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Moving Through Life As A Twin: The Negotiation of Twin Identity Across the Life Course

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by

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For Helen and Hannah

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Acknowledgements

Abstract

This thesis examines twins' negotiations of identity across the lifecourse. Split into two main parts – structuring contexts and agency contexts – it draws upon Jenkins' theory of social identity to examine the interplay between structure and agency as identities are constructed and reconstructed across the lifecourse. Importantly, reflecting current theorising within the sociology of childhood, it illustrates how children can and should be considered to be competent social actors. Even though children have their childhoods structured for them by their parents, children take an active role in shaping their own and each other's childhoods. The body, space and talk provide three important resources for helping twins to variously play up and play down their identities as twins.

Discursively constructed as both a concentrated version of siblingship and an intensification of the symbol of the child, twinship is something that children are expected to (in the main) grow out of. Leaving behind the sameness and togetherness they once shared as children are vital signifiers that they are 'growing up' successfully. However this thesis shows that although, on the one hand, children are often keen to show that they are following this normative timetable, on the other hand, it is evident that they do not simply move from being twins to being adults but rather may try to take up and exit their identities as twins in different situations and with varying degrees of success. Identity then is always in process, moving between various possibilities and emerging from social interaction between embodied actors.

Introduction: Twin Identity and the Life Course

'Identity is our understanding of who we are and of who other people are, and, reciprocally, other people's understanding of themselves and of others (which includes us). The outcome of agreement and disagreement, at least in principle always negotiable, identity is not fixed'

(Jenkins, 2004: 5).

Introduction .

What does it mean to be a twin? How do twins conceptualise their identity? To what extent can twins 'escape' or shape their identity as twin? By comparing the experiences of both child and adult twins[1], this thesis will explore these three questions across the life course. Building on postmodern theories of identity, it draws attention to the fluid and processual nature of identity whilst taking the limitations of this creative process seriously. 'Identity' is embedded within the web of social relations that constitute it and is negotiated across the interplay between structure and agency. Indeed, as this thesis will show, twins draw on particular resources to manage, negotiate and construct their identities within various enabling and constraining contexts. In order to outline the theoretical framework for exploring this process, this introductory chapter will examine the relationship between personal and social identity, structure and agency and similarity and difference. These constitute three dominant themes within this thesis.

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[1] Identical twins were studied but the sample is predominantly composed of non-identical twins.

Identity in late modern society

Today, so it is claimed, it is the *subject's* role to piece together a version of identity from the plurality of alternatives on offer. Increasingly freed from the social confines of industrial society, the individual reflexively constructs his/her own biography in the face of uncertainty and doubt (Giddens, 1991). Certainly the break away from traditional modes of identification (such as class, gender and race) and the rise of individualism (MacFarlane, 1978) in Western society have been well documented. Yet whilst our concerns about identity may be a product of the modern age, 'there is nothing to gain from annexing notions such as selfhood, identity and reflexivity as definitively modern' (Jenkins, 2004: 13). As Jenkins notes, it makes no sense to postulate that people lacked identity prior to the onset of the twentieth century!

Current theorising on 'identity work' and 'body projects' reflect this emphasis on the creative and transformative capacity of individual action. However, rejecting the 'Enlightenment philosophical tradition which conceives of identity as essential, unitary, fixed and unchanging'(Roseneil and Seymour, 1993: 3) does not mean that anything is (instantly) possible. Discourses and social/power relations may shape the options available and the choices made. Ethnographies of childhood have, for example, drawn attention to the relative powerlessness of children to direct aspects of their lives with some researchers (e.g. Mayall, 1999) arguing in favour of conceptualising childhood as a 'minority-group' status. An adequate theory of identity construction must therefore take account of the relevant social and cultural contexts surrounding this process and, in doing so, attempt to transcend the traditional binary opposition of 'individual' and 'society'.

Personal and social identity

The first dominant theme that addresses this relates to personal and social identity. Studying the *negotiation* of social identity rests upon a particular conceptualisation of identity. From this perspective identity is socially constructed through the space of everyday life; it does not simply exist but *emerges* through the course of social interaction. Much previous social science theorising has tended to distinguish between personal identity and social identity in one form or another. For instance, self-categorisation theory (see Chapter 6) has conceptualised personal identity as that which 'differentiates the unique self from all other selves' whereas social identity is the 'internalisation of, often stereotypical, collective identifications' (Jenkins, 2004: 89). Mauss's famous essay ([1938] 1985) distinguished between self-awareness and the social concept of the person and more recently Craib discussed the difference between a continuous 'core self' (I) and a malleable 'social self' (Me) (1998: 4). However, such distinctions neglect the mutuality of these selves and fail to capture the dynamic process of identity construction. Following Jenkins (2004), it is argued that there is no such thing as personal identity conceptualised as separate from social identity. Identity is simultaneously personal and social, individual and collective.

Bridging the gap

For Jenkins, all identities are the result of an ongoing synthesis of (internal) self-definition and (external) definitions of oneself offered by others (Jenkins, 2000: 8). We can never separate internal and external definitions because they are mutually constitutive, as he puts it, 'your external definition of me is an inexorable part of my internal definition of myself' (Jenkins, 1996: 27). Whilst we define ourselves in

particular ways, others also define us. These definitions may (or may not) then reflexively become incorporated into self-identity. Thus, it is only through the process of social interaction that identity emerges. 'Identity is not 'just there', it must always be established' (Jenkins, 1996: 4).[2] The key question to ask is how can twinship be defined as a social identity?

Defining twinship as a social identity

As Chapter 2 will point out, common-sense understandings of twinship reflect the dominance of 'scientific' theorising, preferring to view twinship as a biological state rather than as a social identity. However, this thesis argues that British twinship results from a classificatory process (Douglas, 1966)[3] that uses biology (itself a particular cultural system of meaning) to mark out the distinction between different types of twins as well as between twins and the general population. Meaning is mapped onto this biological framework so that discourses of twinship construct particular understandings of what it means to be a twin (e.g. in terms of the relationship they have with each other, and their appearance). Yet, the biology of twinning so central to our own contemporary definitions of twinship is irrelevant for some cultural classifications of twinship. For example, Diduk (1993) has shown how, within Kedjom society (a north-west province of the Republic of Cameroon), some single birth children are classified as twins. As she points out, 'being labelled a twin rests ultimately on criteria that are assumed to be external to the social order; i.e. being born with god given faculties' (2001: 29). The category 'twins' therefore, does not simply include biological twins but also includes

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[2] The influence of Mead is clear. Mead was one of the first theorists to conceptualise this joining of individual and public perceptions through his notions of 'Me' and 'I'. Whilst the 'I' dimension of the self acts on impulse and initiative, the 'Me' represents the voice of others. These two components enable us to converse with ourselves drawing on the perceptions of the 'Generalised Other' (see Jenkins, 2004: 18-19).

[3] According to Douglas (1966), cultural systems of classification create order (e.g. by distinguishing between 'insiders' and 'outsiders').

any other children who are either born with or are later diagnosed as embodying signs that show they have extraordinary powers.[4] Hence, twin identity, although in western societies thought of as predominantly 'biological', is inextricably linked with the social and cultural world. Indeed, though twins may have an understanding of who they are, this has to be examined in relation to the discourses and stereotypes that inform and are produced by the public imagination. Importantly, twins, like the rest of us, do not live their lives outside of the discourses, institutions, social relations and social practices that constitute their everyday lives.

Examining twinship as a social identity

This thesis begins by exploring the 'external' aspects of the identification process (discourses of twinship and the family context) before turning to examine its connection with the twins' individual perceptions and negotiations of self. Any account of the negotiation of twin identity across the lifecourse must take account of the interplay between discourses of childhood/adulthood and discourses of twinship. In approaching this task, Chapter 2 draws attention to the ways in which British conceptualisations of twinship represent an intensification of the Western cultural notion of 'the child'. Chapter 3 then turns its attention to examining the family context. The child twins discussed here are entwined within networks of family relations that constitute one 'field' (Bourdieu, 1990) or context for this practice of 'identity work'. The final part of the thesis examines how twins use, manage, reject or reconfigure these cultural understandings through drawing on particular resources, namely the body (Chapter 4), physical space (Chapter 5) and talk (Chapter 6). The thesis concludes by arguing that

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[4] Hence, *single twins* (*nyingong*) are classified thus if they are breech births, births with the umbilicus or caul enveloping the infants head, born with spittle on their lips or with bulging eyes (Diduk, 2001).

twinship loses some of its salience as twins grow older and that this reinforces the idea that twinship is a condensed symbol of childhood itself.

Structure and agency

By now it should be clear that any exploration of identity that embraces both the individual and the collective, the personal and the social calls forth a conceptualisation of society that captures the interplay between structure and agency and the subjective and objective aspects of social life. Giddens and Bourdieu have both attempted this. Giddens' synthesis is expressed through his notion of the 'duality of structure' –

> According to the notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise. Structure is not 'external' to individuals: as memory traces and as instantiated in social practices, it is in a certain sense more 'internal' than exterior to their activities in a Durkheimian sense. Structure is not to be equated with constraints but is always both enabling and constraining (Giddens, 1984: 25).

Structure is therefore made up of sets of rules and resources that only exist in so far as they are acted out in the actions of people in their everyday lives. Structure both predates and emerges from action, 'provide[s] the fundamental means for interaction' (Mouzelis, 1989: 615) whilst at the same time being the outcome of it. In this sense, structure and agency are two sides of the same coin. Neither can exist without the other. Thus, in contrast to traditional theorising, structure is both enabling and constraining – allowing agents to act, as well as setting the parameters for such action. Notwithstanding his attempts to synthesise structure and agency, Giddens' 'structuration theory' has been criticised for reifying 'society' as an external entity separate from the members that constitute it (Cohen, 1994). Craib (1998) also notes that in attempting to

bring together such a broad body of academic works, Giddens oversimplifies elements of modern social theory and provides an inadequate account of human agency which does not pay enough attention to the unconscious: 'any conception of agency constructed to fit in with a synthesizing social theory is likely to be inadequate' (Craib, 1998: 63).

Bourdieu addresses some of these issues. Like Giddens, his theory of cultural reproduction argues that individual action accounts for the transformation and endurance of social structures. However through his notion of 'habitus' he attempts to ground these structures in human embodiment. According to him, we each embody a set of 'durable, transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1990: 53) (obtained through experience and teaching) which we bring to social situations and use to produce social practices: 'the habitus imbues people with a tacit sense of how to become competent social agents, which is realized in practices that are constitutive of social life' (Tucker, 1998: 71). We are therefore rarely conscious of it. Instead, as we incorporate the possibilities and limitations of social action, the habitus provides us with a 'feel for the game' of social life that becomes almost second nature to us (Wolfreys, 2000). Some critics argue that in theorising the coterminous relationship between individual and society, Bourdieu implies that the individual is at the mercy of their 'habitus' and thus provides an overly deterministic account of social life. Bourdieu is however quick to defend himself:

> Habitus is not the fate that some people read into it. Being the product of history, it is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that reinforces or modifies its structures. It is durable but not eternal! (Bourdieu in Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133 original italics)

Both Giddens and Bourdieu contribute useful conceptual tools for understanding the relationship between the individual and society. Even though Bourdieu's notion of habitus may achieve this synthesis slightly more successfully, both remind us of the importance of human action in constructing, reproducing and transforming social structures. The individual cannot be detached from society nor society from the individual. Hence, the emphasis they place on the simultaneity of structure and agency supports a conceptualisation of identity as both personal and social, individual and collective and therefore constitutes the second dominant theme within this thesis.

Examining structure and agency in the negotiation of twin identity

The thesis is divided into two parts: 'structuring contexts' and 'agency contexts'. Importantly, this is merely a device to ensure clarity and one way in which to explore this dynamic interplay in a systematic way.[5] Chapter 2 examines discourses of twinship and 'growing up' thus setting the context for the entire thesis. Dominant discourses of twinship emphasise three main interrelated components: sameness, togetherness and closeness. Alongside this, children are expected and encouraged to become independent and unique adults. In drawing attention to the hegemonic presence of scientific understandings of twinship and developmental understandings of 'growing up' this chapter therefore highlights the tensions between these two sets of cultural expectations. Positioned as the epitome of twinship, identical twins, defined through their very sameness, represent the antithesis of individuality – a central cultural goal in the construction and 'development' of the 'self'.

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[5] Thus it should not be taken to imply a dualistic understanding of social life. Indeed, although the first part focuses on an exploration of the role of structure in providing a framework for and setting limits around the possibilities for identity construction, links are made with the second part of the thesis which explores children's agency.

Chapter 3 then turns to explore one particular social context within which identity is negotiated – the family. This chapter examines the ideas and expectations held by parents of twins. As Jenkins rightly points out: 'it is not enough to assert an identity. That identity must also be validated (or not) by those with whom we have dealings' (2004: 19). Thus, following the lead of the earlier labelling theorists (e.g. Becker, 1963), this chapter asks: whose definition counts? The answer to this question in part lies within the set of power relations that underpin this interactional context. Here Bourdieu's work is particularly enlightening. His notion of 'field' is drawn upon to theorise this interactional space and examine the intergenerational power relations that exist between children and adults. This examination shows that parents structure their children's childhoods through the decisions they make with regard to dressing and 'naming' twins, allocating bedrooms and placing them in classes at school. However, links are also made with the forthcoming chapters that explore how children utilise their own bodies and space to negotiate their identities and the naming strategies that others employ. On one level, this chapter draws attention to the regulation of childhood. Many twins have little choice in deciding these matters until they are judged old (competent) enough to make decisions. This in turn also provides insight into the 'normative' roles of 'parent' and 'child'. On another level, we also learn about how parents conceptualise twinship. Here we bear witness to the reproduction of dominant discourses of twinship and childhood. Many parents want their children to be twins before they are adults but expect them to abandon certain aspects of this identity as they get older. This emphasises, therefore, that twinship is seen more as a child than an adult condition.

The second part of this thesis turns to explore children's agency. In opposition to traditional models of socialisation (Parsons, 1951; Denzin, 1977) children are conceptualised as competent social actors capable of influencing and changing their

own life trajectories (Prout and James, 1997). This thesis will show that child twins contribute to, act out and challenge dominant cultural notions of twinship and thus have an important role to play in the production and reproduction of social life.

Chapter 4 begins this analysis through examining the very basis of agency: the body. As embodied beings we both live in and as our bodies (Lyon and Barbalet, 1994: 54). Any account of social action must, therefore, take the physicality of the body seriously. This is especially so when examining the construction of twin identity – an identity tied to the appearance of the physical body. Central to this chapter, then, is a conceptualisation of the body as both a symbolic and material entity. This chapter shows that although twins may use their bodies to try to negotiate their identities, these bodies may also limit the success of such attempts.

Chapter 5 investigates children's use of physical space at home and at school. Here space is conceptualised as a resource for both expressing and constructing identity. As embodied beings we act in time and space. Particular attention is given to the ways in which physical space is utilised to position the self in relation to the three defining features of 'twin identity' (sameness, togetherness and closeness). Interestingly, this section shows that space may be the most useful resource for escaping twinship, especially where the physicality of the body limits transformative capacity.

Chapter 6 finalises Part Two on agency contexts with an examination of the modes of talk employed by child and adult twins. This chapter draws attention to both the intentional and unconscious nature of social action. For instance, twins may use talk to 'exoticise' their experiences or express detachment and singularity all of which serve to communicate a particular version of identity. In this respect Goffman's work on

impression management and the presentation of self (1969) has much to offer. Yet on the other hand it is also evident in their slips of tongue that they may be participating in the process of cultural reproduction without giving any thought to the content of their expressions. At this point Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' becomes particularly useful. This analysis shows that whilst twins may deliberately use talk to distance themselves from their plural status, their use of the plural pronoun 'we' serves to reaffirm this.

Similarity and difference

The final dominant theme running through this thesis is that of 'similarity and difference'. Within the internal and external dimensions of identity construction are found assumptions about who we think we are and are not, and who others think we are and are not. These terms therefore capture the central dynamic of the identification process and thus continue the quest of linking the individual to society. The notions of similarity and difference hold particular resonance when discussing twin identity in the British context since, even at a general level, twins are largely identified through their physical sameness to each other and set apart as a specific category of being through their difference to the rest of humankind.

Theories of identity have variously placed more emphasis on one or other of these extremes with conventional sociology accentuating sameness (e.g. Cohen, 1985) and more current 'postmodern' theories paying attention to difference (e.g. Hall, 2000). On one level, this varied emphasis seems absurd since similarity is implied in the very notion of difference and vice versa. I know who I am through knowing who I am not and I know who I am not through knowing who I am. As Jenkins puts it, 'similarity and difference reflect each other across a shared boundary. At the boundary we discover

what we are and what we are not' (Jenkins, 2004: 79). The first part of this thesis examines the importance of these terms in the structuring of twin and child identities. Chapter 2 examines this interplay through examining the role of stereotypes in refining and sharpening the boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Here it is evident that whilst stereotypes of twinship gloss over differences between twins they also reaffirm differences between twins and the general population.

On another level, similarity and difference can be seen to take on varying degrees of significance across the lifecourse and therefore one or other of these dimensions may predominate in the identification process. Although young child twins tend to accentuate sameness as a key dimension in defining who they are, older child twins tend to emphasise difference. This emphasis on difference will be examined alongside western cultural understandings of growing up and personhood. The latter entails being 'somebody' rather than just 'anybody' and therefore when individuality becomes threatened, difference is asserted. As James found, being 'acknowledged as 'one of the crowd' rather than remaining anonymously, merely 'one among many in the crowd' becomes increasingly important as children learn the rules of being an older child (1993: 151). In exploring how child and adult twins navigate their way through these 'normative timetables' (Finch, 1987) the chapters contained in Part Two variously show how sameness can be both a source of social stigma and a source of physical and social capital and draw attention to the necessity of the Other in formulating and asserting difference. For those twins seeking to position themselves in opposition to and in isolation from their fellow twin, this has the unfortunate consequence of reaffirming their dyad status. This is particularly evident in the narrative constructions of the 'individual self' given by some twins in Chapter 6. The final chapter of the thesis

concludes by summarising the obstacles, dilemmas and opportunities that twins encounter as they move through the lifecourse.

The life course

The life course is here conceptualised as fluid biological and social process rather than as a series of fixed stages (Hockey and James, 2003). The latter perspective – epitomised through the notion of 'life cycle' and reflected through anthropological studies of rites of passage (for example Van Gennep, [1908] 1960) and developmental understandings of child growth (for example Piaget, 1970) – suggests that we move (in a linear manner) from one 'status' or 'stage' to the next. In contrast, the notion of 'life course' 'admits more variation in patterns of experience' (Finch, 1987: 162) and for this reason captures a sense in which individuals may move back and forth, in and out of different social identities as they move through life. This latter perspective is important in helping to understand the negotiation of twin identity because, although normative timetables help to structure how twins see themselves and each other, twins, as we will see, do not simply move from being twins to not being twins as they get older, but may take up and exit these identities within different social contexts both as children and as adults.

Conclusion

This thesis explores the negotiation of twin identity across the lifecourse. Perceiving identity as a process involves taking account of the relationship between the individual and society. Conceived as simultaneously personal and social, twin identity emerges from the interplay between structure and agency. Whilst children may have

their childhoods structured for them in certain ways, they also have an important role to play in shaping their own lives and identities. The notions of similarity and difference are central to this process and are variously used by twins and their families to mark out identity. After outlining the methodological approach for researching this topic, the thesis begins by examining the structuring contexts of identity production before turning to explore how twins themselves manage, resist and reproduce twin identity.

Chapter 1: Methodology

'As in all research, what is important is that the particular methods chosen for a piece of research should

be appropriate for the people involved in the study, its social and cultural context and the kinds of

research questions that have been posed'

(Christensen and James, 2000: 2).

Introduction

This chapter outlines the various aspects of the research process undertaken and reflexively explains some of the decisions, revisions, difficulties and opportunities encountered along the way. The chapter is divided into a number of sections. The first makes plain my own positionality in relation to the research topic and acts as the starting point for examining my centrality within the research process. It then moves on to explore the different elements of the original research design (pieced together before the fieldwork took place) before examining the issues and events emerging during the empirical research. Importantly, no discrete section is dedicated to exploring ethical issues, since, as the chapter will clearly show, these emerged throughout the entire course of the research.

Being a twin: the research context

I am a twin. This is a statement that captures more than just how medical professionals classified my (and my twin's) body but also refers to the way that I often

think about myself. Indeed, this research has brought to my attention that I seem to increasingly identify myself as a twin. The importance that being a twin sometimes has for me (albeit in different contexts and at different times) represents one important position from which the accounts given in this thesis emerge. The notion of positionality forces us to consider the situatedness of knowledge, that is, that knowledge is always linked to the people that make it (Rose, 1997). Reflexivity is a key tool for exploring positionality:

> The researcher's awareness of her or his own subjective experience in relation to that of her or his participants' is key to acknowledging the limits of objectivity. It recognises the bi-directional nature of research (Deutsch, 2004: 888-889).

This provides a critique against a conceptualisation of the all-knowing, all-seeing objective researcher (what Haraway has referred to as the 'god-trick' (cited in Fine, 1998: 138)).[6] It forces us to pay more attention to the 'messiness of research' and to steer away from producing over generalised accounts of the social world (Rose, 1997).[7]

Ultimately, this account of twinship is a subjective one, mediated through my own interpretations that cannot be divorced from my identity as a female adult twin, and the ways in which these aspects of my subjectivity mix with those of the participants.[8] The

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[6] For this reason traditional notions of validity and reliability are rejected in favour of assessment criteria that privilege methodological coherence, appropriate sampling, 'grounded' analysis and the linking of the micro and macro realms of social life (see Morse, et al., 2002).

[7] Certainly the small-scale nature of this research, the exact dimensions of the end sample, together with the underlying commitment to the specificity of situated knowledges means that on one level these findings cannot be generalised to refer to other twins. However, on another level, these twins provide a glimpse into the ways in which discourses of childhood, adulthood and twinship feed into and shape twins' identities and presentations of self. Other child and adult twins, parents and siblings of twins may potentially be influenced by these discourses and may therefore find aspects of these stories relevant to their own lives. Thus, it is left within the hands of those who wish to generalise from these findings to make a judgment about the appropriateness of doing so.

[8] This is not to suggest that identity is constant. On the contrary, the very basis of this thesis relies upon a theoretical perspective that sees our ideas about who we are and our performances of self as changing across time and space. These intersubjectivities will therefore take different forms in different contexts.

findings of this thesis therefore represent just *one* reading of those data collected by me. Thus, as Holt states, 'the researcher is not an expert' but a 'supplicant' who wishes to learn as much as possible from the people she speaks with and tries to represent these voices as faithfully as possible (2004: 17).

Throughout my life, my family have told me that I am a non-identical twin. Yet, despite this, I have become increasingly aware of how others immediately assume that we are identical twins. To this day, people find it difficult to tell us apart. I sometimes find this hard to understand. How can others think we look so similar when I think that we look different? In my mind, we have different body-shapes, different faces and different bodily presentation styles. However, in reality, I sometimes find it difficult to tell us apart in photos, which annoys me.

At present, we are based at different universities. However when we find the time to meet up I am often made aware of my twin identity. A journal note explains[9]:

> *On Friday, Hannah [my twin sister] and I ventured out to the pub. Hannah was waiting to be served. The barman gave me the drinks and asked me for the money. I looked over to Hannah in an attempt to suggest that she had been the person ordering the drinks, and he said, 'Oh' and asked her for the money.*

For me, it was important that the barman acknowledged that he had got us mixed up. Indeed, being acknowledged as 'individuals' is important to me. Like many of the twins

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As Rose (1997) argues, the self cannot ever be fully grasped but has to be seen as emerging in different ways in different contexts. Any sense in which we, as researchers can be completely transparent - laying our selves, the respondents and the research contexts bare (captured by the notion of 'transparent reflexivity') - is therefore unachievable. We can only make clear our conscious but partial reflections on these issues, showing how we think our identities have shaped the research process and stating that the version of events put forth are situated knowledges.

[9] Since beginning my PhD I have recorded my reflections on my life as a twin in a journal.

I talked with, when given the opportunity, I chose to dress differently from my twin sister. For a time, when we were younger, I would not let her borrow any of my clothes. I also found it difficult sharing a room with her and spending most of my time at secondary school in the same classes. I wanted to escape from, what others always seemed to assume was, my 'other-half'. She was always less concerned about making such statements of individuality and was saddened by my attempts to avoid being seen with her.

Today, on those occasions when we are together, we do swap clothes, but we rarely venture out wearing the same outfits. However, on some occasions we have met up wearing similar clothes:

> *I see her coming around the corner and my first thought is the shock at what she is wearing. She looks like me. She is wearing her long black coat, black trousers and heeled boots. She looks more 'posh' than usual. I always think of her as trendy and me as the smart one of the two. I am wearing my long black coat, jeans and shoes* (Journal note).

Interestingly, I use the phrase, 'one of the two' to conceptualise this difference suggesting that together, our different 'parts' form a cohesive unit. Another layer of difference was brought to my attention by two of the child twins in this study who asked me to draw a picture of my sister and I together. I drew Hannah wearing trousers and me wearing a skirt. The 'feminine'/ 'tomboy' distinction that I sought to capture is one which emerges from a more general family narrative of the differences between Hannah and I. However, whilst it is true that I wear skirts more often than Hannah, I do not wear them often – it is actually more likely that we both wear trousers! What is striking, then, is the way in which I choose to emphasise certain elements of difference in order to assert my individuality.

Since much of my daily life is spent in the absence of my twin, it is rare for my friends and colleagues to see us together. Although many now know that we are twins, this does not prevent them from being intrigued at the sight of us together. Strangers also, without invitation, continue to make themselves known to us, and ask questions about us. On one occasion, a woman working at the university saw us together and asked to be introduced to her. However, since I was not aware that I knew this woman, this was extremely difficult and embarrassing. On another occasion, two girls approached my sister and I on a bus. One of them asked us if we were twins and then followed this by asking if we were identical twins. Like many of the twins I talked with, I am used to being asked such questions. This kind of public attention was withheld from our other sibling, Helen, causing her to feel relatively unimportant and invisible. At times she did not like having twins as her sisters. She once told me that it was nice when we had both moved away to university because we were no longer the focus of other people's attention.

These experiences constitute part of my life as a twin. They cannot be erased or ignored. Since my experiences of being a twin cannot be separated from the broader social context within which they are constituted they already offer a glimpse into the social constitution of twinship and as such also provide one account of how biography and social structure interlink. Related to this, they also provide some insight into the types of issues that might affect twins more generally: as Mills has suggested, these 'private troubles' can provide a useful insight into 'public issues' (Mills, 1959: 15). The following sections show how my own experiences influenced the research process.

THINKING ABOUT TWINS: THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Formulating research questions

The original aim of the research was to explore the social construction of twin identity during childhood and adolescence: to examine how this identity is built up, negotiated, changed and affirmed throughout the course of everyday life. After consulting a broad range of literature on the topic of identity, it was evident that notions of 'self' and 'Other' form the basis of many theoretical conceptualisations of social identity, ranging from Mead's 'Me' and 'I' to Jenkins' (2004) 'internal-external dialectic'. All refer to the social *process* of identity construction – the central concern of the research. Three broad research questions, focused on process, therefore underpinned the design of the study: how do twins conceptualise their own identity; how do others perceive them; and how do these 'internal' and 'external' definitions work together to construct a particular version of social identity?

The study required therefore a research context that could incorporate the accounts of the twins themselves as well as of others with whom they interacted on a day-to-day basis. The family provides one such context and thus, it was decided that the research would be conducted within family groups (e.g. parents, twins, siblings and any other family members) providing an opportunity to explore how ties of twinship are understood and practiced within the broader context of family relations. Several key research questions were identified in relation to this. How much voice do twins have in constructing and asserting their own identity viz a viz one another and other siblings? How might particular constructions of twin identity serve to suppress one or both twins'

ability to express individuality and difference? When do twins choose to conceal their identity and when do they choose to accentuate it? Who are the significant family members involved in the accentuation or suppression of twinship as a social identity? In addition, attention would be paid to exploring conceptualisations of twin identity across different social contexts: at school, and social events with friends.

Three more specific areas of investigation were identified as being central to the research. The first area comprises an exploration of the role of the body in identity formation. Both the literature and my own experiences of being a twin suggested that this should be a central concern. For instance, Goffman (1969) and Shilling (1993) have both highlighted how the body constitutes a resource through which identity is managed and conveyed. My own experience of being a twin certainly supports this conclusion. Not only does my body give vital cues as to whether or not I am a twin, and therefore to some extent constrains my ability to pass as a 'non-twin', but it also provides a medium through which I attempt to negotiate this identity and conceptualise my own sense of self. Certainly, since, as the following chapter will show, twinship is predominantly conceptualised through notions of bodily sameness, the body could not be ignored. The following questions thus emerged: to what extent do children and adolescents use their bodies to signify difference/similarity and how important is the body in relation to how twins are seen and how they see themselves? Does zygosity and gender impact upon other people's definitions, and twins' own definitions of themselves? Related to this, how does social space help to construct particular cultural definitions of twins? For example, are twins classified as twins even if they do not share the same social space (e.g. if they are enrolled in different classes at school and have separate friends)? Aspects of the literature on identity, particularly within the field of social geography (for example Teather, 1999; Valentine, 2001) suggested that the use and organisation of

space could be another important context within which to explore experiences of twinship and identity construction. How important a resource is space in the construction of identity? Can it be used to negotiate a particular version of self and if so how?

A final area of investigation comprised an exploration of how ideas of 'childhood' and 'adulthood' provide specific social contexts for constructing and negotiating definitions of the self as twin. Since child twins are both children and twins, the negotiation of twin identity has to be explored in relation to discourses of childhood and twinship. How do children and adolescents define what it means to be a child/adolescent? In what ways does being a twin make it easy/difficult to abide by what is expected of them (both by adults and peers) as children/adolescents?

Theoretical standpoints

The empirical research was designed with a view to gaining some answers to these questions. However, importantly, these questions emerged from particular theoretical perspectives. The following sections thus explore the two main theoretical standpoints that informed the research methodology.

Meaning and method

The first perspective may be labeled as 'constructivist' (Schwandt, 1998). Stemming from 'interpretive sociology' this is concerned with understanding social meanings. Hence, this thesis examines the meanings and experiences of social actors, the ways in which they construct their own lived realities (Berger and Luckman, 1967) and in

particular their identities. Importantly, this is not a disembodied constructivism where 'matter' does not matter (Schwandt, 1998: 238), but, as Chapter 4 will point out, one that takes seriously the role of corporeality in our lived experiences of the world, of who we are and who others say we are. It is also not one that relies completely upon the knowledgeable actor, since as Chapter 6 will show, aspects of our own actions may not be fully comprehended. The actor then, contributes to the social world, knowingly and unknowingly, and is central to the creation, reproduction and transformation of social 'structures'.

My choice to do a qualitative study is partly bound up with this world-view (as well as being based upon my judgement concerning what constitutes the appropriate methodological approach for examining and exploring the research questions presented). Although qualitative methodologies vary, these approaches also share some common themes amongst which are the quest to gain in-depth and contextualised understandings of social phenomenon and to base explanations on the accounts given by participants. Thus within this study I wanted to examine how participants defined what being a twin was, both in stereotypical terms and in terms of their own experiences. I wanted to explore and analyse in detail *their* experiences in an attempt to provide explanations. Since I wanted to learn from them, my approach to conducting the research was not highly structured in terms of being entirely pre-planned. Although I had reviewed the literature prior to beginning the fieldwork and had particular topics that I wanted to examine (which emerged in part through this review) I tried to leave these topics 'open' to discussion. Hence I utilized semi-structured interviews to try to allow respondents to explain their points of views in their own words and provide an

opportunity for the research to take new directions.[10] However, by asking similar sorts of questions (although not in a standardized manner), I tried to enable comparison between the different accounts given by the twins, parents and siblings.

The socially competent child

The second theoretical viewpoint that underpins the research methodology is the model of the socially competent child. From this perspective, children are social actors who contribute to the social world and participate in the process of cultural reproduction (James and Prout, 1996; James and Prout, 1997). Understandings of childhood are a product of discourse and thus it is conceivable that there are many different childhoods rather than one singular childhood. Conceiving childhood as a 'social construction' means that the child-adult divide is made available for deconstruction and contestation. As James, Jenks and Prout point out, 'to describe childhood, or indeed any phenomenon, as socially constructed is to suspend a belief in or a willing reception of its taken-for-granted meanings' (James, et al., 1998: 27). The model of the socially competent child thus takes issue with the child incompetent/ adult competent dichotomy and in doing so also challenges the taken for granted assumptions about childhood and adulthood.

This model represents a significant shift away from the previously dominant methodological perspective that positions children as the objects rather than the subjects of research. As Hood et al. (1996) state, most of the research on children has been

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[10] When citing interview extracts within this thesis, I have tried to represent their voices in the accents and (as far as possible) the slang terms used. This I hope, breathes life into these accounts presenting them as *real* people who, like the rest of us, embody social class and local dialects, and, as Chapter 6 will show, aspects of family and life course identity through talk.

influenced by 'developmental' perspectives that suggest that children move through a series of stages towards adulthood.

> ... within the developmental paradigm, children are in a state of 'not yet being'. They are a set of 'potentials', a project in the making, researched within an evaluative frame that is mainly interested in their position on the stage-like journey to mature, rational, responsible, autonomous, adult competence' (Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000: 13).

Consequently, this kind of research has traditionally taken little account of what is regarded meaningful and important to children themselves. Within psychology, children have been the focus of 'scientific' observations and laboratory experiments – both of which uphold the positivistic value of complete objectivity (Woodhead and Faulkner, 2000). Hence, psychology has traditionally conducted research *on* rather than *with* children. Similarly, sociological research has tended to subsume the study of children within broader topics such as the 'family' and 'education' thus once again giving little consideration to children in their own right (Alanen, 1994). Moreover, as the following chapter will discuss in more detail, dominant socialisation theories have also served to position children as incompetent becomings by emphasising that children passively absorb culture rather than take an active part in producing and reproducing it. Given this, it is possibly not surprising that 'until recently survey researchers, when investigating aspects of childhood, have preferred to ask adult respondents such as parents or teachers to report on children's lives, rather than to ask children themselves' (Scott, 2000: 98-99).

In contrast, the model of the socially competent child views children as active participants in the construction of their own experiences (Prout and James, 1997) and thus emphasises the importance of talking directly with children. They are the best

informants on their own experiences. Indeed, 'it is neither theoretically nor methodologically appropriate to rely on proxies to represent the views and experiences of children' (Mahon, et al., 1996: 146). Whilst discussions about collecting data from children tend to question the validity of children's accounts by suggesting that they cannot determine truth from fiction, make things up or do not have enough experience to comment on their own lives, these issues, as Mayall (1994b: 11) has pointed out, apply to adults too. As such they do not constitute reasons for abandoning conducting research with children. On the contrary, 'children's views can and ought to be taken seriously' (Mahon, et al., 1996: 146). This study was designed to directly access the voices of children as well as adults by conducting interviews with all willing family members. In this way children's accounts are valued in their own right.

Research designs

A central problem faced by researchers who work with children is the unequal power relationship that exists between children and adults. This makes the task of giving children a voice uniquely difficult (Bacon, 2002: 31). Of course this is not to say that power inequalities are only a relevant concern in relation to studying children. On the contrary, conducting research with children and adults alike initially places the researcher in a more powerful position simply because the researcher is the person carrying out the research. All researchers should be aware of the particular power relationships framing the research context, and in this sense, 'the issues that are highlighted in thinking about research in the area of childhood studies are not a particular class of issues: they are questions to which all *good* researchers will attend in conducting their research' (Oakley, 1994: 27). However, for children, this means considering the intergenerational power inequalities that exist between children and

adults, as well as the unequal power relationship between researcher and researched. Children are used to receiving orders from adult parents and teachers. Indeed, Mayall (2000) found that children characterise adults by the very power they have over them.

Mandell (1991) sought to remedy this situation by adopting a 'least-adult role'. However, this seems to be an unrealistic solution: as Fine (1987) notes, it is not possible for adults to pass as children since age and size may signify adult status. Indeed, one cannot and should not ignore the power differences that exist between children and adults since it is only through being aware of such issues that the researcher can aim to negotiate ways of minimising this gap. In particular, researchers should be aware that 'children are not used to being asked their opinions and to relate their experiences to unknown adults, and probably need to have some familiarity with the researcher' (Morrow and Richards, 1996: 101). Introductory meetings were therefore built into the research design in order to allow the participants the opportunity to meet and get to know me.

It was decided that semi structured interviews would provide a sensitive research context within which to negotiate and address some of these power differences. Face-to-face communication allows children to actively participate in shaping the trajectory of the research. Moreover, it allows the researcher to make use of visual aids, to talk *with* the participants and prompt for further information (Scott, 2000). These interviews were mostly carried out in the absence of the parents. Doing this, it was hoped that the children might feel less compelled to give answers that they thought their parents would agree with and their voices would not be regulated by adults redefining or challenging their accounts (O'Kane, 2000: 151). Talking directly with the children would affirm my

commitment to devoting my full attention to each interviewee and emphasise once more that their accounts were valued irrespective of age.

I chose to interview the twins together and apart, to allow them the opportunity to talk about more sensitive issues in private whilst still being able to examine how they interacted with each other.[11] It was hoped that interviewing them together would help to put the children at their ease. As Mayall (2000) and Hood et al. (1996) have pointed out, interviewing children in pairs, or groups, can help children to feel more confident in the presence of the researcher. This would be particularly important given that, in order to collect the most relevant data at the start of the fieldwork, I hoped to interview the twins first (before parents and siblings). In addition, this could help to create a more equal distribution of power by lessening my role as 'interviewer' and providing the twins with the opportunity to bring different issues to each other's attention.

Two topic guides were also designed for the child twins in order to make them feel more comfortable talking about their experiences. Initially these were only constructed for the twins since these would possibly be the first interviewees and would therefore provide an opportunity to pilot the topic guides before going on to create more for the siblings. (The revisions made to the topic guides are discussed later on in this chapter – see p. 46.) To be handed out to the children at the start of the interview, these guides explained some of the research aims. Hence, the first topic guide (see figure 1, p. 30), constructed prior to interviewing the twins together, asked children how they experienced twinship across three different social contexts: at home, school and after school. A specific question was written under each section heading to help prompt

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[11] This decision also potentially allows for an examination of whether or not their responses differed when being apart. This was however rarely the case and possibly points to the ways in which the accounts given in the absence of their twin sibling were influenced by the accounts they initially constructed together. Indeed, this is a difficulty that emerges in relation to deciding to interview twins together before interviewing each of them alone.

Figure 1: Topic Guide 1 (version one)

what is it like to be a twin?

These are the kinds of things that
I'd like to talk about with you...

Being a twin at home:
   e.g. do you have your own room or do
     you share a room?

Being a twin at school /in class:
   e.g. are you in the same or different
     classes as your twin?

Being a twin after school:
   e.g. what are your hobbies and interests?
     who do you spend time with after
     school, at the weekend?

discussion. Importantly, these were hand written on coloured paper in order to emphasise informality and to help further establish a rapport with the twins. The second guide was constructed during the interview process and will therefore be discussed later on in this chapter.

In addition to the topic guides, a number of participatory methods were also designed prior to conducting the interviews. The main aim was to develop tools that would encourage children to talk about their experiences in ways that made sense to them and drew on the talents they possessed: 'As in all research what is important is that the particular methods chosen for a piece of research should be appropriate for the people involved in the study' (Christensen and James, 2000: 2). Rigid question and answer sessions would not have been appropriate since the literature suggests that children may become bored with lengthy verbal conversations (Hill, et al., 1996; Mauthner, 1997). It was therefore hoped that incorporating participatory methods within

the interviews would help to both keep the children interested (Hill, et al., 1996) and to create a more enjoyable participatory experience.

Three main participatory methods were designed, namely drawings, vignettes and a self-return task. Drawing is an activity that can potentially utilise children's skills, provide them with the time and space to consider their ideas, help them to shape interview conversations (O'Kane, 2000), and give them a voice in the interpretation and analysis of data after fieldwork is over. The drawings in this study were designed to introduce some of the more abstract research topics, such as constructions of twinship, perceptions of self and other/s and issues relating to space. Hence, the theme for the first drawing was 'being a twin/sibling to twins' – a drawing that described what it was like to be a twin or sibling of twins. The second was a picture of 'people in my family' designed to help talk about family roles, relationships and experiences of family life, as well as perceptions of self in the family context. The final picture – 'my bedroom' – was devised to discuss the allocation of bedrooms in the family home, the distribution of power in this decision making process and the classification and use of space in the twins' bedroom/s or anywhere else.

Four vignettes were designed in order to facilitate the discussion of more sensitive issues relating to the twin relationship (see appendix 1). The first vignette (*Jack and Jo – joining the local hockey club*) examined issues relating to competition and rivalry. The second (*Clare and Gail go swimming*) was designed to examine how the twins felt about being on their own, as well as issues relating to notions of loyalty. The third (*Chores at tea time*) was designed to talk about family roles and alliances and the final vignette (*Jane gets a boyfriend*) issues relating to how twins felt/would have felt if their fellow twin had a girl/boyfriend. Although the vignettes drew upon some of these

common understandings of twinship (see Chapter 2 for an outline of these), they did not take them for granted. Indeed, the very reason for highlighting them was to explore the prevalence of these experiences of twinship and to discuss how far twins perceive these to be an accurate representation of twinship.[12] Since the vignettes allowed these topics to be discussed hypothetically before any connection was made with 'real life', it was hoped that the twins would feel more comfortable about discussing their own experiences.

Finally, a self-return task was designed to explore some of the defining aspects of twinship. The title, 'what life would be like if I wasn't a twin'/ 'what life would be like if I wasn't a brother/sister to twins' was written at the top of an empty page.[13] The twins and siblings were encouraged to use this space in any way they chose. Involving both twins and siblings in this task, it was hoped, would highlight some of the key issues and experiences involved in being a sibling of twins. Importantly, this activity would be completed in their own time allowing children the space to contemplate their own experiences and, if they wanted, to complete the task in private.[14]

Thinking about a sample

Given that the main aim of the study was to provide an in-depth account, it was important to make sure that the participants involved in the research were relevant to the topic being studied and could enable me to develop my explanations. This approach is usually referred to as 'theoretical sampling' (see Arber, 1993). Although this required

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[12] Although aspects of these data have been incorporated into the thesis, there is scope for further development beyond this thesis. See later section on data analysis and the thesis conclusion.
[13] To make the children feel more comfortable communicating their personal experiences the question was phrased hypothetically.
[14] The sheet could either be collected at a later date, or returned to me using the stamped addressed envelope provided.

that twins dominate my sample, I also ideally wanted to incorporate elements of diversity in terms of zygosity (identical and non-identical twins) gender (male and female twins, different-sexed[15] and same-sexed twins) and age to enable a multi-layered analysis and particularly some understanding of how twinship is experienced and twin identity negotiated across the life course. In order to keep the study clearly focused, I planned to target children aged between 10 and 18. This meant that children could talk about their experience of moving to comprehensive school, if this was an important issue to them, and could make more explicit any problems faced by twins as they move through childhood.

REFLECTIONS ON FIELDWORK AND FIELD RELATIONS

Although, as just discussed, the research had been planned prior to entering the field, the fieldwork (carried out between 2001-2002) brought new activities dilemmas and difficulties and some surprises. This section therefore reflexively examines these.

Locating twins

Initially, I had planned to contact TAMBA (Twins and Multiple Births Association) to gather information about the local twins club meetings and through attending these, gain access to some twins. However, before I could pursue this, one family, contacted through a friend, expressed an interest in participating in the research. Following this, I continued to publicise the research through friends; however only two more families were accessed. New ways of contacting twins had to be established. Although attending

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[15] The term 'different-sexed' is preferred over 'opposite-sex' and 'boy-girl twins'. Whilst the notion of 'opposite-sex twins' seems to reinforce assumptions of gender duality, the notion of 'boy-girl twins' implies that each of these twins embody both sexes (thereby reinforcing notions that twins constitute one person or one unit).

TAMBA meetings was still an option, this would take time to arrange. Moreover the accounts given by these twins and their families might not necessarily have been comparable with other twins not attending a twins' club. For these reasons, TAMBA was once again put to one side. Instead, adverts and leaflets were placed in a range of public spaces that twins, parents of twins, or anyone who knew twins might visit. Leaflets and posters were distributed to post offices, a local university, doctor's surgeries, charity shops, community centres and coffee bars. One advert was also placed in the local paper and another in the local university magazine.[16] This combination of methods however resulted in locating more adult twins than child twins and may reflect children's relative marginalisation from public spaces (Valentine, 1996) as well as their own attitudes towards these spaces.

Since I still wanted the child twins to constitute the core sample for the research a greater number of child twins had to be located. At this point, 11 local schools (including junior and senior schools) were contacted in order to request the opportunity to speak to pupils about the research. Leaflets outlining the aims and objectives of the research were enclosed along with a letter for the attention of the head teacher.[17] Many of the schools did not respond to the mail out.[18] However, one school did organise a time at which I could meet with all the twins in the school. Due to the busy schedules of both teachers and pupils this was only possible during the first five minutes of lunch. The pupils seemed anxious to leave and I was conscious of encroaching on their time. During the meeting, I explained what the research was about, distributed short information leaflets and encouraged any interested pupils to contact me. However, unfortunately, no child twins were accessed via this method.

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[16] The original intention was to conduct a local study therefore methods were initially devised in order to contact twins living in and around the local area.

[17] The letter explicitly stated that the research would not take place on school grounds or during school time and drew the head teacher's attention to the fact that the researcher had been police checked.

[18] One school explained that the timing was inappropriate.

Following this, one advert was posted on the 'Acebabes' website – an organisation that provides parents of children born through assisted conception, with help and support. This could potentially draw twins from a much wider geographical radius. This was now necessary in order to maximise the extent of potential interest. I also asked some of the participating twins to forward information about the research to any twins they knew and to their friends in the hope that some of these might be willing to take part, however only one twin and one friend of twins were located. In addition, enquires were also finally made to TAMBA regarding how to access twins involved in the local twins' club. On the advice of TAMBA, I contacted the previous leader of the nearest twins' club who then helped me to directly contact two families with child twins.[19] These twins also lived outside of the immediate local area. In total, twenty-three twins, sixteen parents, eight siblings and one friend of twins were located. However, as we will see later on, not all of these people actually decided to take part in the study. .

Negotiating field entry

The actual process of making contact with twins and their families took many forms. Most of the adult twins contacted me directly to express their interest in taking part. Some of these twins lived away from their twin and either offered to forward them information about the research or handed me an email address with which to do so.[20] In one instance, the mother of child twins telephoned me to express the family's interest. However, where twins had been located through friends, it was more common for me to initiate contact. One set of child twins lived next door to a friend I often visited so it was easy to talk about the research (literally) over the garden fence. One mother to child twins had asked my friend to tell me to phone her. A slightly different approach was

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[19] These families were no longer attending the twins' club
[20] In these cases the twins also emailed their twin sibling to inform them that I would be contacting them.

adopted in relation to the families located through TAMBA. These had not seen any advertisements about the research and had not been told that I would be contacting them so therefore it seemed less invasive to inform them of the research by letter.

Letters were distributed to all respondents to introduce the researcher, the research and in some cases, to request a convenient interview date. Importantly, the envelopes and letters were addressed to each member of the family by name to emphasise that any member of the family could read it. Booklets were enclosed outlining the aims and objectives of the study in more detail and explaining what could be involved if they chose to take part.[21] The confidential, anonymous and informal nature of the research was emphasised along with the fact that the researcher had been police checked. The researcher's contact details were also provided in order to ensure that potential participants could make any further enquiries or register their continuing interest. One booklet was specifically designed for adult twins, older child twins or parents of twins and one for younger twins in order to ensure that information was presented in ways that were understandable to all participants and thus to give each respondent the opportunity to make an informed choice about participation.

