people are like going to argue over it and stuff but it is important to like believe in something otherwise your gonna just have a miserable life.

I: Why do you think that, why do you think that you would have a miserable life if you didn't believe in something?

D: Because like if people believe in God and someone in your family dies then if they don't believe in nothing then there just not gonna think nothing about anything but if they believe in God then they'll be like angry with him for a while but then they'll be like happy because they'll think the person will be with him.

I: So do you think how you see yourself and how you think other people see you are the same thing or are there any differences?

D: Well they're different some ways.

I: In what ways are they different?

D: Because like at school when I get shouted at I might seem like quiet and stuff but then to the people who know me I'd be like loud and stuff.

I: So it's only the people who know you well who see every part of you?

D: Mmm.

I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

D: Um English or Irish, oh yeah I like to think Irish but I'm more English than Irish.

I: Is your family Irish?

D: My mum.

I: Where were you born?

D: England.
 I: So why do you like saying I'm Irish?
 D: 'Cause I like Ireland more.
 I: You like Ireland more?
 D: Yeah.
 I: Why?
 D: 'Cause the people are nicer in general.
 I: The people are nicer//
 D: //yeah they're more friendly and it's just, it's just nicer over there.
 I: But if somebody asked you though, what would you usually say?
 D: Irish.
 I: You'd say Irish?
 D: Yeah.
 I: OK that's it.

(B=Betty, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Is this one big collage or two?
 B: It's sort of both.
 I: OK so it's a mixture.
 B: Yeah.
 I: Do you want to go through the images and explain what you are trying to express with them?
 B: Where shall I start?
 I: You can start anywhere you want. Do you want to start with 'say no to crap' [words]?
 B: OK yeah (laughs). I just sort of don't agree with people you know like bullying like bullying other people so it's sort of like if anyone is ever horrible to them then just to like ignore it instead of like getting upset over it and that.
 I: What about these pictures?
 B: The star on the neck because it's sort of like symbols for rock and everything and like all, most rock stars have it and that's like the kind of music I like and the Volkswagen because I'm a surfer and I just really like them.
 I: And you've also got a little 'Children in Need' logo, what is that there for?
 B: I just agree with giving money for charities and like that and like//
 I: //you disagree//
 B: //no I agree.
 I: You agree with giving money for charity.
 B: Yes.
 I: Are there any charities that you feel really strongly about?
 B: Live 8.
 I: Live 8. What is it about Live 8//
 B: //like it just shows they were getting people to like start sort of mentioning how important it was to like help the people in Africa and everything 'cause they got like a load of pop people and everything and show how//
 I: //but why do we need to help the people in Africa?
 B: Because they don't have like much money and they've got Aids and HIV and we could help stop it, well not stop it altogether but we could help like it not getting that far, like help people not dying.
 I: And you've got a picture of skateboarding there, does that tie in with the van because you like surfing//
 B: //yeah I skate a bit.
 I: And there's an ipod, what's that//
 B: //I just really like music.

I: And tying in with music you've got McFly and Green Day, are those the types of bands that you//

B: //yeah//

I: //enjoy listening to//

B: //yeah.

I: What is it about their music or them that you relate to?

B: I don't really know I just, I just like their kind of music, I don't know but I play guitar as well and I don't really know, I just sort of like, why do other people like different music?

I: Because sometimes you might identify with the pop star or you might think that they are singing about positive messages or that you might respect somebody because //

B: //about Green Day I just think they are really cool and that because I'm not like into proper heavy rock I like sort of like pop rock and that's what they are and then they sort of like the way they act 'cause I've got the DVD and it's just I sort of like I think it's funny and I like that sort of stuff and then the same for McFly as well.

I: OK and you've got Fearne Cotton, why is she there?

B: Because I think she's really funny and I like her style of clothes and everything as well like.

I: What is it about her clothing and her style that you like?

B: I think they're just really cool 'cause they're sort of like rocky and that and everything and they're sort of like in the skating sort of like style as well.

I: And what do these cameras mean?

B: I love filming stuff and everything.

I: And [image of cartoon rats]//

B: Oh because in my band the rats are, a rat is our mascot and I just couldn't find any others like it.

I: And what does that one stand for [3 Mobile monkey]?

B: I don't really know because it's like the opposite of me sort of thing because like I'm not evil so I still put it there, do you know what I mean?

I: No I don't.

B: It's sort of like, because I'm not evil and I'm the opposite to it I put it there.

I: So do you think there's a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?

B: Yeah I think there is but I think most people see me as a sort of like a surfing kind and like sort of a style that I'm my own style and everything and I am and that's how I like it but I'm sort of skater as well and that's sort of the same because not many people, because I don't see like everyone in my class saying that they don't know I'm like a skater as well because most people see me as a surfer because my whole family are into that.

I: Your whole family.

B: Yeah we surf and everything and my sister is in sixth form and she's like she's a surfer.

I: Right, and just finally how you would usually describe your ethnicity?

B: English.

I: You'd say you're English?

B: Yeah.

I: Always?

B: Yeah I think so.

I: Why do you say I'm English and maybe not I'm British?

B: Because I'm not any of, I'm not like I'm not part Irish or Scottish or anything like that I'm just, 'cause my parents and then my grandparents were all English so I'm sort of like that as well but because my granddad lives in Portugal but he's still like whole British.

I: OK that's brilliant.

