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Creating meaning : an ethnographic study of pre-schoolers, literary response and play.

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CREATING MEANING:

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF PRE-SCHOOLERS,
LITERARY RESPONSE AND PLAY

A Dissertation Presented

by

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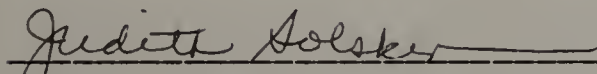
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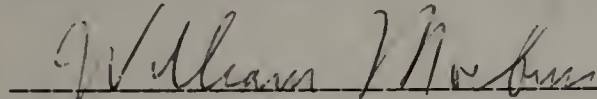
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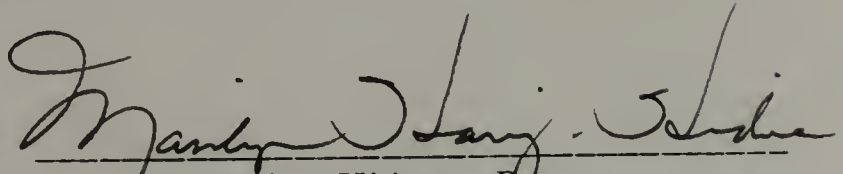
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DEDICATION

For Alex, Jenni and Noah,

with love and gratitude

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ABSTRACT

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LITERARY RESPONSE AND PLAY

FEBRUARY 1990

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The purpose of this study was to first identify and describe the literary response behaviors exhibited by pre-schoolers in a literature rich setting. Next, the study examined these response behaviors as indicative of the characteristics of theorist Michael Benton's 'secondary world' of literary response (1983) and of psychologist D.W. Winnicott's 'third area' of play (1971). Finally, the study considered the possibilities inherent in these secondary worlds for the creation and exploration of meaning on the part of pre-schoolers.

This study utilized ethnographic methods of participant observation, in-depth interviewing, informal conversations, field notes and videotaping. Validity was established and checked

through trianglization using the adults in the setting and two outside readers.

The findings of this study are culture specific. This ethnographic study offers ways of thinking about, considering and discussing how young children use their experiences of interacting with books and responding to books to create meaning for their lives.

Response behaviors were identified, described and organized into three general categories: (1) Individual/dyadic response behaviors involving one child/book(s), two children/book(s) and a child/adult/book(s), (2) Communal response behaviors involving several children/book(s) or several children/adult/book(s), and (3) Guided/directed response behaviors which always involved several children, an adult and book(s), and, in addition, had a specific goal or objective. Response behaviors in each of these categories covered a broad range of activities and formed an intregal part of the living and learning experiences of the pre-schoolers in this day care setting.

Both physically and humanly this setting was an organized and supportive environment which expected and encouraged interactions with and response to books. Within this setting, reliable and trustworthy relationships were formed which both allowed and encouraged the creation of secondary worlds. Such secondary worlds were intermediate between inner psychic

reality and outer shared reality, were dependent upon individual contributions and provided place and opportunity for the creation of meaning. The pre-schoolers used these secondary worlds to explore self identity, emotions, competency development and to expand and integrate their ways of being in the world.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

xiv

LIST OF FIGURES

x v

CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Joey tromped around the day care center, a stack of six caps on his head. At each group he encountered he laughed and threw the caps into the air, one by one. Every group laughed with him, several of the children commented on the caps or grabbed for a flying cap, yelling, "I'm the monkey." All of these children had shared yesterday's story hour when the teacher read Slobodkin's picture book Caps For Sale (1947).

Matthew and Lewis crawled around on the floor in the big block area of the day care center. They had spread the blocks out, chosen the sizes they needed and had built two tractor trailer trucks. Earlier in the week Lewis had brought in his current favorite picture book, Mathieu's Big Joe's Trailer Truck (1974). The teacher had read this book to the whole class just once but she had read it to Lewis several times. On this day Matthew had listened to the story with Lewis and then they went off to play the story out. They discussed how to put the trucks together, what products they were hauling and what their destination was. They took time out to ask an aide to help them write the signs

they wanted to affix to their trucks before they continued their play.

"It's mine! It's mine! " hollered two year old Jenni as she climbed precariously onto the saw-horse her father had just finished building. "I'm going to name him Kaseesa and we're going places." She had staked her claim and rendered impossible any practical use of the saw-horse for several weeks. This saw-horse did resemble, somewhat, the rather straight, stiff legged giraffe in Ronald Himler's picture book, The Girl on the Yellow Giraffe (1976). Jenni had asked for this story several times recently and had commented on all the places the little girl in the story went on her giraffe.

Five children (ages11-13) in a remedial reading class continually asked to spend some time of each class period having me read aloud. Their desire and need to be read to was obvious and the books they most wanted to hear were picture books. For reasons I didn't understand at the time, this reading aloud seemed to help their comprehension and understanding more than the prepared skills and comprehension lessons. So we read daily. Their comments, attention and concentration all seemed to indicate that in these books they were encountering places, things, ideas and experiences new to them. They seemed to be using the books to play and to imagine new possibilities for themselves.

In all these instances young children were taking story into their fantasy play. They appeared to be using it to explore all kinds of possibilities presented by the world around them. These children imitated the behavior of story characters, explored the jobs of truck drivers and visited imaginary places of their own creation similar to those explored in a story. Here, too, were older children using story and story characters to improve their literacy skills and think about new possibilities for themselves.

All of these interactions, those that involved me directly as well as those that didn't, supported my impression that many varied and interesting things were occurring when children and books got together and prompted me think about and ask questions about what I was seeing. In listening to and responding to literature these children seemed to have made connections for themselves between story, play and imagination. I became more and more curious and began to seriously consider the basic question I had been thinking about over the years. What was it that happened between young children and their books?

Background to the Study

As I began to look for answers to this question I found that others, too, had noted these connections and asked this question. Researchers in literary response had talked about the interaction between the reader and the text. I. A. Richards (1929) was one

of the first to talk about the worth of any literary piece being individual and being decided by the reader's own inner nature and the world he/she lived in.

Louise Rosenblatt (1938) was one of the first to set this idea out in a theory. She based her response theory on Dewey's idea of learning as a two way process. Rosenblatt saw literary response as a 'transaction' involving reader and text with neither having a passive role. She referred to two kinds of transactions. One transaction she termed efferent. In the efferent stance readers focused mainly on public or social use of referents of the text. Here readers took away parts of the information for their specific use. She referred to the other transaction as aesthetic. In this transaction readers focused on an evocation of the literary work. Readers used ideas, feelings and images from their own past to create their own meaning of what was being read.

James Britton (1977) also had similar ideas about reader/text interaction. He referred to these interactions in terms of the roles readers assume as they read. He called one role participant and the other spectator. In assuming the participant role readers were directly involved with the material being read; readers needed the information they were reading in order to be actively involved in the world around them. In assuming the spectator role readers stood aside from the narrative in order to contemplate, explore and evaluate what the text was offering from their own experiences.

Michael Benton's (1983) work was strongly involved with literary response as well. Benton looked at the responsive interaction between reader and text in terms of what it actually was and where it happened. Benton used Tolkien's idea of the story maker as sub-creator building a world for the reader's mind to enter. Benton proposed that the responsive interaction between books and readers occured in what he termed a 'secondary world' -- a space between inner psychic reality and the shared reality of the outer world. He found, in his work with both readers and writers, that one concept both spoke of and agreed upon was the creation of such a separate world. As long as this world was trustworthy, believable in itself and followed the rules created for it, it could exist for the reader's exploration and response.

Benton's ideas about a safe, trustworthy and separate 'world' for reader's response closely resembled work done in object relations psychology and especially the work done by psychologist D.W. Winnicott (1971) in the area of play. Winnicott described play as a form of creativity that began at birth and continued throughout life. He saw play as the basis for the experiential existence and cultural growth of humans. He went on to say that children's play and society's cultural experience were both located in a potential space -- a 'third area' between the individual and his environment. Individual inner psychic reality and outer shared reality contribute to the creation of this

'third area'. In addition this 'third area' of play happens only in a confident, trusting relationship in which rules and meaning are created and recreated to accommodate growth and development.

There were several strong similarities between Benton's 'secondary world' of literary response and Winnicott's 'third area' of play and cultural growth. First, both the 'secondary world' and the third area' were separate from inner psychic reality and from the reality shared with the outer world. Both were dependent on trustworthy relationships and based on rules created specifically for this so called 'space between.' Winnicott and Benton both emphasized that this 'space between' was different for each individual depending on the individual's life experiences. They also said that this 'space between' was a place to think, explore, imagine and create one's own meaning.

The books themselves and the shared experience of children and adults reading them together seemed to fit the criteria of the 'secondary world' of response and the 'third area' of play. The content of many picture books such as Brown's <u>Good Night Moon</u> (1977), Sendak's <u>Where The Wild Things Are</u> (1963), Burningham's <u>Where's Julius</u> (1987) and Tom Roberts' <u>Pirates in the Park</u> (1973) actively elicit an imaginative response from children and invite them to pretend, both within the content of the story itself and within their own fantasy play. My experiences with children and their books had demonstrated the inclination and ability of young children to take story content and

use it for their own devices and to explore and extend the possibilities of their own living.

The adult/child shared reading aloud experience, too, seemed to fit the criteria of the potential space of the 'secondary world' of response and the 'third area' of play. While adults and children were reading together they weren't directly interacting with the outer world reality, nor were they entirely into their own psychic worlds. They were somewhere in between, sharing bits and pieces of both as they created the story in the text according to their own experiences. In order to occur at all, this sharing had to take place in an atmosphere of warmth, safety and trust between the adult and the children, between the reader and the story. There was trust that the story had something to say and that the reader/listener could understand it (Butler, 1982). This sharing experience also had rules. It was usually understood that there must be a measure of quiet and cooperation in order to share the book; that the adult would not allow the story or the emotions evoked to become overwhelming. By virtue of this reading/listening experience occurring at all, it seemed that all participants must be contributing: the author/illustrator out of life experiences in creating the text and illustrations, and the children/listeners, adult/readers out of experiences of their own lives and previous reading. Thus actual observation of and participation in interactions between children and books, extensive reading in the literature of play and response theory

and consideration of the importance of the role of context in all of these areas provided the background for this study.

Significance of the Study

Historically literary response studies have been done with high school or college-age participants (Squires 1964; Holland 1975). The majority of these studies depended on written and/or verbal interactions between the reader and the teacher or researcher about the text. Until recently little literary response work had been done with very young children who have some limitations in both of these skills.

Early research studies that did involve the responses of young children emphasized their reading interests, reading choices and reading preferences. Some of these studies (Broening, 1934: Terman and Lima, 1926) were simply descriptions of the kinds of books young children liked to read. The indications were that, in general, children liked books of adventure, action and mystery. Several studies (Rankin, 1944; Thorndike 1941) looked at the preferences of children based on gender and elementary school age range. Norvell (1950 & 1958) and Peltola (1965) did large scale studies of upper elementary age school children and surveyed independent reading choices. These studies, however, did not provide the opportunity or the means for allowing children to explain why they liked what they did or what it meant to them.

The idea that the cognitive and psychological development of children contributes to their comprehension of literary meaning and to their ability to use narrative to create meaning for themselves was beginning to be reflected in more recent studies of literary response. Favat (1977) analyzed the possible connections between fairy tales and the thinking of children ages six to eight. Schlager (1978) contrasted the content of popular and unpopular award books to determine if the more popular ones contained an identifiable stage of development. Others such as Sutton-Smith (1978) and Applebee (1973) looked at the story productions of young children in the hopes of discovering what young children expected of story. These studies had their basis in the idea Rosenblatt had advanced many years before, that reading was a 'transaction' between the reader and the text and that neither the reader or the text were passive participants in the process.

Still more recent studies have looked at the literary responses of younger primary school children in light of Rosenblatt's ideas. Hickman (1979) gave special consideration to the context in which cilldren responded to literature. Kiefer (1983) considered the responses of young children to picture books as a visual as well as a textual entity. Lehr's (1985) study characterized the nature of a child's sense of theme iı. narrative across three age levels.

These studies have looked at response to literature as a multifaceted, active process for the creation of meaning. They

have also validated the possibilities of doing literary response work with pre-schoolers.

One of the primary needs, then, was for an investigation of the response behaviors of pre-school children to the literature with which they are most involved. Such an investigation would accomplish several things. It would identify and describe the response behaviors. It would consider the context in which book sharing occurred. It would explore the response behaviors beyond the immediate involvement during book sharing such as in imaginative play resulting from interactions with books. In addition it would consider the possibilities, inherent in these response behaviors, for the creation of and exploration of meaning on the part of these pre-schoolers.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe the responses of thirteen pre-schoolers to literature in a pre-school setting. In addition, it considered the context in which those responses occurred to discover if and how these two things (response and context) contribute to the child's ability to create and extend meaning for his own living. The following questions guided the collection and analysis of data:

    1.   What are the response behaviors of pre-schoolers to literature shared in a day care setting?

2. Do these literary response behaviors reflect the characteristics of Winnicott's 'third area' of play and Benton's 'secondary world' of response?

3. What are the possibilities, inherent in these response behaviors and reflected in the 'third area' of play and the 'secondary world' of response, for the creation and extension of meaning on the part of pre-schoolers?

Reflecting the exploratory nature of qualitative research, these questions were viewed as the initial framing questions. As the meanings and actions of the participants within this study were observed, recorded and analyzed, new aspects of these questions emerged as part of a typical reactive-interactive naturalistic inquiry research cycle.

Definitions

The following definitions are appropriate for terms used in this study.

Day Care Center is a facility outside of the home providing supervised daytime care for pre-school children whose parents are otherwise employed.

Pre-schoolers are children aged three and one half to five and one half.

Literature includes picture books as a genre of literature in which the text and illustrations are combined to create and extend the story. In this study picture books included picture story books, folk and fairy tales, nursery rhymes, concept books, information books and a few textless story books. Illustrated chapter books were also a form of literature to which children responded in this study.

Response is the unique and personal expression of preferences, thoughts and feelings. It is also a reflection of age and experience. For the purposes of this study, the term response indicates the expression of preferences, thoughts and feelings of young children in interaction with literature, either alone, with their peers and/ or with adults.

Play is the imitative, symbolic and socially dramatic activity demonstrated in pretend and fantasy accomplished by pre-schoolers. For the pruposes of this study play is broadly defined and is considered in specific relation to response to literature.

Approach to the Study

Ethnographic research methodology was chosen as the framework in which to study the responses of pre-schoolers to picture books in a literature ¬ich, day care setting. This methodology allowed for the importance of social context in the interactions between young children and books and permitted a

wide breadth of pre-schooler response activities to be recorded and assessed.

According to Smith (1987)

> What sets qualitative research apart most clearly
> from other forms of research is the belief that the
> particular physical, historical, material and social
> environment in which people find themselves has
> a great bearing on what they think and how they
> act (p.175).

Agar (1980) agrees with this idea when he states that ethnography

> provides a social metaphor within which richness
> and variety of group life can be experienced as it is
> learned from direct involvement with the group
> itself (p.11).

Agar (1980) goes on to say that ethnography also involves "a perspective of understanding the human situation that does not require sharp group boundaries" (p.11).   Since this study was designed for working with pre-schoolers who are seldom respectors of boundaries and given that it focused on learning from them how they set out to create meaning for their lives as well as how access to books may contribute to this process, the techniques of ethnography fit the requirements of the study. These techniques included formal interviews and informal discussion sessions with the teachers, participant observation in the classroom, recorded fieldnotes and weekly summaries, and video taping.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The first limitation of this study is lack of generalizability to a large population of parents, teachers and pre-schoolers. This lack is reflective of the nature of qualitative research. While some of the conclusions may provide useful information about how young children respond to literature and how they go about creating meaning for their lives, the results as a whole can not be generalized to other young children. This study was intended to explore the literary response behaviors of particular pre-schoolers in a particular setting. I have attempted to present as much detail as reasonably possible about the phenomena under study. This 'thick description' will allow readers to make judgements for themselves about the representativeness of this setting and the prospects of generalizing to other settings.

Time was also another important consideration. Due to my teaching schedule and travel time limitations it was not possible to be in the setting on a full time basis. The study was done over a twelve week period and covered approximately 170 hours of participant observation. These hours covered the times of the day when the most interactions between books and children occurred as well as much of the free play time. In addition, I spent several days observing in the extended day (3:00 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.) part of the day care program. I provided validation

through informal discussions with the teachers in the setting as well as with an outside reader and a faculty member.

Another limitation is related to the small class size. To avoid unnecessary disruption to the classroom, I entered the setting and completed all the data collection and analysis alone. The subjects are representative of a range of ethnic and cultural groups as well as a variety of socioeconomic levels, yet it is not possible to determine if each subject was 'typical' of others in the same group or level.

Another limitation has to do with the lack of parental input. This was not a focus of the study. Parents were not approached for personal or family interviews. The parents of all of these children were either employed full time or were students. Their lack of time and scheduling difficulties made it impossible to include home contexts in the study. Some informal discussion did occur when the parents delivered or picked up their children at the center.

Finally, the present study reveals my personal frame of reference and theories of the world as well as those of the participants. Researchers are subject to distortions in observations, anxieties and personal affinities for certain types of data (Schwartz and Schwartz, 1969). Other researchers may well have collected data in different ways and drawn different conclusions about the meaning of that data. This limitation was

partially overcome by the verification of data through informants from diverse perspectives. The abundance of data at least partially compensates for the element of researcher bias.

Summary

This study was designed to research the responses of pre-schoolers to literature in a setting rich in both literature interactions and adult interest and support. Its main focus was on the possibilities of pre-schoolers creating and exploring meaning through response activities and their imaginative play. Qualitative research techniques were used to observe, record and analyze these possibilities.

The remainder of this dissertation will report the methodology and findings of the study. Chapter II will present a discussion of the related research and theory. A description of the methods and procedures used to complete the study will be found in Chapter III. Chapter IV contains a description of the context in which the study was done. A description of the response behaviors of the pre-school children is the basis of Chapter V. A discussion of how secondary world are created and the meaning making possibilities inherent within them is contained in Chapter VI. Chapter VII summarizes the findings of this study and then suggests implications of the study and possibilities for further research.

CHAPTER II

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following is a selective review of literature relevant to the stated research questions. Literature concerned with various aspects of play theory and response to literature theory will be discussed.

Play Theory

The spontaneous, imaginative play of very young children has long been a source of delight and fascination for parents, grandparents and doting aunts and uncles. It has also been a rich area of interest and study for educators and psychologists.

Historically, children, especially royal children, were viewed only as miniature adults waiting for the passage of time and physical growth to achieve status in society. Interest in children and their activities as separate from adults and adult behaviors began to be apparent in the seventeenth century, when themes of childhood began to appear in the artistic and literary genes of the day. Major artists of the time such as Rubens, Van Dyck and Lebrun began to make children and their activities the center of the family portraits they painted. Descriptions of children began to appear more frequently in family journals and letters. Early

educational theorists such as Froebel (1782-1852) and Pestalozzi (1746-1827) were sensitive to the importance of early childhood experiences to human development. Both recognized the important role of play in early childhood education and made suggestions and accommodations for its systematic use.

Over the centuries numerous and varied theories and ideas about play and its role in human growth have developed. Some (Groos, 1901) felt that children's play was practice and rehearsal for adult living skills, or the working out of ancient rituals of the savage (Hall, 1906). Others (Spencer, Schiller in Singer, 1973) have seen play as the simple manifestation of the excess energy often prevalent in childhood. Growth and exploration in the various fields of psychology in the twentieth century have expanded modern concepts of play in child development. The psychoanalytical theories of Sigmund Freud (1932, in Singer, 1973), Buhler (1930, in Singer, 1973) and Anna Freud (1937, in Singer, 1973) represented play as an attempt on the part of the child to satisfy, at least parially, such basic drives as hunger, thirst and sex, to resolve conflicts and wishes. Most of these models, however, were concerned primarily with the pathological forms of behavior and as such they tended to illuminate and emphasize the special features of disturbance and anxiety as it manifested itself in play.

One prevalent model of play theory focused on play behavior as a striving for competence and self actualization.

Erikson (1963) felt that if infants' first use of things from the outside world was successful then the pleasure in the mastery of things, both objects and phenomena, built confidence and trust in their own ability to create reality for themselves.

Competence and mastery was also a strong theme in the study of children's play, games and chants done by the Opies (1959 and 1969). They found that the acting out of specific parts and definite stories in children's pretend games provided possibilities for improvisation and strong involvement. Here there was room for thought and activities that called for exploration of mastery, fantasies, and the children's own ideas of the meaning of fear, death, and evil.

Other major theories considered play from a basically cognitive viewpoint. Studies done by Clark & McClelland (1953), Atkinson & Lowell (1953) and Tompkins (1962, 1963) explored the strong interrelationship between information processing and individual personality as manifested in play. Guilford (1967, in Singer, 1973) decided that play behavior developed from and further extended two specific cognitive processes which he saw at work in children. He labeled these processes convergent and divergent. Convergent was defined as a process that involves activities in which the ultimate final decision is a single response about which society is in agreement, such as 2+2=4. Divergent was defined as a process that involves activities in which each

individual is capable of generating a variety of novel responses which may or may not overlap those with which society agrees.

One of the best known modern play theorists is Jean Piaget. Piaget, a developmentalist, viewed children as active learners constructing their own representations of the world. He saw play as the fundamental method children use to integrate new information gradually into their limited experiential background (Piaget, 1962). Piaget posed two characteristics of children's modes of experience and development: accommodation and assimilation.

Accommodation was children's attempts to imitate and interact physically with the external environment. According to Piaget, accommodation developed out of infants' creation of sensorimotor representations in their minds. For instance, the children's representation of their mothers or of other nurturing adults came from all the sensorimotor activities such as nursing, feeding, warmth, cuddling, soft soothing sounds, etc. that children associate with mothers as they pay attention to and fulfill the children's needs.

Assimilation was children's attempts to integrate these externally derived precepts and motor activities into the relatively limited number of schemata available to them at any particular age and developmental stage. Assimilation developed as the sensorimotor representations (acquired in accommodation)

became symbols of the children's experienced environment and as the children used them to perform early internal actions. Assimilation was children's developing ability to manipulate these collections of symbols in cooperation with their activities in the external world, i.e. play activities such as feeding dolls, playing house or playing super heroes.

It was Piaget's contention that assimilation was the dominant factor in play and that it was through assimilation that children find or create meaning for their life experiences. He also felt that such symbolic functioning was only possible as a result of this union between actual or mental representations of absent models and the meanings provided by various forms of assimilations. Such a union was the result of 'equilibration,' which he defined as a dynamic and powerful force which brought about resolution between assimilation and accommodation processes so that new and higher assimilation could take place. Piaget contended that language, as a collection of symbols, only became possible as a result of this union. He saw language as only one of the possible symbolic representations of thought and believed that, in itself, language was not the origin of thought. He saw language as a social invention external to children although tied to the internal schema of thought. For him language was disassociated from actions and objects. In contrast to language, Piaget saw other forms of symbolic representation such as symbolic, imaginative play being internally invented by children

as a personal, individual means of representation. It was his theory that all learning is a function of maturing development and he placed less emphasis on the part of social interaction in learning than on the developmental process.

On the other hand, L. S. Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner, who also viewed children as active creators in their own learning processes, contended that social interaction was as important as biological processes in learning. For Bruner, language was the primary source of cultural intrepretation and regulation. He saw the joint activity (play) occurring between mothers and infants as the key social interaction that brought about the development of both language and cognition. He saw this mother/child interaction occurring primarily in familiar play and games such as Rock-a-Cock Horse and Peek-a-Boo that were the ritualized and predictable formats invented and shared between parents and children. These games allowed the mother and infants to share interchangeable roles and "often provide the first occasion for the children's systematic use of language with an adult" (Bruner, 1983, p.45). Play of this nature gives the children their first "opportunity to explore how to get things done with words" (Bruner, 1983, p. 46). So play, in Bruner's viewpoint, became a place where children could explore, without serious consequences to the self, various ways of achieving their goals, and it was here that various psychological and linguistic processes could interact, develop and mature.

learning and growth. He saw play as "thought separated from objects and as action that arises from ideas rather than from things" (Vygotsky, 1979, p.97). It was his contention that play provides a broader background for changes in needs and in consciousness.

> Action in imaginative spheres, in imaginary situations, the creation of voluntary intentions and the formation of real-life plans and volitional motives all appear in play (Vygotsky, 1979, p.102).

For Vygotsky the essence of play was in the creation of a new relation between situations in thought and in reality. An important aspect of Vygotsky's theory of play was his contention that play creates what he termed a "zone of proximal development". This 'zone' is a

> place where children always behave beyond their average age, above their daily behavior; a place where the children's thought ventures beyond the small tangible outside world (1979, p.102).

Necessary to effective learning and growth in this 'zone' was the sharing of language and activity with others, essentially adults in the trusted roles of parents and teachers willing to interact, encourage and play with the developing infant.

Vygotsky and Bruner were in agreement about the importance of social interaction with significant others as crucial not only to language development but to the development of

not only to language development but to the development of thinking; both believed that this interaction was often best accomplished through shared play activities.

However, it is the work of two other theorists which presented play behavior itself as a basic necessity to the creative growth and development of individuals and society. Both Huizinga (1938) and D.W. Winnicott (1971) saw play as an entity occurring in its own separate time and place between inner and outer reality.

Huizinga saw play as both evidence of and as taking place in a dimension which was different from 'ordinary life.' It was his contention that play had its own 'significant form,' creating "a secondary world alongside the world of nature" (in Coe, 1984, p. 23). The essence of Huizinga's contention is that the

> play structures of certain areas of human activities
> constitutes a positive, alternative dimension outside the
> range of material determinism and positivistic rationalism
> (in Coe, 1984, p. 246).

He considered that this dimension was a freedom necessary for growth and development.

It was British psychologist D.W. Winnicott who, through his extensive work with very young children, provided the broadest and most flexible interpretation of play. Winnicott (1971) felt that

play occurs in the opportunities for formless experiences and for creative impulses, both motor and sensory, that are provided and encouraged by parents, teachers and other nurturing adults (p.64).

He went on to say that "on the basis of playing is built the whole of man's experiential existence" (p.102).

Winnicott saw humans as no longer introvert or extrovert but instead as experiencing life in the area of transitional phenomena, one that allowed the interweaving of subjective and objective observation and participation. This was an area that was intermediate between the inner reality of the individual and the shared reality of the world external to the individual. This area of play was one of possibility and exploration similiar to Huizinga's 'secondary dimension' and Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development.'

Winnicott described play as a form of creativity that begins at birth and takes place first between infants and their mothers or other nurturing adults. In infants' first play, mothers and infants are perceived by the infants as merged together. The infants' views are purely subjective and because of their total dependency, the mothers are, themselves, oriented toward being the object the babies need to find for relief, for sustenance, for satisfaction and virtual survival. Soon, however, the processes of living develop in complexity for infants. Now the mothers take on a somewhat more objective existence (at least at times) for the infants. Mothers are now in a 'to and fro' position between that

"which the baby needs to find (satisfaction of her needs) and alternately being herself waiting to be found (an external means of satisfaction for the infant's needs" (p.47).

If this vital give and take relationship exists reliably, infants experience control which for them feels like a form of omnipotence, secure, trustworthy and their own. Here infants can encounter their own inner psychic needs. For instance, they are hungry or afraid and they cry to let it be known. They can also come to trust their own control of the actual world because when they are hungry or afraid and cry, mother comes and provides love and nurture. Such trust and confidence in self and mother create an intermediate area. Play begins here in this potential space between mothers and babies. Winnicott identified this as a vital area of human development and an exciting one for infants. It is exciting in the very precariousness of the interplay between inner psychic reality and the experience of control of actual objects and responses that arises in the intimacy of a reliable and nurturing relationship.

Next infants develop the capacity to be alone in the presence of someone else. Infants can play on the basis of believing that the person who loves and nurtures them is reliable and available and will continue to be available when they remember her after having forgotten her. For example, infants play contentedly in the crib while the mother is occupied about the room or in an adjoining room. This is the infants' use of the

26

mother as the original 'transitional object,' their first 'not-me' possession. In this first use of a transitional object occurs the initial use of symbol and the earliest experiences of play.

When the infants have thus begun to explore the 'me' and the 'not-me' phenomena of their lives and have found a reliable relationship between the two they can begin to separate them. They begin to avoid or to substitute for the pain and frustration of separation by filling in the space between (referred to by Winnicott as 'the third area') with creative playing and symbolic use.

From here the infants, through their experiences of trust, reliability and control in the relationship with their mothers, can allow and enjoy an overlap of two play areas; theirs and that of their mothers. At first the mothers play with the infants by fitting themselves into the baby's play, then the mothers introduce their own ideas of playing and begin to pave the way for extended 'playing-together' possibilities. For both the children and the adults, the opportunities to encourage, to enrich, to explore and to learn lie in this overlapping play area.

It is important to emphasize that if the experience between the mothers and the infants is one of reliability, acceptance and nurture, then this potential space, this 'third area' of play, is open and free and the infants can fill it with rich products of their own creative imaginations. If, however, the experiences between

mothers and infants are not trustworthy and the infants come to fear the transitional object (the mother), then the infants lose the possibilities of the play area and of creating meaningful symbols. It must also be remembered that the experiencing of this 'third area' varies considerably according to the life experiences of the babies in relation with the mothers.

In addition, play always contains the potential to become frightening. Responsible persons must be available when children play although the adults do not have to actually enter into the play. Winnicott contended that it is through the organization of games, both by adults and children, that societal attempts are made to forestall or control the frightening aspects of play and of life.

Winnicott also said that while adults express the infinite subtleties of their living experiences through language, art, music or work, children express theirs through their play. What adults do with words, paint, clay, music, design, etc., children do with the play activities. These play activities hold the seeds of cultural life and activity. Winnicott saw play as a creative experience, a basic form of living that is universal and that is facilitating to health and growth. Play is the experience that leads to group relationships and to sophisticated forms of communication. He believed that cultural experiences are in direct continuity with play, and are in fact the play of those who have not yet totally organized their games.

Winnicott's main thesis concerning play is based on four premises which can be summarized as follows:

1. Cultural experience begins with the creative living first manifested in children's play. Both children's play and cultural experience are located in a potential space and their environment.

2. Individual use of this 'third area' is determined by life experiences which take place in very early existence. The infant and young children have the maximum intensity of the experience in this 'third area.'

3. This potential space or 'third area' happens only in confident trusting relationships. This 'third area', whether between baby and mother, child and family or individual and society, continues to depend on experiences which lead to trust.

4. This 'third area' is vital to individuals and to society for it is here that humans experience creative living and continue to strengthen, validate and enrich their culture.

According to Winnicott it is in this 'third area' where humans do their most creative living: thinking things over,

experimenting with possibilities, dealing with decisions, considering consequences and creating meaning for our lives.

This 'third area' of play is most observable in the lives of young children. Most adults see play as an accepted way for children to develop psychologically, emotionally, and cognitively. As a result children are usually allowed and encouraged to express their thoughts, ideas and images in play activities. Some of these play activities occur as a result of and in response to literature.

Literature, in general, is an important and prominent area of our culture; an area about which we have strong ideas and expectations. Literature touches our inner psychic reality by evoking and stimulating our conscious and unconscious emotions. Literature also contributes to the outer reality which we share with others by presenting us with other possibilities for living. In these ways literature provides us with a place and opportunity to explore our own thoughts and ideas as well as those of others and allows us the opportunity to use these thoughts and ideas to create meaning. Literature is one way we can "improvise upon our representations of the world" (Britton in Meek, 1979, p.108). As such then, literature becomes one of the valuable places and opportunities for play.

Several researchers have given attention to specific learning possiblities inherent in children's interactions with and response to literature.

For example, Marilyn Cochran-Smith (1984) contended that:

> children's early experience with books and stories can enrich their experience outside of books can play a part in language and concept development, influence later attitudes toward reading, and stimulate and broaden young children's imaginative behavior (p.12).

Dorothy Strickland and Denny Taylor(1986) looked at storybook reading in light of the opportunity for literacy acquisition it provides. In Family Storybook Reading (1986), they described it this way "Family storybook reading is a special time when families grow together, as parents and children learn about one another and the world in which they live" (p.5). They added: "When parents read stories to their children they are creating a safe, warm place for language and literacy learning" (p.5). In Books Before Five (1984), Dorothy White pointed out that "the experience makes the book richer and the book enriches the personal experience" (p. xvii). Dorothy Butler, in Cushla and her books (1975), described her deep conviction of the power of text and illustration to make connections for a handicapped child cut off from the rest of the world.

Don Holdaway (1979) was the first to talk describe what he called a "literarcy set" which children develop as they interact with books. Such a set includes a positive attitude toward books, an understanding of the sense-making possibilities of stories, the stability of print to tell the identical story over and over again as well as the structure and form of written language itself. He felt that all of this learning occurred at the pre-reading stage and seemed important for future success in reading itself.

Catherine Snow's studies have also focused on the processes of literacy acquisition resulting from the shared experience of book reading between adults and children. She stated that in western, literate societies the "situation of book reading is a frequent and powerful source of learning about language" (in Teale and Sulzby,1986, p.118) and further that "reading books with a parent provides a child with an opportunity to learn the rules for reading," what she and Anat Ninio termed the "contracts of literacy" (in Teale and Sulzby, 1986, p.119), Ninio used Werner and Kaplan's terminology to talk about picture book sharing. Picture books help the child to establish a new mode of treating the world as 'objects of contemplation' rather than 'things of action' (in Teale and Sulzby, 1986, p. 119) She found that book reading behavior was to a high degree 'routinized'; that is, "it is made up of a small number of steps that follow a predictable sequence" (in Teale and Sulzby, 1986, p.119). Both Snow and Ninio concluded that "joint picture book reading helps

young children to internalize some basic skills and concepts important for true literacy" (in Teale and Sulzbly, 1986, p. 121).

Denny Taylor in her work on emergent literacy (1982, 1983, 1988) explained and described how "patterns of family literacy are constantly evolving to accommodate the everyday experiences of both parents and children" (in Teale and Sulzby, 1986, p. 139). Taylor described ways in which the "children themselves, as integral members of a social organization, use print as one medium through which they master their surroundings, build new social concepts and establish new environmental relationships" (in Teale and Sulzby, 1986, p. 140).

Shirley Brice Heath addressed the possibility of imagination being the process by "which readers and writers express ideas about objects, actors and events that they have never before wholly experienced" (in Teale and Sulzby, 1986, p. 156-157). Heath stated that

> both use imagination to separate themselves from the natural world; every work of imagination is an analogue made up of only the fragments of life available to the imagination of the co-creators of text - the reader and the writer (in Teale and Sulzby, 1986, p. 156).

However, it is in the area of response that more concrete connections can be made be made between literature and play and the opportunities each offers for the creation of meaning.

Literary Response Theory

Response in general consists of the unique and personal expression of preferences, thoughts and feelings. It is also a reflection of age and experience. Response to literature demonstrates all of these general aspects.

Traditionally the interpretation of literary response was primarily based on the assumption that the text affected a rather passive reader. From the late eighteen hundreds on through the nineteen twenties and thirties, various theoretical orientations toward the nature of response were put forth. Structuralism, Formalism, New Criticism were the most prominent and all of them were based on the same assumption: the text and not the reader determines the response.

Over the years different ideas about response have been given serious consideration. I.A. Richards was one of the earliest to give voice to the idea that readers themselves actually brought a unique perspective to their reading. Such 'personal history' was a result of the individual's set of life experiences. Richards saw the worth of any literary piece to be individual, decided by "our own inmost nature and the nature of the world we live in" (Richards, 1929, p. 11). He became one of the forerunners of a

new school of literary critics which identified itself as reader-response criticism whose adherents would argue

> a poem cannot be understood apart from
> its results. Its "effects", psychological or otherwise,
> are essential to any accurate description of its
> meaning since that meaning has no effective
> existence outside of its realization in the mind of the reader
> (Tompkins, Ed.,1980, p. ix).

In her book, <u>Literature as Exploration</u> (1938), Louise Rosenblatt began to look at the interaction between the reader and the text and the contribution made by both to the process of making meaning. She asserted that it was possible to

> affirm the reader's contribution, the uniqueness of the
> literary experience and recognize its social origins and
> potential social effects (p.34).

Her theory became known as the 'transactional' theory of literary response. The term transaction implies that the reader brings to the text a network of past experiences in literature and life that contributes to the understanding of and response to what is being read. Rosenblatt saw this transaction between the reader and the text as a reciprocal process with neither the reader nor the text as passive participants.

She hypothesized two different types of transactions. The first she called an 'efferent' transaction. It is one in which the reader's focus is mainly on public or socially useful referents of

35

the text, the information needed to be kept and referred to when the reading is completed. The second transaction she called an 'aesthetic' one in which the reader's focus is on the evocation of the literary work. She defined evocation as

> the process in which the reader selects out ideas, sensations, feelings and images drawn from his past linguistic, literary and life experience and synthesizes them into a new experience, his own experience of the poem, the play, the story (in Cooper, 1983, p. 40).

Rosenblatt's transactional theory didn't attract much consideration for many years. It wasn't until 1968 with the work of James Britton that reader response began to be looked at from a similiar perspective.

Britton drew his ideas about the response to literature from his theory of language. He stated that language, whether in speaking, listening, reading or writing, can be divided into two roles: participant and spectator. The participant role uses language to get things accomplished, to deal with the actual events of the world, to meet the demands of others. The spectator role of language is a representation which provides distance from the actual world.

Britton, drawing on his own theory of language and on the work of pshychologist D. Harding, went on to describe the reader as responding to different kinds of texts in the same roles. In reading certain kinds of text readers assume a 'participant role'.

In this role readers are directly involved, they need to use the material they are reading practically to take part in the world's affairs. In reading other kinds of material, readers assume a 'spectator role'. In this role readers stand aside from the narrative to contemplate, explore and evaluate the aspects of living presented by the text. Britton saw the participant role as a way of applying our value system and the spectator role as a means of exploring and refining that same system. It was his contention that "taking up the role of spectator gives shape and unity to our lives and extends our experiences in an orderly way" (Britton, 1984, p. 325).

During this time, however, other theorists were considering different aspects of the possibility of active reader involvement in text interpretation. Simon Lesser (1957) paved the way for more psychoanalytic studies in reader response. He articulated a model of response that suggests the idea of humans using story to set forth their ideas about the origin of the universe, their relationship with the gods, their morals, goals, fears and dangers. Lesser (1957) saw literature as a way for humans to "deal with themselves at a distance" (p. 6).

Norman Holland (1975), too, saw response to literature as primarily a psychological process. He insisted that the text does not provide a simple fixed stimulus but is, instead, always changing, its re-creation being based on the input of the reader.

He stressed that a literary text embodies a familiar mental precess which transforms fantasy into conscious meaning.

Bettelheim's (1977) work on fairy tales discussed the psychological reponses of children specifically. He saw folk and fairy tales as carrying strong messages to children's minds on all levels of consciousness. These tales provide a place where children may respond to and explore the darker side of life. By fitting their unconscious fears into the conscious fantasies of these stories, children are better able to understand and cope with them.