In some cases, a follow-up phone call was then made in order to ascertain whether the respondents were still interested in participating in the study and to organise a convenient time to meet.[22] However, at this stage, it was difficult to negotiate a way of speaking directly with the children. In all cases, it was one of the parents, most commonly the mother, who spoke with me. Often she had already decided upon a convenient time to meet up and voiced the consent of all members of the family thus

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[21] The leaflets were also enclosed in separate named envelopes for each child and parents. This was one way of trying to ensure that each child gained access to this information and also served to emphasise the value of each person's contribution to the research.
[22] This approach was less necessary with the adult twins since many of these had already made these arrangements during the initial stages of contact.

identifying herself as the family representative and mediator.[23] Asking to speak to the children could therefore imply that I did not take her word seriously, or respect her position as mother. It could also potentially result in the mother questioning my credibility. Parents are expected to protect their children from harm, particularly from 'strangers'. Therefore, given that I was still a stranger to the families, asking to speak directly with the children could have caused these mothers to be suspicious of my intentions and, in a worst-case scenario, lead to them withholding access to their children. Consequently, in all but one case, I decided to wait until the introductory meeting to speak to all members of the families and to ask them for their individual consent.

Constructing a sample

Whilst the aim was to gain access to male and female twins, identical and non-identical twins, and children aged within a specific age bracket, initial problems involved in contacting the twins meant that any twins were welcomed. As previously mentioned, some of the twins and family members that responded did not actually take part in the study.[24] In total, 21 (individual) twins participated. Only 2 of these were sure that they were identical twins. 5 twins were unsure of their zygosity but thought that they were more likely to be identical twins and looked very alike (hence these twins are referred to as 'identical-looking' twins throughout this thesis). 14 twins (two-thirds of the sample) were non-identical therefore the study is primarily about non-identical twins, with identical twins providing a comparative perspective.[25]

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[23] In line with this, research suggests that women bear responsibility for co-ordinating children's needs within and without the household (Ribbens, 1994; Alanen, 1998).

[24] The reasons for this were various. Some found it difficult to arrange an appropriate time, others did not respond to further attempts of contact or chose not to take part.

[25] It is not surprising that a greater proportion of non-identical twins participated in the study since these make up approximately two-thirds of all twin births in the UK (see The Multiple Births Foundation,

In total, 12 child twins and 9 adult twins participated in the study. Most of the twins were either older children (teenagers aged 13-17) or young adults (aged 18-24). Only 2 twins were young children (aged 8) and only 2 adults were aged over 24 (one aged 32 and one aged 36). Although this resulted in an unequal proportion of male and female twins taking part, the sample still provided the opportunity to analyse different gendered experiences of twinship. All 12 of the child twins lived with their parents and half of these also had other siblings, most of which still lived at home. In contrast, only 3 of the adult twins lived with their parents. All had other siblings but only 2 of these siblings still lived at home. The remaining 6 adult twins had all left home. One of these twins was a lone twin[26] and the others lived away from their twins. In most cases, the parents and siblings of adult twins were not contacted.[27]

15 (individual) parents also participated in the study. 4 of these were parents to adult twins living at home and 9 were parents of participating child twins. However, a further 2 parents took part without their twins. Alongside these, 5 siblings also participated. 4 of these were siblings of participating child twins and 1 of these was a sibling to participating adult twins. Only 1 friend of twins took part in the study and therefore this perspective did not constitute part of the research. Figure 2 (p. 39) summarises the sample for the research (listing respondents who participated). Pseudonyms are used.

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www.multiplebirths.org.uk/media.asp). Thus, whilst the study did not aim to obtain a representative sample of twins, the distribution of non-identical twins contained in the sample reflects the pattern for the UK population.

[26] A lone twin is a twin whose fellow twin has died.

[27] There were several reasons for this. Their views were arguably less relevant for examining the present-time everyday social context within which these twins experienced and negotiated their identities. Moreover, since the adult twins were included to provide a comparative perspective, time restrictions meant that it was more necessary to focus attention on researching the families of child twins.

Figure 2: Summary of participants

Twins	Age	Zygosity	Parent/s	Parents' occupations	Social Class (NS-SEC)*	Sibling/s	Friend	Location (parental home)
Ash	8	Non-identical	Clare Anthony	Factory worker	Lower occupations (working class)			Suburban
Harry	8							
Ian	13	Unsure						Urban
Peter	13							
Emma	13	Unsure	Sue Stuart			John (aged 16)		Suburban
Ruth	13							
Hannah	15	Non-identical	Caroline (also an adult lone twin)	Unemployed	Long term-unemployed	Ellie (aged 12)		Urban
Charlotte	15							
Adam	16	Non-identical	Janet David	Lawyer	Managerial and Professional (service class)	Craig (aged 25) Naomi (aged 24)		Suburban
Olivia	16							
Liam	17	Non-identical	Allison Mike	Own business	Unable to classify			Semi-rural
Dan	17							
Sally	20	Non-identical						
Rachel	20							
Justin	22	Non-identical		Mother and Father University Lecturers	Managerial and Professional (service class)			
Rebecca	23	Identical	Pam Malcolm	Personal Assistant Chief Electrician	Intermediate occupations (intermediate class)		Friend	Suburban
Andrea	23							
Anne	24	Non-identical	Cheryl Jonathan	Bus Driver	Lower occupations (working class)	Roger (aged 19)		Suburban
Brian	24							
Caroline	32	Unsure						Urban
Jennifer	36	Non-identical						
			Lindsey (adopting non-identical twins aged 4)	Secretary within Higher Education	Intermediate occupations (intermediate class)			
			Jenny (mother of non-identical twins aged 3)	University Professor	Managerial and Professional (service class)			

* Based on the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification. Long-term unemployed means one year or over. These classifications should be treated with **caution** due to the minimal information recorded relating to parents' occupations. Some parents did not state their occupation. Classifications have been made based on both occupations where they are present. If these occurred in two different groups, the highest group was chosen to represent the family social class. The class positions in brackets show the overlap with the Goldthorpe Class Schema (see Rose and Pevalin, 2001).

Whilst all the participants were White and British, they varied in social class, geographical location (see figure 2) and family composition. Most of the participants were from nuclear families containing two resident parents. Only two of the families were 'headed' by lone mothers. In addition to this, one mother was adopting her twin children and one mother and one adult twin were part of a reconstituted family.

The introductory meetings

Although the intention was to hold introductory meetings with all the twins and their families that participated, some of the participants (mostly adult twins) chose to forgo this. Possibly this was conceptualised as a needless task and certainly meant that the research took up even more of their time. Most of the introductory meetings that took place were held in the parental home and included twins, parents and, on some occasions, siblings of twins.

Open and closed doors

Entering the family home presented its own difficulties, dilemmas and opportunities particularly in relation to the assumed 'privacy' of family life, and the intergenerational power differences between adults and children.

> ... the home is hung about with ideologies as well as emotions. It is regarded as the appropriate place for negations about the proper conduct of its members, and notably of its children. The privacy of the home has high value – these negotiations are meant to take place out of the sight, and outside the concerns of the public worlds that surround it. For researchers who are strangers, to enter the home and ask questions, however sympathetic, is an invasion, a crossing of traditional boundaries between public and private (Hood, et al., 1996: 119).

During the meetings, many of the parents enquired about the sorts of questions that I would be asking their children to make sure that the research was suitable for them to participate in and also to measure how far I would be delving into the inner 'doings' (Morgan, 1996: 189) of their family life. Ideologically constructed as a private space, the family is difficult to penetrate. Normative expectations surround the conduct of both children and parents set limits, however implicitly, around the kinds of information that should be divulged to a stranger, a point that will be taken up later on in this chapter.

The 'familiar' surroundings of the family home did however help some of the participants to relax in my presence. This was especially so for those families who had been introduced to me through a mutual friend and contained members who had already met me. On one occasion I was greeted at the door by a mother of twins who was in the process of painting her finger nails. She continued to paint her nails throughout the course of the introductory meeting and this helped to provide an informal context within which to discuss the research. On another occasion, the meeting took place in a busy kitchen where mum was cooking soup for dinner and the other family members were variously standing up drinking coffee or helping prepare the food. Both of these families were seemingly at ease with my presence in their family home. Indeed, the performance of family life took place around me.

In contrast, my first meetings with some of the other twins and their families were far more formal. One adult twin, who did not know me and who had opted to forgo the introductory meeting, met me for the first time when I arrived to do the interview. Consequently, there was very little time to build up a rapport before the interview took place. My field notes record that she needed a lot of prompting to talk and was far less willing than some of the other participants to talk at length about her experiences of

being a twin. Some of the other families containing child twins created a space where we all sat down together to discuss the research. As such, the 'doing' of family life seemed to temporarily stop to make way for the research.

Negotiating intergenerational power differences

For the child twins, all of these introductory meetings took place in the presence of their parents. Therefore, I had to find ways of presenting myself as friendly and trustworthy that would appeal to both parents and children. A first consideration was choosing how to dress. I opted for a 'smart casual' approach since this would neither be too formal nor informal and would hopefully convey my credibility as a researcher without appearing to be superior or unapproachable.

Other aspects of the meetings were more difficult to negotiate. Many of the parents who had not met me were confident about expressing their interest, concerns and anxieties about the research. In contrast, the children were often given less space to talk and initially seemed to feel nervous about me being there. Ruth and Emma sat together on the sofa with their parents seated to the left and me to the right. One field note records: '*Emma doesn't seem too willing to speak to me*'. Similarly, when I visited Ellie, Charlotte and Hannah, they seemed '*nervously engrossed*' in watching *Home and Away* and did not respond to my attempts to talk about the programme. Being an adult stranger in the family home I was both unfamiliar and threatening. These children felt nervous and some of the parents were anxious about my intentions. Consequently I was placed in an ambivalent situation. On the one hand I was eager to discuss the parents' worries, and on the other, aware of how this detracted attention away from what the children thought. The fact that the parents were directing all their questions to me made

me feel that, as an adult, I was being asked to align myself to them and that, in attempting to include the children more effectively in the discussions, I was disrespecting their authority and being deemed to be acting inappropriately. One field note explains:

> *The parents expect me to talk to them when I go around. But I need to talk to the children as well. I want to. I get the impression sometimes that if I talk to the children the parents think that I am stupid or offending them somehow.*

As Qvortrup notes, 'there is indeed, a certain logic in this unspoken attitude, namely that to be serious about what children do themselves may be seen as subversive to adults' definition of the rules of the game' (1994: 2). Within this context (and as we will see later on, within the interview context also), I was placed in a triangle of social relations, seeking to maintain the respect of both children and adults.

Wherever possible I tried to sit alongside the children rather than sit near to the parents in order to emphasise that, as an adult, I was not aligning myself with their parents. Even though this could have served to suggest to the parents that I was then aligning myself to the children, this was necessary in order to maintain eye contact with both the children and the parents whilst talking about the research and thus also to emphasise that the information was relevant to everyone. This way, I could turn to the children to ask them their opinions and ideas and therefore speak to the children directly rather than across their parents.

The most successful strategy that helped to build a rapport with both the children and adults was presenting them with photographs of my own twin. The photos not only legitimated my identity as twin, but also in doing this, prompted the twins and their

families to ask questions about her, to discuss their own experiences, and comment on their own photographs, thus providing me at the outset with some useful data. Many asked what her name was, whether or not she was also doing a PhD and where she lived. I volunteered this information freely throughout the research. Indeed, answering the children's' questions and (when asked) telling them about my own experiences of being a twin was unavoidable if I was to uphold my claim that the research would be informal and conversational. As Oakley (1981) notes, it is unfair to ask of them if we are not prepared to put something of ourselves back in. Moreover, by talking with the participants about my own twin, attention was periodically diverted away from my status as an adult researcher since at these points, it was my identity as a twin that took precedence. Providing each of the participants with this opportunity to get to know me as a person therefore not only helped them to familiarise themselves with me but also helped create an empathetic environment within which they could ask questions and, later on, talk at length with me about their own experiences.

It was within this context that we discussed some of the practical and ethical issues involved in the research. Amongst other things, this included their feelings of being tape recorded, of parents being absent at the time of the children's interviews, their initial consent to participate and issues relating to confidentiality and anonymity. I took along the Dictaphone so that all the participants could ask how it worked, and familiarise themselves with its appearance and possibly judge for themselves how invasive it would be if it were to be used. All of the children and parents agreed to be tape-recorded and, after discussing the interview process, the parents agreed for their children to be interviewed in their absence. Throughout the meeting the confidential and anonymous nature of the research was emphasised. All participants were assured that no one else would listen to the tapes and that their names would be changed in order to increase the

level of anonymity. I also explained that they would receive regular updates regarding the progress of the research along with a final summary of findings. Towards the end of the meetings, after we had discussed the research at length and had an opportunity to get to know each other, all the participants were asked once again if they had any questions or anxieties and whether or not they wished to participate. I emphasised that they could change their mind at any time, and did not have to answer any questions that they did not want to. All the parents and children agreed. However, these decisions were repeatedly checked throughout the course of the research process. Whilst this is good practice for any kind of research, the unequal power relationship between children and adults, so clearly evident at points within these meetings, meant that it was also necessary to keep asking these questions within an environment where the children felt more able to say no.

Interviewing twins and their families: some general issues

Adapting the research methods

When interviewing the twins and their families, further difficulties, dilemmas and opportunities arose. Although I had planned to conduct semi-structured interviews with all the participants, one family containing adult twins did not want the research to take place in the family home, or to have any contact with me as a researcher. The family representative, uncommonly the father, explained that his wife would find this too invasive and asked for a questionnaire to be sent out to all members of the family instead. One adult twin also preferred this option since she had little time to organise interviews and maintained contact with me via email. A questionnaire was therefore designed that covered the general topic areas brought up in the interviews (see appendix

2). A series of questions were written in paragraph form under the different 'themed' headings to encourage respondents to write about the issues that were important to them rather than provide short answers to each single question. Overall, this worked well. However, the father of adult twins wrote out the accounts provided by the different members of his family. These data therefore have to be seen to be mediated through the father and one has to be aware of any potential bias that this may cause. Unlike the other participants, I did not meet any of these people throughout the course of the research. It was therefore important to try to build up a rapport with the 'mediators' by maintaining regular contact. Often this was done via email. It was especially important to check that the questionnaire was appropriate and understandable and to make sure that they were all still comfortable with participating.

Negotiations were also made in relation to the topic guides. On some occasions these hindered rather than helped the flow of conversation between the children and I. One set of twins simply read through the various headings giving short answers as they went. This highlighted how the topic guides could be perceived as a list of questions that had to be answered, constraining the children in their thoughts and restricting their chances of directing the agenda. In order to make sure that a guide was available for all the children participants (should they wish to use it) one was also created for siblings of twins. For purposes of comparison, this resembled the first topic guide used with the twins. One sibling talked openly and freely and did not require this kind of guidance. Presenting the guide could serve to lessen this rapport by emphasising my role as researcher and creating a more formal context within which to discuss her experiences. In contrast, for the youngest twins, these proved to provide another useful introduction to the research and a constant reference point throughout the interview. It was therefore important to be flexible: to utilise methods that were appropriate for individual

respondents. This lack of standardisation pays testimony to the 'messiness' of research, which in turn reflects the complexity of the people and processes that we study.

As the interviews progressed, it also became evident that the wording of the first topic guide might contain some assumptions and need revising. In version one, all of the subject headings began with the phrase, 'being a twin' implying that being a twin was an important defining component of the twins' life experiences. However, some of the twins said they did not feel like twins and one father in particular seemed to think that the research was less relevant to his family because they did not see their children as 'twins'. The subject headings were therefore revised to overcome this assumption (see figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Topic Guide 1 (version two)
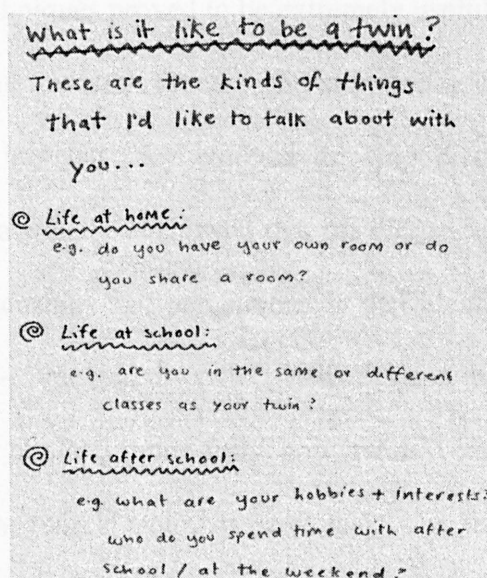
The subject heading 'being a twin at home' was changed to 'life at home' and so on. The second guide (see figure 4, p. 48), designed to help to discuss family alliances,

family relationships, socialisation patterns and children's expectations for the future, was then created using similar phraseology.

Figure 4: Topic Guide 2

<u>Life At Home...</u>

These are the kinds of things I'd
like to talk about with you...

<u>Relationships</u>:
eg. how would you describe your relationships with
the different people in your family?

<u>Rules + Regulations</u>:
eg. do you have to follow any rules when you
are at home?

<u>Family Occassions</u>:
e.g. what happens on your birthday, at christmas
(and any other family occassions)?

<u>The Future</u>:
e.g. how do you see your future?

The participatory techniques proved to be extremely useful in helping the children to take an active part in the research process and stimulating conversation. Many of the younger children told me that they enjoyed drawing pictures and listening to the stories.[28] Indeed, the data analysis showed that the pictures were particularly useful in discussing family relationships and perceptions of self-identity.[29] Taking heed of this, another themed picture – 'me and my twin' – was devised throughout the course of the interviews in order to explore more fully how twins conceptualised themselves in relation to their fellow twin.[30] Another new task – a list of the similarities and

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[28] However some of the older children said they did not want to draw pictures and were happy just to talk.
[29] I began to transcribe and analyse data as soon as the interviewing began to ensure that any important points could be followed up later on. However an intense period of analysis did follow after the completion of interviews. Codes were created inductively and used to group data underneath a series of themed headings. Connections between themes were then explored with a view to providing a more holistic and contextualised account (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).
[30] One of the last twins to be interviewed asked me to draw my own picture of my twin sister and I. This request, whilst initially taking me by surprise, was an important confirmation that some degree of equality of participation was being achieved in the interview setting. My mind was thus opened to considering

differences – was also introduced and piloted with two twins. This provided clarification of the ways in which these twins defined themselves in relation to each other (see Chapter 6). However, although these twins often spoke in terms of similarity and difference, it was clear that this method could potentially force children to describe themselves in these terms even when they may not be relevant concerns. This anxiety meant that the method was abandoned.[31]

Conducting interviews in a variety of settings

Interactions between researcher and researched occur in space and are constituted through the place where the interviews are carried out (Elwood and Martin, 2000). Whilst I was able to meet most of the participants face-to-face, the actual settings for these meetings varied between participants. Although the majority of interviews took place at the family home, I also met two parents in a local pub – a place where they often went out to socialise – and one mother in my flat. All these parents explained that these alternative venues would allow them not to be distracted by their children and could help them to talk more openly about their family. It was not appropriate to tape-record the interviews in these alternative settings. This technique would detract from the informal atmosphere that the parents were striving to achieve and could accentuate my role as researcher. The mother (interviewed in my flat) in particular, wished to discuss some very sensitive issues and these (I felt) were more empathetically heard without the mediating presence of the Dictaphone. In another case, an adult twin took me to a local coffee bar where, like the pub, there was a considerable amount of background noise. However this also provided the advantage of an informal environment where we relaxed

whether this would be a useful research tool for the future. Drawing together could affirm the notion that we were *all* participating.

[31] In hindsight it would have perhaps been more useful to ask the twins to describe themselves (on paper or via a tape recorder), this way it would be possible to see if and how notions of similarity and difference emerge, complementing some aspects of the interview data (for instance see Chapter 6).

and talked over a coffee. In all of these situations, the participants agreed for me to take notes.

Inside the family home, interviews were also conducted in a variety of spaces. Some of these interview settings provided a more enabling environment for informal discussion than others. Many of the participants chose to talk with me in the family lounge where they often sat together and socialised. This setting seemed to be constructive for talking about personal experience since it was the setting within which respondents were most relaxed. However, since the interviews were being conducted amongst the 'doings' of family life, on some occasions this room was being used for other purposes. Consequently, on one occasion, I spoke with a child twin in her dining room – a place that was not used very frequently. Within this context, we were forced to sit around a table, a situation I had hoped to avoid for fear of creating an overly formal research setting. Indeed, this participant was more nervous within this environment, talking less than she usually did. However, in another case, whilst a 'formal' space was chosen by the family to conduct all the interviews,[32] this meant that the room became the focus of ridicule and jokes. Before entering the 'interview room' the brothers and sisters would proclaim, 'I'm going in now – wish me luck!' On the one hand this drew attention to the ways in which this space represented the unequal power relationship between researcher and researched: a place where they would be asked questions and asked to comment on their lives. However at the same time, the humour surrounding this declaration served to make fun of this very distinction.

On another occasion, two twins had just arrived at their new house and the family was in the process of unpacking when I arrived. Their brother was watching TV in the

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[32] The children often practiced their music in this room and whilst there were sofas and chairs to sit and relax in, the family always congregated in another lounge area.

lounge so the twins cleared some space in the new dining room. Their pet dogs continually moved about the room sometimes barking or howling. Whilst this was helpful in encouraging the twins to relax and talk more freely, in the end, it also distracted the twins and I and resulted in one of the twins deciding to shut the dogs in another room. Although we were sat around the table, the space in the dining room allowed me to sit to one side of the (sitting) twins rather than opposite them. Consequently this (quite literally) provided the space to develop an atmosphere where we were all talking together rather than me talking across to them. In another situation two female twins agreed to talk with me in their own bedroom. Since research suggests that older children may value their bedrooms as resources for developing a 'private self' (Larson, 1995), it is important to acknowledge that such methods may potentially be experienced as invasive. However, after giving me a guided tour, it was clear that they enjoyed talking about their experiences on their own territory. They wandered around their room showing me posters and discussing which bands they liked, pointing out which property belonged to them and talking about the advantages and disadvantages of sharing a room. Since we were discussing their experiences of sharing a room, this environment, through its relevancy, helped to empower them as 'knowers and actors' (Smith, 1988 cited in, Oakley, 1994: 24)

Family fronts

Irrespective of age and whether or not interviews were conducted at home or outside of the home, some respondents seemed keen to present their family in a positive light. One example is worth citing here in order to highlight the compelling force of such

family 'fronts'.[33] After telling me about a computer game where characters swear, Ash

drew himself sticking his middle finger up. After he had finished his picture he told me

that he wanted to throw it in the bin:

Ash	Here *[he shows me his picture]*. I want to rip that one up.
Kate	Why?
Ash	Cos I'm swearing, I don't like swearing.

Ash did not want to give me a picture that showed him doing something naughty.

Almost immediately after Ash had thrown his picture away, his mother entered the

room to check that they were being 'sensible' – a first indication of her parental concern

to uphold a 'respectable' family image. Ash then told her what he had done:

Ash	Mum I drawed a picture and I was swearing on it so I ripped it up.
Mum	*[Looks at Ash in a condemning way]*
Ash	I didn't really... What?
Mum	I'm just amazed that you, what were you doing that for?
Ash	Just the first thing that come into mi head.
Mum	To swear?
Harry	You're on the radio!
Mum	I'm just wondering why Ash... cos we know we don't swear in this house do we?

Ash was clearly aware of this perspective since this was his reason for throwing his

picture away in the first place. However, mum's assertion that they do not swear in their

house communicates a message to both Ash and me: swearing is wrong and is not

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[33] The notion of 'front' appears throughout this thesis and, following Goffman (1969: 32), refers to the ways in which an actor's performance can help to define the situation for its observers. For example, in performing their identities as 'mother' or 'father', parents may wish to convey that they are 'good' parents and encourage me to view their family with respect.

permitted in this family. Certainly both the mother and Ash may have assumed that I would make a judgement about their family based on Ash's behaviour. This highlights a further difficulty in conducting research in and about families, namely that 'the very request to talk with children and parents about family life may imply, in this context, a criticism of the home and its values' (Hood, et al., 1996: 119). It was therefore important to convey that I had not judged them. Throughout the interview I made no reference to this incident and continued to speak with both twins in a friendly manner. Like the other participants, I thanked them and emphasised that I appreciated their contributions. When their mother re-entered the room and brought up the incident, I told her and the boys that they had been 'wonderful' seeking to affirm that I had not taken the 'adult' point of view.

Even though these family fronts may set limits around the types of information that should be divulged, these notions of 'proper conduct' provide useful data in relation to what it means to be a 'good parent' (and indeed a 'good child') part of the research topic to be explored (see Chapter 3). This overlap between substantive topic and methodological approach therefore provided opportunities through its very limitations.

Negotiating a research role

As might be expected, I developed different relationships with each of the participants. Some of the families continued to create a rather formal research context where I would visit the family to conduct the interviews and leave shortly after. Others allowed me to spend a great deal of time in the family home, sharing their food and helping out. To some extent, this depended on whether or not the participants knew me, or had any connection with me, prior to the research. For instance, one family invited

me to stay with them for a weekend. Whilst this was a practical decision emerging from the fact that we lived many miles apart, the fact that I knew the eldest son also played a part in gaining this degree of access. Indeed, the eldest son suggested that I come to stay and to some extent, could verify my credibility even before I arrived. The presence of the eldest son in the family home also made it visibly apparent that we knew each other and got along well, thereby helping to create a rapport with other members of his family. A room was made up for me and, throughout the course of the weekend, I ate with the family and ventured out to town with them. Within this context, I was perceived as both a 'PhD student' and 'Craig's friend'. Similarly, another family who knew the son of one of my friends, made me extremely welcome, and even though the mother had some anxieties about the research, treated me as a family guest – making sure that I ate and drank as much as I wanted. On many occasions, we would often sit and talk for some time before 'formally' beginning the interviews. In both of these cases, I was able to participate in some aspects of their family life, whether that be helping to cook dinner, making a hot drink or helping out with homework.

Those families who did not know me or anyone connected to me responded in a variety of ways. Those participants receiving questionnaires tended to draw attention to my status as a PhD student and as a twin. Whilst constant email contact was initiated throughout, this from of contact did not provide the advantages that face-to-face interaction can offer outlined above. In contrast, both families contacted through TAMBA lived in my original hometown and consequently, I was also able to emphasise this aspect of commonality. For instance, in one situation, this allowed us to informatively discuss a local school which the children and I all had experience of attending, in another, experience of working at a local factory. In these contexts, it was perhaps even more important to temper my status as a PhD student researcher by

accentuating other aspects of commonality since these families had been contacted through more formal channels. Indeed, I consciously drew on my status as a twin and as a fellow townsperson when talking with both parents and children in order to build up a rapport and put them at their ease. It some situations it was clearly evident that the participants felt comfortable with my presence in the family home and being interviewed by me. On one occasion, one of the two youngest twins ran down the stairs and gave me a hug when he knew that I had arrived. Later on, when talking with the mother on arrival to interview both parents, she told me that this son had not wanted to go to football training because he wanted to see me. However, despite this, the parents were seemingly more concerned to quickly proceed with the formalities of the research. Compared with the families that knew me, we spent less time talking informally prior to and after the interviews.

One family, who also had no prior connection with me, proved to be the exception. Previous to the interviews, the mother and I had already spoken at length about the research on a number of occasions. She was particularly interested in the research due to the fact that she had had some difficult experiences of being a lone twin when she was a child and was still grappling with some of these as an adult. The mother's level of interest meant I was able to visit the family on numerous occasions. At times we ate together and on one occasion, I was invited to one of the children's Christmas plays. I maintained frequent and regular contact with all members of this family and developed a friendship with both the mother and the children. This level of involvement in their family life helped to build up a trusting relationship with both the children and the mother. After finishing the interviews I thanked them all for their sustained participation

by buying each of them a present. This was an important expression of thanks and a token of friendship.[34]

Adult-child alliances

During my numerous visits to this same family I witnessed family arguments. The mother often followed these by making comments about her children. In some situations the children were present. I was once again caught up in a triangle of social relations. Whilst I made no comment on what had been said, I did not want the children to think that I was taking sides simply by my 'adult' presence. On one occasion, I heard one of the children refer to me as 'mum's friend' and whilst this could mean that she trusted me, I was also aware that she might feel that I was allied to her mother. I made several attempts to emphasise my impartiality such as talking with them (about unrelated issues) after they had been told off and showing an interest in and participating in as many of their activities as they would allow. This was particularly important given that the children also sometimes saw their mother talking to me. It was also especially important to interview the children before the mother in order to emphasise that I was equally interested in their opinions.

A similar tension emerged within the 'swearing' scenario (mentioned earlier). Although the mother clearly expressed her disappointment in Ash, I also sensed that she was disappointed in me. A field note made after the interview makes this clear: *'I think that she blames me for not being more 'responsible' and telling him off'*. Indeed in this situation I felt the tension between expectations of me as an adult and my duty as a childhood researcher. From my perspective, any data the children gave me would be

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[34] I did not buy all of the participants presents. In hindsight I would give more consideration to this issue because my actions suggest that I valued the contribution of some of my participants more than others.

acceptable and no judgements would be made. Although I may have, once again, been playing against the 'rules of the game', it was neither my responsibility, role or wish to make any comment about the incident. On the contrary, it was important that the children felt appreciated and valued for all the contributions they had made.

Confidentiality and anonymity

Conducting the research in the family home also highlighted a tension between the child's right to confidentiality and the parent's wish to supervise and check up on their children and me. Parents would sometimes walk through the rooms where the interview was taking place. In most cases the parent only remained in the room for a matter of seconds, and therefore had little opportunity to listen to what we were discussing. However, in one situation, the mother prepared food or made drinks in the kitchen that was joined onto the room in which we were talking. She could potentially listen in to our conversations. This therefore presented a challenge to the promise of confidentiality. It was sometimes possible to temporarily re-centre the conversation around less sensitive issues (e.g. talking about which school they attended) or to use the time to introduce some of the participatory techniques. This way the mother could get a sense of what we were doing and the children's experiences would remain confidential. I also spoke with the mother to check if she had any further anxieties about the research and once again briefed her about the kinds of topics the research was concerned with exploring.

In other situations, the children asked me what their fellow siblings had talked to me about. Whilst I told each participant that they could always talk to others about what they had told me, I periodically asserted that each participant's conversation was

confidential. Indeed, 'issues of confidentiality also require us at times to assert very strong boundaries since people from within a cluster [family] may feel they have a right, or agreement, to know what has been said by others close to them' (Edwards, et al., 1999: 37).

Each of the participants was asked to create for themselves a 'fake name'. It was their decision whether or not they informed others about this.[35] Yet despite this attempt to enhance their anonymity, in practice, this was difficult to uphold. If the participants chose to read this thesis or any of the articles emerging from it, they could quite easily identify the various members of their family by working out their family connection to themselves. This ethical problem is difficult to remedy since it is necessary to make these connections explicit in order to piece together and cross-reference their various accounts. Indeed, as Darlington and Scott point out, 'the purpose of the research is to show the phenomenon in a holistic way, disaggregating the data can weaken its essence' (2002: 29).

Interviewing twins, siblings and parents: some specific issues

Interviewing twins

As was the case with the other participants, these interviews lasted for an average of two hours. All the child twins were interviewed together before being interviewed (on another occasion) separately. As envisaged, this not only helped the children to relax in my company, but also encouraged them to talk to each other. They would sometimes

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[35] In practice some of the participants chose their own names whilst others left the decision up to me. Whilst I could have quite easily formulated these names without any help from the participants, this helped to involve the participants in the research process and ensured that they would be able to access their own accounts in the written text.

ask each other questions or probe each other to bring something to my attention. These interviews thus provided some useful data with regard to how twins negotiate disagreements and sometimes attempt to construct a shared narrative (see Chapter 6). However, although this strategy served to help to put the children at their ease, and therefore solved some ethical dilemmas, it created others. Doing joint interviews might have made some twins feel like they were being treated like twins, something that some said they did not like, and something that is part of the research question to be explored.

Overcoming any sense of treating them as twins through talking with the twins together was difficult. I tried to emphasise that I respected them as two people by using their names occasionally throughout the course of the interview and by (whenever possible) making sure that, if one of them commented on a particular issue, I also asked the other what they thought. The first of these also helped in the transcribing process since it served to ensure that I was attributing the correct voice to the correct person.

By conducting the joint interviews before hand, the child twins were more familiar with my style and approach and knew what to expect when being interviewed separately. Whilst the adult twins did not have this benefit, I had either met some of the participants before arriving for interview, or had been verbally introduced to them (by a fellow twin).

Interviewing siblings

Although the original plan was to conduct these interviews after speaking with the twins, this did not always occur. In one case, the twins and siblings from one family had all made particular social arrangements that meant that it was impossible to follow this

plan. In another case, I sensed that the sibling of twins was beginning to feel rather left out, due to the fact that I had begun by interviewing her twin sisters. It was therefore necessary to make sure that she felt included in the research and knew that I was also interested in her own opinions, ideas and experiences. I was able to tell her this on several occasions. However, it was also important to display this commitment through my own actions. I made sure I spent as much time with her as the other members of her family. Amongst other things I plaited her hair, asked to see her newly painted room, and attended her Christmas play. However, one of the most important enactments of this commitment was to ask her if she wished to be interviewed next. Although the interviews with the twins were still in process, this was an essential part of making her feel more involved. Certainly this drew my attention to some of the ethical issues involved in choosing to interview the twins first and made me reassess the need to do so. Although there were practical reasons for wanting to interview the twins first, in hindsight, it would have been better to ask all the participants who wished to be interviewed first. Indeed, this way, the participants could have played a more direct role in shaping the arrangements of the research.

This experience also made me aware that choosing to interview the siblings on their own could similarly serve to mark them out as 'outsiders'. Whilst this is an important realisation, it was not confirmed by the sibling who felt excluded because her twin sisters were interviewed first. On the contrary, she was glad of the time dedicated specifically to her. On the back of her self-return essay she wrote, 'To Kate, thank-you for letting me talk to you about my life as a sister to a twins... Thank-you Kate.' The privacy of this interview context meant that she discussed some of her difficult experiences openly and also helped to reaffirm the importance of her role within the research.

Interviewing parents

All the parents were interviewed together. Whilst this could have prevented access to more individual and personal accounts of being a parent of twins, it provided a number of related advantages. As Chapter 6 will show, it allowed for an investigation of the ways in which parents construct a narrative of events in each other's company and to see how far certain modes of talk are particular to twins. This also provided an insight into the ways in which parents monitor each other's comments and behaviour in attempting to give a particular impression of themselves and perform the role of parent and partner effectively and convincingly.

Data Analysis

The data that emerged through the study consisted of interview transcripts, children's drawings, discussion of vignettes and family photographs, short essays and poems (given in response to the open ended task) and written prose through the qualitative questionnaire. Whilst all these data were analysed, the material relating to the vignettes was not utilised in full in this thesis. These data suggested that some twins held quite strong notions of loyalty, responsibility and admiration (for their twin) and therefore raised questions relating to the appropriate ('moral') conduct of twinship (as a social role). Whilst relevant to the project at hand, this required in-depth exploration in its own right, especially in relation to notions of gender and sibling hierarchy (i.e if these viewpoints relate to being an older sister, younger brother and so on). Hence, whilst this was not practically possible within the constraints of this thesis, it is, as the conclusion points out, a topic which can be taken up and explored further in the future.

The process of developing codes was inductive, that is, they emerged from these data rather than being pre-determined. The coding of data occurred in two main ways (although this process did not constitute just two attempts at coding). Firstly the transcripts were analysed descriptively, that is, extracts were grouped in terms of the surface appearance of what was being said. These more 'concrete' categories (and the data pertaining to them) were then examined more analytically, that is, thematically, with a view to developing more 'abstract' codes and theoretical explanations (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). This description makes the coding process sound quite linear and non-complex, which of course it is not. As new codes were developed, 'old' transcripts had to be re-coded. Coding categories were joined together, discarded and sub-divided. Higher-order (more 'abstract' or 'inferential') and lower-order (more descriptive) categories were created. These often overlapped in the text such that one extract could fall under several different 'abstract' themes thus indicating that themes were linked together. To help me to conceptualise these links, I drew coding maps throughout the analysis, possibly too many. In this sense, then, the analysis could be loosely conceptualised as 'grounded'. However, I do not think this analysis can be properly termed 'grounded theory' (Glasner and Strauss, 1967) because I do not claim to have formed a 'theory' about how twins grow up. This seems to have totalising implications that I wish to avoid. This thesis is a subjective narrative. I outlined important aspects of my positionality earlier on in the chapter to make clear that this thesis represents just one perspective on these data. Although links are always made between the 'micro' analysis of participants' accounts and 'macro' patterns, this should only be taken as an attempt to situate *my* explanation within a broader context. Other possible explanations are no doubt possible and thus other links may also be made between the micro and macro aspects of social life. Thus rather than developing a grounded theory, this thesis represents my attempts to build 'grounded' interpretations.

Reflecting this process, my thinking moved repeatedly between thinking descriptively and analytically. The emphasis that the older twins placed on difference encouraged me to think about the *process* of forming this narrative of difference. Hence I moved from describing these data as examples of 'difference' to thinking about the process of 'differencing' (as a higher order concept) and the extent to which different twins 'played up' or 'played down' certain aspects of 'twinship'. The latter drew attention to the situational nature of identity and therefore was later linked to the concept of 'moving in and out of twinship'. The 'developmental' focus of the participants' descriptions of growing up led me to examine the form and content of the 'developmental model' being advocated and its links to participants' conceptualisations of 'age' and 'twinship'. This analysis also encouraged me to think about overlaps between twinship and marriage (two-in-one-ness being something twins are expected to grow out of and something they are expected to take up in the future). Paying attention to alternative examples and surprises was important and helped to investigate my own analysis. Hence gender differences and spatial/social context emerged as two further aspects of diversity. Whilst I had intended to examine the general topics of the body and space, I had not initially intended to focus on talk as an important resource for negotiating identity. The importance of talk emerged as I examined the twins' narratives of self and considered the prevalence of the plural pronoun 'we'.

Maintaining contact with twins and their families

After the interviews had finished, all the families received a letter of thanks and were subsequently mailed a series of 'progress reports' to inform them of the current developments in the research process and to affirm that they would later receive a summary of findings. A 'change of address form' was enclosed in order to remain up to

date with the participants contact details. As with the initial letters of contact, these were addressed to all family members and written with all the participants in mind. Following this, a final summary of findings was then posted out.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined different aspects of the research methodology underpinning this thesis and discussed some of the practical and ethical difficulties encountered along the way. The following chapters now turn to explore the question of how twins negotiate their identities across the life course, beginning first with an outline of the role of discourse in the construction of twinship.

PART ONE: STRUCTURING CONTEXTS

Chapter 2: Discourses

'[Discourse] defines and produces the objects of our knowledge. It governs the way that a topic can be

meaningfully talked about and reasoned about. It also influences how ideas are put into practice and

used to regulate the conduct of others'

(Hall, 1997b: 44).

Introduction

Discourses represent one important structuring context of social life. They feed into the ways in which we think, feel and act, they provide a framework for interpreting social meanings and crucially, play a central role in helping us to construct ourselves and identify others as certain types of people. From the outset then, it is important to take account of those discourses, which may potentially inform, and shape, children's and adults' negotiations of twin identity. To this end, this chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part examines discourses of childhood and adulthood. These give meaning to the twins' generational status and provide the backdrop against which child twins grow up. The second part then turns to focus specifically on discourses of twinship, which feed into our cultural (normative) expectations of how twins *should* be. Before beginning this journey however, the chapter begins by outlining the theoretical standpoint on discourse.

Theorising discourse

As the opening quote suggests, discourses constitute the knowledge systems that bring meaning to our everyday lives. They 'shape how we think about things, how we talk about them, and what we see as our choices' (Gilbert, et al., 1999: 754). However, importantly, discourses are more than just words. The statements that constitute them emerge from and through social action. Discourses are therefore both a product of, and a structuring context for, social practices (Frank, 1991). Power is a central component of this process (Foucault, 1980). Discourses compete to produce legitimate knowledge and a sense of 'truth' – a story about how things *should* be. As Foucault noted, 'each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true' (Foucault, 1980: 131). Knowledge systems are therefore invested with, and carry forth, varying degrees of authority (to make their version of events count). In addition, as we will see in the next section when exploring discourses of childhood, they produce subject positions that are characterised by varying degrees of power.

Although Foucault has been criticised for producing an overly deterministic structural account of social life (for example see Hall, 2000), his analysis draws our attention to the important role that discourses play in shaping our understandings and providing frameworks for social action. This is important since, as Hall points out, 'identities are constructed within, not outside, discourse' (2000: 17).[36] Because they condense and summarise discursive representations, stereotypes are especially useful resources. Through simplifying similarities within groups and differences between

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[36] This is not to resort to a deterministic stance whereby children, similar to Foucault's 'docile bodies' (Foucault, 1977: 138), are always summoned into place *by* discourses. Rather it is to suggest that discourses provide the frameworks within which identities are attributed, recognised and validated as well as performed, resisted and negotiated

groups, stereotypes help us to draw out the lines of difference between each other and also to foster a sense of belonging (Rapport, 1995: 279). They may also provide a 'script' for performing identity:

> Scripts provide our routines and roles with meaning and significance, tell us how we should be acting and feeling at any particular moment, provide us with details of others whom we encounter in the situation and forecast the next move in the game, the next development in the play (Cohen and Taylor, 1976: 50-51).

We may utilise these 'scripts' to classify others and, as the second part of this thesis shows, employ them (to varying degrees) when producing our own performances of identity. Moreover, others may draw on these scripts to forecast how we will act and what we will say. Furthermore, as the next chapter shows, they may use them to help classify, identify or present us as particular sorts of people. It is therefore important to explore the discourses that help constitute and bring meaning to 'twins' and 'children' because these feed in and out of the internal-external dialectic of identification; providing the context within which child twins are identified by others and how they identify themselves.

Being a child, becoming an adult

As the previous chapter began to explain, this thesis advocates that childhood is a social construction. Back in 1962, the French historian Philippe Ariès asserted that 'in medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist' (1962: 125). According to him, the concept of childhood emerged in Europe between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Although his work has been criticised (for example Wilson, 1980), it has prompted theorists to consider the ways in which discourses of childhood may be socially and

temporally contextualised. Indeed, the latter constitutes one defining feature of the 'new' sociology of childhood:

> First, and of prime importance, childhood is, within this paradigm, to be understood as a social construction. That is, the institution of childhood provides an interpretive frame for understanding the early years of human life. In these terms it is biological immaturity rather than childhood which is a universal feature of human groups, for ways of understanding this period of human life – the institution of childhood – vary cross-culturally... (James and Prout, 1997: 3).

In many Western cultures, such as Britain and the United States, the child and adult are understood through the ways in which they are different rather than the ways in which they are the same. Indeed, as Jenks points out, the child 'cannot be imagined except in relation to a conception of the adult' (Jenks, 1996: 3). Whilst the child lacks personhood, the adult has come to symbolise the acquisition of it. Although the concept of personhood incorporates 'some idea of completeness and wholeness, in the sense of achieving full membership of society' (Hockey and James, 1993: 48), what this actually entails varies across time and across cultures (Mauss, [1938] 1985).[37] Our own notions of personhood have to be set against the cultural backdrop of the rise of Western individualism. With roots in the entrepreneurial activities of the thirteenth century and growth of Calvinistic Protestantism, individualism emerged out of a market economy that encouraged contractual relations between workers over traditional associations

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[37] For instance, drawing on evidence from ritual, ceremony, law and custom, Mauss ([1938] 1985) showed how the idea of the person 'evolved' from a clan role-player to a unique self with psychological consciousness. At the start of the journey, the person was defined by their role and status within a clan. For example, in North America and Australia, each role incorporated a number of duties, titles and kinship names within the clan that were ceremonially exemplified by masks or body paint. However, it was in Ancient Rome, that the person became attributed with certain rights and duties forming a notion of the legal person and citizen. Through Protestant Christianity, the person then acquired a metaphysical foundation – a soul and psychological consciousness – through which the person became both rational and individual. Whilst Mauss's work has been criticised for providing an evolutionary theory of notions of personhood (Allen, 1985), his work successfully shows how such notions change across time and space.

based on kin and class (MacFarlane, 1978). Thus as Hockey and James point out, individualism supports 'the freedom of the individual to pursue his or her own ends, rather than being committed by birth or kinship to the needs and objectives of any one social group' (1993: 52). The autonomous, independent and unique individual has thus became a defining component of socially respectable personhood (La Fontaine, 1985). To be somebody, one has to be somebody *specific* rather than just *anybody* – as Turner notes, 'to be an individual is to be a particular individual' (Turner, 1986: 6). Difference, then, is a central component of 'felt' individuality (Cohen and Taylor, 1976: 20)

One only has to look to the fears surrounding human cloning to confirm our cultural valuing of uniqueness. For instance, the Center for Genetics and Society outline one argument put forward against human cloning:

> Human cloning would diminish the sense of uniqueness of an individual. It would violate deeply and widely held convictions concerning human individuality and freedom, [and] could lead to a devaluation of clones in comparison with non-clones (2003: http://www.genetics-and-society.org/technologies/cloning/reproarguments.html).

Importantly, this distinctiveness is discretely embodied within the singular and separate body. In this sense, the notion of the 'bounded individual' (Geertz, 1974: 31) captures the essence of this aspect of westernised personhood; to be a person is 'to be distinguished from the other, to be ordered and discrete, secure *within* the well-defined boundaries of the body' (Shildrick, 2000: 79). The bureaucratic process of individuation further confirms the singularity of individual persons – the State treating each human being as one entity with particular rights and responsibilities – and provides the basis for establishing equality between persons (Turner, 1986; Nasman, 1994). This singular

and separate person is able to think and act both rationally and independently of others. An important aspect of this independence relates to the capacity to work and secure economic self-reliance (Hockey and James, 1993). During the process of Western industrialisation, children were removed from the workplace and placed within the domestic settings of the home and school (Hendrick, 1997). Thus in Britain, we have come to associate the ability to work, exercise choice and self-determination and to have legal rights and responsibilities (for instance eligibility to vote) with the acquisition of full personhood.[38] The 'age of majority' legally marks the acquisition of personhood and as such, 'adulthood is legally and administratively defined by the state and is bound up, in a weaker or stronger sense, with notions of citizenship and full membership in the polity' (Jenkins, 1990: 135).

Children are commonly understood to 'develop' independence and a unique individuality as they grow up. Psychological theorising commonly pinpoints 'adolescence' as a key stage within the growth of the self. For instance, back in 1950 Erikson, pronounced the search for identity as the fifth 'age of man':

> The growing and developing youths, faced with this physiological revolution within them, are now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are ... (Erikson, 1950: 253).

And more recently Kroger states:

> Although the foundations of 'I' are formed in infancy through the interactions of care-takers and child, adolescence does seem to be a time, at least in contemporary, technologically advanced

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[38] The notions of autonomy and independence so central to this discourse of individualism are, as Ribbens (1994: 48) points out, fundamentally male, white, middle class and, as we will shall see, adult.

western cultures, when one is confronted with the task of self-definition (Kroger, 1996: 1).

Betwixt and between childhood and adulthood, adolescence is portrayed as an ambiguous time full of contradiction and uncertainty. During adolescence, children individuate from their parents (or more commonly, specifically the mother), leaving behind their child dependency in order to develop a stronger sense of who they are. This separation is portrayed as a positive aspect of child development (Brannen, 1996). Only in adulthood does this individuality reach full fruition.