(D=Dale, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: So Dale, are these two different collages?
- D: Um yeah.
- I: So shall we start with [how I see myself]//
- D: //yeah with the Arnold Schwarzenegger thing he's a really really good actor and I see myself as I'm really good at drama so I think I can do it, and that [image of a lion with man's face] is to show that I'm really timid yeah I'm quite shy.
- I: And you've got some trainers.
- D: That's 'cause I really like sport.
- I: And you've//
- D: //Colin Farrell that's because he does action films and I like action films so I would like to be an action actor.
- I: And on the other side, on how you think other people see you//
- D: //yeah that one's to show [image of an old man] that I'm quite crazy he's a really crazy person because they do stunts and stuff and that one is to show like um//
- I: //who is that?
- D: That's the guy off *Little Britain*.
- I: Which character is that, Andy or Lou?
- D: Andy I think.
- I: Andy.
- D: Yeah I kind of thought I was that because I'm quite a good liar like sometimes I lie quite a bit and so like when people find out they get quite annoyed.
- I: Do you think lying is a good thing or a bad thing//
- D: //it's a bad thing.
- I: So why do you do it if it's a bad thing?
- D: It's 'cause sometimes if I do something bad I just can't really tell the truth about it 'cause it's, mmm, you know.
- I: Because what?
- D: Because like I just don't like kind of person to see like, other people to see me like because of the bad things that I do.
- I: OK.
- D: So if I do something quite bad I might go bad but then I'm ok about it and I'm normal. I'm also really good at comedy and make people laugh quite a lot.
- I: So do you think how other people see you is how you see yourself, do you think they are the same or are they different? Do you think other people don't really know who you are?
- D: No people don't really know who I am really.
- I: They don't.
- D: No.
- I: Because here you've put down that you can be quite timid [how I see myself], whereas here [how I think other people see me] you've put down crazy and they seem like two quite different things.
- D: Yeah I get that quite a lot, like I can't really I just, I don't know, I just like when I'm at home I'm a different person or when I'm at school I'm a totally different person to that, I'm like the opposite.
- I: Which person do you prefer, the person at school or the person at home?
- D: The person at home.
- I: The person at home.
- D: Yeah.
- I: And just finally how you would usually describe your ethnicity?
- D: Um probably I would just say English.
- I: English.
- D: Yeah or British.
- I: What one would you usually choose out of them two? Or what's the difference?

- D: Well I don't really know the difference, I do know like the difference but I like to be quite precise about everything so.
- I: So by saying English you are being more precise?
- D: Yeah I'm being more precise.
- I: OK that's brilliant.

(L=Leah, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Are these two separate collages or one?
- L: Two different ones.
- I: So do you want to start with 'how I see myself'. Do you want to just go through the images and explain what you are trying to express and represent with them?
- L: Well I chose the bears because I really like animals and bears are one of my favourite, and I chose the baby to symbolise my niece who is a year old now, I chose an ipod because I like music and the ring because I like jewellery and I chose Leanne [*Coronation Street* character] from the soaps because Leanne is my name so. I chose a smiley face because I'm happy and dolphin is my all time favourite animal and then Demi [*EastEnders* character] because it's meant to symbolise my big sister and her baby who she's quite a young mum so, and I chose the doctor because I want to be a doctor when I get older. And the Capricorn because it tells you when my birthday is.
- I: Just going back to the picture of Demi, you said your sister is quite a young mum.
- L: Yeah.
- I: Demi was very young when she had the baby, some people were very upset because they don't like young mothers. What do you think about that issue?
- L: Well I don't mind young mothers, my sister's not that young she's just in her twenties but she is still quite a young mum but young mum's are I think well, because of my religion I'm Christian, I think it's not very good unless your married.
- I: Is your sister married?
- L: No she's not, not at the moment but she's got a boyfriend and they are very close though.
- I: But would you have preferred it if she had got married first?
- L: Yeah I would have.
- I: You would have.
- L: But I don't hate her for it 'cause I'm not sure.
- I: OK let's move on to how you think other people see you. Do you want to just go through and explain the//
- L: //OK I chose a mouth a smiling mouth because I think other people think I'm happy because I'm always smiling.
- I: Right.
- L: And I chose make-up because I wear make-up when I'm out and I chose a phone and a car because well people sort of, don't know, I'm not sure why I chose them two really, can't remember.
- I: Do you think there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you?
- L: Some of the things, yeah.
- I: What are the differences?
- L: Most of them except for them two.
- I: So the ipod and the jewellery, what about the other images, what do you mean?
- L: Well because I listen to music and I usually listen to music outside and inside, the people can see me with music and jewellery.
- I: Oh right, but they don't know everything else about you, they don't know//
- L: //people that don't know me they don't know much about me, they don't know what I want to be or how I think.
- I: Are you happy that they don't know how you think or does that frustrate you?
- L: I wouldn't mind if they knew what I think or anything but, no I just wouldn't mind.