Research work which has looked closely at responsive interaction between readers and literature in terms of what it actually is and where it happens is that done by Michael Benton in 1983. Benton described this responsive interaction as occurring in a 'secondary world'. It was his contention that such a secondary world exists in the space between the author, the reader and the text and that

> the act of reading demonstrates that the compelling power of literature lies neither just in the text or the reader but in their interaction in the 'space between' (Benton, 1983, p.69).

He felt that the single concept that writers and readers agree on is the creation of a "world," be it called "other," virtual," "alternative," "secondary" or "story." He used the ideas of Tolkien, W. H. Auden and D.W. Winnicott to explain this concept.

Tolkien had written (1966):

Children are capable, of course, of literary belief
when the story maker's art is good enough to
produce it. That state of mind has been called
'willing suspension of disbelief'. But this does not
seem to me a good description of what happens.
What really happens is that the story maker proves
a successful 'sub-creator'. He makes a Secondary
World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what
he relates is 'true'; it accords with the laws of that
world. You, therefore, believe it, while you are, as
it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the
spell is broken; the magic, or rather, the art has
failed. You are then out in the primary world again,
looking at the little abortive Secondary World from
the outside" (Tolkien, 1966, p. 36).

Auden's view is similar:

Present in every human being are two desires, a desire to
know the truth about the primary world, the given world
outside ourselves in which we are born, live, love, hate and
die, and the desire to make new secondary worlds of our
own or if we can not make them ourselves, to share in the
secondary worlds of those who can (In Meek, 1977, p. 49).

Benton, himself, went on to give structure to this concept of

a secondary world of literary experience and response. (See

figure # 1) His structure of the secondary world was based on

three dimensions. He saw the psychic level as conveying the

continuous state of interplay between the reader's conscious and

unconscious, psychic distance as conveying the continuous

fluctuations in the degree of involvement with the text, and the

psychic process as conveying the temporal fluctuations between

conscious

hallucination

p

r   PSYCHIC DISTANCE

e

c   involvement

starting ←—retrospection ——o——— anticipation—→ ending

                    "R" = Shifting Viewpoint

detachment   s

               c   PSYCHIC PROCESS

               i

disengagement o

               u

               s

               PSYCHIC LEVEL
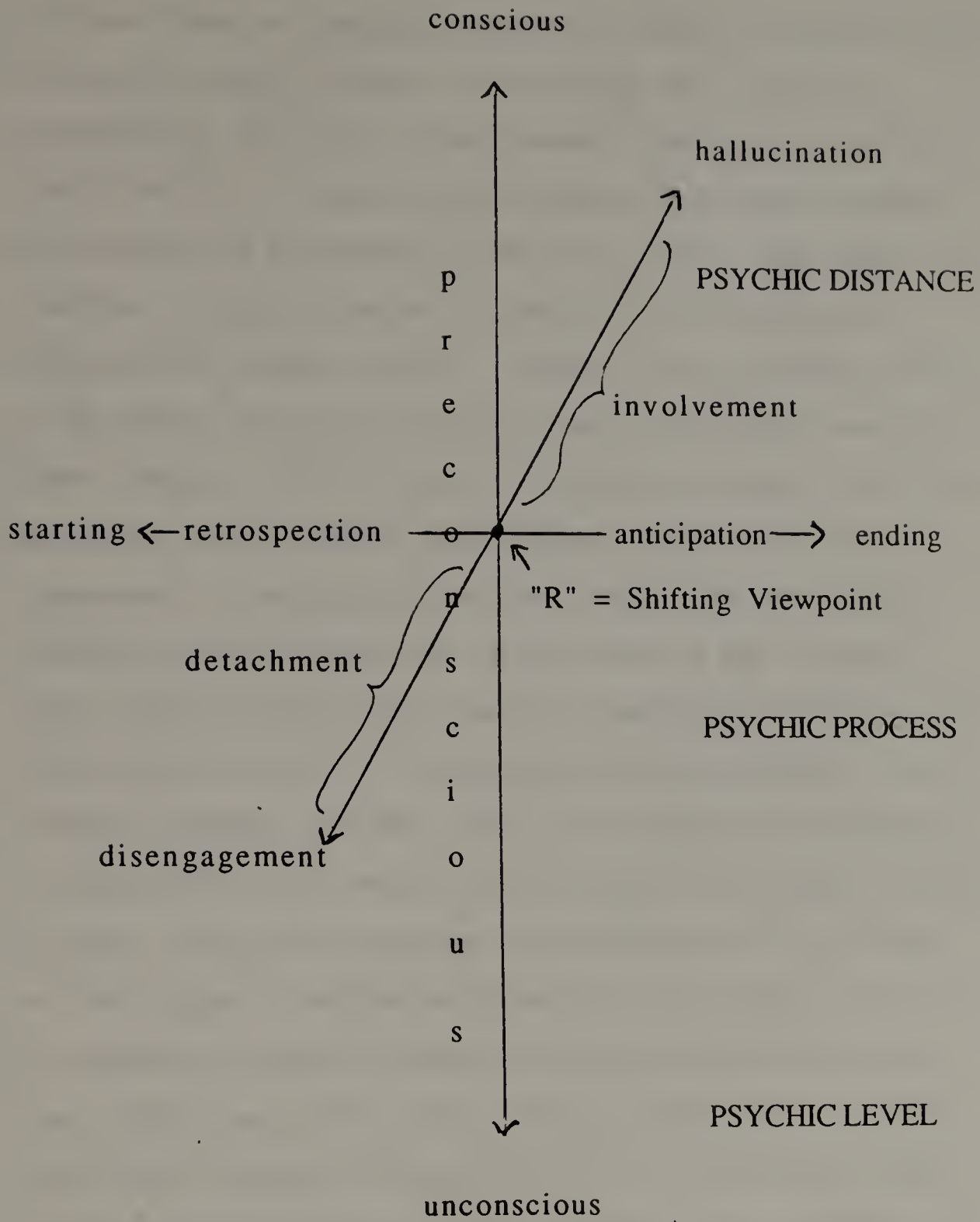
unconscious

FIGURE I

Benton's 'Secondary World'

40

continuous state of interplay between the reader's conscious and unconscious, psychic distance as conveying the continuous fluctuations in the degree of involvement with the text, and the psychic process as conveying the temporal fluctuations between retrospection and anticipation as the text is read. The third dimension of psychic process accounts for the experience of reading and/or writing a story. Creation of the secondary world by the reader and the text occurs at any point where these three planes intersect. This is a point of continual movement and flux determined by the reader's inner vision, memory and prior experiences, to continually create and blend ideas and details from his own living with those of the writer of the text being read. The focal point of any reading or composing act is at 'R,' the point where the text is in the process of being perceived. It is a shifting viewpoint: one that varies in the degree of involvement or detachment of the reader with the text, in the degree to which the story engages the conscious and unconscious of the reader and the degree of anticipation about what will happen next or of to continually create and blend ideas and details from his own living with those of the writer of the text being read. The focal point of any reading or composing act is at 'R,' the point where the text is in the process of being perceived. It is a shifting viewpoint: one that varies in the degree of involvement or detachment of the reader with the text, in the degree to which the story engages the conscious and unconscious of the reader

and the degree of anticipation about what will happen next or of what has happened based on the story so far.

According to Benton, belief in a secondary world was dependent on two things. The first was the ability to be 'inside,' to surrender the self to the book. The second was the recognition that this secondary world, like all others, is governed by rules. These two ideas were similar to those put forth by Winnicott in defining his 'third area' of play . The third area of play involves a surrender of the self based on the experience of trust and it is also a world effective only if governed by rules, rules first created by the trusted adult and later by the individual's own trust of self. From individual to individual secondary worlds are never identical because they are dependent on the idiosyncratic experiences of each individual as well as the different psychic experiences of each. Winnicott applied these same criteria to his 'third area' of play and creative living. Thus   literary response stands in a similar relationship to children's play. Both occur in a 'secondary world' or a 'third area' of individual and shared creation. Both are dependent on individual experience; are governed by flexible rules and offer a safe place for exploration of and experimentation in   living.

There are others who also saw the reader's response to literature as the creation of another whole world. Reading theorist George Craig (1976) explained that the compelling power of literature lies neither in the individual nor in the text but in

their interaction in what he called 'the space between.' Philosopher Suzanne Langer (1953) saw the reader as engaging with 'virtual life.' She pointed out that there is a crucial break with the actual environment that is necessary in order to make the 'virtual experience' possible and believable. She went on to stress the wholeness of this virtual world that the reader has created. She stated that "whatever our integrated response may be --- it is a response to a strongly articulated virtual experience, one dominant, whole stimulus" (Langer, 1953, p. 205).

Tolkien, Craig, Langer, Winnicott and Benton looked at this 'third area' of play and cultural experience, this 'secondary world' of reader's response to literature, in basically the same ways. Here they saw the opportunity to explore, create and recreate the thoughts, ideas, fantasies and lives of one's self and of others. James Britton, perhaps, explained it best when he stated that

> Culture, the common pool of humanity, offers the young child witches and fairy godmothers, symbols which may embody and work upon the hate and love that are part of a close, dependent relationship: he will read of witches and tell stories of witches of his own that arise directly from his needs. In doing so he performs as assimilative task, working towards a more harmonious relationship between inner needs and external demands. It is important to provide the cultural material (including literature) on which this can flourish (Britton in Meek,1977, p.47).

During these years other researchers, too, continued to look at various aspects of reader response. The emphasis of a study done by Squire in 1964 was on trying to understand high

school students' difficulties with literary comprehension of short stories. Studies done by Purves and Rippere (1968), and Odell and Cooper (1976) looked at ways of classifying and analyzing the written response of adolescents in order to understand their comprehension of the literary text. These kinds of studies have constituted a major trend in recent response research. In general, they are based on the assumption that personal satisfaction plays a large part in individual response to literature. Mostly these studies were based on specific written or oral statements specifically solicited. The majority of literary response studies have been done with adolescent or college age students. Only recently do we find a comparable body of research studies which analyzes the responses of young children to literature.

Traditionally research studies that involved the literary response of young children have had their reading interests, choices and preferences as the major emphasis. Early studies covered descriptions of preferences (Terman and Lima, 1926; Broening, 1934); preference differences between boys and girls (Thorndike, 1941; Rankin, 1944); reading interests (Norvell, 1950, 1958; Peltola, 1965) and response to specific kinds of content (Monson, 1968; Terry, 1974). These studies, while useful to teachers and librarians in choosing books for children, did not provide the opportunity or the means for allowing children to explain why they liked what they did or what it meant to them.

Several studies done in the 1970's suggested that children's interests and preferences might be better suggested in response patterns to stories that reflect their own conceptions of the world. Favat (1977) analyzed the possible connections between fairy tales and the thinking of children ages six to eight. He used Propp's (1968) scheme of thirty-one functions or relationships between characters and actions occurring in fairy tales and compared them to developmental information based on Piaget's (1965,1967, 1968) studies. He felt that the similarities between the two accounted for the often strong preference of primary grade children for fairy tales. Schlager (1978) contrasted the content of popular Newbery Award books with the content of less popular Newbery Award books to determine the characteristics of the books children read the most.

These studies, while somewhat limited in approach, were beginning to consider some of the ideas that Rosenblatt (1978) was advocating. Rosenblatt's idea that the process of response is contained in the interaction between what the reader brings to the text and what the text provides for the reader is reflected here in the idea that the cognitive and psychological development of children contributes to the comprehension of literary meaning as well as to the children's ability to use narrative to create meaning for themselves.

Several major studies in the field of cognitive psychology and specifically in the area of the development of a sense of story

have also had important implications for response research. What children expect from stories and how they use storying skill are important aspects of the response process. Sutton-Smith (1978) analyzed the story-creating patterns in the folk type stories of two, three and four year olds. Arthur Applebee (1973, 1978) analyzed 120 stories told by pre-schoolers and identified six patterns of story production which gave evidence of progressive distancing from personal, immediate experience in storying as children matured. He also found that young children are more adept at retelling story detail than in talking about stories and that young children appear to move from acceptance of story characters as real people toward an understanding of the characters as made up.

Adoption and use of ethnographic research methods in educational settings have made studies of the literary responses of young children more easily accomplished. Only in the last ten years have studies using ethnographic research methods given serious consideration to the responses of primary school children. In general these have sought to establish response patterns for the purpose of helping teachers provide a rich educational experience for this age group.

Hickman (1979) found that there was a need to explore the response development of elementary school age children as well as how response occurred in real classrooms rather than in measured contexts. She used an elementary school environment.

She identified and categorized the classroom events that reflected children's experiences with literature, compared the general characteristics of response over the early, middle and upper elementary levels and gave attention to the relationships between the response events and the elements of classroom context. She found that the general response behaviors covered a broad spectrum. Children expressed interest through listening behaviors characterized by body stance, laughter, applause and chiming in on refrains. They also responded to contact with books by situational browsing, keeping chosen books close at hand and through a decided impulse to share by reading together and sharing discoveries in the text content. They also responded orally. They would use structured story forms in retellings or in their own storytellings, in discussion statements that gave clarification or were repetitive and in free comments that showed their individual preferences, feelings, familiarity with and references to the content.

Synthesis of body movement and language occurred in their dramatic play as well as in child and teacher initiated drama. They also responded to literature by creating things: pictures using different media and techniques, three dimensional constructions (clay, dioramas) and miscellaneous products such as games, displays, collections and cookery. Finally, response was expressed in written form by their restatement or summarization

of stories, writing about literature and in both their deliberate or indirect use of literary models in their story writing.

Basic response behaviors were found at all age levels. The differences appeared in the frequency of the occurrences and in how the responses were executed. The youngest children (K-1) in the study were more likely to browse through books than to read them intently. This age group also used more motor response behavior to express themselves. Evidence of dramatic play occurred only at this level and children tended to rely primarily on generic characters or character prototypes in their dramatic play and composition. In their picture making as well as in their oral responses they tended to 'collect' items and ideas rather than place them in the framework of relationships.

In this study Hickman drew several important inferences concerning the response of children to books. She strongly suggested that children need the opportunity to talk about books with each other as well as with the teacher. She felt that children also need the opportunity to respond to literature in a wide variety of ways, nonverbal as well as verbal. She saw some types of behavior as being especially common at a particular age level and felt that responses reflected the children's level of thinking and language development. She found these children exhibited a strong concern with "making sense" -- achieving a fit between the story as they saw it and the world as they knew it. Hickman also found a strong correlation between context and the various

patterns of response. In a rich literary environment, with strong teacher interaction, response was broad ranging, overlapping with other areas of the children's lives.

Her identification and categorization of the response behaviors of young children was especially salient. Previously the majority of response studies have been done with high school or college age groups using comparable texts, primarily because this older age group can already read fluently as well as write and speak articulately about what they have read. Hickman's study validated behavior beyond the limited possibilities of writing and speaking and pointed the way for future studies being done of young children's response behaviors.

A study done by Kiefer (1983) looked at the response of first and second grade children to picture books. Kiefer was particularly interested in the variety of responses and the context of those responses in light of picture books as a total art form: text and illustrations. She noted a wide variety of response behaviors in the ways these children chose, looked at, and talked about picture books. She also documented other responses outside of these literary ones. She found that children often chose to act out stories, either the actual ones that had been read to them or their own versions of them. Children also made pictures, murals, dioramas and displays centered on the stories they had heard. There were also various physical responses to picture books. Many children would sing or hum or help with

choral reading of a predictable part of a story. They also created appropriate sound effects for stories. They often wanted to touch or hold the book being read. Often, too, in their silence and intense attention they displayed their pleasure and reflection.

The idea that context had a strong effect on the responses was also documented in this study. The setting for her study made available an extensive collection of picture books varied in both style and genre. The class structure allowed the children to have freedom to read and talk together often. Peer interactions often influenced book choices and initiated book discussions. Kiefer found that teachers played a key role in shaping response. Children demonstrated strong interest in the books the teacher had chosen to read and discuss with them. The teacher could direct attention to aspects of the book that the children had not been aware of before and could help the children make connections between the books and their own experiences.

Kiefer's study, as Hickman's, gave serious consideration to response behaviors beyond those considered 'literary' , i.e. written and/or oral. Both studies validated the physical behaviors typical of children of this age as well as the artistic and imaginative possibilities of interaction with picture books. Both Hickman and Kiefer stressed the important effect of context on these interactions.

A study done by Hepler (1982) concerned the responses of fifth-sixth graders in a classroom setting. Hepler stressed the importance of the 'community of readers' as a social network involved in the responses of this age group. Such a 'community' atmosphere influenced book choice, discussion and changes in attitude over time.

Lehr (1985) also conducted a response study with young children. The purpose of her study was to characterize the nature of the children's sense of theme in narrative as it develops across three age levels. She was particularly interested in how children come to represent meaning in their encounters with books and how certain contexts might facilitate this type of learning. She found a strong correlation between levels of thematic awareness and exposure to story. In her opinion, opportunities to listen to, read and discuss books and the ideas contained in them contribute greatly to children's world knowledge and help develop their ability to create meaning for themselves.

Several longitudinal studies focusing on one or a few children have kept track of a broad range of data. Case studies done by White (1954), Bissex (1980), Crago and Crago (1982) and Butler (1975) have looked at individual children's interactions with books from very early childhood through school age. They have given consideration to the children's developing curiosity about authorship, their concern for 'real' or 'true' stories, their

understanding and expectations of illustrations and the development of specific reading and writing skills.

In validating behavior beyond reading, writing and speaking, these response studies have opened up possibilities for studies of pre-schoolers and their responses to literature. The limited reading and writing skills of this age group do pose some problems for researchers. It is important to note, as well, that the genres of literature which young children interact with and respond to most often are those of picture books and illustrated chapter books. Both of these, but especially picture books, present the child with two organized symbol systems to deal with, the linguistic one of the text and the pictoral one of the illustrations which combine to create a whole artistic entity. Pre-schoolers are a rich source of behavior in another area as well, that of spontaneous, imaginative play, which presents yet another symbol system. Much of the response of very young children to the world as well as to literature is embedded in play. Here the "very young express themselves, respond to, explore and extend their experiences and create meaning for themselves (Huck, Hepler and Hickman, 1986).

Thus, it appears that research in response to literature encompasses various kind of theories: those based solely on the psychological effect of the text on the reader; those that give credence to the possibility that the reader as well as the text contributes to the interpretation of meaning; and those whose

52

serious emphasis is on the even broader interaction of text, reader and context.

Summary

The literature explored and considered for this study covered theory and research on children's play behavior and on response theory.

Theories about play behavior are also diverse. They encompass the possibilities of play as the working out of savage tendencies, as satisfaction of basic psychic drives, as motivation for cognitive, psychological, and physical skill development. They include a broad interpretation of play as a basic, on-going form of creative living for both children and adults, which begins in infancy, continues through adulthood and involves each individual in continual interaction with and response to their environment. Such interaction and response is described as occurring in a 'third' area' between the individual's inner psychic reality and the outer reality shared with the rest of the world. This particular definition of play provides for an extensive place and means of exploring the possibilities of our thoughts and ideas as well as those of others. It provides many opportunities to create meaning for ourselves, to make sense of our world and to find ways to live culturally rich and satisfying lives.

Response theory has covered a wide range of possibilities. Many early studies, especially those having to do with young

children, emphasized their reading interests, choices and preferences. Others looked at how comprehension of literary text was accomplished. Most of these early studies were based on the assumption that the text and not the reader determines the response. Gradually new ideas were explored. Response came to be seen as an 'transaction' between reader and text, a transaction that involved the reader's life experience as well as the text being read. Response was thought to take several forms depending on the type of text being read and the experience of the reader and his needs. One theory, in particular, sees response as occurring in a 'secondary world,' a place separate from inner psychic reality and from the shared outer world. This 'secondary world' of response is a place of trust and acceptance, a place in which to explore one's own ideas and those of others and to create and extend meaning for our lives.

This dissertation will use these areas of research to discover some of the ways young children go about this process of creating meaning for their lives. The response behaviors of pre-schoolers in the context of a day care setting have been described, categorized and examined in the hope of discovering evidence of the 'third area' of play and the 'secondary world' of response as children make meaning for their lives.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The exploratory nature of this study strongly suggested the use of qualitative methodology. Both philosophically and methodologically, ethnographic procedures were appropriate to address the research questions and the practical aspects of data collection in a pre-school/day care setting. The decision to use a qualitative perspective guided the subsequent research design, data collection procedures and the selection of instruments and techniques.

Ethnography, as part of the broader field of qualitative research, is richly diverse, offering a variety of data collection possibilities, a deliberate sensitivity to context and the opportunity to experience and learn from the point of view of the selected population.

> What sets qualitative research apart most clearly from other forms of research is the belief that the particular physical, historical and social environment in which people find themselves has a great bearing on what they think and how they act (Smith, 1987, p. 175).

Qualitative research has grown out of many diverse fields such as psychology, anthropology and sociology and defies simple description. Research work falling under a variety of labels (e. g. ethnomethodology, constitutive ethnography, ethnosemantics, cognitive anthropology) has as its basis, the notion of context

sensitivity. Ethnography, as part of this broader field of qualitative research. provides a "social metaphor within which richness and variety of group life can be experienced as it is learned from direct involvement with the group itself" (Agar, 1980, p. 11).

Ethnography also involves a "perspective of understanding the human situation that does not require sharp group boundaries" (Agar, 1980, p. 29). In addition, the researcher's role would be one of participant observer or of "one who is to be taught: (Lofland,1971, p. 101). This study was designed to be done with pre-schoolers who are seldom respectors of boundaries and one of my major goals was to learn from these pre-schoolers how they set about creating meaning for their lives as well as how their relation to literature contributes to this. I found ethnographic methodology appeared to fit the requirements to accomplish this.

Qualitative research, ethnography in particular, will be defined first in this chapter. Next, the decisions concerning the choice of setting and population as well as their characteristics will be presented. The research design, including the research cycle, the role of the researcher, methods of data collection and sampling procedures will be discussed. Finally, a description of the analysis process is included to document how final conclusions were determined.

Qualitative Research Defined

Bauman defines ethnography as

the process of construction through direct personal observation of social behavior, a theory of the working of a particular culture in terms as close as possible to their universe and how they organize their behavior within it (1972, p.157)

Sanday says much the same thing, describing ethnography as a "way of systematically learning reality from the point of view of the participant" (1982, p. 251). Considering the limited literacy skills of pre-schoolers to articulate their experience of or with books, I had to look at their environment quite broadly and include as much of their social interactive behavior as was relevant. It was necessary to establish, from their point of view, a valid reason for being involved in their daily living. Lutz sees ethnography as centering "on the participant observation of a society or culture through a complete cycle of events that regularly occur as that society interacts with its environment" (1981, p. 52).

Agar's contention that "ethnography involves a rich collection of different kinds of information and sentiment and the relations among them" (1980, p.194) and his statement that "ethnographers have invented numerous methods and approaches to their research settings" (1980, p.11) opens up

many possibilities for data gathering and anlysis that are useful in working with very young children. Agar's description of ethnographic methodology as being a dialetic instead of a linear one is also helpful. He describes the ethnographic process as "not simply one of data collection" (1980, p. 22) but rather as a process

> rich in implicit theories of cultures, society, and the individual and one that is accomplished by collecting, observing, participating, analyzing, then going back to the setting and checking to see if the analysis holds true and then repeating the process (Agar, 1980, p.9).

Ethnography, then, presents me with the theory and the methods to work with pre-schoolers on their own terms. Here are the ways to observe and work with young children in a natural setting familiar and ordinary to them. Here is the opportunity to learn from them what is important to them and how they go about learning it.

The Population and Setting

Selection

This study took place in the Green Ridge Day Care Center, which is located on the campus of a large northeastern university. This setting was chosen for several reasons. I had completed three pilot studies of the responses of young children to picture

books. The first two studies had been done in a nursery school and a first grade classroom in a public school in a small, industrial community in New England. The third had been done in the Green Ridge Day Care Center. All of these studies had been done in the eighteen months preceeding this study. The settings of the first two studies had not provided either the atmosphere or the opportunity for extensive response research. Both settings were strongly curriculum oriented and had highly structured routines. Interactions with books in these two settings had been on a very formal and limited, basis. Children in these two settings had access to books only at very specific times; i.e., a fifteen minute story time in the nursery school and during free time, when their work was all finished, in the first grade. The class size in these settings was high as well; twenty-two children/two teachers in the nursery school and twenty-seven children/one teacher in the first grade.

Green Ridge Day Care Center, on the other hand, had only thirteen children in each classroom with three teachers and two or three part time aides. All of the children were members of the classroom on a daily basis, ensuring a more or less consistent population.

The routine at the day care was flexible with much time for free play. It also provided many opportunities for the children to make their own choices for activities. Interactions with books were an integral part of this classroom, both philosophically and routinely. Children in this classroom were provided with a wide

exposure to books. There were many shelves of books throughout the room. Books were openly displayed on shelves and counter tops. The collection was varied and often changed or added to from the head teachers's own collection or by borrowing from the public library. Throughout the day, there were many opportunities for interaction with books. 'Books' was a consistent daily option for choice time. Often the daily, group circle time involved books in some way. Specifically, books were read just before lunch, just before nap and again in the late afternoon. Any child was welcome to spend free time interacting with books as well. In addition, there was usually an adult available to read to an individual child or a group of children on request.

The philosophy of this day care center was one of belief in and respect for young children's abilities to make the most of a rich environment. Opportunities for growth in emotional, psychological cognitive and physical areas were many and varied and were made as individual as possible. Thus, the opportunities to interact with books were extensive, encouraged and always available. Such interactions tended to grow out of the interests and needs of the children and were not totally teacher imposed.

Setting

This day care center was housed in a building at the southern end of the campus. It consisted of two floors. Each floor had two classrooms areas with thirteen children assigned to each area. Each are was somewhat separated from the other by

bookcases and shelving units. There was, on occasion, some visiting back and forth by the children between one area and another. The classroom in which I worked was in the basement. It contained a housekeeping area, a large block area, a book corner and tables for activities such as writing, puzzles, small manipulatives and art activities.

This day car had two formats (see Table IV, p. 112). There was a core day program when all of the children were there. This ended at approxiamately 3:30 p.m. each day. Then there was an extended day program for the children who needed to stay until 5:30 p.m. Various children left during this ninety minute time period, depending on the parents' schedules. Consequently, the late afternoon story reading was not always consistent and was frequently interrupted. However, I spent four individual, separate days involved with the extended day program.

Population

There were thirteen full time child members of this classroom. They were representative of several cultures and ranged in age from three and one half to five years of age (See Table 1, p. 62). In general, these children came from middle class homes where both parents worked or where one parent worked and the other was a student at the university. Attendance was financed on a sliding scale and several of the children came to the day care under the Title 20 program. The children were given pseudonyms for the purpose of this study.

TABLE 1

Child Participants

Name	Gender	Age	Racial/Cultural Background
Mikki	female	4 1/2	White, Isreali
Josh	male	4	White, American
Will	male	5	White, American
Jack	male	4	White, American
Alan	male	3 1/2	White, British
Adam	male	5	White, Isreali
Eli	male	4	Black, American
Peter	male	4	Black, West African
DiAnn	female	4	White, American
Jordon	female	4	Black, American
Kerrie	female	5	White, American
Joie	female	4	White, American
Jude	female	4	White American

The classroom was managed by two full time teachers (Nora and Martha/Edmund) and at least one student aide during the school year. Both teachers held Bachelors degrees in Early Childhood Education and Nora, the head teacher, finished her Master's degree in Early Childhood Education in the year this study was done. Martha was a physically challenged young woman. The day care had hired Edmund to facilitate her independence in the classroom. Edmund also had a Bachelors degree in Early Childhood Education. In this setting, his first task was to help Martha and together they were ocnsidered one teacher. However, Edmund worked with the children in the same ways as Martha and Nora.

Gaining Entry

The initial phase of this study was quite easily accomplished. This day care is part of the university system and is amenable is accommodating research projects. Parents are always aware of this possibility and seldom have any objections. I had already done a pilot study in this classroom the previous year and was known to the head teacher. However, the child population was different from the one in the pilot study.

During this initial phase, I gained approval for the project fror the University of Massachusetts Human Subjects Research Committee and from the director and the parent advisory board

of the Green Ridge Day Care Center. In the first case, I had to complete the appropriate university form and submit it with a copy of the research proposal and and explanatory letter to the head of the Human Subjects Research Committee. In the latter case, I had to submit a brief explanation of the research proposal along with the explanatory letter, to the parents, the day care director and the advisory board. In addition, a copy of the research proposal had to be made available, in the director's office, for any parent wishing to read it. As a result of gaining these approvals, I was allowed to begin the study.

During this same period, I spent some time with Nora, the Head teacher, discussing the study and my role as a researcher in the classroom. We discussed the educational and socialization expectations of the center and how these were accomplished in this particular classroom. We articulated our individaul viewpoints and goals. These teachers had worked closely with another qualitative researcher over the previous two years and were comfortable with having a researcher in their room. The children, too, were used to having extra people in and out of the classroom. Eleven of them had had experience in this center with other researchers who wandered around, wrote things down, watched them and did some direct interacting with them.

Together, Nora and I decided that, within the classroom, my role would be similar to that of the teachers and the aides. I would be there to tie shoes, help with coats, hats, breakfast and

lunch, play games, answer questions and read stories. I would not, however, initiate activities, supervise or discipline.

At this time, too, I devised a ten question interview (Appendix A) to use formally with the teachers in this setting. The questions were discussed and approved by a member of the dissertation committee. During the first three weeks of the study, these teacher interviews were conducted, taped and transcribed. Transcriptions of the interviews were made available to the teachers for verification.

At the beginning of the study, a notebook was place on the countertop directly inside the classroom. This was looked on as a daily journal and teachers and aides were asked to record any book interactions that occurred when I was not in the setting. Parents were also welcome to make comments in the journal.

During this initial phase, I made a point of introducing myself to each parent delivering a child to the classroom, making myself available to answer any questions they had about the study and generally getting to know the parents on a casual basis.

The initial, gaining entry phase took place within a three week period at the beginning of the study in March of 1988.

Research Cycle

This study was composed of three interactive phases. These three phases took place over a period of months and each

phase was reflective of the ethnographic methods used. Each phase will be discussed separately.

Phase One

During this first phase (January-March, 1988) securing the population and gaining entry to the setting were the main tasks. An additional focus during this time period was to formulate interview questions for the teacher population. General research questions had been identified to provided a framework for further inquiry and observation. I brainstormed with another researcher who had conducted a study in this setting with one member of this teacher population, in order to formulate a set of formal interview questions. These were then presented to and edited by a member of the dissertation committee. The interviews were not pilot tested.

Other proposed data collection techniques such as photographing, audio and videotaping were also discussed with a committee member and with the teacher population and were approved. The teachers felt that no one in the setting would be inconvenienced or bothered by the presence of either video camera or a tape recorder. They did caution that it was quite possible that the setting would prove too noisy to successfully audiotape and this did prove to be the case. The teachers also gave their permission for me to add a small collection of picture books to the already existing classroom collection.

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Phase Two

Between March 7, 1988 and May 27, 1988, the second phase of the study occurred. Participant observation and data collection were the tasks of this phase (See Table II, p. 68).

On March 7, 1988, I arrived at the setting at 8:30 A.M., armed with notebooks, pens, pencils and eight picture books. No children had yet arrived so there was time for a brief talk with the teachers. I set the classroom notebook on the shelf and explained again how I hoped it would be used. I put the picture books I had brought out on the shelves as well. The children all arrived over the next ten or fifteen minutes and none of them seemed especially curious about my presence. Several of them headed for the book corner and were amenable when I offered to read to them. Later in the morning, at circle time, Nora formally introduced me to the children and briefly explained that I was there to observe and take notes and that I would read to them, help with coats, boots, lunch, answer questions and go on field trips with them for the next few weeks. The children had no questions and quickly accepted me

TABLE 2

Researcher's Weekly Schedule

DAY	TIME
Monday	8:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
Tuesday	8:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.
Wednesday	8:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
Thursday	8:00 A.M. - 10:30 A.M.

as just another female adult doing the same kinds of things others did in the setting. At choice time, several children chose books for their activity. I was sitting close to the book area to observe and was quickly pressed into service to read aloud to the group. After choice time, when the whole group went outdoors to play, I stayed in the room in order to catch up on field notes. I observed and took notes during the pre-lunch and pre-nap story times and joined the group for lunch.

A similar schedule was followed for each day of this phase of the study. On the days when I left at 10:30 A.M., the same schedule was followed until that time. I checked the class notebook on a daily basis to see if any notes had been left. If they had, I removed them, added them to my notebook chronologically and dated another page in the classroom book. I also had the occasional opportunity to talk with parents bringing their children for the day. This did not happen consistently because parents were often constrained for time or had a problem to discuss with Nora or Martha.

After the first day, it also became apparent that it would be more useful if I arrived at 8:00 A.M. instead of 8:30 A.M. Arriving at eight meant being there before any of the children arrived. This provided the opportunity to observe arrival and

parent leaving behaviors which often involved books in some way.

On the first day I also realized that two of the aides who worked in this classroom on a part time basis were former undergraduate students from a reading methods course I had taught.

On the four days when I observed in the extended day program I arrived back at the center at 3:15 P.M. and stayed until 5:30 P.M. While there, I helped the children who were leaving put on their coats and sometimes talked to parents. The extended day program accommodated children from both classrooms housed in the downstairs area of the setting. Only a few of the children from Nora's room stayed past 3:30 P.M. and only a few from the other classroom, so the the two groups were combined. Jonathan was the only teacher there and he had the help of one student aide. The children from the classroom not in the study, knew me by sight and didn't seem bothered by my presence. Some of them came to listen when I agreed to read to several of the children in my own study.

The extended day program consisted of both an indoor and an out door play time, a clean up time and a story time. I observed all of these components and took notes. In addition, I continued to help with coats, boots, clean up and snack, as well as reading to anyone who asked for a story.

This schedule was followed for the four days of participant observation in this part of the program.

During this phase, I also formally interviewed the four teachers. Nora was interviewed first, during a mid-morning break. The interview took place in the director's office. This provided a measure of privacy although there were many interruptions for phone calls and questions from other teachers. Nora was the acting director until a replacement was found for the director, who was incapacitated with an injured back. Nora's interview took approximately forty-five minutes and was tape recorded. I also took notes while the interview was in progress. The tape was later transcribed and made available to Nora.

Martha was interviewed a week later. At Martha's request, this interview took place in the classroom during the children's nap time. It took approximately forty minutes. It was conducted at a table somewhat removed from the area where the children were sleeping. It was quiet and uninterrupted. Martha, however, kept nervously putting her hand over her mouth as the interview progressed. Several questions had to be asked more than once. The interview was tape recorded but I did not take notes during this interview in order to put Martha more at ease by making eye contact and nodding and encouraging further answers and idea exchange. The tape was difficult to transcribe because Martha had spoken so softly and covered her mouth so often. Notes would have been helpful. I transcribed the tape as soon as possible after the interview in order to make use of my

memory of the discussion. This transcript was made available to Martha.

Edmund was interviewed next. This interview, also, took place in the classroom during the hour when the children went outside to play. It was a quiet atmosphere with no interruptions and took about thirty minutes. This interview was tape recorded, later transcribed and made available to Edmund.

Jonathan had agreed to be interviewed as well. Jonathan was not as often directly involved with the children in the classroom in the study except through the extended day program and filling in for the occasional absence of a teacher. He had, several times, expressed, humorously, some concern about being observed. He seemed to feel that I was there to judge his performance. We talked about this briefly and I reassured him about my role. Jonathan was interview in the classroom one morning while the children were outside playing. This interview took approximately sixty minutes. Again, it was quiet and uninterrupted. However, Jonathan was very nervous and found it difficult to get started. I turned off the tape recorder and asked if it would be easier for him to just talk. He agreed and even preferred to write his answers to some of the questions. About half way through the interview he reached over and turned the tape recorder on himself, saying as he did so, that he didn't think it would bother him anymore and it was faster. The rest of the interview was recorded. I did not take notes during

this interview in order to set Jonathan at ease. The tape was trascribed and made available to Jonathan.

During this phase of the study, I took field notes on a daily basis. These notes were kept in spiral notebooks, dated chronologically and summarized at the end of each week.

Throughout this phase of the study examples of the children's written and art work were also collected. In particular, I collected such materials as were directly related to book interactions. I also took photographs of various class projects ongoing in the room. I also photographed several of the child/book interactions that occurred. From time to time, during this phase I brought in new picture books to add to the existing collection. When I brought them in, I simply stated to the children that I had brought some new books for them and I put them on the shelves.

From the beginning of April until the middle of May videotaping occurred once or twice a week. The video unit used was a small hand-held, battery operated camera. This had the advantage of being very mobile and not cluttering up an already busy room with long electrical cords. However, it did restrict the amount of taping that could be done. I could only tape when someone else was involved with books and the children.

The days and times for videotaping in this setting were dependent on the ongoing activities in the setting. On days when a field trip was planned, the scheduling was too complicated and rushed to accomodate taping. If a teacher was absent or

73

occupied with meetings, I was often more involved in reading with the children and could not videotape. I chose to videotape only book interactions and occasional fantasy play activities that arose out of interactions with books. Approxiamately fifteen to twenty hours of videotaping were done. These tapes were transcribed and added to the field notes in chronological order.

Towards the middle of May I began to withdraw a bit from active participation in the setting in preparation for the study's ending at the end of the month. Within the setting, I spent more time observing and writing up notes than in reading to the children or helping out in other ways. The weather had improved by this time and the children spent more time outdoors involved in more active play, and somewhat less time was spent interacting with books. This made the task of leaving easier for me. This phase of the study, which involved participant observation and data collection in the setting, ended on May 25, 1988.

Phase Three

Post-site analysis, interpretation, and reporting of findings occurred during the third phase (June 1988 - May 1989). Data coding and reduction, which had begun during the second phase of the study, was continued with greater continuity and intensity. Conclusions were formulated as I moved back and forth between the data and the literature. The amount of data obtained from

the respondents, as well as the various research methodologies used, allowed for the acculmulation of different kinds of information, all of which contributed to my fuller and better understanding of how children responded to literature in this setting and how such response contributed to their process of meaning creations.

Role of the Researcher

I assumed two roles during the data collection. The major role assumed was that of participant observer, while the second and minor role was that of interviewer. Collaboration with teachers and parents was not a goal of this study, so the role of collaborator did not occur.

Participant Observer

The most useful and common role that is assumed by a researcher in naturalistic inquiry data collection from human sources is that of participant observer. As a participant observer in the setting, I could broadly observe and record the setting and the respondents as well as participate in the ordinary schedule and activities of the day. This was a particularly useful role in this pre-school setting. Another pair of hands to help, another voice to read, another ear to listen is always useful in working with a number of young children. These particular children were used to adults, especially females, coming and going in the day care setting. Mothers (and fathers) volunteered for projects and

help, different aides were there on different days, other researchers had done projects in the setting. My presence was taken quite for granted.