> Ideologically, children are epitomised as somebody whose individuality must develop primarily in the family surroundings to be availed of when they become adults (Qvortrup, 1994: 10).

Thus, families are expected to 'raise' individuals (Ribbens, 1994). Indeed, Strathern notes that the individuality of persons constitutes the 'first fact of English kinship' (1992: 14).

In direct contrast to the ideal of independence, the child is a symbol of innocence, vulnerability and dependency (Hockey and James, 1993). The roots of this image of the innocent child can be traced back to the eighteenth century where Rousseau, in his seminal work *Emile*, pronounced: 'God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil' (cited in James, et al., 1998: 13) . This angelic child is uncorrupted by the adult world and should be kept in this natural state for as long as possible (Hendrick, 1997). These ideas found expression in the Romantic images of Blake and Wordsworth and continue to hold currency in our contemporary

understandings of the child.[39] For instance, parents and educators are 'contracted to bring up our children in such a manner that their state of pristine innocence remains unspoilt by the violence and ugliness that surrounds them' (James, et al., 1998: 14).

Running alongside and feeding into this are discourses of child incompetence. This aspect of our cultural conceptualisation of 'the child' owes much to developmental psychology. During the second part of the nineteenth century childhood became the subject of serious psychological interest and investigation. Influenced by post-Enlightenment ideals of growth and progress and Darwinian notions of evolution and development, developmental psychology conceptualised the transition from childhood to adulthood in terms of the child's progression through a series of fixed stages. One of the most influential figures to contribute to this model of the 'naturally developing child' (James, et al., 1998) was Jean Piaget who saw the child move through four stages of mental growth: sensory-motor intelligence; preconceptual thought; intuitive thought and formal operations. [40] These stages were chronologically ordered and increased in complexity as the child aged (Jenks, 1996). Within this model the child and adult are diametrically opposed: the child lacks competence whereas the adult has achieved it. Indeed rational thought becomes the marker of full adult status and as such is presented as a desirable goal. Therefore:

> What [this model] provides analytically and culturally, are some grounds to establish differences between adults and children. The control provided by adult competence justifies the supremacy of adulthood and further ensures that childhood must, of necessity, be viewed as an inadequate precursor to the real state of human being, namely being 'grown-up' (James, et al., 1998: 18).

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[39] For Blake, childhood was the source of innocence and for Wordsworth a special time in life, lost with the ending of childhood (Hendrick, 1997: 37)

[40] The child moved from 'figurative thought' (which allowed the child to focus on the immediate present) to 'operative intelligence' (which allowed the child to reflexively engage with objects and thus displayed logical cognitive processes) (Jenks, 1996: 17).

These notions of progress and development were imported directly into traditional sociological socialisation theories of the 1950s and provided the basis for the model of the 'socially developing child' (James, et al., 1998: 23). Parsons, one of the key contributors to sociological socialisation theories, was concerned with the problem of social order and consequently formulated a 'top-down' theory that explained how children became integrated into 'society'.[41] The successful assimilation of new members primarily took place within the family where children learned to acquire the norms and values fostered by adults. Only in learning these new ways could children become fully functional (adult) members of society. Thus, as was the case with Piaget's model, children passively await their eventual arrival into the adult world but this time they *become* competent social actors. Parsons' model is therefore also based upon a developmental schema that positions children as incompetent *becomings* rather than competent *beings* and, like developmental psychology, implies that development and growth are positive and inevitable features of the child's biological maturation.

The developmental perspective is thus one dominant discourse helping to constitute 'the child' as a particular category of being. From a Foucauldian perspective, it both helps to reproduce power relations as well as emerging out of them. As a knowledge system, developmental psychology in particular has a large part to play in structuring how we understand and interpret child growth. Endorsed by the authority of 'science' it commands social respect. This legitimacy ensures that this knowledge filters down to and is taken up within the social practices of everyday life. Mayall explains:

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[41] According to Parsons, the social system is divided into three sub-systems: the cultural sub-system, the physical sub-system and the personality sub-system – all of which work to ensure the maintenance of the whole system. However it is the latter which is most relevant when discussing socialisation. The unsocialised child is the primary concern of the personality sub-system which needs to ensure that the child develops into a competent 'adult' (Jenks, 1996: 17).

... whilst thinking about children has moved on, the notion that children are best understood as incomplete vulnerable beings progressing with adult help through stages needed to turn them into mature adults, has socially recognised status, both theoretically and as enlisted in policies and practices affecting children's lives. Developmental psychology underpins the training of teachers and the organisation and ethos of schools; thus at the Institute of Education (University of London), primary teacher training is sited within the Department of Child Development and Primary Education ... The surveillance of pre-school children by health staff is conducted within understandings of children as developmental projects. If children truant from school, or do badly at school, the educational psychologist is called in to help; the school, as an institution designed for children, cannot be in question, so there must be something wrong psychologically with the child' (1994b: 3).

The cultural value that we attribute to getting older and 'growing up' is all too evident. The iconography of children's birthday cards pronounces and celebrates the increased age of the child. If someone is being 'immature' we tell them to 'grow up!' The very notion of 'growing up' metaphorically reflects the positive value that we attribute to being a 'grown up'; the movement from childhood to adulthood is represented as a progressive development.

Presumed to be socially incompetent, children are perceived to require the protection and wisdom of adult caretakers. For example, children have had their welfare rights (e.g. rights to education, health care and freedom from violence and cruelty) increasingly affirmed since the late nineteenth-century (Hockey and James, 1993) and these, as Archard notes, emphasise that adults (parents and the state) are responsible for caring for the young (1993: 47). It is only after children have legally become adults that they have the unconditional right to marry, the right to vote, the right to welfare benefits and the right to donate blood or organs for transplantation. Becoming an adult therefore also means becoming an autonomous thinker and independent actor:

During the lifecourse of Western cultures, dependency must somehow be shrugged off in favour of an individualistic, knowledgeable, independence which is the mark of adulthood (Hockey and James, 1993: 69).

In line with this, children are expected to leave the parental home to begin their own lives and create their own homes (Allan and Crow, 2001).[42] Those adults who fail in this endeavour risk being stigmatised. As Murphy (1987) argues: 'overdependency and non-reciprocity are considered childish traits, and adults who have them – even if it's not their fault – suffer a reduction in status' (cited in Hockey and James, 1993: 72). Thus mentally handicapped adults may not necessarily be considered capable of making self-determined choices (Jenkins, 1990) and disabled youths may be deemed incapable of taking care of themselves (Butler, 1998).

In sum, then, whilst the adult has achieved complete development, the child is in a state of becoming and is therefore incomplete (see figure 5 below). These ideas, contained in social theory, have filtered through into our everyday 'common sense' understandings of the child so that the child is commonly viewed to be dependent, innocent and incompetent.

Figure 5: From 'becoming' to 'being'

Child		**Adult**
Dependent	———————————▶	Independent
Incompetent	Development	Competent
Irresponsible	Progression	Responsible (citizen)
Innocent	Positive movement	Knowing
Foundations of self		Unique self
Incomplete		Complete
Unfinished		Finished
Becoming		Being

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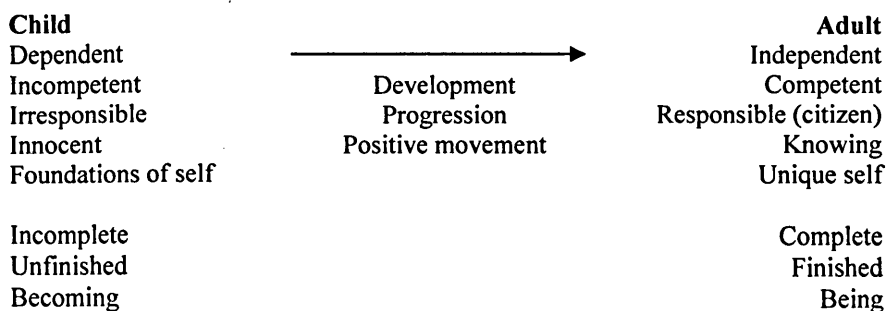
[42]In practice, this cultural ideal takes many forms and does not necessary conform to a linear movement from dependence to independence (Allan and Crow, 2001). For example, children may live away from home whilst at university and leave home to set up an independent household later on.

Being a twin

This thesis examines the experiences of child twins. These children are characterised as specific sorts of 'becomings' because, as the second part of this thesis shows, they have to carve out their status as 'separate' individuals by using each other and, as the following section explains, represent an intensified version of the symbol of 'the child'.

Representations of twinship emerge through a variety of different mediums including academic works, parenting guides, newspapers, films, chat shows, documentaries and novels.[43] These provide some insight into our cultural understandings and expectations of twins and, more specifically, into our normative constructions of twinship as a social identity. Importantly, parents, child twins, other family members and public strangers may have access to these kinds of resources and therefore, in analysing some of their content, this section outlines one further important aspect to the cultural backdrop against which the parents and twins within this study perform, resist and reconstruct notions of twinship.[44] Three inter-related characteristics are central to our cultural notions of twinship: sameness, togetherness and closeness. The following sections trace each of these key strands out.

Sameness

Sameness lies at the heart of our cultural constructions of twinship.

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[43] Within this thesis, parenting guides about twins are sometimes referred to as 'twin parenting guides'.
[44] Although this analysis does not constitute a representative sample of works, the prevalence of these discourses is indicated by their repeated presence across these different cultural mediums.

In the whole of Europe, popular ideas pertaining to twins embroider on the theme of their complete identification: they are physically indistinguishable from each other except through recourse to clothing or to cosmetic means… (Levi-Strauss, 1995: 228-229).[45]

Indeed, examples abound in children's stories about twins, especially in relation to their physical appearance. For instance, Roger Hargreaves' *Little Miss Twins* (1984) are exact replicas of each other. A picture of the two twins dominates the front cover (see figure 6 below) where they mirror each other's actions perfectly.

Figure 6: Little Miss Twins

Turning onto the first page, the association between twins and sameness is confirmed, the opening line declares: 'You just couldn't tell them apart!' Similarly, Lewis Caroll's (1971) 'Tweedledum and Tweedledee' (see figure 7, p. 79) are identically dressed schoolboys who wear name tags (on the collar of their shirts) to make their identities clear. Enid Blyton's *Twins at St Clare's* are 'so alike that only a few people could tell which was Pat and which was Isabel' (1941: 1) and similarly, Jacqueline Wilson's *Double Act* (1995) twins – Ruby and Garnet – immediately inform us: 'We're identical.

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[45]His cross cultural analysis of twin myths shows, for instance, that native American myth (for example Coyote and Lynx) tended to stress opposition and difference whilst European myth (for example Castor and Pollux) tended to emphasise sameness (see Levi-Strauss, 1995: 225-242).

Figure 7: Tweedledum and Tweedldee
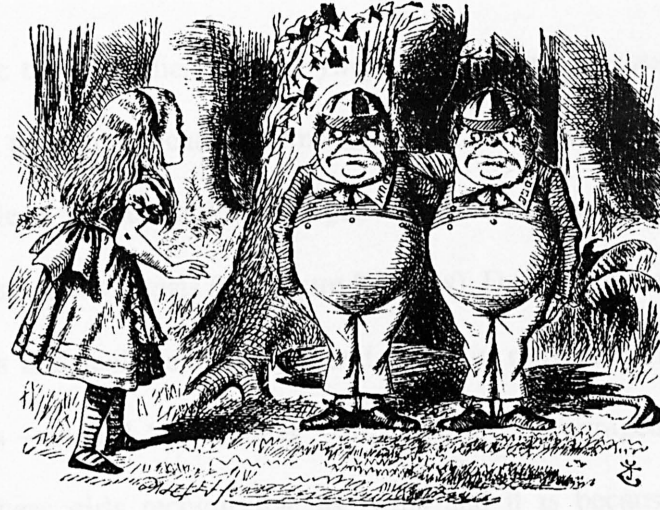
There's very few people who can tell us apart'. Going as far back as Shakespeare (*Twelfth Night* and *The Comedy of Errors*), twins have featured in comic scenarios of mistaken identity, a theme that continues to be a common twin motif. The film *Parent Trap* (re-made in 1999) relies on the ability of twins to 'swap places' and take on each other's identities. In the original movie one actress played both twins further confirming the sense in which twins may be thought to be two versions of the same person. Poems about twins (written for children) also draw on this stereotype. John Foster's *Who's Who* (1993) begins, 'He looks like me / I look like him' and similarly the first stanza of David Harmer's *Which One Are You?* (1993) reads:

Look at me

Look at him

Just the same

Just my twin

Same hair, same eyes

Same face, same size

Same freckles, same nose

Same expression, same clothes.

Same same same!

So powerful are twins' bodies in signifying sameness and twoness that advertisers often exploit them to communicate information about their own consumer products or offers. For example, a recent Marks and Spencer advertisement for double store card points featured identical twin girls (see figure 8 below). Dressed in identical outfits with identical hairstyles and facial expressions and stood in mirrored positions, it is their physical sameness – indeed 'doubleness' – that we are encouraged to observe. This instantly makes these girls recognisable as twins and it is because of this that we attribute their bodies with a whole range of cultural meanings. These twins are alike in every way, they belong together and quite literally look to each other for company.

Figure 8: 'Double Points' Marks and Spencer Advertisement July 2004

These latter expectations are confirmed through their holding of each other's hands and

slight grins – actions which suggest that these twins *enjoy* being together. In short these twins force us to consider the value of having a twin, someone else, someone like us, two rather than just one.

By using twins to advertise these 'double points', these advertisers set up connections between social meanings such that, 'images, ideas or feelings … become attached to certain products, by being transferred from signs out of other systems (things or people with 'images') to the products, rather than originating in them' (Williamson, 1978: 30). Cultural notions of twinship thus constitute the 'referent system' (Williamson, 1978: 19) that we use to bring meaning to the value of double points. Through their sameness, smiles and symmetry these twins help to signify that *double* points *are* better than *single* points. We are encouraged to envy their companionship ('I wish I was a twin') and to attribute the fulfilment of being 'two' to acquiring 'double' points.

Because of their power to represent sameness twins may also be used to show up the differences that consumer products/ items can make. For instance, an advert for 'Dove' hair conditioner (November 2003) showed one identical twin using the Dove conditioner. After washing, her hair was then compared to her twin sister's in order to show that the Dove brand produced shiny healthy hair (as compared to dry hair). Similarly, identical twins were used on GMTV (ITV Dec 1 2003) in order to test the judge's ability to 'spot the difference' between an expensive dress (worn by one of the identical twins) and a cheaper dress (worn by the other). In both examples, twinship is defined through a stereotype of natural sameness. Indeed, this is the source of the twins' immense symbolic power. Although it is not essential to use twins to highlight the difference that using a specific conditioner can make to your hair, twins allow the

advertiser to draw upon and communicate a number of unspoken 'truths'. The stereotypical image of the twin body brings notions of natural sameness immediately into view. Within this context, the differences, which are clearly shown in the advert, seem 'amazing' because the conditioner has overpowered and transformed nature! Through setting up an 'experiment' (where the twins are alike in every way except for the 'treatment' – Dove conditioner – being administered to one of them) the advertiser implies that the test is 'scientific' 'valid' and 'reliable'. Hence, by using twins the advertiser can present difference as 'fact' and convey some sense of the 'true' extent of difference. In those cases where we are not supposed to notice any differences between the twins (like the 'dress test' on GMTV), a similar scenario is created. Here we are invited to discover synthetic differences between the twins. Identical twins are chosen to provide a backdrop (of sameness) against which any potential differences can be viewed.

Although images of identical twins dominate representations of twins, there are examples of non-identical twins also. For instance, images of different-sex twins may emphasise both sameness and difference in order to mark out their gendered identities. For example, in the 'Rugrats' tale *Reptar's Surprise Visit* (Schoberle, 1999), 'Phil' and 'Lil', both appear as almost identical replicas - they have the same facial expressions and clothing but Lil has a pink bow in her hair. They always appear together and their actions are often depicted as mirror images of each other (see figure 12, p. 97). Jane Fisher's *Cherry Twins* (1983) are also different-sex twins and like Phil and Lil are drawn exactly the same apart from the fact that Charlie wears shorts whilst Cheryl wears a skirt (see figure 9, p. 83). Hence physical sameness is used to highlight their status as twins at the same time as differences in dress are used to highlight their

Figure 9: The Cherry Twins
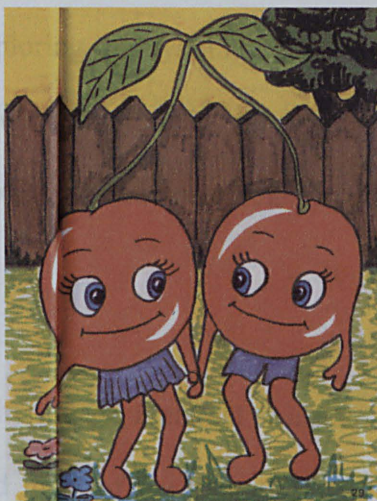
different gender identities. However, in these examples, the extent of difference is so slight that twinship (sameness) remains the dominant identity.

Descriptions of twins' personalities seem more ambivalent switching between absolute sameness and complete opposites. For instance, on the one hand, the title of one series of Mary-Kate and Ashley books, *Two of a Kind* (Stine, 2000), suggests that, like 'two peas in a pod' the twins are duplicates of each other: two of the same thing. On the other hand, even though Pat and Isobel (*The Twins at St Clare's*) look the same, their personalities are different. Whilst Isobel wants to conform to the school rules, Pat willingly breaks them. This notion of contrast is mirrored in psychological research about twins and has provided one further plot device in film. For instance, Burlingham (1952) and Koch's (1966) famous twin studies utilised notions of the 'passive' and 'active' twin, exploring the different degrees of dominance/submissiveness in twins.[46] In a similar vein, representations of twins in film sometimes position one twin as 'good'

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[46] For example, Burlingham's (1952) famous study identified Bill as 'active' and Bert as 'passive' (but also emphasised the capacity of twins to 'swap roles').

and the other as 'evil' (for example, psychotic twin Terry and her identical twin sister Ruth in the film *The Dark Mirror,* 1946) or alternatively draw on this motif as a metaphorical device for exploring the dysfunctional aspects of schizophrenia (Stewart, 2000: 33) – the most famous example being Stevenson's (1979) classic tale of Jekyll and Hyde. In these examples, twins are constructed as opposites, different parts, or two halves of one whole.

Notwithstanding these differences, identical twins are at the forefront of our cultural imaginings of twins. Indeed most of the twins referred to above have been identical twins. In her study of public responses to twins, Stewart (2000) found that members of the public often associated the word 'twins' with looking alike and wearing the same clothes and, in line with this, commonly asked parents of twins if their twins were identical. Thus, if people look alike we might say they 'look like twins'. Our fascination with identical twins was further reflected in a more recent television programme (*Twins: The Identity Test* BBC1 March 19 2003) of which the principle aim was to find the *most* identical twins in Britain. The following chapters will also continue to demonstrate the prevalence of stereotypes of twin sameness amongst the twins and parents in this study. Importantly, this construction of twinship serves to position twins outside of the cultural category of the person; defined through sameness, twins are assumed to lack individuality.

Not surprisingly, parenting guides encourage parents of twins to foster the development of individuality in their children (thus bringing them in line with this cultural ideal).[47] Amongst other things, they advise parents to take time to address each

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[47] Although these parenting books were published some time ago, with the exception of Rosambeau's guide, all were being distributed through TAMBA at the time of submission and therefore still constitute works that can potentially inform parenting practice.

twin separately, to read stories to each child separately and to spend time with each twin on their own (Cooper, 1997: 156). Parents should dress their child twins in differently coloured outfits in order to help others to recognise them as two separate people, and to help the twins themselves to formulate a sense of how they are different from each other (Sandbank, 1988: 37). Parents should thus avoid referring to their children as 'the twins' as some on-line advice for parents of twins makes clear:

> Try to refer to each by names, not as 'the twins' and make it easy for others to do so. When they start school, give them name tags, if necessary, or color-code their wardrobes so that teachers and other children know that 'Jenny always wears something red and Sarah always wears something blue' (Malmstrom and Davis, 2005: http://parenting.ivillage.com/baby/bmultiples/).

Child twins therefore lack personhood on two counts: they are children who are in the process of *becoming* somebody, and as twins they are 'the same' and need to be *made* different.

Mirroring accounts of child development within psychology, these parenting guides pinpoint adolescence as an important stage in this *progression* towards developing a sense of self:

> Adolescent years are crucial ones for any youngster. The whole question of "Who am I" becomes magnified in the eyes of a teenager. These are the years of strong hormone development, boiling new desires, agonizing self-definition and a yearning for self-expression through sexuality and the establishment of the attitudes of adulthood (Case, 1992: 79).

Twins, especially identical twins, are sometimes said to find this task more difficult than other children:

If they are exciting, bewildering and difficult years for singletons, imagine the adjustment that twins have to make, especially identical twins (Case, 1992: 80).

Rosambeau argues that this may be because others, as well as the twins themselves, have always conceived of the twins as a unit, as one of a 'them' (1987: 159). Twins should therefore be encouraged to be individuals from childhood in order to make this task of establishing a sense of self easier:

> Twins who have been helped to find an individual identity during childhood are in a stronger position when they reach adolescence to cope with the self-doubts and the struggle to find a positive self-image that beset all teenagers (Sandbank, 1988: 126).

Given that adolescence is constructed as an important stage within identity development, it is no surprise that one parenting guide warns against older child twins dressing the same:

> Identically dressed babies are delightful, five-year-old look alike cute, but adolescents who dress the same are slightly disturbing. Adults are suspected of doing it only for fun, and the elderly couple who still dress alike are regarded as slightly sad. A butterfly, ready to fly, who had chosen to remain in his chrysalis might inspire some similar regret (Rosambeau, 1987: 164).

Indeed, as we will see in the second part of this thesis, this is a perspective held by many of the twins and parents in this study.

These 'expert systems' (Giddens, 1991) therefore provide help and advice on a specific set of children – child *twins* – and participate in the process of constructing knowledge, expectations and understandings about them. As Giddens notes, these are 'not just works 'about' social processes but materials which in some part constitute

them' (1991: 2). The very fact that parenting manuals and self-help groups (like TAMBA) exist for twins help to mark twins out as particular *sorts* of children with special problems and difficulties to be overcome. Within the scenario above, identical twins are differentiated from non-identical twins, and twins in general from singleton siblings. We might therefore say that a continuum of siblingship is erected (see figure 10 below): siblings are different to each other and will find this process of developing a sense of self easier than twins in general; identical twins, constructed as more intense versions of twin sameness, may find this process more difficult than non-identical twins.

Figure 10: A Continuum of Siblingship:

Singleton sibs	Non-identical	Identical twins	Conjoined twins
Look different	Twins but look different	Look the same	Look the same
Different ages	Same age	Same age	Same age
Singular	Plural / together	Always together	Bodies are joined
Can be close	Are close	Are very close	Embody closeness
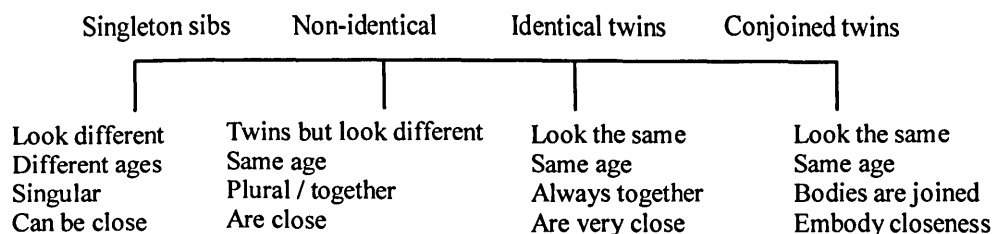
These classificatory distinctions between different types of twins and twins and sibs are underpinned and legitimated by scientific discourses concerning zygosity. One TAMBA 'fact sheet' outlines the difference between these different types of siblings:

Monozygotic twins are also known as identical or uniovular. They arise when one fertilised egg splits early in the pregnancy (within 13 days of fertilization): the cause of this division is unknown. Monozygotic twins are always of the same sex, because division of the fertilised ovum produces two genetically identical individuals ...

Dizygotic twins are also known as fraternal, non-identical or binovular. These twins occur when double ovulation takes place and both eggs are fertilised separately. They can be conceived at different times, but always within the same menstrual cycle (i.e. within a few days of each

other), a process known as superfecundation ... DZ twins are no more alike than any other brothers or sister and have an equal chance of being of the same sex or of different sexes (TAMBA, 2002).

Sandbank adds conjoined twins within her classification of identical twins:

> Identical twins are also known as uniovular or monozygotic (MZ) twins. This is because they come from one ovum, or egg, which is fertilised by one sperm which then becomes a zygote, or germ cell. This zygote then splits into two cells which eventually grow into two genetically identical bodies. If the two cells remain partly attached they may grow into conjoined ('siamese') twins (1988: 19-21).

Thus identical twins (including conjoined twins) are more similar than non-identical twins who are said to be just as different to each other as siblings.

Scientific research on twins utilises and adds further weight to these distinctions by employing identical and non-identical twins as methodological tools for testing the relative influences of nature and nurture. Usually accredited to the work of Sir Francis Galton (1875; 1883), the 'twin method' assumes that:

> ... any difference within identical pairs must be due to environmental or at least non-genetic causes, whereas differences within fraternal pairs are due to both environmental and genetic factors. The extent to which identical twins resemble each other more than fraternal twins is held to reflect the strength of the genetic contribution to a characteristic (Mittler, 1971: 45).[48]

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[48] However, this method has received extensive criticism. A central problem is that it assumes that both types of twins share equal environmental influences. However, this obviously does not take into account the infinite number of ways in which their so called 'environments' might differ not only when comparing the two twin groups (MZ/DZ), but also when comparing the environments of each twin separately (Zazzo, 1978). Differences in attitudes towards each twin, the appearance of each twin, family size, number of other sibs, and the various reputations negotiated throughout the course of social interaction are just some of the ways in which twins' environments might differ.

Thus, the study of twins has been actively pursed by psychologists and biologists seeking to uncover the 'genetic' and 'environmental' components of various biological and psychological characteristics.[49] Since as Barker notes, 'science as a discursive formation plays an over-determining and grounding role in what we recognise as 'true' (1998: 31) it is no surprise that these distinctions between identical twins, non-identical twins and siblings – which form an important part of 'scientific' thinking about twins – feature on this TAMBA fact sheet. Designed for parents of twins, this fact sheet, along with the advice given out in the parenting guides, provide some mediums through which these 'scientific' discourses can be transported into parents' everyday understandings of their own twins. However, whilst parents may be provided with the specifics of this 'expert' knowledge, the attribution of different degrees of sameness are important features of our common sense understandings of twins – the terms 'identical' and 'non-identical' being part of our everyday language. Although in many respects, non-identical twins can be said to occupy an anomalous position within this classificatory scheme (being twins and being different) the hegemonic dominance of stereotypes of twin sameness works to ensure that this discrepancy is concealed and the distinction between twin and sibling maintained. Indeed, this, as Jenkins points out, is one principle function of stereotypes:

> It is in the nature of stereotypes to emphasise a small number of putative similarities between the stereotyped rather than their infinite array of particularities and differences. Stereotypes are extremely condensed symbols of collective identification (2004: 128).

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[49] Amongst other things, twins have been used to test for genetic components in mental disorders and criminal behaviour (Newman, 1942), as well as to investigate more generally how far particular temperamental aspects of personality are inherited or caused by environmental factors (Buss, et al., 1973; Loehlin and Nichols, 1976).

Hence, the following chapter shows how some parents may not classify their twins as 'twins' because they think they look *too* different and Chapter 4 shows how different-looking twins may become *invisible* twins because they fall outside of the dominant cultural stereotype of twin sameness.

Togetherness

Alongside, and related to, these discourses of twin sameness run notions of twin togetherness. For example, the back cover of Jacqueline Wilson's *Double Act* (1995) tells us that 'Ruby and Garnet are ten-year-old twins. Identical. They do *everything* together ...' Similarly, the opening lines of *The Cherry Twins* state:

> Charlie and Cheryl were cheerful little cherries. Both were full of fun and chatter and were never apart. They were twins you see. They did everything together. They even spoke at the same time (Fisher, 1983: 28).

The use of the world 'little' above helps us to associate their physical togetherness with them also being children. Later we are told that the twins are four years old. However, importantly, it is because they are twins that they spend so much time together. This is what twins do. The fact that they are said to speak at the same time only serves to intensify this image of togetherness. It seems no coincidence, then, to have the twins depicted as cherries who obviously are both physically small and physically joined together by a stem (see figure 9, p. 83). As Moses' (1993) poem *Twins* puts it:

> We're hard to pull apart.
> We stick to each other like glue

Hence, where one goes, the other will follow! Importantly, because we are told that the Cherry Twins are 'never apart' alongside how they are 'full of fun and chatter' we are encouraged to value their togetherness.

This metaphorical representation of 'twins as team' appears within more popular portrayals of twins also. Within the Disney film *Parent Trap* identical twin girls plot to reunite their (divorced) parents. Along the way the twins get up to all sorts of mischief trying to make their father's girlfriend leave him. The woman is powerless to stop their jokes and pranks that in the end result in her leaving. Thus, we do get the impression that twins are 'double trouble'.

In line with these conceptualisations, it is often implied that twins will experience greater difficulty in achieving independence than other children. In her twin study, Burlingham explained, 'in contrast with the normal course of events, our twin children could be observed to develop two early emotional ties at a time when other children establish one tie only; that to the mother' (1952: 53). Similarly one twin parenting guide stated: 'the adolescent twin is faced not just with breaking away from parental control but also with separating from his co-twin' (Cooper, 1997: 273). Thus whilst other children only have to 'separate' from their parents, child twins have to 'separate' from both their parents *and* each other. In this sense, twins represent an intensified version of child 'dependency'.

Parents should encourage their children to become independent:

> Whether they're the same sex or not, allowing twins to go out together can be convenient – surely there is a safety in numbers? This is not always best for their individual development and may inhibit one or both (Cooper, 1997: 277).

Being grown up is a two-way process. It means being given more independence and freedom on the one hand, and more responsibility on the other. Youngsters need to be given responsibility not only for doing some of their own tasks – making their own bed, tidying and cleaning their own room – but also others around the home ... Adolescents need time on their own with their parents (Sandbank, 1988: 142).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, separating from one's twin is often represented as a potentially traumatic event. Koch likens this to the loss of a vital limb:

A more appropriate parallel perhaps for the sudden separation of twins at school since the identicals have typically never been separated from birth, would be the loss of an arm or leg, because, as here, every experience must seem incomplete and strange without the sib as part of it (1966: 138).

Again we get some impression of identical twins representing the epitome of togetherness and interdependence – they have never been separated from birth. Indeed, Sandbank makes this perspective clear: 'some twins, particularly identical twins, may decide that they do not wish to separate and continue to do everything together' (1988: 133). Because, as Taylor suggests, stereotypes function to condense similarities within groups as well as intensifying differences between groups (1981: 84), these notions of twin togetherness (like those of sameness) should be seen as emerging in relation to the normative model of 'siblingship'. Thus whilst twins have each other, a companion of the same age, siblings are singletons and of different ages. So intertwined are notions of twinship and togetherness that 'twins' (rather than brothers, sisters or siblings in general) may be used as metaphors for togetherness. Thus we may talk about 'twin towns', 'twin buggies' 'twin towers' all of which capture the plurality and relatedness of twinship. We may also say that people who spend a lot of time together are 'just like

twins'. Thus one short story by Angela Contino told of how two best friends 'were always together ... like twins' (Contino, 1998: http://www.indiejournal.com/indiejournal/ShortStories/).

Whilst siblings represent the 'normative' model of siblingship, conjoined twins mark the point at which togetherness becomes socially unacceptable. Although in metaphorical terms, (identical) twins may be 'stuck together,' they still carry the possibility and indeed the expectation of future independence. In contrast, by literally embodying physical togetherness, conjoined twins bring no such *hope* of *development* and *progress*. These twins cannot 'split up' from each other at will. Thus the very physicality of their bodies implies a concentrated version of the *natural* interdependency of twinship. Possibly this explains why, in a documentary about their mission to be separated (*Dying to be Apart* BBC1 September 1 2003), Laden and Laleh Bijani were described by the leading surgeon as 'children' despite the fact that they were twenty-nine years old. Conjoined twins may share areas of common sensation and experience divided authorship of action. Indeed, it is because parts of their bodies are joined together that it becomes difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. Contravening dominant Western assumptions that one body contains one autonomous self, these joined bodies *have* to be 'corrected' through potentially life threatening separation operations (Shildrick, 2000; Murray, 2001). Such operations may be considered to be part of a cultural normalisation process whereby the physical bodies of conjoined twins are brought into line with western notions of personhood.

> The issue of surgical intervention and modification is taken as settled in principle, and subject only to technical feasibility, as though there is nothing at stake except an inappropriate body ... The privileging of singularity and autonomy so evident in Western discourse, and the value

accorded to bodily self-determination combine to erase any consideration that there might be other ways of being (Shildrick, 2000: 83).

Media coverage may therefore show how the anomaly of conjoined twinship will be corrected by paying attention to where the twins are joined and *how* they will be separated. For example, figure 11 (below) is a diagram taken from newspaper coverage of the separation operation for Ladan and Laleh Bijani (Shears, 2003).

Figure 11: Rectifying the anomaly of conjoined twinship

THE OPERATION...HOUR BY HOUR
(Singapore times)

■ SATURDAY: Five hours of X-rays map out blood flow in twins' brains. Scans and tests identify alternative blood channels if a bypass is needed.

■ SUNDAY 10am: Twins go into operating theatre. Intravenous lines and monitors checked. Anaesthetic administered.

■ Noon: Two sections of vein removed from Ladan's right thigh.

■ 4pm: Operation finishes. Twins put in support frame for main operation.

■ 8.15pm: Section of scalp of both twins peeled back.

■ 10pm: Neurosurgeons remove strip of bone from both twins to expose

brain and blood vessels. Operation longer than expected as bones were thick and compact, especially where skull had fused.

■ MONDAY 4am: Bypass of finger-thick vein using thigh vein.

■ 4.30pm: Operation is completed.

■ 5pm: Separation of brain begins. Neurosurgeons dissect tissue millimetre by millimetre. Blood circulation became unstable.

■ TUESDAY 1.20pm: Separation at advanced stage. Most of skull bone disconnected.

■ 2pm: As surgery was ending, a lot of blood is lost by both women. Attempts to stabilise condition.

■ 2.30pm: Ladan Bijani dies.

■ 4pm: Laleh dies.

Vein graft from Ladan's leg

Shared vein

To heart   To heart

It shows the fused skulls, the 'shared vein' and the enmeshed, albeit separate, brains but also depicts what the surgeons will do to rectify this anomaly. Thus a dividing line

between the brains is implied through the darker shading so we get some idea of where the two brains will be prized apart. Importantly, we see how anything crossing this darker line (the 'shared vein') will also be severed thus making each of their bodies singular, autonomous and discrete. A new vein will also be added to make both blood supplies complete and fully functional. Hence, the diagram shows the potential for these twins to *become* separate individuals; it provides a pictorial representation of how medical science can potentially 'create' two 'contained' selves. The fact that this operation was called 'operation hope' (Hanlon, 2003: 8-9) points to the ways in which the 'new' separate lives that potentially await conjoined twins are constructed as sources of freedom and liberation. Indeed newspaper coverage of the operation (for example McKie, 2003; Thornton, 2003) drew attention to the achievement of separation alongside the tragedy of the twins' deaths.

It is precisely because these twins exist beyond the boundaries of social acceptability that they bring our cultural values into such sharp focus and show up where these boundaries lie (Dreger, 1998). Hence, as 'monsters' of nature (Shildrick, 2000: 80), they mark the point at which being 'together' is no longer socially acceptable in childhood. Conjoined twins may therefore be positioned in front of identical twins along the continuum of siblingship, marking the point of 'excessive' twinship (see figure 10, p. 87).

Closeness

Since twins are said to spend a great deal of time together, it is possibly no surprise that they are also often constructed as having a close personal relationship with each other. Academic psychological accounts and the more popular accounts offered through

twin parenting guides have much in common in this respect. Koch (1966) operationalised closeness through a variety of indicators (for example, if twins wanted their fellow twin in the same class at school, if they would rather play alone or with their twin) and, in line with the continuum of siblingship discussed earlier (see figure 10, p. 87), concluded that identical twins were closer than fraternals and that, generally speaking, all of the twin pairs were closer than matched singletons. According to Burlingham, twins

> ... fight each other's battles and ally themselves against the rest of the world when they feel themselves threatened or find that they are in danger. They can withdraw from the rest of the world when it is too disagreeable and still have a world of their own (1952: 82).

Similarly in her parenting guide, Case suggests that:

> While fraternal twins do not usually develop the closeness and psychological interdependence that identical twins do, intense bonds do develop and they illustrate the special rapprochement that exists between twins (Case, 1992: 19).

It is this 'private' world which is sometimes linked to language delay in twins. Thus Zazzo (1978) proposed that twins' abilities to read each other's facial expressions and gestures could mean that they had less need to communicate verbally. [50] It is also often linked with the development of an autonomous 'twin language' (or *cryptophasia*) which consists of sounds, words and syntax that are not those of the common language (Zazzo, 1978). The latter is upheld in some twin parenting guides. For example, Sandbank (1988) suggests that twins may develop their own language that is unintelligible to others.

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[50] See Stewart (2000: 104-108) for a review of research on twins and language development.

Case also continues this focus on the 'exotic' beginning her chapter entitled *Parallel Lives* by stating:

> Parallelism and extrasensory perception in the lives of identical twins demonstrate a psychic relationship which is far from being understood (1992: 117).

Returning to one of the children's stories mentioned earlier, in *Reptar's Surprise Visit,* we see (in figure 12 below) that, unlike some of the other characters, different-sex twins Phil and Lil are depicted as sharing one thought bubble implying that they either know what the other is thinking, have the same thought, or actually share their thoughts.

Figure 12: Phil and Lil
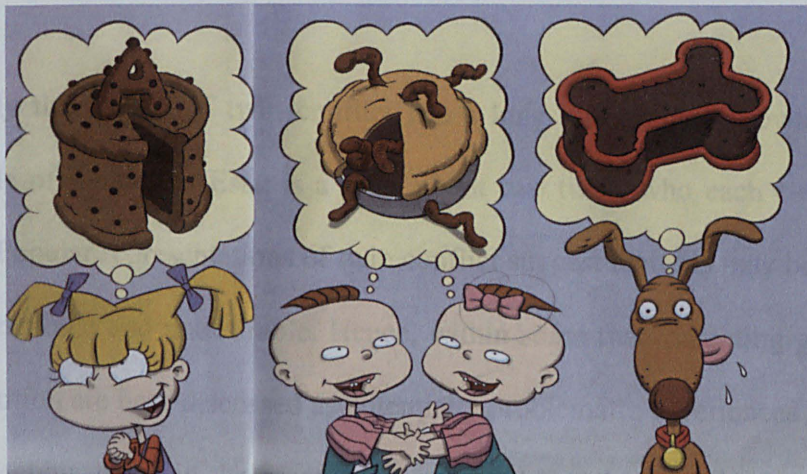
In line with the continuum of siblingship, these notions of psychic and mystical connectedness seem less predominant in psychological accounts of siblingship. Academic research suggests that siblings can develop shared understandings through private jokes and phrases (see Powell and Ogle, 1985). However, whilst this also implies some degree of solidarity, others would understand the language used. Since the

autonomous language of twins involves words no one understands, the nature of their relationship is portrayed as being more exclusive and elusive than the sib relationship.

Alongside these accounts of shared understandings and harmony are placed accounts of sibling rivalry (also well documented in the psychological literature about both twins and sibs). For instance, siblings and twins alike may compete for the attention of their mother, however when age hierarchies are present, older and younger sibs may compete for power, control and specific roles (Newman, 1994). Because, unlike siblings, twins are the same age, Burlingham argues that they cannot claim the 'prerogatives of the elder nor the indulgence usually afforded to the younger' (1952: 53). According to her, twins 'have a more acute rivalry to cope with than is the case for ordinary siblings' (Burlingham, 1952: 87).

Certainly this notion of twin conflict has a long history in our own culture. The Biblical tale of Jacob and Esau is a story about two twins who each compete for the birthright. Popular representations of twin conflict suggest that this may be perceived as both dysfunctional and undesirable. Hence, within some twin parenting guides, rivalry and competition are both discussed as potentially problematic experiences for twins. For example, keeping twins in the same class at school may lead teachers to compare the twins and encourage the twins to compete against each other. However, separating them may lead the twins to experience too heavy an emotional burden being both separated from home and from their fellow twin (Case, 1992: 66, 67). Jealousy between twins is said to be especially intense:

> Jealousy is an emotion that twins probably experience earlier than other children, and for this reason it may be particularly strong (Sandbank, 1988: 36).

Comparisons made between twins are particularly problematic during the school years when twins may be compared for their academic achievements. Comparisons between twins should thus be avoided, as should competitive games and wherever possible twins should be treated as equals. This prevents twins from measuring their own achievements against their fellow twin's (Sandbank, 1988: 93). One author makes the 'negativity' of 'the damaged bond' clear including a section underneath this very heading within a chapter entitled *When Twinship Goes Wrong* (Rosambeau, 1987: 69).

Children's stories about twins show up a similar ambivalence – conveying notions of love and friendship as well as competition and rivalry. In *The Bobbsey Twins in the Country* both sets of twins are described as being close to each other: ' Nan had her friends, as all big girls have, but Bert, her twin brother, was her dearest chum, as Freddie was Flossie's' (Hope, 2002: 5). One's fellow twin is therefore one's closest friend and friends are no substitute for one's twin. Similarly, in *P.S. Wish you Were Here* (Stine, 2000), the main plot describes how Ashley needs the help of her twin sister Mary-Kate, in order to sort out a problem she is having at her school. Ashley constantly tries phoning and emailing her sister but she gets no reply. She grows angry and frustrated, but this only serves to highlight the extent of her reliance on her sister and thus the extent of their closeness. Later on, we find out that the lack of contact is due to an email problem and Ashley's anger resides: 'being mad at each other was so horrible … I was so glad that Mary-Kate and I were friends again. It was the best!' (Stine, 2000: 74). Any sense that the girls may be on bad terms is thus in the end dispelled.

'Darker' representations of love and hate appear in more 'adult' texts. *The Silent Twins* (Wallace, 1987) tells the real-life story of June and Jennifer Gibbons who develop a secret language, detach themselves from the outside world and become

locked within their personal battles to both escape from and reaffirm the extent of their closeness. Willy Russell's *Blood Brothers* (1995) similarly tells a tale of love, jealousy and death. Two twins (Mickey and Eddie) are separated at birth – Eddie staying with his birth mother Mrs Johnstone and Mickey going to live with the middle class cleaner who works for her. Unaware that they are twins, Eddie and Mickey become blood brothers and vow to defend and stand by each other. Since the mothers fear their sons will die if they ever find out they are twins, they strive to keep the twins apart. However, their affection for each other overpowers their mothers' attempts and the brothers continue to see each other. Hence, twin closeness is conveyed as both *natural* and *inevitable*. However, like June and Jennifer, these twins are also jealous of each other. Mickey wishes that he could 'wear clean clothes, talk properly like, do sums and history like' Eddie (1995: 41) whilst Eddie wishes that he could 'Kick a ball and climb a tree like, run around with dirty knees like' Mickey (1995: 42). Later on, Russell focuses his attention on the divisive violence that exists between the twins as adults. Reproducing suspicions that twins find the same people sexually attractive, Eddie asks Mickey's wife to marry him (unaware that she is now already married to his twin brother). Their romance is brief but when Mickey finds out he feels that Eddie – a middle class, well-educated man who, in his eyes, has everything – has taken from him the only good thing in his life. Because their pact of love and loyalty cannot be broken, he shoots Eddie and the police shoot Mickey.

Twin closeness is therefore discursively represented as ambivalent – incorporating love and hate, harmony and conflict. Many aspects of the representations considered above also imply once more that twinship represents a concentrated version of siblingship: sibs are close but twins are *closer*. Indeed, it is the very fact that twins are said to be *so* close that questions are often raised in relation to their abilities to develop

meaningful intimate relationships with a different (romantic) partner. One newspaper article fittingly entitled *The Other Half* makes this clear. The opening sentences declare:

> You've been together for years, shared private jokes, know each other inside out. Then one of you falls in love ... Catherine Jarvie on the trouble with twins (2002: 83).

The trouble, as Jarvie sees it, is that identical twins in particular may find it difficult to keep their twin relationship 'outside' of the 'couple' relationship:

> The dating rules, as non-twins know them, don't always apply. Date a twin and you might just find that one and one equals three (2002: 83).

The very fact that this 'problem' emerges at all signifies the presence of another dominant representation of twin closeness summed up in title of this article: twins as soul mates. Although we may search for our 'true' life companion, someone who understands us perfectly, or as Jarvie puts it, knows us 'inside out', twins (especially identical twins) have already found this 'other half', the person who makes them 'complete'. Because of this, twins are expected to find it difficult to establish a new relationship that excludes their fellow twin. As might be expected, this 'problem' also emerges in twin parenting guides. Thus Sandbank states, 'identical twins who have been very close may find it difficult to walk out of the Secret Garden to find happiness with someone else' (1988: 153). She makes it clear that if twins choose to marry, it is the partner that should come first and the twin that should come second: 'twins need to be aware of their new partner's needs as well as that of their twin. Partners who feel confident that they come first will feel happier about the twin coming second' (1988: 155). In this sense, the intensity of the twin bond has to be moderated to make way for the new romantic partner. Conjoined twins who have not been separated also cause

'concern' for this reason. Unable to leave each other's sides, these twins cannot form relationships with another partner and spatially exclude their fellow twin from it.

Notwithstanding these concerns, twins are not expected to completely give up on being emotionally close. Whilst this has to be modified, it is not absolutely forfeited. Hence, an episode of the TV chat show *Life's Too Short* (BBC1, June 25 2002) dedicated an entire programme to reuniting some quarrelsome *adult* twins. In one case, Emilia and Becky talked of experiencing problems communicating with each other. In a bid to 'mend' the 'broken' relationship the host (Jill McCullough) went about re-uniting the twins: firstly, asking them to complement each other; then to remember a time when they angered each other; and finally, with some semi-structured help from herself, to work through how they should communicate to avoid future arguments and misunderstandings. The very fact that arguing twins feature on a show aimed at solving family *problems* suggests that adult twins are still expected to get along. By the end of the show, it seems that the host has been successful in reaching this ideal; the twins hug and Becky pronounces, 'we can be together as two halves should be'.

The value that we place in twins being close may reflect our cultural valuing of sociality – our ability to establish meaningful social relationships. Embodying the very epitome of closeness, identical twins may come to represent one positive dimension of our 'human essence'. From this perspective, if twins cannot be close, then there is no hope for the rest of us. Identical twins may therefore renew our faith in our capacity to be companionate beings and as such may also become a source of envy. As Farmer puts it, the 'unease, the fascination, the longing, is common to us all' (1996: 331). In this sense, then, our attitudes towards older child (identical-looking) twins may be rather ambivalent. Whilst we want these twins to be individuals (and not twins), we also value

them for their 'mythic' closeness (as twins) that is signified through their identicalness! These twins may therefore cause fear and invite stigma as well as arousing awe and envy.[51]

Twinship as an intensification of the symbol of 'the child'

This analysis has shown that there is considerable overlap between discourses of childhood and twinship. Whilst children are constructed as dependent beings in the process of *becoming* unique persons twins are constructed as interdependent beings who are 'the same'. In this sense, twinship can be seen as another way of being a child. However, because twins are said to be doubly dependent – both on their parents and their fellow twin – and doubly lacking in uniqueness – both because they are young and because they are twins – twins represent a *concentrated* version of the symbol of the child. Like other children, twins are expected to *grow up* and become unique and independent and autonomous adults. However 'Western childhood makes the transition to adulthood problematic' (Allan and Crow, 2001: 37) precisely because, as Jenks (1996) pointed out, childhood and adulthood are defined through their mutual opposition. Twins therefore face a series of contradictions: whilst they are expected to be the same they are expected to *become* different; whilst they are expected to be together and close they are expected to *become* independent.