I: And just finally how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 L: Um English maybe half German because my dad came from Germany and my grandparents.
 I: What would you usually say though?
 L: English usually.
 I: You'd say you are English.
 L: Yeah.
 I: So is your dad German?
 L: Well I don't think he is full German I think he is more like three quarter German.
 I: But you don't feel like any part of you is German?
 L: No not really 'cause, no I just don't.
 I: You don't.
 L: No not really.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

(J=Jacob, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//overlap)

I: You just did one collage.
 J: Yeah.
 I: So is this just for how you see yourself or is a mixture//
 J: //mixture.
 I: Do you want to just go through the images and explain what you are trying express?
 J: Well that's my football team Tottenham and that's my favourite player and that's why I like him.
 I: Who is it?
 J: Michael Carrick and he's like my sort of personality as well, often when you see him talking in like the interviews afterwards he's like sort of like me as well.
 I: In what way?
 J: I don't know I'm not sure, he's just, I don't know. The way he talks and everything what sorts of things he says is like comparable with me.
 I: OK.
 J: I just put that in because I was looking for cricket and he's like a world cricket player I know and I like.
 I: Who is he?
 J: Muralitharan.
 I: Who?
 J: Muralitharan in the Sri Lankan team, cricket bowler.
 I: Oh.
 J: That because I'm Irish [flag] and that's the Irish football team, Freddy Flintoff because he's like the main man for England the best cricketer and I love him I think he's brilliant, um penguins because there my favourite animal and I like how they like, I can't think of the word but I just like penguins. *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* my favourite film and I just thought I would draw the English and Irish flag 'cause I'm half Irish and half English.
 I: OK.
 J: They're my favourite colours and that's how I feel, sort of like not depressed and, like depressed would be a blacky and these are like happy sort of light colours.
 I: So you feel you're sort of in the middle somewhere?
 J: No I'm like happy upbeat sort of person//
 I: //oh right//
 J: //like they are happy colours not like grey or anything like that. Zebra skin, I'm not sure, just a good contrast to go with it, I like zebra's.
 I: There's a Nike logo here and trainers, is this to show that you are quite sporty?
 J: Yeah yeah.
 I: What about *Gladiator* [film logo]?

J: I'm not sure I just put that in, again 'cause I like the film *Gladiator*.
 I: What about the number four and the Crazy Frog?
 J: Four is my favourite number and the Crazy Frog, I don't know why I put that in there, I don't know.
 I: So do you think how you see yourself is the same as how you think other people see you?
 J: Yeah yeah.
 I: Do you think there are no differences?
 J: Not really.
 I: No?
 J: No.
 I: And if you had more time are there any other pictures that you would have put on?
 J: Yeah quite a lot.
 I: Like?
 J: Like I was trying to find probably pictures of people that will represent me as well, like more, I'm not sure//
 I: //if you could think of a couple of examples now, who comes to mind that you would have used?
 J: I can't think.
 I: No.
 J: If you go through a magazine I would see, oh I know that person and that's it oh he looks he's the sort of person I'm like, you know happy upbeat type of person.
 I: And just finally then, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?
 J: If they asked me I would say English.
 I: You'd say you were English.
 J: Yeah.
 I: But you keep stressing that you are part Irish.
 J: Yeah I am part Irish but if someone said to me I would say I'm English but I am, you know what I mean like.
 I: So you don't ever tell people about the Irish//
 J: //no, yeah, but I am mainly English.
 I: Were you born here?
 J: Yeah. I was born in England but like my dad is Irish my Nan's Irish and all that and my dad's Nan and granddad that side of the family are all Irish so like, and my mum's side is all English so, and we have a lot of Irish people coming down to visit us and I've found relatives out there and everything so.
 I: OK that's brilliant.

Appendix B.8: Willowfield School

(A=Alfie, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Can you explain what pictures you've used and what the pictures mean to you?

A: Well, I see myself as a crossword because I'm always puzzled and confused and stuff and I see myself as a crocodile because I'm scary and I see myself as a banana for some reason I forgot yeah. I see myself as a hamster because I'm like quiet. I see myself as a cancer thing [starsign] because I'm a cancer and I done this picture of people kissing and stuff because I thought (starts laughing).

I: Yes?

A: I think other people see me yeah, I put a camera here because like I'm always kind of alert and I've got this crazy man staring up because I think I'm like scary again. I think people think I'm scary and I've got another one of a guy with a moose on top of his head and that's just really freaky and stuff and that's how I think I am. And again I've just put another woman on it with a laptop.

I: Why is the woman there?

A: Everyone was doing it (laughing).

I: OK. On this side of the collage, on how you think other people see you, you've used a picture of somebody, Ozzy Osbourne//

A: //that's Ozzy Osbourne?

I: That's Ozzy Osbourne, yes, who you said is scary and you've used pictures that you said are freaky, but you've not got much else in this section.

A: Well that's because I really think that's how people see me. Alert, scary and freaky.

I: Alert, scary and freaky.

A: OK, not even the alert thing I was just trying to make myself look a bit good, about alert and stuff.

I: What does this image [image of a guinea pig] mean?

A: Well, it's a guinea pig or a hamster and guinea pig or hamsters are quiet and sometimes I'm usually quiet.

I: On this side [how I see myself] you've said you can be quite puzzled and that you are also quiet, but here [how I think other people see me] you're saying people see you as quite scary and freaky. Why do you think that people don't see the quiet side or puzzled side of you?

A: Because I'm not usually quiet around other people, I'm usually quiet when I'm like at home or like with other friends that don't come to my school.

I: I've also noticed that apart from Ozzy Osbourne, you haven't used many pictures of media celebrities. Is there a reason for this?

A: No, not really.

I: No?

A: Mainly because everyone took the other pictures of celebrities before I got to them.

I: So if there were pictures that you could have used to express what you were trying to say in both of these sections, what pictures would you add to this if you would add any?

A: I'd probably put Kate Moss on this because she's a druggie and (starts laughing), and I'm not sure what other celebrities I'd do. I don't really know any quiet celebrities.

I: So why would you put Kate Moss on?

A: Because she's a druggie, and druggies inspire me (laughing).

I: Druggies?

A: Inspire me (laughing).

I: Why do they inspire you?

A: Because they're always in trouble and I'm kind of a boy who's always in trouble.