In addition to being involved in the activities of the setting, I could observe from a neutral, non-teacher, non-family perspective. Hopefully, as the researcher I could guard against personal bias and prejudice, though these emotions are undeniable present.

Interviewer

During data collection from human sources in naturalistic inquiry, a researcher is often also required to assume the role of interviewer. This is especially necessary when the research issues have tended to determine the selection of techniques, rather than the reverse. Such was the case with this study. A minor role of interviewer was appropriate here.

It is acknowledged that the respondents, as teachers, are giving a picture of the world as they see it. "The informant's statements represent merely the preceptions of the informant, filtered and modified by his (or her) cognitive and emotional reactions and reported through his (or her) personal verbal usuages" (Dexter, 1970, p. 120). Consequently, the interviewer receives only wl.at the informant is willing to talk about in the interview session.

Due to time and work constraints, this study did not provide for formal parental participation. No parents were

interviewed. No children were formally interviewed. The four adult teachers in the setting were formally interviewed. Throughout the study, informal questions and discussions occurred between me, the teachers, the student aides and the children. Much of this informal conversation was recorded in the field notes.

Within the roles of participant observer and interviewer, a researcher attempts to gain access to the pre-school domain without negative interference. A researcher carefully makes use of the setting in order to accomplish the study with as little disruption as possible to the respondents. This was quite easily accomplished in this study. As has been stated, the children accepted me easily, as another helping adult in the classroom. I had made it clear that I would not assume supervisory or disciplinary roles and this was not expected. The teachers called upon me to do the other kinds of things other adults in the setting did. Jonathan's initial discomfort with the study abated by the end of it. I was always available to talk to parent if they wanted and had left my work and home telephone numbers if the parents had any questions concerning the study. It would seem I built an honest and trusting relationship with all the informants involved.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred over a period of three months. I spent part of each of four days a week in the setting. (See Table

II, p. 62). This schedule resulted in fifteen hours of data collection each week for twelve weeks, in the core program setting. In addition, I spent two hours of four separate days in the extended day program setting. This resulted in a total of one hundred eighty eight hours of data collection. Due to a heavy teaching and work schedule, it was not possible for me to spend entire days in the setting. The hours spent there, however, did cover the times when the child participants had the most opportunities to interact with books: i.e., early morning free time, mid-morning choice time, and, for two of the four days each week, the story times before lunch and before lunch and nap.

Several methods of data collection were utilized. These included written and videotaped field notes, informal and formal interviews, collection of written and artistic materials and photographs of the setting, the respondents and work in progress.

Field Notes

Field notes were of two types: written notes and video tapes. Both were done during the hours of data collection in the setting. At the end of each day, I expanded the day's written notes. I later transcribed the videotapes, and added the transcriptions to the chronological order of the written notes.

The daily working field notes were kept in double entry, spiral notebooks. One side was used to record the setting and activities in which the book interactions and response behaviors were embedded. The other side was used for recording specific

conversations and discussions around the books. In addition, I often made personal comments within the context of the notes. These were put in brackets and labelled O.C., for observer's comments. I had also asked the adult participants to record any book interactions or response behaviors they observed. I left a spiral notebook on a shelf in the book area for this purpose. Field notes were not recorded in this classroom notebook on a regular basis, but one teacher and one aide did leave notes several time during the course of the study.

I also kept a personal journal of my own thoughts, emotions and reactions, as a means of working through, and clarifying, my own perspective. I compiled an inventory of the children's books most often read and/or looked at in this setting. From these field notes, thick descriptions of the setting, the participants and the response behaviors were generated. These written field notes also provided evidence of on-going analysis as I struggled with the tasks of discovering behavior categories and patterns in book interactions.

As has been stated before, video taping was done on a somewhat restricted basis. I used a hand-held, battery operated camera which provided great mobility and meant there were no long, cluttering cords for children to trip over. However, it also meant that there was no way to leave a camera up and running for long periods of time. In addition, I could only record when other adults were reading to children or children were involved with books on their own. Video taping did provide the invaluable

opportunity to view a scene again, and to reassess some of the book interactions and response behaviors in this setting. The videotapes also provided a means of checking ideas and interpretations with the other adults in the setting.

Informal Interviews

In this study, informal interviews consisted of the casual conversations and discussions that occurred throughout the hours I was in the setting. These conversations occurred with the teachers, the aides, the parents and the children. With the teachers, the casual conversation had to do with individual children, on-going projects and other activities in the room. Either the teacher or I might initiate the conversation.

The aides, two of whom were former students of mine, were more likely to come and talk to me, in free moments. Both the aides would talk about a class they had taken from me. They were more likely to make personal comments about their own lives as well. The aides usually initiated these conversations.

Casual conversations with the parents usually occurred early in the morning, as they delivered their children to the center. Often these were no more than casual greetings. One mother was especially interested in talking to me about the choice of 'picture books' for the study. This mother's interpreation of picture books, taken from the explanatory letter I had sent to all parents, led her to think I was using only wordless picture books. This was not the case, and the

misunderstanding was soon straightened out. This mother frequentlty had a short discussion with me about the books her sons read at home and the things they liked to do.

Another mother was pregnant, and her son often requested that she read him a story before she left for work. She would agree to begin it and then ask me to finish it, so she cold get to work on time. Other mothers, too, would occasionally ask me to help them get their child involved with a book, particularly when the child was upset at having her leave. Any other conversations with parents were initiated by me, and consisted of simple comments on something their child had written or made in the classroom.

By far the largest amount of casual conversation and discussion occurred between me and the children. This happened at any time and either might initiate. These discussions covered all kinds of topics from things happening at home, trips taken, visitors, requests for help with clothing, for help with writing, requests to be read to, as well as specific discussions around the books read. I attempted to record some of these discussions on audiotape, but the attempts were unsuccessful, because the setting was too noisy overall.

Formal Interviews

Formal interviews were scheduled once with each of the four teachers involved in the setting. The purpose of these interviews was to discuss their understanding of the educational

and socialization philosophy of the center, and how they each
went about actualizing this philosophy in the classroom. In
addition, I was trying to determine the individual attitudes of
each of these teachers toward their job, and the children in their
charge. The interviews also offered me an opportunity to clarify
the goals and expectations of my study for the respondents. Each
interview was centered on, but not restricted to, the particular
set of questions I had prepared (see Appndix A).

The structured interview questions remained constant over
the course of the four individual interviews and served to keep
this aspect of the study focused. These interviews were all
audiotaped, transcribed, and transcriptions made available to the
respondents on request, and were ultimately placed in an
interview folder.

Collection of Written and Artistic Materal

Throughout the study, it was possible to collect examples of
the written and artistic work of the children. These consisted of
one story dictated to me in conjunction with listening to a Davt
Crockett story on an audiotape (see Appendix F), pictures drawn
while listening to Davy Crockett and Robin Hood on audiotape
(see Appendix G) and Star Wars stories written, and pictures
drawn, for a class book and for a play script (see Appendix H). In
addition, I collected other examples of children's written work
that was not the result of interacting with books. Most of this
non-book-related material was the result of putting out picture,

letter and word stamps for the children to use. Another source of this material was the consistent writings done by Mikki.

Photographing

I took some photograpkhs on a limited basis. A series of photographs were taken of one interaction between several children and books. Other photographs were taken of class projects and displays. These included stories about themselves as babies and as they were now; story/ideas about people from various ethnic backgrounds; class dictated stories about field trips (a maple sugar farm visit, see Appendix I); art displays on torn paper designs, drawing with their feet and science projects about what kinds of things sink or float, and how to eat with their toes. These photographs provided a graphic record of the on-going events in the setting as well as a record of how the curriculm aspects of the program were accomplished.

Sampling

Goetz and LeCompte (1984) state that sampling involves "extracting from a large group some smaller portion of that group so as to represent adequately the larger group" (p. 66). Sampling is also a technique for comparing, contrasting, replicationg, cataloguing and classifying the objects and events under study. Sampling is crucial to establishing the authenticity of descriptive analysis. It is one of the means available to a researcher for

systematically seeking and discarding alternative descriptions or explanations of the observation. Sampling is also important to to the process of constructing the logical inferences of comparability and applicability (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984, p. 71).

Sampling activities occur throughout the research process. Decisions concerning sampling involve various aspects of the study, from choice of study type to procedures of collection and analysis. Sampling decisions are guided by the theoretical framework of qualitative research. Purposeful sampling can be pursued in ways that will maximize a researcher's ability to devise grounded theory that takes adequate account of local conditions, local mutual shapings and local values (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Several types of sampling were used in this study. These included setting, population, time and event.

Setting

This study was based on the purposeful selection of this setting. Preliminary pilot studies had shown this setting to be both philosophically and physically amenable to the goals of this study. It represents an environment natural to the experience of many young children. The individual classroom population was limited to a size easily observed, and easy to interact with. The socialization and educational expectations were clearly defined and honest attempts were made to accomplish them. The physical environment was set up to accommodate the needs and

84

interests of young children. In particular, this setting provided many books for children, as well as multiple opportunities to interact with, and respond to, books.

Population

The human population within this setting was also a purposeful selection. It was a small group, with a high ratio of adult to children. The children were in the age range considered "pre-school." The head teacher in this setting had many years of successful experience working with young children. In addition, she had extensive experience with researchers in the classroom. Both of these attributes were helpful to me as the researcher. One or more of the adults in this setting were available at almost any time during the day to read to children. Books were often used to accomplish the curriculum portions of the program.

Time

Due to constraints of travel and work, I chose particular time periods to be in the setting. The hours spent there were arranged to cover the majority of time during the day when book interaction were most likely to occur. These included the free play time first thing in the morning, the mid-morning choice play time, and on two of the four days a week, the story times before lunch and before nap. These times included book interactions that: (a) were initiated by either a child or an adult; (b) consisted of a single child and an adult, several children and an adult,

several children together or a single child and a book or books; or (c) that involved the whole class hearing a story read by an adult.

The four days that were spent in the late afternoon extended day program were a representative sample of the daily activities of that program.

Event

Events within the setting and involving the child and teacher population were also representative samples. Books in general were a given factor of life in this environment. I concentrated on observing and recording story reading and book sharing interactions. In addition, I especially noted instances where the areas of book response behaviors and fantasy play behaviors overlapped.

Data Analysis

Spradley (1980) states that "Analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationship among the parts, and their relationship to the whole. Analysis is a search for patterns" (p. 85). In selecting the ethnographic strategies for analysis, I was influenced by the "general purpose of the research, the natiure of the research problem or qu⌐stion, and the theoretical perspective that inform the research problem and intrigue the researcher" (Goetz and LeCompte, 1981, p. 64).

Such analytic strategies that were chosen were used throughout the study. More intense, concentrated analysis took place after the data collection was completed.

Analysis in the Field

There were several ways in which I made analysis an ongoing part of the data collection, in preparation for the more intense analysis to follow.

Narrow the Study.

In the beginning, data collection was done on a broad basis in order to explore different possibilities in setting, respondents and issues. Prior to beginning this particular research work, I had done three pilot studies concerned with the literary responses of young children. The first was done in a nursery school in a small New England industrial city, the second in a first grade classroom in a public school in that same community. Some of the children who attended this nursery school would later attend this same public school. The third pilot study was conducted in the Green Ridge Day Care Center, where the current study was also completed. The third pilot study was conducted in the same classroom with two of the same teachers, but with a different child population. From these studies, I determined that the day care center would, for reasons already stated, provide the setting most open and conducive to studying children interacting with, and responding to, books.

As the study progressed, slight changes were made in the time I was present in the setting. I found it more helpful to arrive at the center earlier than the children, gaining some opportunity for casual conversations with parents, and to observe the impact of book interactions which occurred as the children arrived.

Type of Study. Throughout the course of the various preliminary pilot studies and through reading the research literature, I decided on the type of qualitative methodology to use. The busy, noisy setting, the young age of the child population as well as constraints of time and travel suggested that an interview or a case study approach were not practical. The best strategy choice was to do a participant observation study. This kind of study allowed me access to the setting and population in any ordinary, normal adult role and allowed for focusing the study on book interactions and responses. Since parents were involved in this study in only a very minor way, they were not formally interviewed. Teachers, however, were formally interviewed once.

Analytic Questions. Broad, general questions about the literary responses of young children and the influences of setting on those responses had characterized the pilot studies. By the completion of those studies and through extensive reading of literature on response and play theory, I had been able to focus this study and formulate the specific questions I wished to

address in it. These three basic questions were reassessed periodically as this study progressed and, while the questions were somewhat expanded, there were no major changes.

Plan Data Collection In Light of Previous Observation. Field notes, interview transcripitons and videotape transcriptions were reviewed at the end of each week. This allowed me time and opportunity to make plans for the following week's participant observation. Decisions like this included amount of time spent in the setting observing particular activities or children, to go on field trips. These plans were always kept flexible, subject to change as the schedule and events of each individual day required. The majority of the days of the study were spent as the schedule indicated. One change that did occur because of the weekly review was that I made a particular effort to observe two specific children. Through reviewing my notes, it became obvious that, while the majority of the children spent many and quite lengthy periods of time involved with books, these two children seldom did. They were also the children most likey to be disruptive during book interactions with adults and other children.

Write Observer's Comments About Ideas Generated. In ethnographic inquiry, the personal comments of the observer are meant to be included. Strong feelings, ideas and insights are as important to the ethnographic record as the detailed descriptions. Many observer's comments were made in the field notes of this

study.   Within the pages of the field notes, the observer's comments were set off in brackets and labelled O.C.   The coments included my ideas about day car in general versus the opportunity for children to be at home, my struggle with the noise level in the setting, insights into the ways both adults and children in the setting used books to accomplish transitions and acquire skills.   They also included comments and questions about evidence I felt I was seeing that substantiated my belief that literary response and play occur in a secondary world.

During the end of every week, or of every two weeks, I reread all the data carefully and wrote a one or two page summary of what I thought was emerging.   Such memos provided time to reflect on the issues being raised in the setting and how they related to the study in progress.

During the course of the of the study, I continued reading the literature relevant to response, play and methodology.   Some of the ideas and theories pursued were discussed in the memos. In addition, I completed and defended my written comprehensive papers during the period the study was being completed.   One of these comprehesive papers was a review of the relevant play and response literature, and the other was a methodological review of the three preliminary pilot studies. Writing and defending these papers served to keep me deeply focused and involved with the literature and methodology important to this study.

Venting. It is an expected and accepted part of naturalistic inquiry that the researcher talk with friends, colleagues and professors about the ideas emerging from the ongoing study. As this study progressed, I talked with several graduate research classmates about methodology and analytical procedures. Two friends, in particular, were especially helpful. One had recently completed her own ethnographic study in this setting and was a good source with whom to explore various aspects of the study. The other friend was an ideal outside reader. He is a librarian with a special interest in children's literature and some knowledge of educational philosophy as well. He helped me to clarify and substantiate my ideas and implications. Discussions with members of the dissertation committee occurred on a regular basis as well.

Analysis Following Data Collection

May 27, 1988, was the date active data collection for this study ended. When all the data had been sorted into files (i.e. field notes, book lists, journals, artifacts, etc.), I then decided a break was in order, and put away all the gathered materials, for a period of six weeks. Beginning in August, 1988, an intensive analysis of the gathered data was undertaken.

I began by sorting the material. All of the field note and journal entries as well as other transcribed, artistic or otherwise written material had been dated at the time of collection. Now I

checked the chronological order of the material in the files, numbered and labelled the pages (i.e., N. 1 p. 1, for first notebook, page one; T. 1 p. 1, for first tape transcription, page one; BL 1, p. 1, for first book list, page one, etc.) Two photocopies of all materials were made.

Scheduling several long, interrupted periods of time, I next reread, twice, all of the data gathered. The first time to become familiar with the material once again. The second time I used "memoing" in the margins as a method of identifying categories for later coding.

> A code is an abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words -- most often a sentence or paragraph of transcribed fieldnotes -- in order to classify the words. Codes are categories. They usually derive from research questions, hypothese, key concepts, or important themes. They are retrieval and organizing devices that allow the analyst to spot quickly, pull out, then cluster all the segments relating to the particular question, hypotheses, concept, or theme. Clustering sets the stage for analysis.
> (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 56).

This first search of the material resulted in approxiamately ten to twelve coding possibilities. This number was too unwieldy, so the material was searched and recoded. This time six categories emerged. They were as follows: I = Individual Response Behaviors; C = Communal Response Behaviors; IC Individual Response Within Communal Response Behaviors; G/D =

Guided or Directed Response Behaviors; S = Setting, and OC = Observer's Comments. The data were then labelled with these category abbreviations.

Then I broke the data into smaller, more manageable units by cutting the labelled set of notes and placing them in appropriate folders, labelled with the category abbreviations.

I began the actual writing process of the research report by generating a thick description of the setting. This description was primarily written from the "setting" field notes, the interview transcriptions and the observer's comments. When this description was finished, a copy was given to the teacher respondents. This gave me the opportunity to test the validity of the description with those respondents and make any changes they felt were required.

Next, I searched the coded data again, in order to further identify the kinds of response behaviors particular to each category. As this reading went on, I made extensive notes of specific behavioral incidents using short descriptive sentences and indicating the file label page number. From these notes and the categorized field notes, I addressed the first research question which had to do with describing the response behaviors of pre-schoolers to picture books. As this writing progressed, it beame apparent that one category (Individual Response Within Communal Response Behaviors) was more useable if it were incorporated into either of the separate files labelled Individual or Communal Response Behaviors. It also became apparent that

many of the behavior patterns labelled Individual often included a significant other and so was changed from Individual to Individual/Dyadic.

Next, I addressed the second research question, having to do with the creation of secondary worlds of reponse and play. The second copy of the data (those not cut and filed in labelled folders) was reread. During this reading, I again made extensive notes consisting of short descriptive sentences and page numbers of specific incidents that supported this concept. Then, by using these notes in addition to the field notes, I wrote to discuss the second research question.

The third research question had to do with if and how children create meaning for themselves within a secondary world of literary reponse and play. This question required the most time to write. Again, I read the uncut, unfiled copy of the data, made extensive notes of references to actual occurences and their page numbers. In addition, I read several newly published books and articles having to do with all aspects of the question: play, response, meaning creation and meaning acquisition.

Conclusions were drawn and possibilities for further research generated and the final chapter was written.

Trustworthiness

In order to guard against the very real problems of bias and prejudice in a research study, the researcher must use strategies to test the validity or trustwortiness of the findings. The following such strategies were used in this study to ensure validity: prolonged site engagement, triangulation, member check and peer debriefing.

Prolonged Site Engagment

Two possible sources of bias are suggested by Miles and Huberman (1984). They are (a) the effects of the researcher on the site, and (b) the effects of the site on the researcher. In a research study involving a high degree of participant observation, both of these possibilities must be given careful consideration.

For this study, I spent several hours in the setting on an almost daily basis for twelve weeks. This allowed for trust and rapport to build quite quickly between the researcher and the respondents. The children were used to various adults who came and went in their classroom, and who did much the same kind of things I did. From my perspective as parent, teacher and children's librarian, I was familiar and comfortable working with

95

things I did. From my perspective as parent, teacher and children's librarian, I was familiar and comfortable working with young children. The teacher respondents, too, were used to having aides, parent volunteers and researchers in the setting at various times. Both the teachers and I were most careful to remeber that the researcher's role was not to supervise or discipline.

Triangulation

An ethnographer checks the accuracy of conclusions drawn by triangulating with several data sources . This prevents the validity of initial impressions from being too readily accepted, and expands the scope and clarity of the developing constructs as well as helping to correct any biases that arise when the researcher is working alone in the setting (Goetz and LeCompte, 1984).

Triangulation was accomplished in several ways in this study. I examined the data and created the overall description of the setting and the population. This was read by the head tecaher in the setting. It was also read and critiqued by another graduate who had done recent research in the same setting. The material was read by a member of the dissertation committee and an outside reader. Discussion concerning validity and clarity occurred with all these readers.

Severeal times, throughout the study and at the end of the study, I examined the data from the multiple perspectives of the daily field notes, the transcripts of the videotapes, and the personal journal.

Debriefing

The same people who contributed to the triangulation process were also available to me for debriefing possibilities. Discussion of emerging hypotheses, patterns and concepts took place throughout the study. I received necessary and helpful feedback from these people. I also had regular meetings with two members of my dissertation committee. Finally, I debriefed with doctoral peers in this field of study to report my overall progress, to vent my frustrations, and to discuss writing progress. Their constructive listening, criticism and support were invaluable to me throughout the entire study.

Summary

In this study, the naturalistic inquiry strategies of participant observation and interviewing were used to: (a) categorize and describe the responses of pre-school children to literature; (b) explore the possibilities of such responses as well as fantasy play behaviors occurring in a secondary world, and (c) explore the possibilities of pre-school children using these

secondary worlds to create meaning for their lives. The setting and population were chosen on the basis of three previous pilot studies.

The research cycle consisted of three interactive phases. These included securing the population and gaining entry, participant observation and purposeful data collection, and finally, post-site data analysis and reporting of the findings. Within this cycle, my major role was that of participant observer, and to a minor degree that of interviewer. Rapport and trust were established with the respondents.

Data collection was done through written and videotaped field notes, four formal interviews, collections of written and artistic work, book inventories and photographs. Sampling procedures were also used to ensure representativeness of the data. Data collection strategies were refined as needed throught the process to ensure adequate understanding and clarification of the original research questions.

Data analysis was performed both during and after the field work. During field work, analysis consisted of several phases: narrowing the study, formulating analytical questions to guide the study, reviewing and modifying the ongoing collection procedures, making observer's comments, exploring the relevant literature, discussion of emerging themes and ideas, and venting.

More intense and concentrated analysis occurred when the actual field work was completed. The strategies used for this analysis included rereading the data, coding the data into

categories of response behaviors, a second reorganization of the material to explore the concept of secondary worlds, a third reorganization of the material to explore the process of meaning creation, and writing the final report. Hypotheses were double-checked against all data and refined to create and adequate and cogent description of the findings of the study. The issue of validity was addressed in order to provide credibility.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONTEXTS OF RESPONSE

The purpose of this study is to first describe and then analyze the response behaviors of pre-schoolers to literature as they occurred in a setting that is natural and ordinary to young children. In order to do this effectively, a description of the day care center itself, the administration, teachers, parents and children as well as the socialization and educational philosophies is important.

The Physical Setting

The Green Ridge Day Care Center was part of the child care system of a large New England University. Its physical location was in a large, wooded area in the southwestern corner of the campus.

Two buildings, which were at one time private homes, housed the day care center. These buildings were old and in need of paint and other cosmetic care. Unreliable plumbing and heating facilities sometimes resulted in occasional doubling up of classes. Each building was divided into four classrooms; two in each basement and two on each first floor. The classrooms for the younger children were on the first floors and those for the older children were in the basement rooms. The classrooms on each individual floor were divided only by shelves and storage

units. Each floor had its own entrance and bathroom facility. The first floor of each building also contained kitchen facilities and an administrative office.

The classroom where this study was conducted was in the basement area and serviced thirteen four and five year olds. This classroom was divided into several areas set up to accommodate the needs and interests of this age group. The outside walls were fitted with individual cubbies for storage of the children's clothing, toys from home, books and notices. Two sinks and the bathroom were also along this outside wall.. There was a large carpeted area for big and small block play. Another play area was set up with with tables, chairs, dolls and doll accessories, wooden stove and sink, cooking utensils, typewriter and paper, cushions for beds when it became a hospital and a fold-up wheelchair. There were two large tables used for eating, games and projects. These were almost surrounded by low shelves which contained manipulatives, puzzles, games, paper, pencils, markers and other art and writing materials as well as a blackboard. There was a fairly large carpeted area called the book corner. It had two large open bookcases on which many books were stored and openly displayed. Stories and pictures done by the children hung on the walls in this book area.

Outside to the sides and the back of the two buildings there were large fenced areas for outdoor play. In this outdoor

area there were swings, climbing bars, sandboxes and small picnic tables. The ramp, built

to accommodate the wheelchair of the physically challenged teacher, also came into this play area. Each class was assigned a particular area of this space for morning outdoor play. At other times any class chose any of the space they wanted to use. The buildings were set back from the street and there was a circular drive in the front. This drive was open to motorized traffic only first thing in the morning when deliveries were made. During the day both ends of the driveway were blocked off and it was used by the children to ride bikes, trikes, scooters and big wheels.

The Human Population

The Green Ridge Day Care Center had begun as a parent cooperative but now had twelve full time, benefited positions including a director and a nutritionist. Staff salaries were some of the highest in the field and the benefits included accumulated sick days, personal days and health insurance. The staff were trained professionals whose ideas and contributions were sought and encouraged. Staff members received planning time, conducted weekly staff meetings, attended professional conferences and were evaluated yearly by the director, the parents and fellow teachers. Most of these factors were not typical in many day care centers and probably contributed to the

low turnover rate in staff as well as to the positive environment within the center itself.

The Center served approximately fifty-two children ranging in age from fifteen months to six years of age. The average daily professional ratio was one adult to six children and was usually further reduced by the additional non-professional staff. The state mandated ratio was one to ten. The Center serviced first the child care needs of graduate and undergraduate students, then those of the staff and faculty of the university and finally, if spaces were available, the surrounding communities. The Center was administered by the director, the teachers and a parent advisory board.

Each classroom had two full time teachers. When budget permitted, various aides were hired as well. Usually, these aides were undergraduates in the university. The classroom where this study was done had two experienced women teachers, Nora and Martha. Martha was a physically challenged young woman and needed a wheelchair in order to be mobile. A young man, Edmund, had been hired to implement her independence. He primarily acted as her aide although he also assumed a role in the classroom separate from hers, doing the same kinds of activities as those done by the teachers. There was another male teacher, Jonathan, who handled the extended day program for the Center. He was at the Center in the late afternoon and occasionally during the day to fill in for an absent teacher. There was usually an aide

to help with the extended day program as well (See Table III, p.105). Socioeconomically most of the families could be considered middle class. Payment to attend this center was on a graduated scale with some children being eligible under Title 20. Parents of the children here under the Title 20 program were students completing degrees andtheir low income status was considered temporary. The parents of the children in this study were either students, faculty or were otherwise employed by the university. Both single-parent as well as two-parent homes were represented.

The parents were required to become actively involved in the center. Their involvement was expected to be equivalent to one and one- half hours of work a month. This could include serving on the advisory committees, volunteering in the office, the classrooms, at parent work days, organizing pot luck dinners, repairing toys, doing laundry, mending and cooking as well as contributing to the multicultural curriculum commitment. Teachers considered the parents to be very interested in the care their children received and to take the need to be actively involved seriously. Because most of the parents worked close by in the university they could usually make arrangements to come to a dramatic performance put on by their children, to come and share lunch, to bring in pets, to share ethnic holidays and birthday celebrations with the class as well as to fulfill their monthly required involvement.

TABLE 3

Adult Members of the Setting

NAME	SEX	RACE	OCCUPATION
Nora	female	white	Head Teacher Regular Day
Martha	female	white	Assistant Teacher Regular Day
Edmund	male	white	Assistant Teacher Regular Day
Jonathan	male	white	HeadTeacher Extended Day
Jane	female	white	aide
Laurie	female	white	aide
Rachael	female	white	researcher

This group of thirteen children was culturally and racially diverse. Three were black, one a recent arrival from West Africa; three children were active members of the Jewish community; two of these were from Israel and would return there when their parents had finished their graduate educations (See Table I, p. 57).

The Educational and Socialization Atmosphere

The unifying philosophy of the Green Ridge Day Care Center addressed three main areas: (1) a child's individuality and self esteem; (2) the creation of a shared community; and (3) the physical environment, the curriculum, and the adult role. The basis of this philosophy was the belief that children must feel good about themselves as individuals in order to learn; and that the process of learning was more valuable than the product. The parent handbook stated;

> The goal is to structure success and minimize frustration, allowing children to explore, create and proceed at their own pace, using their own style. Staff demonstrates respect for individual children to make choices, expanding their interests and experiences, encouraging them to function independently and fostering their understanding and respect for the ideas and individuality of others. (Parent Handbook, 1986, p.4).

Each classroom at Green Ridge worked to accomplish this philosophy through unique and individual programs. The program in Nora and Martha's classroom was set up around the

belief that, if the environment was rich enough, children would go to the activities that they needed in order to learn and grow. Children were encouraged to self-select in the belief that they would eventually put together the range of activities that they needed. This didn't mean that the children received no guidance at all, but that the importance of working within their own choices was emphasized. For instance, it was necessary at one point to change the daily schedule from entirely free play after circle to play within the range of five or six choices of activities. Free play had become dominated by constant 'Star Wars' behavior that tended to get rough and to exclude specific children. The children still had time to play 'Star Wars' during free play before circle and outside and some days 'Star Wars' play was included in the five or six choices. However, setting up the specific choice time insured that the children were aware of other activities and could still make choices. Setting 'Star Wars' out as a choice, also allowed control of the number of children playing and insured that everyone had the chance to play.

During the free play time the children were allowed to play with anything on the shelves. All three of the teacher expressed concern about how this was implemented. Nora felt that many of the children were not aware of the wealth of materials in the room. She thought that even though the materials were stored on open shelves and cupboards the children didn't notice or remember what was there. She felt that they (the teachers)

needed to make more effort to make the children aware of all of the possibilities available. Often the children were more interested if several things are put out on the tables and in the various play areas than if left to their own devices.

The teachers planned activities week by week and incorporated into those activities, games and toys and choices that certain children seemed to need. They were aware of the physical, cognitive and psychological needs of the individuals as well as of the group. They were adept at suggesting to children that it might be time to choose a different activity and pointing out several possibilities. Eventually, they were successful in getting children involved in a wide range of activities that were beneficial to their total development. However, there was also some concern about how this was handled individually. Two of the boys appeared to need more time and opportunity for the development of large motor skills. Their needs were not specifically addressed by the teachers. The boys managed some of this during outside play time but were not directly guided or helped.

In this classroom there was recognition and encouragement of each person's contribution to the shared community. Teachers handled aggressive or unfriendly behavior quickly. They were sympathetic and understanding of the needs of children in day care and they provided much individual attention and care, while at the same time, encouraging independence in activities

such as setting the table, clean up, dressing and sharing. An aide who spoke Hebrew was hired to work in the classroom several hours a week in order to provide support and translation for the child who arrived in September speaking only Hebrew. Another child brought in a tape of _Peter and the Wolf_ being read in Hebrew. Listening to the tape extended their awareness of the difficulties Mikki had in coming to a new place, a new situation and a new language. However, two of the children who had a problem being part of any group activity, were not given much individual help with acquiring this skill. They were sent to their cubbies when they were disruptive and later a teacher would talk to them about their behavior. No specific provision was made for either of these children to be part of smaller groups where their successful interaction with others could have been encouraged.

The philosophy of self-choice and motivation was, perhaps, more successful with the children who had been members of this particular day care community for several years and were, therefore, familiar with the openness of the routine. The two children who seemed to need to develop large motor skills and those two who were most disruptive in a large group were recent additions to the group. One of the children who was most disruptive was frequently absent and seemed to need to establish her role in the classroom anew each time she returned.

The curriculum provided numerous, hands-on, learning experiences to cover the wide range of young children's abilities and interests. The most important ingredients to learning, however, were the children themselves. Circle time was very much a shared and group activity. This time was spent on specific curricular needs such as learning the parts of the body, personal safety, preparation for field trips such as those to the maple sugar house, a play at the Fine Arts Center or to story hour at the local library. During this time the children, as a group, also learned songs, dances, worked on dramatic performances and wrote group stories. They also discussed group ideas and problems. For instance, they made several charts of the things they liked to do best and those things that they didn't like to do at day care, of how they planted seeds and watched them grow, of how it felt to eat celery with their feet and of what kinds of things floated in a small pool and what things didn't. Individual stories were dictated to the teachers and read to the group. They made a recipe book for publication with each child contributing their family's favorite recipe. All of these areas were curricular and were begun or worked on in the community circle with individual children and teachers continuing the work as time and interest permitted throughout the day.

Time spent at the day care was divided into two basic parts. The regular day began at 7:45 A.M. with the arrival of teachers and ended at 3:30 P.M. when the regular day teachers left and

most of the children had been picked up. The extended day program then went into effect. It ran from 3:30 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. when all of the remaining children had been picked up. The extended day program was handled by Jonathan and an aide. Children in the regular day program were picked up anytime after 3:00 P.M. (See Table IV, p. 112).

Nora, Martha, Edmund and Jonathan had planned the classroom environment in ways to foster self-direction and self-regulation with minimal adult direction. The physical environment was set up to accommodate the developmental and cognitive needs of this age group. There was a good deal of open space, both inside and out, low shelves and bookcases, many toys, manipulatives and many, many books. All were available and used.

Families, as well as teachers, were very important to this classroom. Parents and teachers communicated frequently, concerning home and school experiences. There was a parent's notebook for any daily messages or reminders that parents needed to leave. Things such as books borrowed, who would be going home to play with whom and who would need what medicine was recorded daily. There was usually a few minutes of conversation between parent, child and teacher upon arrival in the morning. There were formal conferences at the end of each semester and parents were kept informed about any problem

TABLE 4

Daily Schedule of the Regular and Extended Day Programs

Time	Activity
7:45 A.M. - 8:00 A.M.	Teachers arrive
8:15 A.M.	Children begin to arrive
8:15 A.M. - 9:40 A.M.	Free play time (Breakfast is served during this time.
9:40 A.M. -10:00 A.M.	Circle time
10:00 A.M. - 11:00 A.M.	Activity time
11:00 A.M. - 11:50 A.M.	Outdoor time (weather permitting.)
11:50 A.M. - 1:00 A.M.	Lunch time/Story time
1:00 A.M. - 2: 15 P.M.	Nap time
2:15 P.M. - 3:00 P.M.	Snack and Free play time
3:00 P. M. - 4:15 P. M.	Outdoor play (weather permitting) or indoor free play
4: 15 P. M. - 5:30 P. M.	Activity and "extend a hand" time (clean up time)

that arose. Parents were encouraged to visit and participate in the classroom activities. They came for lunch when possible as well as coming in to share special activities such as Jewish parents teaching the class how to make matzah. Parents did a written evaluation of the center and of the individual teachers at the end of each year.

Though no longer a parent cooperative, Green Ridge Day Care Center was made a stronger, more vital and positive environment by the cooperation and interaction of the parents and teachers here. All were interested and dedicated to creating a warm and inviting place for young children to learn and grow.

Response Environment

Taken together, the physical setting, the human population and the educational philosphy of the Green Ridge Day Care Center all contributed to the creation of an environment that invited and encouraged the interaction of children with books.

This classroom contained a designated area for sharing books which was spacious and comfortable. The floor was carpeted and had a small rocker to sit in and a larger, overstuffed chair, big enough to accommodate several friends. Low bookshelves on two sides of the area contained many books openly displayed and within easy reach for the children. In

addition, there were more shelves full of books at the other side of the classroom and the children were free to look through these if they wanted. Often several separate groups of friends would congregate in different corners of this book area to look at books, to talk about books or to be read to by an adult. Frequently, a child would take a book to one of the other play areas to share it or to look at it alone.

There was a large collection of books (approximately three hundred) available to the children and access to them was both quick and easy. The Center owned its own large collection of books. These were housed on the many books shelves in all the classrooms. The teachers were free to borrow from any of the shelves and the children had access to them as well. This collection contained both non-fiction and fiction in picture book format and included folk and fairy tales, picture story books, alphabet and number books, wordless books and nursery rhymes. The children would often borrow a favorite to take home for a day or two, signing it out and in again in the daily notebook. Jordon made a habit of taking home The Nock Family Circus at least once a week. Some children would also bring in their own books from home to be read and shared. Will brought in a non-fiction book on archeology and Edmund read parts of it to him and to Josh. Josh brought in The Tale of Squirrel Nutkin to share. The most popular books from home libraries were the various Star Wars books. Kerrie owned more of these than any of the

other children and she brought them in daily for months. Jude owned one and she, too, brought it in on occasion. Any book brought from home was always commented on by the teachers and they also offered to read it to the child who brought it in or to the whole group.

Nora had her own collection of picture books which she kept in a drawer in the classroom. She would bring out several at different times in order to extend and vary the classroom collection.

As often as possible, the class took a field trip to the local library to choose books. At the library, each child had an opportunity to choose a book and check it out. The books were taken back to the classroom and read aloud over the next few days or weeks. Usually, these borrowed collections were kept for a month or two, then returned and more chosen.

In addition to the space for books, as well as the large number and the wide variety of books available to the children, there was always time and opportunity for sharing, interacting with and responding to books. Books played a prominent role in the everyday activities of the center. Everyday, one adult or another was available to read to the early arrivals. Josh loved this the most. If no teacher or aide was immediately available when he arrived, he coerced his very pregnant mother to sit and read to him before she left for work. Alan often had a hard time

letting his mother go and could be appeased with a story. Will took a long time to wake up and liked to hear several stories before he was ready to run off and play with the others. Frequently several friends would sit together to look at and talk about a book first thing in the morning. As more children arrived, some of them joined the story group too. Often this story group continued, with shifting members, from arrival time (8:15 A.M.) until circle time (9:20 A.M.). Other activities also took place at this time, including breakfast, but almost everyday there was a group listening to stories during this hour.

Curriculum lessons or activities were the center of the circle time. Often these lessons or activities included books. During this period the children heard non-fiction picture books that were appropriate to what they were discussing. For instance, Nora read <u>Jenny's in the Hospital</u> when they did a unit on personal safety. Nora and Edmund shared the reading of <u>Sugaring Time</u> over three days in preparation for a visit to a maple sugar house.

At the end of circle time, the children had to make choices for participating in activities during the next hour. There were always five or six possibilities offered, such as 'office' in the dress up corner, puzzles or manipulatives, writing or art work, blocks, a science project (which objects float and which ones don't) and books. Four children at a time could be at any one activity and movement between activities was encouraged, giving children several activity opportunities during the hour. Books were the

basis of the one activity that remained consistent day after day. Different children chose books on different days. Frequently by the end of the hour most of the group was in the book area listening to stories. Kerrie, Will and Adam often chose books as an activity, in order to look through and talk about the Star Wars books Kerrie had brought in. Usually they didn't want the books read to them. Jordon and Mikki often chose books as well. They, however, preferred to have the books read to them, as did Josh and Jude.

Stories were read to the class as a whole when they came in from outdoor play and were waiting for lunch and again after lunch as they waited for their turns in the bathroom or if they had to wait for transportation for field trips. Many children took books to their mats with them as they settled down for the afternoon nap. Once everyone was settled, most of these were collected and a story was read to the whole group. Adam, who hadn't napped since he was three, was allowed to keep a stack of books with him during nap time. He always had at least six and he looked through them from beginning to end during the whole nap time.

An aide was often reading to some children during free play time in the late afternoon exte..ded day program. Jonathan, the teacher for this program, always read to the whole group during this time as well.