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[51] This can be seen to reflect our mutual valuing of individuality and sociality. Indeed, the 'rise of individualism' has not meant that we have given up on establishing and appreciating the importance of social relationships. Durkheim ([1893] 1933) acknowledged that a different kind of solidarity (organic) would develop from autonomous contractual relations, rather than there being an absence of social networks altogether. More recently, Giddens (1992) has argued that the autonomous and reflexive individual develops a 'pure' intimate relationship with a romantic partner. In this scenario it is the relationship itself (rather than say the 'institution' of marriage) that counts. Hence, the 'pure' relationship is valued for what it can provide its members, it has to be reflexively worked out and negotiated. Ribbens (1994) has also pointed out that 'the individual' *and* 'the family' constitute two basic western values. According to her, the dual presence of 'individuality' and 'sociality' can be seen within the family where there is a concern to raise children as unique individuals and yet this occurs within a family order ideologically defined through notions of parenting and love relations. Indeed, even the very notion of 'family values' highlights our cultural valuing of sociality.

Conclusion

Discourses of childhood and adulthood, twinship and siblingship thus provide one set of structuring contexts for twins' negotiations of identity. These provide the means though which we come to understand what children and twins are and are not, and importantly, also what we think they *should* become. Epitomised through the stereotype of identical twins, twins are associated with sameness, togetherness and closeness. Lacking in individuality and independence both as children and as twins, child twins represent an intensification of the image of 'the child' and a concentrated version of 'siblingship'. Siblings look different to each other, are of different ages, and, unlike twins, might spend some of their time together and can be close. Twins, as epitomised by identical twins, look the same, are the same age, spend all their time together and are *so* close that they may experience problems forming relationships with other (romantic) partners. Conjoined twins are literally one and the same, their very embodiment joining them together and keeping them close. Whilst singletons provide a 'normative' model of siblingship, conjoined twins draw our attention to the dysfunctional nature of togetherness and represent the point at which twinship becomes socially unacceptable. Contravening the cultural notions of personhood that the singleton child promises to uphold, these twins are stigmatised as 'monsters' and drastic action is often taken to 'split' them up. Throughout the second part of this thesis, we will see how twins utilise this continuum of siblingship in their own negotiations of identity.

As children who are expected to grow up, twins are expected to *become* different, autonomous and independent individuals. The following chapter thus turns to examine the accounts given by the parents in this study to see how far these ideals are played out

in their parenting philosophies and everyday decisions. In doing this, it also continues to

explore the structuring contexts within which children negotiate their identities.

Chapter 3: Families

'Modern childhood tends to be – or is expected to be – familialized in the sense that children are seen to depend on their parents for the basic conditions of their lives. Parents are normally in command of more material, social and other resources than children, and thus in a more powerful position to shape the everyday conditions of child-life. Therefore the expectation is that parents are in fact the main organizers of children's everyday lives (outside school and other formal institutions). Also the predominant ideological normalization of a familial childhood and its parental counterpart – culturally normative motherhood – includes the expectation that mothers are responsible for the general management of their children's lives outside school'

(Alanen, 1998: 37).

Introduction

Children have traditionally been subsumed within the sociological study of the 'family', considered unworthy of study in their own right. However, this thesis rejects this proposition and instead adopts a child-centred approach that emphasises the value of examining children's experiences of childhood and twinship. Here parent-child relations are presented as one structuring context within which ideas and expectations of childhood and twinship are constructed and played out. Attention is given to the ways in which parenting philosophies and specific parenting practices construct childhood and twinship in particular ways. This chapter examines the 'mission statements' that parents make to convey their strategies for 'raising' their twins alongside the more every day decisions they make in relation to dressing their twins, placing them in classes at school, allocating bedrooms within the family home and naming them. Since, as the previous

chapter showed, these types of decisions feature heavily in twin parenting guides, this allows some insight into the ways in which parents draw upon or discount normative notions of 'how to bring up twins'.

Theorising parent-child relations within the family context

Drawing on Bourdieu, the 'family'[52] can be conceptualised as a social 'field' (Bourdieu, 1993). Underpinned by power relations that are defined according to the distribution of various types of 'capital', it represents one social space within which children are encouraged to develop various forms of 'habitus' (May, 1996). Hence, within Western ideologies of family life, (heterosexual) parents (especially the mother) are identified as having direct responsibility for the care, protection and moral education of their offspring. This discourse runs alongside and is justified by a notion of the vulnerable innocent child who is in *need* of adult protection. Reflecting traditional socialisation theorising (discussed in Chapter 3), the child is thus positioned as a passive object. More recent advancements in the sociology and anthropology of childhood have criticised such models of passivity arguing that children play an active part in constituting family life, and indeed, in socialising each other and their parents (for example see Bluebond-Langer, 1978; James, 1993; James and Prout, 1996; James, 1999; Smart, 2001; Smart, 2003). However importantly, alongside this there is also a recognition that adults shape children's lives in certain ways and thus their agency may, in some situations, be constrained (See James and Prout, 1995 for a theoretical consideration of this). Of particular importance here is the issue of adult power – an issue that will re-emerge throughout this chapter. As the previous chapters have already

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[52] This is not to suggest that there is only one kind of family. Sociological research has revealed the many variations in family forms within Western society and deconstructed assumptions relating to the universality of the 'nuclear' family (see Anderson, 1980; Barrett and McIntosh, 1982; Rapoport, et al., 1982; Creighton, 1999). Nor is this to deny the ideological underpinnings of the family. On the contrary, this section begins to show how the 'family order' (Alanen, 1998) is created and defined.

pointed out, within Western society adults are positioned as superior to children (who are defined through their very lack of 'adulthood'). Having reached the eventual goal of personhood, adults have power and control over these future becomings. This 'intergenerational contract' (Mayall, 1994a) therefore positions children and adults as unequal partners. As Alanen notes, parents are 'normally in command of more material, social and other resources than children, and thus in a more powerful position to shape the everyday conditions of child-life' (1998: 3). Returning to Bourdieu, then, we may say that these power relations underpinning the family 'field' are constructed in relation to various forms of 'capital' whether that be economic capital (e.g. money), social capital (access to valuable social relationships), cultural capital (various forms of 'legitimate' knowledge) or symbolic capital (prestige and status) (Jenkins, 1992: 85).

The everyday decisions that parents make about and for their children constitute part of the 'family habitus' (Tomanovic, 2004) that structures children's everyday lives. Hence, we will see that in deciding how to dress their twins, how to allocate bedroom space, and whether or not to place their twins together or apart at school, parents 'provide children with various resources and ways of using them' (Tomanovic, 2004: 343) and thus encourage particular embodied ways of being. These everyday decisions are conceptualised as parenting 'practices' because they only exist inasmuch as they are acted out (Morgan, 1996). Moreover, although this chapter focuses on parents' explanations for their actions, some of these decisions may be momentarily enacted without much conscious deliberation. Bourdieu's (1977) notion of practice acknowledges this.

Mission statements

Parents of twins talked of their strategies for bringing up their twins, and thus identified themselves as key socialising agents. Reflecting messages conveyed through twin parenting guides, at the heart of this lay a concern to treat their children as 'individuals'. For example, Mike explained that he and his wife had always 'tried to keep them as individuals' and similarly Pam told me that her adult twins 'were treated as individuals all the way through'. Because, as Chapter 2 pointed out, child twins potentially lack personhood both as children *and* as twins, these concerns to emphasise individuality may be even more potent for parents of child twins.

Indeed parents of twins saw their twins as unique beings and sometimes drew a distinction between *their* own twins and other twins to illustrate this. According to these parents, 'twins' were expected to be 'permanently and always the same' (Stuart), 'do everything the same way and react the same way' (Clare). Twins were 'identical'. 'Like two out of the same pod' (Allison). Reflecting the continuum of twinship outlined in the previous chapter, identical twins were thus positioned as representing all twins – symbolising the very epitome of twinship. Indeed the overlap between these notions of 'twinship' and the parents' constructions of identical twinship make this especially evident. Identical twins 'don't have any individualities' (Caroline) – a sentiment reflected in Jenny's fear that identical twins would be seen 'as more of a unit'. Mike said, 'the beauty of our two is they're not identical and they have completely different characters really' implying the lack of such difference in identical twins. Like Mike, Caroline, Anthony and Jenny spoke of their relief at having non-identical twins and this further highlights the cultural valuing of individuality and the potential threat identical twinship poses to achieving this ideal.

As some of these utterances imply, many parents resisted incorporating these ideas into their own definitions of their own twin children. For example, both Caroline and Lindsey described their same-sex twins as being like 'chalk and cheese' implying opposition, antagonism and incompatibility. Anthony adopted a different approach drawing on family resemblances to re-twin one of his own twin sons (Harry and Ash).

Anthony	Harry's the double of me and my Dad. If I showed you some of the photos of my Dad, you'd say it were our Harry dressed in old clothes.
Kate	Oh right.
Anthony	Wunt you?
Clare	Yeah.
Anthony	Cos me, my Dad and our Harry are like peas in a pod. Yet Ash has took after her side. But that's a good thing really as well. Some of her family is carried on and some of my family is.

Through claiming Harry as his (and his father's) 'double' and locating all three of them in the same 'pod' Anthony symbolically 'splits up' the twinship between Harry and Ash and effectively re-twins Harry. Located on different 'sides' of the family, Harry and Ash are now constructed as potentially antagonistic and conflictual opposites who are symbolically set apart from each other. By drawing on physical difference, Anthony is thus able to emphasise the distinctiveness of each of his twins.

Certainly, bodily difference was a resource that parents of non-identical twins sometimes exploited to actively construct their children as 'individuals'. For instance, Caroline, who sometimes named her twins 'the taller one' and 'the smaller one', literally presented her twins to me – asking them to stand up in front of me so that I

could view this difference. Allison went further in her accentuation of difference, arguing that it was difficult to see her sons as 'twins' at all:

> **Allison** I suppose I never think of them as twins. Brothers, but not as a twin. I don't know why. Whether or not it's because they don't look alike at all, they don't act the same at all. You know, one's dark, the other's quite fair. I just think of them as, as two brothers really, not a twin.

Drawing on the continuum of siblingship outlined in the previous chapter, she thus redefines her twins as two *different-looking* brothers rather than as *one (same-looking)* twin unit. Even parents of different sex twins, do not take this aspect of difference for granted. Jenny, mother of three-year-old different-sex twins said that her twins were 'very different in looks and in temperament as well' and similarly Janet explained that 'Olivia had a much rounder face than Adam'. The body therefore takes on significance precisely because it is an effective marker of distinctiveness and can serve to distance *their* twins from other (identical) twins.

Given this, it is not surprising that personality and character differences took on added force for parents of identical twins who had to assert their children's individuality quite literally in the face of sameness. Thus, during the introductory meeting, mum Sue told me: 'whilst they look the same they are very different'. Describing these differences during the interview dad Stuart explained that Emma was 'not afraid to talk back' and 'stands her ground' whilst Sue said that Ruth was 'more reserved'. Sue then condensed and simplified this distinction through applying character labels to each twin: 'Soppy Ruth' was thus compared with her sister 'Miss hard as nails'. Such simplifying strategies help to crystallise distinctions between twins and, in this example, serve to

assert the individuality of those very twins who – through their embodiment of physical sameness – are at most risk of being cast off as 'failed' individuals. Yet, although these parents of identical and non-identical twins want to present their children as 'individuals', paradoxically, it is in denouncing twins' assumed double lack of individuality (both as children and twins) that they reconfirm their children's status as twins: people who need extra help in claiming individuality.

Alongside and related to this valuing of uniqueness, parents also drew attention to the importance of encouraging independence and autonomy in their children. This gradual progression towards independence was considered to be a natural part of 'growing up'. For example, Anthony and Clare constructed their 8-year-old twins as 'natural innocents' (Ribbens, 1994: 148) but did not expect them to stay this way forever. At present, they said they were 'keeping them in like a little cocoon' (Clare). Amongst other things, this involved censoring television programmes and (video) films so that they were not exposed to 'too much swearing' (Anthony). According to Anthony, 'where sex and swearing come in, you know, they're not at an age group where they can take that on board'. Being in the 'early stages' of development, these children are deemed *incapable* of dealing with this scenario. Hence, from Anthony's point of view, monitoring and restricting access would stop them facing a situation they 'could not deal with' and prevent them from becoming more 'knowing'. Clare and Anthony wanted to preserve this innocence for as long as possible:

| Clare | Well our idea is that we try and keep 'em as young and innocent as we can. |
| Anthony | When they need to know about things like that we'll tell 'em, it's as simple as that. You know, when they need to know about such things, we'll tell 'em. |

However, the dependency that this protection brought would have to be shaken when they got older as they both explained:

Clare	Cos you say, 'sixteenth birthday, blow candles off o' cake' and that's it.
Anthony	'You're gone!'
Clare	'You're out!'

Within Western 'normative timetables'[53] (Finch, 1987: 163) of growing up, this movement away from the family home marks the passage to adulthood (Allan and Crow, 2001). However, as Chapter 2 noted, this has two implications for twins: twins should become independent of their parents *and* each other.

Pam I know you're twins and I know you've got this bond between you and all the rest of it, but I do think you're individuals at the end of the day. It is good to mix with different people. If you're together all the way through, and you've got one circle of friends that you both share, I don't think it's healthy – not for relationships. I mean at some point, you're going to have to go your own separate way in life, you're going to get married and you're going to have your own families. So you know, the sooner you sort of get used to leading your own way of life- Because obviously the longer it goes on you're together, the further down the line it gets, it'll be harder to make that split.

Such mission statements therefore mobilise and combine cultural notions of twin togetherness and child dependency with cultural expectations of adult independence.

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[53] These set out normative ideas about the 'right age' / time to do things – in this instance, to leave home and start a family of one's own.

Like Pam, many of the parents were keen to express their commitment to this ideal of 'independence' by saying that their children were working towards or had already achieved this goal. However, importantly, parents of older twins emphasised this to a greater degree. Clare, mother of eight-year-old twins, emphasised the value of togetherness over and above independence:

> **Clare**   Yeah, they can mix socially and everything but they do like to be wi one another, and like when our Harry goes to my brother's and if he's been away too long, they miss one another. They'll say ... and vice versa if Ash has gone.

Although she qualifies that her children are able to 'mix socially' and thus that they are not overly reliant on each other, her emphasis lies on how her twins like to spend time together. Characterised as a period of dependency and lack of personhood, childhood offers these young twins the opportunity to be physically together (and to *be* 'twins' in this sense) without being stigmatised as failed individuals. Indeed parents value the companionship that their young children offer each other in play. Jenny, mother of three-year-old twins, told me that 'they'll always have someone to play with. I think that's a big advantage to being a twin'. The implication is that twinship lasts for as long as play does. Through being conceived as a 'childhood' and 'childish' activity, play once again locates 'being a twin' within the social space of childhood.

In line with this, parents of older twins placed more emphasis on how their children were moving away from this physical togetherness and becoming more independent:

> **Janet**   [...] I think it's a good thing that they don't actually rely on each other to such an extent that they have to really cling on. You know,

they can go off for their various days out without the other one,

although the other one might miss, but erm... It would be terrible if

they depended so much on each other, they couldn't do anything.

In contrast to Clare, however, Janet – mother of 16-year-old twins – emphasised how her twins spent time apart and could act independently. Even though they may still miss the companionship offered by their childhood togetherness (and may still be close as twins in this respect) they were, above everything, independent individuals.

Thus far then, it seems that, in line with the advice given out in twin parenting guides, parents are keen to help their children become unique and independent 'individuals'. In this sense, they might provide an enabling context for twins to construct themselves as 'individuals'. However, as we will now see, these philosophies do not necessarily always form the basis for the more every day decisions they make about their own twins.

Making decisions[54]

Dress

Dress is one medium through which identity is constructed, expressed and conveyed (Barnes and Eicher, 1992). In making decisions about how to dress their twins, parents

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[54] The parents who were interviewed each gave their accounts from particular standpoints. For instance, whilst some had very young child twins and were contemplating the decisions they would be making in the future, others were the parents of adult twins and were speaking retrospectively about the decisions they had already made. All the parents of twins were asked to explain their points of view and think about if anything would or had changed over time. Although most of the parental interviews involved mothers and fathers, commonly it was the mother of the twins that communicated most information regarding these decisions which, whilst possibly being a response to my own gendered embodiment as a woman, might also be said to reflect the dominant cultural understanding of 'mothers' as carers of children (Mayall, 1994; Valentine, 1997).

communicate scripts of identity on behalf of their children and variously play up and play down their children's identities as twins. Although parents emphasised the importance of treating their children as unique 'individuals', most explained that at various points, they (commonly the mother) had chosen to dress their children in identical or similar clothes. This was the case for Allison, Clare and Caroline who had dressed their same-sex-non-identical twins in identical clothes as babies and (for Clare and Caroline) as children also. Some parents highlighted how this compromised their 'mission' to assert individuality on behalf of their children. Commenting on his wife's decision to dress their children in identical clothes, Anthony argued:

Anthony   Well they're individuals aren't they. They shunt really have same, you know, why try and make 'em same.

For Anthony, such parenting practices are inappropriate because they present his children *as if* they were not individuals at all. Clare seems aware of this: 'I suppose that's not giving them, they're not individuals'. However, at eight years old, her sons Ash and Harry are still dressed in identical clothes. This highlights the decision-making power invested in the mother – a point that will be taken up later on in this chapter.

In slight contrast, Sue – mother of identical-looking twins – and Pam – mother of adult identical twins – both explained how they had dressed their children in different coloured (albeit the same type) outfits. Interestingly Pam says she chose different colours to 'give them their own identity'. The beginning of this individuality is therefore actively 'achieved' through dressing their children in different coloured identically styled clothes.

Parents of different-sex-twins also said that they had dressed their children in similar clothes. For instance, Jonathan told me, 'we did [...] dress them alike up to about the age of 2 ½ yrs'. Similarly Janet said:

Janet   ... when they were really tiny [...] they had some snowmen sleeping suits which, if one had one [...] I had to buy the other one because they were both so nice'.

Whilst Jenny also explained that she had dressed her different-sex twins in gender-stereotyped colours (thereby signalling the sex differences that may not be directly obvious) this practice was not *always* undertaken: 'I liked to see them dressed in the same things, or sometimes have one in pink and one in blue'. Indeed, she implied that, in contrast to toddler clothes, baby clothes could be interchangeable: 'I would never consciously consider their clothes interchangeable [now as toddlers]. We've got past that stage I think'. The developmental model of child 'growth' is obvious here both in the language used (mention of 'stages' reflecting the stronghold of developmental psychology) and in the story being told; babies are non-persons who develop into (more distinct) gendered 'persons in the making'. As Ribbens notes, 'there is a common tendency for babies to be described as not quite 'human'' (1994: 56). In babyhood therefore, expressions of gender difference do not necessarily have to be communicated by parents. In these instances, expressions of 'twin identity' can override gender differences. This is further implied by the iconography of 'new baby' greetings cards for parents of twins which, in contrast to singleton babies, make little if any mention of the sex of the babies preferring to focus on congratulating parents on the birth of their 'twins'.

When children become toddlers, it seems that gender becomes too physically evident to be ignored; parents emphasise that gender difference has to be acknowledged. Thus Janet said, 'you can't dress them the same anyway because they are a boy and a girl'. Individuality, so it seems, has materialised through the very physicality of the body. This is why, to paraphrase Jenny, it is *obvious* that 'you can't put them in the same outfits'. In this sense then, adult mothers 'act as purveyors of culture by providing gender-symbolic dress that encourages others to attribute masculine or feminine gender and to act on the basis of these attributions when interacting with the child' (Eicher and Roach-Higgins, 1992: 17). However, this does not mean that expressions of sameness are completely abandoned:

> **Jenny** ·   As they got to be toddlers, I used to go to Safeways down the road.
> They have a good range of toddler clothes. I could spend a fortune
> there. They tended to have boy and girl versions of the same thing.
> Like they would have orange cord dungarees and an orange cord sort
> of pinafore dress.

Jenny modifies expressions of sameness and instead presents her children as two 'similar' peas out of 'the same pod'. By dressing them in the same style and colour of clothing she symbolically connects them to each other and thus actively marks them out as one dyadic unit. Alongside this, the 'pinafore dress' and 'dungarees' serve to signal gender differences.

Same-sex non-identical twins may therefore remain dressed in identical outfits in childhood because there is no sex-difference to signal through gendered clothing. No compromise has to be made; these twins can be dressed as twins whilst still being dressed as boys or girls. In contrast, this period of identicalness may be cut short for

different-sex twins whose 'emergent' gendered identities are seen to demand acknowledgement past babyhood. However the 'ideal' of twin sameness may be modified rather than abandoned. Being most at risk of conveying a lack of potential for individuality, identical twins are dressed in different coloured outfits to 'create' some expression of uniqueness amidst sameness.

But why do most parents initially choose to dress their young children in similar or identical outfits and do they envisage a time when their children will dress differently? Many mothers emphasised the practical basis of their decisions to dress their twins in identical or similar clothes. Allison told me it was easier to buy two at the same time 'because it was too hard work to start traipsing around the shops' whilst Jenny told me that 'it was an awful lot easier to keep an eye on the pair of them outside because they were both wearing the same things'. However, notwithstanding these points, many still said that they *liked* to see their children looking similar to each other. For example Jenny reluctantly said, 'I suppose I liked to see them in the same things' and likewise Clare told me, 'I just like to see 'em in [the] same clothes'. Indeed, there is a great deal of 'social capital' (Bourdieu, 1986) to be gained from publicly presenting child twins in identical or very similar clothes. Parents may gain access to a variety of different social contacts, or opportunities for social interaction. Many parents explained how passers-by would often stop them in the street and ask them questions about their children:

Jenny   'Ooo are they twins?' they say. I say, 'yeah'. 'Are they identical?'
               [...] They're fine. I like it. I mean when they were babies they got
               lots of nice comments.

Anthony   When they were babies, obviously you've got two and you can see
               they're [the] same age. You used to get people saying, 'oh I'd have

loved to have had twins'.

Allison   Yeah I suppose if we were out, people would maybe ask if they were twins, won't they? *[To her husband Mike]* Because they were dressed the same.

Being recognised as twins, these children attract welcomed attention to their parents. As Jenny put it, 'you feel as if you get a lot of special notice taken of you'. Indeed, like Jenny, many parents said they felt 'special'. Clare said, 'I think we're privileged to have twins' and similarly Malcolm said, 'we're lucky to have something special'. These feelings of 'specialness' simultaneously set them apart from other parents whilst reaffirming their identification with fellow parents of twins:

Jenny   [...] You do bump into lots of other people with twins when you're out. It's like there's some special bond there [...] It's nice.

Parents may spend time and money preparing their children for public presentation:

Malcolm   We actually, well you actually spent a lot of money on clothes to make them look nice. [...] Pam always liked to have them looking pretty. And they did. They looked gorgeous. And everywhere we went we always got good comments about them. And of course people are curious. They've got curiosity when they see twins when they're dressed nice and they look identical. People are very curious and they want to look at it.

So what is it about being a twin that allows them to attribute their parents with this 'special' status? At the root of this lies the cultural valuing of two, which emerges from

and in response to the ambivalence that twins cause through being born at the same time. Turner (1969: 45) argues that wherever kinship is structurally significant – providing the basis for social status and the frame for social relationships – the event of twin birth is a source of 'classificatory embarrassment'. The event of two being born at once disrupts notions of seniority, birth order and related kinship roles:

> There is a classificatory assumption that human beings bear only one child at a time and that there is only one slot for them to occupy in the various groups articulated by kinship which that one child enters by birth (Turner, 1969: 49).

Remedies are sought through either getting rid of the classificatory embarrassment or by dealing with it in some way; in Turner's words we have to either 'make what falls outside the norm a matter of concern for the widest recognised group or to destroy the exceptional phenomenon. In the former case, the anomalous may be sacralized, regarded as 'holy' (Turner, 1969: 49).

In British society twins (especially child twins) are made sacred – that is, they are set apart as special and valued for being two. This is expressed through jokes about the father's increased fertility and comments about the 'cleverness' of parents forming two rather than one. Malcolm spoke of the reactions he got from some of his work colleagues: 'oh they were real happy – slapping me on the back and shaking my hand and congratulating me'. Allison also explained the reaction she got from the wife of a surgeon:

Allison   His wife said to me, 'did you think that you were somebody special when you'd had twins and you were very clever?' I said, 'oh no'.

> She said, 'oh you want to think that cos-' [...] 'How clever, you
> know, to have, for your body to have two in one go'.

Our cultural constructions of twinship provide the lenses through which we come to see and understand what this twoness means and thus how twins are different to other people. Expressions of sameness are permitted when children are young because childhood itself is, as we saw in Chapter 2, defined as a period of training and *becoming*. Firmly positioned within this institution, these children are socially endorsed (by adults), indeed encouraged, to temporarily discard the pursuit of physical expressions of individuality in favour of being 'twins'. Identical-looking young child bodies therefore constitute a form of 'physical capital'[55] (Shilling, 1993) that can be used to help parents obtain social status (symbolic capital) and broaden out their social networks (social capital). By dressing their twins in identical, or similar clothes, parents map cultural meanings of twinship onto their children's bodies, train others how to 'see' them and encourage a (positive) response.

However parents did see a time when this sameness would stop. Clare, mother of eight-year-old twins told me,

> **Clare**   I just like to see 'em in [the] same clothes. I suppose as they get
>   older they will change.

For most parents, this transition from sameness to difference only came/ would come when children actively objected to being dressed the same – as Clare said, 'until they say, 'oh I'm not wearing what he's wearing', I'll continue to do it'. Implicit in this

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[55] The body may possess value and status that will help it to accumulate other forms of capital (Shilling, 1993: 127).

statement is the assumption that, at present, her children are too young to have opinions - an assumption that is given more explicit voicing by Jenny:

> Jenny   When they're older, they'll be able to make more choices about what
>   they want to wear. I would never ever say, 'oh you're wearing this'
>   or try to dress them the same if they weren't interested.

However in choosing to dress their children the same, Jenny and Clare both assume that their children would 'be interested' or would have agreed with their choice. Children can only opt out of this 'agreement' and this active objection can only take place when their children are old enough, or to be more correct, competent enough, to make their own choices and act as autonomous individuals. Thus, whilst the decision to dress children the same is based upon a notion of child incompetence, the forthcoming decision to dress differently, will be taken by the children themselves and is based upon an assumption of the child's emergent ability to make self determined choices. A full consideration of parental power will be given towards the end of this chapter.

Thus far it is clear that parents have a role to play in shaping one important signifier of identity: dress. As external others, parents impress particular versions of identity onto their children's bodies and, through such actions, potentially shape other people's attitudes towards their children. Parents therefore have an important role to play in the 'internal-external dialectic' (Jenkins, 2004: 49) of identity construction. Since young children who look like twins may be a source of social capital, parental 'missions' to emphasise uniqueness may be overridden by a concern to emphasise 'twin' identity. Through dressing their twins in similar or the same clothes, parents of young twins play up their children's 'twin' identity to varying degrees and, through these actions, reproduce and modify cultural constructions of twinship. The story changes, however,

as children get older and are expected to be moving towards adulthood and thus to be emerging as unique individuals. In line with developmental understandings of child competence, these children are now given more opportunity to choose their own clothes. In this sense, older children may have a greater degree of agency in presenting their own selves and also in re-negotiating the identities that have already been initially drawn out by their parents. This part of the story is taken up in Chapter 4.

Bedrooms

In addition to presenting their children's bodies in certain ways, parents also have a role to play in shaping the spatial contexts within which these bodies act and move. Two of these contexts are discussed here. Parents' decisions about allocating bedrooms provide a glimpse into how they shape one space within the family home and their decisions about placing their children in classes at school provide an insight into how they shape one dimension of children's space outside the home. In both contexts, we see how parenting philosophies relating to the importance of independence are activated and moderated.

Bedroom space constitutes one important finite household resource that can be used by children to construct and negotiate their identities (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002). The ways in which parents allocate bedrooms, together with the ways in which they 'create' and define this physical space, structure the context within which this process takes place. All of the parents had originally decided to place their twin babies together in one room. Most said that they did not have enough space to place them in different

rooms. However this reflects the significance they attributed to distinctions of birth order, age and gender.[56]

Twins with older siblings had to fit in around their already resident brother(s) and/or sisters(s). Thus Ruth and Emma were placed in a different room to their older brother John, and Andrea and Rebecca were placed apart from their older brother Jeremy. Such decisions could thus reveal the value (and privileges) attributed to the firstborn child and/or point towards the parents' reluctance to 'disturb' social hierarchies of age when the new twins were born. Certainly, fears that the firstborn's 'development' may be negatively effected by the birth of the second born sibling/s (for example through expressions of jealousy and conflict) are well documented in the psychological literature (see Dunn, et al., 1981; Dunn, 2000) and form part of our cultural understanding of the significance of birth order.[57]

Related to this, some parents decided to keep their twins apart from their fellow sibs due to the age differences between them. This was the case for Caroline who explained that she had placed her twins in a different room to her younger daughter 'because of the age gap'. Parents held two slightly different conceptualisations of age. Age was frequently conceptualised in developmental terms. For example, Mike said, that twins were 'easier than having [...] one and then another say two years older because they're then at different stages' and Sue explained that her twins 'go through the same stages together'. Thus, following the Piagetian tradition, age indicates a particular stage of child *development* and as such positions similarly aged children into one universal category along the *progression* towards adulthood. In line with this, Caroline suggested

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[56] Although each will be considered in turn here, these have to be considered alongside each other.
[57] For example, the Biblical tale of Cain and Abel tells of how Cain – the firstborn brother – kills his younger brother Abel when God favours his younger brother's sacrifice over his own.

that it was inappropriate for Charlotte or Hannah to share a room with their younger sister Ellie because this would mean that 'boyfriends' would be in the same room as 'dolls'. This developmental model of 'ages and stages' was sometimes modified, though, through conceptualisations of how different *generations* of children had different interests and tastes. Thus Mike also said that 'each age group has things that are the hip things doesn't it' and similarly Anthony said that if his twins Ash and Harry had an older sibling, 'there'd be differences in what their tastes are [...] and their interests'. These notions of age therefore run alongside notions of birth order so that twins, being born at the same time, are of the same age, and have the same interests. This lies in contrast to other singleton siblings, who will be of different ages, have different interests and have different positions within the birth order hierarchy. Notions of age therefore not only differentiate between particular children within the category 'children' but, importantly, in doing this, also draw out distinctions between singleton children and twin children. In locating twins in different rooms to their older or younger siblings, parents give physical expression to the classificatory distinction between siblings and twins and thus communicate and map out these lines of commonality and difference. We therefore see how the organisation of space may emerge from social relations (Massey, 1994). However, through actively constituting twin togetherness parents place their twins within a spatial environment that reflects one key defining feature of twinship and quite literally makes room for their children to embody twin togetherness and *be* 'twins'. We therefore also see the potential for space to shape social relations (Massey, 1994).

Just how far parents were willing to provide space for their children to be 'twins' also depended, however, upon where their twins were situated within the life course and related to this, the extent to which parents thought it necessary to provide space for

them as 'individuals'. Child twins were always kept together regardless of whether there was 'space' for them to be placed in two different rooms. This expression of togetherness was seen to be an important part of twin childhood and something that should not be interfered with. For example, Jenny said, 'they seem to enjoy being together. We haven't actually thought about giving them separate bedrooms'. Although Jenny encourages her children to be independent of each other in other aspects of their lives ('Louise will go out for a trip with daddy to the supermarket and Dom will stay with me, out in the garden') she reserves the bedroom as a space for her twins to enjoy being together. Importantly, this was often conceptualised by parents as a 'shared' space implying joint ownership and the absence of a clear-cut distinction between the two twins. Some parents helped to define this space as a shared space by locating 'shared' objects within it. Hence, Sue bought her twins one TV because it was impractical to place two in the one room.

However parents do acknowledge or activate their desire to encourage independence by 'splitting their children up' and placing them in 'separate' rooms when they are older. Indeed, just as parents expected difference to replace similarity and sameness, so independence and apartness are expected to replace this expression of togetherness. The separate 'single' room, as we will discuss in more detail in Chapter 5, 'is not only a private spatial sphere made possible by increasing family affluence: it is also a private symbolic sphere, underlining the child's position as an individual and a personality' (Frones, 1994: 154). Although she did not have the space to accommodate splitting her 13-year-old twins up, Sue said 'I'd separate them if I could'. Having the space available to do so, Mike explained how he 'split their rooms up' in order 'to give them some space to be able to do their studies'. Even Jenny, whose children were presently together in one room, foresaw a time in the future when her children would 'want'

'separate' rooms: ' I think certainly by the time they're nine or ten, they'll probably want to have separate bedrooms anyway'. Implicit is the suggestion that twins *naturally* progress from togetherness to apartness; increasing age brings the desire for separation. Through utilising a developmental model of child growth, Jenny's comments further highlight how children are seen to 'grow out' of some aspects of twinship. Indeed, as Mike explained, 'life's not going to continue with [them] together'. Certainly life is not supposed to continue with twins sharing a room. On the contrary, twins are expected to move into 'separate' rooms so that they can be re-twinned with a romantic partner and share a room with them instead!

As we have already seen, gender constitutes an important signifier of individuality and as such, may mean that different-sex twins are expected to 'separate' earlier on than same-sex twins. Certainly it seems that the same-sex twins in this study were together in the 'shared' room for longer periods of time, some until they left home. Fears of incest (Fox, 1934) may also make this decision more urgent for different-sex twins who are already part of different-sex partnerships. These twins therefore have the potential to realise, what is still deemed to be, a natural expression of sexuality. This fear may be intensified when different-sex twins become adolescents, since this, as Sue also explained when describing her own children, is characterised as a period of life governed by the controlling power of 'hormones'. Different-sex twins who stay together for *too* long may therefore find that they are the source of ridicule and social stigma. Still sharing a room with her brother at age 16, Olivia identifies the social unease that this creates:

Olivia   Our friends laugh and get really weird when we say we share a room.

Fears of incest set the limits of twin closeness and through attributing social stigma, remind twins of the increasing need to turn away from each other towards external others. In short, this cultural taboo reaffirms the necessity for twin 'separation'. Certainly, Olivia's father David recognised the social 'appropriateness' of different-sex twins being apart:

> **David**   More significantly, wasn't it that we thought Olivia ought to go into her own room and she couldn't sleep so she had to come back in her big room.

Although David and his wife Janet made attempts at 'splitting' their twin children up, to avoid causing Olivia distress, they decided to place them back together again.

In deciding who is present and absent from the bedroom space, parents give their twins varying degrees of 'immediate' access to their fellow twins and siblings and present them with different 'human resources' that can be used during social interaction to construct identity within this particular space. Chapter 5 therefore examines how twins utilise each other to map out their identities within their bedroom space. Alongside this, they also shape the physical landscape of this environment. On a mundane level, parents provide their children with vital elements of bedroom furniture such as beds, wardrobes and shelves, all of which, as we will see in Chapter 5, may be drawn upon by twins and utilised as props to negotiate identity.

In sum, parents' decisions about allocating rooms communicate messages of identity by signalling differences between siblings and twins, the significance of gender and life course positions. Importantly, in placing their twins together or apart parents provide

their children with various spatial contexts within and through which to negotiate their identities.

Classes

Children spend a large part of their time at school, an institution which is grounded in developmental notions of age-related academic difference. Being the same age, twins are likely to enter the school setting at the same time and, depending on school policy, parents may or may not be given the opportunity to place them together or apart. Later on, when children move 'up' to secondary school, parents may also make decisions about whether to place their children in the same form (tutor) group. Such decisions potentially structure the social settings within which twins identify themselves and are identified by others.

Commonly parents chose, or wanted to place their children together in primary school. Indeed, reflecting the earlier conclusions raised in relation to decisions about rooms, some implied that this was a *natural* state of twin childhood and as such, something that should not be obstructed:

> Pam   I said 'don't split them, let them decide' because obviously at that stage, you don't know how they're going to develop. And I think for starting school, up to that point, they'd always been together and I didn't want to make the decision to split them at that early stage because it might have affected them, you know, through their school.

I asked Jenny why she would ideally like her twins to stay together:

Jenny   [...] The only reason I can think of is that they've always been together. Ok, they've not been together in the same room doing the same things all of the time, but to start not seeing each other for most of the day, five days a week, is a big step really isn't it?

To return to one common twin motif presented in the previous chapter, 'twins go together'. Togetherness has to be opted out of rather than opted into. Since twins have 'always been together' this is presented as a natural state of twinship and set in opposition to the unnatural (dysfunctional) effects which could be caused by 'separation'. The biological events of twin conception and twin birth only serve to reaffirm the naturalness of this togetherness. However, whilst children should be allowed to indulge in physical togetherness this should be moderated if it becomes apparent that children are becoming overly reliant on each other. Hence, Sue moved Emma and Ruth into different classes because they weren't making friends, whilst Caroline opted for different classes because the 'smaller twin' was 'always following the bigger one around'. Too much physical togetherness is therefore deemed to be suffocating and efforts are made to moderate this to ensure that twins do not lose their capacity for independence. When explaining why they would prefer their twins to be in different classes, Anthony and Clare outlined some of the potential opportunities that this 'separation' could offer:

Clare   [...] They'd probably be doing different things and have different interests. Erm... I think that's about it. But so they wouldn't be in each other's company for twenty-four-seven, that type of thing. So they'd have space and be able to develop theirselves as individual.

Anthony   So [Ash] can develop his own friends, do you know what I mean?

That's probably my theory behind- I'd like 'em in different classes.

They can develop their own group of friends.

As we saw in the previous discussion of bedrooms, this separation is seen to offer child twins the space to *develop* as individuals. They can develop as distinct persons through getting different interests and mixing with different friendship groups. Alongside this, they can develop their capacity for independence by experiencing being without each other. Clearly these narratives reflect a conceptualisation of emergent individuality and independence and thus position each child within a state of *becoming*. This 'separation' is presented as being both progressive and beneficial – solving the problem of over-reliance and resultant lack of opportunity to *develop* as 'individuals'.

Twins were also removed from this state of togetherness if their academic achievements were diverging. Behind this decision lie concerns to both avoid placing twins in competition with each other and defining one twin as 'better' than the other. With regard to the latter, there is also some attempt to deny sameness. Thus, Mike explained how he had put his children in different classes because the teachers 'put them against each other' and because he and his wife Allison did not want either twin to feel inferior:

Kate	You said they're in different classes at school?
Allison	Yeah.
Kate	Was that your choice then?
Allison	Yeah it was.
Mike	Yeah.
Kate	Why did you choose that then?
Mike	Because we didn't want them measuring themselves against each

other.

Kate	Mmm.
Mike	We just felt that was very important really because you know, they can be- They're at a good school, they have to be academically pretty good to be there. But if they're constantly thinking, 'I'm not doing as well as my brother' you know, it's a bit horrible really. So we stopped that.

Parents wanted their children to see themselves as equal individuals rather than interpret these differences as evidence of superiority or inferiority. Indeed, parents that compared their children and positioned them hierarchically according to their achievements sometimes expressed remorse at this practice:

Clare	I know sometimes that we do, we do compare them to one another don't we?
Anthony	Hmm.
Clare	And I know that we get cross with one another don't we?
Anthony	Mmm.
Clare	'Oh you should be doing this' 'Harry's- You should be doing-' ... 'Look what Ash can do' and we think, that's not right because-
Anthony	They're individuals.
Clare	*[Continuing]* Everybody's got a weakness and everybody excels at something, and so, we try, don't we? *[To Anthony]* We try not to do it.

Encouraging twins to be equally different rather than differently equal is here presented as 'good' parenting practice. Parents should respect their children as unique persons without judging them and showing preference for one over the other. There should be no favouritism. This sentiment is reflected in parents' keenness to stress how they *do*

treat their children equally. As Jonathan wrote, 'I've purposely ensured that equal time/money/love (not necessarily in that order) have been given to my children' and similarly Mike said, 'we're always conscious of making sure, if we spend some money on one, we spend the same amount on the other'. Whilst the appropriateness of fostering this equality reflects cultural knowledge transported through the 'expert systems' (Giddens, 1991: 18) of twin parenting guides, this also has to be seen as reflecting the wider cultural valuing of the 'individual'. Within Western society the individual is a person with individual rights who, through the process of individuation also becomes an individuated citizen entitled to equal treatment in terms of health, welfare and education (Turner, 1986).[58] Parents of twins may therefore be no different to other parents in wanting to present their children as equals. Indeed, research suggests that this is the case (Allatt and Yeandle, 1986; Finch and Mason, 1993). It was due to these concerns that many of the parents said their twins had already been 'split up' prior to reaching secondary school. In some cases, parents chose to continue to separate their children by asking for their children to be placed in different tutor groups. Thus Ruth and Emma and Hannah and Charlotte were placed in different 'halves' of their year groups and were in no classes together at all. In other cases, children were temporarily placed back together by being registered in the same tutor group. This was the case for Liam and Dan and Rebecca and Andrea. However, now the organisational features of the school could provide their children with opportunities to be apart. For instance, streaming could separate their children according to ability and the opportunity to choose GCSE options could enable them to pursue different subjects. Mike and Allison explain:

Mike   [...] In a way [the threat of competition and rivalry] then sorted itself

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[58] Children are placed in an ambiguous position in this respect. They are on the one hand considered to be individuals with rights (a perspective upheld by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child) but on the other hand also identified as *future* citizens (young incompetent dependents who will grow into self-determined autonomous adult voters) (see Nasman, 1994).

	out once they opted for their different GCSE's and A-Levels. And now to the point where now they're not doing any common A-Levels are they?
Allison	No.
Mike	You know, Daniel got his er, Physics, technology and Maths. Liam has got English, History and Business Studies. So their studies are different.

Although parents may appear to relinquish some of their control, their adult power is transferred to the hands of another set of adults – amongst them teachers, child support assistants, head teachers and management and administrative teams. Within the school setting, children have their time and space structured by another set of adult rules. Timetables map out their days so that children know where they should be and when they should be there. The timetable allows other adult members of staff to monitor and regulate children – providing exact knowledge of their location and a plurality of spaces within which to enact discipline and control. Through the timetable, different classes are periodically insulated from each other and children's educational identities as 'successes' or 'failures' conveyed (James, et al., 1998: 42).

The school therefore constitutes one important spatial context within which twins construct and negotiate their identities. The decisions that parents, teachers and other school staff make shape these children's childhoods by, at the very least, placing them in particular social groupings. Through variously activating their desires to foster twin togetherness, encourage independence and treat their children equally, parents not only have a role to play in shaping the social circles within which their twins move, they also influence the extent to which they are seen to be physically together by others. Since the latter constitutes one defining feature of twinship, this may also be important when

trying to re-negotiate twin identity within the internal-external dialectic of identification. Chapter 5 on space thus explores how twins utilise their school environments and the people within them to try to negotiate identity.

Naming

As children move within the various spaces of their childhoods, parents (amongst others) also present and identify their children in certain ways by 'naming' them in particular ways. The power of names in identifying persons and helping us to identify others cannot be overstated. Indeed, as Harré points out, 'to be a person, is amongst other things, to have a name' (1998: 65). Names are so central to conveying identity and individuality that concern is expressed over the potential of others to take on and use our names and the information that goes with them – for instance, fears that 'identity thieves' will steal our wallets and scan our emails to obtain credit (Federal Trade Commission, 2005: www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/credit/idtheft.htm).

Here, this notion of 'naming' refers to the ways in which people (parents in this case) refer to twins. In line with their commonly stated desire to 'treat their children as individuals,' parents tended to say that they did not refer to their twins as 'the twins'. There was considerable agreement between parents about the connotations lying behind this particular naming strategy:

Janet Well yes, I suppose I make a point of trying not to say 'the twins'. I do say 'Adam and Olivia' because you shouldn't put them together and ... they are so very very different. They look different.

Jenny   [...] Other people quite often call them 'the twins'. But I think there's a lot less of them being 'the twins' than there would be if they were identical. But they are very different in looks and in temperament as well.

Naming twins 'the twins' joins them together as one dyadic unit and conceals difference. This name is therefore unsuitable for referring to two unique 'individuals' because it makes no distinction between each twin.

Interestingly, the twins' own narratives reveal that this naming strategy may be used by others to talk *about* them in public:

Kate   How do [your parents] usually refer to you?

Adam   They call us individually but they may say – when we're going somewhere – to the person, 'oh we're bringing the twins'.

Kate   You said that people call you twins, who calls you twins then?

Olivia   All of our family, like cousins, my sister and Craig does as well.

Adam   And friends do as well, they always go, 'we're at the twins' house'

Adam, son to Janet and David, explains that his parents sometimes referred to them as 'the twins' when talking about them to other people. Indeed, during my time at their house, I often heard Craig and David refer to Adam and Olivia as 'the twins' when they were talking about them to other family members. Similarly, whilst attending Ellie's Christmas play, I watched as Ellie's mother Caroline told another mother that she 'had twins' and then later introduced them to her as 'the twins'. All these twins were different-looking twins. Hence, as the mother speaking with Caroline put it, 'they don't look like twins'. This naming strategy therefore marks out and makes visible what

might not otherwise be seen. As was the case in relation to dress, then, naming strategies can be seen as another way in which parents play up or play down the significance of twinship. In publicly naming their twins 'the twins' they classify them within this identity group and thus participate in constructing external perceptions of them as 'one unit'. The fact that this strategy may be employed in 'front-stage' (Goffman, 1969) interaction suggests once more that there may be social capital to be gained from publicly identifying twins as twins.

In contrast, personal names offer parents the opportunity to signify difference and distinction. As Strathern has pointed out, 'using the first name to personalise the person named seems of a piece with the idea that to treat people as persons one must treat them as unique individuals' (1992: 19). Through the personal name, the individual is marked out as separate and distinct from the Other and thus constructed as an autonomous, self-contained unit. As Harré points out, names convey individuality because they 'pick out persons as publicly identifiable individuals' (1998: 65). Certainly Adam's assertion that his parents call them 'individually' confirms their power to communicate individuality and, in addition, highlights how parents can use these names to address their twins directly – establishing relations with children as individuals. However, there are other senses in which personal names may be less effective in communicating individuality and playing down 'twin' identity – for instance, if parents choose rhyming or sound-alike names, if parents confuse names or join names together.

Stereotypically, twins are often depicted with similar sounding or rhyming names. These serve to connect the twins together as two parts of one whole. However, one internet survey (Sanders, 2002: http://www.twinstuff.com/nameyourtwins.html) suggests that these practices are becoming less frequent. Indeed, none of the twins that

feature in this thesis had sound alike or rhyming names. Parents did however occasionally explain how they sometimes confused names. Sue said that she mixed Ruth and Emma's names up with her son's name. Pam and Malcolm explained how they sometimes found it difficult to put a name to a voice when speaking to one of their twins on the telephone:

Kate	Did any body ever get them mixed up?
Pam	Oh, all the time, all the time. The only time we found it difficult was if we used to ring up and speak to them on the phone. And even now sometimes.
Malcolm	Oh I still have that problem. Every time I call home and one of the girls answers the phone they just start talking to me and 'oh it's me' and after a couple of minutes I'll say, 'ok stop, who is it?' 'It's me, I told you it's me' ' well that is not the answer. I don't know who I'm talking to'. 'Well you don't think it's Rebecca do you' and I'll say, 'ok it's Andrea then'. I don't know the difference.