I: But you just said that you couldn't find any pictures of quiet celebrities because that's also how you see yourself.

- A: I see myself as loads of things.
 I: There seems to be a clear definite difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you.
 A: I'm not sure.
 I: You're not sure?
 A: No.
 I: OK, just one last question. You said that you describe your ethnicity as Turkish Cypriot. Do you ever call yourself British?
 A: Yeah, I think that because I was born here that probably makes me British, I'm not sure.
 I: What do you usually say? What would you usually describe yourself as?
 A: I'd probably say I'm Turkish Cypriot.
 I: OK, thanks Alfie.

(A=Andre, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Andre, would you like to explain what pictures you've used and why you have used them?
 A: I've got this one down [Jermaine Dafoe] because I, this player he plays the same position as me, a striker.
 I: Which player is it?
 A: Jermaine Dafoe.
 I: OK.
 A: I chose this one [mobile phone advert] because I like phones. This one [car] because I like racing.
 I: Who is this [image of a black man]?
 A: I don't know but my brother looks a bit like him so maybe one day I might look like that.
 I: Are there any qualities about Jermaine Dafoe that you think are similar to how you see yourself?
 A: I think that we both score, I don't know, goals and we're both black.
 I: Do you identify with him because he is black?
 A: Yeah, but it's not just that.
 I: So what else is it about him [Jermaine Dafoe] that you identify with?
 A: On the pitch he's hard-working like me.
 I: And is that something you see in yourself as well?
 A: Yeah.
 I: OK, let's move on to this side [how I think other people see me]. Can you explain what the images mean? You've got a picture of a wolf here, why have you used that?
 A: Because some people might see me as quite lonely.
 I: Do you think you're lonely?
 A: No.
 I: Why do you think other people might think you're lonely then?
 A: I think, I just don't talk much.
 I: What about these pictures [Beyonce and Lucy Pinder] here? Why have you placed these here [how I think other people see me]?
 A: Because that's how my friends say they see me. Someone who, like if they've got a magazine with girls in it then they'll just call me and show me because they say that one day I'm going to grow up to be a porn star or something like that.
 I: Is that how you feel?
 A: I'm not sure.
 I: Now I've noticed on this side [how you see yourself] you've got pictures of black men and on this side [how you think other people see me] you didn't use any images of black men. Is there a reason why you did that, or do you think that that is not something people think about when they see you?

- A: I don't know why I hadn't on that side [how I think other people see me].
- I: If you had more time are there any pictures you would have liked to have put on the collage?
- A: Maybe an athlete. Maybe put an athlete on both sides.
- I: What would the athlete mean to you? What would it represent?
- A: Hard-working and being good.
- I: OK and how would you define your ethnicity?
- A: Half Trinidadian
- I: Half Trinidadian. Why only half?
- A: Because my mum was born in Trinidad and my dad was born here.
- I: Do you consider yourself British?
- A: I wouldn't say I'm British.
- I: You would or you wouldn't?
- A: I don't often say that I'm British.
- I: Is there a reason why you don't?
- A: Because there's some people that have British parents and grandparents, but my parents and grandparents are from the Caribbean.
- I: Do you think that if I changed the picture of Jermaine Dafoe to, let's say David Beckham, do you think that it would still reflect part of how you see yourself or do you think that would change the overall message and meaning of who you are trying to say you are?
- A: I don't think I would put David Beckham because he plays , unlike Jermaine Dafoe, he plays like different and in a different positions and he has got some qualities that Jermaine Dafoe don't have.
- I: OK. Thank you.

(C=Carl, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: OK, let's have a look at your collage. Would you like to just explain the images you've used for me?
- C: Yeah, I chose the image of Motorhead because I love heavy metal music and that's how I see myself as a heavy metal rocker. I used, well, the Gothic 3 monkey from the advert [3 Mobiles] because like, I don't want you like putting names on me, but a lot of people see me as a Goth, but I also see myself as a Goth so I'm pretty much in both spaces.
- I: What does being a Goth mean to you or what does it mean?
- C: Well to other people it means you worship the devil, but I don't think that, I just think you wear some clothes and your automatically a Goth, there you go.
- I: One interesting thing about your collage is up here you've written 'I love life sometimes' with a time bomb. What does that mean?
- C: It's just sometimes life can be good and sometimes life can be up in your face, so it like, sometimes I like my life and sometimes I don't.
- I: What about this image of the person windsurfing?
- C: Well, I do a lot of extreme sports. I go down the skate park a lot to do skateboarding, and when it's summertime I go down to Swanage to do a bit of surfing and weight boarding and stuff like that.
- I: And [image of Green Day]?
- C: I used a picture of the three members of Green Day because they're good friends and other people see me as a good friend.
- I: Now I've noticed that a lot of images that you have represent the meanings associated with gothic and sports, are there any images there that reflect how you think other people see you?
- C: Yeah.
- I: Can you explain which ones?