In addition to space, an extensive and varied collection of accessible books as well as time and opportunity, there was a multitude of materials available to encourage and extend interactions with books. Alan brought in a large handmade wooden castle, complete with small knights and horses. Room for this was made on the table in the dress up area and the opportunity to play with it was immediate. The boys were delighted. They played at stories from <u>Robin Hood</u> and took direction from Alan to play at <u>King Arthur</u> stories, Alan being the only one who knew that story. Later when the castle had been returned home, Alan and Will and Adam built their own castle out of big blocks in that play area and continued to play scenes from <u>Robin Hood</u> and <u>King Arthur</u>. Kerrie, Jack and Will listened to a tape of <u>Davy Crockett</u> story and drew pictures to go with it. Adam brought in a tape of <u>Peter and the Wolf</u> being read in Hebrew so that the class could better understand how Mikki felt when she first arrived and knew no English. Mikki, herself, spent several mornings writing 'like in the book'. She asked me to spell what she wanted to write. Then she'd write it and the two of us would read it to each other. Several children dictated and illustrated their own <u>Star Wars</u> story. They planned to dramatize this for other classes in the center. Blocks, dress up materials, office equipment, paper, markers, pens, pencils, paint, clay as well as interested adults willing to read, talk, listen and share were always available for these children. The two children, ((Peter and DiAnna), who had the most difficulty with group

interactions and the two who appeared to need the most space and physical activity, (Peter and Jack), were the children who used and asked for books the least often.

The attitudes and beliefs of the adults in this setting were also an important part of the interactions between the children and books. Nora, Martha, Edmund and Jonathan all shared a deep and abiding belief in the children themselves, in their intelligence, in their abilities. This was reflected in how they interacted with the children. The teachers made serious efforts to know each child for the individual he or she was. The teachers spoke to the children and listened to them with patience, acceptance and respect. They did not talk down to them personally or refer to them in cutesy, generalized baby terms. The expectation that each child could and would make his or her own choices was always evident and acted upon. The children were encouraged and guided in developing self discipline and in respect and acceptance of others. All of this was evident throughout the day's activities including the activities that involved books.

For instance, when the group visited the library, the children who wanted books had chosen them and Adam had asked me to read hir to him. We sat at a table and began to read; Adam listened and several others joined us. When it was time to leave, we still had several pages to read. Nora interrupted to tell me that she'd take the rest of the group outside to wait, but that

the small group at the table could finish the story. Her consideration for the children and the story was sincere and genuine. During a discussion about the Star Wars stories and play that went on daily, Will voiced his dissatisfaction with Kerrie being the one who always decided who could look at her books and who would play what role. Nora and Edmund acknowledged his concern and gave him the opportunity to talk to Kerrie about it. The situation was resolved by making a list of who would assign what Star War roles on different days. The interests and needs of the children were the first consideration. The time and schedule was flexible enough to allow for unexpected happenings.

When Alan brought in his castle and knights, the teachers found room for it immediately and it became a choice activity. A teacher stayed nearby so that the Robin Hood and King Arthur play didn't become too rough, but the children themselves negoiated the play from the stories they knew. Choice of books to be read was also negotiated quite easily. The books any child brought in from home were always commented on and read to him/ her or to the group. The adults here were available and willing to read. They were also adept at talking with the children about the books they were reading. Children were encouraged to join in on predictable parts of stories (laughter and chanting when Wacky, Wacky Wednesday was read to the group), to ask questions (Adam asked me what bountiful meant when I read Rapunzel to him, Joie was listening as well and wanted to know

the difference between bountiful and beautiful) and to relate the story to their own lives (Nora and Josh had a serious discussion about long trips when she was reading him <u>Three Days on the River in a Red Canoe</u>).

Summary

Attitudes of respect for and acceptance of both children and books, space for, accessibility to books, time, opportunity and materials for interactions with books all worked together at Green Ridge Day Care Center to create an environment that was open, positive and inviting for children to interact with and to respond to literature. The categories of play behaviors and response to literature behaviors are addressed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

RESPONSE BEHAVIORS

The first question for this research was an encompassing one. Given a setting in which pre-school children had the opportunity and encouragement to interact with literature, what would happen?

When used in connection with pre-schoolers, 'response behaviors' becomes an umbrella term. It covers a multitude of activities and interactions and it is most difficult to separate the behaviors because, in general, pre-schoolers have not yet learned compartmentalization. Their living is a whole and integrated entity.

For the purposes of this study, literature was a general term which covered the variety of books with which these children interacted. The literature in this classroom was primarily in the genre of picture books which included realistic and fantastic picture story books, traditional folk and fairy tales, as well as concept books and picture information books. Several illustrated chapter books were also included. All of this literature was considered as an organized symbol system which depended on the integration of both text and illustrations to convey message content. I was interested in describing the response behaviors of these children to the overall book itself of which

both illustration and text were important parts. I did not try to analyze the differences in response to illustrations versus the response to text.

I looked at response behaviors from several points of view. First I will discuss the behaviors that appeared to be distinctly individual/dyadic, i.e., those that involved a single child and a book(s); two children and a book(s); an adult, one child and a book(s). Because these particular pre-schoolers did not yet read on their own, their response behaviors very often involved at least one other person, either an adult or another child. I have chosen to consider these behaviors as individual/dyadic since they are somewhat different and more personal than other behaviors which I have termed as communal and which involve more than one other person. The second pattern of response behaviors which I considered involved more than two participants with a book(s). I termed these behaviors communal. Within these communal behaviors there appeared to be several differences in group behavior depending on whether or not an adult was part of the group. The third pattern I have described as guided or directed. This response pattern always included an adult and usually had a predetermined objective.

Individual/Dyadic Response Behaviors

To begin with, literature was always available in this classroom and all the children interacted with books at some

point during every day. Several were involved with books only within a larger group and only when requested to be part of that group by the teacher. The majority of the children, however, spent a considerable amount of the day in interaction with books, often by themselves or with another child or with an adult.

One Child/Book(s)

The children were free to look at books anywhere in the classroom area. They took books to the various play areas (big block, housekeeping, tables). They sat, stood, knelt or sprawled on the floor or in the chairs. The book area itself was carpeted and had a large overstuffed chair as well as a small rocker to accommodate their needs.

Josh preferred to sit in the small rocker or to bring one of the small straight chairs to the book area when he looked at a book. Jack and Adam usually sprawled on the floor on their stomachs to share their book choices. Kerrie and Will pushed the overstuffed chair around to build themselves a cubby hole where they could sit to share books, hidden from the rest of the group.

Individually, children made book choices in several ways. A child might wander around the book area, looking at the various books on display or randomly taking books out of the shelves to look at briefly. Another child might simply grab any available book and sit to look through it. Still another would search through the shelves for a particular favorite or

deliberately choose an interesting one from those on open display.

Mikki periodically hunted out the Disney version of <u>Cinderella</u> and would sit on the floor in the book area to look at it. Jordon's particular favorite was <u>The Nock Family Circus</u>. Josh would pick up any book that happened to be lying around and sit to look at it by himself until he could interest an adult in reading it to him.

Several children preferred to choose and look through books entirely on their own. Alan almost always made deliberate book choices and usually refused to be read to, preferring to sit by himself and systematically look through his choice. Aaron, too, preferred to make his own considered choices and to look through them on his own. He usually refused any offer from an adult to read to him.

Physical contact with the actual book also appeared to be important to these pre-schoolers. When they looked at books on their own they would often hold several others beside them or on their laps. Individual children often carried a book around, sometimes to try and interest a friend in sharing it, an adult in reading it to them or simply to have it handy. When a child sat to look at a book alone he or she would sometimes stroke or smell the pages. Frequently he or she might hold a certain place in the

book with a finger or thumb while looking through the rest of the book.

A child alone with a book often exhibited what is termed literacy behavior (Clay, 1986). Any of the children knew enough about book handling to go through a book from beginning to end, page by page. They would point to individual words they knew or to the title. They would sit and 'tell' the story to themselves, out loud but softly. The story they were 'telling' might follow the actual story text or be a story of their own creation. They used the illustrations to 'tell' or create the story, sometimes following the print with their finger.

Jordon sat with <u>The Nock Family Circus</u> in her lap. She was creating her own story page by page from the illustrations.

> "The boat got bumpy.
> She got beat up.
> "Wow! Wow!" She said, "You always know what to do."

In addition to using the illustrations to re-create the story for themselves individual children also used them to find their way around within the story or a book. Jack hunted through <u>Robin Hood</u> for several minutes in order to find the illustration that he knew indicated his favorite part. Will would find his favorite fairy tale in a large collected edition by using the illustration and the boldface title of "Hansel and Gretel".

Some children would follow the text with their finger going from top to bottom. These same children could also follow the left to right print progression. Frequently a child would re-read the same book several times or go through several books more than one time in a single sitting. The attention span of many children in this classroom, interacting with a book was amazingly long, usually lasting from ten minutes to half an hour.

Several children borrowed books from the classroom collection to take home for a few days, signing them in and out much the same way as in a public library.

Some of the individual response behaviors could perhaps best be described as personally useful. For instance, any one of three particular children was usually the first to arrive early in the morning. Whoever came first gravitated to the book area to look at books. This seemed to serve several purposes.

First, it seemed important that the book area was a quiet, comfortable place and activity until the child felt more awake, until breakfast was served or until friends arrived to play. Any available
book was acceptable to Will for contemplation until he felt awake enough to join other play. Josh asked any available adult to read to him as soon as he arrived in the morning and he liked to snuggle close.

It also seemed easier to let parents leave if one was involved in a book. Josh continually asked his very pregnant mother to sit on the floor with him to "just start the book, Mom" before she left for her job.

Alan, the youngest member of the class, always found it hard to let Mom leave but wasn't nearly as upset if he got involved in a book before she did leave.

When a child was especially tired, sad or not feeling well during the day, books provided comfort and again the book area was the quietest spot in the room. Jack, usually one of the most active and noisy, sat quietly at one of the tables, holding three books, very slowly looking through one at a time. Finally, someone felt his forehead, discovered his temperature was up and sent for his mom. Mikki spent the whole morning looking at books by herself, almost in tears, because both of her special friends were out sick.

Books were also a way to quiet down and prepare for sleep or rest. When the children were on their mats just before nap, each one had several books to look at before the lights were turned out. Adam, who hadn't napped since he was three, was allowed to look at books all through the nap time.

Books were an acceptable substitute if a child could not, for some reason, be part of a particular group or on-going activity. Story also provided times of individual pretend play such as

Jack's continual practice of Robin Hood's sword play or Will's morning of being the white seal from a story his dad had read to him the night before.

Two Children/Book(s)

One child, having chosen to look at books, attracted others. The reading child often invited a friend to share the book or asked an adult to read it aloud. Another child might ask to join or more likely simply sit down and look on. The choice of the first book was often random and quick in these instances, almost as if the important thing was to get the interaction established. Once that was accomplished, then, the two would often stay with the activity for some time and make more deliberate second and third choices.

Some response behaviors were similar whether the second participant was an adult or another child. In either case, the two sat close together, touching or snuggling. Interruptions for one child or the other to go to the bathroom, to eat a quick breakfast or for the teacher to answer the telephone or talk to someone else were usually patiently tolerated. Both participants would be likely to have other books in their laps ready to look at or be read.

Two children and a book created a shared experience a bit different from the one created by an adult and a child sharing a

book. To begin with, neither of the children could accurately read all of the actual words of the story text. Consequently, they tended to do several things instead. While both fiction and non-fiction books were available and displayed, a child alone or with another child tended to choose fiction stories with which they were familiar. They would look through the book from beginning to end pointing out the few words they did know, they would talk about the content pictured in the illustrations and they would hunt through the entire book to show each other their favorite part or the illustration they liked best. There was seldom any quarrel about whose turn it was to turn the page and they could successfully negotiate the choice of which book to read next.

Between two children the discussion of the actual story text of the book was most often general and consisted of pointing out various items or the behavior of characters in the illustrations. Will and Kerrie sat in the book area looking at <u>Star Wars Darth Vader's Activity Book</u>.

Will: "Look, the space ship is broken here."
Kerrie: "See, I told you Leia wasn't in this story."

At other times two children would 'tell' the story together both contributing comments and ideas. In these instances, much of the story -telling involved making 'self' choices. As the children shared the book they would enthusiastically point to

various pictured characters and claim the character's identity for themselves.

Josh and Kerrie sat on the floor poring over the Disney version of <u>Cinderella.</u> They each claimed the identity they wanted and kept the genders sorted out.

> Josh: "I'm him!" (pointing to the prince) "I'm the prince!'
> Kerrie: "I'm her!" (pointing to Cinderella dressed for the ball) "Isn't she pretty?" (big sigh)

A similar discussion occurred around the same book between Kerrie and Mikki, both of them amicably claiming to be Cinderella. These two also commented on the pretty dresses worn by the mean stepsisters but neither girl wanted to be a stepsister. Josh and Joie also discussed this book claiming their own gender identity. Josh commented on how mean the stepsisters were and Joie assured him it was "all right in the end."

Alan and a friend looked through <u>A Story, A Story</u>, together, each claiming to be several of the spider sons. With their hands they acted out the occupations of the sons they had chosen to be. Mikkie and Jordon often chose <u>The Nock Family Circus</u> book to look at together. As they looked through it page by page they each chose the circus performers they wanted to be, laughing and pointing with each choice.

Occasionally one child or another would use fantasy play from a story to frighten another. The witch from <u>Rapunzel</u> and

Darth Vader from <u>Star Wars</u> were the culprits most frequently used to deliberately scare someone.

In all of these situations the children were interacting with books they knew well and in which they could anticipate the action. These particular books seemed to offer opportunities for exploration of and play with their own self possibilities. Often these interactions led to pretend play without the actual book in hand and outside of the play area. Several times Mikki and Jordon galloped off pretending they were the bareback riders in <u>The Nock Family Circus</u>. The occupations of Anansi's sons spilled over into the big block area as Alan and Kurt went off to build the road and the river from the story.

Two children together frequently used a book to explore the process of reading instead of the actual story content. Sitting close together, each child would be looking through his or her own book and sharing it with their companion. Each would point out a favorite part, character or illustration and show the other the words they knew. One or the other might also imitate the reading aloud behavior of an adult reading to the children: holding the book so it could be seen, repeating the title and pointing out characters or actions using the 'teacher' tone of voice. In these interactions the attitude and attention of each child was

directed at using the book to show what they knew about how to read instead of being directed at the story content itself.

Child/Adult/Book(s)

The interaction of a child and an adult with a book(s) was similar in some ways to that of two children with a book. Either the child or the adult would initiate the interaction; a child asking the adult to read or the adult offering. Book choices were usually made by the child and again the first choice often was made quickly and randomly in order to get the activity started. Second and third book choices were made more deliberately.

Will took The Foot Book by from the shelf (random choice) and went to ask Edmund to read to him. Edmund was supervising Star Wars play and couldn't read. Will wandered around for a few minutes, holding the book, finally brought it to me and asked me to read. I read it to him, then he chose another (The Very Hungry Caterpillar). He helped turn the pages in this one as I read it to him. Next he looked for and deliberately chose Three Favorite Fairy Tales . He found the one he wanted to hear first (Jack and the Bean Stalk) and asked me read this one to him also. Then he chose Red Riding Hood and I read that one. When they finished those, Will went and found Cinderella and, as we began to read that story, other children joined us.

Any of the individual children being read to exhibited a great deal of patience, either waiting for an adult to finish a project or a conversation, in order to read or tolerating numerous interruptions to the story reading.

Will wandered around holding <u>Lightning Strikes Twice</u>. Finally he asked Edmund to read it to him. Edmund was helping Jude write a story about herself as a baby but told Will he would read to him when Jude was finished. Will sat beside them holding the book. Will dictated a baby story for Edmund to write, too, and then he and Edmund went to the book area and Will had his story. Mikki asked Nora to read <u>Cinderella</u> (Disney) to her. Nora said she would if they could take it to the block area so she could keep an eye on that play, too. Mikki agreed and they sat to read. Nora was called away for several minutes but Mikki sat quietly, held the place with her finger and waited for Nora to return.

The books chosen by the child were usually fiction. However, a child was more likely to bring a non-fiction book or a new or unfamiliar book to an adult to share than to another child.

Eli came to where I was sitting holding two books that I had just brought in (<u>The Gorilla Did It</u> and <u>Blueberries for Sal</u>). When I asked him if he'd like me to read to him, he answered that he already knew <u>The Gorilla Did It</u> , so would I please read the other one. Will brought in a new book, <u>The Earth</u>, and he immediately took it to Edmund to explain that his father had bought it for him

134

over the weekend. He asked Edmund to read it to him right then. When the classroom gerbils turned up missing, Alan brought in one of his books, <u>Wild Animal Babies</u>. Alan thought the book had some information in it about gerbils. It didn't but Edmund read it to him anyway.

Any child feeling tired, unhappy, upset or not feeling well was more likely to ask an adult to read than to ask another child to share a book.   Will, carrying a book around, looked for an adult to read to him,
saying he was "just too tired to play." Finally, he asked me to read to him. For several mornings Kerrie was having a hard time letting her mother leave. Finally, her mother would begin reading a <u>Star Wars</u> book to her and then Nora would take over when Kerrie's mom had to leave. Kerrie was able to make the transition this way.

An individual child being read to by an adult often exhibited 'literacy behaviors' similar to those of two children together.   The child was interested in turning pages, pointing out known words or the title, pointing out a favorite part. Here, too, the child was often more interested in exhibiting book-using knowledge than in the actual story content.

I offered to read to Mikki who sat in the book area holding <u>Three Favorite Fairy Tales</u>. Mikki agreed and found the story she wanted (<u>Hansel and Gretel</u>). Mikki wasn't really interested in the story content. She showed me where to begin reading, turned the

pages and asked for clarification about which was the boy's name and which was the girl's. She didn't want the story finished but took the book to find a different story and again turned pages and showed me where to read. This may have been an important process for this particular child who spoke no English when she arrived in this classroom last September. The Hebrew books she was familiar with were written and set up right to left. Adam sat with me looking through <u>Wacky Wednesday</u>. He pointed to the title and read it for me. Then he went through the book pointing out the words 'Wacky Wednesday' each time they appeared. He also showed me the sequential number of wacky things that appeared on each page. He was in charge of turning the pages and did so in the right order.

A child often used the illustrations to read the story to the adult. This reading was usually related closely to the story text itself. When with an adult, seldom did children create a story of their own that didn't contain elements of the actual text being considered. All of the adults encouraged the use of prediction as they read and talked about the story with the child. Frequently, a child would ask to have the same book reread several times.

Mikki asked me to read <u>The Door Bell Rang</u> three times in a row. She also asked me to reread the last page each time we came to it. Josh asked Nora to reread <u>Rapunzel</u> twice for two mornings in a row. The book was new to the group as a whole

and Josh seemed especially interested in the story and the illustrations.

Physical contact was important and a child was more likely to sit or cuddle close beside the adult than to sprawl on the carpet. Either or both were likely to have more books in their laps or beside them and it was unusual to have only one book read at a sitting.

Jane was reading The Three Little Pigs to Eli in the book area. In his lap he was holding Snow White and Three Favorite Fairy Tales. I read The Door Bell Rang to Mikki and in her lap she held The Elephant and the Bad Baby.

Other aspects of the interactions of an adult and a single child with a book or books were different from those of two children with a book or books. In the adult/child situations, one important objective was actually to hear or read the text of the book so listening behaviors were more evident here. Some general listening or concentration behaviors were exhibited by most of the children, at one time or another. They would suck their thumbs or fingers, play with strands of their hair, rub their noses or ears, while sitting quietly to listen. Some children were quite distinctive in their listening behaviors. Josh always sat perfectly still with his hands folded in front of him and stared into space while an adult read to him. Kerrie, too, did these things. They would look briefly at the illustrations when the

pages were turned. Will sat very still but followed the text and illustrations with his eyes as the story was read. Joie almost always knelt beside the reader, intent, continually glancing from reader's face to the text. Jude was a restless listener. She seemed to be continually moving some part of her body, wandering around the book area, or drawing while she was listening. Her attention was still with the book, however. She could answer questions and noticed if any parts were skipped over. Their listening behaviors often reflected their feelings about a story as well.

Will sat very close to me to hear Rapunzel. Will was usually a very quiet, intent listener but this story seemed to bother him a bit.

He kept wiggling, covering his eyes and ears. However, he refused when I asked if he wanted me to stop reading. He heard it through to the end and didn't choose to leave. Jack sat quietly listening to Rapunzel. When the story was finished he asked to look at the book by himself. At one particular illustration he heaved a dramatic sigh and said "The Witch!". At the end, he closed the book, looked at the adult who had read it to him first and commented, "That's a scary book."

There was one particular behavior that occurred occasionally when an adult was reading to a single child and, more often, when an adult read to a group of children. Several of the children did this. For lack of a better description, I have

termed the behavior 'two things at once'.   A child would sit and listen to a story being read by an adult and, in addition to listening, the child was also doing something else, such as drawing, playing with playdoh, watching other children read to themselves or play in another area. Most often the listening child would be looking through another book, turning the pages slowly, touching the illustrations. His or her attention was not divided or separate. Such a child's attitudes of attention and concentration would indicate that he or she was involved in both activities. Such children noticed when the reader turned the pages of the book being read aloud, they might ask a question about the book being read aloud and they were as likely to show the adult reader a picture in the book they were looking at or make a comment about it to the reader. Both the adult and the child seemed to take this in stride and no adult admonished the listening child to pay attention just to the book being read.

Jonathan read <u>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</u> to Kerrie. As he read she looked through another book on her lap, glanced up whenever he turned a page, pointed to the food illustrated and then returned to the book in her lap. Nora read <u>Where's Your Baby Brother, Becky Bunting?</u> to Kerrie.   Kerrie held another book in her lap, slowly turning the pages and touching the illustrations. Nora read a fairy tale to Mikki who was systematically looking at <u>Button in Her Ear</u> at the same time.

Talk between a child and an adult interacting with a book was also different than that between two children interacting with a book. The child anticipated and expected the adult to have and to share his or her broader knowledge base. There was little hesitation, on the part of the children, in using that base to explore and expand their own needs for knowledge and meaning. Consequently the talk between an adult and a child that arose from book sharing was quite varied.

In general, discussion that came out of book reading related back to the child's life in one way or another. Sometimes there were immediate connections as when Josh sat perfectly still listening to Laurie read Where's Julius. Julius is a boy given to imaginary play that keeps him from dining with his parents. His parents are most understanding and take a number of his meals, vividly described, to wherever Julius is pretending to be visiting. When Laurie had finished the story, Josh rushed over to me to say: "Rachael, know what? That book made me hungry!" and then he went off to eat breakfast himself.

On arrival the morning of the field trip to the maple sugar farm, Adam immediately took his mother to the book corner to show her the book Sugaring Time. The book had been read to the whole class in preparation for the trip and Adam had been especially interested in having it read to him alone. He showed his mom the photographs in the book and told her what was going on. She asked him a number of questions and then told

him to pay special attention at the farm so he could tell her all about it, since she had never seen how syrup was made.

Other connections involved other areas outside of the day care setting, questions and explanations about memories, interests, people or activities. Will brought in a new non-fiction book from home and asked me to read it to him. we read through one section on how viruses live and reproduce and the following discussion took place.

> Will: "Could this really happen sometimes?"
> Rachael: "I think it happens all the time. Viruses
> reproducing makes us sick sometimes."
> Will: "Could it make us die?"
> Rachael: "Probably that isn't too likely -- though if we
> don't take care of ourselves when we're sick,
> it can be serious."

Joie listened to <u>Amy Loves Goodbyes</u> and returned several times to point out her favorite illustration, a wedding. Joie had recently attended a family wedding.

Nora read <u>Sugaring Time</u> to Josh, who was particularly interested because one of the characters had the same name as his. They lingered over the illustration of the horse and sled and laughing family walking through the deep snow. Nora commented:

> " Is it hard to walk through snow up to your knees?"
> Josh: "No! Remember that big snow storm -- there
> was snow up to here!" (points to his thighs)

Nora: "Your thighs! Wasn't it hard to walk in that?"
Josh: "No! It was fun!"

Jude and I had read several books together. At the end of the third book Jude looked up at me and said:

"You like books, don't you?"
Rachael: "Yes, they're my favorite thing in the whole world!"
Jude: "My favorite thing is horses."
Rachael: "Horses! Do you have one?"
Jude: "No, but I've seen a lot of them. My friend has a house beside a pasture where there's a horse. I climb under the electric fence and make friends with it. I have a baby horse at home -- not a real one -- a stuffed animal imaginary one. I have lots of stuffed animal kinds of horses.

Later, after hearing <u>Chester the Worldly Pig</u>, Jude asked to hang on to the book while I read another one to her. Jude's comment was that Chester was a horse book. In actuality, the story is about a circus bound pig but does have a farm horse in the illustrations.

Movies and videos seen at home or with family members were also experiences to be shared and explored. Those talked about in class were based on a book that the child was familiar with or had at least seen.

Edmund sat in the book area reading to Josh. When Will arrived he immediately rushed over to tell them about the movie, <u>Treasure Island</u> ,which he had seen the night before.

> Will: "Josh, It's an exciting movie. I bet you'd like it and wouldn't be scared of it. Maybe you'd be scared - maybe you wouldn't."
>
> Edmund: "Will, let's finish reading this story and then we'll talk about <u>Treasure Island</u>, o'kay?"

Will went off to play and when Edmund and Josh had finished the story, Will returned to talk to Edmund about the movie. Edmund made reference to the fact that the movie was made from a book and Will said he knew that and that he had seen the book. They went on to talk about the movie.

> Edmund: "Who's the pirate who tricks them in the beginning?"
>
> Will: "Long John Silver!"
>
> Edmund: "Doesn't he have a wooden leg?"
>
> Will: "No -- just one leg on this side and one on this side (pointing to each of his own legs) and not one wooden."
>
> Edmund: "What was the name of the boy?"
>
> Will: "Jim Hawkins!"
>
> Edmund: "You didn't want to be Jim?"
>
> Will: "No! The doctor."
>
> Edmund: "What part did you like best?"
>
> Will: "The part where they fight!"

Jude brought the book <u>The Muppets Take Manhattan</u> to me and asked me to read it to her

> Jude: "Yes, I know this story from the movie. I like movies 'cause they move and talk."

> Rachael: "Do you like movies better than stories?"
> Jude: "Yes, but I really like books too."

With the last sentence, Jude snuggled close and pointed to the book, ready to listen. It is a book with a great deal of text so we only read four or five pages before it was time for breakfast.

Other book talk between an adult and a child offered the child the opportunity to express and explore feelings, imagination and creativity. For instance, one morning I sat in the book corner on the floor, looking through some of the picture books when Alan brought over the book An American Tail: Fievel's New York Adventure to show me.

> Alan: "I saw the video of this book. Some parts of it were scary."
> Rachael: "What parts were scary?"
> Alan: "The sweat-shop was scary."
> Rachael: "How about where he was caught in a trap? Was that scary too?"
> Alan: "Yes, that was too."

He sat quietly for a few minutes looking through the book and then he asked me to find the page that showed the sweat-shop. I did and he looked at it intently for a few minutes and finally commented "That's the scary part."

Kerrie brought in a taped version of Robin Hood and Davy Crockett. She set it up in the housekeeping area and she, Will, Alan and Joie all sat to listen to the stories. Nora gave them all

paper and pencils to draw with as they listened. When they had

heard the stories through once, everyone left but Joie. She

continued to sit and listen to Davy Crockett. I came and sat with

her. There were several references to mountains in the Davy

Crockett story and Joie began to draw and tell me a story about a

'mountain lady'

> Joie: "This is a mountain lady."
> Rachael: "What's she doing on the mountain?"
> Joie: "She's part of the mountain."
> Rachael: "Does she get tired being part of the
>   mountain?"
> Joie: "No, she likes it."

Here Joie took a yellow marker and drew on the other side of the
paper.

> Joie: "This is the ocean and a river going into the
>   ocean." (turns the paper over again) "Back to
>   the mountain girl! Know how she got in the
>   mountain?"
> Rachael: "How?"
> Joie: "Someone put her there."
> Rachael: "Like Rapunzel in the tower?"
> Joie: "Yes, and she doesn't like it. (chose a brown
>   marker and drew a big fish) and she got
>   swallowed by a fish.(drew a small brown line)
>   That's how she got out. They're logs to walk on
>   -- but the person who put her there doesn't
>   know she knows how to get out."

Joie added several more fish to her picture, gave it to me and

went off to play. (See Appendix B for picture)

Eli had chosen The Gorilla Did It for me to read to him.

Before we began the story we discussed imaginary things.

Rachael: "This is about an imaginary friend. Did you ever have an imaginary friend?"
Eli: "No, but I had an imaginary dream once."
Rachael: "What was it?"
Eli: "I was chasing a dragon but he wasn't real."
Rachael: "Were you real?"
Eli: "I"m real but I wasn't in the dream."
Rachael: "Then what happened?"
Eli: "Then we were friends."

Will asked me to read Hansel and Gretel from Three Favorite Fairy Tales and he listened intently, rubbing his nose while I read. At the end, Will decided that the wicked witch was the same person as the cruel stepmother. He checked through the illustrations and then decided they weren't the same after all. Next he wanted Little Red Riding Hood, from the same collection and when we came to the wolf part he laughed and commented that this was the exciting part. Another day he had asked to hear Rapunzel and he sat cuddled close to me while I read it to him. He had heard this book several times and it had always made him uncomfortable. He would wiggle around and cover his eyes and ears whenever the witch appeared but he never chose to leave before the story was finished. This time he commented that he "didn't like this witch." I assured him that the witch got her punishment in the end and he uncovered his eyes.

Alan and I read Come Away from the Water, Shirley together. Alan had this book at home and was familiar with it. He and I talked about the fact that in the story the parents are

just sitting and saying the words in the text while Shirley is imagining a whole different scenario on the opposite page.

> Rachael: "Which part is real and which part is pretend? Is this part pretend?" (pointed to picture of the parents).
> Alan: "No, this side!" (pointed to Shirley) But the pirates are real. I know the pirates are real!"
> Rachael: "Would pirates make a little girl walk the plank?"

Alan laughed and shook his head in an exaggerated yes. Then he pointed to the crown on Shirley's head and told me the whole story of the castle he visited in England when he went to see his grandparents.

At other times, a child would want to talk with an adult about the actual books themselves, specific content or show that he or she understood how book reading worked. Edmund read The Temper Tantrum Book to Josh. Midway through Josh commented with amazement, "Oh, I've heard this -- but not the beginning and not all the parts". When they went on to read The First Star, Josh commented that he had looked at this book before, too, but just the pictures and not the story.

Nora and Alan sat together in the book area looking at Mooncake . Alan was reading the story to her. Nora would ask an occasional question and Alan would use the illustrations to read the story. Later, he came to me with the same book and asked to read it to me. He told it accurately, an incident at a time.

Jude also brought a wordless book <u>Pancakes for Breakfast</u> to me and wanted to read it to me. She, too, told the story accurately using the illustrations. Mikki carefully chose <u>A Very Hungry Caterpillar</u> to read to me. She knew the sequence of food the caterpillar ate from day to day but not the actual days of the week. She read until the Saturday list of food and then I finished the book. Will brought one of the new books into the book area. The book consisted of pictures of common, ordinary things (firetrucks, buildings, animals, etc.) with which many children are familiar. The text of the book consisted of labels for these things written in Japanese. Will wanted to name the items he recognized and, with his finger, touch or trace the Japanese characters that labeled them.

Sometimes a child was especially interested in displaying knowledge about certain books or their content. Josh had been given a new book over the weekend. He didn't bring it to the center but he did want to talk about it. Edmund asked Josh to tell him a story he liked in the book.

> Josh: "Well, it has lots of stories. It has Rapunzel, Rapunzel let down your hair."
> Edmund: "Sounds like a book of fairy tales."
> Josh: "It has Robin Hood in it too and know what -- Robin Hood and his men hang the Sheriff."

> Josh: "This book says the prince will try it tomorrow (using Rapunzel's braids to get into the tower) but my book says he'll try it today."

Celia, a vistor from the upstairs classroom for the younger children, asked me to read the book of Nursery Rhymes to her. She was really more interested in reciting the ones she already knew, and pointing out the items in the illustrations that were directly related to the rhymes she was reciting such as the house Peter Pumpkin Eater made for his wife and the gentlemen in Hickity, Pickity.

Response behaviors of individual children interacting with books or of two children, or a child and an adult interacting with books covered a broad spectrum. These behaviors went from simply touching, holding and carrying books to many literacy activities such as labeling and retelling the story. They also included fantasy play and various kinds of in-depth, exploratory discussion. Given the setting and the atmosphere it isn't surprising that many of the individual response behaviors led often and quickly to book interactions that involved several other children and/or adults or the whole group.

Communal Response Behaviors

The response behaviors that involved several participants were categorized as communal. Communal, here, is meant to indicate the actual sharing between members of a group or a community and not simply the living within that community.

Creation of a group interacting with books happened in several ways. Often a single child sitting in the book area looking

Creation of a group interacting with books happened in several ways. Often a single child sitting in the book area looking at books attracted another child or several others. Other children would simply join an adult and child already reading together. One child would invite several friends to look at books; an adult might invite several children to come and look at books or an already formed group of children would ask an adult to read to them. Individual children would spontaneously choose books for their choice time play or several friends would plan ahead of time to choose books for their choice time play.

I sat in the overstuffed chair in the book corner to read What Mary-Jo Wanted to Kerrie. As we began to discuss the pet in the story other children joined the group. First, we talked about their pets and the children all stayed to listen to the story. Kerrie arrived with the inevitable Star Wars books under her arm. She headed for the book corner calling to Josh and Will to join her, which they did. Adam and Joie also joined the group as soon as they arrived. Kerrie, Will, Josh and Adam all sat in the book corner to look through Kerrie's newest Star Wars book. After several minutes checking it out, they sent Will off to ask Edmund to come and read it to them. Waiting for lunch to be ready, Nora called the whole group to the book corner for a story. They gathered quickly, found seats with little arguing or pushing and once settled, listened quietly and attentively while Nora read Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters. Will, Kerrie, Joie and Josh planned

play in order to continue looking through Kerrie's Star Wars books.

Once formed, the group exhibited some rather general response behaviors. With this particular group of children, there was seldom much serious disagreement about finding a place to sit or being able to see the book being read. Only two of the children exhibited strong tendencies to be disruptive during a story reading. If the whole group was gathered for a story, the adult reading would explain that the pictures would be shown at the end of each page of reading so that everyone would have a chance to see. When a disagreement did arise the situation was usually negotiated to the satisfaction of everyone.

Edmund sat in the big chair to read a Star Wars book to Kerrie and Will. Josh sat in a small chair in front of them. Will was unhappy with his position and went to get a small chair, too. Josh moved to the small rocker to see better, but neither of them were happy with the arrangement. Edmund said there had to be a better way to arrange things than bringing all the small chairs in to the reading corner. He asked if they could think of something and, at Will's suggestion, they all agreed to sit on the floor where they could each find a place from which they could see the illustrations clearly and easily.

Jordon, Joie, Jack, Jude, Kerrie were listening to <u>Cinderella.</u> Peter and DiAnn came along to listen too. Both Peter and DiAnn were unhappy with the situation. Both pushed and shoved the others out of the way. DiAnn screamed when she tripped and fell. Nora came immediately and sent them both to their cubbies.

Martha was reading to the whole group while they waited for lunch to be served. Before Martha had finished the story, both Peter and DiAnn were sent to their cubbies for hitting and pushing the other children in the group.

The group of children most interested in the <u>Star Wars</u> books and play (Kerrie, Adam, Will, Jack, Josh and Joie) would often meet in the book area to look at the <u>Star Wars</u> books. They spent some time talking about the characters and the action as well as discussing the videos which some of them had seen. Any combination of children in this group usually refused to have the books read aloud and preferred to stay by themselves. This seldom happened with any other combination of children.

The dynamics of the group changed depending on whether or not an adult was reading to several children or if the several children were on their own with a book. In the adult/children group the children seemed to feel freer to come and go. If the story didn't interest them or wasn't one they had chosen, they might leave until the adult began to read a story they liked better. A child who joined an adult and other children involved

with a book often chose a book from the shelf to hold before joining the group. A single child approaching a group of other children involved with a book almost always asked permission to join; this didn't seem necessary if an adult was part of the group.

The choice of books to be read to the group was also quite negotiable within the group. Most of the children seem to feel that their turn would come, their own choices would be acknowledged and respected and they were willing to wait. Nora asked Will and Kerrie to choose some books for her to read to them. I offered some new ones that I had just brought in. The three of them looked through the four new ones (Chester the Worldly Pig, The Gorilla Did It, The Elephant and the Bad Baby and Blueberries for Sal). They decided that Nora would read The Elephant and the Bad Baby first, then Chester and finally an old Anansi favorite, A Story, A Story.

Nora joined several children in the book corner. She asked if they wanted her to read to them She showed them three books Red Riding Hood, Wind Rose, and Abby which they could choose from or they could choose a different one altogether. They all agreed they wanted to hear Red Riding Hood.

At other times, the choices were made on a more random basis. Will and Joie sat together in the large chair looking at a book Joie had grabbed from the top of the shelf. Will looked up and asked me to read to them. We went back to the beginning of

Joie's book and read through it. Then, Will reached over and pulled the book closest to him off the shelf. When that one was finished, Joie did the same thing, taking the nearest book she could reach and asking for it to be the next one read. Neither child objected to any of the choices.

I was reading to several children after lunch. As I finished one book Peter came along and asked me to read <u>The Truck Book</u>. I agreed if the rest of the group wanted it, too. No one had any objections, so Peter sat on the floor in front of me while I read it to the group. Peter picked up a book lying on the floor and handed it to me to read when I had finished <u>The Truck Book</u>. This choice, too, was okay with the group.

Within any combination of children that formed a group interacting with a book, there was a willingness to tolerate interruptions and wait for a friend to return to share or for an adult to be able to continue reading.

Mikki asked Nora to read <u>Cinderella</u> to her. Nora agreed but said they would have to take the book to the big block area so she could keep an eye on the kids playing there. Mikki agreed, so they settled on the edge of the area and began to read. They were soon joined by Will, Kurt, Eli and Kerrie. Nora left to answer the phone and was away some minutes but the group continued to sit in the big block area and wait for her to return. Soon after they had picked up the story again it was breakfast time. They all adjourned to the table and Nora continued reading at the

table. The children ate and listened though the story was continually interrupted by requests for bagels and more juice. They voiced their objections when Nora had to answer the phone again, but they continued to wait for her to return and listened to the story through to the end.

Edmund was reading from <u>Three Favorite Fairy Tales</u> to Will and Josh. He was interrupted twice to answer the telephone and once to attend to breakfast before they could finish one story. Each time, the boys stayed in the book area to wait for him to return. They took turns holding the place in the book with a finger. They talked to each other while they waited, but gave immediate attention to the story as soon as Edmund returned.

Nora was reading a <u>Star Wars</u> book to Kerrie, Will, Jack and Joie. She had to leave them to talk to parents and answer the telephone several times. They waited patiently, turning the pages and talking about the illustrations until she returned.

A long attention span was also a noticeable trait of the various group interactions with books. It was longer if the group was small (three to six children), but, frequently, it was possible to read for fifteen to twenty minutes to the whole group of thirteen.