Because, names signify and encapsulate individual identity, confusing names blurs the boundaries between one individual and another. Put another way, attributing a person with the wrong name means attributing them with the wrong identity. Thus, by being attributed with her twin's name, Rebecca temporarily becomes Andrea. A similar blurring of distinction is implied when twins' names are joined together using the word 'and'. For instance, Janet preferred to refer to her children as 'Adam and Olivia' and Jenny said that her children might be called 'Dom and Louise'. Interestingly, although personal names are used, the connotations lying behind this naming strategy may closely resemble those that emerge in relation to calling twins 'the twins'. Craig, brother to Adam and Olivia, explains:

Craig	[...] I suppose with a lot of their friends, they've grown up as being 'Adam and Olivia' and so there's always been two halves to the whole in a way, with people at school and stuff. But I think perhaps that's changing now in that they're seen more as, they've got their own separate groups. Erm ... but with some people, the people that have known them for a long time, I think it is quite nice, in a way it's special that there is the two parts, the parts not really being parts. Erm ... you know, there's double, there's Adam *and* Olivia rather than there just being one of them [...].

According to Craig, being called 'Adam and Olivia' reflects their status as two halves or two parts of one unit. Instead of there just being one of them there is 'double': Adam *and* Olivia. Here Adam and Olivia are constructed as replicas of each other; the unit which they constitute ('them') is split in half so that there are two of 'them' each half being identical and symbolising the whole. Hence, although Adam and Olivia are not explicitly objectified as 'twins', they are still constructed as 'two peas in a pod'.

These different methods of naming therefore incorporate and signify different meanings and, by emphasising varying degrees of similarity and difference, variously construct twins as one objectified unit, as two parts of one whole, as indistinct and interchangeable or as unique individuals. However, although parents may choose how to refer to their children in different social contexts and play up and play down twin identity to varying extents, twins also identify themselves and each other in particular ways and thus participate in constructing their own identities. Hence, Chapters 4, 5 and 6 highlight how twins can variously use their bodies, space and talk to negotiate the ways in which they are named and identified by others and also how they think about themselves.

Power

This chapter has shown that parents have an important role to play in structuring their children's childhoods and contributing to the internal-external dialectic of identity construction. Indeed, whilst Giddens envisages a 'democratic family' characterised by 'equality, mutual respect, autonomy, decision making through communication and freedom of violence' (Giddens, 1998: 93) this 'manifesto' implies a greater degree of agency than may be possible (Crow, 2002). As adults, parents have more resources available to them and also structure those available to their children. Oldman (1994) conceptualises this inequality in terms of class relations – adults forming a ruling class and children a subordinate class. Yet whilst Oldman's model effectively draws attention to the economic aspect of this inequality, this must be set within the broader context of 'generational' inequality:

> Adults have divided up the social order into two major groups – adults and children, with specific conditions surrounding the lives of each group: provisions, constraints and requirements, laws, rights, responsibilities and privileges (Mayall, 2000: 120).

Adults decide the when, where and how of childhood – an institution which is defined in opposition to adulthood. Importantly, the notion of generation can capture this relational dynamic: in conceptualising power relations as generational relations we come to see childhood and adulthood as two different structural (social) positions within the social order (Mayall, 2002: 27). Located in an inferior structural position, children are less able to speak out and have their voices heard. From this analysis, it is clear that parents participate in shaping their children's lives and in doing this have some role in 'setting the stage' for twins' identity work.

This adult authority is premised upon a notion of child incompetence, which as we have seen, emerges through some of the parents' own narratives. Although their narratives suggest that this *progression* from childhood to adulthood means leaving behind some aspects of twinship, parents initially encouraged their children to *be* twins before they were adults. Mothers had a large role to play in securing this twin identity. Certainly the parents' narratives suggest that mothers took a lead role in deciding how to dress their children. Mothers were in charge of choosing, purchasing and making their children's clothes. There is also some evidence to suggest that mothers were at the forefront of decisions concerning classes and rooms. For instance, Pam explained that she had told the teacher to keep her children together at secondary school:

> **Pam**   [...] When we went for the initial induction meeting, I was asked if they wanted to be in the same class because as I said, their grades were the same, and I said, 'well it's never been a problem so far so just keep them as they are, and if, you know, their work goes different and they need to be split up then' but it was never a problem. [...]

Janet also explained how she had tried to put her different-sex twins into different rooms:

> **Janet**   [...] They've never shown any inkling to move out. It was only when, I think when Craig did go, that I tried to put Olivia over into his room, that she didn't like it. And I thought that's silly if she keeps camping in there so I put her back.

Although some of the mothers did identify themselves as having a key role in this decision making process, they (like the fathers) also commonly spoke using the plural

pronoun 'we' giving the impression of a 'united front' – the presence of one 'parental' voice. This, as Ribbens points out, 'signifies the ideology that *parental authority is shared*, rather than either father or mother taking over-riding control' (1994: 69). This form of talk, as we will see later on in Chapter 6, serves to communicate their dyadic status and is therefore one way in which parents signify that they are 'doing parenting' and 'doing marriage' 'correctly'. However behind this 'front' (Goffman, 1969) we catch glimpses of the control that mothers have over their children's lives. Parent-child relations are therefore also gendered relations (Mayall, 2002: 41). Indeed, as Alanen points out in the opening quote, it is principally mothers who are deemed responsible for the care of children outside of school. Discourses of 'maternal instinct' and 'children's needs' position mothers as the meeters of these needs (Nicholson, 1993; Lawler, 1999). Mothers have a biological drive to have children and this 'is a precursor to the drive to *nurture* those children' (Nicholson, 1993: 209). Discursively positioned as caretakers of children, mothers are defined in relation to their children's needs:

> Conceptualizations of motherhood and of good mothers merely reflect ideas about children. What children are considered to need for development is generalized to define good mothering (Woollett and Phoenix, 1991 cited in Lawler, 1999: 73)

Hence, to return to the start of the chapter, treating children as individuals is therefore good parenting (mothering) practice because children must grow into and *become* individuals.

Some of the mothers emphasised that these decisions were made in the best interests of their children. Thus Janet returned Olivia to the 'big room' because she could not sleep properly, Clare said she would not dress her children 'the same' if they objected and Jenny explained that she would not *force* her children to move into separate rooms:

Jenny   Well, once again, I'd like them to feel like they had some choice in it

and if they said, 'oh no we don't want'. I'd say, 'ok, carry on'.

Given within the interview context where mothers may feel they are being watched and judged by an 'expert' (Hood et al., 1996), these statements may reveal something about what they think constitutes 'good' 'mothering' practice. Here, it seems that this entails acting as a responsible caretaker by making decisions on the child's behalf, but also allowing them to make their own choices later on. Parents may *practice* this 'good' parenting in their everyday lives because they believe this to be the appropriate format of adult-child relations or to provide their children with a 'proper' childhood. This was, for example, implied by Anthony and Clare's attempts to protect their children from knowledge of sex and swearing. Thus, as Mayall points out, relationships between parents and children 'include adult exercise of power, both perhaps as a component of adult views of appropriate child-adult relationships and also in the interests of socializing children appropriately' (Mayall, 1996: 82).

Conclusion

Ideologies of childhood and twinship are mediated through adult power to shape twins' lives in certain ways. As adult caretakers, mothers in particular take up their roles as chief decision makers and key directors in preparing their young twins for public presentation. Through deciding how to dress and name their twins, place their twins in school classes and bedrooms, parents (mainly mothers) train others how to 'see' their twins and 'set the stage' for their twins' negotiations of identity. This aspect of adult power may be relaxed later on in line with an acknowledgement of child competency. Conceptualised as being more able to make 'choices', older twins may be afforded more agency in determining their own presentations of self. Movements from

similarity/sameness to difference, togetherness to apartness (mediated through 'age' 'gender' and zygosity) mobilise, express and reproduce particular notions of childhood and adulthood discussed in Chapter 2. Through its lack of decision-making power, the child twin is presented as passive and incompetent. In contrast, the adult is active, independent and autonomous. Through its association with physical sameness and togetherness, the child twin is constructed as indistinct and interdependent – constituting one part of the dyadic unit. In contrast the adult must abandon these expressions of twinship to become unique and independent. We therefore bear witness to the 'generationing' processes (Mayall, 2002: 27) whereby 'childhood' and 'adulthood' take on certain meanings and twinship is largely located and contained within the social space of childhood. Having examined some of the structuring contexts of identity construction, the following chapters turn to examine how twins use their bodies, space and talk as resources to negotiate and construct their own identities.

PART TWO: AGENCY CONTEXTS

Chapter 4: Bodies

'In the affluent West, there is a tendency for the body to be seen as an entity which is in the process of

becoming; a project which should be worked at and accomplished as part of an individual's self

identity... Investment in the body also has its limitations ... Bodies are limited not only in the sense that

they ultimately die, but in their frequent refusal to be moulded in accordance with our intentions'

(Shilling, 1993: 5, 7).

Introduction

This section of the thesis turns to explore how twins, as agents, negotiate their identities within various enabling and constraining contexts. The body constitutes one key signifier of twin identity and is thus central to attempts to reconstruct the self as twin or non-twin. Twins actively use their bodies as resources to construct their identities and to present particular versions of self to others. In this chapter, we bear witness to both the limiting and creative power of the body in negotiating identity. Beginning with a theoretical consideration of the role of the body in identity construction and moving on to explore twins' bodily presentations of self, this chapter shows the limits of social constructionist perspectives whilst also confirming the cultural value invested in the body as a symbolic marker of identity.

Theorising the body

The body is central within the process of identification, providing clues about who

we are and also helping us to form opinions about other people. In Chapter 2 we began to uncover the significance of physical appearance within discourses of twinship, concluding that twin sameness was one major defining feature of twinship. In Chapter 3 we saw how some parents reproduced these cultural expectations in their own parenting practices and in doing so communicated twin identity on their children's behalf. It is therefore vital that we take account of the body as a symbolic entity. Although, as Shilling has noted, the body has had something of an absent presence (1993: 19) within sociology, the work of Foucault and Goffman provide some useful theoretical insights. Adopting a rather extreme social constructionist approach, Foucault argued that the body was *produced* through discourse. According to him, the human body was never completely free of social meanings and in consequence could not be understood or seen to have any independent existence aside from them (Shilling, 1993; Burr, 1995). In short, the subject was produced through and within discourse (Hall, 2000: 23).[59] Given this portrayal of bodily passivity, it is not surprising that Foucault is criticised for offering a 'pessimistic vision of agency' (Lash, 1990: 58) and of not taking adequate account of the corporeality of the body (Shilling, 1993; Turner, 1994). Whilst discourses play a central part in bringing meaning to the body, they do not bring it into existence. As Frank states, 'bodies of course, do not emerge out of discourses and institutions; they emerge out of other bodies, specifically women's bodies' (1991: 49). The body as a corporeal entity would exist even if discourses did not. However, despite these criticisms, importantly, Foucault draws attention to the ways in which bodies may be shaped and regulated through discourses – a process which we saw occurring in Chapter 3 as parents chose to utilise common cultural expectations of twinship to shape

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[59] This approach is evident in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) where Foucault accounts for the ways in which the body is produced and reproduced through discourses and institutions of punishment. Whilst the public burnings and dismemberings of the medieval order affirmed the 'fleshiness' of the body and regulated the body by external brute force, the prison system that followed this (epitomised by Bentham's Panopticon) constructed a 'mindful body' (Shilling, 1993: 76) capable of regulating itself.

and control their own twins' bodies. Within this chapter we see how twins resist and modify these discourses through their bodies.

In contrast to Foucault, Goffman doubted that the body was actually *produced* by social forces. Instead, he depicted the body as a receiver and conveyor of meaning. Through his work on public and private spaces, the presentation of self and the management of stigma, Goffman shows how the body acts as resource in the negotiation of identity. Through careful impression management and information control (through face-work and body-work), the individual can construct a particular definition of himself or herself. Certainly this has currency within late modern society where we are encouraged to manage and maintain our bodies. Media advertisements and magazine articles persuade us to take care of our bodies, to look after our skin and keep fit. As one supplement from *The Observer* put it: 'never before have Britons been so fascinated, and repelled, by our bodies. We gym, we slim, and enlist the help of plastic surgeons' (The Observer, 2003: 3). A whole range of consumer products and services are produced to help us maintain our bodies which, as Featherstone notes, points to the 'significance of appearance and bodily preservation within late capitalist society' (1991: 170). Within this context, we are placed in charge of our own bodies and our own identities. Thus Giddens (1991) argues that late modern society – characterised by risk and uncertainty – demands that we reflexively construct a sense of self through the choices that we make on a day-to-day basis. By examining the body as a symbolic entity, Goffman's focus on bodily presentation of self helps to theorise some aspects of this contemporary trend and for this reason, his work will be drawn upon at times throughout this chapter. However, this said, he provides far less insight into how we *experience* our identities through our bodies – thereby neglecting an important aspect of our human embodiment.

The body is integral to our sense of self. As Lyon and Barbalet put it, 'persons experience themselves simultaneously *in* and *as* their bodies' (1994: 54). Theorising the body therefore demands that we take the physicality of the body seriously. Through the body we develop sensory experience of the world and we also live in the world. As Csordas (1994) explains, the body is an acting, empirical, experiencing entity that constitutes the grounding for the self. Whilst our physical bodies are not produced by social structures (as Foucault would have it) they are interpreted and given meaning within them. The body is therefore simultaneously 'material' *and* 'symbolic'. Thus, following Shilling, this chapter argues in favour of conceptualising the body as an 'unfinished biological and social phenomenon which is transformed within certain limits, as a result of its entry into and participation in society' (1993: 12). This model allows us to see how the physicality of the body may be literally transformed or given the finishing touches through dress – a cultural tool that contributes to the symbolic translation of materiality into cultural images or signifiers (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 3) and, as we will see, is an important resource for many twins. Importantly Shilling's model draws our attention back to the ways in which bodies are situated within the internal-external dialectic of identification – being judged and classified by others whilst also providing the basis for judging and classifying the self. Finally, Shilling's unfinished body mediates between structure and agency, being shaped and interpreted through discourse whilst also constituting the grounds for human action. All of these dimensions draw our attention to the enabling and constraining power of the body within the process of identity construction; as the introductory quote points out, although we may want to present the self as someone or something else, our bodies may refuse to be moulded into line making it difficult for us to receive external validation and verification. Identities are thus continually managed and negotiated – moving between various possibilities – within the process of social interaction. The following

sections therefore trace out the creative and limiting powers of the body, exploring how twins experience their identities through their bodies and use their bodies as resources for negotiating their identities.

Creating identity through the body

Twins take an active role in managing their bodies in order to express similarity and/or difference. Many of the twins in this study were non-identical twins who looked physically different from each other. The very materiality of their bodies thus provided . them with varying degrees of opportunity for negotiating their twin identities. However, there were differences between the ways in which twins managed and used these different-looking bodies. The youngest twins drew attention to the ways in which they were the same. Arriving to interview non-identical twins Ash and Harry (aged 8), I noticed that they were dressed in identical outfits. Within the interview context, Ash and Harry both drew my attention to this dimension of their sameness:

Ash   Yeah. You can hardly tell our clothes, that they're different. *[They line themselves up against each other – side by side.]*

Although their mother Clare may have played a large part in presenting their bodies in this way through dressing them in identical clothes, by positioning their bodies side-by-side in physical space, Ash and Harry further this representation of twinness and actively use their bodies to encourage me to *view* their sameness. They therefore participate in 'finishing off' their own bodies, helping to draw attention away from their physical differences and encouraging me to attribute their bodies with an alternative set of cultural meanings. On one other occasion, Ash re-drew part of his drawing (see figure 13, p. 152) to create more physical similarity between himself and his brother:

Ash   I've done over your [Harry's] nose with my rubber. I wanted them to be

the same. So our noses are the same.

Figure 13: 'Me and my twin' - by Ash, aged 8
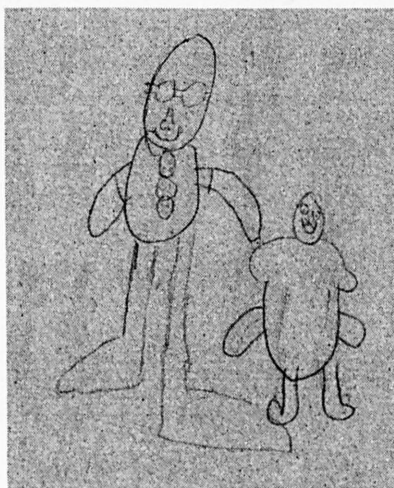
As 'symbolic tokens' (Woodward, 1997: 4), Ash and Harry's matching outfits convey a sense in which they 'belong' together and to the category 'twins'. Child twins may draw attention to various dimensions of sameness because, as the previous chapter showed, they can potentially obtain symbolic and social capital from this. Certainly, within the home setting, where, as we saw in Chapter 3, mum Clare *likes* to see them dressed the same, there is little threat from social stigma. Entering this setting as an adult visitor and someone who Ash and Harry know to be interested in twins, I am someone who can potentially validate their 'specialness' by confirming that they look the same. However, as we will see later on, such presentations of sameness may have to be modified when in the company of other children at school.

In contrast to these young twins, the accounts provided by the older children and adult twins point to the negative value attributed to such expressions of sameness in late childhood and adulthood. As Rachel (aged 20) explained when talking about some

twins that looked the same and walked around university together, 'it's a bit weird. When you're 20 you really should have your own identity rather than being a twin'. Expressions of embodied difference therefore become more important as children get older and try to mark themselves out as 'individuals'. Thus Justin (aged 22) remembered how, at aged 12, he and his brother 'just tried to differ from each other in as many ways as possible' and, likewise, the older child twins explained how they did not like to look the same:

Charlotte	I don't like going around wearing anything the same as anyone.
Ian	I don't like looking the same as another person as well though.
Peter	No it's good to be different.

Ian and Peter explained why it was good to look different:

Peter	Because we're totally different human beings aren't we?
Ian	Erm... because its like, it's like a law that you have to wear the same clothes [as twins] but I don't like to. It makes you feel like a real bore. I mean, it would cause arguments as well because if Peter wanted to wear a bright red jumper that means I'd have to wear it or if I wanted to wear sommat *[Peter sniggers in the background]* we'd like argue [...].

In Peter's words, 'it's good to be different': difference allows for autonomy and freedom of choice and reflects individual uniqueness.

Many of these twins were quite explicit about the increased value that such expressions of difference took on, as they got older.

Peter	[...] I'm glad that we didn't dress the same [when we were younger] cos we'd probably be dressing the same now.

Charlotte	I didn't mind [being dressed the same] when I was little, but I wouldn't like to be dressed the same now I'm older.

Kate	Would you ever wear the same clothes do you think?
Dan	The odd thing probably, but generally... We wouldn't go out wearing the same thing unless it was a joke or something.

Thus whilst Ash and Harry (aged 8) delighted in their bodily similarities, these older twins confine sameness within a past 'childhood'. Olivia (aged 16) reproduces this scenario when talking about how she would dress her own twin children if she had any:

Olivia	[...] I would like maybe keep [dressing them the same] as like a fun [thing] for when they're really small but I wouldn't carry it on when they're like six or seven.
Kate	Why do you think you'd stop dressing them the same-
Olivia	*[Interrupts]* I don't know, cos I just feel like they might get a bit, don't know ... if they want to carry it on then they would, but they can have their choice to choose their own clothes.

Mirroring some of the parental accounts given in the previous chapter, Olivia associates increased age with choice and competent decision-making; therefore (once again) these (hypothetical) twins only choose to opt out of twinship.

The body as a resource for constructing difference

Although many of the older child twins said they wore different clothes, some also

explained how parents and relatives continued to buy them identical outfits. However, not wanting to look 'the same', Ian and Peter made sure that they did not wear any 'identical' clothes at the same time.

Ian	We do have the same clothes but we don't wear them at the same time.
Peter	We do have different ones as well.
Kate	Why do you choose not to wear the same clothes at the same time?
Peter	Because I think people treat you more like one person.

Being identical-looking twins, these twins are potentially able to stage a convincing performance of twinship (they are physically alike and have the clothing available to further extend and amplify this sameness). However. they do not choose to uphold this 'front' (Goffman, 1969). Instead, dress becomes a resource for transforming the exterior surface of the body, of symbolically severing the lines of belonging that once, in early childhood, served to assert their status as twins and children. Wearing different clothes provides some expression of uniqueness, something that may be particularly important for these identical-looking twins. Indeed, as Barth (1969) notes, dress constitutes a symbol of identity which serves to produce and maintain dichotomies between different social groups, or in this case, between one twin and the other. Importantly, however, twins must monitor each other's bodies in order to create and maintain these dichotomies since they cannot be different if they choose to be different in the same ways! Morgan's notion of 'bodily density' becomes particularly useful in this context. Referring to the 'knowledge, control and care' that we may have/take of other people's bodies (Morgan, 1996: 132), this term effectively captures the relational nature of twins' body-work. For example, Charlotte explained that if Hannah wore the same

outfit as her then she would 'force her to change' whilst Sally (aged 20) recalled being limited in what shoes she could buy:

> **Sally**   [...] I mean she had a funny thing about this pair of shoes that she loved and she wouldn't let me buy them. I went out secretly and bought them and hid them from her for two years [...]

And similarly Andrea remembered:

> **Andrea**   [...] Sometimes if I saw something that I was gonna get, I'd like [say], 'no you're not getting it'. We would argue about that, and Rebecca used to do it a lot. 'Oh I'm gonna get one of them', 'no I don't want you to get one'.

By staving off any potential threat to their expressions of 'bodily distinctiveness' (Kaveny, 2001)[60] older twins may be able to avoid becoming a source of public ridicule. Andrea explains:

> **Andrea**   I didn't want her to wear the same *as* me. Cos it was mine. [...] I wouldn't want to wear it at the same time [as Rebecca] cos people [would say] like, 'oh look at them two, idiots!'

Onlookers therefore feed into her understanding of what constitutes a 'normal' body. This cultural knowledge is constructed and reproduced within social interaction between embodied persons. In other words, it is our bodily presence in the world that allows for such comparisons to take place. Through comparing and contrasting different bodies, we classify others, situate ourselves and are in turn defined by others. Thus

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[60] This term captures our Western understandings of the body as a singular, separate and distinctly owned entity (Kaveny, 2001).

external perceptions feed into our own embodied experience such that, as this example shows, other people's reactions to Andrea and Rebecca's bodies have the potential to make them *experience* their same-looking bodies as 'stupid'.

Certainly, there is evidence to suggest that, as children get older and become more actively involved in the social world of childhood, expressions of sameness become sources of stigma. James' (1993) ethnographic account of children's social relationships suggests that expressions of bodily sameness – associated with being a younger (infant) child – are quickly dispelled even after children enter the social world of the primary school. Once an effective method of establishing a sense of belonging (e.g. making a bid for friendship and locating one's self alongside other children at school), sameness now becomes translated as a sign of 'copying' – a classification that signifies the growing importance of expressions of individuality.

> Among the older children who had become more actively involved in the social world of childhood, far from being appreciated and remarked upon, such behaviour was positively discouraged ... 'being the same' as another moves from its conceptual classification as a sign of sociality to something which discriminates and stigmatises (James, 1993: 141, 142).

In line with this, Valentine (2000) highlights the importance attached to expressions of individuality within young people's (aged 11-18) peer group cultures. Hence, Ash and Harry's bodily expressions of sameness (described at the start of this chapter) may need to be modified when in the presence of other children at school if they are to avoid being stigmatised as copy-cats (who look *too* much like each other to be regarded as anybody specific) whilst Rebecca and Andrea's mutual display of difference may help them to demonstrate their achievement of individuality and status as older children.

By managing their bodily styles, twins work together to 'finish off' their own and each other's bodies. In making their bodies different, and marking them out as their own, older child twins produce embodied expressions of identity that move them further away from childhood towards adulthood. In one sense, we might therefore say that older twins are effectively trying to resist attempts (previously made by their parents) to ingrain practices of twinship into their modes of bodily action. Or, drawing on Bourdieu and Csordas, that they do not adopt the bodily 'dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1990) necessary to reproduce 'twin identity' because they consciously choose bodily modes of being-in-the-world (Csordas, 1994) that play down sameness. However, just how successful these strategies might be in encouraging validation of individuality is questionable. Whilst twins who wear the same clothes or accessories at different times will not look exactly the same when they are together, this could still potentially suggest a lack of difference in style and taste and also, if clothes come to be associated with one or other of the twins, it may imply interchangeability and 'copying' – that I can be you and you can also be me.

Narrating difference

On a more discursive level, twins utilised their bodies as resources for narrating difference. At times, these twins would pinpoint differences in the physicalities of their bodies:

Ian	Erm... He's a bit taller and I think he's slightly thinner cos he's -
Peter	I'm not thinner than you! I'm bigger than you, I'm bigger built than you.
Ian	I know.
Peter	But you just said I'm thinner than you.

Ian	No but-
Peter	You're thinner than me.
Ian	You're more stretched than me.
Peter	I'm just a bigger build than you Ian *[laughs]*.
Ian	Oh right.

Here, identical-looking twins Ian and Peter (aged 13) work out the precise dimensions of their physical differences. Peter takes a leading role trying to socialise his brother Ian into adopting his account. In this way, Peter tries to ensure that they both agree on the precise nature of their differences thus avoiding any potential overlap in characteristics. Importantly, by pinpointing these differences, Ian and Peter train each other and me how to *see* their bodies.

Emma and Ruth (also identical-looking twins) were slightly clearer about their physical differences. When they were drawing pictures of themselves together they told me:

Ruth	I'm a bit taller than Emma *[looking at her picture]*.
Emma	I'm a bit thinner than you *[laughs looking at her drawing]*.
Kate	Are you actually taller then Emma?
Ruth	Er... I don't know. Last time I think I was, but it changes.
Emma	I have funny eyes and I'm thinner than Ruth [...].
Kate	[...] Who's who then? *[To Emma]*
Emma	Well that's Ruth [on the left] cos she's got shorter hair than me.

Like Ian and Peter, Emma and Ruth remark upon their bodily differences and thus distinguish between their fellow twin's body and their own. As such they also actively construct two distinct bodies. Their pictures become one medium through which they

present themselves and each other in particular ways. Certain physical traits may be exaggerated, concealed or reshaped. For example, Emma's picture (see figure 14 below) shows the differences in length of hair and waistline quite dramatically.

Figure 14: 'Me and my twin' – by Emma, aged 13

Through these drawings, twins can construct a particular version of self that does not necessarily fit with the actual appearance of their physical bodies. Indeed, as Drotner (1996) suggests, children's drawings can be interpreted as 'sign systems' which form repertoires of identity; in this case, they represent twins' own understandings of who they are or their possible ways of being. Drawings therefore provide one medium through which twins attempt to negotiate their identities (Hawkins, 2002). The twins' verbal narratives show that the differences that are depicted are integral to their own (internal) sense of self.

Whilst such discursive constructions may provide these identical-looking twins with more scope to present themselves as physically unique persons, other non-identical twins also pointed out physical differences. Hannah explained that her nose was 'flatter' than Charlotte's and Charlotte explained that she and her sister Hannah had got 'different eyes, different nose, different mouth'. This in turn led her to conclude that 'she looks like my mum, I like look like my dad'. Here Charlotte reiterates a point of

view on family resemblances that is held by all the members of her immediate family (twin sister, sister and mother). This family narrative is important in pinpointing the dimensions of their physical differences and attributing them with significance. Not only do these twins look different but these differences allocate them separate positions within the family – Charlotte with her dad and Hannah with her mum. This narrative therefore serves to turn the twins away from each other to face outwards towards other members of their family; thus their twinship is played down as they are each re-paired with one parent.

Liam explained that whilst be had long hair his brother had short hair. Interestingly, he actively drew on this bodily difference to help him narrate differences in personality:

Liam   [...] I'm more, I don't conform that's the thing. It always gets me into trouble you see. In school I don't cut my hair so I'm singled out as a troublemaker. I've got [...] long hair, I listen to loud music, I get drunk before school and turn up to school drunk, as Dan, he's, 'can't go out tonight, playing rugby tomorrow', 'can't go out tonight, I've got a test'. [...] If he had long hair he'd shave it off. As I'm more, I'm not going to conform, I'll do what I like. [...] When I get to my grandma's [my grandparents] think the same. They'll think, 'yeah Liam is bit of a rogue as Dan's more ...' They don't like call him the kind of perfect grandson but he is kind of, you know, what they all kind of love. Cos he's a senior prefect, he's captain of rugby, he was captain of cricket for a few years as well, and he was captain of athletics [laughs]. He's got academic awards and sporting achievement awards er.... And he's just that kind of thing where grandma's and grandpa's think 'oh great'. As I'm more, a lot laid back. I don't really care what grades I get as long as I get passed the term, grow my hair and express my own opinions. As Dan's, he's a

lot more responsible. Even if he thinks something he won't say it because he'll think 'oh well, I might disappoint my grandma and grandpa' whereas I'll say it.

Although Chapter 6 will examine the importance of *contrast* as a technique of talk in more detail, here we see how Liam's long hair lies at the centre of his definition of who he is – namely a 'non-conformist' self-directed individual – and provides one basis for distinguishing between himself and his brother who is, by contrast, constructed as a 'responsible' conformist (with short hair). Importantly, this difference in hair length allows Liam to draw upon and reproduce two opposing 'scripts' of identity: the 'rogue' versus the 'goody-two-shoes'. This again draws our attention back to the necessity of body monitoring. Twins must supervise their own and their fellow twin's body if they are to ensure that such embodied differences are maintained. As Cohen and Taylor point out, these 'scripts are available to others who seek similar transformations of identity and experience; they are a common cultural resource'(1976: 68). As such Liam's identity may come under threat if Dan also grows his hair and chooses to practice this script of identity. 'Script juxtaposition' (Cohen and Taylor, 1976: 68) should therefore be maintained if uniqueness is to be upheld. Indeed, it is vital to Liam's sense of being *just* a brother:

Liam   I just think... I think that since we're so different we are nearer brothers, normal brothers than nearer twins.

Liam's embodied sense of difference makes him experience himself as being a 'normal' brother and encourages him to position himself further down the continuum of siblingship outlined in Chapter 2. Hence, as Csordas (1994) pointed out earlier on, we see how the body becomes the site and source for subjectivity.

Alongside this, twins utilised descriptions of their tastes in clothes to narrate difference.

Charlotte	She goes for trackers and I go for girly clothes.
Hannah	I never wear trackers now. I ant even got any trackers.
Charlotte	Yeah but you wear stuff like black trousers and I like wear denim.

Here, Charlotte seems adamant to maintain some level of distinction between the two bodies. She begins by pinpointing herself as the 'girly' dresser, but Hannah disagrees with her characterisation of her as a person that wears 'trackers'. Charlotte therefore turns to focus on another difference – contrasting black trousers to denim. Similar to Charlotte, Ruth and Emma also drew on discourses of gender to help them differentiate themselves from each other, however, unlike Charlotte and Hannah, Ruth and Emma both agreed on the nature of these differences:

Ruth	[...] Mainly most of my clothes are either pink or a bright colour.
Emma	And dresses!
Ruth	Yeah, most of 'em are dresses.
Emma	I'm trousers and shorts!

According to Emma, Ruth wears 'dresses' whilst she *is* trousers and shorts. The agreement they share is especially important for these twins because they look physically alike and so may rely more heavily on the significatory power of dress to differentiate between them. Emma's last sentence, perfectly demonstrates the way in which these bodily styles become metaphors of the self: she does not just wear trousers and shorts; they are who she is! Dress is therefore both a means of exteriorising and interiorising identity; it presents an outward presentation of self whilst also folding back

in on itself to inject social meanings into our internal sense of who we are (Warwick and Cavallaro, 1998: 15).

Similar differences were represented in Ruth's picture (see figure 15 below).

Figure 15: 'Me and my twin' – by Ruth, aged 13
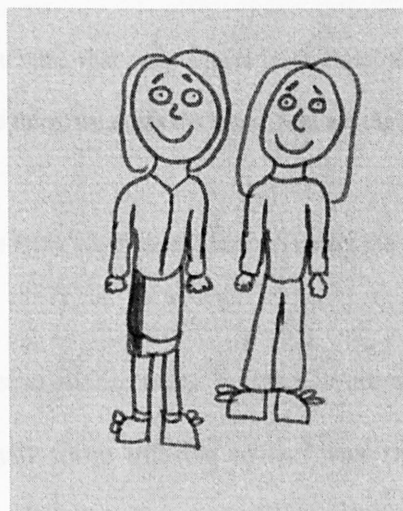
Ruth explained what she had drawn:

> **Ruth**   Emma's wearing a jumper – which is this other jumper that we got – and these trousers and some trainers again and I'm wearing a jacket and this skirt and some shoes.

Unlike Emma's picture (shown earlier in the chapter), here Ruth and Emma are depicted as similar in facial features, facial expressions and body shape. The differences being highlighted amongst these similarities relate to style and taste. Ruth appeals to a feminine/ tomboy distinction to construct them as discretely embodied 'opposites'. Dress becomes an important signifier of difference in this pictorial representation precisely because their bodies appear so similar. In contrast, dress is less important in

Emma's picture because their physical bodies are positioned as the most important signifiers of difference. Yet in both cases, Emma and Ruth use their bodies to accentuate difference and thus to distance themselves from assumptions of twin sameness. Indeed, being identical-looking older child twins, it is possibly no surprise that these twins were adamant that they did not fall into the (stereotyped) category 'twins':

Kate	Do you think that people have ideas about what a twin is?
Emma	People think we dress the same, you act the same, but we don't!
Ruth	No!
Emma	People think we dress the same, you act the same, but we don't!

This concern to emphasise differences in taste were not however confined to the girls; the older boys also had some interest in the way they looked. This falls in line with current research on gender and the body that emphasises the growing importance attached to the appearance and maintenance of the male body. Although females have been traditionally defined through their bodies (for example see Coward, 1984), more current research points towards the ways in which consumer culture is now turning its attention to developing a 'branded masculinity': a combination of muscle, fashion and the appearance of financial success (Alexander, 2004).[61] The boys' comments suggest that they too made choices about the types of clothes they liked to wear and developed their own tastes:

Dan	We are completely... I quite like the-

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[61] In line with this, boys have been found to use exercise to transform and control the shape of their bodies (McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2001), with larger upper arms, chest and shoulders being a prominent concern (Moore, 1993).

Liam	*[Interrupts]* loud shirts.
Dan	No, let's just say, there's like [...] some that are absolutely terrible but there's the odd few that are very tasteful actually, so I go for those.
Liam	I'm a lot more plain.

Ian	[...] He's got these Levi trousers that-
Peter	*[Interrupts]* Are quite flarey.
Ian	They go in then they go out. I wouldn't wear them. [...] I'm not really into like really baggy clothes.
Peter	Not that it's like-
Ian	*[Interrupts]* I just like clothes what you can do stuff in.

Leaving aside the fact that these twins speak on behalf of each other for our later discussion of twin talk (Chapter 6), we see that these expressions of taste say something about the character of the twins. Thus Ian's dislike for baggy clothes reflects that he is an 'active' person that likes to 'do stuff' whilst Liam's plain clothes stand as metaphors for the self ('I'm more plain') in the same way that Emma's 'trousers and shorts' did.

Unlike these same-sex twins, the different-sex twins Adam and Olivia (aged 16) seemed far less concerned about using dress to narrate difference:

Kate	Do you have the same taste in clothes now? Different? A bit the same? A bit different?
Adam	Oh that's a bit difficult. Olivia always goes for jeans and things don't you?
Olivia	We go to that, that top he's got on's from Extreme [shop]. We go to Extreme and get clothes from Extreme.

Here, Adam finds it 'difficult' to pinpoint any differences, asking Olivia for confirmation, whilst Olivia implies some commonality in taste by saying that they shop at the same place. Certainly, as the second part of this chapter will show, as different-sex twins, these twins are the least at risk of being assumed to be twins and therefore dress need not take on the significance that it does in the narrative constructions of difference given by the other older same-sex twins.

Borrowing clothes

Being integral to many of the older twins' internal constructions of self (and Other) clothes were always attributed to an owner. Some of the female same-sex twins reported arguments over borrowing clothes. For instance, Hannah explained that she would 'go mad' if Charlotte borrowed her clothes without asking whilst Sally told me that her sister Rachel disapproved of her borrowing her clothes:

Sally	[...] She really didn't like me borrowing her clothes when we were in sixth form and fifth year at all because we looked too similar.
Kate	What people could see you-
Sally	*[Interrupts]* Yes I think if someone saw me wearing the same thing as her I don't think she'd like it because 'oh you're wearing Rachel's clothes'. She always liked to be completely individual. More than I did I suppose.

By wearing her sister's clothes in public, Sally is presented as if she were 'Rachel' implying that the two twins are indistinct and interchangeable. These extracts suggest that some attempts were made to defend ownership and secure the boundaries of the self. However this said, some of the older twins who seemed so intent on presenting

themselves as distinct individuals were sometimes implicated in such exchanges. For example, although Hannah said she 'went mad' when Charlotte took her clothes without asking, Charlotte told me that Hannah also took her clothes:

Charlotte	She did last night.
Kate	Why what happened last night?
Charlotte	She had my trousers on and my top.

Moreover, whilst Emma explained that she disliked having to share clothes she still said:

Emma	Well occasionally I nick clothes, but only if they're good ones.

Emma thus highlights one potential advantage to gaining access to another wardrobe of clothes. It may be that the opportunity to extend the quantity and quality of clothing through borrowing clothes becomes too tempting to be overridden by a concern to maintain these lines of ownership.

Interestingly the same cannot be said of the older boys. Although they were also clear about who owned which clothes, such accounts of exchange were notably absent from their accounts. Dan (aged 17) made this explicit: 'we've never 'can I borrow this can I borrow that.' We've never done that'. Although, the sample of twins is far too small to make generalisations based on gender, this raises the question as to why borrowing could be less prevalent amongst boys. Possibly the answer does lie within the cultural organisation and construction of gender roles. Although males are increasingly encouraged to take an active role in monitoring and shaping their bodies (paying close attention to their physical appearance) this cultural trend is in process; we have certainly

not forgotten about our more 'traditional' gender stereotypes! Being 'feminine' is still bound up with a strong *interest* in fashion that may be ritualistically practiced through 'dressing up' 'retail therapy' and clothes swapping. Indeed, as Russell and Tyler (2002) found in their study of the retail outlets 'Girl Heaven', the shopping-obsessed, pink, glittery, girly-girl is still promoted for consumption. According to the co-founder, 'Girl Heaven' was a place where girls could 'enjoy shopping together' and 'mothers could enjoy shopping with their daughters' (cited in Russell and Tyler, 2002: 620). The twin boys' apparent lack of concern to swap clothes may therefore reflect the continuing prevalence of these gender stereotypes and the desire to keep a (safe) distance between the embodied practices of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'.

Another notable exception to this scenario was the case of the older different sex twins, Adam and Olivia. Unlike some of the female same-sex twins, Adam seemed comparatively relaxed about Olivia borrowing his clothes:

Kate	What about your clothes and the things that you have, you know your toys and games, things like that. Does it matter who has what or do you share things?
Adam	Er … yes it's usually fine. Olivia usually borrows a jumper of mine, as long as she doesn't ruin it.

However Adam was less interested in borrowing clothes from his sister:

Kate	Do you ever borrow jumpers of Olivia's or anything like that?
Adam	No *[laughs]* not really. Olivia borrows more stuff from me.

The suggestion is laughed off implying the inappropriateness of a boy borrowing 'girl'

clothes as compared to a girl borrowing 'boy' clothes. Thus Adam told me, 'I think it's easier for Olivia to do that'. Research suggests that whilst there has been some convergence in gendered clothing styles (e.g. a growth in unisex fashions) men's fashion has remained distanced from women's fashion. As Diaz points out, 'female fashion has adopted traditional men's styles much more often than men's fashion has adopted women's styles' (Diaz, n.d.: 3). Implied in Adam's comment is a clear sense of gender difference – an embodied difference that may explain this lack of concern over borrowing clothes. Unlike Sally and Rachel above, Olivia will not look the same as her brother even if she wears *his* jumper. Indeed, swapping clothes does not present the same threat to bodily expressions of difference that it does for some same-sex twins. Adam has a clear sense of how they are different that is rooted in their being differently sexed and it is this which here seems to make dress far less necessary for signifying and experiencing an internal sense of difference.

Holding on to twinship

Whilst, as we have seen, many older twins tried to use their bodies to distance themselves from notions of twin sameness, some did not give up on this aspect of twin identity completely. Emma and Ruth explained:

Ruth	We wear the same stuff but [in a] different colour.
Kate	What now?
Emma	Yeah different colour.

Similarly, Charlotte said that she would wear the same clothes as her sister Hannah if they were in a different colour. Some twins may also want to be known as twins by their

friends. Charlotte and Hannah and Adam and Olivia all chose to tell people at school that they were twins.

What explanations can be given for this? Older child twins may miss the public attention that they once received as young children and therefore try to reclaim aspects of this. Our ambivalent attitude towards older child twins – wanting them to become unique, whilst also wanting them to be close (see Chapter 2) – could mean that some of these twins may potentially be able to obtain status from appearing as *similar*. For different-looking twins Charlotte and Hannah, their skilful balancing of individuality and twinship (wearing identical outfits but in a different colour) may help them to uphold their status as individuals whilst lending some support to their claims that they are twins. Since closeness is still valued, this aspect of 'twin' identity could potentially bring them positive social attention. Emma explained how some of the kids at school said they 'wished' they were twins:

Emma	But like everyone else says 'I wish I had a twin'.
Kate	Right.
Emma	When people say, 'oh I wish I had a twin' we like say, 'oh you don't want a twin' because you're always arguing and stuff. And they're like, 'oh we do' and we're like, 'no you don't'.

However, identical-looking twins like Emma and Ruth may express *too much* similarity to obtain this capital. These twins may be at risk from being stigmatised as 'children' who are not growing up.

Some of the adult twins also returned to participate in those activities that, as older children, they had wanted to prevent. For example, Rebecca explained that she and her

sister Andrea, 'always want to borrow each other's clothes' whilst Sally explained how her sister Rachel now felt more comfortable about them buying the same clothes and swapping clothes:

> **Sally** [...] We went out shopping together and I liked this top and I showed her it and she thought I was picking it out for her. I said, 'no. I was picking it out for me' and she goes, 'I might try it on' and I went 'fine I will too'. [We] both tried it on. I mean it's not like just a red top, it's bright pink and stripy. Like a polo shirty thing. It's pretty dam striking. You couldn't mistake it for another top. She bought it and I bought it and she didn't mind at all. This was since we've been at uni. And I kind of realised that she's obviously changed in that way. She doesn't mind us wearing the same things, preferably if we don't wear it on the same day cos it's pretty similar. We laughed about it cos we said we definitely look like twins looking like this. But she doesn't mind doing that anymore and she doesn't mind me borrowing her clothes much anymore. She used to but since we've been at uni she doesn't mind me borrowing them.

Andrea (aged 23) also explained how she and her sister would sometimes wear similar looking outfits:

> **Andrea** Sometimes I'll go out in a top and trousers that are similar like same colours but different. And we'd laugh because it's like we're just nipping to pub or something.

Andrea plays down the significance of these expressions of sameness. Their tops and trousers are described as the 'same colours but different' and are only worn when *nipping* to the pub – a brief and seemingly relatively insignificant activity. In this

context, dressing in similar outfits is just 'a laugh'. Indeed common to both these narratives is how having the same or similar clothes causes laughter. Adults who dress exactly the same may become invested with comedy value precisely because this is the opposite to what we expect them to be like. As Rachel (aged 20) told me, there is a 'comic-ness' and also a 'hint of tragic-ness' about adult twins looking the same. The tragedy implied here is that these adults are behaving as if they were children. However, in these extracts, dressing the same is presented as a non-serious activity; it is play-acting, a bid to once again look *like* twins. As Sally said, 'we laughed about it cos we said we definitely look like twins looking like this'. Even though they may buy the same clothes, these should still ideally be worn at different times. Borrowing clothes and looking similar are also only temporary activities.

Thus whilst, once again, we see how embodied expressions of twin sameness may potentially become a source of ridicule – an act which points to the negative social valuing of the social category 'children' – the non-permanent nature of these activities may help these twins to maintain their social standing as 'adults'. For the most part, Sally lives away from her sister Rachel at university where, as the next chapter will examine in more detail, she has her 'own' friends and space to be *her*-self. Given this, swapping clothes may pose less threat to her sense of individuality as it may have done when she was younger and living *with* her sister. Similarly, Rebecca and Andrea talk of how they have already 'split up'. As the next chapter shows, they too lived apart from each other, and explain how they each had their 'own friends' and different interests from each other. Comfortable in the knowledge that they have 'made the break' from each other, these twins may feel less concerned to continually practice and affirm the boundaries of this divide through always looking different. On the contrary, as these examples suggest, they may take some pleasure in rekindling some aspects of twin

sameness precisely because they have been left behind. Through dressing alike, but passing their actions off as 'just a laugh', these twins can momentarily make themselves feel special again whilst still offsetting any potential stigma.

The limits of corporeality

Although twins' bodies may provide them with various opportunities for managing and producing a particular version of self it can, as Shilling points out in the opening quotation of this chapter, constrain the extent to which twins can transform their identities. Being central to cultural conceptualisations of twinship and the successful performance of twinship, the presence of physical sameness will have an impact on the extent to which twins can 'pass' (Goffman, 1963: 92) as non-twins. [62] Most of the twins in this study were non-identical, different looking twins who did not conform to the cultural stereotype of identical twinship. Fittingly some expressed how others did not think they were twins:

Kate	What do people say when they see you together? Do they think you're twins?
Hannah	They don't believe us.
	[...]
Kate	Why do you think that they don't think you're twins?
Charlotte	Cos we don't look like each other and I'm small and she's tall.

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[62] As Goffman uses it, passing is a person's ability to convince others that they are something other than who they *actually* are. However, in line with Jenkins, this thesis argues that we can never have an *actual* identity (Goffman, 1963: 12) which remains constant over time as this would imply that individuals have an inner core of self which exists outside of a social context. 'Passing' would therefore be better thought of as a person's ability to convince others that they are something other than what they have been socially defined as.

Dan	I think that when people think twin they do think identical. I think it's because we're not [that] they maybe don't associate us with being twins.

The perception of physical differences therefore makes it difficult for onlookers to believe that they are twins. Indeed, like Dan (aged 17), Hannah (aged 15) explained that they were not known as 'twins' but 'just known as sisters because we look totally different from each other'. These 'external' readings of identity can feed back into how twins think about themselves. As Hannah also said, '[if we were identical] they'd notice that we were twins but we don't, so we're just like sisters'.

Different-sex twins may find it even more difficult to be 'spotted' as twins:

Kate	What do they say to you when they find out you're twins?
Olivia	Quite surprised.
Kate	What do you think Adam?
Adam	They go... they're just a bit surprised I think.
Kate	Why do you think they're surprised?
Adam	Well because they usually think of twins as a boy and a boy or a girl and a girl. [...]

Cultural interpretations of this gender difference therefore serve to position different-sexed twins outside of normative definitions of twinship. They are *too* different to be twins. This once again points to the power of social categories of gender to override and conceal twin identity. These different-looking twins may therefore have more work to do if they wish to assert their twin identities and be acknowledged as twins.

It is clear that the very physicalities of twins' bodies may limit the extent to which

they can be spotted as twins and the extent to which they may have this social identity validated by others. These 'invisible' twins thus need to actively identify themselves as twins – their oral 'presentations of self' doing the work that their bodies cannot. As previously mentioned, Hannah and Charlotte and Adam and Olivia told friends at school that they were twins. Yet twins who say they are twins but do not have the bodies to 'match' may find it more difficult to get this version of identity validated by others. On the other hand, in telling others that they are twins, whilst appearing to look very different from each other, these twins also participate in modifying cultural notions of twinship through their embodied action.