- C: That one [advert for band auditions]. Well, it's a band audition and I think it's the only one that I could actually find with the word actually band in it so I'm in a band at the moment and people like see me in a band like with other people.
- I: And is that a picture of a cheetah?
- C: A cheetah or a leopard I'm not sure.
- I: And what does that represent [image of a cheetah]?
- C: That I stand out in a crowd.
- I: OK.
- C: That other people see me that I stand out in a crowd.
- I: That's how you feel other people see you, that you stand out. Is there a reason for that?
- C: Yes but I wouldn't like to say it.
- I: That's fine.
- C: I used the word 'bloke' because I'm quite like, I speak in a cockney way.
- I: That's alright I speak in a cockney way.
- C: Yeah, that's why I used it (laughing).
- I: Now, I've noticed on this [how I see myself] you've also got 'blimey she's fit' next to a nude woman. What does that mean and represent?
- C: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Because, well the blimey bit was supposed to be added to the body bit, the cockney bit, and the words are supposed to be because, that's something I like (laughing).
- I: Do you think that the 'bloke' thing and the nude woman, if other people see you that way do you think they see that as positive or negative?
- C: In what way? What do you mean by that?
- I: OK, you just said that you've used the word 'bloke' because of your cockney accent and that you've also got a picture of a nude woman there which you said you like. Do you think that if other people were looking at you and if they were qualities that they saw in you, i.e. he's a cockney bloke who likes 'birds', do you think other people would see that as a positive, like a good thing or a bad thing?
- C: Other people would see it as positive and other people would see it as negative, it's like 50/50 really.
- I: What would influence what way they thought; whether they thought it was a good thing or a bad thing? What do you think?
- C: People might see it as a bad thing because like, I don't know, they might take it the wrong way as if I'm a perv maybe, but in some other way people would see it as me being straight, so that's the positive.
- I: I've also noticed on your collage that there are no images of people who are not white. Are there any//
- C: //I'm not trying to imply anything by that.
- I: No, I'm not suggesting you are. But if you had more time//
- C: //yeah I would have
- I: Who would you have put for example [how I see myself]?
- C: I would have put, well if there was in a magazine, someone who I think who is a hero and like who has won the Nobel Peace prize because he stood up for what he believed in and that would be Martin Luther King. So I probably would have put that down as well but I couldn't find it so there was no-one else except for, if I had found Tony Blair I would have put that there, I don't really like him but I would have used him because he's thinking and sometimes I make bad decisions and so does Tony Blair, but he also makes good decisions as well and so do I.
- I: OK. How would you usually describe your ethnicity?
- C: British, English.
- I: Would you say British or English mainly?
- C: Well, I would actually just say I'm a Londoner really. That's what I say to people like if they come up to me I say I'm a Londoner there you go.
- I: So that's what you would usually say on a day-to-day basis?

C: Yeah.
I: Thank you.

(J=Jimmy, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Let's start with the images on this side [how I see myself]. Can you explain why you chose them and what they represent?
- J: Well I've got pictures of the Gorillaz band because they're like my favourite band, like I sort of, I prefer their music to anything else it's like electronic rock and the eagle is just to show nature, that I like nature and I was born into a family of well my dad is sort of a climber, not like that extreme but like hill-climbing and stuff, and I've gone into I've been brought up into that way and the eye is for like I'm aware, most of the time anyway.
- I: Aware of?
- J: My surroundings and stuff. And it's just another one [image of a deer in a forest] to show nature like the eagle.
- I: What about this picture here of the man with the gun?
- J: That's not to say like guns are OK it was in a game magazine I didn't cut out all the whole thing.
- I: And is this all one picture or are they separate?
- J: That's separate. I put that in the middle because I know that I'm a *Metal Gear Solid* fan and I like PlayStation stuff and everybody sees me as that//
- I: You know you're a//
- J: //*Metal Gear Solid* fan like computers and stuff and everybody else knows I'm a big fan of it as well.
- I: And you've got the Gorillaz picture here again [how I think other people see me].
- J: Most people know like all my friends know I'm into the Gorillaz.
- I: And you've also got the eagle again, so it's the nature theme repeated.
- J: Yes, yes.
- I: But here (pointing to child with gun and word 'mosher')//
- J: //well, that's a separate part [child with gun] that's to do with that as well the computer games. Mosher is like a, it's a bit like Carl said like a Goth but it's in a different way. It's more of a different style, like electronic rock it's not heavy metal, but it's the way you dress, music you listen to, the way that you sort of style yourself out.
- I: So this is really interesting because it's like you've repeated pretty much the same images on both sides, but here you've used, on how you see yourself, you feel that you are aware, but on this side [how I think other people see me] you haven't put it down.
- J: That's because I think that most people, because I am aware most of the time, I think people just thought I'm unaware because they see me that way all the time.
- I: So you think you are a lot more aware//
- J: //then people think I am.
- I: If you had more time to work on this what other pictures would you have put on?
- J: I probably would have put some more, I would have put like a PlayStation 2 or something like that because I always like that and I would put a couple more bands.
- I: Like which bands?
- J: I would have put Tupac on it because he's a good guy I look up to him.
- I: In what way is Tupac a good guy?
- J: Because he was like, he stood up for what he thought was right and then he got all the way through stuff and then he explained it in like songs and stuff and I thought that was really good.
- I: Because some people saw Tupac as a bad guy because he was a bit of a gangster type and he was involved with guns. Didn't he end up getting shot?

- J: But the only reason he got shot was because he stood up for what he thought was right. I think that he was like really brave in what he did. I think he deserves a lot more respect than he probably does get.
- I: And how would you describe your ethnicity?
- J: English, I don't really have any other background.
- I: That's brilliant. Thank you very much.