Kerrie, Josh and Jack asked me to come to the table and read Scarry's <u>The Jeremy Mouse Book</u> to them. This was quite a long book; sixty-four pages divided into one and one-half to three page chapters. I read twenty-four pages to them and then

Edmund needed the table for breakfast, so our group moved to the book corner and I read six more pages. After breakfast the group returned and settled down to hear ten more pages before circle time.

Jack, Kerrie, Josh and Joie sat in the book corner with <u>Robin Hood</u> spread across their laps. They looked through it together showing each other their favorite parts, acting out bits and pieces of the story with their voices or their hands. Nora joined them and began to read the story. Eventually, all of the children ended up in the book corner listening. The story reading continued for twenty-five minutes.

Within any group physical contact was important. Each child wanted to see the illustrations at some point and seemed to prefer to be close enough to touch either the adult reader or another child.

Several Children/Book(s)

The differences between the book interaction groups that included an adult and those that didn't were similar to those between a single child and an adult or two children together. Several children looking at books together might do one of two things. As a group they would share the same book, telling the story to each other using the illustrations and going through the book from front to back.

Jack sat on the floor with the Robin Hood book in his lap. Joie joined him to look through it. Soon, Kerrie, too, decided she'd like to look through it. All three sat together, taking turns turning the pages, engrossed in telling the story to each other using the illustrations. Josh and Jude asked to join the group and the story continued as they all talked about the characters, the swords, the sheaths and the action. They also dramatized bits of it with their voices and their hands.

Mikki, Jordon and Eli sat together on the floor in the book corner looking through Nock Family Circus. They took turns turning the pages, each child telling a different part of the story through the illustrations.

Control within the group usually depended on the make-up of the group. The four or five children most interested in the Star Wars Books were usually under the thumb of Kerrie. She had seen all of the videos, owned several of them, and decided who could come to her house to see them. In addition, she owned the most Star Wars books. She was quite genereous in sharing them, but she recognized the power that ownership gave her. The group usually sat around her, they all talked and pointed to things in the illustrations, but, Kerrie held the book on her lap, turned the pages, and decided who would sit next to her. Often she directed the discussion though she was willing to let others

contribute and also let others sit and look through her books by themselves.

More often, however, several children would all sit together in the book area, each looking at his or her own book and sharing it with the rest of the group. Control, as such, was shared. They recommended books to each other and showed each other their favorite parts or the illustrations they found interesting. They often went back to reread the book to themselves or to read one that a friend had looked at before.

Jack sat at the table, looking at The Truck Book. Will came and sat beside him to look at the book, too. Kerrie and Josh sat on the other side of the table, Kerrie holding one of her Star Wars books. The four of them talked while Jack finished looking at his book. Jack pushed The Truch Book over to Will and said "Here. Look at it yourself." Then Jack took Mooncake and began to look through that. Will finished looking through The Truck Book and ask if he could look at Mooncake with Jack. Jack nodded yes and then asked Will if he wanted to see something in the book. Will leaned way over to see what Jack was pointing at. Jack said "Look at this! They're making something." Will pointed to it and commented that it was a rocket ship. They finished looking at the book and Jack went back through it again, saying, "I want to see where he shoots it."

Mikki and Jordon sat together in the book area, each looking at a book of their own choice. Jordon had The Nock

Family Circus and Mikki had Disney's Cinderella. They each showed the other one their favorite illustrations and pointed out their favorite parts.

Book talk within a group of children was most often centered around the characters and actions in familiar books. They tended to exhibit their book handling knowledge to each other as well.

Several Children/Adult/Book(s)

Book talk in a group that included an adult went a bit differently. In this context, the children would often participate by joining in on the repetitive or predictable parts of the story

I read The Three Little Pigs to Kerrie, Josh and Alan. They all joined in repeating 'not by the hair on my chinny,chinny chin.' Nora read The Elephant and The Bad Baby to Kerrie, Will and Jude. The story has a rather elaborate, cumulative pattern. The three children quickly began to use the illustrations to help Nora repeat the pattern each time it appeared.

The children contributed to the reading experience in other ways as well. Jonathan was particularly gifted at oral story telling. He would begin a story that the group was familiar with such as Robin Hood and then suddenly change the whole thing and involve another story. For instance, the knights in Robin Hood got invited into the house of the three bears who couldn't eat their hot porridge. The hot porridge, however, got eaten by

159

the Fat Cat. Jonathan kept the story going at a fast pace, involving the whole group physically by acting out bits and pieces of the stories and verbally by having them recite the familiar, repetitive parts. The group had no trouble following leaps he made from story to story, since they were familiar with all of them. They were enthusiastic and the whole episode ended in gales of laughter

Nora read A Story, A Story to Jude, Kerrie, Will and Joie. She taught them a hand motion to indicate the job of each of Anansi's spider sons. She read the book through several times and the children acted out the motions, either all together or each child chose a son and took the appropriate turn as the story progressed.

The adult reading to the group would sometimes involve them directly in the story by leaving out key words in sentences in a familiar story. They would ask the children fill in the blanks. Teachers would also use the children's names instead of the actual names of the book characters. Nora did this with Ellie, Holly, Josh and Jude as they listened to Snow White and Jesse did it with Will, Kerrie and Josh as they listened to The Jeremy Mouse Book.

A small group of children would use the illustrations to explore content with the adult. Wacky Wednesday was the favorite for this. For instance, Jude had asked me to read to her. As soon as we headed for the book area, Josh joined us and then

Will and Joie, too, came along. Joie asked me to read <u>Wacky</u> <u>Wednesday</u> and everyone else agreed with her choice. <u>Wacky</u> <u>Wednesday</u> is the story of a boy who encounters a consecutive number of strange or 'wacky' things on a particular Wednesday, such as shoes on the ceiling and trees with no trunks. The text is written in rhyme and the wacky things are hidden in the illustrations. This was a favorite and had been read to various individual children. As a group, they looked for the wacky items on each page, pointing and calling out 'wacky' when they found one. They knew each page contained a specific number of wacky things and weren't content to go on until each one had been identified. During the second reading, they each took a page and found the wacky things individually.

Discussions that arose out of book interactions involving an adult and a group of children were different from those that happened when a group of children were on their own with a book. Like individuals alone with an adult and a book, a group of children also recognized and used the adult's broader base of knowledge and experience to explore and expand their own. Most frequently this kind of discussion involved relating the story back to their own lives.

Jude had brought in a version of a <u>Star Wars</u> story which the group had not heard. Nora sat to read it to her and was immediately joined by Will, Kerrie, Josh, Adam, Jack and Joie. They were all especially attentive, sitting as close as possible to

Nora and leaning over her to pore over the illustrations. As Nora read to them, she asked questions that led them to clarify the parts of the story with which she was not familiar. To do this, they had to refer back to plots of other <u>Star Wars</u> books which they knew but she didn't.

> Nora: " Do the Ewoks and the Star Wars characters end up being friends?"
> Group: "Yeah! They help Han and Leia in Kerrie's book."
> Nora: "This book says the death star explodes and Darth Vader is killed. Does this really happen?"
> Will " No! Know why?"
> Kerrie (interrupting) "Cause there's more stories after this."
> Josh was adamant in explaining that they died because they 'got old, not because they were killed.'

Nora also asked them questions which related the book to possibilities in their own lives. She asked them what might happen if someone like R2D2 or C3P0 showed up in their front yards. They went on to discuss how scary that might be, what they might do and finally decided they would want to know these 'people' better before having them walking around their neighborhood. Later in the story, they talked about how the Ewoks thought that C3P0 was God and how confusing that might be. Kerrie asked me to read <u>The Jeremy Mouse Book</u> to her. We were immediately joined by Will and Joie. This is a book of short chapters, each telling about a different adventure of Jeremy Mouse. One chapter is about a surprise birthday party for George

162

Goat. These three children told me when their birthdays were.
Kerrie remembered that my daughter's birthday is a day after
hers and Joie commented that her name and my daughter's name
are the same. When the story was finished, they wanted to know
why George Goat ate the candles instead of the cake. This led to a
discussion of what kinds of things other animals ate and what
they, as children, liked to eat.

> Joie: ' On Sesame Street it showed a goat eating hair."
> Rachael: " It would have to be your hair since it's the
>   longest!"
> Kerrie: " or Jude's because her hair is REALLY long."

In a later chapter several animals are having to dismount from a
stranded ship by swinging to shore on a rope. Two of the animals
are well dressed foxes; a lady and her husband. The lady is
swooning in her husband's arms. Both Kerrie and Joie pointed to
this and told me that these two are Maid Marion and Robin Hood.

> Rachael: "Why do you think they're Maid Marion and
>   Robin Hood?"
> Kerrie: "They aren't really. They're just foxes."
> Joie: "But we pretend they are Robin Hood and Maid
>   Marion and all the girls are Maid Marion."

Discussions led the children to make direct behavioral
connections and to ask for definitions and explanations.

Nora gathered the group into the book area for a story.
Joie and Will asked me to read a different story to them on the

163

other side of the book area. So I began <u>Mufaro's Beautiful</u> <u>Daughters</u>. When I read the word bountiful in the story, Will asked if I didn't mean beautiful instead.

> Rachael: " No, it says bountiful but you're right it
> sounds almost the same. It has all the same
> sounds except the middle one.
> Will: "What does it mean?"
> Rachael: "Having plenty; lots of things, a big harvest.
> Will: "Okay."

Later, when we came to the word destination in the story Joie asked what that meant and I defined it for her. As the story went on Will commented on the nastier of the two sisters.

> Will: " She's mean."
> Rachael: "That's right. She's not too nice, is she?"
> Joie: "She's not nice and that's why she doesn't get to
> be queen."

I was reading <u>Why Mosquitoes Buss in People's Ears</u> to several children. When the story mentioned a 'council' Adam claimed that's what he was, then he immediately asked me what a council was. When I defined it for him, Adam decided that, yes, that's what he was all right.

Generally, the talk between children and an adult was wide ranging as the interaction progressed. Some books were chosen and read because the children had heard them before or had the same book at home and liked the continuity that made between home and school. They might have missed the beginning or the

164

end of a book read the day before and they wanted to hear what they had missed and talk about the part they did hear.

Josh asked me to read The Scarecrows and Their Child to him. We discussed the fact that we had started it before but couldn't finish it and no one else had finished reading it to him either. As we read, Will and Joie join us and all of the children began to make 'self' choices from among the characters.

> Will: " Know who I am in this book? The kitten!" He
>   pointed and smiled.
> Josh: " Then I'm him!" Pointed to the father
>   scarecrow.
> Rachael: "Then I guess I'll be Blossom." They all
>   laughed

When they finished this book Josh wanted I Am a Mouse.

> Josh: " I love this book. I have it at home."
> Will: " I hate this book."
> Rachael: "Well, it's short, Will, then we'll read
>   another."

Later Will chose The Elephant and the Bad Baby for me to read aloud. Josh didn't like that one so he left for a bit. Will then chose The Foot Book and they all joined in on the rhymes. Meanwhile, Josh had returned with The Very Hungry Caterpillar in his hands. I read that one next. Both Josh and Joie commented that they had this book at home. Joie asked for Ira Sleeps Over and Josh had this one at home, too. They went off for breakfast. When Will had eaten, he returned to the book corner and asked me to read more of The Scarecrows and Their Child. As we

165

began to read, Kerrie, Joie, Jude and Adam all came to listen, too. The Scarecrow's child is a cat and the discussion formed around the fact that the book doesn't say if it's a boy or a girl cat, so they decide it can be either. Both Joie and Will claimed to be the cat child and since the book didn't mention gender, both agreed they could be.

> Adam: " Hey, Joie, how come you don't want to be
>   the mother?" (her usual choice)
> Joie: (shrugging) "Just don't want to."
> Adam: "Then I can be the mother."
> Jesse: "Sure."

They read a few pages and then insisted that I look ahead in the story to be sure the cat finds its parents in end.

Other interactions involved discussion about more abstract ideas and concepts such as imagination and death. Kerrie and I read Window Wishing and when we had finished it, Kerrie chose Come away from the water, Shirley. Jude and Joie joined us. I read the actual words which consisted of admonitions from Shirley's parents about what she should and shouldn't do. The second page of each double page spread, however, showed what Shirley is imagining and what was Shirley's fantasy. The girls discussed this with me as we read.

When seven of the children sat to hear Nora read Annie and the Old One, first they discussed the kinds of animals they might encounter in the desert and then the idea that dying (as the

grandmother in the story does) could be considered "going to heaven".

Discussion covered any topic that came out of any story read. Story content was related specifically back to the lives of the children as well as used to extend their experiences. They used story and talk to express their feelings and ideas, to state their likes and dislikes, to make choices and to define the world around them.

Communal response to picture books also covered a wide spectrum of behaviors. Groups of children, either with an adult or on their own, negotiated space and position in book sharing, negotiated book choice and exhibited various levels of attentions as books were shared. In addition, they used books to display their literacy competence and to extend meaning and explore possibilities through play activities. Adults played an important role in all of these response behaviors and had some specific expectations for some of the shared interactions with books.

<u>Guided or Directed Response Behaviors</u>

<u>Adults' Use of Books to Effect Behavior</u>

Throughout any given day, adults used books to accomplish various things. Jonathan's statement that "books just seem to

bring everybody together" was indicative of the expectations of both the teachers and the children in this setting.

Bringing them together, as well as quieting them down, was an expected function of book reading. This happened, primarily, during what might be termed transition times. Usually the forty five minutes to an hour during which the children arrived and breakfast was served, was free play time. However, if the group became rowdy or aggressive, they would all be called to the book area to hear a story before breakfast. This happened more often just before lunch was served when they had just come in from outdoor play and tended to be noisy and rambunctious. They were told to put their outdoor clothes away and go to the rug and someone would read to the whole group before they ate. This was the time Nora would be most likely to read new book selections to the children such as <u>Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters</u> and <u>The Elephant and the Bad Baby</u>. Directly after lunch they went to the book area again and an adult read to them while they took turns going to the bathroom. When everyone was finished, they went to their mats for nap time and heard still another story. For several days, this before-nap story might be a short chapter book, such as <u>The Jeremy Mouse Book </u>or <u>Charlie and the Chocolate Factory</u>. Most of the children also took several books to their mats to look at before they fell asleep. They also gathered in the book corner, as a group, just before they went outdoors for play in the morning and, again, in the afternoon. At these two

times they were more likely to look at books in small groups while they waited for the rest to finish dressing. At all of these times the expectations of both adults and children were that they would became quieter in order to listen to the story. They lowered their voices, sat still and stayed together. This procedure usually worked quite well and was effective at both bringing them together and quieting them down.

Adults also used books to manage behavior more directly. If a child or several children became too noisy, or aggressive in the context of the larger group they might be sent to the book area to look at books until they could quiet themselves down. Neither the adults or the children seemed to perceive this as punishment, but more as an alternative. Punishment for unacceptable behavior meant being sent to sit in their cubby, completely isolated from all the others.

The Star Wars books and the fantasy play behavior that resulted from these books, provided the most interesting opportunity to observe how adults influenced behavior through books. The strong interest in the Star Wars books was evident throughout the whole year. In the beginning, it involved a core of four children: Kerrie, who owned most of the books and had access to all of the videos, Adam, Jack and Joie. Gradually, over the course of the year, Will and Josh joined this group and, occasionally, Jude would play as well. For this core group, Star Wars play tended to dominate all their free play time. The boys,

especially, spent much of the time acting out the violent shoot-to-kill parts and all of them argued a good deal over who else could play with them, who could play what characters and who was 'really dead'. To combat this ostracizing and aggressive behavior, the teachers did several things. To begin with, this setting offered the children a great deal of free play time, as well as the opportunity to make many of their own choices about what they would do in this free time. The teachers didn't want to interfere with this set up any more than was needed. They decided that the free play time just after circle (approximately 10:00 - 10:50 A.M.) would become a choice activity time. Each day they set up at least six different activities for this period and at the end of circle, each child made a choice about what to do. 'Books' was the only choice that remained consistent day after day. Occasionally Star Wars play was included as a choice.

Children could still play Star Wars at other free play times, but making it an occasional choice at this particular time, gave the teachers the opportunity to see to it that other children were included if they wanted to play Star Wars, to encourage the children who played it the most, to do other activities and to interact with other children, to guide role choice and steer plot development into less violent forms of expression.

For instance, Joie and Will began to play Star Wars in the large block area. Nora came along and asked them what they were doing. They told her and she suggested they get some

paper and write down the names of who they were and scramble up the roles so they could be different characters. They objected but Nora, gently but firmly, insisted. They finally agreed when she said they could be whichever character they wanted to be for five minutes and then had to be a different one from the scrambled list for five minutes. Kerrie joined the group after her mother left. Nora stayed with the group to see that the play didn't get too rough and to see that the five minute limit was followed.

Jack, Kerrie, Will, Joie and Josh spent some time in the book corner first thing in the morning looking through one of Kerrie's Star Wars books. When no one was in the big block area, they went over and built a space ship with the blocks. Nora, again, joined them and they negotiated the five minute limit on character choice. Nora stayed with them and managed to keep the noise and aggression under control within the context of the story play they were creating. She would tell them it had to be quiet in space or else the ship had to land or she said the space ship was crowded and there wasn't room to push or stretch out. This worked well and the Star Wars play was enjoyed by the whole group for well over half an hour.

In addition, Edmund helped the children take the unacceptable behavior and put it back into story which it came from in the first place. He took large sheets of blank newsprint and had each child who wanted to, draw and label a favorite Star

Wars character on it. For several days, he gathered them as a group to talk about the pictures they had drawn. Then, they dictated story information about the characters and he wrote it down. In the dictation they could have the characters do anything they wanted them to, including the violent shoot-to-kill incidents. In addition, more than one person could draw a picture of their favorite character (Han Solo or Princess Leia) and tell a story about that character, an expansion of role possibilities. These pictures and stories were displayed in the classroom and, later, put together as a book, which the children shared with the other class in the downstairs classroom and also showed their parents.

When they had finished this large format Star Wars book, the children, with Edmund's help, decided to write another Star Wars story which they would act out for the other class and/or for their parents. Edmund gave them one sentence from one of the books and they dictated the rest with only occasional input from him. This story differed from the other. In the first one, they could use any action they wanted but, because this one was going to be dramatized, they had to handle the violent behavior in the story, in ways that were acceptable for the classroom; no shooting, pushing or hitting. The story/drama was four pages long. They also illustrated it. They did dramatize parts of it for the other class but not for parents. (See Appendix D)

The children seemed to find these somewhat more structured responses to the <u>Star Wars</u> stories quite acceptable. Gradually, they began to be more willing to try out other Star Wars characters during their free play. They were always enthusiastic about drawing pictures of their favorite characters and about dictating stories about them. They enjoyed the dramatization too. Star Wars play continued to be the favorite play activity, but it assumed less importance as the year went on. Gradually, these children spent more time in the book area looking at the <u>Star Wars</u> books and talking about the characters and the action than in actually acting it out. Several of them even turned it into comedy, playing with the language. With much laughter, Han Solo became Ron Rolo and Princess Leia became Princess Peeah. The sly use of bathroom humor here didn't go unnoticed.

Adults' Use of Books to Instruct

Instruction was often a result of the interaction between an adult and children and books. Frequently, the teachers used a book or books in circle time to accomplish direct instruction or preparation. At other times, they seized the opportunity to instruct when it arose out of the more casual reading of books to individual children or to a group of children.

Direct instruction, using a book, was always done during circle time in the morning. This twenty to thirty minute period

was devoted to the specific curricular aspects of the program such as personal safety, feelings and emotions, plant life, celebrations. The curriculum was designed to augment their particular life experiences through discussion, song, drama and practical activity (planting and growing seeds, science experiments to see what floats and what doesn't, eating with their feet, making ice cream and taking field trips). Books were often used to accomplish different parts of this curriculum.

For instance, in the on-going discussions about feelings and emotions, Martha took time to read Baby Sister for Francis to the whole group during circle. After they heard it, they spent some time talking about babies. When Eli's mother worked at the center she brought his baby brother with her and he was always the center of instant attention for several of the girls. The mothers of two of the other children were pregnant and several other children, also, had younger siblings at home. Two children, however, were only children. Hoban's book and the discussion that followed allowed each child to think about and express what they thought and felt about siblings, babies and possible family changes.

Celebrations played an important role in the lives of these children. Their birthdays were always acknowledged. The teachers helped them make ice cream and bake a cake for a birthday celebration after lunch. If a child requested it, the book

<u>Happy Birthday and All That Jazz</u>, was read for the special day as well.

175

Several of the children were Jewish. In the spring, Josh's parents volunteered to come in and make matza with the children. In preparation for this, the book <u>The Story of Passover</u> by was read to the whole class during story time. The group discussed the holiday and talked about making matzah in the morning before Josh's parents arrived. They had also prepared some questions of their own.

Books were also used to prepare for field trips. During March of the spring I was there, all four classes took a field trip to a maple sugar farm. For three days during the week before the trip, the teachers took turns reading <u>Sugaring Time</u> to the children. This was a rather long, factual book about the making of maple sugar on a farm. It was illustrated with photographs of the farm family and friends involved in the process. Because of its length, it took three days to read. Each day the teacher recapped what had been read the day before to maintain the continuity. During the reading, the discussions ranged over the seasons, the weather, the calendar, the height of the snow in the pictures compared to the height of the children, etc.. Once at the actual maple sugar farm, the teachers helped the children make comparisons between what they had seen in the book and what this experience was for them. During circle time for the two days following the trip, the children composed and dictated a class

story about their trip and again talked about how it was different from the book. The story was displayed in the classroom for the children to share with their parents. (See Appendix F)

These were the experiences which were enhanced by the direct instruction through use of a particular book. More indirect instruction frequently occurred as well, when an adult reading to a child or to a group of children used the book to expand the content of the story. This kind of instruction arose easily out a casual book interaction. However, the discussion was always initiated by the teacher and tended to be more specifically oriented toward the expansion of content or ideas than the discussions that came out of questions the children asked. Most often, this kind of indirect instruction also arose out of interactions with very familiar books, while child initiated discussions usually came out of books new to them.

Nora was reading <u>Lightning Strikes Twice</u> to Jack, Will, Josh, Kerrie, Alan and Adam. Nora stopped to comment on the little phrases the papa in the book was always reciting. She called them platitudes and explained what a platitude was. Later in the story the following conversation took place.

> Nora: "Do you see something that the papa is doing that is dangerous?
> Jack: "Putting nails in his mouth."
> Nora: "That doesn't make sense to me."
> Alan: "Maybe it's okay for woodseys."

Kerrie: "Animals in the woods don't really use
        hammer and nails."
Nora: " So maybe this is make believe?"
Children in chorus "YEE -SS- SS
Nora: "Would we do that if we used hammer and
        nails?"
Children in chorus: "NO-O-O!"

When the story had progressd a bit farther, Nora again stopped to ask them if they remember seeing the real mole houses in the playground yard.   They remembered.

Nora: "If a mole could see underground what mignt
       he see?"
Kerrie: "He might see a worms."
Jack: "There would be a lot of dirt."

Nora asked if any of them had ever been underground and the discussion continued around their experiences in subways and on trips to caverns.

Another time Joie had asked Nora to read Abby to her. They were soon joined by Josh, Adam and Will. Nora asked the children if they could figure out what Abby was writing. They decided, with some help from Nora, that, because Abby was about their age and size and was printing, she was probably writing her name and, indeed, that is what Abby was writing. Nora went on to check and see who in the listening group could write and spell their own name. They could all spell their own names, but not everyone could actually write their name.

Jonathan was reading <u>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</u> to the whole group while they waited for lunch to be delivered. As he went along he used the story to check on who knew the sequence of the days of the week.

First thing in the morning Nora sat in the book corner to read to Josh. He had chosen <u>Little Red Riding Hood</u>. As Nora read, other children came and sat to hear the story, too. Hyman's illustrations for this fairy tale are very colorful, detailed and quite realistic. Using the illustrations Nora developed this conversation.

Nora: " Are wolves really as scary as this book makes them seem

Children in chorus: "Ye-e-s-s-S."

Nora: "Not really. You know what wolves eat a lot? Mice! They don't eat people. I met a wolf once and a man I know 'sings' with wolves. He plays the saxaphone and the wolves howl back. There aren't any wolves around here though."

Jack: "There are in Alaska though." (Jack moved herefrom Alaska just a year ago.) "The scary thing there is POLAR BEARS!"

Will: " I could never go to Alaska!"

Nora: "Why? Because you're afraid. Don't be afraid of Alaska, guys."

Will: "No, because I don't have anything warm to wear."

Nora: "Sure you do. Boots like Jack's are warm enough for Alaska."

Nora pointed out the wildflowers in the illustrations. She named them for the children as she pointed them out. Later, they talked about how Little Red Riding Hood felt afraid.

> Nora: "Should she have trusted that feeling?"
> Children in chorus: "Ye-e-s-s.

She went on to ask them what they might have done if they had been Red Riding Hood. This discussion fit in well with their recent circle discussion about personal safety and saying no to strangers.

Directed or guided response behaviors cover a wide range, from the built in, unvoiced expectations that books do affect behavior simply by 'bringing everyone together and quieting them down" through the specific and casual instruction and discussion that came from book interactions.

Summary

Response behaviors were divided into three main categories; (1) Individual/Dyadic, (2) Communal and (3) Guided/Directed. In any of the categories, the response behaviors covered a wide range of behaviors. Children used book interactions to make transitions, extend their knowledge base, explore their emotions, practice and improve their competencies and as a basis for fantasy play. Teachers played active and important roles in many of these interactions. Teachers also had

specific expectations of some of these behaviors to affect behavior and to instruct. The responses of these pre-schoolers to literature were extraordinarily rich and varied in this setting and provided opportunities and possibilities for the creation of meaning in the lives of the children. Distinct areas of meaning creation which the children in this setting explored through play and response to literature are addressed in chapter 6.

CHAPTER VI

SECONDARY WORLDS: CREATION AND USE

Secondary Worlds Created

The second question of this study was meant to form the basis of a discussion of the observed response behaviors and how they might reflect the characteristics of Winnicott's 'third area of play' and of the 'secondary world' of response as described by Benton. However, as analysis of the data went on, it became evident that more than the simple reflection of similar characteristics was important. The how and why of a secondary world being created in this setting seemed as important as the reflection of the characteristics. Consequently, the question has been expanded to include discussion of these aspects and will concentrate on the characteristics of secondary worlds which describes them as dependent for existence on trustworthy, reliable relationships. The third question of the study concerned the meaning making possibilities inherent in the secondary worlds of play and literary response. The other characteristics of secondary world which describe their individuality and their provision of place and space for imagination and exploration will

be discussed in the context of the third question. Both the second and third questions are addressed in this chapter.

Commonalities: Benton/ Winnicott

All of the commonalitites between Winnicott's 'third area' of play and Benton's 'secondary world' of response do bear repeating briefly at this point. Both the 'third area' of play and the 'secondary world' of response are thought of as occurring in a potential space between an individual's inner psychic reality and the reality shared with the outer world. In order to exist both depend on relationships of trust and reliability: relationships that are flexible and negotiable and that are not arbitrarily imposed or changed. These intermediate worlds are the creations of individuals and are not identical because they are dependent on the varied experiences of living. Finally, both offer space and a place to think, imagine, explore and create meaning for life. (For the duration of this dissertation the term 'secondary world' will be used to designate Benton's world of response and Winnicott's world of play). The second of these four commonalities which has to do with the underlying trust and reliablity necessary for the formation of secondary worlds is the basis for discussion of this question. The first, third and fourth of these commonalities will be addressed in the discussion of question three.

Winnicott (1971) quite accurately described how and why he saw an intermediate world develop through the interactions

Winnicott (1971) quite accurately described how and why he saw an intermediate world develop through the interactions between an infant and a nurturing adult. His concern was basically with "the child as discoverer and creator of the self" (Natof, 1989). Benton went on to use characteristics similar to Winnicott's to describe his ideas of an intermediate world of response to literature. Benton's concern was with the child as reader creating meaning for the self. The question for this study became what contributes to the creation of a secondary world where a child becomes a discoverer and creator of self and of meaning for that self through books and play. Context, in many forms, appeared to have an important part in this creation.

Contexts of Secondary Worlds

Contexts are constituted by what people are doing and where and when they are doing it. People in interaction become contexts for each other. The contextual worlds of childhood exist wherever children live. Within these contextual worlds and through their own unique experiences, children create authentic foundations for their own existences. Winnicott felt that the creation of the intermediate world of play, which he considered essential for creative living, began at birth in a context of acceptance and encouragement for the infant and his or her needs. Benton postulated a similar context as necessary for the development of an intermediate world of response to literature. Just such a context played an important part in the overlapping

worlds of play and response which occurred in this pre-school setting.

Physical Context. First, there are several things to consider about this setting. To begin with it was physically set up to accommodate the general developmental and cognitive needs of this age group. There were large open areas for rest, play and activity. A wide variety of toys, props, manipulatives and books was available and openly displayed. It was, essentially, a physically comfortable place for young children. In addition, while it was not a home situation where interactions might be more on a one to one or one to two basis, the number of students(13) was kept small and there were several adults (4) with whom the children could interact. This ratio allowed for more individual time and attention than is possible in some other pre-school settings.

Philosophical Context. Philosophically, too, this setting made an important contribution. As was discussed earlier in the chapter, the emphasis here was on encouraging a child's individuality and building self esteem within the shared community. The teachers in this classroom took this philosophy to heart and each made a serious and consistent effort to work with the children as individually as possible.

Winnicott suggested that the intermediate world of play, vital to creative living, does not happen if there is too much

interference from the outer world. If the parental interpretation of life becomes too strong or is too insistently imposed at the time the infant is attempting to create his/her own images and sense of self then the infant fails to build the ability to create a secondary world where he can explore and create his own meaning. Instead he assumes the meanings being imposed by the adults and has lost the opportunity to play creatively. Similarly, when outside interpretations of literature are imposed on the young listening or reading child, the opportunity to build a secondary world of individual response is lost or fails to be allowed. Attitudes of trust, reliability, acceptance and self worth are necessary for the creation of the intermediate world.

Human Context. The presence of these attitudes on the part of the teachers in this classroom provided the children with the opportunity to create secondary worlds in their play and in their response to literature.

An example of such a secondary world being created was when space was made for the large, wooden castle Alan had brought in to share for a few days. In addition, Alan had a whole set of miniature knights, horses and weapons. The boys, in particular, were fascinated with the whole set up. All of the boys knew some of the Robin Hood stories. Alan told several stories he knew about King Arthur. Alan had also visited a real castle in England when he had visited his grandparents there. The fantasy play that resulted revolved around all of these various stories

and the castle. The boys especially wanted to to explore the battle aspects of these stories and did so within the safety of the secondary world they created. The various story contributions were welcomed and respected by both the teachers and the children. The boys had created a trustworthy place to explore their ideas about battle: a secondary world that didn't involve actual pushing, shoving, hitting of each other. The adults, by making room for the castle, encouraging Alan's stories and not interfering with the play (beyond seeing that no one was hurt) provided access to the creation of a secondary world that gave the boys the opportunity to explore their ideas about themselves and their ways of being in the world. This intermediate world of play and response was a safe, reliable place, where each had personal opportunity to contribute out of their own experiences and ideas.

Another time a secondary world was created as one of the aides sat in the overstuffed chair reading <u>Lightning Strikes Twice</u> aloud. Kerrie sat, cuddled close, in the chair beside her. Josh sat in the small rocker beside them, hands folded, listening intently and rocking. As the aide read, Jude came and climbed onto the back of the big chair behind her and Kerrie. Soon Will noticed them reading and came to stand quietly beside them to listen, too. Each child joining the group did so quietly and unobtrusively, leaving one or another on-going activity and slipping into the story world being created by the reader and the

listeners. During the course of the reading, the aide asked them if they knew what moles looked like. The discussion that resulted contained comments and ideas from all the children about having seen dead moles, pet cats having brought moles into their houses, descriptions of the ruffled patterns moles leave in the dirt and why moles don't need to see underground.

In this instance Jude and Will had made the choice to leave their activities and join the reading group. Each knew they would be welcomed and admitted. They didn't disturb the others but simply slipped into the secondary world being created by the group reading together. They were all comfortable with the continuation of the story and felt no disruption or interruption. The aide accepted them without disturbing the listening atmosphere. She also elicited their contributions to the experience with a question. They all had comments and ideas to give and all of these were accepted. Each had an opportunity to contribute and all were listened to with respect and patience. The secondary world created around this story was a familiar and reliable experience, a place to listen, think and contribute.

One morning, Nora joined a number of children already in the book corner. She offered to read to them and gave them three titles to chcse from. They all agreed to hear <u>Little Red Riding Hood</u>. Several separate discussions occurred as the story continued. Nora and the children talked about wolves, wildflowers, feelings and trust. Josh and Jack both claimed to be

the hunter and Will claimed to be the weapons. As the story was being read, Mikki looked up at Nora and, nodding in my direction, asked Nora what I was writing. Nora simply answered that I was writing about the story and went on reading. Mikki was satisfied and continued listening.

Nora had a great deal to do with the creation of a secondary world in this interaction with books. By being willing to sit and read aloud to them, she gave them access to the story world itself. She asked, allowed and encouraged them to share their ideas and experiences, helping them make connections to their own lives and think beyond the moment. Mikki asked a question which was not directly related to the story or the discussion. This could have resulted in interruption of the secondary world depending on how Nora handled it. Mikki was always very interested in what I was writing. If Nora had said she didn't know what I was writing, it was more than likely that Mikki would have left the group and come to ask me directly. Instead, Nora answered that I was writing about the story. This satisfied Mikki and kept her part of the secondary world. Her answer served to bring me into the secondary world as well. They were listening and talking and I was writing but we were all involved in the same experience. We were a congenial group, each involved in our own way, acceptable to each other and to the whole and safe enough to be individual, all co-creators of a reliable and safe secondary world.

Belief in, and respect for, the abilities of children to create their own patterns of learning and make their own choices led the teachers to set up a relatively flexible overall daily stucture. Within this structure there were large amounts of time for play, much of which had its roots in literature in one way or another.

While not specifically articulated, the belief, on the part of the teachers, in the importance of literature was very evident in this classroom. Books was the one activity for daily choice time that was always avaliable. Books were used to accomplish the various aspects of the curriculum. They used books to solve problems (a lost gerbil), impart information (maple sugar farm or space), affect behavior and instruct.

Perhaps the most important aspect of their belief in the importance of literature was manifested in their encouragement of the children's interaction with books. The teachers spent a great deal of time reading to the children. One adult or another was almost always available to sit and read. They also spent time talking to the children about the books, helping them to make connections between their lives and the story content, asking questions, clarifying information and encouraging them to share their individual experiences and intrepretations of the story.

The adults in this setting helped provide both opportunity for and access to the creation of secondary worlds. The overall structure of the daily routine was quite open and flexible. It

provided time and space for play. It was not strictly regimented and did not impose absolute time and activity decisions on the children. The children were given many opportunities to make choices and decisions for themselves. The teachers displayed their belief in the children as creators of their own meaning, allowing them time and place to make a secondary world of their own, a realiable place to play, explore and respond.

Secondary Worlds Not Created

It appears that the context, physical, human and philosophical, of this particular setting was instrumental in providing access to the creation of secondary worlds for the exploration of self and of meaning for the self. However, the creation of such intermediate worlds did not happen automatically, even here. Book and play interactions which involved the children and Martha were rare and when they did occur a secondary world such as I have described was not created. Martha often offered to read to the children but seldom did any of them accept her offer and they did not go to her to ask her to read to them. Martha's attitudes toward the children were as open, encouraging and accepting as those of the other teachers. Martha was a physically challenged young woman who spent most of her time in a motorized wheel chair. As has been stated, a young man, Edmund, had been hired specifically to facilitate her mobility. The children liked Martha and spent time talking with her, showing her their toys and work. Martha did

occasionally conduct story hour but always with Edmund nearby. It was difficult for the children to get physically close to Martha because of the wheelchair. Even when she had been lifted out of the chair to sit on the floor, the children still had to be careful not to trip over her legs or fall against her. In a sense, the children seemed to know that she could not take care of them and in fact they had to take care of her: running to get Edmund when she needed him, not stepping on her or tripping over her when she was out of her chair as she could not move on her own. They were also aware that there really was very little that they could do to help her. They were not physically large enough or strong enough to be of use to her. The children had to be directly involved with the reality of her handicaps and such direct involvement left them little opportunity to play or respond separate from her immediate needs. They seemed somewhat uncomfortable if left alone with her.

While for the majority of the children the contexts of this setting supplied the opportunity to create a secondary world, it didn't happen for all of the children. Creation of a secondary world seemed to happen most easily for those children who had been in the setting the longest. They were most familiar with the adults, the structure and the environment and most used to interacting with each other and with the setting. Their experiences of all of it had been trustworthy and reliable. Indications were that these children also had extended access to

and interactions with books outside of this setting. This can only be assumed from the casual conversations I had with the children and their parents as well as their ease and comfort dealing with books.

For two of the children, however, this context was not particularly useful in helping them to create secondary worlds in which to explore themselves and create meaning. Peter and DiAnn were considered the most disruptive and uncooperative children in the group. Neither of them were comfortable being a part of the large group. One or the other and frequently both were likely to be sent away from a group story sharing for hitting, screaming, pushing or tripping over others.

DiAnn liked to carry a book around with her as she went from one activity to another: however, she seldom sat to share a book with a friend or asked an adult to read to her. In the smaller group of the extended day program, DiAnn would often quietly join a group listening to a story, listen for a few minutes and then leave. She might repeat this several times as the storyreading was going on. She never sat to listen to a whole story, however. DiAnn was frequently absent from day care, often for several days at a time. Each time, upon her return, it seemed that she felt she had to re-establish her place in the classroom community. Her many absences might have made it

more difficult for her to maintain ties of friendship when they did develop.

Peter was new to the group that year. He had recently come from West Africa with his mother who was pursuing a graduate degree. His father had been in Brazil for some time as well. Peter had two special friends in the group of children who shared this classroom. He often spent time visiting that classroom and seemed more comfortable with their more structured schedule. He would join his class group for a shared story time, usually sitting on the reader's lap or close beside the reader. He seldom sat through an entire story without creating enough disturbance that he was sent to his cubby. Usually his disruption was physically hurtful to other children. However, when he did manage to stay through a story he was always very interested in seeing the illustrations immediately. During one storysharing when I was reading, he requested that I read The Truck Book. The rest of the group agreed to his choice and Peter listened to the whole book, commenting several times on the kinds of trucks he was familiar with that were pictured in the book. Another time he listened to Nora read the entire text of Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters. He knelt in front of her throughout

the whole reading and commented at the end that "That's a story!"

It would appear that, for both Peter and DiAnn, other things might have been going on socially, emotionally and developmentally, that interfered with their abilitiy or opportunity to create secondary worlds in which to explore and learn. It might also be true that the context of this particular setting, while respectful and encouraging of individuality, was not especially helpful to the learning needs and patterns of these two children.