Conversely, those twins who looked very alike may find it more difficult to escape being publicly known as 'twins':

Ruth   [...] When [people at school are] talking about us both they call us 'twins' instead of Ruth and Emma.

Onlookers may find it difficult to 'tell the difference' – confusing names with bodies. In her essay on what life would be like if she wasn't a twin, Emma explained that there would be 'no more people mistaking me for [Ruth] or people mistaking [Ruth] for me'. Being mixed up by friends made her feel 'a bit annoyed'. Not surprisingly, she explained that she would confirm her own name when people called her 'Ruth':

Emma   Well I just react by saying, 'Emma' *[impatiently]*.

Ruth   And I just go, 'No! Ruth'.

Some other identical-looking twins explained how they would answer to each other's names:

Peter   [...] Sometimes if someone says Ian I'll still turn round cos they might be calling to me.

Interchangeability works against the cultural ideal of bodily particularity. As Turner notes, 'to have an identity is to have a particular identity and to have a particular identity is to have a particular body which is socially recognisable as *your* body' (Turner, 1986: 6). Thus, even though Peter and Ian may wish to be acknowledged as different, external others may identify them as twins drawing attention to their bodily relatedness[63] rather than their bodily distinctiveness. In this sense, members of the public may 'finish off' twins' bodies on their behalf.

Within the spatial context of the school, it may be more difficult for these twins to assert their uniqueness through dress. The school uniform effectively helps to mould pupils into one homogenous mass – constraining expressions of individual style by enforcing a standardised dress code. This then also serves to convey a sense of the school's 'corporate' identity: 'as schools have begun to operate in a competitive market, uniform has come to be used as a tactic of impression management in the projection of school identity' (Swain, 2002: 54). Drawing on Goffman (1968), we may go slightly further and argue that school uniforms represent one part of a 'mortification process' whereby children are stripped of their identities and admitted into the institutionalised culture of the school. Certainly from a Foucauldian perspective, school uniform may constitute one discipline of control (Foucault, 1977) because it constitutes one means of regulating children's bodies in space. When in uniform, children represent the school and as such are encouraged to behave in accordance with the rules of the school. Differences between children's styles, tastes and socio-economic status are played

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[63] This term refers to the ways in which bodies may be seen as being related or symbolically connected to each other. This constitutes a reworking of Kaveny's (2001) original definition which, used within an analysis of cultural views on conjoined twins, denoted how these twins shared parts of their bodies.

down. Indeed, fears that some children may use violence to acquire desirable consumer products displayed on other children's bodies are commonly cited amongst the reasons for adopting a uniform dress code. However, underlying such explanations are a whole range of assumptions about what childhood as a social space should be like. As Bodine notes, 'children's clothing serves as a screen on which are projected all kinds of beliefs, anxieties and aspirations about children' (2003: 60). Amongst other things, childhood is presented as a 'protected space' that should be controlled by adults and defended against violence and social and economic hierarchy. Secondly, and importantly, it is presented as a de-personified social space populated by characterless beings. Twins who require dress to convey a sense of their own distinctiveness may therefore find it more difficult to receive public affirmation of their difference. Hence, identical-looking twins Emma and Ruth (above) were usually spotted as twins at school. In other situations, it may also be difficult for some twins to be recognised as twins because they look as different to each other as they do to other children. Thus Charlotte and Hannah said that they were not spotted as twins.

In those situations where the physicality of the body constrains the extent to which twins can be 'seen' to be unique persons, other strategies have to be adapted to convey individuality. Emma (aged 13) explained how she relied on being 'known' by her friends:

> **Emma**   People that know I've got a twin always call us 'the twins' but once
> they get to know us then they just call us our names

Importantly, both Emma and Ruth have to be 'known' in order to be different. This difference is then symbolically marked through the attribution of 'personal' names. Personality thus potentially becomes a vital resource for portraying differences and

helping friends to learn how to read bodily styles and attribute them with the correct name. However this may not always be successful:

Emma   Your friends can tell you apart as well because they've known you for a while. That's ok. Does Kay get me muddled up wi you, sometimes calls me Ruth?

Ruth   Oh! *[Looking almost offended]*

Clearly, then, Ruth, like Emma, did not like the thought of being 'mixed-up' with her twin sister! Inversely, those twins who 'look' like unique persons will have to find ways of hiding this embodied identity if they are to 'pass' as twins and become interchangeable. Charlotte and Hannah were able to use their voices as Charlotte explained: 'when we're on the phone, we speak the same'. Hannah recalled one instance when Charlotte passed herself off as her:

Hannah   She starts acting stupid though. Cos my boyfriend phoned the other day she went, 'hang on. I'll just go and get her' and she came back and went, 'hello it's Hannah' and he believed her.

In this scenario, Charlotte may have been able to exploit this interchangeability to gain access to 'private' information about her sister's relationship.

Conclusion

The body provides twins with a valuable resource for negotiating their identities as they grow up. Indeed, this chapter has shown that many twins use their bodies to navigate a pathway towards adulthood – with older child twins tending to emphasise

difference in line with cultural expectations that they will develop as individuals. However this movement away from sameness towards difference is not a clear-cut and finite transition. Even though older twins tend to emphasise their differences, some cling on to aspects of twin sameness and may not give up on them altogether as they move into adulthood. Indeed, it seems that whilst sameness is forfeited, it is also snatched back. Older child and adult twins may tell others that they are twins or occasionally choose to dress alike – acts that bring their status as twins into view. Thus whilst twins are expected to sacrifice twin sameness as they get older and become adults, the extraordinariness of this identity may be hard to give up on.

Whilst, for non-identical twins, the very fleshiness of their bodies may make their status as twins difficult to detect and provide a useful basis for amplifying and fashioning difference, the physicality of identical-looking twins' bodies may work to constrain the extent of such creativity. It may be more difficult for these twins to escape being socially classified as twins when caught up in social interaction with other embodied actors. Yet since some of these older twins also wanted to cling on to some aspects of twinship, the absence of this may make it difficult for different-looking twins to attract attention as twins! Nevertheless, the body still provides twins with a resource for expressing their identities and a medium through which to experience their identities – whether that be as 'normal', 'stupid' or 'special' persons, as 'twins', 'sisters' or 'brothers'.

The following chapter now turns to explore how twins use space as a resource for constructing and negotiating their identities. Since we cannot ever get outside of our bodies, this too draws attention to the embodied nature of identity.

Chapter 5: Space

'Space is understood to play an active role in the constitution and reproduction of social identities; and

social identities, meanings and relations are recognised as producing material and symbolic or

metaphorical spaces'

(Valentine, 2001: 4).

Introduction

Space cannot be separated from identity. As embodied beings we go about the process of building, establishing, validating and resisting various identities within and through specific spatial contexts. Thus far this thesis has looked at the adult organisation and classification of space and explored how children are regulated and controlled in space. However, in order to examine another dimension of children's agency, this chapter explores how twins draw on space as a resource for constructing and negotiating identity. Thus, following on from the previous discussion of parents' decisions about bedroom space and school classes, this chapter explores how twins utilise bedroom space and school space to mark out their identities and to variously reproduce, resist and modify, cultural discourses of twinship.[64] Throughout, the main concern will be to explore how twins negotiate the spatial contexts of togetherness and apartness to position the 'self' in relation to the three main defining features of 'twin' identity – sameness, togetherness and closeness.

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[64] This chapter draws on interview data, children's drawings of their own bedrooms, discussions of vignettes and their depictions of life without a twin to achieve this aim.

Theorising bedroom space

Rather than merely providing a backdrop for social action, space plays 'an active role in the constitution and reproduction of social identities' (Valentine, 2001: 4). Space is invested with social meanings, however, these also feed back into the internal-external dialectic of identification: shaping how we identify others and classify ourselves. Drawing on the work of Claudia Mitchell and Jacqueline Reid-Walsh (2002), bedroom space is here theorised as an 'identity text' which both conveys and contains messages and meanings about the self.[65] Although parents structure this space in various ways, showing how matrices of power are mapped in and reflected through space (Foucault, 1984), children also actively create it as a meaningful place and use it to identify themselves and each other in various ways. Through a process of 'mapping', twins use objects to mark out and construct the self and may transform 'external' meanings produced by parents (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002: 120). Thus we see the interplay of structure and agency through children's use and management of bedroom space and further examine another medium of the internal-external dialectic of identification.

In exploring this process, this chapter draws heavily on the notion of 'boundary'. Cohen (1985) pointed towards the centrality of this concept in constructing a sense of community. Whilst groups may use physical boundaries to partition themselves off from each other, they may also construct symbolic boundaries that provide a *sense* of belonging and are expressed and maintained through social interaction. In Cohen's words, the 'consciousness of community is, then, encapsulated in perception of its boundaries which are themselves largely constituted by people in interaction' (1985:

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[65] This is adapted from Mitchell and Reid-Walsh's original suggestion that bedrooms can be theorised as 'cultural texts' or expressions of popular child culture (see Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002).

13). In this chapter we see how twins use space to give physical expression to the symbolic boundaries they create between and using each other and thus to convey the points at which the self begins and ends.

'Mapping' identity

The children in this study actively used their bedroom space to convey a sense of their own individuality. Indeed, some were quite explicit about the role of bedroom space in conveying identity. For instance, Peter told me:

Peter   Your clothes are seen to.... Your drawings and your clothes and your room, whatever, seems to, well your surroundings seem to reflect your personality.

Posters, toys, tapes, CDs, videos and décor provided clues about personal tastes and interests and the role of popular culture in shaping them. For example, the walls of Charlotte and Hannah's room were plastered with posters of their favourite pop stars, displaying their current likings for particular (predominantly male) pop idols.[66] These posters existed in the same space as the teddies they had since childhood. Thus, as Mitchell and Reid-Walsh (2002) also found, it seems that bedroom space is a space of transitional identity where past, present and future identities merge. In part, this may well be due to the fact that other household spaces are deemed inappropriate for containing such objects. Toys may be cleared away from the lounge or dining room to create 'adult' spaces. Bedrooms thus become hoarding grounds for children's toys, make-up, magazines and computer games – objects that map out the trajectory of time's

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[66] McRobbie (1991: 171) suggests that posters of male pop stars allow girls to stare at their idols without being ridiculed.

passage. However, in this example, Charlotte and Hannah use this space to produce a dominant identity text. Whilst teddies may be present, it is the posters that dominate the space and greet the onlooker's eye. In this sense, it is their knowledge of and participation in 'teenage' popular culture that is pushed to the foreground of this display. For Ash and Harry (aged 8) elements of their early 'childhood' are packaged away for them by their parents. Toys are consigned to the wardrobe and teddies stuffed under their bunk beds. In this way, bedroom space is transformed into an 'age appropriate' space and is used by parents to display their children's 'developmental' progression. This is particularly evident when their mother Clare explains her future decorating plans:

| Clare | Well we haven't decorated yet because you said you want Harry Potter on don't you? And I say, 'no, we're not having Harry Potter on, we're having grown-up wall paper!' |

Although Ash and Harry's parents control the overall arrangement and design of their bedroom space, in one sense, they resist the pressure to demonstrate that they are 'growing up' by drawing on elements of this childhood/ 'childish' culture to exhibit their different interests. Having been given the opportunity to choose their own bedspreads, Ash uses this to signify his interest in Digimon[67] whilst Harry illustrates his liking of Harry Potter.[68] Yet in another sense, Ash and Harry also display their commitment to reaching the goal of adulthood by expressing their valuing of individuality. Harry would ideally like this expression of individuality to be reflected in the décor of their room:

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[67] An animated television series from Japan.
[68] The main character in J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter' stories about wizards and witches.

Harry	You can just do Harry Potter wallpaper here *[the wall next to his bunk]* so I can see it and then you do normal wallpaper all around. ... You could put Digimon things around the top *[next to Ash's bunk]*.

In Harry's suggestion, this distinction between Harry/Harry Potter and Ash/Digimon is clear-cut and does not give any indication of overlapping interests. This is interesting given that throughout the interviews both Harry *and* Ash said they liked Harry Potter. In this example then, Harry reveals the creative power of bedroom space in simplifying and signifying identity. Bedroom space may be used to conceal ambivalence and ambiguity to trim off the rough edges and firm up the boundary between self and other.

Although at 8 years old, Ash and Harry may not be permitted to transform such ideals into reality, Liam and Dan (aged 17) had more control over the choice of bedroom décor:

Liam	Dan's got kind of a Japanese look.
Dan	Mine's kind of more laid back.
Kate	Go on then tell me – yours is decorated *[to Liam]*?
Dan	His is very modern and -
Liam	Black and white stripes, white walls and this kind of wall design. It's actually completely different cos I've got more London-ey, kind of modern.
Dan	And mines...
Liam	His is completely East Oriental Buddha [inaudible].
Dan	It's more, its yeah, quite quiet.

By impressing their tastes and personalities into their bedroom space, twins actively transform these spaces into *places*. Place is defined as 'space to which meaning has

been ascribed' (Carter, et al., 1993: xii).[69] Put another way, space becomes place when it has become 'somewhere'. However importantly, these identities are not simply located inside the space of the bedroom, but also stretch far beyond it. For example, Hannah and Charlotte's posters and Harry and Ash's bed spreads connect them to the broader worlds of teenage and childhood culture. This notion of place is therefore also a 'progressive notion of place' (Massey, 1994) in the sense that it acknowledges how the micro and macro 'scales' of social life are linked together.

The enabling and constraining spatial context of the 'single' room

Although thus far, no distinction has been drawn between those twins that lived together in one room and those twins that lived apart, these different spaces provide various enabling and constraining contexts for mapping out identity and creating an 'individual' self.

Of those twins still living at home, only Ian and Peter, Liam and Dan and Rebecca and Andrea were in different rooms at the time of interview (although, these twins had also experienced sharing a room too). Having 'separate' rooms offered twins the opportunity to locate such expressions of self within a bounded space. As Sibley notes, '... when a child has been given its own bedroom, then the space may be appropriated, transformed and the boundaries secured by marking that space as its own' (1995: 131). Having one's own room allows twins to characterise the entire space as their own, and secure property as their own – as Ian (aged 13) said, 'now we [don't] share a room, we've got like our own stuff and we can like keep our own stuff safe'. The 'single' room creates and affirms 'individual' ownership and acts as a container for the separate self –

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[69] Notions of 'space' and 'place' are central concepts within geography and have been heavily debated (see Andrews, 2003 for a review).

a self that can be protected and maintained though its physical separation from the other. However, this being the case, 'owned' objects can flow more freely between these differentiated spaces without necessarily threatening the security of individuality. For example, Peter kept some of his juggling equipment in Ian's room whilst Dan had many of Liam's CDs in his room. All these twins also talked about visiting each other's rooms to spend time together. Entry in and out of each other's rooms was not heavily policed as Liam and Dan explained:

Liam	I just walk in his room and I think when I'm downstairs he's in my room.
Dan	Rummaging about trying to find something.
Liam	But I don't really get too bothered unless he's got a project to be in by the next morning, then he gets like *[impersonating Dan]* 'get out!'

Although there is a definite notion of 'my' room and 'his' room, this individual space is not always closed off to one's fellow twin. On the contrary, movement takes place across this boundary so that 'his stuff' might be located in 'my room'. The exception to this rule emerges when Dan needs to concentrate on his studies. At this point, when privacy is demanded, this space is closed down and Liam becomes a 'space invader'.

This resonates with Barth's (1969) conclusion that symbolic boundaries persist despite a flow of interaction across them. According to him, it is precisely because interaction occurs across the boundary that differences can be judged, stereotyped and transformed into points of differentiation. Thus, rather than encouraging 'assimilation,' this movement helps to act out difference in everyday life. Hence, whilst twins and the objects they 'own' may step over onto the other side of the boundary this only serves to bring the distinction between self and other into sharper focus. When 'my' CD is in 'your' room, I have the spatial coordinates for where I end and you begin. However,

importantly, it is the sense of 'separateness' that the 'single' room conveys that enables twins to secure property and space as their *own* and paradoxically also what makes them feel at ease about loaning these objects out.

Growing up, moving out

The significance attributed to such 'personal space' increases, as twins get older:

Kate	What did you think to sharing a room?
Dan	It didn't really bother me until -
Liam	Later on.
Dan	Later on when you're kind of getting older.
Liam	*[Talks over Dan]* and you want your own space.
Dan	You want your own space yeah erm, up 'til then it -
Liam	It was fine for when we were growing up.
Dan	It was just normal.
Liam	...But when you're out of there do you know what I mean? You're just a few years bigger and you think I need space to do stuff.

'Getting out' of childhood means getting out of the shared room. Dan's point of view becomes even clearer when he speaks with me alone:

Dan	I think you... I think you become... Whereas from a young age you're quite similar, you're the same age, you're twins and you kind of have roughly the same interests and that and I think, as you get older you change don't you? And so you start wanting different things and you can't really, you can't really, both people can't be happy if we're both living in the same space.

Such accounts closely resemble parental understandings of child development and as such, point to how parental narratives can help to structure children's own explanations. Related to this, they also once again confirm the hegemony of developmental psychology. Space is required as twins get older in order to make room for the developing individual. As Dan clearly points out, the shared room is associated with 'being a twin' and having the same interests; however the movement into 'separate' rooms marks the *natural* transition out of twinship towards becoming an autonomous, independent and unique person.[70]

As an adult who returned back to the family home after living with her partner, Andrea was adamant that her parents acknowledge her *need* for a separate space where she could practice her adult status:

Andrea	[...] I wanted my own room. And that's why I moved out the second time. And then when I came back, it was the condition I came back that I'd have my own bedroom for my own space.
Kate	That was the condition was it?
Andrea	Yeah.
Kate	So you told...
Andrea	Mum'd say 'come back' and I'd say, 'I'll come back but I don't want to share a room again. I want my own room wi my own things. I need my own wardrobe, I need it decorating how I want it decorating'.

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[70] There is no reason to think that this desire for 'space' is specific to twins. As Chapter 2 showed, this movement towards independence constitutes part of our cultural normative timetable of 'growing up'. Indeed, previous research emphasises the importance of 'space' for adolescents and links this to a concern to differentiate and separate the self from parents (see Larson, 1995). However, this may take on added significance for twins who also have to distance themselves from each other in order to achieve independence.

For Andrea, the prospect of retreating into a former state of childhood togetherness is unthinkable. Having her 'own space' is *necessary* if she is to be acknowledged as an autonomous individual. This space, like her-self has to be bounded and personalised. It cannot be anywhere, it has to be somewhere, and somewhere that symbolically affirms that she has 'split up' from her sister.

This space therefore provides twins with the opportunity to act out an autonomous, self-determined self. For example, Liam told me that Dan was 'always working in his room' and explained how he used his own room to read, listen to CDs and play his drum kit. Similarly, Ian and Peter explained how having separate rooms allowed them to practice their own musical instruments without the sounds clashing. Peter told me that if they practiced in the same room, 'mine would over-power Ian's sound'. Within the confines of this 'individual' space, then, twins are not obliged to take their fellow twin into account and in this sense, the 'separate room' offers some escape from the controlling power of one's fellow twin.

Related to this, this 'individual space' also offers twins an opportunity to develop a 'private' self. A door can potentially be closed or locked: 'I just walk in shut the bedroom door and I'm in there on my own' (Andrea, aged 23). Closing the bedroom door offers an opportunity to participate in 'backstage' behaviour (Goffman, 1969) – that is, behaviour conducted out of the sight of an audience, which may, if revealed in public, be frowned upon. Twins may therefore utilise the single room when they feel that they need to be alone. Here, personal feelings can be contained within a personal space. In Liam's words, one can 'sulk' and let feelings 'boil up inside'. Solitude offers a space for private reflection, where fears, pressures and worries can be internally discussed and experienced. As Larson points out:

Rather than being merely the absence of people, aloneness becomes recognised as an experiential niche providing valuable personal opportunities for emotional self-regulation and cultivation of the private self (Larson, 1995: 541).

It can also offer some escape from adult power. Liam explained how Dan retreated to his own room when he thought his parents were treating him unfairly. However, importantly, such 'freedom' is not absolute. On the contrary, many of the children explained how parents still managed these 'private' spaces by telling them to tidy and clean their rooms. In doing this, parents temporarily override any sense their children may have of controlling their own rooms and encourage them to acquire middle-class ideals of 'cleanliness, tidiness, orderliness, and the attendant qualities of responsibility and pride of place necessary for the functioning of an orderly civil society' (Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002: 135).

Personal space away from one's twin is especially valued when entertaining girl/boyfriends. As Liam said: 'you begin to have girlfriends and that and you just want your own kind of space instead of being with Dan all the time'. In making the decision to take his girlfriend, Lynne, to his own room, Liam confirms that it is he, not his twin brother that Lynne is going out with. In this way, any sense of indistinctiveness and interchangeability is avoided. Moreover, it is within and through this setting of 'private' space that Liam presents himself as a unique, separate, bounded individual who is not forever connected to and known by his twin brother. Physical space from one's twin is necessary in drawing a clear line between the intimate heterosexual couple and the assumed closeness of twins.

Liam   […] If he had a girlfriend, I wouldn't go out with him […] when I've got my girlfriend, he doesn't come out with me.

Kate	Right.
Liam	Unless he's got something to gain from it. Like if I'm going into town he'll come along and he'll go off on his own. It's a bit weird when you start 'come Dan lets go, me and my girlfriend'.

The 'weirdness' that Liam refers to reflects the negative social value now attributed to twin physical togetherness. In this sense, these twins give physical expression to the incest taboo whilst also declaring that this has not been transgressed. The absence of one's fellow twin momentarily confirms the overriding importance being attributed to heterosexual intimacy (over and above twin closeness) and linked to this, asserts that one's twin is not fulfilling this role.

This separate space takes on added significance when partners begin sleeping together as Rebecca (aged 23) explained:

Rebecca	I've only got a like double bed in my room she 'int getting in that with me and Craig. I don't think that'd work very well.

Twins move into these spaces to close off access to their fellow twin and to uphold the privacy of their hetero-sexual relationships. However this signifies a reversal of the physical togetherness that they once shared in childhood:

Rebecca	But we used to like get into each other's bed on a night though, just for a cuddle [...]. Sounds really really odd, but we like our backs being scratched a lot and like so we'd get in bed and we'd have a clock next to us and we'd actually time it for a minute – I'd scratch her back for a minute and then it'd be like my turn to scratch. [...]

Rebecca is keen to point out the limits of this childhood intimacy by making clear that they *only* 'cuddled' and alongside this also shows her commitment to normative life course timetables by explaining how she has sacrificed this 'innocent' expression of closeness in favour of establishing sexual intimacy with her partner. Physical separation from one's twin (into a 'separate room') is therefore also vital in signalling that as an individual (with no ties), Rebecca is ready to be re-partnered. Once this has occurred, partners may take on some of the roles that the twin once took. Sally explains:

> **Sally** [...] We used to go 'mm' like that, just go 'mm' in our sleep and the other one had to reply with like a grunt as well. And if the other one didn't reply you kept doing it until the other one did because you didn't want to think that one had fallen asleep before you.

As an adult now sleeping with a boyfriend instead of her sister, she substitutes her partner to replace her twin:

> **Sally** [...] If I stay over at his I don't want him to go to sleep before me. And I'll prod him actually *[laughs]*. But I told him about what I did with my sister and I said, 'can you just some nights, if I do make that noise, just do it for me because it comforts me completely'. So that's weird. It's a really weird thing and it's probably always stayed with me.

Spatially separated from her twin sister, a partner provides a socially acceptable alternative for establishing the 'comfort' that being together once brought.

The enabling and constraining context of the shared room

In the absence of such physical separation, twins who live together in one room have to develop alternative ways of securing their individuality and independence. Firstly they may 'name and claim' objects or areas of physical space as their own; secondly they may negotiate the *use* of space to practice their individuality; and finally, linked to this, they may create 'private' spaces to retreat from togetherness.

Naming and claiming

Although, as we have already seen, parents may draw attention to the children's twin identities by placing them together in one room and encouraging them to share objects within this space, older child twins actively transform this space to resist such expectations. Through naming and claiming space and objects, many of these twins re-set and redefine the stage upon and through which they perform their identities. This is an important part of identity work since, as Cohen and Taylor point out, 'the possibilities for transforming reality [...] are limited [...] by the unsuitability of the settings in which they must occur' (1976: 91). Twins therefore seek to maximise the effectiveness of their identity work by making the spatial setting conducive for acting out this alternative script of identity – one which asserts their status as individuals rather than as twins.

Twins often used the spaces of their rooms to draw out physical boundaries between self and other. Often their rooms were 'split' into two sides. This was the case for Ruth and Emma (aged 13):

Kate	So what about your bedroom then? Have you always shared a room or -
Together	Yeah.
Ruth	*[Looking over at Emma]* Well we were looking for a house that I could have a different bedroom in but there wasn't any.
Kate	Right.
Ruth	So we could have our own bedroom [...]. But this one is better cos there's like a divider as well cos it's got like dip things in the wall so you can put your bed in there. And then we're going to have a wardrobe that can split it as well so you don't always see each other.
Kate	I see. So you like your bed where you can't see Emma?
Ruth	Yeah.
Emma	But I can see Ruth cos the radiator's in the way so my bed can't fit in.
Kate	Right.
Ruth	At the moment anyway, you're getting in!
Kate	Do you think there are any good and bad sides to sharing a room?
Ruth	Well the problem with the side of Emma's is that I always clean it! I always tidy it up.
Emma	Cos my side is the mess at the moment. Cos you've got two people in the room and it's a mess.

Although Ruth and Emma were still together in the one room, they actively used this space to create 'Emma's side' and 'Ruth's side'. This naming process, is integral to the transformation of space into place (Carter, et al., 1993: xii). In naming and claiming space, these twins struggle to define parts of this space as their own and thus to create two *places:* Emma's place and Ruth's place. Each place reflects the singularity of each twin, identifying Ruth and Emma as distinct, unique and self-contained entities. In short, Emma is not Ruth and Ruth is not Emma.

The significance of this divide is made clear in Emma's bedroom picture (see figure 16 below). Emma increases the size of the division from 'little' to 'big'.

Figure 16: 'My bedroom' - by Emma, aged 13 (pseudonyms added)
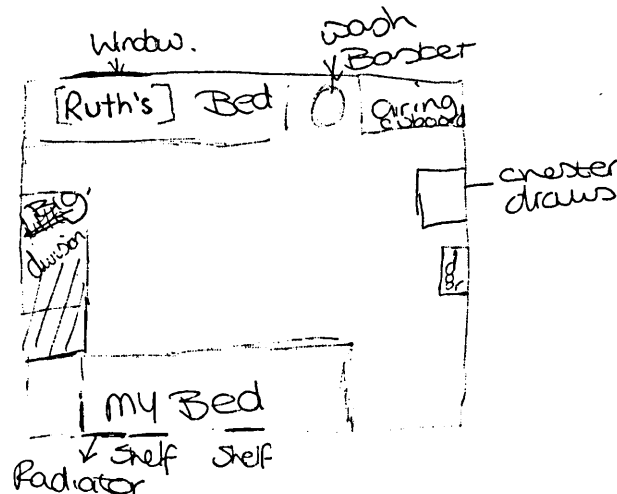
Since, as Massey (1994) argues, social relationships emerge from and feed into the organisation of space, we might say that this amplification exaggerates the extent of their 'disconnectedness'; they have even less to do with each other than the 'little' divide implied. Indeed, this drawing quite literally banishes any assumption of 'closeness'. Drawing on Cohen (1985) we might also say that since the boundary between self and other is symbolically extended, the 'imagined' 'gap' separating them out grows bigger and the extent of difference is thereby increased. This picture can, therefore be read as a commentary on identity, communicating who she is (an 'individual') and who she is not (a 'twin'). Related to both of these points, the very notion of 'my side' also implies a sense of belonging: *I* belong here; this side belongs to *me*. Thus whilst, this picture shows how the physical space of the bedroom is divided up, it also identifies 'spaces of belonging' (Morley, 2001: 425) and conveys a sense in which Emma feels like she belongs in a different place to her sister Ruth. Although this

point will be taken up later on when discussing the symbolic significance of the 'single bed' in marking out these 'sides', this example shows how twins can use space to resist assumptions that they 'belong together'.

However, although, in this sense, Emma distances herself from notions of twin sameness, interchangeability and togetherness, her interview narrative reveals that this divide is not impermeable. Since these two places exist within one room, Emma's side becomes Ruth's concern: 'the problem with the side of Emma's is that I always clean it! I always tidy it up'. Ruth keeps her sister in check and takes over the management of her sister's space when it becomes messy. In such everyday situations, the relatedness of these places is emphasised: 'her' place is part of 'our' room. However, by tidying her sister's belongings up, Emma also puts them back into their appropriate place, deals with any anomalies and re-affirms their status as 'owned' objects. Interestingly, many of the twins complained about their shared rooms being messed up by their fellow twin. Following Douglas (1966) this complaint can be interpreted as an objection against the blurring of symbolic boundaries and an attempt to 'purify' the distinction between them.

Further examining Emma's narrative we see that the radio and the TV continue to draw out and affirm this boundary:

Kate	Do you have sides then?
Ruth	Yeah.
Kate	Tell me about that then?
Ruth	Emma's side is where the radio is so she likes to have the radio and my side's near the window and I've got my own television but it's like both of ours really.

The radio, being located on Emma's side thus becomes 'Emma's' and the TV positioned on Ruth's side becomes 'Ruth's'. The latter is particularly interesting given that mum bought the TV for them both to 'share'. The very notion of sharing implies unity, as Andrea (aged 23) noted: sharing signifies that 'you're one person'. In line with this, Emma explained that this was part of being treated 'the same because we are twins' and Ruth and Hannah pinpointed this as a defining feature of twinship:

'If I wasn't a twin [...] We wouldn't have to share as much stuff' (Hannah, aged 15).

'If I wasn't a twin I would be able to have my room all to my self and I wouldn't have to share anything' (Ruth, aged 13).

By renaming the TV as her own, Ruth momentarily re-presents this object as being *individually* owned and uses it to mark out her place in the room. In doing this she temporarily resists being objectified as a (anonymous) 'twin' and instead writes a new discourse into the landscape of her room: substituting twinship for individualism.[71] In this way, she transforms this setting so that it forms an appropriate habitat for the cultivation of a new 'individual' self.

Charlotte and Hannah provide a similar example. Hannah explained: 'Charlotte's TV's on her side and I've got the CD player on my side'. Although throughout the course of the interview, it emerged that Charlotte and Hannah defined the CD player and the TV as shared objects, in this extract, Hannah used them to mark out and emphasise the separateness of their 'sides': because their spaces do not overlap, the TV

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[71] As Valentine points out, discourses may be embedded within space (Valentine, 2001: 5). This is not to suggest that there is anything 'essential' or 'fixed' about the identities of different spaces. On the contrary, space may be actively constructed and reconstructed so that it comes to take on different meanings (Massey, 1994).

becomes Charlotte's and the CD player, Hannah's. In this sense these objects act as identity markers that help to discursively create a sense of having 'individual' space.

On a more mundane level, beds, wardrobes, drawers and shelves were also named and claimed. Beds were always individually owned and never claimed as 'shared' space. The latter would contravene the very cultural (incest) taboo that these 'single' and 'separate' beds give physical expression to. Possibly not surprisingly, then, twins were often keen to differentiate the beds in the room:

Kate	Do you share a room or have you got your own room?
Ash	We've got us -
Harry	We share a room.
Ash	I've got top bunk!

Twins sometimes named their beds in their bedroom pictures thereby marking out the limits of their closeness. In both Adam's picture (see figure 17, p. 200) and Emma's picture (shown earlier in this chapter - see figure 16, p. 196), there is certainly no sense that these beds are shared or interchangeable. On the contrary the separateness of these beds is accentuated and drawn upon as a resource to assert individuality. As Newson points out, one's own bed constitutes the 'most basic "personal space"' (cited in O'Brien, 1995: 510). Like Emma, Adam names his own and his twin's bed, effectively marking out where these named selves can be located and contained. Indeed, by naming their beds these twins intensify the symbolic power of the 'single bed' to signify the presence of a separate, singular and bounded self.

Whilst the youngest child twins were sleeping in bunk beds, many of the older children actively positioned their single beds in ways that affirmed this spatial

Figure 17: 'My bedroom' - by Adam, aged 16 (pseudonyms added)
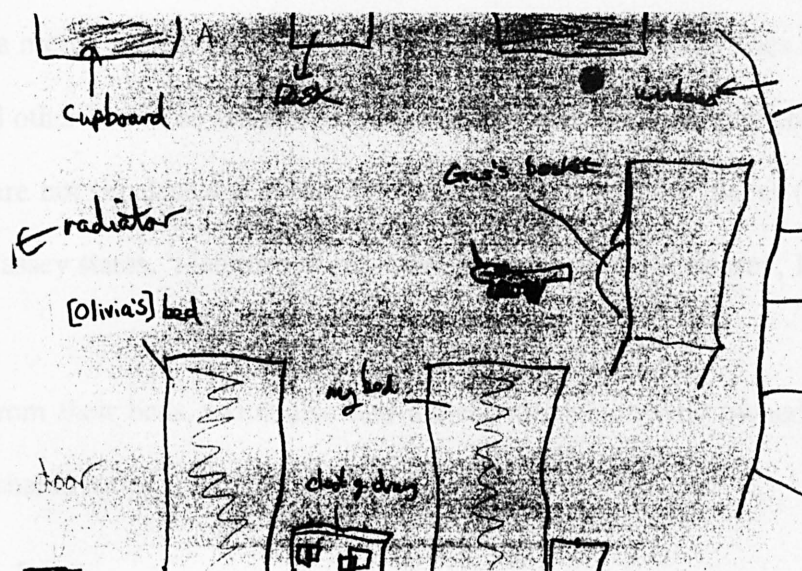
boundary. Indeed, whilst the physical shape of the bedroom may have been conducive to creating a physical boundary, it was the positioning of the beds in relation to this boundary that effectively served to mark out space as 'yours' and 'mine'. For example, Emma's picture shows how one bed is placed either side of the 'Big division' to identify Emma's side and Ruth's side. Importantly, the beds are pushed to the far edges of the room, and no objects drawn in the middle of the room serving to intensify the polarity of this divide. Similarly Sally explained how she and her sister Rachel used the archways of their room to 'split' the room up: 'we used to have archways either side – she had a bed there *[in one archway]* and I had a bed there *[in the other]*.'

However, this space may change shape. As we have already seen, 'shared rooms' may become 'separate' rooms when children 'grow up' 'Open' spaces (a 'separate room that one's twin can enter freely) may also be closed down when privacy is required. However, on an even smaller scale, objects within the room may be relocated and identities shifted accordingly. For example, Ruth and Emma said they had sometimes

swapped beds when they had become bored with their present arrangement. However, the emphasis they continue to place on individual ownership suggests that rather than signifying a merging of selves, this movement only meant that the lines separating out the self and other had to be redrawn so that 'her' bed now became 'my' bed. Identities, therefore, are not timeless and static, forever tied into particular places (one particular bed). As Massey states, 'identities of place are always unfixed' (Massey, 1994: 5).

Aside from their beds, twins also had a clear idea about who owned other objects within the shared room:

Kate	Who's is what. Who sleeps where?
Charlotte	That bed's Hannah's.
Hannah	That's mine *[pointing at the bed]*.
Charlotte	And that's Hannah's *[pointing at the chest-of-drawers]*.
Kate	What these chest-of-drawers?
Charlotte	Yeah.
Hannah	No they were already here, but I've just decided to put my hamster on them.
Kate	So that bed's yours Hannah and those chest-of-drawers next to it are yours?
Hannah	Yeah.
Charlotte	And that chest-of- drawers thing's Hannah's.
Hannah	And they're mine and they're Charlotte's *[pointing at some shelves near Charlotte's bed]*.

By agreeing where these boundaries lie, Charlotte and Hannah work together to personify each other as 'individuals'. As Cohen explains when describing how we become aware of 'culture':

... when we are brought up against its boundaries: that is when we become aware of *another* culture, of behaviour which deviates from the norms of our own. Put briefly ... we are not aware of the distinctiveness and circumscription of our own behaviour until we meet its normative boundaries in the shape of alternative forms (Cohen, 1982: 4)

Faced with each other and the opposite side of the room, these twins are constantly brought up against the boundary that separates them out. By splitting the room up into 'owned' places, they help each other to mark out who they stand with (namely the realm of other singleton children who do *not* share everything) and who they stand against (each other and the category 'twins'). In this sense, these twins provide each other with valuable human resources for establishing a sense of 'felt' individuality. However, paradoxically, this also means that they construct a relational self that cannot exist without the presence (and cooperation) of the other twin! Hence, whilst, in dividing the shared room into two distinct 'halves', twins may attempt to resist 'being' twins, they also reproduce some dominant motifs of twinship: twins are two peas in a pod; twins are two halves of one unit.

Moreover, whilst these older twins may attempt to redefine this space and through it, reconstruct themselves, others may still interpret the shared room as a signifier of twinship. As Lechner points out,

> Bounded space makes any social order more concrete and intensely experienced. But spatial ordering not only reinforces social order, it also lends greater clarity to conflictual relations. Partitioning thus influences relations within and across boundaries (which can be drawn more or less narrowly) (Lechner, 1991: 197).

For Ellie (aged 12), younger sister to Charlotte and Hannah, the bounded space of her twin sisters' 'shared' room only served to affirm their unity and her isolation from it.

Her explanation of what life would be like if she wasn't a sister to twins (see figure 18 below) makes this clear.

Figure 18: 'What life would be like if I wasn't a sister to twins' – by Ellie, aged 12

What Life Would Be Like If
I Wasn't A Sister To Twins...

If I wasn't a sister to twins, I think life would be easier because, I wouldn't always get left out. I think I would get along better with just one off them, and not two. I think this because, I could do more things with just one of them such as, share a bedroom because at the minute I have one off my own and I would like to share because I think it would help us communicate more with eachother.

MY SISTERS   ME

2 gether   LONLEY

Here the opposition between togetherness and loneliness runs parallel to the distinction between twinship and siblingship. Reflecting the continuum of siblingship outlined in Chapter 2, twins come in pairs and go together whilst sisters are on their own without a partner. Charlotte and Hannah are pictured as almost identical stick figures and set in opposition to Ellie who looks different to them. The word '2 gether' draws attention to the twoness of twinship – both in terms of twin sameness and in terms of twin togetherness – and quite literally connects the two figures together filling the space in between their bodies. In contrast, Ellie's loneliness surrounds the space around her body only serving to emphasise that there is no one else there. Whilst Charlotte and Hannah

are happy to be together, Ellie is sad not to be with them. For Ellie, the shared room affirms that her sisters belong together and helps mark her out as an outsider – a status that is further confirmed through being allocated to a single room.

This partitioning of space also influences relations across the boundary. The 'me and them' divide sometimes made Ellie feel 'left out' and like her sisters ganged up on her:

Kate	[...] If you could tell me how you sort of experience your family life... being here with your mum and your twin sisters.
Ellie	Well like, my sist- like Hannah and Charlotte have got each other, share a bedroom and that. But like when I'm feeling a bit left out, my mum like chats with me and she says we're just like twins. And like when my sisters are having a go at me, then my mum will have a go at them and she'll back me up.

Although here mum tries to become Ellie's twin to make the groups quantitatively and qualitatively equal, from Ellie's point of view, her twin sisters still have something that she does not have – each other. For Ellie, this is a vital part of being a twin: 'if you're a twin you have each other'. Thus, although twins may try to redefine this space and through it themselves, it is questionable as to how far these definitions are accepted and validated by others. As we have seen here, the presence of other siblings, located in 'single' rooms may help to bring their twinship into view.

Negotiating the use of objects and space

Through negotiating the use of objects and space, twins act out and practice the distinctions they make between self and other in their everyday lives. Many of the older

twins drew attention to the limits this 'shared' space placed upon their capacity to action self-determined choices. Thinking back to when he moved from the 'shared' room, Liam (aged 17) said,

Liam   [...] I think it was the right time to kind of change and erm ... cos I wanted my own space. I think Dan definitely wanted his own space. [...] I'd like be watching TV he'd 'I want to watch something else' like that, and then there'd be like er, I'd be like reading a book and I'll have the light on and he goes 'I want to go to sleep, turn the light off'. And it was just silly things like that and you think 'I need my own room really' [...].

Andrea's retrospective account practically mirrors this:

Andrea   [...] but then as we got older and you want to do your own thing... I'd come in maybe at a different time and go to bed cos I was always like the quiet one but she'd come in been to pub, turn the light on, want to read. I'm like, 'turn the light off!', 'no I'm reading'. 'Well it's really selfish. I've got to be up for work.' 'No I'm reading.' [...]

Like Andrea (aged 23) and Liam, twin sisters Charlotte and Hannah (aged 15) both reported difficulty in negotiating their different sleeping patterns:

Hannah   If she fancies someone... She goes on about this one lad for weeks on end and I'm trying to get to sleep on a night and she's going on about him.

Charlotte I go to bed earlier than Hannah so when she comes in we start arguing.

Importantly, increasing autonomy, here associated with growing up, is seen to make this living arrangement difficult to manage. Given the importance of beds in carving out 'individual' space it is possibly not surprising that these twins became frustrated when they were unable to use these exclusively owned objects as and when they pleased. Keeping a light on brought the interconnected nature of their individually owned places into view – the personal space of one bed being invaded by light from the opposite 'side' of the room.

Despite such difficulties, older child twins often tried to negotiate the use of the space within their rooms to mark out the self as a distinct entity. In contrast to many of the reported experiences given by twins living in separate rooms, objects did not often flow freely across and between the different sides of the room. Hence when the boundary separating out self and other is under threat or unstable, the objects marking it out may become more closely monitored and guarded from 'invasion'. As Raffaelli argues, 'possessions are integral to self definition' and therefore disputes over ownership may reflect 'issues of self definition and personal boundaries'(Raffaelli, 1992: 660).

Hannah explained the importance of keeping beds 'pure' (Douglas, 1966):

Hannah	[...] She goes mad though if I sit on her bed.
Kate	Right.
Hannah	She goes 'get on your own bed!'
Kate	Why do you think that is?
Hannah	Don't know.
Kate	... Does it matter if she sits on yours?
Hannah	Yeah, I tell her to get off it.

Kate	Why?
Hannah	Cos it's my side.

Although some literature on place and belonging suggests that 'outsiders' and 'strangers' may be deemed to threaten our sense of identity and belonging (Morley, 2001), in this case, however, it is precisely because one's twin is *not* a stranger that they become so threatening. These twins live together in one space that, in emphasising twin togetherness, threatens to undermine the security of the 'individual' self. Beds are thus guarded and protected to ensure that the boundary between self and other, my place and your place, is not transgressed or blurred. As part of this process, one's twin may be symbolically constructed as an 'outsider' (by being cast out of 'my side') or identified as 'matter out of place' (if they come to fall on the 'wrong' side of the boundary) (Douglas, 1966). This way the singularity of the self is upheld and the twoness of twinship played down. Indeed, this regulation of space may be one way in which Hannah and Charlotte practice their assertion that they are (singleton) 'sisters' rather than 'twins' (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 6). By keeping the single bed – a symbol of oneness – 'pure', these twins can actively affirm their belonging to the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991) of singleton siblings whilst detaching themselves from each other.

Twins also often contained their own property within their own spaces. Hence, Andrea explained how she kept her things in 'her' bottom two drawers, Olivia how she kept her own clothes in 'her' cupboard and Rachel how she kept her things on her own shelf. In this sense, twins act out and try to maintain the clarity of this divide between 'my' space and 'your' space. Where there is fear that this distinction will be undermined, twins may go to more extreme measures to 'protect' their belongings:

Hannah	And I've put like, had to put a lock on some of my stuff so she can't get to it and use it – cos she always like uses it so there's hardly any left for me. She just like comes and nicks my make up and stuff. So I've got a lock on it so she can't use it and hid the keys.

By placing her property under lock and key, Hannah tries to guard it from being used by her twin sister Charlotte. Certainly in one sense, knowing where one's things are located helps to police and manage any potential invasions:

Andrea	But if she went to a drawer there, if I saw here do it, I'd... 'What you doin?' 'I'm borrowing your socks'. 'Well where's yours?' 'Well I ant got any'. 'Well why?' And it'd be like that – bit of interrogation. And she'd go, 'oh please let me' and I'd be, 'oh alright then, oh yeah hang on'.

Knowing that her socks were kept in *that* drawer, Andrea was able to quickly intercept her sister's attempts to borrow her things. Although she may have agreed to loan this property out, this was not done unconditionally but after a 'bit of interrogation'. Hence, what's mine is certainly *not* yours!

Any object found to be 'out of place' (i.e. in 'her' drawer, on 'her' shelf) could be cast back into its 'proper' place:

Charlotte	I put my stuff on her shelf.
Kate	You put your stuff on her shelf?
Charlotte	She just threw it on my bed so I'll have to clean it up.

By placing Charlotte's 'stuff' on Charlotte's bed, her sister Hannah re-locates this 'impure' material (Morley, 2001) firmly within Charlotte's side of the room and cleans up the anomaly she has created ready for her sister Charlotte to place the object back in its appropriate place.

Even though these older twins tried to regulate the movement of objects across this boundary, often property was borrowed without asking – a common root of arguments and upset. Charlotte's picture (see figure 19 below) of what it was like to be a twin at home positioned this conflict at the centre of her experience:

Figure 19: 'Being a twin' – by Charlotte, aged 15

Here, Charlotte tells Hannah to 'shut up' and Hannah replies, 'I don't think so'. This, so Charlotte explained to me, simulates an argument over 'who's took each other's stuff'. Although Charlotte and Hannah borrowed each other's 'stuff' without asking they both said that this property *should* be requested and returned to the owner. Thus, as was the case in the previous chapter when these twins talked about borrowing clothes, we see a 'lack of fit' between their normative expectations of appropriate behaviour and their accounts of what happened in practice. Indeed, it seems that the benefits of having another person's property so immediately available is hard to relinquish. However, this

need not undermine the boundary they have constructed between and using each other. Since these constructions of individuality are most at threat from being undermined by one's fellow twin, what is important is that twins continually uphold, enact and practice this divide in front-stage interaction (Goffman, 1969), that is, in the presence of and when talking about each other. Borrowing without permission, literally behind closed doors, in the 'backstage' region of space (Goffman, 1969), potentially provides an opportunity to privately acknowledge some of the benefits of living together, to indulge in this aspect of twin experience without one's fellow twin finding out or compromising one's attempts to define the self as an individual set apart from the other. If property is put back in its 'place' then the lines of distinction can also be re-placed and the transgression concealed. Different 'regions' of space therefore offer different degrees of opportunity for balancing individuality alongside some of the advantages of being together.

As well as monitoring individually owned property, some older twins also negotiated the use of 'shared' objects. Often bought and initially placed in the room by parents, TVs, Hi-fi's, CD players and videos could be momentarily transformed into outlets for expressing autonomy and personal taste. Andrea explained how she and her sister Rebecca used the 'shared' Hi-fi:

> Andrea   Er... whoever got up first I suppose put what they wanted [on] and then the other would turn it off and put their's on. So there were plenty of fights about it.

In this scenario, Andrea and Rebecca both compete to get their music heard and thus to activate a sense of having (superior) rights to this object. Charlotte and Hannah reach a slightly more amicable agreement over using their 'shared' TV:

Charlotte	She watches some quiz shows and I don't like stuff like that.
Kate	You don't?
Hannah	It's too hard for her!
Charlotte	*[Laughs]*
Kate	So what happens then?
Charlotte	I go downstairs and watch it and she stays up here.