(A=Amelia, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Would you like to explain what pictures you've used and why you've used them, what they mean to you? Let's start with this side first [how I see myself].
- A: There's that [cartoon picture of a girl in bed] because I'm lazy and I like sleeping and there's that [word 'adorable'] 'cause I'm certainly beautiful (laughs).
- I: Who is this a picture of?
- A: Dougie from McFly, because he's cute and so am I.
- I: OK. And what does Franz Ferdinand 'Do you want to' [words] mean?
- A: I don't know I just like that song.
- I: So overall, how do all these pictures work together to express how you see yourself?
- A: I don't know. Fun, yeah.
- I: So fun?
- A: Yeah.
- I: And you've also written 'happy' here and drawn a face.
- A: Yeah.
- I: Now this side, how I think other people see me, could you explain some of these pictures here?
- A: That one [picture of a rabbit] is for weird, and that one [cartoon girl] is for funny and Nicole Ritchie is funny.
- I: And what about this woman up here [Kelly Rowland]?
- A: I think she has cool hair. I don't know, she looks happy and stuff.
- I: And you've also got a picture of Gwen Stefani. What does she mean to you?
- A: Original and, original and different but in a good way like me.
- I: So these images are also quite similar to these ones on how you see yourself, but on this side you've also written some words like we've got 'stupid', 'clueless', 'quiet', 'clumsy'. Why are they//
- A: //it's what people tell me.
- I: Everybody?
- A: No, but a lot of people.
- I: A lot of people.
- A: Yeah.
- I: Why do you think they think that?
- A: I don't know. Because they do, because I am, kind of.
- I: If you had more time to work on this and you could put in more pictures onto your collage, what pictures would you have liked to have put on and why?
- A: I don't know a mouse or something.
- I: A mouse for quiet?
- A: Yeah and a smashed plate or something, something smashed.
- I: Now I've noticed as well apart from Gwen Stefani and Dougie from McFly, you've not got many pictures of famous people here.
- A: She's famous [Kelly Rowland] and her [Nicole Ritchie].
- I: Who is this one [Kelly Rowland]?
- A: Kelly Rowland from Desinty's Child.
- I: Have you just used her because you said you think she has got cool hair?
- A: Yeah and because she looks happy and she's smiling.
- I: Is there anything else about her where you think you are similar to her?
- A: Not really.

I: OK and how would you describe your ethnicity?
 A: Half-cast or mixed race.
 I: Do you ever call yourself British?
 A: Sometimes yeah, yeah.
 I: But you usually say//
 A: //Half-cast or mixed race.
 I: And you were born?
 A: In England.
 I: OK, thank you.

(P=Pamela, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

I: Wow, you've got a lot on your collage. Where would you like to start with this?
 P: How other people think they see me as.
 I: OK, let's start this side [how I think other people see me]. Now you've got quite a few images here of different women. What does this head bit cut out on top of the other body mean?
 P: Some people just think I'm moody and I've got attitude.
 I: So some people think you're moody and that you've got attitude.
 P: Yeah.
 I: What do all of these different faces mean?
 P: That one says I'm confident [image of a girl in a yellow top].
 I: Is that how you think other people see you, as confident?
 P: Yeah. Also friendly and funny [various images of women's faces].
 I: What about this one [image of a black girl]?
 P: Pretty.
 I: And what about that one [image of a girl looking up]?
 P: I don't know, I just stuck it there.
 I: OK, you've also got 'boring' [word].
 P: Yeah, some people think I am boring.
 I: And what does this represent [image of a champagne bottle in a bucket]?
 P: That I'm lively.
 I: That you're lively?
 P: Yeah.
 I: Is 'talk too much' [words] this side to?
 P: Yeah.
 I: Now you've got pictures of somebody funny and confident, but then also moody, attitude and boring. Do you think other people see you as all those things?
 P: Yeah, that's what I think.
 I: OK let's go onto this side [how I see myself]. What do these images mean? Let's start with the girl in the jeans.
 P: Independent.
 I: Independent.
 P: Yeah.
 I: You've also though got the word 'bitch' with an arrow going to the independent.
 P: (laughter) No it's not supposed to go to there.
 I: So that wasn't deliberate?
 P: Yeah.
 I: Do you think that this [independent] is a positive quality or sometimes people think it's negative?
 P: What independent?
 I: Yes.
 P: Positive.
 I: And what about these images [images of fashion items]?
 P: I just like going out and shopping and thing and buying clothes for me.
 I: So you like your fashion and accessories?

P: Yeah.

I: And you've also got the words 'nice' and 'star' and you've got 'going-out' there. Now on this side [how I see myself], looking at it, it seems very positive but on this side [how I think other people see me] you've got 'quiet', 'boring', 'moody', 'attitude'. Do you think that other people really know who you are, what type of person you are?

P: Most of them don't.

I: Why do you think that that might be?

P: Because I'm different around them.

I: In what way?

P: Quiet, bitchy.

I: What was that? Bitchy//

P: //to Kelly [pupil]. Sometimes I'm evil to people

I: OK. If you could have used more images on your collage are there any pictures you would have liked to have been able put on?

P: No.

I: So you think this summaries, this sums up what were you were trying to express quite well.

P: Yeah.

I: That's great. So finally, how would you usually describe your ethnicity?

P: I don't know.

I: Last week you wrote//

P: //I was black.

I: Would you ever describe your ethnicity as British?

P: No.

I: Why not?

P: I don't know.

I: Were you born in this country?

P: Yeah.

I: So you always describe yourself as black?

P: Yeah.

I: And you would never describe yourself as British?

P: I would, but I'm confused. Yeah I would.

I: OK, we'll leave it there, thank you.

(R=Rachel, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Would you like to explain what the images mean here [how I see myself]?

R: This means [image of a black model] I think I'm sexy, this one [image of a black girl] Rachel is beautiful so I think that I'm beautiful and this one [image of a woman with a golf club] is showing that she's active and that's something that's me.