All of the teachers expressed special concern for these two children and their needs but no aspects of the environment were changed to accommodate them. Neither did they get any specific attention which might have helped them more successfully interact socially.

Summary

Winnicott's 'third area' of play and Benton's 'secondary world' of literary response have four basic characteristics in common. Their similarities can be summarized as follow: (1) both occur in a 'place between, between inner psychic reality and outer shared reality, (2) both are created only on the basis of trust and reliability, (3) both are dependent on and enriched by the individual experiences of those involved, and (4) both offer

194

individuals opportunities to explore, create and re-create images, ideas and thoughts in order to create meaning for their lives.

The characteristic of primary importance in the creation of secondary worlds is the establishment of reliable and trustworthy relationships. It is necessary that such relationships both accept and respect the participants involved and do not impose societal ideas and expectations so strongly that individual creation and contributions are inhibited. Once established, these relationships form the basis for building secondary worlds that reflect the other characteristics described by Winnicott and Benton.

The physical, human and philosophical aspects of a setting also contribute greatly to the creation of such a secondary world. An open, flexible structure, space and time, as well as access to literature are necessary in order for children to gain access to the creation of a secondary world. Attitudes of respect, acceptance and encouragement of individuality on the part of adults towards children aid in this creation process as well. While the majority of children in such a setting as this could create and use a secondary world to explore themselves and make meaning for

themselves, it was not always a useful or successful context for all children.

Use of Secondary Worlds

As previously discussed, opportunities for the creation of meaning, which began in infancy in the 'third area' of play experiences, can be expanded and extended through the creation of the 'secondary world' of response to literature. Such a secondary world is separate from both inner psychic reality and outer shared reality, is dependent upon and enriched by individual life experiences and offers opportunities for the creation of meaning. The emphasis of the discussion concerning the third question of this study centers on these aspects of a secondary world. The discussion will begin with a broad example to demonstrate how such an intermediate, separate world is created and is dependent on individual contributions. Next, instances of meaning making around issues of identity, emotion and new and anticipated realities will be discussed. The final section will address the long term, multifaceted nature of secondary worlds with emphasis on the roles teachers played in the meaning making process. The extensive interactions with Star Wars book and the resulting fantasy play will be used to discuss this aspect of secondary worlds and their use.

It is important to note that in talking about the meaning children make for themselves I am being interpretive.

196

Ethnographic methods allow for such an interpretive view on the basis of the researcher's participation in the setting and the thick description of the culture. My interpretations and the subsequent discussion have come out of extensive reading in the field of objective relations psychology, play and response theory as well as extensive observation of the particular patterns of living exhibited by these specific children.

A Broad Example of a Secondary World

Any particular interaction with books usually covered a considerable amount of time and was often an open, flexible activity where children were welcome, and free to come and go. These young children created and used the intermediate secondary worlds of play and literary response to explore their own images, ideas, thoughts and possibilities; here they also explored the context of outer reality, their place in it as well as that of others. They also worked at making the connections between themselves and their world; in short, they used the secondary world to create meaning for themselves and to grow.

Nora joined a number of children already in the book corner. She asked if anyone wanted a story. She said she had three books they could choose from or they could have a different one if they wanted. She showed them Red Riding Hood, Wind Rose and Abby. They all agreed they wanted to hear Red Riding Hood. They all found a place to sit around Nora and listened intently, joining in on the words Little Red Riding Hood

when they appeared in the story. Nora initiated the following discussion the first time the wolf appeared in the story.

Nora: "Are wolves really as scary as this book makes them seem?"

Kids: "Yes-s-s-s!"

Nora: "Not really. You know what wolves eat a lot of? Mice! They don't eat people."
"I met a wolf once. A man I know 'sings' with wolves. He plays his saxophone and the wolves howl back. There aren't any wolves around here."

Jack: "In Alaska the scary thing is POLAR BEARS".

Will: "I could never go to Alaska!"

Nora: "Because you're afraid? Don't be afraid of Alaska, guys."

Will: "No, I don't have anything warm enough to wear."

Nora: "Sure you do -- boots like Jack's are warm enough for Alaska."

Mikki: "What is Rachael doing?"

Nora: "Is she writing?"

Mikki: "What's she writing?"

Nora: " About the story."

Nora continued with the story using different voices for the different characters. She stopped to tell them the name of the different wild flowers in the illustrations. As she read, they cuddled close to her; Jack and Eli were sucking their thumbs and Will his little finger, Joie played with her hair and Jude leaned against Joie with her head on Joie's shoulder. As the story progressed they stopped to talk about the fact that Red Riding Hood was feeling afraid at Grandmother's house. They discussed why she was feeling afraid, when they themselves sometimes

198

might feel afraid. They talked about what Red Riding Hood could do about her feelings and about how they needed to trust their own feelings, too, and who they could go to for help. The story continued once again and when they reached the part where the hunter appeared Josh and Jack both pointed to him and claimed to be him.

Jack: "That's me!"
Josh: "I'm the hunter." Josh also acted out the way the hunter cut open the wolf.
Will: "Know what? I'm the dagger, the gun and the bullet!"
Nora: "So you're all the weapons."
Will: "Yep!"
Nora: "I've heard of you being people but not weapons."
Will: "I'm not anything in this book."
Nora: "I"m quite glad you changed from being the weapons!"

Next the group decided they wanted to hear Abby. In the book, Abby was pictured writing something on a piece of paper.

Nora: "What do you suppose she's writing? She's about your age - 4 &1/2. What would you write?"
Jack: "My name?"
Nora: "Yes!"
Jack: "Great!'

When Nora finished reading Abby, Kerrie requested that she read Noisy Nora. The group agreed with Kerrie's choice and as Nora read they all joined in on the repetitive pattern that they remembered.

Joie: "She's bad."
Jack: "Yeah!"
Eli: (pointing to Noisy Nora running away from home) "She's going to come back! Her mother can't find her but she's going to come back."

Nora finished reading Noisy Nora and asked them if they wanted to hear another. She suggested Mooncake and told them it was about a teddy bear. They agreed to this choice and listened very intently as she read it. Together they also discussd what the moon might taste like.

This book interaction was representative of the book sharing experiences that occurred every day in this setting. One or more of the children often went to the book corner to choose, look at and share stories. This day, this particular group of children had gravitated to books on their own. When Nora joined them, they had already begun to pick up books from the shelf and find places to sit and to talk about the books they were looking at. They were in the process of creating their own intermediate world, separate from the other on-going activities in the room and also separate from totally individual introspection. They were in between these realities. They were in the process of entering the world of story within the books they held. Nora entered this secondary world very easily and was most welcome. The boundaries simply expanded to include her.

Nora, in this instance, was influential in helping to create a secondary world environment that was secure, nurturing and flexible. By joining a group already involved with books in the book corner, Nora validated their choice of activity. This was important enough for an adult to share. She offered them specific choices or the option of choosing an altogether different book. The choice was theirs, another validation, this time of their ability to agree as a group and make a choice they could all enjoy. No child left the group and they did make group choices for the books they wanted to hear. Individual choices were also allowed and respected: Kerrie's choice of <u>Noisy Nora</u> and Nora's suggestion for <u>Mooncake</u>. Nora sat with them close around her, allowed them to touch her, the book, or each other and thus provided reinforcement that sharing a book was a physical comfort, a pleasure. Here they were comfortable, respected and encouraged. They could understand what the situation was and their individual and group part in it.

The various discussions that arose out of this book sharing were dependent on and enriched by the individual contributions of each member of the group. In addition, the discussions provided many opportunities to play verbally with possibilities relating to the reality these children shared in the outer world. In this secure, comfortable world they discussed their ideas and emotions. Here it was safe to acknowledge that wolves were scary and if not wolves, then polar bears. Jack could speak with

authority because he had just moved here from Alaska and knew about polar bears. Will, who had a history of being timid about wild animals and rough play, could save face in finding another another reason not to go to Alaska while not rejecting the possibility out of hand. The ideas and emotions of both Will and Jack were respected by Nora in her reassurance that Alaska wasn't to be feared. Wild animals, in the form of wolves, became a touch closer and more friendly if someone could sing with them.

Nora was also adept at finding other ways to relate story incidents to the outer reality shared by the children and to invite them to share their individual intrepretations of that reality. The school curriculum included an ongoing unit about various aspects of personal safety. While sharing this familiar story, Nora could use Red Riding Hood's feelings of fear to open a discussion of the fears of the children themselves. She acknowledged that Red Riding Hood's fears were well grounded and thus encouraged the children to think and talk about their own fears. In thinking and making suggestions about what Red Riding Hood might have done to protect herself, they were also exploring possibilities about what they themselves could do as well.

Self identity was being explored in a number of ways as well. Most of these children would be entering kindergarten in the fall. There had been some discussion about this. Some of this discussion had centered on how kindergarten would be different from day care. They all knew that literacy skills

(writing/drawing/reading) were expected activities in kindergarten and most of them could recognize and print their names. Jack quickly made the connection between what Abby was writing and what he, at four and a half, might be expected to write. Pre-reading skills were evident when the group used the predictable aspects of <u>Noisy Nora</u> to recognize where they could join in the repetitive pattern which they had memorized. Eli could also predict the plot of the story. All of these things validated their ideas about themselves as literacy learners. Nora contributed to this further when she elicited their individual ideas about what the moon might taste like. She encouraged them to think for themselves and reinforced their image of themselves as having something worthwhile to contribute.

Josh and Jack explored possible images of themselves when they claimed the identity of the hunter in <u>Red Riding Hood</u>, both perhaps seeing themselves as big, competent and able to rescue. Perhaps Will found a measure of safety or a source of strength and power in playing at being the weapons instead of the hunter. However, these boys were thinking about themselves as someone other than the four year olds they actually were and felt safe enough to voice the possibility in the security of the story and its sharing.

This example shows the ease and flexibility with which a secondary world was created in this setting. It is also indicative of the kinds of meaning being explored such as identity, feelings,

relationships to new realities as well as growing competencies. More specific examples of these will be discussed in the next section.

Creation and Exploration in the Secondary Worlds

There were specific areas where these pre-schoolers spent considerable energy and time in exploration and creation of meaning for themselves. These had to do with self identity, emotion, anticipated reality and individual as well as social growth and development. Within each of these areas an intermediate, secondary world was created. Each time such a secondary world was created, it grew out of and was enriched by the contributions of the unique and separate individuals involved.

One of the areas where these pre-school children spent considerable energy and time in exploration and creation of meaning for themselves had to do with the exploration of self identity.

Self Identity

Exploring and understanding the ideas and images they had about themselves was one of the major ways these pre-schoolers used the secondary world of play and response. This was manifested in several ways.

Most of the children, at one time or another, during book sharing claimed book character identities as their own. Identifying with a story book character in this way seemed to serve various purposes for the children. At times identification with a story character seemed to be the expression of simple delight in the possibility of being something or someone else. The child or children would simply point to the character in the book being shared and claim "That's me!"; "I'm him!"; "I'm her!" or "I'm the mother, sister, brother, fox, mouse, goat, kitten, etc!". No reasons for the choices were given, and the story continued.

A boy from the other classroom took the book Anansi the Spider to Nora and asked her about the characters in it. She offered to read it to the group in the book corner. They all agreed. As she read, Nora pointed out the sons of Anansi and several of the listening children claimed a character's identity: Will -- See Trouble; Josh -- Road Builder; Joie -- River Drinker; Kerrie -- Game Skinner and Adam -- Stone Thrower. Nora had also taught them hand and arm motions to indicate the job of each son. As she continued to read the story, each child said "That's me!" or I'm him!" as the character they were portraying came into the story. They continued making the hand motions throughout the whole story.

Joie, Will, Adam and Jack sat in the book corner to share The Amazing Bone. Will held the book in his lap and turned the pages while the rest of them looked on. Quickly they all began

pointing to various characters in the pictures and claiming "That's me! That's me!"

Mikki sat at the table in the housekeeping area with Jordon standing beside her. They were sharing the book <u>The Nock Family Circus</u>. As Mikki turned the pages they each pointed to the circus characters they wanted to be. When they had finished this book, they went on to look at <u>Cook's Night Out (A Tom and Jerry Story)</u>. They again went through the book page by page and claimed to be several of the characters on each page.

Joie and Will asked me to read <u>The Three Little Pigs</u> to them. As I read. Will pointed to the pictures of each little pig and said:

> "That's me, That's me".
> Joie: "Don't say me! me! me!"
> Will: "But I want to do all those things!'

When I had finished the story, Joie took the book and turned to the beginning. She pointed to the picture of the mother pig and stated quite emphatically: "ME!"

At other times, the children appeared to be thinking about and exploring what it meant, more specifically, to be a boy or a girl when they claimed the identity of a particular story character. They would assume the identity of the story character of their own gender. Fairy tales, folk tales, legends and stories about heroes were particular favorites for this kind of

image exploring. Cinderella and Snow White were especially popular choices for several of the girls.

Four children (Kerrie, Joie, Will and Josh) sat reading Cinderella. Kerrie held the book on her lap and told the story page by page. When they came to the page showing Cinderella dancing with the prince Kerrie pointed to it and commented, "I love this page, it's a beautiful page. Don't you think so? I think so." The other children nodded and smiled and they finished the story. Kerrie closed the book and sighed: "Cinderella!" They decided to go through the book a second time. When they came to the page where Cinderella is talking about fixing up her mother's dress, Kerrie sighed again and said, "Isn't this a pretty dress? I think it's very pretty, don't you - because it's pink." Again the others nodded and smiled. At the end Kerrie said, "Look how they danced! I'm Cinderella. I'm beautiful." Joie, too, claimed to be beautiful as she pointed to Cinderella, and Will and Josh pointed to the prince and each said "I'm handsome."

When it was Kerrie's turn to choose a book she chose Cinderella. As I read it aloud, Kerrie and Joie each chose to be Cinderella, pointing to her in the illustrations.

> Rachael: "Why do you want to be Cinderella?"
> Joie: (with disgust) "Because she's a girl!"
> Rachael: "How about you, Adam? Are you anything in the story?"
> Adam: (pointing to the prince) "Yes! Him!"

In the book corner, I read <u>Snow White</u> to several children. When I had finished, Joie took the book and began to turn the pages to share it with Kerrie. They told each other various parts of the story and each chose to be Snow White.

Kerrie: (pointing to Snow White in
    one illustration)"I'm her in this one."
Joie: "I'm her and her (pointing to Snow White in two
    different illustrations) but not her" (pointing to
    the witch in the background).

Jordon and Mikki sat at one of the tables sharing <u>Snow White</u>. They turned the pages, front to back, and, on each page, each girl claimed to be Snow White and exclaimed about how pretty they were as Snow White.

After lunch Jordon asked me to read <u>Cinderella</u> to her. We were soon surrounded by several other girls as well. Joie stood behind us, Kerrie and Jude in front of them and DiAnn beside me. As I read, all of the girls commented that they were either Cinderella or the fairygod mother.

When sharing the story of <u>Cinderella</u>, the girls expressed their interest and delight in lovely clothing as they examined and commented on Cinderella's ball gown. As Cinderella, they could claim a beauty they may have been unsure of in themselves at four and five, but which had the possibility of being there when they were grown up like Cinderella. The boys seldom chose the book Cinderella on their own, but some of them were willing to

share it when the girls were reading it. They were willing to consider themselves princes, and handsome ones at that.

Snow White offered Joie the opportunity to make a clear choice, to claim the goodness and beauty of Snow White for herself and to reject the evil of the witch. None of the girls ever pretended to be the witch in this story or the bad stepmother or stepsisters in Cinderella. They could, however, acknowledge that the dresses the stepmother and sisters wore to the ball were pretty. Pretty clothes, however, were not enough to entice them into identifying with recognized 'badness.'

The boys, too, had a strong interest in exploring the images they had of themselves within the safety of the secondary world of story and play. The strong heroes of legend tended to be their favorites.

Alan brought in his large wooden model of a castle and a set of miniature knights complete with horses and weapons. Will, Josh, Jack and Adam were immediately fascinated. Alan was the only one who knew the stories of King Arthur, which he shared with the boys. The boys all claimed the character of their favorite knight and spent their free play time for several days playing King Arthur stories. Later, when Alan had taken the castle home, these same boys built their own castle out of big blocks and continued to play King Arthur. Alan hadn't included any female characters in his stories about King Arthur and there

were no female characters in the set of miniature knights. The girls expressed little or no interest in the model castle, the big block castle or any of the play that resulted from them. Kerrie, who controlled a great deal of the play that went on around Star Wars characters, was quite upset, however, when the boys deserted her and her Star Wars books in favor of King Arthur and the castle.

Jack was especially interested in the stories of Robin Hood. His special favorite was the battle between Robin and Little John on the log over the river. Jack frequently took his interest in this story into his fantasy play. He had, at one time or another, convinced most of the boys to play the part of Little John, but he never relinguished his role as Robin Hood. Only Adam was ever willing to play Little John more than once. Will would occasionally join them as Friar Tuck. Joie was always willing to play Maid Marion and be rescued.

Josh and Will both had difficulty with the aggressive, fighting kinds of play that often went on when they played with Jack. They, however, continued to play at fantasy combat with him. Alan, on the other hand, was never part of this kind of play. But, within the King Arthur stories, Alan had control. He owned the model castle and only he knew the stories. He was perfectly willing to share what he had and what he knew. His biggest interest was in keeping the play authentic. He wanted it to stick to the story. The others were willing to follow his lead. Josh and

Will both found it easier to express their fighting instincts and abilities with the miniature knights than they did in direct combat play with Jack or Adam. The small knights seemed to be a mediating factor. The boys were more evenly matched in ability using the knights. Jack and Adam had the opportunity to express their ideas and abilities about war and fighting, and Will and Josh had the chance to explore and develop theirs. Using the small knights to fight was also more acceptable to the adults in the setting. This play didn't get quite so actually, physically aggressive and scary.

Will and Josh were both single children and perhaps more interested in adult approval. Neither had either of them ever had to compete for parental attention. Adam and Jack, on the other hand, both had siblings and both tended to pay less attention to teacher approval. These two were more willing to take a chance on play behavior that might get them disciplined. Alan also had a sibling, a brother just one year older than he, and with whom he got on very well.

This King Arthur story and play behavior had quickly separated the girls and boys. Kerrie and her Star Wars books could usually keep this group of boys involved in play or book sharing, but she lost them to the castle and the knights. The boys didn't return to Star Wars play until Alan had taken his castle home. Some of this gender separation might have been due to the absence of female characters in the King Arthur stories that

Alan told. However, none of the girls even attempted to claim the identity of any knight. Boys and girls frequently invited each other to play at Robin Hood, and Star Wars was always a shared activity. The girls were not invited to share the King Arthur play at all and there was no argument about the arrangement from either group.

Jack was the child who exhibited the strongest interest in fighting play. His favorite character to be was Robin Hood. He spent part of most every day involved in sword play as Robin Hood. Often this kind of play got away from him and he became too rough and was sent to his cubby to calm down. Adam liked this kind of play as well and he had often agreed to be Jack's foe in the role of Little John. He could hold his own in combat. Will on the other hand, while appearing to want desperately to be part of this play, could not bring himself to actually play- act fighting. He always chose to be the good and faithful companion, Friar Tuck. Joie was usually the only girl to join the Robin Hood play. She dearly loved being Maid Marion, especially when she could convince Jack that she needed to be rescued. She seemed to be incorporating fairy tale princess ideas into this legend. She also adored Jack and took care of him whenever he got wounded.

Other stories, too, provided opportunities to consider and examine male and female roles in life. Most often the children deliberately chose to assume the identity of story characters of the same gender as themselves.

Josh and I were reading <u>The Scarecrows and Their Child</u> together in the book corner. Will joined us. At the first illustration Will asked, pointing and smiling,

> Will: "Know who I am in this book? The kitten!"
> Josh: "Then I'm him!" Josh pointed to the father scarecrow.
> Rachael: "Then I guess I'll be Blossom!" (The mother scarecrow).

The boys laughed and the story continued.

Occasionally some children chose to identify with a story character across gender. Usually this happened in a story with a particularly strong main character involved in an interesting plot. It seemed that the possibilities for imagining oneself in the plot overrode the need to identify with one's specific gender.

Adam, Kerrie and Will were listening to me read <u>Pirates in the Park</u>. This had been a favorite story for Adam for a few days. Adam and Will claimed the characters they wanted to be.

> Will: "I'm the elephant."
> Adam: " I'm Jenni - even if she is a girl."
> Rachael: "Yep! That's okay."

Joie asked me to read <u>Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears</u> to her. Will, Adam and Kerrie soon joined us and this discussion took place.

> Adam: "I'm the council. No, I'm the rhinoceros. What's
>   a council?"
> Rachael: "It's a group of people who talk things over
>   and make decisions."
> Adam: "That's me!"
> Joie: "I'm the mommy owl and the baby."

The story continued until I reached the part where the king was asking the Mother Owl why she wouldn't hoot to wake the sun. Mother Owl said she was too sad to hoot because she thought that Monkey had killed her owlet. At this point Joie insistently interrupted the story to explain what 'really happened.'

> Joie: "She thinks that's what happened." Here Joie
>   pointed to the illustration showing the monkey
>   squeezing the owlet to death. Then Joie went on
>   with her explanation.
> Joie: "But it didn't.
> Rachael: "What did happen?"
> Joie: "He (Monkey) fell on a stick and it broke and hit
>   the owlet and he died."

After breakfast Will returned to the book corner and asked me to read more of <u>The Scarecrows and Their Child</u> to him. Kerrie, Joie, Jude and Adam came along to listen as well. As I read, the children began to discuss who they were in the story. Will claimed to be the kitten child and so did Joie. When Will objected to Joie being the child she replied,

> Joie: "It could be a boy or a girl so I can be it too."
> Adam: Why don't you want to be the mother?"
> Joie: (shrugging) "Just don't want to."
> Adam: " Then I can be the mother."

Obviously, Adam was the child most willing to cross genders in identifying with story characters. He was easily the most self confident of the male children in this day care classroom. He particularly liked the story <u>Pirates in the Park</u> whose plot involved a young girl and her stuffed animal friends taking on the bullies in the park via an imaginary pirate battle. She won, of course. Adam seemed called upon to remark that Jenni was a girl but the pull of the story possibilities was stronger. He knew he, too, could do what she had done. He would enter kingergarten in the fall and might need just such skills to make his way successfully. There was safety in considering his abilities as comparable to those of the story character. Will had again chosen to be the good companion. Jenni depended on her elephant for help and support in the battle. This was the kind of character which Will seemed to identity with easily. In any of the classroom activities Will was seldom the leader, but was always a strong and loyal supporter. He explored and reinforced these abilities of his in the characters he chose to identify with as well as those he tended to act out in fantasy play.

Adam was a classroom leader and usually willing to take risks. He further explored these possibilities in story characters. He was an active, articulate youngster and the active imaginative character of Jenni in <u>Pirates in the Park</u> appealed to his own ideas about himself. Adam was seldom a child to sit passively and let

anything pass if he had a question. He quite often interrupted for an explanation or a definition. He saw himself as a knowledge seeker, knew he was capable of understanding explanations, trusted the situation and the people enough to ask what he needed.

It is hardly surprising that he was quite willing to take a chance on being something (council) before he understood what it was. Once it was explained it appealed to his sense of himself as a person who could be in charge. He was also perfectly willing to let Joie be the mother if she so chose, but when she didn't, he found the image of himself as mother perfectly possible. Mothers are usually one of the most powerful adults in the life of pre-schoolers and Adam didn't seem to see any reason why he couldn't get in on that, too.

Joie had a long history of choosing to be the mother in any story that contained one. She was an energetic caretaker in the classroom. She was the child who could be most solicitous of others' feelings, most willing to nurse the battle wounded, usually the mother in housekeeping play. In contrast to this she was also the most frequent user of the fancy dress-up clothes and the most insistent, sometimes to the point of tears, that she and she alone could be Princess Leia in Star Wars stories or play. Joie was four and a half, she had a two year old brother at home and another baby was soon to arrive. She was always the first to run and inspect any baby brother or sister that appeared in the

classroom. If her mother and her younger brother brought her to school, she spent a lot of time showing her brother around the room, seeing that he didn't fall or touch anything he shouldn't or that might hurt him. For Joie, motherhood held power; mothers were in charge, mothers were caretakers, mothers were strong, protective, responsible and important.

This choice of the mother characters was so strongly Joie's that the other children simply took it for granted that she would be mother. Adam was surprised when she made a different choice in The Scarecrows and Their Child. The kitten child in this story could be either a boy or a girl, as could Joie's own mother's unborn child. Joie took the possibilities of mother characters very seriously. She explored her own ideas and abilities in this role with vigor and intent. It was interesting that Joie chose to be both mother and baby in Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears. In the story the mother, while she had the power to stop day from coming, had not been able to prevent the death of one of her babies. True, responsibility for feeding them was what had taken her away from them and even if she had been there, she might not have been able to save him. Joie was very intense in her explanation of the misunderstanding concerning the baby's death. She had made a similar explanation at least once before when the story was read. The seriousness of her own responsibilities in helping her mom take care of her siblings seemed to weigh heavily as did the possibilities of making

mistakes and being misunderstood. In the safety of the stories and the play, Joie thought out and explored her ideas about motherhood and her competence at it. She also chose to be the baby, perhaps in exploration of the other side of the coin. After all, babies are what makes one a mother in the first place. Identifying with the baby could also have carried the idea of relief from the responsibility she sensed in motherhood.

All year Joie had attached herself to Jack, especially Jack as warrior: Luke Skywalker, Han Solo or Robin Hood. For months, she was his Princess Leia or Maid Marion and talked about marrying him when they grew up. It was only at the end of the year, with kindergarten approaching and break- up of the group imminent, that she would occasionally admit that she and Jack probably wouldn't get married. Much of this play and story character choice seemed to offer Joie the opportunity to explore the wife side of motherhood. She made the connections between man, woman and child, recognized them as primary and strong in her own life and used books and play as the secure, flexible place in which to investigate her own ideas and those of others.

Mikki and Jordon sat together in the book corner sharing a familiar book.

> Mikki: (speaking to Jordon): "Let's look at this book?"
> (In The Night Kitchen)
> Jordon: (laughing, repeated a line from the book):
> "QUIET DOWN THERE!"

Mikki laughed too and they continued enjoying the book. They stroked the pages, pretended to eat the cake in the illustrations and kiss the pictures of Micky, the main character. Each girl also claimed to be Micky, laughing aloud at every illustration.

Mikki sat on the floor looking through <u>The Elephant and the Bad Baby</u>. Eli and Jordon sat beside her. The three of them quickly began the "that's me!" game. Mikki was the first to decide to be the bad baby.

Jordon: "Are you going to be BAD?" Mikki nods yes.
Eli: "Then I'm going to be bad, too."

With that decision made they all continued looking through the book pointing to other characters and chanting Me! Me! Me!

Mikki liked the 'that's me' game and was exuberant in making identification choices. Mikki was probably the best behaved child in the group. She had never been sent to her cubby for misbehavior, had not been seriously scolded or reprimanded. She tended to be eclectic in the characters she chose to be. Micky in <u>In the Night Kitchen</u> was a strong, mischievous character with a name similar to her own. He was out to have fun in the night and get his questions answered when everyone else was decently asleep. He also had the ability to save the day. Mikki could explore her own abilities in knowing what needed to be done and how to accomplish it. The

possibilities of misbegotten fun and a touch of mischief, too, were appealing to this child usually so good and well behaved. For Mikki, the idea of being naughty seemed to be possible only in story. It was safe to be selfish, unreasonable and naughty if one was a baby. Babies, after all, were not expected always to be good and could be forgiven.

Mikki, who spoke no English when she came to this classroom in September, had spent a great deal of her free play time interacting with books. Gradually she made friends, especially with Jordon and Eli. The three of them together also spent time with books. In the secondary world of story, Mikki, especially, found a measure of safety, acceptance and freedom that was much more secure or possible than in other areas of the classroom setting. Here she had the place, time and opportunity to make the connections between herself and the new environment in which she found herself. Books and imagination helped her to find her way around in a new language, a new living situation and with new people.

Jordon and Eli weren't known for such excellent behavior as Mikki managed. They seem genuinely surprised at her deliberate choice to be a naughty character. So if Mikki was willing to take the chance, why shouldn't they, too? After all, they knew a bit more about it and could make some suggestions. It certainly had

the potential of fun, this being naughty on purpose and admitting it.

In all of these instances, whether on an individual or a group basis, children created a secondary world. In this intermediate place, they were not dealing directly with either their inner psychic reality or with the realities they might share with the outer world. They could make the claim of "that's me" about any story character and not have to actually become that character. The characters, thus chosen, could be invested with each child's own intrepretation of the characteristics and abilities needed to make that identity their own. Joie didn't have to deal directly with the mothering kinds of activities she accomplished for her younger brother. Neither did she have to work out her thoughts and ideas about mothering in the recesses of her own subconscious. Assuming the identity of story characters within the secondary world gave her a safe place to mentally play with the possibilites. Her own thoughts, ideas and comments were welcomed and respected. She contributed to this secondary world as well as using it.

Alan contributed the wooden castle, miniature knights and the King Arthur stories around which the boys built a secondary world in which they could express their own needs and ideas. They didn't have to directly deal with either the realities or the

inner fears, anxieties and excitement of battle. Still, they all had the opportunity to contribute to the possibilities. Within the secondary world they had created they could explore and express their own and society's perceptions of being male.

Mikki, Jordon and Eli could, for different reasons, quite safely express bad behavior in the intermediate world they had created with story. None of them had to actually be naughty or hide the fact they might even be thinking about being naughty. Eli, who had contributed his share to actual naughty behavior (especially scaring other children), Jordon, who often preferred to go her own way rather than cooperate with group requirements, and Mikki, who was always considered very well behaved, each of them made their unique contribution to this intermediate world.

Emotion

The children in this setting also used the secondary world of book sharing to explore and express their emotions. Emotional involvement can not be separated from any of the interactions that occurred, but in some it was a more obvious happening.

A good deal of strong emotion was involved in Joie's need to explain what happened to the baby owlet in <u>Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears</u>. This book was read several times over the course of several weeks and every time that Joie was part of the listening group, she made a similar explanation. She appeared

222

not only to be considering her role possibilities as mother, older, care-taking sibling and infant, but also to be sorting out the emotions involved with the various responsibilities of those roles.

This group of children was familiar with a number of fairy tales. These were often favorite choices to look at alone, with a friend or to have read aloud. However, none of them had yet heard the tale of Rapunzel. I had brought in a copy of the tale retold and illustrated by Trina Schart Hyman. Hyman's illustrations were rich in color and detail. They were also dark and somewhat forbidding, which seemed to contribute a measure of scariness to the story itself. The story quickly became a favorite for several of the children.

Kerrie joined Will and me in the book corner where we had just begun to read Rapunzel. Jude, Joie, Jack and Adam came along to listen as well. The children stood close to me and to each other as I read. Will was obviously bothered by the witch. Everytime she was mentioned or appeared on a page, Will, usually a quiet listener, wiggled in discomfort, covered his ears with his hands and closed his eyes. He didn't leave the group and shook his head no when I offered to stop reading it.

Will heard this story several times and each time reacted the same way, wiggling, closing his eyes and covering his ears. Will seemed to find it quite safe to acknowledge his fear and discomfort around the witch within the context of the story being

read aloud. While he continued to exhibit the same behaviors, uncomfortable wiggling, covering his ears with his hand and closing his eyes, every time the story was read aloud, he never chose to leave the group and said no if the reader offered to stop the story. He could be fearful and uncomfortable but not threatened. He could let those emotions wash over him and know the safety of being in the group and with an adult. He could connect with what was going on inside of himself. His feelings were validated and acknowledged by the reader and he had a choice about how to handle it. Here he could explore how it felt to be afraid and how he might react to it.

Jack asked to look at the <u>Rapunzel</u> book when I had finished reading it aloud. He sat on the floor with Joie and Kerrie to look at it. Jack quietly commented that, "It's a scary book!" He continued to hold the book and turn the pages. The three of them were quiet and engrossed in the illustrations. When they had finished it, Kerrie took it and they went through it again. At the end, Jack again commented that it was "a scary book."

Jack had a good part of his classroom identity set up in being strong and not afraid. His was the most aggressive, fighting kind of behavior. He was Joie's rescuer. He conquered the bad guys and saved the day. He made the most noise imitating guns and sirens. In commenting that <u>Rapunzel</u> was a scary book, he made one of his very few concessions that he could find something frightening. It was safer to think about being scared

in connection with an unfamiliar story. There was no fighting warrior character in the story of Rapunzel with whom Jack could identify. The story presented him with an opportunity to think about fear and the possibilities of handling it in other ways besides combat. He did ask to have the book read aloud several times and to look at it on his own several times. Each time he heard it or looked at it, he became very quiet, intent and thoughtful, checking back and forth through the illustrations, especially those that contained the witch.

Josh had also heard <u>Rapunzel</u> several times. He also spent time looking through it on his own and seemed especially intrigued by the

part of the story were the witch is talked about but isn't visible in the

illustrations. Finally, one day he brought the book to me.

> Josh: " I figured it out."
> Rachael: "What?"
> Josh: "Where the witch is."
> Rachael: "Where is the witch?"
> Josh: "She's back there behind the bushes, watching."
> Rachael: "I bet you're right."

Josh obviously needed to know where that witch was throughout the whole story. The one picture that drew his special attention was the one of the father in the witch's garden the first time, stealing radishes. The background is dark and foreboding, nighttime, the father is intense and fearful and the

225

witch is nowhere in sight. But the text let the reader know that she must have been watching because she caught him the next time he went into the garden. Josh's mother was also pregnant. Perhaps Josh feared his father faced some unknown danger, too. Many changes were coming for Josh; a new sibling, leaving the familiar day care setting and entering kindergarten. He seemed to need to know as much as possible about the situation and his place in it. Finding out where the witch might be hiding in that illustration seemed to give Josh a touch of control, and to reinforce his ideas about his ability to adjust and solve problems as well as to explore the trustworthiness and dependability of the adults in his life.

When Nora and I discussed Will's discomfort with Rapunzel, Nora commented that it was good that he could express himself as fearful with an adult so he could have the feelings acknowledged and could talk about them. She went on to explain that Eli had been terrifying and intimidating several of the children by telling them scary stories. Will and Josh had been his particular targets and he had used the witch in Rapunzel as well as Darth Vader from Star Wars to frighten them. It would seem, then, that both Josh and Will found the safety of the actual story, read aloud with friends and an adult, a place to explore and defuse their emotions. Eli, on the other hand, was using story to explore his ideas about power. He was also testing the limits of what the adults would allow in this direction.

Alan, too, found story a secure place in which to admit to feeling of fear. I read An American Tail; Fievel's New York Adventure to Josh

and Will and when Alan recognized the story he, too, joined the group. Soon Josh and Will left for breakfast, but Alan sat down beside me to talk about the story.

> Alan: "I saw the video of this book. Some parts were scary."
> Rachael: "What parts were scary?"
> Alan: "The sweat-shop was scary."
> Rachael: "How about where he was caught in a trap? Was that scary?"
> Alan "Yes, that was, too."

Alan looked through the book, snuggled close to my side. He asked me to find the page that showed the sweat-shop. When I found it, he pointed to it and said, "That's the scary part."

Alan's actual fright seemed to have arisen from the video of the story and not the book version. Frightened or not, he did come to listen to the story and to look closely at the illustrations of the sweat-shop scene that he found especially fearful. He sat touching close to me as he spent several minutes engrossed in that illustration. Again the illustration was dark, intense and foreboding. Within the experience of hearing the story read aloud, sharing closeness with an adult and having the time to really look at and explore the picture, Alan could acknowledge

being scared. The story experience provided him time, place and safety to get to know himself and this emotion.

Each of these instances, too, occurred in a secondary world set apart from both inner and outer reality. Again and again, Joie seemed to be exploring the emotions and responsibilites she felt around motherhood and babies. In the intermediate world she wasn't an actual mother nor was she immersed absolutely in the emotions of that role. Will could express, physically, his discomfort with the strong emotions aroused by Rapunzel. He didn't have to repress those feelings nor deal with the situations that aroused them directly. Josh dealt with his emotions about this book by seeking more information and explanation within the world of the story itself. Alan and Jack found they could each express the 'scariness' they encountered and it was safer to deal with it here in this secondary world which wasn't entirely real or entirely personal.

New and Anticipated Reality

These pre-schoolers expended a great deal of their time and energy creating and exploring possibilities for themselves in the reality they would encounter in new and anticipated situations involving the rest of the world.

The content of specific books related to the lives of particular children and their interest and attention to these books was immediate and obvious. The mothers of both Josh and Joie

were pregnant. Both Joie and Josh exhibited special interest in the books involving mothers and babies. They gave serious, concentrated attention to Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears, The Scarecrows and Their Child, Where's Your Baby Brother, Becky Bunting and Rapunzel. Josh's specific interest was in the last two books. This was his first sibling and both of these books had to do with babies being taken or given away. Joie's need to take care of people was reflected in her special interest in the first two books.

More often, much of the meaning creation and exploration done by these pre-schoolers revolved around their expanding abilities and competencies in literacy acquisition. This was evident in how strongly they investigated both the accomplishment of 'school' tasks, and their individual place within the group by playing with the possibilities.

The whole group gathered in the book corner after lunch to wait their turn in the bathroom. Edmund was reading to the group while two or three children at a time went to sit on the bench outside the bathroom to wait their turn for using it. Those on the bench had books to look at while they waited. Jude had The Elephant and the Bad Baby. She began to turn the pages and to tell the story aloud from the illustrations. Alan was sitting next to her but she didn't seem aware of him. She was totally engrossed in retelling the story, turning the pages to show the illustrations to an imaginary audience, holding the book up high

enough for this audience to see. Her role playing was an almost exact imitation of Nora's reading of this book to the whole class a few days earlier. Jude used the illustrations to get the sequence correct. She used the exact wording in the text, and she used the same expressive voices for the characters that Nora had used, as well as the same hand gestures. Joie joined them and asked a question about the illustrations. Jude answered her and then continued reading. Alan seemed fascinated with the whole procedure. He kept looking at Jude with this wondering expression on his face, then he would look at the book as if checking to see if she was getting it right. He moved closer to see better, finally kneeling beside Jude to run his whole hand over the page showing all the food the baby wanted. He commented, "We would love all of that! All of that!" "Yep" Jude replied and turned the page. Jude continued reading the book through to the end, then closed it, put it down on the bench and marched off into the bathroom.

All of these children except Alan were headed off to kindergarten in the fall. They had all attended at least a one-half day visit in the kindergarten class they would be attending. While in this classroom, the majority of story reading tended to be more individual and casual, these kinds of structured behaviors were used when the whole group sat together for a story. With the whole group involved, not everyone could sit touching close to the teacher, nor could everyone see the

illustrations at the same time. Jude was demonstrating that she knew how to handle this situation. She was also demonstrating her knowledge of story and of book handling. She had only heard this story once or twice but she could accurately remember the sequence of the rather complicated text pattern. She also knew how to use the illustrations to orient herself in the story and to help her keep the sequence correctly ordered and moving. In addition, she knew how to handle a book. She told the story from beginning to end, front to back, as the sequence and the illustrations indicated. Joie and Alan acknowledged Jude's competence by asking her questions and making comments just as they would have if an adult had been reading the book.