Having another TV in the house, but importantly, in a space that is used as a public forum (the lounge) enables Charlotte to activate her autonomous choice and affords them both with an opportunity to escape being together. Indeed, using this method, twins are able to maximise their viewing choices.

Thus far, then, we have seen that, in being constantly faced by the other and by enacting the boundaries that separate them out in their daily lives, these twins are able to use each other to construct a sense of their own individual distinctiveness. Through both defining and using their bedroom spaces to mark out and display the self, twins construct themselves and each other as subjects. Aitken (1998 cited in Mitchell and Reid-Walsh, 2002: 9) argues that groups can only be considered as subjects if they can produce identifiable space. Although like other spaces, adults regulate bedroom space, we have seen that this also provides one outlet for children to express who they are or who they want to be. Indeed, children take control of these spaces and mould them into arenas conducive for displaying and practicing particular versions of identity. In doing so they both assert their capacity to act and identify themselves as specific persons rather than being anonymous members of the monolithic category 'twins'. In transforming these spaces into specific *places* they both resist being objectified as 'children' and as 'twins'.

Carving out a private space

Like the twins who had moved into separate rooms, many of the older child twins still living together, and some adult twins who had 'shared' a room, spoke of wanting their 'own space'. Not surprisingly, twins sharing a room often remarked on the lack of privacy that this afforded them. Hannah explained that you 'don't get no privacy' in the shared room because 'she's got all her mates and that round in the bedroom so you can't do what you normally do'. Ruth wanted her own room so she could achieve this kind of privacy. Explaining what it would be like to have her own room she told me, 'when I have a sleep over, you can have like Emma's friends in her own room and my friends in my room'. Privacy is thus achieved when the self is completely concealed from the other – in this instance, when Emma and Ruth are located and contained in different rooms. The partitioning of friends along these dividing lines helps to further crystallise this: each self is individually known. In this 'ideal' scenario, the parameters surrounding each self are made completely impermeable. Neither twin enters the other's space or even sees them. However, living together in one room, these twins are denied the opportunity to secure this type of physical separation. Nonetheless, twins may still use their rooms to escape physical togetherness.

Emma and Ruth exploited the physical shape of their room to try to keep aspects of themselves hidden. Explaining how the 'big' divide would be formed Ruth said, 'we're going to have a wardrobe that can split it as well so you don't always see each other'. In this way, Ruth and Emma try to carve out some 'private' space that is not visible to the other. Using space to contain the self, Ruth thus tries to keep her-self to herself and Emma tries to keep her-self to herself. Once achieved this could therefore potentially offer some opportunity for back-stage behaviour. For other twins, the 'public' nature of

the shared room became difficult to negotiate when wanting to escape from arguments they were having with each other. Hannah explained that in these situations, 'I just want to go and be on my own somewhere'. However the shared room offers little comfort in this respect – as she told me, 'if I'm upstairs, she could just like come upstairs and I'd get stressed even more'. Hannah thus required a space where she could experience her inner feelings in physical isolation from her sister – in short, a setting conducive for activating the private self. Feeling that she had 'nowhere to go' she occasionally sat in the bathroom because, as she explained, 'there's a lock on [the door] and no one can get in'. Closing, securing and guarding the door literally shuts off outside access and thus protects this vulnerable self from any potential invasions. Twins may therefore cultivate the private self through engaging in periods of solitude at home. In helping twins keep themselves to themselves, solitude allows for some escape from being known, offers space for internal reflection and thus helps twins to resist assumptions of 'twin' attachment and unity – for example, expectations that twins think and feel the same things. It also offers an opportunity to practice independence.

Alternatively, twins may exit the home setting altogether, choosing to spend time apart with other family members or friends. Adam and Olivia utilised their older siblings: Adam spent time with his brother Craig, running and swimming, whilst Olivia spent time with Naomi going shopping in town. The presence of four siblings – two boys and two girls – allows the siblings to pair off without leaving anyone out.

Olivia	[...] I think it's probably useful that there's both a boy and a girl.
Kate	Yeah, why?
Olivia	Cos then they've each got someone to play with.

This family composition allows Adam and Olivia to 'split' off into alternative gendered groups. Charlotte and Hannah also had another sibling – Ellie. However, unlike Naomi and Craig, Ellie (aged 12) was a *younger* sister - being three years their junior - and thus carried the potential stigma of 'childishness'. Charlotte and Hannah explained that they did not like to spend time with her when in the company of friends:

Charlotte	Say we've got our mates here, [Ellie] comes in here and sits on the bed.
Kate	Right.
Hannah	But we tell her to get out.
Kate	How come?
Hannah	Cos she just starts acting cocky.

Differences in age thus override and cut through any sense of gendered similarity making any social alliance difficult to establish. From Charlotte and Hannah's point of view, the social stigma of being associated with someone 'younger' makes Ellie an inappropriate escape route from physical togetherness.

Like some of the other older child twins, Charlotte and Hannah said that they spent time apart from each other socialising with their own friends.

Kate	How do you spend your time after school?
Charlotte	I go out with my friends and she goes out with her friends.

Older children like Charlotte often explained that they spent little time together and, in line with findings from other ethnographic studies of older children (for example Ward, 1976; Griffiths, 1995), placed more emphasis on 'going out'. Although this would sometimes involve visiting other children's houses, on other occasions time was spent

outside of the home setting in 'public' spaces – for instance, at the under 18's discos (Hannah), in the pub, at a party (Rebecca) or in town (Hannah). This is especially interesting given that 'public' space is often deemed to represent the antithesis of a 'proper' childhood (Valentine, 2004). By using 'public' space to put 'distance' between them, these twins activate their autonomy and independence from each other in a spatial setting which distances them from 'childhood'. Such distancing strategies may therefore be especially effective in playing down twinship precisely because, as we have already seen, twinship is an identity bound into the social institution of childhood. Within this setting they both activate their status as individuals apart from each other *and* individuals apart from parental surveillance and control.

Making space for twinship

Some twins valued being together and thus rather than wanting to escape this dimension of twinship, actively wanted to participate in it. This was especially prevalent for the youngest twins in the study. Although Ash and Harry named and claimed their toys, these were used as resources for activating and practicing twin togetherness:

Harry	I've got Harry Potter [Lego] at this end [of the room].
Kate	Who plays with this then? Just you?
Harry	Sometimes my brother plays with me ... and I got tons of it upstairs.

In contrast to the older twins, they did not attempt to create bounded, named zones and thus to distance themselves from notions of twin togetherness. On the contrary, togetherness formed a central part of Ash's depiction of what it was like to be a twin at home:

Figure 20: 'Being a twin' – by Ash, aged 8
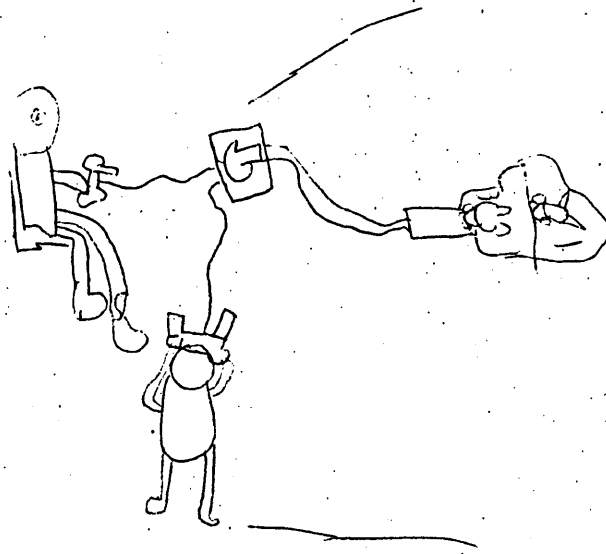
Here Ash and Harry are pictured playing on the 'shared' play station together in their bedroom. Ash identifies this aspect of togetherness as what makes being a twin special:

Kate	Do you think that being a twin is anything special or anything different?
Ash	Special
Harry	Yeah. Special.
Kate	Why is it special?
Ash	Cos you've got someone to play with, be in your clubs, play with you on your play station [...].

When asked what life would be like if he wasn't a twin, Ash said it would be 'horrible' because he would have 'no one to play with'. Similarly, his brother Harry drew a picture of a sad face:

Figure 21: 'What life would be like If I wasn't a twin' – by Harry, aged 8
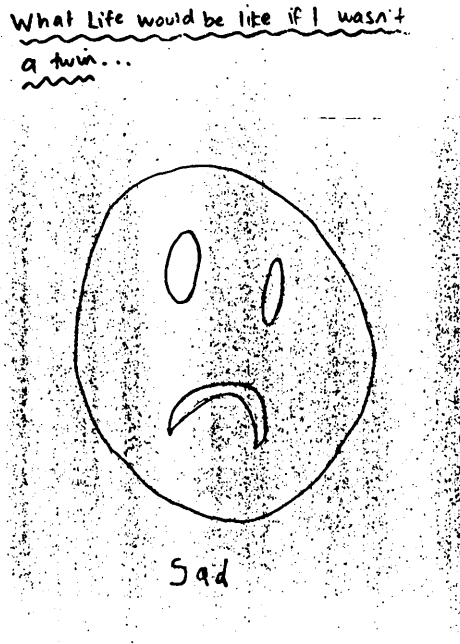
Explaining his point of view Harry said:

Harry	I'm going to put sad.
Kate	Why would you be sad then?
Harry	Cos you've got no one to play with except mum and dad but they don't play with you. And you won't have no one to talk to … […]

In line with this, many of the adult twins reminisced about their past childhoods – the time spent playing together with their twin often formed a central and dominant part of their narratives. Sally (aged 20) told me 'when we were younger we'd always think 'what shall we do?' and we used to do it together'. Sharing a room 'was perfect cos we had all our toys in our room, we had all our books in our room and we could just play in *our* room and it was almost like a play room'. Andrea (aged 23) also remembered that 'it was fun because you used to have a person to talk to and I suppose that's why you're even closer because you're in that room, talking all night. Play in the room when you're little'. She and Rebecca 'used to sit and lay awake chatting and talking about stuff at

night'. The shared room is thus depicted as the container of childhood togetherness and as such becomes a resource for fostering twin closeness.

Cultural constructions of the 'home' and 'childhood' provide the backdrop for this aspect of twin experience. As Chapter 2 pointed out, the process of Western industrialisation saw children removed from paid work and placed in the domestic realms of the home and the school. Indeed, the ideological meanings of 'childhood' and 'the home' have become mutually constitutive – each being defined in and through the other. Whilst childhood is a state of innocence, the home is a safe haven where this innocence can be protected and maintained. As such, it is a 'safe place' where love and protection can flourish:

> Traditionally, the home has been constructed as a private space in opposition to the public space of the world of work; an understanding articulated in the construction of postwar suburban housing estates in North America and Europe. As such, it is commonly regarded as a safe, loving and positive space (Valentine, 2001: 63).

Conceived in this way, the 'public' world (e.g. 'the street', 'the city') is conceptualised as potentially dangerous and disruptive. Epitomised through the fear of 'stranger danger', life outside the home represents unfamiliarity, threats of violence and harm and as such something that children should be protected from (Valentine, 1996).[72] In line with this, Ash (aged 8) told me that his brother would 'spend more time with me cos we're stuck in [the] house all day'. His choice of wording here implies a lack of control – he is stuck at home rather than choosing to be there. In this sense, cultural

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[72] This binary opposition says more about the ideological constructions of the 'public' and 'private' than what actually takes place. As Jenks (Jenks, 1996), has pointed out, the family is one spatial location for child abuse. However importantly, these constructions of 'public' and 'private' help to conceal this and control and regulate the spaces that children have access to or use. A child left alone in the street is 'matter out of place' and should be 'taken home' by a 'responsible parent'.

expectations of normative childhood help to constitute twin togetherness. At 8 years old, Ash and Harry's actions are closely monitored by their parents, who as we saw in Chapter 3, want to keep them as children for as long as possible. Given that space is made for them to be together (both within the home in general and within the shared room more specifically), and they have little power to exit from this, it is possibly no surprise that they pinpoint togetherness as a key component of their experience of being twins. It may also be no surprise that this is represented as a positive experience since, certainly within the home setting, where parents value their togetherness and do not expect them to be completely independent of each other (see Chapter 3), there is little threat of social stigma. Togetherness therefore provides an opportunity for companionship and escape from being potentially 'alone'. However, we will see later on, how this may change once in the company of other children at school.

Thus far, then, a general pattern seems to be emerging: physical togetherness is abandoned when individuality is under threat. Keen to show that they are becoming successful adults, older child twins distance themselves from this aspect of twinship and childhood, whilst young children, able to enjoy *being* children, and therefore able to enjoy *being* twins (within the home at least), draw attention to this as a defining feature of twinship. However, there were some important exceptions to this pattern. Firstly, some older child twins – Adam and Olivia (aged 16) – drew attention to the advantages of being together and highlighted this as one defining aspect of twinship. Adam depicted twinship as an 'adventure': It's just like … [being] together, an adventure, doing stuff together'. Similarly Olivia drew attention to the different dimensions of this togetherness in her picture of what it was like to be a twin (see figure 22, p. 220).

Figure 22: 'Being a twin' – by Olivia, aged 16

Olivia splits her picture into five zones, four of which indicate 'happy' experiences and one that contains 'bad times'. The positive experiences are dominated by instances of playing together at home: playing badminton in the garden; playing with the Playmobil toys; playing games (like 'I spy') in the shared bedroom. Certainly the latter seems to point to the positive value still invested in 'sharing' a room. However, in her narrative Olivia moves between the past and present tense identifying this activity both as part of her previous and current experience:

Olivia   [...] And then, we play I spy, we used to play that at night time and have giggles. Quite fun. And then we share our stocking; we wait for each other to open our stockings at nighttimes.

Although she may be saying that they still play I spy now but not at night time, she may also be trying to situate this 'behind' her (to emphasise how she *is* moving away from this childhood activity). She is certainly aware of the social pressure to 'separate':

> **Olivia** [...] I think it's quite good if I go to boarding school so I can like ... well just because I go to a boarding school I wouldn't like move rooms but it's quite good just to be on my own because we will eventually be on our, we'll go to separate universities probably, so you know, we've got to try and like gradually get used to splitting up.

Thus whilst Olivia plays up the value of physical togetherness, she has a normative life course timetable in view. It is this timetable that threatens to position Adam and Olivia as (young) 'children'. Indeed, although, as we saw in the previous chapter on the body, these different-sex twins may be less at risk from having their uniqueness undermined, there is still a need to conform to the cultural ideal of independence. Failing to do so may still mean that they are identified as failed individuals.

Moving in and out of twinship

Whilst child twins are expected to move away from being together as they get older, this is not a fixed transition. Twins move in and out of togetherness in different situations. Commonly twins retreated into togetherness when they required the support and comfort of companionship. Thus, although Ruth and Emma played down the extent of time they spent together and actively worked to create their own spaces within the shared room, they still explained that they were presently relying on each other for company because they had just moved house:

Ruth	Now we moved and our friends aren't there, we'll spend more time together.
Emma	Yeah. We don't know anyone round here.
Ruth	Hmm.
Emma	So we like stick together... erm... that's about it.

Rather than 'splitting up' these twins now 'stick together'. Twinship, like childhood, now provides an escape or safe haven from the outside world. Similarly, whilst both Charlotte and Hannah expressed a desire for their own space, Charlotte had more reservations about (hypothetically) moving into a 'separate' room than Hannah. Fearing that ghosts haunted the house, she valued the company her sister provided. Sally explained how she sometimes slept in her sister's room, or let her sister sleep in her own room if she was having nightmares. Liam and Dan sometimes spent time together in one of their separate rooms. For example Liam said, 'I always used to go down into his room and just have a chat and watch TV and now he'll come into my room 'cos I've got Sky or something like that'. In these situations, the 'personal' contained space of the 'separate' room is opened up to provide a setting conducive for establishing companionship and new opportunities for leisure activities. However, this, as we saw earlier may then be closed down again when entertaining girlfriends, concentrating on homework or requesting solitude. If solitude cannot be found within the bedroom, it may be sought elsewhere.

Instigators and followers

Finally, it is important to note that older child and adult twins distanced themselves from twin togetherness and 'dependency' to different extents. For example, although

Rebecca and Andrea saw 'separation' as a 'natural' part of growing up, Rebecca often identified Andrea as the chief instigator of this 'split': it was Andrea who moved out of the shared room to live with her fiancé leaving her alone to miss her not being there:

Rebecca	I've just missed her when she's moved away. I suppose it's because she's just moved away. I've missed her when she's gone out and she's gone and done things that she wants to do.

Likewise, although Sally explained that her sister Rachel wanted her to periodically move back into her room – thus identifying her sister as the 'needy' one – she also explained how moving back into togetherness provided 'comfort for both of us actually'. Indeed, she more commonly identified Rachel as the leader of change and herself as the passive 'follower' caught up in it. According to her, Rachel 'was the one who wanted to move out [of the shared room] which hurt me a lot initially cos I thought 'I don't want to move out, I want to share with my sister still''. She recalled how, at the time of this 'separation,' she wanted to 'talk to her and spend some time with her'. Twins may therefore take a more or less active role in conforming to the normative life course timetable previously outlined and some would perhaps have indulged in more aspects of twin togetherness, had their twin allowed it.

Using bedroom space to negotiate twin identity

The first part of this chapter has examined how twins use bedroom space to negotiate their identities and has used this analysis to examine how twins navigate their way through the life course within this social context. Although on the one hand, we have seen that a general pattern emerges whereby twins use their bedroom space to move away from twinship, as they get older, we also see that this transition out of twinship is

never fixed, absolute or universal. Indeed, some twins transgress this pattern by staying together longer than they *should* whilst others push to instigate change. Although twins may actively use this space to present themselves as individuals in those situations where they feel that this counts the most (e.g. amongst girlfriends and boyfriends, to establish privacy), they may also temporarily reposition themselves as twins by moving back into the safe haven of togetherness. In a very real way then, these examples show how identity is constructed and reconstructed over time and space. Rather than being fixed or static, identity is always in process. The next section of this chapter turns to explore children's agency within the school setting.

Being a twin at school

Compulsory schooling constitutes an important component of childhood socialisation providing children with cultural knowledge about how to *become* socially acceptable adults through both the formal and informal curriculum (James, et al., 1998). As the chapter on 'families' also pointed out, the school is a site that both produces and is produced by social relations of power. 'The school as a social institution is a setting where (obviously but) crucially, adult authority is more salient and less challengeable than at home' (Mayall, 1994a: 122). However, importantly, it is also a setting where children socialise each other and help to define each other's identities. Ethnographic studies conducted within this setting have, amongst other things, examined the reproduction of children's 'culture' (for example Opie and Opie, 1977), drawn attention to their capacity for agency (for example Mayall, 1996) and their role in shaping their own and other children's identities (for example James, 1993). Unlike bedroom space where twins are mainly either in the company of each other or on their own, school space forces twins to live out part of their daily lives in the public presence of many

other children. Within this context, then, identity is continually negotiated between different sets of children. Younger twins are placed together in one class amidst these other children, but, as the chapter on families showed, are commonly later 'split' up into different classes. The remaining parts of this chapter explore how twins negotiate their identities within these two spatial contexts.

Being together

On the one hand, being together could offer some comfort. For instance, Charlotte explained some of the advantages of having a sister her own age: 'we both like do our home work together if its hard or sommat or, starting school, you're like in the same year, so you're like not on your own'. On a less positive note, twins also spoke of the difficulties that being together held for them. For example Olivia disliked that her brother Adam could 'tell' on her to her parents:

> **Olivia**   [...] It's nice to be [apart], like when Adam's like away, and it's like, when you're in different classes, it's quite nice cos you can like, you don't have anything falling back at you at home [...].

Togetherness thus also meant a lack of privacy and freedom from twin surveillance in this context too. However periods of relief could emerge, as Olivia says, when twins were in different classes or when a fellow twin was away from school. However, this said, twins may still be reminded of their 'attachment' by other children and teachers at school. For instance, Liam explained how, being in the same tutor group as his brother Dan, some of the people in his group would ask after Dan if he was not at school:

Liam	[...] If Dan's like ill and I go to school, we'll be sat together in a morning just before registration, they'll go 'oh where's Dan today?' They'll kind of, you know, everyone always comes up to me and goes, 'oh what's the matter with Dan, what's he doing?' And I'll give them the usual spiel and the teachers will ask and they'll transfer work to me and 'give it to him' sort of thing [...].

Thus, whilst being alone at school could allow twins space to be apart and feel independent and autonomous, it is questionable as to how far such constructions of identity would be accepted and validated by others. Liam's comments suggest that he may be re-classified as 'incomplete' rather than 'independent'.

The togetherness of the youngest twins – Ash and Harry – was on display for all to see. Known to be twins in the school setting, their togetherness could be viewed and linked to this identity. However, Harry sometimes distanced himself from this togetherness by choosing a different partner for his team and sitting on a table with his 'own' friends. In contrast, Ash valued the comfort his brother brought and wanted to stay with him. Indeed, he experienced upset at not being picked by his brother and tried to actively create new experiences of togetherness at break time. He told me, 'normally I follow my brother about'. Placed within the same class, they had access to the same range of social contacts. However, just as Harry detached himself from Ash by excluding him from his team, so he also tried to differentiate himself as a uniquely known person by claiming Simon as 'his' friend:

Kate	Do you have friends at school?
Ash	Yeah. One of us, both of us have got the same friends or three. Darren, we used to both like him, Steven we both like him, and

	Simon
Kate	Who?
Harry	Simon Slatter. He's my friend.
Ash	He's his friend. He's about *[twists his hand from side to side to indicate an on-off movement]* like that wi me.

Unlike Harry, Ash's account of ownership is inconsistent – first stating that Darren, Steven and Simon belong to 'one' of them and then replacing this with the assertion that they belong to 'both' of them. This sequence seems to suggest that Ash is using his association with Harry in order to present himself as having friends and being a befriended person. His mum Clare suggests that 'Ash hasn't got friends really'. Therefore, listing these names could be one way in which Ash deals with his own social marginality. As James (1993) notes, children may list children's names to create a sense of 'having friends' to develop a sense of belonging. Whilst Ash looks to Harry for friends, Harry looks away from Ash towards his 'own' friends and uses these to spend some time away from Ash whilst being in the same class at school. Within this context, Harry instigates some expressions of differentiation.

This is especially interesting given that, as we saw in previous section on bedroom space, Harry also said that he would be 'sad' if he was not a twin because he would have 'no one to play with'. This suggests that within the spatial context of school, in and amongst other children, being apart takes on some social value. Hence, as the previous chapter also suggested, children may 'sometimes experience competing understandings of how they should be producing the space of their bodies in different locations' (Valentine, 2001: 40). As James (1993), notes, within the social world of other (primary) school children, it is the successful balance of individuality and conformity that increasingly carries potential for acquiring social capital. This means

that children must learn how to become 'one of the crowd' (somebody unique) rather than 'one among many in the crowd' (socially anonymous) or one outside of the crowd (eccentric) (James, 1993: 151). In choosing to spend time with his friends, Harry plays down his valuing of their togetherness and shows his willingness to establish friendships outside of the twin dyad. In doing this he positions himself alongside the other kids at school who do not have a fellow-twin to establish alternative relationships with. Being apart also provides Harry with an opportunity to express some degree of difference and independence from his brother: he does not have to do everything that his brother does. Hence, by distancing himself from his twin, he is able to draw attention to his ability to be an individual whilst also keeping this in check by expressing his concern to be like the other kids at school. Harry, therefore, has most to gain from playing down his valuing of togetherness. In contrast, Ash has least to gain since his expression of dependence confirms his lack of individuality and magnifies his difference from the other children.

A further constraint of being together may be that it encourages others to publicly 'name' twins as 'twins' thus publicly validating their twin identities. This may be the case even where the body does not signify twinship – for instance, Ann (a different-sexed twin aged 24) recalled that 'when we went to secondary school we were kept in the same class and introduced as twins'. However, this may also be intensified when twins do look very alike. Andrea (a same-sex identical twin) remembered:

> **Andrea** [...] They'd say 'Andrea and Rebecca' I'd be, 'just a minute, it was Rebecca or it was me!' Why say both of them? Just cos people maybe are used to seeing us together all the time, we did everything together so it was 'Andrea and Rebecca' [...].

In this case, bodily similarities in conjunction with togetherness encourage naming strategies that, as we saw in Chapter 3, affirm unity and attachment.

Being apart

At the time of interview, Ruth and Emma (aged 13), Adam and Olivia (aged 16), Charlotte and Hannah (aged 15) and Liam and Dan (aged 17) were apart for some, or all of their school classes. Within this context of apartness, twins may have more scope for negotiating their identities. Firstly, this provides an opportunity to be repeatedly seen to be apart from one's twin and thus to resist assumptions of twin togetherness. Twins may seek to further extend their presentation of 'detachment' by minimising social contact with their twin outside of lesson time at school. For instance, Olivia explained that she and Adam just said 'hello to each other' and similarly, Charlotte told me:

> **Charlotte** […] I think [friends] just treat us like we're not twins but we're more
> like friends. It's like when I see Hannah I don't like stop and speak
> to her. I just say hi and bye. Something like that.
>
> **Hannah** I'd pull a mucky face.

The 'hi and bye' approach provides a clear contrast to stereotypes of twin togetherness: 'everyone expects you to walk around together' and 'spend all your time together' (Rachel, aged 20). This may have consequences for the ways in which they are identified and 'named' by others.

> **Kate** Do people at school know you're twins?
>
> **Emma** In my half of the year, people are just finding out that I've got a
> twin.

Kate	Oh cos you're in different year groups aren't you?
Emma	Yeah.
Ruth	And most of [the] people know in my year.
Emma	People like see you around and say, 'oh have you got a twin?!'
Kate	Right, so would you introduce yourself as a twin?
Ruth	No.
Emma	No.
Kate	How do you think they found out then?
Emma	Well sometimes we stand together at break time and when they're walking past they can see us looking the same. Most people do.

Whilst being apart provides these twins with an opportunity to distance themselves from their sameness and temporarily present a publicly 'unique' body to pupils within their class, their physical similarities also make it difficult to escape being identified as 'twins' altogether. Although Emma and Ruth choose not to introduce themselves as twins to other people and it may take some time for others to spot the presence of another person who looks like 'Emma', as soon as they stand together, their sameness is thrown into view and their identity as twins confirmed. Thus as Craib notes, '... it is important to consider under what conditions one might be able to prescribe, erase and rewrite one's identity [...] Once I am seen my ability to revise my identity is limited' (1998: 7). School space may therefore only provide a partial escape for those twins whose bodies confer their twin identity on their behalf. Within this enclosed space, their physical similarities are always at threat of being uncovered. This makes it difficult for these twins to 'pass' as 'non-twins' and, should they attempt such a transformation, also potentially places them at risk of being 'discredited' (Goffman, 1963) should others find out that they are not who they say they are.

For those twins who did not look so alike, this 'separation' could still help in making the distinction between them more clear-cut. As Sally explained:

> Sally   [...] I think we were in the same class for the first year [of senior school], and then second year - first time *ever* separate classes - so we were... twelve and we both said how weird it was and erm... but it was quite nice actually because no one got us mixed up for once at school. [...]

Space can help other children to put the right face with the right name and thus to attribute each twin with the correct identity. Within this setting, children come to know which of the twins is in their class and may thus validate their 'individual' identity by attributing them with a *personal* name and confirming that they are 'uniquely' known.

Being in different classes or parts of the year could also help twins to make their 'own' friends – as Ruth explained, 'you've got your own friends in your own class'. The organisation of the 'school-day' makes space for establishing particular social networks. As children are moved from one class to the next in age grade cohorts, they are also positioned and repositioned within different social circles. As well as structuring the range of pupils available to establish social contacts, this also structures the spaces within which the practice of friendship can take place and the longevity of these friendship connections (Amit-Talai, 1995). For instance, timetable re-shuffles can relocate a pupil within a different range of social networks and temporarily disconnect him/her from those that had been previously established. However, although, in this sense, the school context may shape the social spaces within which twins move, the social networks on offer can be valuable resources in establishing 'difference' and 'independence'. Some of the twins spoke of how being in different classes allowed

them to *grow* as individuals. Justin (aged 22) told me that that this 'definitely helped us to develop our own characters' whilst some of the other adult twins recalled how having different friends reflected and established their different personalities and interests. For instance, Andrea explained that her sister Rebecca was always with the '''in' people' whilst she was 'with the swotty people'. Similarly Sally explained that her sister Rachel 'got in with the trendy crowd'. Speaking about his present situation Liam explained that he had 'those types of friends' who 'don't really give a damn about work'. Friends can therefore help to pull twins out of twinship by affirming new dimensions of belonging. Further differences could then be developed as twins took on new interests within their distinct friendship groups. For example, Sally recalled how they 'had similar interests and then [Rachel] changed a lot and image became a lot more important to her' whilst Andrea explained that she would rather 'work and play but not play as much as Rebecca'. In this sense, then, twins may utilise the contacts created through being in 'separate' classes as resources for affirming difference.

A similar conclusion is drawn when considering the opportunities produced by studying different subjects. Dan (aged 17) explained that it was in picking his A-level subjects that 'it then started appearing that we were completely different'. Certainly choosing different subjects could provide some means of differentiation:

> **Andrea**   [...] My mum wanted us to stay together, and to be fair so did we. But then when we got to that school, you could choose different subjects and that's when we got our own sort of... like I like art, Rebecca didn't, she wanted to do child studies. So that's when sort of there was some individuality [...].

Like Dan, Andrea draws upon these differences to narrate the *emergence* of individuality. They are thus highlighted as central components in defining who they are. However, in addition to providing an internal sense of self, these differences also help to present a particular version of self to other children and teachers too. In taking different subjects, twins not only show that they *can* be apart, but also show that they have different interests and thus cannot be assumed to be 'the same'. In this sense, the separate social audiences created by the segregation of twins within different classes provide an enabling context within which to escape this aspect of 'twin' identity.

Further to this, being in 'separate' classes could also help twins to extend the time they spent apart from each other and thus to further enact their detachment from one another. For instance, whilst twins could spend time with their own friends at school, they could also then utilise these friends to enable them to spend time apart after school. Sally recalls that this was the case for herself and Rachel: 'I never ever went out with her and her friends'. Whilst Rachel enjoyed 'being in with the social crowd, knowing lots of people and going to the pub', Sally considered Rachel's friends to be 'bitches' and felt 'really uncomfortable' in their presence. Having one's own friends may therefore allow twins an opportunity to spend time apart away from the home setting, and the shared bedroom. This however is premised upon the understanding that they are permitted – by parent/s – to 'go out' after school. Younger twins, as we have seen, may have less escape from being together because they are protected from this 'dangerous space'. Thus, as Holloway and Valentine note:

> … the home is not a bounded space shaped only by members of the family resident there, but is, like the school, a porous space shaped also by its interconnections with the immediate locality and with the wider world (Holloway and Valentine, 2000b: 775).

On the other hand however, many of the older child twins seemingly found the opportunity to have access to another set of social contacts difficult to pass up. Although many spoke of having their 'own' friends (who were in their own class) these were not often fought over and clearly marked out in the same way as bedroom space. Twins often 'named and claimed' 'best friends' or friends who they were 'more close to' as well as saying that their fellow twin was also friends with them. For example Emma and Ruth explained:

Emma	Well they're our friends but they're like -
Ruth	Emma's best friends are just friends to me and my best friends are just friends to Emma

And similarly Liam said:

Liam	[...] We're in the same kind of group of friends. We've got like... at school, there's like a group of us, which are all pretty good friends. But [...] I'll have some people in that group who'll be more friends with me than they will be with Dan [...].

On the one hand these twins attempt to uphold some rights of ownership to these friends, and thus try to emphasise that they can be known as and also know others as unique persons. This is not surprising given the emphasis placed on 'splitting' up as twins get older. By asserting that they have their own friends, twins declare that they are prepared to look outside of twinship to develop relationships with other people. In practicing these friendships they show that they are able to act independently of their fellow twin. In line with this, many twins said they did not like it when friends treated them as if they were interchangeable:

Charlotte	Yeah. Like erm... Leanne, one minute she was asking me to go out with her or sommat, and like if I said no so she'd ask Hannah and she would say, 'well you asked Charlotte first so you can go out with her. I don't want to go out with you. You're just asking me cos Charlotte can't go'
Andrea	[...] But some friends wouldn't invite us round say for example for sleepovers...
Kate	Why?
Andrea	Because they didn't want both of us there.
Kate	But they'd want one of you?
Andrea	They'd want one person. Not one because they prefer Andrea or they prefer Rebecca, they'd want one round because two's too many.

On the other hand however, these twins also drew attention to, and indeed exploited their 'twoness' and 'connectedness'. By exchanging contacts so that one twin's 'best' friends become 'friends' with the other these twins imply that they are sufficiently similar to be liked by the same set of people. Indeed it is conceivable that twins could draw upon stereotypes of interchangeability to maintain friendships as Andrea explained:

Andrea	[...] Rebecca used to know [our friends] more when I was settled with my boyfriend. I didn't go [out], but she did and she sort of kept, in a way, them friends for me when I was off being the quiet one [...] I suppose being a twin has been an advantage. I say that definitely cos I probably would have lost a lot of my friends.

By buying into their status as 'twins', twins can therefore potentially provide each other with a valuable resource for gaining access to wider social networks and establishing and maintaining popularity. Although older adult twins may wish to assert their

individuality against each other, the benefits that being a 'twin' provides within this context may be too much to turn down.

Even when twins have left school and are living apart from each other they may still draw on their status as twins to attract social attention whilst also exploiting this distance to affirm individuality. This is best displayed by Sally's narrative of going to university:

Sally   Yeah it was... I think I liked [being at university]... definitely. I mean I wanted [university friends] to see [Rachel]. I sometimes [...] felt, not initially, but after I'd known them for a bit, the need to tell them I was a twin. And I don't know why. Maybe it was because everyone had always known me as a twin and I was finding it almost offensive that people weren't like 'oh you're a twin!' But I felt in a way that I should tell people I was a twin soon-ish, cos... it was almost a novelty because not everyone's a twin and people found it 'oh wow you're a twin!' [...] And when I came I felt very lonely cos I wasn't with Rachel anymore but I really enjoyed it in a way because I was almost sole attention, I wasn't half a person I was one person. I'd felt in a way sometimes that I'd been half – like when Rachel and me shared friends. I felt like we were sharing their attention as well and I thought, 'well why can't I have a friend all to myself?' [...] It was nice to be at uni, for my friends to know me and want to be my friend and not say, 'what's Rachel doing?' as well. [...] They'd just see me and I quite liked that, definitely. I liked being *on my own*. Just being me Sally, not Sally and Rachel. I did like that definitely. I mean, I did find it weird that I felt the need to tell people I was a twin cos I did in a way and I really don't know why I did, but I had to.

Here space becomes so effective at destroying twin social identity that it has to be stated in order to have any chance of being publicly acknowledged. Unlike the school setting where twins are segregated within the parameters of the school gates, here twins are completely spatially apart, being located at different universities. This complete separation means that Sally is able to present herself as a singular, separate person who is *on her own* without others catching a glimpse of her sister and challenging her about this version of identity. Indeed, as the previous chapter also pointed out, such physical separation may be vital in helping twins who look very similar escape being publicly identified as twins. At university, others do not see them together or classify them as 'twins'. Within this spatial context she is individually known as 'Sally' not 'Sally and Rachel' and is also able to know others on this one-to-one basis too. However, it is the power of this 'separation' to eradicate twinship that Sally also finds particularly hard to bear. Being apart from her twin, she is unable to attract any attention as a twin and Sally misses the social capital that this once brought. Consequently, she tries to re-identify herself as a 'twin' by telling others that she is a twin. Without her sister being present to verify this, she carries a photo with her:

Sally	I probably ended up telling him [her boyfriend] the first night that I met him about her because I was talking to him for a long time. I always end up getting her picture out and I don't know why. I suppose I'm just proud that kind of, I am a twin in a way, cos it's a different thing, so it's something interesting. It feels different to me than a normal sibling in that way. It really does. To me it's a different relationship I have with her.

Like partners who want to display their attachments to each other, Sally is able to use this visual image to 'virtually' transport her sister across space so that they are publicly

viewed alongside each other, together again. Aided by this picture, she may be able to 'prove' that she is a twin and narrate their closeness, thus gaining symbolic and social capital for being a twin. In prompting others to ask questions about her life as a twin, this picture also potentially helps Sally to draw others into her performance of twinship and participate in the activity of building a 'repertoire of twinship'. (The importance of talk and public repertoires of twinship will be discussed in the following chapter.)

Even where adult twins may not be identified as twins in their day-to-day lives, they may still bump into childhood friends who once again position them as twins. As Brian (aged 24) said, 'seeing old friends now is strange because for me – they always ask about Anne'. Thus, just as the kids at school reminded Liam of his relationship to Dan, so these friends remind Brian of his relationship to Anne. With regard to the latter, the past is momentarily brought into the present. In the moment of this interaction, these old friends are able to use their memories of Brian and Anne's togetherness to re-identify Brian as a twin. If Brian wants the interaction to run smoothly (Goffman, 1969) he may not object to their interest in Anne and may thus allow their external definition to 'frame' (Goffman, 1974) this interaction.[73]

Conclusion

Children's identities are constructed in and through space. This chapter has shown how twins use space as a resource to negotiate their identities within two social contexts

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[73] Goffman's notion of frame may be useful in explaining why friends choose to construct this version of reality. As the chapter on discourses pointed out, we can consider discourses of twinship to constitute a conceptual framework or schema that can be used to build up a sense of 'who people are'. Since the validity of discourses of twin sameness, closeness and togetherness are taken for granted we could also say that these, in Goffman's terms, constitute a 'primary framework' (1974: 21). Moreover, given the naturalistic underpinnings of these discourses (e.g. identical twins are from the same egg so they go together and they are genetic clones of each other) we could also say that these are 'natural frameworks' (1974: 22). In this example, Brian's friend is faced with the anomaly of a twin-less twin. His re-invention of 'togetherness' may therefore be considered to be one way in which he transforms this anomaly into something that fits into his 'primary framework': a twin who has a twin.

– the bedroom and the school. In the first part of this chapter, we found that whilst the youngest twins had their space largely controlled by their parents, older twins had more opportunity to express their individuality through the form and content of their bedroom space. Some of the older twins were also aided by the resource of having their 'own' rooms – bounded spaces within which they could display their uniqueness and contain the self. In contrast, these boundaries had to be worked out between older twins within the context of the shared room. These twins provide each other with valuable human resources in constructing meaningful places and a sense of individuality. Yet, paradoxically, in relying on each other to be 'individuals,' they also draw attention to their relatedness – another defining aspect of 'twin' identity. Whilst younger twins were more likely to draw attention to the value of togetherness at home older twins did not abandon this completely. Twins move in and out of twinship within different situations – for example to seek comfort and companionship or privacy and control.

A slightly different picture emerges in the school context where children are situated amongst many other children. Here, togetherness is played down by one of the younger twins in a bid to gain some independence from his fellow twin. This draws our attention to the importance of social context and the 'situated' nature of identities. Where twins are 'split up' into different classes, the structuring force of the school also provides them with access to different (segregated) groups of social contacts that can be exploited to help emphasise difference and independence. In this sense, these children are empowered by the very forces that also constrain them. Space may provide twins with the opportunity to be seen to be apart from each other and thus to negotiate being known and named as 'twins' by others. This may be especially important where twins look very similar. However within the enclosed setting of the school, some twins' bodies may still give them away. More 'space' may be needed to conceal their twinship.

Sally's account provides an example of how this could be achieved. However, importantly, it draws attention back to the ways in which twins move in and out of twinship and find it difficult to relinquish this identity completely. The following chapter moves on to consider how twins use 'talk' as a resource for constructing and negotiating their identities and through this analysis, continues to show how twins may variously take up and exit their identities in different contexts.

Chapter 6: Language and Talk

[Children] do not passively accept the messages of society; instead, they use language to define their

sense of selves, to construct their subjectivities and to position others'

(Danby, 1996: 152-153).

Introduction

Much academic attention has been paid to researching child twins' language, however, this has been mainly concerned with examining language development rather than the role that language and talk play in the negotiation of identity. Yet language is central to twins' constructions of self. It is the medium through which they narrate, describe and explain who they are. Language is more than just a way of communicating – as a cultural system of symbols it says more than is actually spoken (Jenks, 1993). Cultural discourses help us to attribute social meanings whilst also being constructed through talk. Moreover, whilst twins may use language and talk to discursively manage and mould their own identities, meanings also emerge from their occasional slips of tongue and unconscious modes of speaking. This chapter examines these different dimensions of language and talk. Although, for the most part, this chapter will focus on the modes of *talk* utilised by twins during interviews, some attention is also paid to their written representations of self as they appeared on the qualitative questionnaires and open-ended self-return task.

Theorising language and talk

Although children may learn to speak through contact with their immediate families, they do not simply passively absorb talk. On the contrary, research examining children's talk has pointed towards the ways in which children *use* language to generate and reproduce children's culture (Opie and Opie, 1977), carve out a place for the self (James, 1995; Danby, 1996; Cheshire, 2000) and organise and control their own social worlds (Goodwin, 1990; Danby, 2002). This chapter continues this emphasis on children as social actors, showing how twins draw upon certain words or forms of talk to try to convincingly perform their identities and categorise themselves and others. As Bruner notes, 'we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative' (1991: 4). These narratives both represent and constitute reality. They are one medium through which we interpret, construct and reconstruct reality and present and compose a sense of who we are.[74] Goffman's (1969) work on impression management therefore provides a useful theoretical backdrop. From his point of view, talk is one means of communicating and managing information about who we are. Oral representations thus 'offer ways into examining how storytellers are bringing off and managing a sense of themselves' (Bamberg, 2004: 368). However, importantly, as we will see, they also provide insight into how other figures may be characterised and animated (Goffman, 1974). Talk therefore constitutes a form of social action - a means through which we deal with (and define) each other (Goodwin, 1990).

Whilst some aspects of talk may be consciously performed, other aspects of talk –as this chapter will show – may be given little, if any, conscious deliberation. Language and talk are therefore also conceptualised as socialised systems of symbols that provide

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[74] Anthropologists and psychologists have therefore explored narrative constructions of identity (for example Gergen and Gergen, 1984; Lieblich and Josselson, 1994).

actors with some limitations. Bourdieu's notion of habitus provides some useful insights in this respect. Constituting a set of dispositions which generate particular modes of acting, speaking and thinking, the habitus 'engenders a potentially infinite number of patterns of behaviour thought and expression' that are relatively unpredictable but limited in variety (McNay, 1999: 100). Linguistic habitus thus 'implies a certain propensity to speak and to say determinate things' (Bourdieu, 1992: 37). Because the habitus is formed unconsciously, the symbolic content of utterances may not be consciously articulated. As Bourdieu states, 'it is because agents never know completely what they are doing that what they do has more sense than they know' (Bourdieu, 1990: 69). Jenks confirms the appropriateness of using this theoretical tool to further analyse the negotiation of identity:

> ... language can be considered as a habitus – certain ways of speech provide for membership of particular communities. These forms of speech which instance membership, are far more than mere media for communication – they speak more than they can say. Such forms of speech are totemic, they are emblems, they symbolise the particular group, they carry with them the group's particular interests and orientations, and they display the group's thought and style (Jenks, 1993: 14).

Symbolised through the image of identical twins, twinship is an identity characterised by 'twoness,' 'togetherness' and 'sameness'. 'Totemic' forms of 'twin talk' would therefore include those that encapsulate these various expressions of connectedness. In this chapter, we bear witness to the ways in which twins use certain forms of talk to play up or play down their twin identities, but also how they unknowingly identify themselves as 'twins' through utilising these totemic styles of talk.

Talking up the self

Twins use talk to resist and reproduce dominant discourses of twinship. Although, in many ways, the entire thesis can be seen to be about talk (due to the fact that it is based mainly upon interview data), I want to focus more specially on the strategies and techniques that the children and adults use to negotiate identity. Hence, in line with approaches adopted within the ethnography of speaking (Hymes, 1971) and conversation analysis (see Goodwin and Heritage, 1990), this chapter shows that it is not just the content of what is said that is important. *How* we talk is also part of what is said (Hymes, 1971: 59). Hutchby (2005: 67) thus makes a distinction between 'ordinary talk' 'as a means of gaining information' and ordinary talk as a means of 'displaying' this information. By examining the form as well as the content of talk, we can gain some insight into how identities are performed through various *modes* of talk.

Contrast and the necessity of the other

One important mode of talk for the older child twins was, as we have already seen throughout this thesis, *contrast.* In Chapter 4 we saw how these twins differentiated between each other in terms of style/ taste and physical appearance. When talk is co-narrated (by both twins in the 'joint' interview) the self ('I') may be contrasted with the Other ('he'/ 'she'/ '[name]'). For example:

Emma	[...] We're just not identical.
Kate	Tell me what's different.
Emma	We've got different personalities.
Ruth	And I like things like teddy bears and pink and Emma likes blue – the colour blue – and stuff like that.

Emma	It's like, *[impersonating Ruth]* 'oh my teddy bears' and I'm like, 'no!'

Although helped by her sister, Emma takes the narrative floor adding another dimension to their 'feminine'/ 'tomboy' distinction (outlined previously in Chapter 4). Emma begins to proclaim their difference using the plural pronoun we. This as we will see later on, momentarily undermines the very distinctiveness she is trying to achieve through her talk. However Ruth then takes up the first person singular pronoun 'I' to voice her opinion as a discretely embodied person who exists separately to the named person 'Emma' (Harré, 1998: 55). Since there are now two discrete entities interests and tastes can be individually owned: Ruth has teddy bears and pink and Emma blue. Although both twins are present, at the end of this extract, Emma impersonates her sister Ruth, characterising her as a 'figure' in her story (Goffman, 1974) and acting out the differences she describes. Importantly, in playing down any sense in which they may be considered to be 'identical' these twins also make a bid to be like other ('normal') children.

Even within the context of the separate interview, one's fellow twin may still be drawn into a story, to show up and display further dimensions of difference:

Kate	Are there any rules and regulations would you say that you have to abide by whilst living at home?
Liam	Er…. We've got to be responsible. We can't obviously do really insane things. Like my mum and dad are going away for two weeks or whatever so we're in the house on our own so Dan can't have a massive party. I mean that's what we think. We like make fun of my mum you know 'we're gonna have a massive party'. But she says,

'no, no you're not having that!' Like I can't have my girlfriend round during that two weeks unless I go to hers so it's just like that. It's, I mean, my dad always says, 'don't do anything I wouldn't do' so we always, it limits us to not much *[laughs]* but we just... As long as it doesn't [...] hurt us, and it doesn't hurt the house it's all right. We haven't got any kind of twin, kind of, I don't know, kind of rules. No its kind of er... well, Dan's the more responsible one, he's a lot more responsible in respecting what my dad and my mum say as I'll try and do things behind their back or something like that er... yeah.

Even though the topic of conversation is based upon household rules, Liam still manages to use this to create further examples of difference. It is his own assertion that they do not have any 'twin' rules that leads him to proclaim his difference and characterise himself as the less responsible 'one'.[75] He draws his brother into this narrative ('he') and utilises him to help to position himself ('I') in opposition to the category 'twin'. Hence, as Coates argues, 'the characters we construct in our story telling and their relationships with each other ... all combine to express who we are' (2003: 7). Indeed, like Emma and Ruth's account, Liam's narrative, shows up the necessity of the Other (in this case the fellow twin) in accounting for difference and, in this sense, reflects the theoretical thrust of Derrida's (2000) *différance*. For Derrida, meaning is always relational, emerging through a network of Other meanings. Hence, meaning is always deferred and never fully grasped. Likewise, for Liam, any sense of who he is, is inextricably tied up with who his brother is. It is no surprise that these twins use their fellow twin as a point of comparison given that it is their fellow twin who proves the most threat to their assertions of individuality. Yet whilst on the one hand, this positioning of 'I' against 'he' helps Liam to constitute himself as a subject

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[75] Although this may be a feature of the methodology, it still shows his determination to resist being classified as a 'twin'.

who is completely exterior to this Other 'you' (Benveniste, 2000), paradoxically, it also serves to emphasise the connectedness of their different identities – reminiscent of notions of twins as 'complementary opposites' or 'two halves of a whole'. Moreover, although Liam is attempting to resist being categorised as a 'twin', he still reproduces this cultural category by talking up his 'lack of fit' with it. As Said (1979) noted when examining how European identity was constructed in relation to the Orient, both are kept intact through their mutual opposition.