I: And what about this side [how I think other people see me]?

R: People think that I'm friendly [image of girls] like this one here and this one [image of a man holding a woman] people think that I'm strong, and this one [image of a man with his mouth open] people think that I'm a bit excited.

I: Excitable, yes.

R: And this one [image of a man with moustache] people think that I'm quite short-tempered and this one [image of a girl laughing] is funny, because I'm funny.

I: They [other people] think you're funny.

R: Yeah.

I: Now I've noticed that you have strong and excitable and funny, but you've not put any similar images in how you see yourself. Do you see yourself as all of these things or do you think that only other people see you as these things?

R: I see myself as these things here [how I see myself], also these things [how I think other people see me].

I: So you see yourself really as both, the two sides can sort of merge.
 R: No, not really.
 I: Are there any things here that you think you are that you think other people don't think you are?
 R: Yeah (pointing to image of a black model).
 I: So you think you're beautiful and you don't think other people think you're beautiful.
 R: Some people do.
 I: Some people do?
 R: Yeah.
 I: But not most people?
 R: Um, no.
 I: OK. If you had more time are there more pictures that you could have added to this, or that you would have liked to have added?
 R: I would have something that shows that I love animals.
 I: You love animals. So what picture could you have used to show that?
 R: Someone hugging a dog or something.
 I: OK, that's brilliant. And how did you describe your ethnicity?
 R: Caribbean.
 I: Caribbean. Jamaican?
 I: So you are Jamaican?
 R: Yeah, both.
 I: OK, because I've noticed here that you've used images of black women for beautiful and sexy. If I took these pictures away and put pictures of maybe a white person or an Asian person here would it still mean the same thing?
 R: Yes, yes.
 I: It would?
 R: Yes.
 I: That's great. Thank you.

(Z=Zahra, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Let's go through your picture. What do these images mean [how I see myself]?
 Z: Well these mean what I think like how I see myself because they are all of the things I like, and these are how other people see me
 I: So we've got images like the butterfly, 'good friend', 'quiet' [words, how I see myself], and you think other people see you as quiet as well. What do these two lions mean?
 Z: They're my favourite animal.
 I: So is this one big collage that you've done or are they two separate?
 Z: Two really. Two separate.
 I: So which side is 'Muslim' [word] on?
 Z: It's in the middle because I'm a Muslim.
 I: Do you think when it's on this side [how I see myself], is it a good or a bad thing?
 Z: It's a good thing.
 I: What about when it's on this side [how I think other people see me]?
 Z: It's a good thing as well.
 I: So you think that people see it [Muslim]?
 Z: //well yeah, unless they're racist.
 I: Unless they're racist. You've used a lot of pictures from nature, why is that?
 Z: I like animals.
 I: You like animals.
 Z: I've got quiet I thought mouse would be good because mice are quiet.
 I: Are there any pictures that you would have liked to have put on your collage that you didn't have a chance to get?

Z: I would like to replace these [all the words on the collage] with pictures and I would have put Beyonce 'cause she's fashionable and independent and so am I.
 I: So everything that you've written you would have liked to have had pictures for then.
 Z: Yeah.
 I: OK and how did you describe//
 Z: //Mauritian.
 I: Mauritian. Were you born in this country?
 Z: Yeah.
 I: You were. Do you always say I'm Mauritian?
 Z: Yeah.
 I: You do. So is it important for you to say that?
 Z: Because most people think I'm from Pakistan but I'm not so.
 I: So it's important for you to make sure that they know you are Mauritian.
 Z: Yeah.
 I: That's great, that's excellent. Thank you.

(A=Aisha, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Do you want to explain what images you've chosen and why, and what do the pictures mean? (pause) OK, let's start with this side [how I see myself]. Why have you used the pictures of Kat and Little Mo [*EastEnders* characters]?
 A: Because I like soaps.
 I: OK, and what about the pictures above [images of a penguin and lion]?
 A: I love cats and I like animals.
 I: You've also got a tub of hair gel, what does that mean?
 A: That I like using hair gel sometimes.
 I: Underneath that you've got the word 'religious' in a bubble. If there was a picture that you could use to represent that what would you put there?
 A: The Quran or something.
 I: Are these two separate collages or one big collage?
 A: That's separate.
 I: Because on how you think other people see you, you've got movies, chocolate and also 'religious' [word] again. Looking at your collage, there's a lot more on how you see yourself than there is the other side. Why is that?
 A: I didn't have time to finish it.
 I: So if you had more time how would you have finished it?
 A: I would have put more stuff on this side [how I think other people see me]?
 I: Like?
 A: Like 'cause I like watching TV and all of that kind of thing.
 I: I asked you last week how you would usually describe your ethnicity and you put Muslim.
 A: Yeah.
 I: Do you ever call yourself British?
 A: Yeah.
 I: You do. What one do you usually use?
 A: Muslim.
 I: So you would usually describe yourself as Muslim?
 A: Yeah.

(Q=Qirat, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Let's discuss your collage. Let's just go through the images quickly.
 Q: I watch this [*That's So Raven*] like after I go home.
 I: You watch?
 Q: I watch this [*That's So Raven*].