A group (Jack, Will, Joie, Josh and Jude) sat with Kerrie in the block area to look through several Star Wars books. Kerrie sat on a chair and the rest were grouped around her on the floor. The story sharing became school/story behavior. Kerrie assumed many of the reading aloud behaviors which adults in the setting exhibited. For instance, Kerrie read a page and then held up the book for the others to see the illustrations. She would ask a question and make them raise their hands to answer. She asked them to sequence the events she had just pretended to read to them. Soon she sent Will and Jude to the book corner to choose new books. They returned with easier picture books with more illustrations and the play continued. Then Kerrie began assigning people to take her place and do what she was doing with the books. Joie went first, then Jude and Josh. Will took a turn as

well though he was less comfortable with the process. The whole group heartily refused Edmund's offer to actually read one of the books to them. They continued this teacher/story reading play for well over an hour.

This larger group involved in story/school behavior was demonstrating similar skills. Kerrie recognized the power of 'teacher' in this situation. She initiated the pretend school behavior quite casually. She took on the teacher role by asking questions, making the children raise their hands and take turns answering. She also assigned roles, letting others have a turn doing the same thing she had done. However, it was always obvious that Kerrie was in charge. The others were all eager and willing to take a turn at being the teacher. Their turns were always shorter than Kerrie's, and Will was less comfortable doing it than the rest. Everyone of them could accomplish the task, however, and they all knew how to handle a book as well. These kinds of behaviors were almost exact copies of the behaviors that were exhibited by the adults when they read specific books to the children during circle time in order to prepare them for a field trip or for a discussion of a curricular topic. These behaviors seemed to indicate instruction and a more formal, structured kind of attention requirement. The children had a vested interest in knowing and demonstrating that they knew how to conduct themselves in story and instruction situations. Their personal experiences were going to be widely expanded when they went

to school. Exploring and playing with the possibilities of what would happen and how they might handle it gave them an extraordinary advantage.

Again, in these interactions with books, the children created a secondary world, separate from the actual reality of their abilities to understand and handle siblings and school. This world was also separate from their individual anticipations and apprehensions about these abilities. Within the secondary worlds of story and play they could and did explore and express themselves individually and as a group.

The experience of one particular child in this setting was indicative of how play and book interactions aid the meaning creating process, especially in the area of new and anticipated situations.

Mikki and her family came from Israel the summer before this study began. When Mikki arrived in this day care setting she knew no one and spoke no English. By the time this study began in March, she was speaking English well enough to be understood and to join in play activities and book discussions. Nora said Mikki had spent several silent months, only trying out a few Englsih words with the adults in the setting. Gradually, Mikki became more comfortable about talking to the other children and she made friends.

Nora went to help with breakfast, I offered to read to Mikki and Mikki agreed. Mikki handed me a book of three fairy tales but she didn't really want to hear it. Mikki was more interested in turning the pages and showing me where to begin. She wanted to know which words were Hansel and Gretel, which was the boy's name and which was the girl's name. Finally she listened to the story. Then she asked me to read The Very Hungry Caterpillar and The Nock Family Circus. When we had finished, Mikki stacked the books neatly on the shelves and went off to play.

The Disney version of Cinderella was a favorite with the girls in this setting. They frequently asked to have it read to them both individually and in small groups. Mikki could often be found in the book area poring over this book. One day she pulled me into the book area to sit and share books. First, Mikki looked through Red Riding Hood, then she spotted Cinderella and pounced on it. She insisted on reading it to me. Mikki knew the whole story, and she used the illustrations to orient herself as she retold the story in sequence. She had memorized many of the exact lines of the text. She knew the left to right sequence of the text. She understood the concept of words as separate units carrying the meaning. She pointed to individual words and asked: "Is this where we are?" "Is this where it says--?"

her hand and said she was going to read it. She refused Laura's help with the words insisting she was going to read it HERSELF. Then she turned the pages quickly saying a few English words,"he said and she said," as she did so. When she came to December she said "a Christmas Tree." She continued this behavior through the entire book.

Mikki and Jordon had become friends. They often shared books together and both were especially fond of <u>The Nock Family Circus</u>. They would search out this book, sit on the floor together and look through it page by page, pointing to the characters they wanted to be.

On days when neither Eli or Jordon came to school for whatever reason, Mikki spent most of the free time in the book area, looking at her favorites, <u>Cinderella</u>, <u>The Nock Family Circus</u> and <u>In The Night Kitchen</u>. All of the children were friendly with Mikki, but none made any special effort to include her in the play. Books were a substitute for the two friends most important to Mikki.

It was obvious from the beginning of the study that Mikki was quite comfortable dealing with books. She went to them often, easily and confidently. She shared them, talking and fantasizing, with her special friends, Jordon and Eli. Most of the play activities that Mikki took part in grew first out of book interactions shared with her friends.

235

Books were an integral part of this classroom and Mikki was able to use them to assess the situation, find ways of being part of that situation, and to explore her own competencies. She created meaning for the situation and herself.

For a child who, at first, didn't understand the language in this setting, the book area was the most comfortable place to begin. This was the quietest area in the setting. This was also the easiest area to be in. Books were a perfectly acceptable activity; everyone came to them at one time or another during the day either to look at books on their own or for the group sharing. It was okay to be involved with books alone and with the group. Whatever the reason, books were safe. The rules for the area and the interactions were simple to figure out. Choosing books, sitting, listening, turning pages weren't likely to get Mikki unwanted attention while she figured out what the required or acceptable behaviors were for the rest of the activities. The book area supplied a safe, quiet vantage point from which to observe, learn and figure out how to fit in. It was also relatively easy to make an adult understand that she wanted to hear a story. The Center had purposely hired a student aide who spoke Hebrew in order to facilitate Mikki's adjustment. The aide could not be there all day or even every day, however. When Laura was there, most of her time was spent in the book area with Mikki, reading and talking. She also read to and interacted with other children but Mikki was her special charge.

The book that Mikki wanted to hear most often was the Disney version of <u>Cinderella</u>. To begin with, the other girls in this setting liked this book and requested to have it read aloud often. Mikki could be part of these groups sharing this story, and the choice was hers as to how actively she wanted to be involved. Within this story interaction, she could learn how the girls in this setting talked and shared and then figure out how and what to do herself in order to be part of it..

The sentence and story structure of the text of this book was not complex. It was not what might be termed 'basalized' but it was simple and straightforward. Mikki appeared to use this text as a tool to learn the structure of the English language. She memorized many of the actual words and lines of the text. Some of her first attempts at speaking English were to repeat these and to join in the 'me' game with the other girls; pointing to Cinderella and claiming her identity by simply saying 'me.' This was a safe enough encounter in which to try out her English and take part in the group.

As Mikki grew more sure of her English and her knowledge of how the routine of this setting worked, she became more willing to be involved in the play. The play she took part in almost always began, both physically and content wise, in the book area. She and Jordon would start out looking at books, usually at Mikki's invitation, Then, they would move from there

into pretending to be the bareback riders from The Nock Family Circus or dressing up as Cinderella in the housekeeping area.

Mikki continued to explore and develop language through books and play. She preferred books with predictable, rhythmical sequences such as The Elephant and The Bad Baby, The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Chicken Soup with Rice. Their redundancy and repetitiveness provided opportunity to sort out the structure of the language so as to use it unobtrusively. The similarities in the structure of the fairy tales did much the same thing.

Mikki also knew how to handle books written in English, going from front to back, top of the page to bottom and from left to right. The books she had been familiar with before coming to this country had been written in Hebrew and organized in the opposite direction.

In this setting, which offered many opportunities for interactions with books, where books were an intregal part of the play and where adults encouraged both, Mikki was very successful in creating meaning for herself.

Mikki, whether alone or with others, was quite adept at creating secondary worlds. As has been discussed, she created and used them to explore numerous aspects of her living. Within a secondary world, she could explore the language and the behaviors of this foreign culture before she had to address it

directly. Here she could also deal with her own feelings and ideas and find her own way to contribute.

The Secondary Worlds of Star Wars

Some of the strongest, most intensive and extensive interactions between these pre-schoolers, their books and their play happened around various Star Wars books and the fantasy play that occurred result.

The Nature of Star Wars Worlds

Four of the children had displayed a long and intense interest in Star Wars books and play. Kerrie, Jack, Adam and Joie had been involved in both the books and the activities since the beginning of the school year. As the year went on, they gradually drew Josh and Will into the group and occasionally Jude would join them as well. The rest of the children didn't express any particular interest and were not invited to share either the books or the resulting play.

Kerrie and her older brother owned several Star Wars Story Books adapted from the films. They also owned at least three of the Star Wars video tapes. From remarks Kerrie made, it was evident that she and her brother often watched these tapes and played at Star Wars. At various times, Kerrie had invited one or another of the group (Joie, Adam, Jack, Will or Josh), to her house to view the tapes. Consequently, this group had a shared base of

knowledge from which to begin. Kerrie brought in one or more Star Wars books at least three out of every five days. She expressed her intention to have the whole group come to her birthday party and they would watch all three of the videos.

Star Wars book interactions and fantasy play had extended over the entire school year and many, many interesting growth possibilities had resulted from them. There were space theme projects, discussions, character and activity explorations, story and book creations and power plays within the group. All of this led to a great deal of growth and development on the part of these children and had its effect on those not included within the group as well.

In discussion with me, Nora, Edmund and Jonathan provided some of the history of these interactions. As the interest in Star Wars behavior grew over the course of the year, a specific group of children ((Kerrie,Jack, Joie and Adam and later Will, Josh and Jude) became the core. They coalesced as a group and began to ostracize other children from the play. The play frequently became aggressive. Pushing, shoving, hitting, fighting, and shoot-em-dead activities erupted often. The teachers were quite concerned about this. It was obvious that the children were using this play to work out and find their way through strong feelings and needs. Because this came from the children themselves, the teachers were hesitant to simply put an end to Star Wars behavior arbitrarily. They saw this behavior as an

opportunity for them to help the children find better ways of dealing with these emotions and needs. After much discussion among themselves, the teachers did a number of effective things to provide opportunities for the children to accomplish this.

Teachers' Roles in the Secondary Worlds of Star Wars

There were several ways in which the teachers helped create changes in the way secondary worlds were created and used. These changes were neither arbitrary nor forcefully imposed. The changes had to do with the structure, the content and the action of the secondary worlds of play that arose in response to literary interactions.

The Structure of the Play.
The teachers began discussions with individuals, small groups and with the whole group in circle time. These discussions centered on the kinds of behaviors being exhibited, how both they and the children felt about it and what they could do about it. The teachers read the Star Wars books when the children requested them and within the context of the book interaction, again, talked with the children about the aggressive behaviors.

The teachers also reworked the daily schedule in order to redirect the Star Wars behaviors. The daily schedule was originally set up to be free play and breakfast, circle time, free play, outdoor time, lunch, nap, free play and then extended day for those children who were there the longest. The teachers

241

decided, after discussion with the parent advisory board, to take the hour or so of free play after circle and make it a choice play time. Every day they set up five or six different activities and, at the end of circle time, the children could choose what they wanted to do during the next time period. There could be four children in any one activity. The large number of choices provided for movement among the activities throughout the time period. Some days, one of the choices was Star Wars play, but not every day. This accomplished several things. It provided the teachers with a measure of control over who could choose to play Star Wars, thus affording other children outside of the core group, an opportunity to play. Star Wars play occurred at other free play times as long as there was no shoving, hitting and shooting activities. The teachers were always especially aware of when and who was involved in Star Wars behavior and made a point of being close by to help if it became at all rough.

The adults in the setting were willing to read the Star Wars books to the children and this happened as often as the children requested it. Most of Kerrie's Star Wars books were long texts taken quite directly from the videos or movies. They contained some illustrations in the form of photographs from the movies. These books were usually read in short segments, with the children requesting only their favorite parts. Within these story readings, the adults encouraged discussion about other aspects of the story beyond the war/fighting issues. Both Martha and Nora,

at various times, brought the texts closer to the actual lives of the children by discussing with them how they would feel if people like the Star Wars characters showed up in their yard or neighborhoods; why they 'hated' certain characters; what made those characters bad. Here the children had an opportunity to connect story to real life and explore what might happen and how they themselves might deal with it. The children were also encouraged to think about, define and qualify what they meant when they spoke about things being beautiful, fake, real or pretend. They could explore, both linguistically and conceptually, within the story interaction.

Nora's quiet but gentle insistence on writing down the names of characters, scrambling them up and having the children take turns at different roles gave the children an opportunity to explore the ideas and behaviors of characters other than their particular favorites. They were all familiar enough with the characteristics of the various characters to be able to do this. The children protested the imposition of this restriction. However, this restriction never stopped the play entirely. Nora's rule of five minutes of their favorite role and five of the scrambled choices took them into consideration.

Star Wars also established a power structure within the classroom. Gradually, over the course of the year, a core group of 4-6 children had formed a relationship based on Star Wars. They tended to separate themselves from the rest and wanted to play

only together, only certain roles and only Stars Wars. The interaction went back and forth between play and books. It might begin with the group sharing one or two of the Star Wars books and then they would put the books aside and take the interaction into the block or housekeeping area to pretend play Star Wars. It might also go the other way. The children might begin with pretend Star Wars play and end up in books because the play had become too rough. If this happened, the books they chose to look at were, once again, Star Wars books. They could continue the play using the text and illustrations, doing it verbally and acting out parts with their voices and their hands. It was easier for each of them to share their favorite character within the story content and context than in the fantasy play. A story sharing could contain two Princess Leias or two Han Solos while actual acting out could not. Story interaction could also contain other children from outside the core Star Wars group. While group members did not invite others to come and look at the books, they could tolerate others sitting close by, looking on and/or commenting.

Power was an invested phenomenon within the Star Wars core group as well. Much of it resided in ownership of Star Wars knowledge. Kerrie owned the books and video tapes. She knew the most about the stories, had heard the stories read at home and had often played Star Wars with her older brother.

If the core group of children was playing Star Wars without Kerrie, they assumed their particular favorite roles, with some occasional arguing over who was going to be which characters. If, however, the group was playing Star Wars with Kerrie, she assumed the role of director, assigning the roles and controlling the play action. For many months the group was content to allow her this power. She had the most knowledge about the stories, owned the books and had control over who got invited to view the tapes.

By the end of the study, however, most of the children had been invited to see the tapes at her house and were quite familiar with the story content. Several of the children went to Nora to complain about Kerrie always being the one to say who could be who. Nora suggested to those complaining that Kerrie was the one to talk to about that. In addition, she asked them how they would like to have this problem handled instead. She called the group together in the book corner. She began by saying that several children were not happy that Kerrie was always the one to assign roles. Kerrie immediately stated that she owned the books and knew the most about them. The others defended their knowledge and said they wanted a turn to assign roles. Kerrie was not especially happy with this turn of events, but she did agree to let others do it. Nora helped them set up a list of dates and names of when and who was to have turns assigning the roles.

Ultimately, Kerrie's way of handling this was to try to get the other children to look at the <u>Star Wars</u> books with her instead of actually playing out the Star Wars games. This left her with a measure of her former power since she still owned the books and could say who sat beside her or helped turn the pages.

Jude was an occasional member of the Star Wars group. She was willing to play other roles besides Princess Leia. She liked playing with the various members of this group. Often it appeared that she joined them for the sake of playing and not for what they were playing. She was the only other member of the group to also own a Star Wars book (<u>The Ewoks</u>). She brought it in twice. Whenever she brought it in the other members of the group, except Kerrie, were ready and willing to accord her the authority and group control they usually gave to Kerrie. Ownership of the book was a source of knowledge and power. Kerrie preferred to hold the group's attention on her own with the book and often refused to have an adult read it to the group. Jude, on the other hand, was aware that this control could be hers, but didn't appear very interested in wielding it. She knew the story and had comments to make but she sought out an adult to read the story to the group, and seemed much more concerned with actually getting on with the story than in personal control of who was listening. Kerrie had a considerable investment in her leadership role. The only serious threat to that role came when Alan brought in his castle and miniature knights. Will had

become Kerrie's staunchest supporter and even he deserted Star Wars for the castle and knights, much to Kerrie's displeasure.

Jack displayed the most energy and imagination in combat fantasy play. This was where he concentrated his attention. He quickly picked up on these aspects of Star Wars and could expand the battle scenes impressively. This gave him a measure of authority as well. Adam also had interest in this area. He and Jack usually shared the good guy roles (Han Solo and Luke Skywalker). Adam, however, was not as totally devoted to combat as Jack, and frequently left the play sooner than the others. Joie and Kerrie tended to squabble over who was Princess Leia. Kerrie was often willing to let the role go since she recognized that she still retained control through ownership of the books.

The children involved in this whole sequence of events were exploring and learning a great deal about themselves. The issue of power was very evident. Kerrie and the others understood that power resided in ownership. In this case, it was ownership of knowledge as well as of the actual objects (books and tapes). They respected Kerrie and listened to her until they had gained enough Star Wars knowledge to be comfortable with and confident of, their own ideas about roles and the fantasy play. Nora built on this confidence by having them discuss their discontent with the situation and Kerrie, with Kerrie herself and helping them sort out a workable solution. Nora was, in effect,

247

telling them they had a legitimate problem and that they were quite capable of working it out themselves. She was there to help them talk about it, find a solution and set it up. She did not impose her ideas or create new rules. She provided the opportunity for the children to make the connections between the problem and their own abilities to solve it.

The Content of the Play. The teachers provided for the expansion of ideas in the content of the play as well. In the farther classroom which housed the extended day program, Jonathan had helped the children create an aura of space travel. This was a direct result of the particular interest of Kerrie, Jack, Joie and Will in Star Wars books and play. With the children, Jonathan developed this theme is several ways. He provided props in the form of headphones, a microphone, a control panel, helmets and egg carton oxygen tanks. The children used all of these to imitate and to explore ways of surviving in space. He helped the children make a large sun, many stars and several planets out of tinfoil. These were then hung from the ceiling. In addition, Jonathan set up a continuum of interaction over several weeks. He and the children planned a pretend space trip to Mars. Every few days they spent some time discussing how the trip was going, how far they had traveled, what they might expect to see and when they would return. The children told their parents about the trip and parents picking up their children asked many questions about the trip.

Jonathan displayed a number of non-fiction picture books about various aspects of space and read from these books from time to time. Jonathan was adept at redirecting the children's interest and their play into different and often the more positive aspects of the Star Wars stories. Star Wars was the beginning since this was where the strong and obvious interest lay. When Jonathan read the Star Wars books to the children and talked to them about the characters and the stories. He asked questions that directed their thinking toward the equipment in the space ships, the kinds of space occupations the characters had and the things the characters had to do to survive in space. In doing this, Jonathan helped the children broaden their interests and ideas beyond the fighting aspects of the story. He helped them see another and different aspect to the stories, and how the situation could be seen differently.

Space props and factual information about space and space travel expanded not only their personal information base but also provided opportunities for a different kind of fantasy play. These props encouraged them to think about and explore using equipment, surviving in space, space travel and what is in space in general. Jonathan was providing opportunities for these children to explore their abilities and possibilities in regard to space. The kind of play that grew out of these props and the non-fiction book interactions seldom resulted in fighting or shooting kinds of behavior. The children extended their

creativity to include other things. It was their idea to pretend the tricycles were small, moveable space ships and to build tall, elaborate rockets in the block area.

   The Action of the Play. The interactions with Star Wars books and the Star Wars fantasy play produced strong indications of how children explored many ideas about themselves, their world and their own abilities to accomplish what they needed to in regard to meaning for their lives. This was, perhaps, most strongly apparent within the action of story itself. Children at this age engage in various forms of rough and tumble play as they test the limits of their own bodies, the tolerance of the society and setting around them. In this setting, such play had found a ready outlet in Star Wars stories, whether in books or videos. The children expressed themselves through imitation and exploration of these characters and their actions. In this sense, the play arose out of story or at least story provided the medium for play expression. Sensing the strength and importance of these needs and a means of expressing it, the adults in this setting did not deny the interest nor banish it from the classroom setting. In very creative and positive ways, the adults helped these children to put the aggressive behavior back into story from whence it had come.

   Edmund spent many days helping the children create a large Star Wars book of their own. He provided newsprint, crayons, time, encouragement and interest. The children provided

250

the ideas. Any child who wanted to was welcome to draw a picture of the Star Wars character they liked or the one they hated or the one they most wanted to be. Edmund labeled the characters for the children. The drawings were mostly done in a group setting accompanied by much talk about the characters being depicted. Over the next few days Edmund met with the children both individually and in small groups. Now the children told him what they wanted to say about the characters. Sometimes they talked about the character they had themselves drawn and sometimes they talked about characters someone else had drawn. Edmund wrote down what they dictated and read it back to them. Here they could express any of their ideas about the characters no matter how violent or aggressive. Later, the book was shared with other classmates and shown to parents. Edmund bound the book together with yarn and put it in an accessible place for the children to look at.

Out of this project came the idea, from the children, to dramatize a Star Wars story for the other class and for parents. Edmund and Nora helped the children do this. The class had done other dramatizations and knew that the first thing they needed was a script. Edmund began the group script writing by providing one line from one of the Star Wars books. The result was a four page story which they did, eventually, dramatize for the other class. Edmund and Nora emphasized that the dramatization had to demonstrate behavior that was acceptable

in school, so they would have to find other ways to handle situations that involved fighting and shooting. During the involved discussions and the writing of the script, the children convinced Edmund and Nora that light sabers were not exactly like swords, and promised that in the dramatization, they would use pretend ones and would not touch each other, so light sabers stayed in their story. The children also drew some illustrations to go with this script (Appendices D and E).

Within these story discussions and creations, the teachers were acknowledging with the children the existence of the violence. How could it be denied? These children had seen the videos and other violent ones besides. Such violence, at least in a visual and oral context, was a fact of their living. Television, movies and even books brought violence into their young lives very vividly. So rather than denying it and banishing it, these teachers helped the children find ways to handle it. In writing about the Star Wars characters and their actions the children had the opportunity to express their own feelings of aggression. In their own story, they could fight and shoot as much as they needed or wanted to and it was safe. Story was, after all, a secure secondary world. Ideas expressed in words were not going to hit back and hurt. The adult involved in writing down their ideas for them was also trustworthy. He was not judgmental and did not think their ideas were bad. Here they could explore violence and the possibilities of their own

competence in handling it. The same rules held true for the discussions that happened around the story writing. They could say what they wanted, say the words and the story; they could trust Edmund to understand, not to judge and to accurately transcribe their oral text to a written one. Story was powerful here in offering both the containment and the exploration of scary ideas and one's own abilities to understand and assure survival.

In writing the script and dramatizing their own <u>Star Wars</u> story, the children also had further opportunity to explore what could happen in story. This was a different kind of story; one that would lead to real action. With the help and encouragement of the adults, the children came up with ways to handle violent behavior: nets, cages, and caves instead of guns, death and destruction. Monsters in a cave could be imagined by the audience and didn't have to really appear. Such monsters could eat the enemies instead of shooting and killing them. The children also learned that drama was a specialized kind of play within play that could accommodate fighting behavior in a pretend fashion with pretend weapons and didn't result in actual hurt.

The children who had used story characters and actions as the medium for actively expressing hostile behavior now found ways of putting that behavior back into story. Expressing such behavior in text was safer for all concerned. No one got hurt, no

one got sent to their cubby or scolded. Their awareness of pain and violence and their need to find ways to deal with it was acknowledged. They had opportunities to explore more positive ways to handle those parts of their inner and outer life. In addition, they also found that they could create story. Here was an ability of their own that allowed them to accomplish what they needed and wanted.

The idea of finding more positive and less hurtful ways of handling hostility was evident in the fantasy play that came out of these story creations as well. After the stories were written and dramatized, the everyday kind of Star Wars pretend play gradually changed. They continued to exhibit fighting kinds of behavior but they also incorporated the possibility of dealing with it in other ways. Kerrie, especially, found a measure of satisfaction in punishing the 'bad' Star Wars characters in the books by smacking the illustrations with her hand or pounding them with her fist as she looked through the books and talked about them with her friends. Will, Josh, Kerrie, Jack, Adam and Joie all acted out bits and pieces of the story with their voices and their hands as they looked through the books. Here they could act out fighting parts with an invisible enemy instead of with each other.

Will was always especially timid about taking on any role that involved fighting and that might have led to actual hitting or shoving. He had avoided those roles by always being an Ewok or

Chewbacca. The day that Jude brought in her <u>Star Wars</u> book, Jack and Adam finally got Will to agree to be Han Solo, a major warrior. However, Will did not immediately join the play. He stood to one side watching and refusing Jack's attempts to get him to fight. Finally he figured out a way to get into the play and still not fight or get hurt. He threw himself on the floor at the feet of the fighters and declared he had been stunned with a lazer gun. This had an immediate effect on the play. After all, Han was an important character and was needed in the battle. All play became concentrated on 'reviving' Han. Adam, as Luke Skywalker, finally succeeded by rubbing his back. But now the idea of being stunned and being revived had captured their attention. Here was a new aspect of the play to be explored and new ways to do it. A kiss on the cheek, a hug and back rubbing were all nurturing and positive ways to handle the results of a heavy fight. Will had found a way to be a warrior and not lose face because he didn't want or like to fight, and, in addition, he had centered attention on a more gentle, but just as interesting play idea.

It was interesting to note that Jude's one <u>Star Wars</u> book was in picture book format with less text and more and colorful illustrations as opposed to most of Kerrie's <u>Star Wars</u> books which had a great deal of text and whose illustrations consisted of photographs from the movies and videos. Jude's book provided the impetus for one of the longest, most positive and most

creative fantasy play interactions that grew out of Star Wars. From this book came the play that saw Will taking on a major warrior role for the first time and also finding a way to be part of the play without actually fighting. Within this fantasy play episode grew positive, nurturing ways of 'reviving' hurt characters. Some of these ways, very likely, were carry-overs from other stories. They knew Snow White had been 'revived' with a kiss and Jenny had been comforted with back rubs in <u>Jenny's Trip to the Hospital</u>. Jude's book, while tied to the actual Star Wars videos and movie texts, was a simplified story text and the illustrations were drawings not actual photographs. Both these attributes seemed to allow for more freedom of choice and imagination, more opportunity to explore and extend their own ideas and make their own contributions.

The secondary worlds that evolved around the <u>Star Wars</u> books and the resulting fantasy play were perhaps the strongest and most pervasive created in this setting. Whether they were involved in the books and/or the play, the children slipped easily and quickly into the separateness of the secondary world. Here they dealt with many and various aspects of life. They talked about and played out their ideas of good and evil, they found different ways of dealing with their strong feelings around aggression and violence and explored the differences between reality and fantasy. Power was also an issue within the secondary worlds of Star Wars, as was the establishment of a social hierarchy, both of which, at times, carried over into the

reality of the other classroom activities. Star Wars also offered opportunities for teachers to paly an important role in effecting the structure, content and action of secondary world creation and implementation. Out of the individual and group contributions grew these secondary worlds where life and meaning were explored and expressed.

Summary

The four common features of Benton's secondary world of literary response andWinnicott's third area of play were found to be present in this day care setting. Those aspects of the environment which allowed and encouraged the creation of open, accepting and trustworthy relationships were especially important in order for a secondary world to be created. Within the context of this setting, the majority of the children could create and/or gain access to a secondary world. Several children, however, were not able to do this.

For those children who did accomplish a secondary world there were extensive opportunities to create and expand meaning within it. Children used the secondary world to explore self identity and emotions as well as new and anticipated realities. The secondary worlds created, especially those which revolved around Star Wars fantasy play and book interactions were of a

multifaceted nature and offered many possibilities for teacher

interaction in the meaning making process.

258

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

This study used ethnographic methods to explore how young children create meaning for their lives through play and response to literature. The decision to work with pre-schoolers was predicated on the belief that the greatest amount of learning humans accomplish is done in the years before they enter a formal educational setting and that, basically, young children know what they are doing as they set out to create meaning for their lives. Consequently, within a natural, everyday context (a pre-school day care center), this study first explored the nature of the literary responses of pre-schoolers in such a setting. Next, it considered these response behaviors in light of the characteristics of a 'secondary world' of literary response as described by Benton (1978) and of a 'third area' of play as described by Winnicott (1971). Finally, the study examined the possibilities, on the part of young children, for making meaning within a secondary world.

Motivating the study were the commonalities found between Winnicott's 'third area' of play and Benton's 'secondary world' of literary response. Both the third area of play and the

secondary world of response are thought of as occurring in an intermediate, potential space between the outer reality shared with society and individual inner psychic reality. Both depend for existence on flexible, non-arbitary relationships of trust and reliability. Both are dependent on and created out of the individual experiences of living and both offer place, time and space for thought, imagination, exploration and creation of meaning for living. The first task of the study, then, became to find a context for children which allowed and encouraged a broad interaction with literature and provided extensive time, space and opportunity for play.

The importance of context had been addressed in other studies. Both Hickman (1979) and Kiefer (1983) stressed the idea that context played an important role in children's response to literature. They emphasized the need for context to supply a wide variety of literature and access to that literature, as well as opportunities to read and discuss literature with both adults and peers. Lehr (1985) stressed that a context which supplied children with the opportunity to read, listen and discuss books greatly contributed to their world knowledge and helped them develop their abilities for creating meaning for themselves. Snow and Ninio (Teale and Sulzby, 1986) were even more specific in indicating that shared book experiences (adult/child) provided a powerful opportunity for the young child to learn about language and reading and to internalize basic skills and

concepts of literacy. Such a context was available at the Green Ridge Day Care Center.

Physically, humanly and philosophically, the Green Ridge Day Care Center provided an atmosphere that encouraged play and literary response activity. Its large, open areas accommodated the developmental and cognitive needs of this age group for rest, play, and other activities. A wide variety of toys, props, manipulatives and books was both available and accessible to the children. The ratio of one adult to three or four children allowed for more individual time and attention for each child than might be found in some other pre-school settings. Philosophically, the emphasis in this setting was on recognizing and encouraging a child's individuality and self esteem. Individually, the teachers made strong and sincere attempts to implement this philosophy successfully for each child. They built their program on respect for the abilities of children to accomplish their own learning in their own ways. The open, flexible structure of the daily schedule encouraged children to make choices, solve problems, make contributions and help establish the community. Children were treated with patience, respect and acceptance.

Within this overall context existed much opportunity and encouragement for play and for literary response. In addition to large open spaces and props for play, there was also a spacious and comfortable space for interaction with books. There was a

large collection of children's literature available and accessible. The collection contained many genres of literature (folk and fairy tales, realistic and fantasy stories, concept books and non-fiction books), mostly in picture book and illustrated chapter book formats. Throughout the day there was always time and opportunity for children to interact with books, both on their own and in group story hours. Often too, adults were available to read aloud on request. Much of the fantasy play that occurred in this setting had its orgins in literature.

As Hickman, Kiefer and Lehr discussed the importance of context in establishing response to literature, so too, did they discuss the kinds and variety of response behaviors that might occur in such a context. All of them validated behaviors beyond the traditional written or oral responses that formed the basis of most previous response studies. Hickman's (1979) study was done with children in kindergarten through grade five and in it she described the response behaviors of the youngest children as listening behaviors that included body stance, laughter and applause, situational behaviors which had to do with browsing, keeping books at hand, reading with friend and sharing discoveries made in the texts and illustrations, oral responses which included retellings, discussions and free comments. It was only with this youngest group of children that she observed any dramatic play in response to literature.

Kiefer's study (1983) was done with first and second graders and she, too, described a wide variety of response behaviors. Kiefer found that this age group exhibited similar listening kinds of behaviors as the youngsters in Hickman's study. She also found a wide variety in response behaviors centered on choice of books, time and attention paid to books and talk that arose from interaction with books. She observed oral responses similar to those observed by Hickman. In addition, the children in Kiefer's study responded to literature through production of creative art work (murals, dioramas, illustrations). Finally, Kiefer observed that this age group also responsed to literature through the medium of dramatic play. They acted out the stories they heard, either the actual story or their own versions. Cochran-Smith (1984), in her study done with nursery school children, also obsereved that interactions with books stimulated and broadened imaginative behavior. I found that pre-schoolers exhibited literary response behaviors similar to those described by Hickman and Kiefer. Their literacy acquisition skills were also similar to those of the nursery school children in Cochran-Smith's study. However, many of the response behaviors of the young children in the present study were deeply integrated with play behaviors. The present study categorized the literary response behaviors of pre-schoolers (age three and one-half to five). Three main categories emerged from the data analysis. They were: individual/dyadic, communal and guided/directed response behaviors. Individual/dyadic response behaviors included book

interactions that involved a single child with a book(s), two children with a book(s) or an adult and a child with a book(s). Within these interactions there were physical responses on the part of the children such as thumb and finger sucking, snuggling close to the adult reader, touching and sitting close to friends, holding books while a story is being read and carrying books around. There were also behaviors which could be termed literacy behaviors. These included labeling items in the illustrations, retelling bits and pieces of the story, dictating stories based on previously heard stories as well as telling their own stories. In addition, these children displayed considerable interest in demonstrating their book handling knowledge. Most of them knew how to hold a book so others could see, where the story began and ended, the front and back of the book, left to right progression of text and how to use illustrations to find their way around in the story. Individual children also chose books frequently, both on a random and a deliberate basis. Discussion between two children interacting with a book generally consisted of pointing out favorite characters, illustrations or parts of stories. Between an adult and a child with a book, discussion was more likely to take the form of relating the story to the child's life or a request on the child's part for definitions and explanations. Fantasy play was also a strong response to literature. Children together or with an adult liked to play the 'that's me' game. They would point to a character in the illustrations and claim the identity of that character with the simple explanation of 'that's

me' or 'I'm him/her/the baby/the mother etc. '   Often, too, two children together would go off to the other open areas pretending to be favorite characters or acting out bits of the stories.

Communal response behaviors involved more than two participants, either several children together or several children and an adult interacting with books.   Response behaviors similar to those of individual or dyadic interactions occurred in communal interactions.   Within the communal interactions, however, there was more opportunity to negotiate for space to see and hear, to be near the teacher and to make choices of books to be read.   Children involved in communal response behaviors often exhibited long attention spans (twenty to forty-five minutes) and could tolerate numerous interruptions.   They used book interactions to demonstrate their literacy knowledge and book handling skills as well.   In addition, some of the play that arose out of communal interactions with books demonstarted their ideas about school behavior such as how to take turns, how to follow directions and how to read a story to a group. Discussion within a group of children involved with a book usually revolved around finding and retelling favorite parts, sharing discoveries from the illustrations and playing the 'that's me" game.   However, when a group of children involved with a book included an adult, the discussion more often related the stories to the lives of the participants.   Here, too, the children were more openly expressive of their feelings and ideas.   With an

adult involved, discussions often explored more in-depth concepts such as beauty, death, heaven and the difference between reality and fantasy. Very often extensive fantasy play behavior grew out of communal interactions with literature as several children would go off to act out parts of the stories.

The third category of response behaviors described by this study was termed guided or directed. These response behaviors resulted from book interactions which always included an adult and which had a pre-determined goal or expectation. The teachers in this setting had built in, though generally unvoiced, expectations that books could accomplish things. The teachers used books to effect behavior both generally and specifically. They expected and used books to bring the children together, to help establish a sense of togetherness, of community. They used books at transition times such as before lunch or nap or a field trip to quiet the children and focus their attention. Children who were too noisy or aggressive might also be sent to look at books until they could better manage their behavior. There had been considerable concern about the aggressiveness of the Star Wars play behavior in this classroom. Many of the children were familiar with these stories and the video tapes and the resulting play behavior was often rough and excluding. The teachers helped the children find more acceptable ways of dealing with this. The teachers directed some of this energy back into story by having the children dictate stories and draw pictures about

their favorite Star Wars characters. In these stories the children could express any idea, violent or otherwise, they wished. Later, they wrote and dictated another Star Wars story to dramatize for other classes and parents. In this story they had to find positive ways of solving the conflicts formerly solved by hitting, pushing and shoot-em-dead behaviors. Gradually the character of the Star Wars play changed and became less violent.

Teachers also used books to instruct, both directly and indirectly. Directly, the teachers chose specific books to prepare the group for celebrations (Passover), and for field trips (Sugaring Time for a trip to a maple sugar farm). They also used books to accomplish particular aspects of the formal curriculum. Indirectly, instruction arose out of discussion questions that came up in casual book interactions with the children and covered a variety of topics such as what you might see underground, what platitudes are, birthday dates, days of the week and months of the year.

Having established broad categories and written descriptions of response behaviors exhibited by pre-schoolers in this literature and play rich environment, the second part of this study considered these behaviors in light of the characteristics of Benton's secondary world of response and Winnicott's third area of play. First, it was important to establish how and why such a secondary world was created in this setting. The establishment of a secondary world primarily involves the building of

trustworthy, reliable relationships which are flexible and are not arbitrarily imposed or changed.

The importance of social relationships in the growth process of humans has been adequately documented by many theorists. L.S. Vygotsky and Jerome Bruner both viewed children as active creators in their own learning processes and both felt that social interaction was as important as biological development. Bruner (1983) saw the joint play activity between mothers and infants as the vital social interaction that allowed for the development of cognition. In his view, play, particularly play that involved langauge, was the place where children could explore and develop their psychological and linguistic processes. For Vygotsky (1979) the sharing of language and activity with others was the essential play ingredient which allowed for the creation of new relations between situations in thought and reality. Winnicott (1971) theorized that the child was first the creator of self. He went on to say that creation of self occurred in a 'third area' and that one of the vital ingredents for such a secondary world was successful interaction with a nurturing adult.

Literary response theorists have also indicated the necessity of interaction. Rosenblatt (1938) saw literary response as a transaction between the reader and the text. Such a transaction was personal and individual, dependent on what the reader brings to the reading out of his own life experiences and what the text provides. She felt that cognitive, psychological, and

social development of humans contribute to their comprehension of literary meaning as well as to their ability to use narrative to create meaning for themselves. While Winnicott saw children as creators of self, response theorist, Michael Benton saw children as readers creating meaning for the self. His secondary world of literary response had characteristics similar to those of Winnicott's third area of play. Both were based on successful social interaction. The second question of this present study explored how such a secondary world was created in this setting and how the children gained access to such a world.

Some of the aspects of the context which have already been discussed contributed to the creation of such worlds. As both Benton and Winnicott stated, social interactions played a strong role in such secondary world creations. Attitudes of trust, reliablility and acceptance were vital. Adults helped accomplsih this through their attention to individual needs and interests, their expectations of respect and ability on the part of each child. The teachers built a flexible structure for the program and the schedule which allowed for and encouraged individual contributions. The structure also provided large amounts of time for play and other social activities.

Winnicott felt that the intermediate world of play was vital to creative living and, while such a world was dependent on trustworthy and accepting social interactions, such a world wouldn't be created at all if there was too much interference

from the outside world. When adult interpretation of life became too strong; was too firmly imposed, the child lost his abiltiy to build a third area in which to play creatively. Similarly, the secondary world of literary response fails to be created when outside, usually adult, interpretations of literatur, are too strongly imposed on the listening/reading child.