- I: OK.
- Q: And Pakistan I come, my parents come from there.
- I: Your parents come from Pakistan but you//
- Q: //were born here.
- I: you were born here.
- Q: Yeah. And Manchester United are my favourite at sport, and *Wizard of Oz* rather a good movie, *Gladiator* good movie, ideas and things like that you know, bright colours and things like that but, and I like cats. London obviously because I live in London. 'Islam' [word] because it's my religion. 'Respect' [word], don't know, 'cause I think I actually respect people when they need it and stuff like that so I put that down.
- I: You've put it [respect] here. Do you think that's something people recognise in you?
- Q: Well, if I say my family yeah my family yeah, I don't know about other people I don't care, about other people.
- I: So you respect your family?
- Q: Yeah, and other people obviously, but you know it does depend.
- I: You've put the words 'Pakistan' and 'Islam' on this side. Are these two separate collages?
- Q: No.
- I: So it's just one big one.
- Q: Yeah.
- I: Do you think that there is a difference between how you see yourself and how you think other people see you then, or do you think//
- Q: //I don't know, I'm just one.
- I: What does this [image of the London Eye] mean?
- Q: This is a bit like you're travelling by being as well like being like half-way through your life and things like that so here it just represents London which is represented by colour like that, colours.
- I: And on your form you described your ethnicity as Pakistani British. Is that how you always describe yourself?
- Q: Well sometimes I do a bit of both sometimes I go a bit British but most of the time I do go a bit more Pakistani, but I do put normally//
- I: //What times would you do that?
- Q: I don't know, but the weird thing when people ask me I say I'm British Pakistani.
- I: And if you could have added any pictures to that [collage] what pictures would you have added?
- Q: Maybe a few more animals because I have lots of pets at home and some clothes to show I'm into fashion and am like my own person.
- I: OK. Thank you.

(H=Husna, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)
(//=overlap)

- I: Shall we go through your pictures?
- H: I chose this word ['cute' next to an image of a toucan] because I like dogs and I got pictures of books because I like reading and I've got soaps because I like watching TV and soaps and I'm religious [word].
- I: If you could have used a picture here [for religious] what would you have used?
- H: I would have used like a person.
- I: OK.
- H: Yeah. And I've got a sign, a Pakistan flag, and I was smiling all the time and I'm happy.
- I: Now do you think that the religious here [how I see myself] and the religious here [how I think other people see me] are the same?
- H: No, not all the time.
- I: Can you explain that?

H: Sometimes I don't wear my scarf and sometimes I do.
 I: You've got a picture here [how I think other people see me] of a woman with a scarf on. Do you think that people treat you differently when you have the scarf on than when you don't have it on?
 H: No.
 I: No.
 H: Yeah.
 I: And you also described yourself as Muslim so is that how you usually//
 H: //yeah.
 I: describe yourself?
 H: Yeah.
 I: But you were born in England and your parents are from Pakistan?
 H: Yeah.
 I: Is the Muslim more important to you than//
 H: //yes.
 I: Why?
 H: Because I'm more like religious and more a Muslim as well.
 I: OK, brilliant. Thanks.

(S=Simone, aged 13, female; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

I: Would you like to explain the images [how I see myself]?
 S: I've got pictures of mice because I'm quiet as well sometimes and I've got a fair ride because its fun and I like to do fun things. I've got a person trying on shoes because I like to go shopping.
 I: You've got a picture of Bobby V here, what does Bobby V mean? What does Bobby V express about how you see yourself?
 S: That I like R&B music.
 I: That you like?
 S: R&B music.
 I: OK, let's move onto this side [how I think other see me]. You've also got quiet again, and you've also got 'excited', 'annoying sometimes' [words]. So the pictures here are actually quite similar, or am I incorrect?
 S: Yeah, some of them are a bit different.
 I: Which ones would you say are different?
 S: Like the mad one.
 I: So you feel that other people would see you as a little bit mad?
 S: Yeah.
 I: You don't think that is how you are?
 S: I am a little but sometimes.
 I: But not all the time?
 S: No.
 I: But that's something that other people see in you?
 S: Yeah.
 I: If you could use more pictures on your collage which ones would you have used?
 S: More colourful stuff.
 I: More colourful stuff. Are there any pictures of famous people that you would have maybe have liked to have put down?
 S: I would have one of Usher.
 I: Usher. Why?
 S: Because he's like my favourite singer.
 I: OK, thank you.

(M=Martin, aged 13, male; I=interviewer)

(//=overlap)

- I: Right, let's go through your collage. Well, the first thing that strikes me is the picture of the girl and you've put 'straight' next to it [how I see myself].
- M: Yeah.
- I: Would you like to explain why you put that there and what are you trying to say?
- M: That I like girls.
- I: That you like girls?
- M: Yeah. Not all girls but most.
- I: OK, and you've also got a little Green Day picture//
- M: //and The Game.
- I: What do they mean to you? What are you trying to express?
- M: That I like all types of music going from say rock down to R&B and Garage. I like them all.
- I: And what about how you think other people see you?
- M: Well one of my friends thought I was sly so I put a snake so I don't know why, but he said I was quite sly because people don't know what stuff I'm gonna do so he done that.
- I: Right.
- M: And he said I was loud.
- I: If you had more time on the collage would you have put more pictures on?
- M: Yeah, because I would have had more time to go round and ask more people what they thought of me.
- I: But what do you think other people think about you?
- M: I don't know 'cause I didn't get to ask them.
- I: OK. And how do you describe yourself, your ethnicity?
- M: British.
- I: British.
- M: If you could have put any more pictures then on how you see yourself, what ones would you have put on?
- M: A big fat Union Jack.
- I: And what would that mean to you?
- M: That I'm from England.
- I: That you're from England.
- M: Yes.
- I: Anything else?
- M: Not really.
- I: No? Cool. Thank you.