Within the context of this study such overlapping worlds of play and literary response were created frequently and quite easily. However, such worlds didn't happen for all of the children. Most of the children who slipped comfortably into an intermediate world to play and to respond to books, were those who had been in the community classroom a longer time and were more familiar with the adults and their peers as well as with the structure of the setting. While Nora, Edmund and Jonathan could and did play important roles in the creation of such worlds, seldom did such worlds occur around Martha's work with the children. While the children enjoyed and interacted with Martha, they were also very aware that her physical handicaps had to be compensated for by Edmund's constant help and attention. Marhta could not take adequate care of them on her own. In addition, the children were constantly and directly involved with her handicaps in that they had to manoeuvre around her wheelchair, not trip over her if she sat on the floor and run for Edmund when she needed him. Her very immediate

needs left them little time or space to play with possibilities on their own.

Two of the children, in particular, didn't seem to create secondary worlds in which to play or respond to books. One child was frequently absent and the other was quite new to the group. In addition, both of these children were encountering many difficult changes in their lives. All of these factors may have contributed to their inability to feel secure and comfortable enough in the setting to create a secondary world in which to play and respond. The teachers also felt that they had more difficulties meeting the needs of these particular children. So, while an open, reliable and flexible context, attitudes of acceptance and respect for individual contributions and nurturing social interactions, allowed most of the children to create secondary worlds or to gain access to them, such a context was not totally successful for all of the children.

For those children who could create or otherwise gain access to secondary worlds, there were extraordinary opportunities to create meaning for themselves. The other three commonalities of Winnicott's third area of play and Benton's secondary world of response were characteristic of these worlds. In each instance, the children themselves or with an adult, in interactions with a book or in related play, created an intermediate place, separate from individual, inner psychic reality and also separate from the reality shared with the outer

world of the day care setting. Such a separate, intermediate place was both dependent on and enriched by the individual contributions of each participant. Such a world offered opportunities to explore, imagine and create possibilities for living.

Researchers in related fields have emphasized the importance of play and interactions with books in the growth and development of children. Erikson (1963) focused on play as a striving for competence and self actualization, as a place and a way of mastering objects and phenomena in order to build reality for the self. The Opies (1959 & 1969) saw the acting out of specific parts and definite stories, on the part of children, as providing opportunities for exploration and mastery of children's own ideas about fear, death and evil. Piaget (1962), too, viewed children as active learners constructing their own representations of the world. Winnicott, however, was most specific in stating that play was the basis of creative thinking and living for the entirety of life, the place where meaning was explored and created.

Researchers looking at children interacting with books found that such interactions resulted in many positive developments. Cochran-Smith (1984) and Snow/Ninio (Teale and Sulzby 1986) emphasized that early shared experiences with books were powerful sources of language and literacy learning as well as influential in the development of reading attitudes.

Cochran-Smith also said that interactions with books both stimulated and broadened children's imagination. Heath (Teale and Sulzby, 1986) stated that both readers and writers use imagination to express their ideas about things they have never experienced before. Dorothy White (1984) described the interactions of children with books as enriching the personal experience. Taylor (Teale and Sulzby, 1986) saw print as one of the major ways children master their surroundings, build new social concepts and estsablish environmental relationships. Benton tied all of these ideas to the area of response to literature and gave structure to the experience of literary response through the characteristics of a secondary world.

Within the context of this study, the intermediate worlds of play and response to literature were often impossible to separate. They were intergrated and overlapping and both were used by the children to explore and create meaning for themselves in various areas of their living. Exploring possibilities for self identity was important to these children. They found infinite pleasure in claiming the identity of various characters in the stories they heard. Within the sharing of the stories and in the resulting fantasy play, they explored roles such as mothers, fathers, babies, warriors, princesses, pirates, knights and princes. The children usually chose characters within their own gender but were occassionally willing to cross gender lines if a particular character or story was especially inviting or exciting. They

investigated their own personal abilities to take risks, to defend themselves, to nurture, to try out unacceptable behavior and to acquire and use power.

The children also used the secondary worlds of response and play to explore and express their emotions. Feelings of responsibility, insecurity and love were strongly apparent in the talk and play which surrounded the assumption of parent and baby roles. Fear and apprehension were more easily addressed in interactions with books and in resulting play.

New and anticipated realities also presented the children with possibilities for creating meaning for themselves through story and play. Specific books appealed to specific children. Books about parents and new babies were special favorites of the two children whose mothers were pregnant. Most of these children would be attending kindergarten in the fall. Their concern with this prospect revealed itself in their frequent use of books and play to explore their expanding competencies and abilities in literacy acquisition and school behaviors. They demonstrated their language and book handling skills and played at following and giving directions, reading stories aloud to others and taking turns, for long periods of time.

One particular child, who spoke no English when she joined the classroom, was especially adept at creating and using the secondary worlds of response and play. The book area of the

setting was the quietest corner in the room. It was also very much a part of the community interactions. This child could interact with books on her own in the book corner and still feel that she was part of the group or she could make overtures of friendships through pointing out her favorite characters or story parts to others. She and the other children seemed to share a common knowledge about how to interact with books. From the safety of this arena, she could observe how the rest of the setting worked socially and gradually find herself a place in it. She also used books and the resulting play to try out her growing competence with the English language.

Interactions with Star Wars books and Star Wars fantasy play provided long-term and multifaceted opportunities for the creation and exploration of meaning. The book interactions and the play presented integrated opportunities for the children to investigate many aspects of their living. Within the seondary words of Star Wars books and play, the children examined both new and familiar roles and abilities, expanded their general factual knowledge and broadened their interests about space, explored behavior and emotions, discussed concepts of reality and fantasy, good and evil, beauty and death. They also learned the value of story as a place to express what was often unacceptable in action, as well as different, more acceptable ways of handling their fears and aggression. Social power was another area investigated and strongly expressed by the children

involved in Star Wars activities. Teachers also took advantage of the opportunities presented by these activities to influence the structure, action and context of the play and ultimately of the use of secondary worlds to make meaning.

The secondary worlds of literary response and fantasy play provided myriad opportunities where meaning and life could be investigated and expressed by the children in this setting.

Implications for Education

The findings of any study using ethnographic methodology are inevitably context-dependent. It is, however, still reasonable to assume that generalizations drawn from the present study can be of use to parents, educators and other child care workers involved with young children.

Based on the recognition and acceptance of secondary worlds as viable and important creations where young children create, extend and explore meaning for their lives, this study identified several factors which contribute to the creation of the secondary worlds in which young children can effectivley and creatively construct meaning for themselves.

The findings of this study support the recommendations of others for the presence of literature in the living contexts of young children. The creation of secondary worlds is facilitated when young children to have easy and consistent access to a large

collection of children's literature which contains various genres, both fiction and non-fiction. Children should have many and varied opportunities for choosing books, as well as the time and space to interact with and respond to them. Social interactions such as talk, discussion and play, with both adults and peers, that revolve around books are also important. As others have stated, all of these factors contribute to language and literacy growth, positive attitudes toward reading and concept development of young children. Yet, the acquisition of these literacy skills is too narrow a focus on what young children do in interactions with books.

Young children are not simply acquiring competence nor are they just enjoying literature. They are directly and actively creating purposeful social and individual meaning for their lives. The importance of literature, as considered in this study, then, is in its offering of a secondary world, where a child can explore self identity through the lives of the story characters, express emotions aroused by the story and use story to extend and validate experiences shared with the outer world. In addition, interacting with and responding to literature provides young children with incentive, inspiration and opportunity for fantasy play. It is strongly suggested that literature itself as well as time and opportunity to respond to it be made a prominent part of the living contexts of young children.

The importance of play in the growth and development of young children has long been acknowledged. It, like literature, provides opportunities for exploring self, emotions, competencies and relations to shared reality. Play, however, when considered as a secondary world, offers the child opportunity to actually create the self as well as explore its possibilities. This study suggests that more attention needs to be paid to what and how young children play. Play should not be restricted to short, specific time periods. Instead, long, flexible blocks of time should be provided. Large open spaces with a variety of props should also be available. Perhaps most important is the opportunity for young children to construct their own play out of their own needs, interests, and feelings. Enough supervision is needed to prevent injury, both physical and psychological, but not so much as will too critically inhibit the child's own creating process. Even when the play is aggressive and ostracizing, adults can find ways of helping children deal with this, ways that do not entirely stop the meaning creation going on within the play. It might be useful for educators and other child care workers to consider adding more open opportunities for both play and literary response to the curriculum of any setting used by young children. Such a consideration could also be important for early elementary eduactors as well. Instead of making the formal educational setting a rigidly structured one, it could become more open and flexible in order to offer opportunities for children to build secondary worlds in which to play and respond to literature and

thus greatly enhance their own personal ways of creating meaning for themselves.

This study also highlights the contribution of adults to the living contexts of young children and to the creation of secondary worlds. Adults working with young children should be willing to relinquish rigid control of both the group and of their own expectations for that group. They should respect and accept the individual learning styles and individual contributions of each child in the community. Their assumption that children can and do respond in new ways contributes to an atmosphere in which the secondary worlds of literary response and play can be created and which will help children to gain access to such worlds. Adults need to resist imposing their own interpretation of life as well as of literature, too strongly on children. Instead, teachers need to create opportunities for choice and decision making on the part of the children. Adults can provide for validation of literature by being strong literacy models, making literature available, being willing and available to read with children and using open ended discussion techniques to which there are no right answers. They need to recognize the meaning creation that is occurring as children play and when such play is overly aggressive, find ways of helping children deal with it still within the realm of play. The beliefs and attitudes of adults towards children contribute greatly to whether or not secondary worlds can come into existence and whether children have access

to them.   Teachers who require children to be too strictly involved with outer shared reality, or who restrict children's play and response behaviors out of their own need for control, inhibit the meaning making possibilities of children.

Any setting which is a context for young children to live in, but particularly an educational setting, needs to be seen as a place where it's important to think about creating an environment that encourages building of and access to secondary worlds.   Physically, it would accommodate the needs of young children by having many toys, manipulatives, props and books as well as large open spaces for rest, play and activities.   The general, overall structure should be open and flexible allowing for individual needs, contributions and interests.   It is also important to have a daily schedule that is not rigid in its timing or expectations.   Such a schedule would provide large blocks of time for play as well as providing many opportunities for children to make choices and decisions about their own learning.   A large collection of children's literature should be available and accessible to the children.   While a context such as the one described here should be successful in allowing most children to create and/or gain access to secondary worlds in which to create meaning, it may not be ideal for all children.   This, too, needs serious consideration.   Attention needs to be paid to the fact that

continuity of time and setting appear to play a factor in the creation of secondary worlds.

Further Research Possibilities

The findings of this study concerning pre-schooler's responses to literature have added to the knowledge previously gained from empirical studies. In addition, these insights have raised new questions about how children create meaning for themselves. The following suggestions may provide further understanding in these areas.

1.   In the present study the use of ethnographic methods for gathering data about response to literature in a pre-school setting was an uncommon approach to the topic. However, it was sufficiently productive to warrant replication. Such a replication study might be done in other day care settings or in other pre-school settings, i.e., nursery schools. These studies might consider such questions as: (a) Are similiar patterns of response found in other day care settings, (b) Are similiar patterns of response found in other kinds of pre-school settings i.e. nursery schools, and (c) What is the relationship between context and response patterns? Another aspect of such a study might compare and contrast response activity in traditionally structured pre-school settings with those in more holistic settings such as the one in which the present study was done.

2. The present study looked at only one pre-school context for young children's responses to books. A study which documented the home contexts as well as the community contexts of pre-schoolers and which included home attitudes and experiences involving book interactions would provide a vital dimension to the concept of meaning creation for both parents and teachers of young children. Such studies could be expanded to include either parents or teachers or both in collaborative research.

3. Literature used in this study contained examples of many genres such as picture story books, folk and fairy tales, fantasy stories, realistic stories, concept books and information books. While there were indications that most fantasy play responses came from interactions with traditional literature and fantasy stories, that children made the most connections between their own lives and realistic stories and that there was a difference in attitude and level of concentration arising out of interactions with non-fiction texts, none of these genres were looked at specifically. A study that specifically considered the responses of young children to these genres would be an invaluable aid to both pre-school and elementary school teachers.

4. The majority of the books used in this present study were picture books in that both text and illustrations were interdependent and contributory to the wholeness of the story. This study, however, did not consider specifically how children interacted with illustrations. It was evident that pre-schoolers

used illustration for many purposes. A study which used picture books as an artistic entity of both text and illustrations to consider the development of visual literacy in young children would, also, add an important dimension to ideas about how children go about creating meaning.

5. A natural outcome to this present study would be longitudinal studies of several children done from birth to age seven. Several such studies have been done in home contexts with individual children (Butler, 1975, Bissex, 1980, Crago, 1983), but none that have included several children. Such longitudinal studies could explore the interactions of young children with literature during these years. In addition, it could consider the possible effect both the literature and the expanding social contexts of their lives have on their meaning making abilities.

6. This study was a beginning exploration of the connections between the secondary world of literary response and the third area of play. It considered these connections only with pre-schoolers. Other studies which further explore these connections with any age group would be useful, especially in considering the changes that occur in the area of play as children enter school. A study that considered these connections in the lives and responses of adolescents would be especially interesting.

In conclusion, I would like to express my deep respect for young children and for their particular ways of being in the

world.   They present researchers with vast and unique opportunities to explore the very source of meaning creation. Young children know what they are doing and deserve recognition for who they are and what they know how to do.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Teacher Interviews

1. Can you give me a general ideas of what the basic educational and socialization expectations are in this center?

2. What are your goals for the program in general? For individual children?

3. How do you go about accomplishing these goals?

4. Would you please describe the population of your class in terms of socioeconomic level, cultures and race?

5. Do you think this background influences their experiences here?

6. Are parents supportive of your program? How is this manifested?

7. Would you please describe the daily routine in your classroom?

8. Tell me how children's books are part of this routine? Do you have a classroom collection available? Who chooses the books? Who reads to the children? How often? Do you visit the public library as a class? What kind of book related activities occur (displays, art work, discussions, dramas)?

9. What is your strongest memory of an interaction involving you and children and books?

10. Do you have any other questions or comments about anything we talked about?

APPENDIX B

STORY TOLD AND ILLUSTRATED BY JOIE

Joie is sitting at the table in the housekeeping area listening to an audio tape of <u>Davy Crockett</u>. She is using plain paper and colored markers to draw as she listens to the story. When I went to sit with her she began to tell me about what she was drawing.

Joie: This is a mountain lady.

me: What's she doing on the mountain?

Joie: She's part of the mountain.

me: Does she get tired being part of the mountain?

Joie: No, she likes it.

Joie turned the paper over and chose a yellow marker to draw with in this side.

Joie: Now this is the ocean and a river going into the ocean.

Joie turned the paper back again.

Joie: Back to the mountain girl. Know how she got in the mountain?

me: How?

Joie: Someone put her there.

me: Like Rapunzel in the tower?

Joie: Yes and she doesn't like it.

Joie chose a brown marker now and drew a big fish.

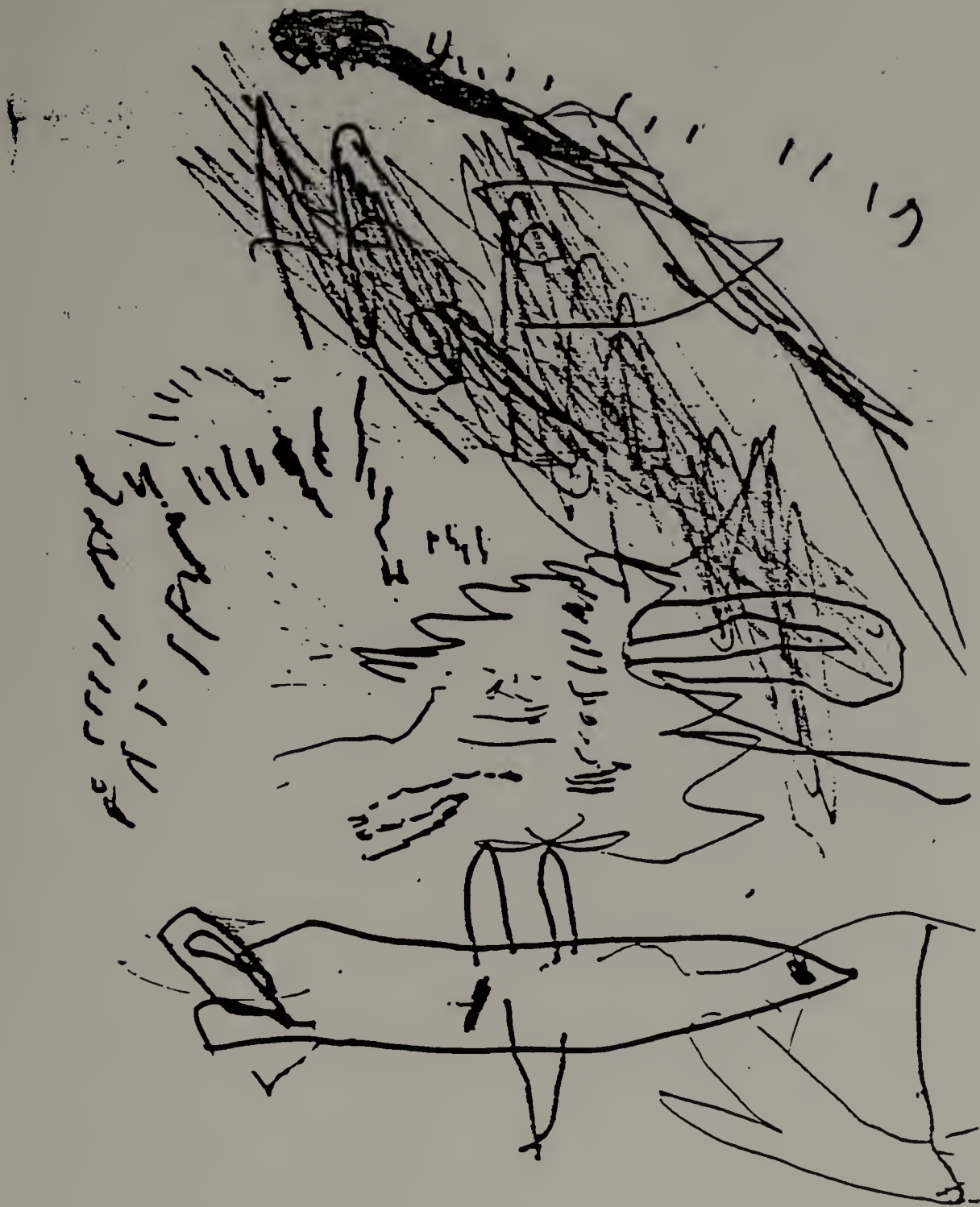Joie: And she got swallowed by a fish.

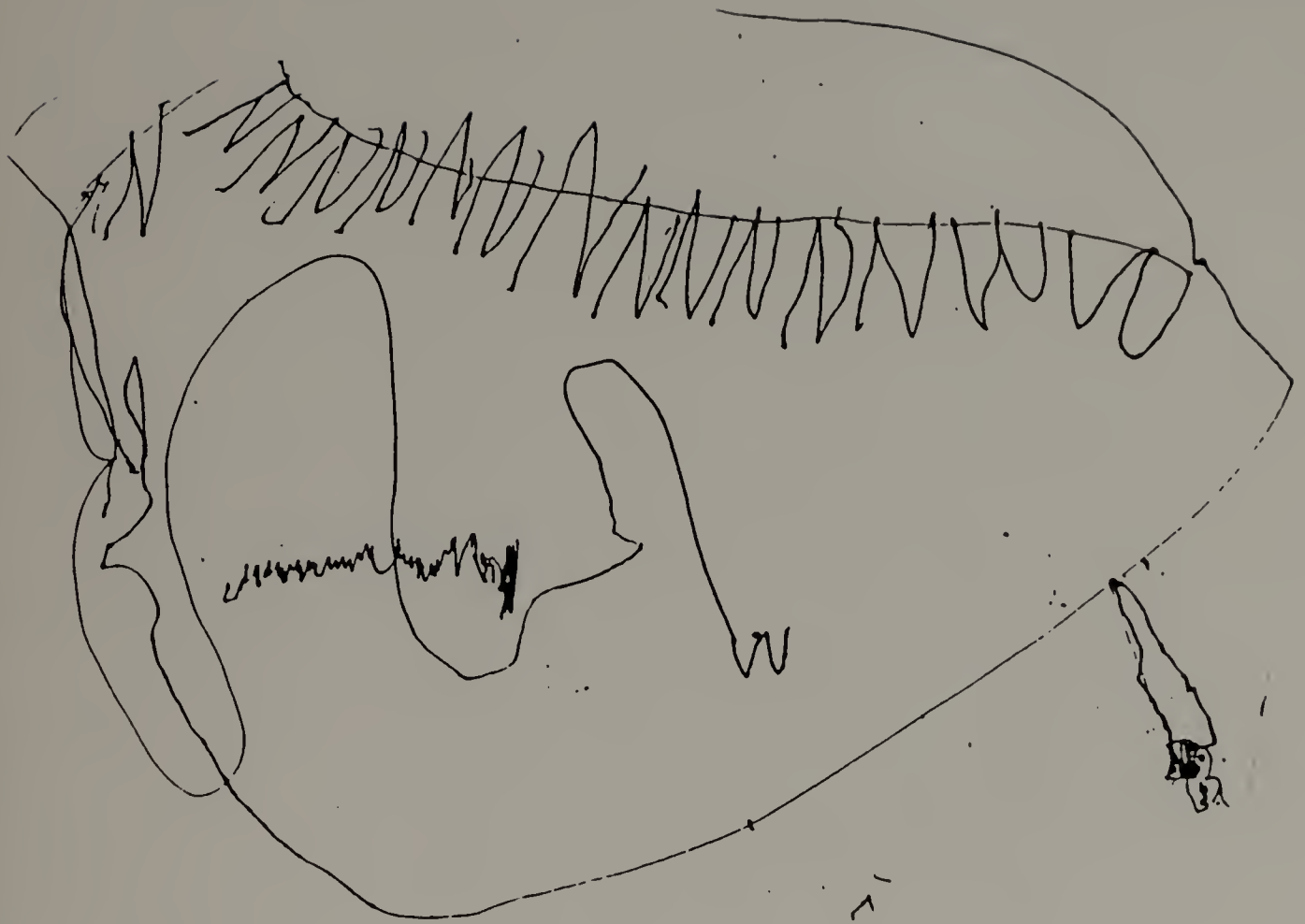Joie drew a small brown line.

Joie: That's how she got out.

Joie drew a series of brown lines.

Joie: They're logs to walk on -- but the person who put her there doesn't know she knows how to get out!
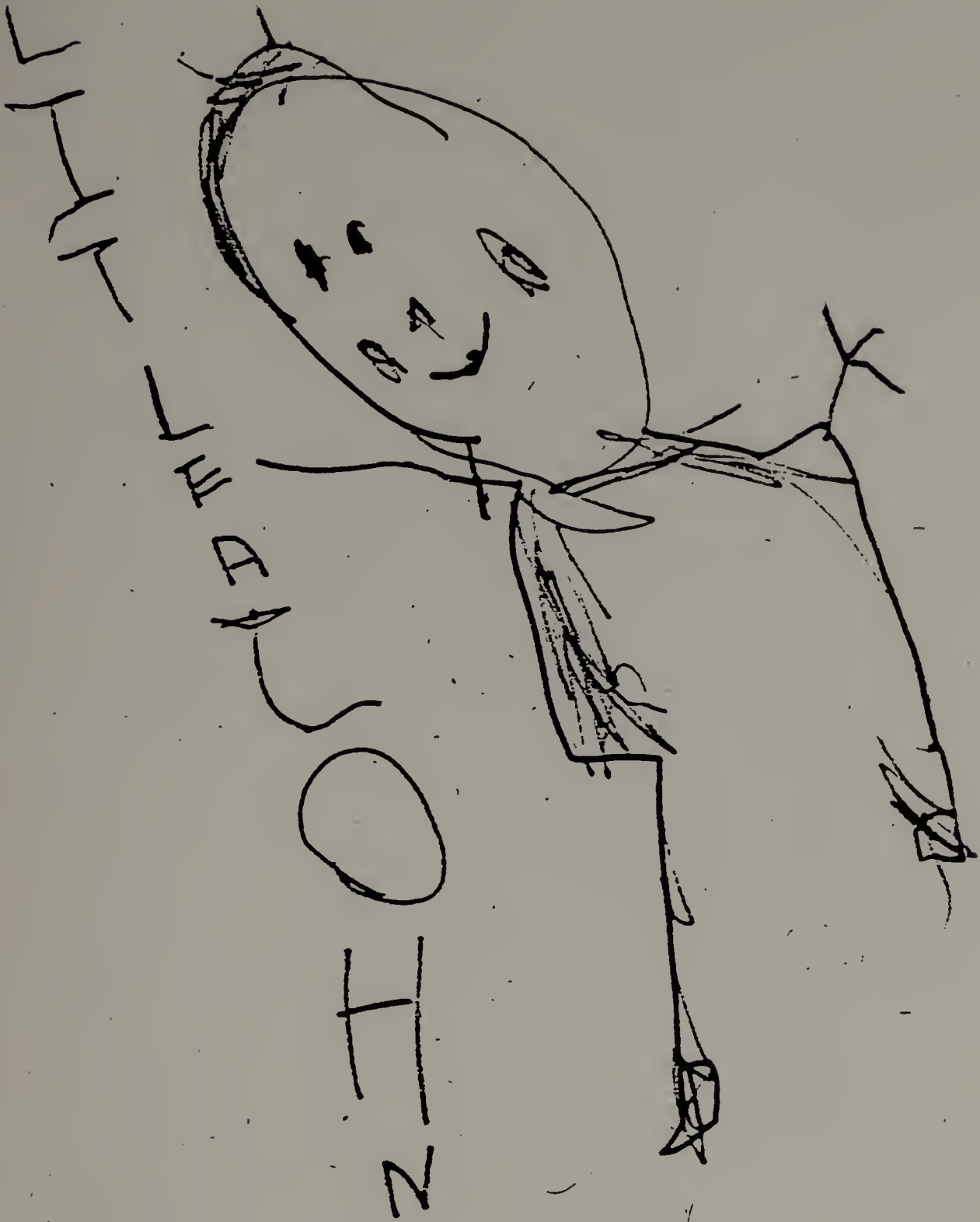
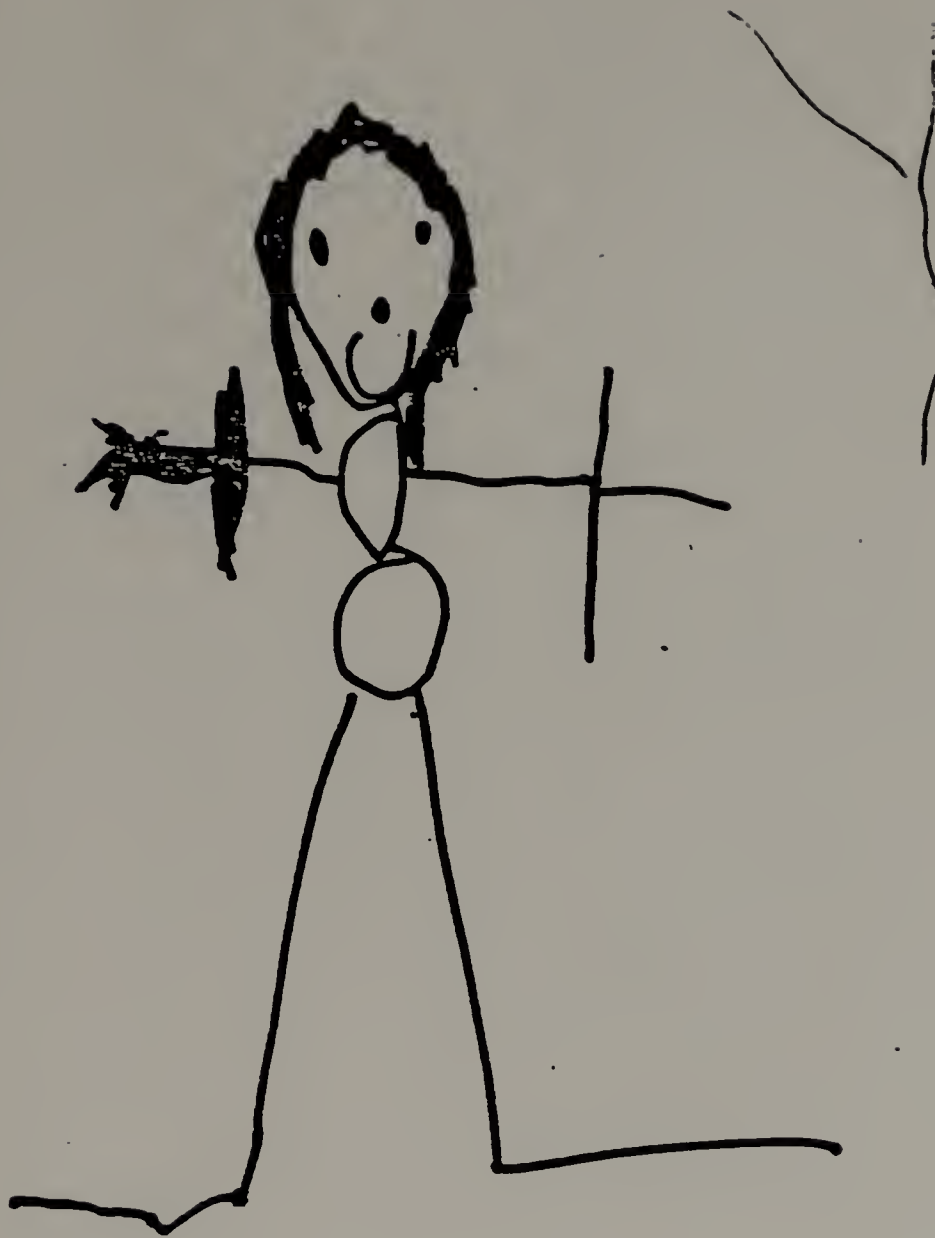Joie added a final fish to her picture, handed it to me and ran off to play.

APPENDIX C

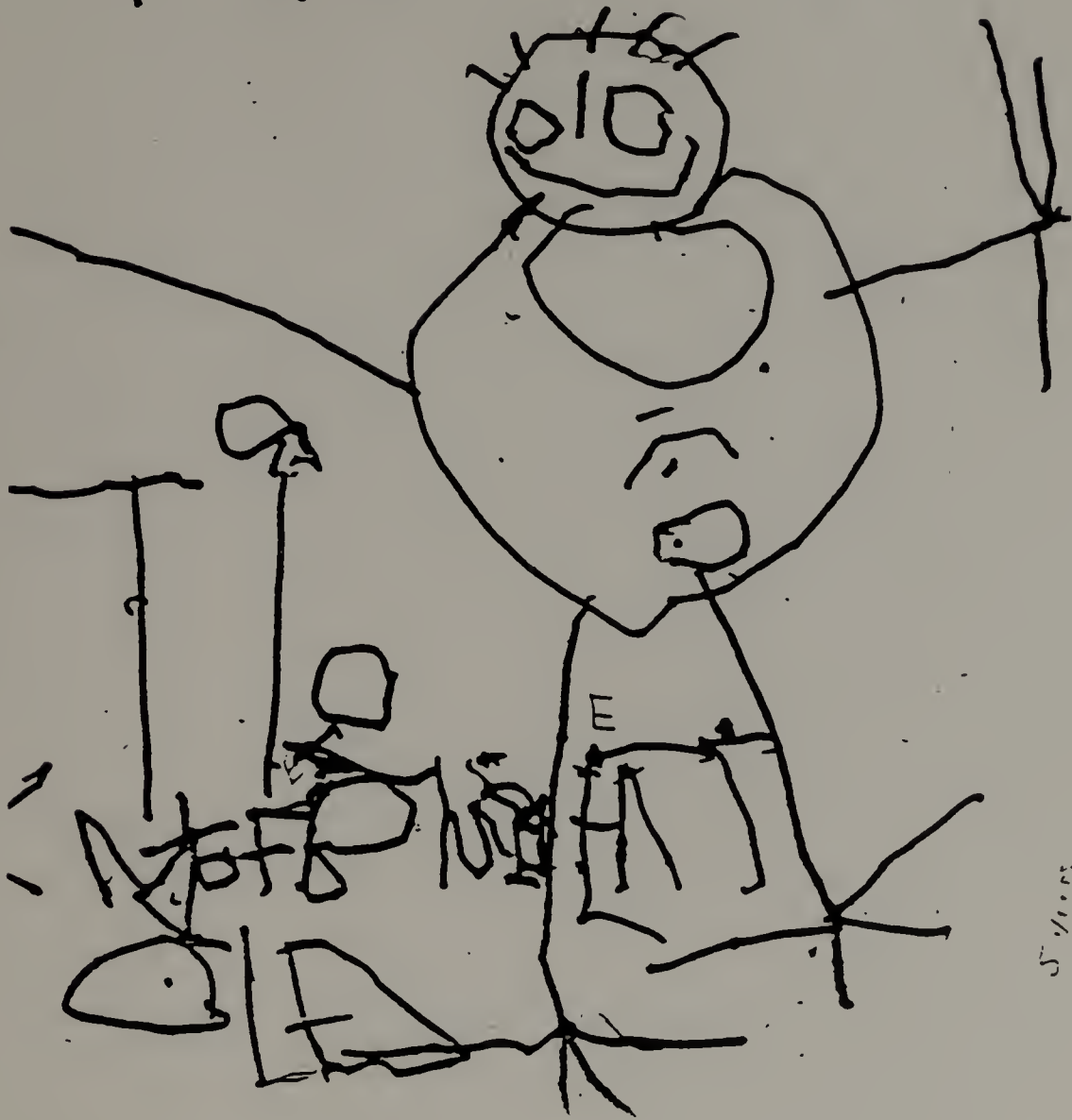EXAMPLES OF CHILDREN'S ARTISTIC RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

LITTLE JOHN

Maid Marion

APPENDIX D

STAR WARS STORY FOR DRAMATIZATION

Star Wars
(Dictated to Edmund by the Children)

(In a galaxy, far, far away the hope of freeedom was kept alive by the rebel forces fighting against the evil galactic empire). Luke fights Darth. Lnado gives the Millenium Falcon to Hans. Hans goes to try to fight some more stron troopers. He flies tinto space. Chewie is Hans' co-pilot. Chewie sees strom troopers coming in a space ship. They shoot the troops. (We can't shoot in school so we'll take it out of the play). We decide to capture the storm troopers. The troopers were under the falcon so they put a net under the falcon and captured the troopers. It broke. (What? The spaceship? The Net?) The net. A fire came and it break it. (Then) He went back to his house and then he did nothing. (Who?) He is the one that's inside and he did nothing. (Who?) Jarbal? No! (gerbil) No! (Jarbal?) Yes.

Then Hans goes back up into space and gets more troops. He catches them with a net. He stays in space for awhile and gets more. He takes them to jail and locks the door. He leaves them on the planet Mars with rebel troops to guard them.

They dress up as bad guys 'cause Leia was captured and they needed to get her not captured anymore. Lando was dressed up in a guard suit. Leia frees herself. She puts chains around Jabba's neck and dresses up in a guard's costume. She need to free Hans and herself. She gets a troop gun (oops- no guns). Leia uses a net to capture storm troopers. She frees Hans in her guard suit, then she frees Chewbacca. They get Luke too and they go off on an air skiff. Then Luke flips and he doesn't fall into the Sarlac pit (that's a pit that eats people). And R2D2 gives him a light saber and Lando stars slipping toward the Sarlac pit. And then Chewie holds Hans' feet and Hans tries to reach Lando. Then hans yells to Luke, "Go fight the guards and we'll save Lando." They save Lnado and luke fights the guards with a light saber. Then more of Jabba's guards come from another skiff

298

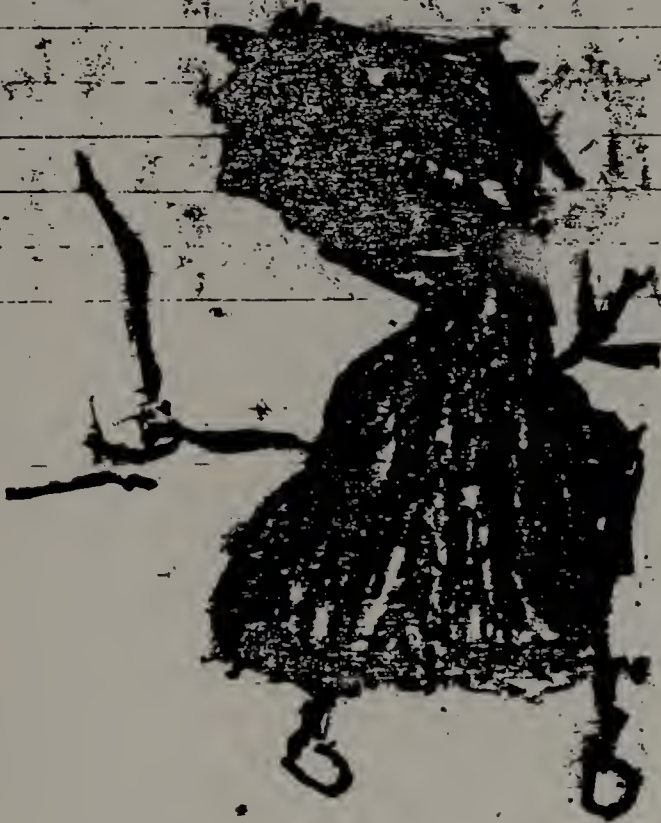and Luke fights them with his light saber. They put a net under the bad guy's ship from the good guy's ship. Then they lock them up and that's the end.

Leia puts them in a locker. Luke puts the locker in a cage. Leia puts them in a cave with a monster (Jabba), then a big monster comes along and eats them.

APPENDIX E

STAR WARS ART WORK

DARTH VADAR

C3PO

The Ewoks

Han Solo

APPENDIX F

DICTATED STORY

Visit to a Maple Sugar Farm

_____. said, "We went to a sugar house and ate snow and maple syrup. _____ went to a sugar house two times in the winter. He had a blueberry waffle with maply syrup. Syrup comes from sap. Sap is food that the tree makes to feed itself (not us). We steal the sap from the tree.

First we drill a hole in the tree. We put a spout in the hole. We hang a bucket on the spout. We (put) a lid, also called a hat, on top of the bucket. The sap goes into the bucket. It takes warm days and cold nights for the sap to flow. It takes two days for the bucket to ger full. It takes strong men to move a full bucket.

They put it in a storage tank and then in a big vat. They boil it. The kids saw it boiling. It looks lile little bubbles - a lot of bubbles. IT takes forty gallons of sap to make a gallon of syrup. While it boils it smells like maple syrup. We remember the smell.

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317

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