The importance of *contrast* in establishing identity has been recognised by social psychologists working within the paradigms of social-identity theory (for example see Tajfel, 1982) and self-categorisation theory (for example see Turner, et al., 1987). The former emphasises that contrasting one's own group with another group is crucial to forming a sense of positive or negative identity whilst the latter develops this perspective further suggesting that an individual's choice of identity category depends on the ratio of intra and inter category differences. If relevant similarities exceed differences, then the individual may classify themselves according to that category (Dickerson, 2000: 383). Whilst these theories are useful for drawing attention to the important role that categorisation plays, self-categorisation theory tends to conceptualise identity as a cognitive process; 'self-categorizations are in the first place essentially psychological subjective, private mental processes' (Edwards, 1998: 17). Yet from a sociological and anthropological perspective we are concerned with identity as a social process - the *social construction* of similarity and difference being central to this. Hence, in relation to these older children, we have seen how, in Hall's words,

> identities are constructed through, not outside, difference … it is only through the relation to the Other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its

constitutive outside that the 'positive' meaning of any term — and thus its 'identity' — can be constructed (Hall, 1996: 4-5).

On some occasions, twins used binary oppositions to intensify their distinctions. For example, Hannah composed a whole set of oppositions in her list of differences:

> Were different coz I'm into sports + she's not. We have different fashion sense. All Charlotte is bothered about is her hair, make-up + nails, she has to look perfect wer as if I look o.k I won't be too bothered how I look unless I go to see my b.friend! Charlotte is very messy were I like my room tidy. I like working with animals but Charlotte dosn't. I am lazy and Charlotte isn't.

Thus as Foucault argued, binary oppositions help to divide subjects from each other, so that they become contained within mutually exclusive 'objective' categories (Foucault, 1983: 208).[76] Although the research tool (a list) may serve to encourage this kind of response (see Chapter 1), her sister Charlotte, who seemed more ambivalent about relinquishing all aspects of twinship, provided a less intense version of difference:

> Hannah is lazy hardly never smiles or laughs. She brainyer, she does[n't] join anything like a club or sports. She's always on the phone and just starts on u 4 no reason.

Thus whilst Charlotte describes Hannah, she only positions herself within her account once — 'she brainyer'. In contrast, Hannah constantly contrasts herself with Charlotte so that what Charlotte is Hannah is not and vice versa. Binary oppositions therefore have an important role to play in extending difference and helping twins to produce their identities through talk.

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[76] Importantly, through marking off the particular discursive domains within which subject positions can be taken up, power restricts the extent to which subjects can choose to become someone or something else (Bevir, 1999).

On those occasions where narratives implied potential overlap between self and other, some twins worked to maintain these symbolic distinctions and achieve a sense of difference. For instance, as well as drawing attention to their physical differences, Ian and Peter described their different hobbies and, as the extract below shows, their different levels of tidiness:

Ian	[...] I think I'm a bit messier than Peter. Peter's bedroom is always tidier than mine.
Peter	It's not always.
Ian	It is. It's tidy-*er*.

Peter protests against being classified as 'messy' which leads Ian to reaffirm that his room is tidy-*er*. The first person singular pronoun 'I' is used to mark out the self against the named twin (Peter). A similar incident occurred in Hannah and Charlotte's joint interview:

Kate	Whose is [the hamster]?
Hannah	Just mine.
Charlotte	Hannah's.
Hannah	Charlotte dunt like pets.
Charlotte	I like Monty [the dog].
Kate	Who's is Monty? Is it a family pet?
Hannah	Yeah, family. I do animal care though at college.

Like Peter, Charlotte disagrees with her twin's classification of her as someone that 'dunt like pets'. However because of the potential overlap that this creates, in response, Hannah further emphasises her increased liking for animals - 'I do animal care *though* at college'.

In line with the findings documented in Chapter 4, the youngest twins were generally less concerned to talk up difference and utilise contrast. For example, Ash told me, 'we're both the same, noisy and quiet', and Harry explained some of their shared interests: 'we both like playing on the play station. We both like playing on the PC. We both like watching TV'. However, although not preoccupied with asserting difference, Harry did seem to want to present himself as *better* than Ash. For instance:

Harry	[...] Guess how many pages Ash did in his literacy book?
Kate	What?
Harry	Two. And guess how many pages I did? Three.

Harry	Ash can do his twenty-five [lengths of the swimming pool]. I've done my twenty-five, my fifty. Cos you know when I did my hundred and my fifty, I did them both at the same time, and I got two badges and two certificates. I've still got those. I'll show you them.

As James, found, the 'idea of hierarchy and competition is firmly embedded within children's own culture and nowhere more apparent than in the children's attitudes towards educational attainment and ability' (1993: 162). In some ways all of these assertions of superior ability express Harry's commitment towards growing up: Harry *is* a *better* reader and swimmer than Ash – both of which are, within the context of schooling, often thought to improve with age. In this sense, then, Harry uses Ash to carve out a sense of individuality and to effectively talk up his status as a young child who *is* successfully *becoming* an older child.

Comparing and contrasting

A less common method of talking up the self was repeatedly utilised by Adam and Olivia – the only different-sexed older child twins. Rather than directly focusing on the ways in which they were different, these twins often seemed primarily concerned to talk up the similarities they shared with one or other of their older siblings.

Olivia	We should have been twins me and Craig cos we're more alike than anyone. Although me and Naomi look the same, kind of look the same, me and Craig have got the characteristics.
Kate	What do you think you have in common with Craig?
Olivia	Short temper.
Kate	Yeah.
Olivia	Well not short temper but just get cross.
Kate	Yeah.
Olivia	And Naomi and Adam, me and Craig are really fussy about cleanliness.
Kate	Right.
Olivia	Adam and Naomi aren't, well they are fussed of course, but they're not as fussed as me and Craig. So yeah, stuff like that.

This emphasis on similarity as a means of identification resonates with Anthony Cohen's work on *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (1985). For him it is a sense of similarity which helps individuals to map out the lines of belonging and position themselves amongst others. Rather than directly *contrasting* herself with Adam, Olivia focuses on the *commonalities* she shares with Craig and only after *comparing* herself to him uses these commonalities as points of differentiation between herself and 'Adam and Naomi'. Indeed, for Olivia, it is her and Craig that fit more within notions of 'twin

sameness'. She thus effectively tries to re-twin herself with her older brother explaining that they 'should have been twins' instead. Adam was more reluctant to identify himself with his sister Naomi:

Adam   [...] I think, me and Naomi are more alike, we're sort of a bit the

same in a way but different from Olivia and Craig. Olivia and Craig,

they usually have quite a short, you know, temper.

For Adam, he and Naomi are (only) 'sort of a bit the same in a way'. Indeed, according to Adam, 'there's not so much similarity between me and Naomi as there is between Craig and Olivia'. It is only 'because Olivia is sort of the same [as Craig that] me and Naomi are sort of put together'. The latter suggests that Adam is in a more ambivalent position than Olivia, and classified within a paired group by default (to maintain the distinction).

Hence, rather than being pushed to the foreground of their narratives, differences often emerged as latent qualities of the similarities they shared with their other siblings. Thus whilst the other older child twins tended to face inwards towards each other with the lines of difference stretching out between them, these twins tended to face away towards their other siblings with the lines of difference being mediated through their siblings (see figure 23 below). Adam and Olivia's accounts therefore draw our attention

Figure 23: Techniques of differentiation:

Contrasting Self and Other   *Comparing* the Self to fellow siblings

I ⟷ S/he

[named sib]   'Me'   [named twin]   [named sib]
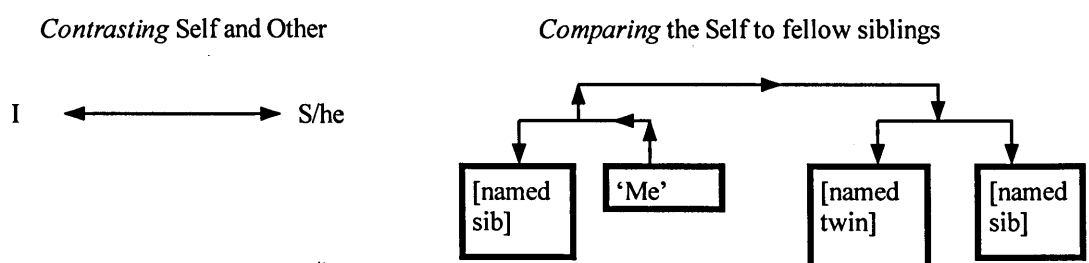
to another, less direct, mode of differentiation where similarities are stressed and differences constructed through these. Being different-sex twins and falling outside of the cultural stereotype of twinship, this may have been something these twins could have afforded. Indeed, it is interesting that even though Charlotte and Hannah and Ruth and Emma did have one other sibling still living at home, they chose to focus their attention on differentiating between each other rather than aligning themselves to their fellow sib. A range of reasons can be postulated for this. Charlotte and Hannah may wish to avoid making alliances with Ellie because she is a younger sibling. Although Emma and Ruth's sibling was older, he was of a different sex and only 3 years older, whereas Naomi and Craig were 8 and 9 years older respectively – holding status as adults. Unlike the other older child twins, Olivia seemed frustrated by the lack of 'twinness' that her twin brother Adam provided and wanted to find a more 'adequate' replacement elsewhere. Constructing Craig as her new 'twin' may provide her with a sense of belonging and specialness and enable her to come to know herself as a ('proper') twin. As Rapport notes, the 'self comes to know itself through its own narrational acts. In narrative ... the self is given content, is delineated and embodied' (Rapport, 1999: 12).[77] However, at the same time, it also helps to draw attention to how she *is* different to her 'real' twin! In this sense, by utilising this technique of differentiation, she may be able to make herself feel like a twin whilst still expressing difference.

These sibling alliances were not, however, in any sense permanent or fixed. Just as Hall found when studying the identity positions of Martiniquains and Jamaicans, 'the boundaries of difference are continually changing repositioned in relation to different

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[77] This is not to imply that these narrational acts stand outside of the internal-external dialectic. On the contrary, as this chapter will illustrate, family narratives and repertoires of twinship are just two 'external' voices that also feed into and shape twins constructions of self.

points of reference' (1997a: 53). Thus since Adam and Olivia's sibling group contained two boys and two girls, there was also opportunity to re-group along gendered lines as Craig and Naomi explained:

Craig   [...] It's quite nice though that he's quite like me in that we like the same things. We very much like the same things and we both like doing the same kind of sport. I mean it's nice now that he's at an age where we can go off and we do exercise together. So most nights we go off and we do some sort of exercise whether it's swimming, and we'll swim up and down the pool next to each other, or running. We sort of can go and do a lot of it together now which is really nice.

Naomi   [...] [Craig and Adam] like the same things. Like you know, sport and they like to keep fit and like me and Olivia like to do shopping so you know, it's easy.

And similarly Adam and Olivia's parents explained:

David   But you see [Adam's] not interested in chocolate, which nor is Craig, and Naomi and Olivia wonder around shops and ...

Janet   Yes they like to. Like they'll go into little bars and the boys aren't interested in that. Olivia and Adam, Olivia and Naomi love going around London together.

David   It doesn't interest Adam.

Janet   No.

Naomi and Olivia are thus identified as chocolate-loving shoppers and Adam and Craig as interested in sport. These distinctions both embody and reflect broader cultural

scripts of masculinity and femininity and help to provide another rationale for splitting the four siblings into two pairs. Craig in particular tries to 'twin' himself with Adam arguing that they 'like the same things', 'swim up and down the pool next to each other' and 'do a lot of [sport] together'. Although Adam and Olivia seemed to pay less attention to these particular pairings (Olivia only explaining that she and Naomi went 'shopping and stuff'), these narratives may potentially still serve to identify Adam with Craig and Olivia with Naomi when talking about hobbies and interests. Indeed, even if they do not necessarily feature heavily in Adam and Olivia's own accounts, the consensus shared between Craig, Naomi, Janet and David could make them difficult to overturn.

The importance of family narratives

The discussion above draws our attention back to the importance of family narratives and, more specially, to how identities are constructed across the internal-external dialectic of identification. There was often overlap between the twins' own constructions of difference and their other family member's narratives. For instance, during an initial phone call, Emma and Ruth's mother Sue explained that 'one is feminine' and the 'other is a tom boy'. During the introductory meeting Ruth also told me that her Grandma always said they were different because Emma wore trousers and Ruth skirts. These are the exact distinctions that Emma and Ruth actually utilise to narrate their own differences. Similarly, Liam's dad Mike explained that ' Dan's more … sporty. Perhaps more academic, erm… deeper'. The twins' internal presentations of self and Other cannot be isolated from these external perceptions of who they are and are not – a point not upheld by self-categorisation theory which draws a distinction between personal and social identity (for example Onorato and Turner, 2004). Rather,

these extracts (and indeed some of those previously outlined in Chapter 4) suggest that family reputations feed into and help structure these narratives, providing 'the means by which the moral identities of each individual gets built up, consolidated and modified over time and gets carried from one situation to the other' (Finch and Mason, 1993: 149).

Normalisation strategies

Within their narratives of difference, some of these older twins used a variety of 'normalising strategies' to play down the significance of being a twin and to situate the self within culturally specific notions of personhood. The main function of these normalising strategies

> is to defuse and contain the potential disruption [produced by the presence of twins in society] by transcribing twinship into symbolic terms which are consistent with the general classification system of the society in question (Stewart, 2000: 13).

In many respects, the twin-to-twin differentiation technique previously outlined can be conceptualised as a normalising strategy because it attempts to break down the connectedness of the twin group. However other more specific strategies were also employed. As we have already seen, in some cases twins literally spoke about being 'normal' (for example, Peter explained that being a twin was 'just the same as normal people') and some of these twins also identified themselves as 'brothers' or 'sisters'. Hannah and Charlotte sometimes emphasised the 'diluted' nature of their relationship by declaring that they were 'just' sisters. Related to this, some of the twins used classifications of birth order to deal with the 'anomaly of twoness' (see Chapter 2). Hannah (aged 15) explained that she should have her own room because she was the

eldest. Olivia told me that Adam was 'nine minutes older' than her, and, when explaining the way he had ordered the different people in his drawing of his family, Adam (aged 16) said, 'Olivia is younger than me and Naomi is younger than Craig'. By introducing these age hierarchies these twins diffuse notions of simultaneity so heavily identified with twinship and instead appeal to a notion of 'normal' siblingship. Indeed, in all of these examples, the notion of siblingship helps to deal with the anomaly of twoness by effectively getting rid of it (Turner, 1969): the two are symbolically prized apart to produce the self as a singular entity.

The 'We-self'

Ortmeyer (1970) analysed the talk of one identical twin psychotherapy patient and coined the term 'we-self' to depict the psychological unity of two personalities functioning as one (1970: 125). As he put it, the 'we-self' refers to a situation whereby 'one twin ... does not effectively develop his personality potential in certain areas where his twin has developed; yet he functions as though he has done just that' (1970: 126). Here, I invest this term with a different set of meanings and use it to achieve different ends. Within the context of this chapter, the 'we-self' constitutes a particular mode of representing the self in talk. However this mode of talk may not necessarily be consciously staged. On the contrary, as this section will show, this form of talk sometimes contradicts the very impressions that some twins seem to want to produce in the very act of talking. In this sense, then, the 'we-self' may be seen as constituting a form of habitus; it is a mode of talk that is not necessarily consciously articulated but which results from the specific social contexts within which twins have lived. It is the 'cumulative exposure to certain social conditions [that] instils in individuals an ensemble of durable and transposable dispositions' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 13).

For many of these twins, this, as we have seen in Chapter 3, involved being placed together (at home and at school) as young children. Within these contexts twins acquire shared experiences and construct shared knowledge of each other. These, as we will see, are then externalised through their talk.

Twins of all ages utilised the plural pronoun 'we' to voice their accounts of twinship. Unlike, the first person pronoun 'I' this grammatical device positions the speaker as spokesperson for the (we) group and hence serves to locate twins within one indiscernible, un-named, objectified unit. This linguistic device was used within a variety of different contexts and thus served to emphasise this unity in a variety of different ways. In most cases, it denoted the common and simultaneous experience of togetherness: 'we put a show on' (Peter, aged 13); 'at school we do rugby' (Dan, aged 17); 'we used to climb over chairs and stuff' (Olivia, aged 16). Although on the one hand we are inclined to think of the two bodies acting separately but simultaneously, this imagery also conjures up a picture of conjoined twins: two bodies connected to each other. For instance, in Olivia's account, it is the singular unit containing the two twins (the 'we' group) that climbs over the chairs. We do not know where one twin ends and the other begins. There is no 'he' to mark out Adam and no 'I' to mark out Olivia. Indeed, within the 'we-self' there is no self and no other. Given this the plural pronoun could also facilitate the narration of shared life experience stemming from this togetherness: 'we had this teacher' (Ian, aged 13); 'we have to share a room' (Hannah, aged 15).

A similar theme of embodied connectedness is also continued when twins use this pronoun to express a shared point of view ('we don't think its fair that John always like gets things more than we do' (Ruth)) and also when they use this to describe an episode

of talk ('we say yeah' (Peter) 'we say, 'oh you don't want a twin'' (Emma)). In the first example, the 'we' pronoun implies shared thoughts. Thus, as was the case with the 'Rugrat' twins 'Phil' and 'Lil' described in Chapter 2 (see p. 93), we can imagine a thought bubble appearing between the two twins' bodies. Related to this, it implies a sense of shared knowledge – that one twin *knows* what the other twin's opinion is and can therefore act as spokesperson. In the case of the second, pluralized accounts of talk add to this effectively asserting that that the 'we' group speaks as one unit – in unison.

Within these contexts, then, the plural pronoun 'we' joins twins together as one unit in slightly different ways – whether that be in terms of shared thoughts, shared knowledge, joint action or common experience. By utilising the 'we' pronoun, twins speak *as* this objectified unit and unknowingly practice twin identity in the act of talking. In some cases, this embodied connectedness was reflected in the ways in which twins variously referred to themselves and each other as 'one of us' or 'two of us'. For instance:

Adam	[In the event of not completing homework] Olivia may use one excuse and I may use another and it may be that one of us gets away with it and one of us doesn't.
Ruth	[...] Like say one of us was cooking dinner, we like go and help.
Dan	[...] Usually we're quite competitive both of us with each other [...].

Here the dyadic unit (us) is embodied in each twin so that one twin = one 'us'. This utterance not only symbolically constructs twins as simultaneously singular and plural but also implies a sense of sameness – that the first 'us' is an identical carbon copy of

the second 'us'. Ruth's utterance is particularly interesting in that it also demonstrates how the 'we' group can be substituted for the singular person. Although Ruth intends to describe a situation where each twin acts as a singular and separate person (one helping the other out), she actually implies that one exists inside the other. The person cooking dinner is one of the two 'us' and the person going to help is 'both' of them.

On one occasion, Ian and Peter utilised a more particular and ambiguous naming strategy:

Kate	I was going to ask you to draw a picture of yourself, do you want to do that?
Peter	Yeah.
Ian	Yeah, what of?
Kate	You.
Peter	Of ourself?
Ian	Ourself.

The opening question is framed with a view to addressing each twin singularly but simultaneously. Whilst this seems to cause confusion (possibly due to the fact that this pronoun can be used in the first, second and third person), what is interesting is that Peter chooses to clear this up by utilising the equally ambiguous notion of 'ourself' rather than asking if the picture should be of 'me' or 'me and my brother'. In this moment of talk, Peter, followed by Ian, implies that *they* share *one* self; they are simultaneously singular and plural. Any distinction between 'self' and 'other' is thus impossible. After Ian and Peter chose their paper and pens Ian tried to clarify the point again:

Here 'ourself' seems to refer to 'himself' and 'opposites' to a picture of them both together. But once again the singularity of the self is lost. This is especially interesting given that, as we saw in Chapter 4, Peter said he disliked wearing the 'same' clothes as his brother because 'people treat you more like one person'.

Interrupting constructions of individuality

In some situations, this plural pronoun quite literally interrupted attempts to construct the self as a unique individual. For example, in her account of what life would be like without a twin sister Hannah (aged 15) wrote:

> 'If I wasn't a twin [...] we'd be more individual because people think that we like and do the same things just because were twins but were the exact opposite from each other. Thankgod.'

Through the notion of opposites, Hannah tries to present her-self as different and detached from Charlotte. Yet paradoxically, the plural pronoun 'we' interrupts the flow of this assertion and serves to reposition her as 'twin'! Although she is trying to say 'I would be seen to be more different to her' what she actually says is 'we'd be more individual'. It is difficult to prize apart Hannah from Charlotte within this statement even though this is what she is trying to achieve. The implication is that *they* – as one unit – would be more individual to other people. Thus without actually intending to, Hannah actually situates herself within (rather than outside of) the dyadic group. Similarly, it was in protesting against the significance that twinship had for him that Liam also inadvertently concealed his own singularity: 'we never really cared, we were never really impressed ... we've never really thought of ourselves as twins really'. This

anonymous we-group has one opinion and one thought process. Without intention or desire, these twins momentarily display a convincing performance of partnership that undermines their attempts to position themselves as separate and unique persons. We will see more examples of this as we move through this chapter.

Authoritative voices and co-construction

As well as utilising the plural pronoun 'we', some twins also spoke on behalf of or *as* their fellow twin.

Ian	If we go to draw something, it sometimes will be that Peter'd draw a clown or something, and erm... I'd like....
Peter	Design something.

Although Ian's use of the 'we' pronoun suggests that they draw as one conjoined unit, Ian tries to differentiate himself from his brother. He does this by speaking on behalf of Peter ('Peter'd draw a clown') and then turning to focus on how he thinks he is different ('I'd like ...'). Hence, although he attempts to distinguish himself from his brother he positions himself as an authority on him. At the end of the extract Peter actually positions himself *as* Ian by taking up and continuing his position as speaker ('I'). Other examples of this emerged within the context of the joint interviews:

Kate	Why do you like your soft toys then Ash?
Ash	Because they always keep me company when I'm-
Harry	*[Interrupts]* Sad.

Although Ash begins to answer, Harry steps in to speak on his behalf positioning himself *as* Ash. Similarly, when I asked Emma about the things she was interested in, her sister Ruth stepped in to answer *as* Emma:

Kate	What sort of things do you like then? *[To Emma]*
Emma	Erm... more like, ...
Ruth	Jamie Lee.

An important aspect of these narratives is that they all entail 'co-construction' (Cheshire, 2000: 242) . Co-construction involves narrators working together to create one single account. Speakers may therefore create a seamless flow of talk where one person's contribution leads on to the next. These 'duets' of talk mean that narrators are able to function as a single speaker (Coates, 2003: 177). Thus in the examples above, Emma and Ruth function *as* Emma and Ash and Harry *as* Ash. It is this that serves to imply that the twins are interchangeable in some sense. Hence, if I want to know how Ash feels I can ask Harry and if I want to know what Emma is interested in I can ask Ruth. Yet Emma and Ruth in particular, disliked it when members of their family or friends at school treated them as if they were interchangeable. Emma explained her frustration at getting told off by her parents just because her sister Emma had done something wrong: 'if I dint do anything but I was still with her I'd still get told off'. Furthermore, as we saw in Chapter 4, both Emma and Ruth explained that they did not like it when friends called them by the wrong name. These extracts therefore show that even where twins dislike being treated like twins and work to present themselves as discretely embodied persons, they may still fall into forms of talk that actually perpetuate stereotypes of interchangeability and connectedness.

Stepping out of the dyad

At other times however, twins seemed conscious of being grouped within this plural entity and utilised talk to actively step outside of its boundaries. For example, on one occasion, Olivia explained:

> **Olivia**   [...] When we left school, mum and dad moved us to different separate schools, two, three years ago and we hated it. Well, I hated it. So we're back at the same school.

Here Olivia exits the 'we' group to avoid misrepresenting her brother and to make her own point of view clear. The potential difference in opinion encourages her to utilise the first person singular pronoun 'I' rather than to continue to conceal this singularity within the plural 'we'. Similarly Liam said:

> **Liam**   [...] We always like ... I mean Dan would always, he would never say, you know, like to my mum and dad, 'oh yes Liam has done this'. But he'd always tap me on the shoulder and he'd go, 'you shouldn't have done that'. He's a lot more responsible than me.

Although Liam sets off to talk *as* a plural entity, he immediately changes his perspective attributing the experience specifically to Dan. This then allows him to reassert his point of distinction, namely than Dan is 'a lot more responsible'.

Like Olivia and Liam, Ash also pulled himself out of the 'we-group' to assert his own singularity however this was done in response to his brother's over generalisation:

Harry	We didn't get [any points saved on the computer]. So we turned it off.
Ash	So we turned it off.
Harry	Cos it was a waste of our time.
Ash	It was a waste of *my* time. *[Shouting]*

In order to claim the time as his own, Ash detaches himself from this brother. He raises his voice to make his point of view clear and to momentarily provide a dominant narrative that cancels out what his brother has just said. On another occasion, he also positioned himself outside of the 'we-group' so that his own achievements would be publicly recognised:

Harry	We normally play, like make clubs at home, on [the] climbing frame don't we?
Ash	*I* made one up and it's called the 'reading club'.

Because it constructs each twin as a singularly embodied person, the first person singular pronoun 'I' enables comparison, facilitates the expression of individual competencies and can potentially provoke competition. We have also seen other expressions of competency given by Harry at the beginning of this chapter. Whilst these examples alone cannot be taken to signal the presence of different (gendered) patterns of talk, Halldén (1997) suggests that constructions of competency may be part of the ways in which boys make sense of and construct versions of masculinity.[78]

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[78] Other research, however, also points out that girls' talk may also be characterised by competitiveness (Goodwin, 1990; Hutchby, 2005).

Stepping inside the dyad

In some cases, twins may also use talk to momentarily re-unite themselves with their fellow twins. Certainly there were occasions when this mode of talk seemed to serve a range of different purposes. For instance, occasionally, Charlotte would align herself to her twin sister Hannah in a bid to profess her difference from her younger sister Ellie. In her separate interview, Charlotte openly explained 'I don't get on with Ellie at all' and branded her 'childish'. In line with this, she sometimes positioned herself alongside her twin sister when speaking about Ellie: 'if sommat's gone missing or sommat, me and Hannah'll think that it's her and we'll tell my mum'. In this utterance Ellie is isolated from the partnership ('me and Hannah'). A similar sentiment is carried by Hannah's assertion that 'we're older'. Thus although these twins wanted to symbolically detach themselves from each other, they may also momentarily reunite in order to show up their status as *older* children and thereby resist the stigma of being associated with being *younger*.

On other occasions, twins may move from speaking as a singularly embodied person to a 'plural' anonymous entity in order to talk positively about the self. For Liam, this sometimes occurred in relation to narrating his academic ability. Although he was often very adamant that Dan was the 'academic' one, he still seemed offended by other people's characterisations of him as the 'less academic twin':

> Liam   [...] I think my grandma and grandpa still think that Dan's quite a lot more intelligent than I am ... in a different context... I don't know. I think quite a few people underestimate me [...].

Earlier on in this separate interview he also explained, 'we're not that different in academic [ability]'. By utilising the 'we' pronoun, Liam momentarily positions himself alongside his brother and makes his brother's achievements inseparable and undetectable from his own. Related to this, in some cases, re-establishing unity in talk can enable twins to boast about themselves without appearing to be arrogant. For example:

Ian	We've had blades before and we're really good on them.
Peter	We've had-
Ian	You jumped something about this high, like off the ground. I did this. *[He demonstrates how high he jumped with his hands]*.
Peter	That high? *[Sarcastically]*
Ian	Yeah you can jump that high on blades!
Peter	Off a ramp.
Ian	You can jump that high easy can't you?

In the first line of speech, Ian casually introduces that they are *both* good on roller blades and this serves to play down any sense in which *he* might be seen to be bragging about *himself*. This then opens the conversation up to discussing their achievements. However, importantly, Ian speaks on behalf of Peter so as to still diffuse any impression of self-obsessiveness. By speaking for his brother Ian avoids talking directly about himself, produces a convincing performance of sibling adoration and yet also conveys a sense of his own skill.

Adult twins

Similarity and difference

Like some of the older child twins, the same-sex adult twins, talked up differences in personality. Justin explained:

> **Justin**   We're different. He likes to impress, he's more, I think he's a little selfish *[laughs]* but that's helped him to get what he wants, being a bit selfish and yeah, he can always... I think he's more selfish than me, sort of more inconsiderate, I mean more self-considerate not the same, and I think that's helped him.

Although Justin seems to re-word aspects of his description to recast his brother in a slightly better light (self-considerate rather than inconsiderate), he maintains the difference between them. Like Justin, Sally also assured me that she and her twin sister Rachel 'really [we]re different'. However, like Adam and Olivia, these differences were sometimes narrated in terms of how she was similar to one of her other older sisters Carrie:

> **Sally**   [...] Mo and Rachel are very similar. They have very similar personalities. Carrie and me are much more alike in that manner. I mean we're not identical but Mo and Rachel are very similar. .

Although Sally clarifies the extent of this similarity (we're not identical') she effectively re-twins herself with a different sister in order to show up the differences between herself and her twin sister. Also like the older child twins, some of the adult twins developed a range of normalisation strategies. Thus Justin referred to his fellow twin as

'my brother', Brian (aged 24) told me, 'I'm just Anne's brother and she's my sister'. His sister Anne erected a hierarchy of age: 'I don't ever mention I'm a twin unless Brian's with me and then I say I'm the eldest (Ha)'; and similarly Jen (aged 36) explained: 'he is five minutes older than me – this has always been a very important age gap – both jokingly and in family hierarchy!'

Despite this emphasis on difference, compared to many of the older child twins' narratives, the adult twins often seemed more relaxed about emphasising aspects of sameness. Thus Jen (aged 36) wrote, 'I think we are still very similar in terms of our values and our personalities', Justin (aged 22) explained, 'he's matured a bit, but we're mature when we have to be and equally we can be extremely immature' and Andrea (aged 23) said, 'personality wise she's caring, but we're exactly the same in that way'. In the latter two cases, these twins begin by talking about their twin sibling ('he' / 'she') and then turn immediately to focus on the 'we' group as if to snatch back for themselves what they are associating with their sib. This may be one way of making oneself feel like a twin again, of trying to legitimate one's status as twin. Thus, even though these twins are now expected to show that they are unique, they may narrate similarities in personality to cling on to some aspect of their twin identity.

The we-self

The plural pronoun 'we' also continues to find its way into these accounts of life as a twin – a finding supported by Kozlak's (1978) study of 10 pairs of adult twins aged 23-34. Thus twins recalled past experiences of togetherness ('when we went to secondary school we were kept in the same class' Anne, aged 24), voiced common opinions, ('we didn't like the thought of being on our own' Sally, aged 20) and described similarities

('we've got a soft heart' Rebecca, aged 23; 'we're very people person' Sally, aged 20). The latter does much more than simply say that Rebecca and her twin sister Andrea are quite emotional, or that Sally and her twin sister Rachel enjoy socialising. Implicit is the suggestion that each twin is not a discretely embodied subject but rather is so inextricably connected to their own twin sisters that their embodied experiences of who they are cannot be detached from them. The mixing of the plural pronoun with a singular tense only serves to reinforce this. In the first example, the we-group has one heart. Bodily boundaries are thus symbolically transgressed and the two twins physically joined together. In the second example, the two are united as one singular *person*. Given the deep rootedness of the habitus, it is possibly no surprise that these twins continue to speak *as* twins even though they may have (to a greater extent) given up on *doing* twinship, and aspects of the material contexts within which these modes of talk emerged (e.g. being in the same classes, sharing a room and wearing the same clothes) have now changed. Indeed, through his notion of the 'don quixote effect', Bourdieu acknowledges that a 'disjuncture may occur between the practices generated by the habitus and the objective conditions required for their outlet' (May, 1996: 127).

The importance of talk

Talk may become a useful resource for helping older child and adult twins to convey their twin identities to others whilst still retaining social status as unique and independent persons. In Chapter 4 we saw how some of the older child twins told other children at school that they were twins. Whilst this may be one way of communicating twin identity it may not be enough to secure them social recognition as twins. Narratives of closeness, on the other hand, may have more to offer in this respect. For example, some twins described their experiences of embodied interconnectedness:

Sally   [...]I told you about the one weird instant, about the kind of sympathy pains that we had when we were, we must have been about 11/12 [...] She fell off her horse and I was at home and I had really bad stomach ache and a really bad head ache. I mean it might just have been a coincidence. But then she came back with a suspected broken leg and concussion. [...]

Andrea   [...] Sometimes we've done strange things... like when Rebecca had her thyroid out, I don't know subconsciously obviously I knew she was having it out. She was sat there. I had a polo neck on that day and I walked in stood there like that scraping my neck, but I didn't know.

These accounts highlight the experiential nature of identity and appeal to – indeed reproduce – discourses of twin closeness. By exoticising their bodily experiences, these twins produce idealised performances (Goffman, 1969) of twinship – everything is at it should be. These twins are 'tuned in' to each other and intricately bound up with each other. The intimacy of twinship that we find so difficult to give up on is here embodied and displayed. Hence in citing these experiences, Andrea and Sally provide evidence of their twin status. However, because the awe-inspiring power of these accounts actually relies on one twin being absent, they also simultaneously imply a sense of their own independence. This attempt to re-identify the self as twin holds particular currency for adult twins who are not expected to express their twinship through *always* looking *the same* or being physically together. Indeed, it is because these adult twins have had to sacrifice such embodied expressions of twinship that these tales of 'closeness' are so important in legitimising their identities as twins. In narrating their closeness, these

twins actively construct themselves and their fellow twins as 'Other' – a status that can once again potentially help them to feel 'special'.

Many of the female adult twins also spoke about their emotional closeness. Commonly they emphasised how this was built through words rather than by relying on physical togetherness. Hence they described how they phoned or emailed each other and often mentioned 'missing' each other. As with the examples of embodied connectedness above, the latter confirms their closeness at the same time as affirming their 'apartness'. Many also gave intricate descriptions of their closeness and in doing so actively constructed it:

> **Kate**   Are there any other advantages that you can think of [to being a twin]? Or disadvantages?
>
> **Andrea**   Advantages is I suppose just being that extra special... just... I love her more than anything and if anyone ever did anything I'd kill em because she is Rebecca. And that's why I get nervous for her, I get frightened for her, I get happy for her, and that's why I get angry at her as well. [...]

And similarly her sister Rebecca told me:

> **Rebecca** [...] I've always thought, cos everyone's like, 'oh I'd really like to be a twin' but I'm a twin so I don't know anything else. And I don't understand what it's like not to have a twin because I can't imagine what it's like. What if I was on my own and I had to look after myself? I always thought of it that way that I wouldn't... if she wasn't to sort of look after me and I'd be like on my own. And then I thought about, oh god no, imagine having that best friend that I've

> always had, all that comfort that I've always had, always had that
>
> person that I know regardless of whatever I do in my life will always
>
> be there for me. No matter, even if I do the worst thing in the world,
>
> she'd always stand by me.

Although Caroline's twin had died soon after birth, she told me that she thought they were identical and explained that having a twin sister would be like having a 'second skin that you can climb into'. As twins, they would share 'closeness' and 'trust' and 'have each other'. Once again, these narratives utilise and reproduce many of the dominant ideologies of twin closeness discussed in Chapter 2: twins are always there for each other; twins are best friends; twins are the most important people to each other and know each other 'inside out'. In this sense then, these twins are activating a 'script' of twin closeness to help them put on a convincing performance of twinship – or, in Goffman's words, to display a credible 'front' (Goffman, 1969).

It is no coincidence that all these accounts are given by women. Discourses of femininity allow women to develop and voice 'emotional' relationships without undermining their status as 'women'. Throughout the process of industrialisation, and the concurrent separation of 'home' and 'family', women, like children, were pushed into the private sphere. This ideology of 'separate spheres' differentiated between the natural qualities of each gender: 'men were naturally calculating, competitive and self-controlled; women were naturally emotional, tender and virtuous' (Oliker, 1998: 22). Some research on gender and friendship suggests that these gender stereotypes still have consequences for establishing intimate relationships. Girls' relationships are often found to be 'closer' than boys (Giordano, 2003). For example, in their small-scale study of cross-gender friendship, Allard and Yates found that the girls said 'friendships with boys were less 'bitchy', less emotionally demanding, less intense' whilst for the boys,

'friendships with girls were less competitive, more informative, more helpful than those with their male peers' (2001: 42). Buhrke and Fuqua (1987, cited in Reeder, 2003: 145) found that men reported feeling closer to female friends than male friends and similarly, in her study of adolescent friendship, Griffiths explained that

> Friendships between girls are deep, intense and long-lasting ... Talking is at the heart of this, ranging from everyday exchange of ideas and events to the confiding of secrets and sharing of problems ... friendships between girls are close and supportive, but also liable to cause jealousy and emotional tension (1995: 3).

In line with this, Green (1998) also drew attention to the power of talk in mediating women's friendships. Hence, reflecting ideological constructions of gender, women's relationships may be characterised by emotional closeness developed through talk.

It is because women are expected to take up subject positions within these hegemonic discourses of femininity that female adult twins are able to develop alternative ways of being close that do not involve being together. Although, as Griffiths' (1995) study of adolescent friendship also confirmed, these intimate ties should still ideally be modified in the event of a romantic relationship, they allow adult women to express closeness without being deemed 'childish'. In contrast adult males have no such resources at their disposal – lest they face being stigmatised as effeminate and possibly as a consequence of this, 'gay'. In their study of adult friendships, Bank and Hunsford (2000 cited in Reeder, 2003: 145) found that homophobia was negatively linked with intimacy between men. Not surprisingly then, although male adult twins sometimes said they were close, their accounts contained no such affirmations of unconditional love, dedication and support.

Justin   [...] When we are together, we are very close. It's more interesting because when we are together we learn from each other. At the beginning of the holidays I was quite keen to hear about his goings on and vice versa but at the end we did get a bit tired of each other I think, funnily enough *[sarcastic tone]*. So it's good that we've gone our own ways. Yeah we do get easily tired of each other.

Unable to utilise the opportunity to reconstruct closeness as an emotive experience, this is still linked to being together and is thus seen as a temporary state through which twins periodically pass. Hence, unlike these female twins, this closeness does not transcend physical togetherness but is still firmly attached and embedded within it. Whilst female twins can still express a watered down version of twin closeness, the same cannot be said of male twins, who have to settle for more temporary and short-lived episodes of twinship. Given this disparity, it is possibly no surprise that different-sex adult twins also rarely spoke of being emotionally close. This was completely absent from Brian's narrative (aged 24) and, although his sister Anne spoke of their relationship, this narrative lacked the emotive power of the other same-sex female accounts:

Brian is always at my house now because of [baby] Jack but he is very good with the baby and I think we get on a lot better since I left home. I can't wait for Brian to get married – maybe we'll have a joint wedding – that would be great.'

Jen (aged 36) played down the extent of their closeness:

I wouldn't say that we were especially close, although we have always got on well and didn't have the arguments with each other that we did with our other siblings (me-v-Katie; Tom-v-Mark)'.

Research on cross-gender friendship also suggests that gender segregation becomes more important as children 'grow up' and start to form romantic heterosexual relationships:

> Friendship networks are often considered to become more segregated when people start dating, get married, and have children. There are several reasons to expect such an effect. In a society with salient boundaries between male and female spheres, the potential of sexual attraction in cross-sex friendships is often perceived to be a problem (O'Connor, et al., 2004: 104).

Indeed, this may well be intensified for twins who are commonly viewed to have intimate friendships with each other. Different-sex twins may therefore have even less opportunity to draw on narratives of closeness to reposition themselves as twins since they are most at risk of accusations of incest.

Shifting selves

Different modes of talk, then, cannot easily be mapped onto the life course. Although, generally speaking, older child twins were more intent on talking up difference than the youngest twins, this glosses over some important differences. One of the youngest twins – Harry – was often more intent on highlighting aspects of his own individuality. Moreover, although most of the older child twins utilised the tool of *contrast* to symbolically detach the self from the Other, the presence of other siblings could potentially offer alternative techniques of differentiation which need not necessarily be so destructive. Whether or not twins actually utilised these other sibs to emphasise *similarities* with them over and above differences with their fellow twin may, amongst other things, depend on the extent to which they wish to play up difference. Being different-sexed twins, Adam and Olivia could perhaps afford to utilise a less

direct mode of differentiation that explicitly expresses similarity as well as difference. This broad summary also fails to capture the dynamic ways in which talk may be used to construct and reconstruct identity and to variously map out the lines of inclusion and exclusion. As we have seen, twins may use talk to set themselves up in opposition to their fellow twin. Thus Liam identified himself in relation to his 'responsible' brother and Hannah herself in relation to her 'lazy' and 'messy' sister. However, on other occasions, twins may use talk to momentarily reposition the self alongside their fellow twin. Thus Liam also regrouped himself inside the dyadic unit to situate himself within the reputation of being 'academic'. Charlotte identified herself with Hannah in a bid to distance herself from her other sister Ellie who she did not like and utilising the plural pronoun and an authoritative voice, Ian was able to disguise his self-talk behind the guise of 'praise' and adoration. However, even though twins take an active role in presenting particular versions of self they are also often unaware of the symbolic content of their utterances and sometimes inadvertently contradict the very presentations they are trying to successfully pull off. Without even knowing it, twins momentarily affirm and reaffirm their status as one unit, as two parts of a whole and as carbon copies. Although, on some occasions, twins may actively step outside of these identities, this linguistic habitus – whilst providing the structure for speaking – restricts the extent to which identity can be managed and controlled through talk. In adulthood, twins do not simply stop speaking as twins. On the contrary these data support the prevalence of the 'we' pronoun within their talk also. Although these twins seemed more relaxed about narrating similarities, like the other twins, they variously play up and play down their status as twins through their talk.

Being spoken to as a twin: repertoires of talk

Aside from the twins themselves, external others also have an important role to play in calling twins to take up their subject positions (Althusser, 2000) as twins. Episodes of talk between 'passers-by' and twins make this particularly evident. In Chapter 3, some parents explained how their young same-looking children attracted public attention. Many twins also recalled being approached by strangers and the questions that were asked of them. Two questions – 'are you identical?' 'are you close?' – were commonly cited and reflect the public yearning for confirmation of the cultural (identical) twin ideal. Jen (36) wrote:

> It remains quite amazing to me how the sequence of conversation invariably goes with new people when family members are discussed ..."....& I'm a twin" "Oh really ? Is your twin a boy or a girl?" "I have a twin brother" " Are you identical?" " "No his nose is larger than mine" – what else do you say?! Some people seem to think that different-gender twins can be identical....

Sally also explained: 'they always ask 'are you identical?' and then they ask 'are you close?' They are the main two questions I've ever got asked'. Importantly, the question about closeness follows the question about zygosity status. This order helps strangers to identify where the twins fall on the continuum of siblingship and thus what extent of closeness to expect to find between them. They may seek particular responses to these questions – as Sally also pointed out, 'they're not so interested if you're not [identical]'. Judged to embody a 'mythic' closeness that we all desire, older child and adult identical twins may still potentially be able to obtain status for their twoness whilst non-identical twins, falling further down the continuum of siblingship, may receive less attention.

Twins may therefore be positioned, or indeed position themselves, as the objects of a spectators 'gaze'.[79] Beneath this public gaze, twins are both 'looked at' and 'on display'. Often used to describe a form of patriarchal dominance, the notion of the 'gaze', or more specifically the 'male gaze' suggests that the gazer holds power over the object being gazed upon. However the power relations that frame the interactions between public spectators and twins do not always necessarily place the onlooker as superior. As we have seen, some twins may try to initiate these conversations by introducing themselves as 'twins'. Within these encounters twins may be able to use these repertoires of talk to control how they are looked at and seen by others. Indeed, twins may not necessarily be passively viewed, but may participate in actively shaping other people's perceptions of them.

During these episodes of talk, twins enter into a 'participation framework' where 'the normative specification of appropriate conduct' provides the background for the interaction (Goffman, 1981: 3). In this sense they may be seen to constitute routines of talk, involving particular scripts, characters and plots. Members of the public ask the questions which are framed in terms of dominant discourses of twinship. Twins form their replies in response to these questions, taking up or declining the invitation to perform their identities as twins through talk. Thus Jen explained that 'his nose is larger than mine' in a bid to fight off any presumption that they were identical. Similarly Sally explained that she might say that she and Rachel were 'complete opposites'. During these repertories of talk, twins gain the opportunity to learn the lines of their own 'scripts' of identity, to practice their narratives, develop their characters and perfect their plots. The interview context itself, therefore, has to be conceptualised in a similar

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[79] The notion of the gaze, developed in film theory (Mulvey, 1975) and taken up by feminist researchers (for example Coward, 1984; Marshment, 1993; Tseelon, 1995) captures the ways in which persons may be looked *upon* and objectified by others. Thus some feminist writers highlight the ways in which women are placed as objects of male desire.

manner: as a repertoire of talk where twins can once again practice and perform these identities.

Twin talk?

So how far can these forms of talk be said to be specific to twins? Conceptualised as 'habitus', language and particular modes of speaking are acquired through a gradual process of inculcation and emerge in relation to the specific social contexts within which speakers have been placed. It is therefore not surprising that other groups, living amongst a similar range of 'social conditions' may employ similar modes of talk. For example, Coates (2003) found that heterosexual couples also sometimes spoke using the plural pronoun 'we' and co-constructed collaborative narratives. As she notes, these modes of talk are 'characteristic of people who know each other well' (Coates, 2003: 176). Certainly this is a finding supported by my own discussions with parents of twins, who, like the twins themselves, often spoke as 'one unit'. For example, David said 'we don't want them to stay at their present school'. Jonathan explained 'we feel [Brian] devoted his weekends to consuming as many different cocktails as humanly possible'. Pam said, 'we couldn't sort of split them and we never have' and Jenny admitted, 'we know that we can't make them alike'. As was the case with the twins, these styles of talk often seemed like 'second nature' to the parents.

However, couples may also deliberately want to use their talk to show that they are 'doing' coupledom *well*. Since dominant notions of twinship and coupledom are constructed along similar lines, these identities (of 'being a couple' and 'being twins') may be practiced utilising similar forms of talk. Like twins, couples are expected to spend time together, be close and are even permitted to wear similar outfits ('his' and

'hers'). There is so much overlap between discourses of 'marriage' and 'twinship' that it may even be considered to be a 'metaphor' of twinship (marriage is a form of twinship). Marriage involves the symbolic joining together of two bodies as one and signifies unconditional love and support ('in sickness and in health') (Morgan, 1991). Married couples constitute a self-contained unit who, after partaking in the ritualised separation from their respective families (by 'leaving home' and 'going away on honeymoon'), are united together *forever*. The 'romantic love complex' that underpins this presumes a meeting of souls, emphasises the primacy of the maital relationship (above other aspects of family organisation), and asserts the enduring nature of 'love' (Giddens, 1992). Hence, like the ideal of twin closeness, marriage involves a lasting intimacy ('til death us do part'). Like twins, we talk about couples in terms of 'parts' – 'my other half', 'my better half' – and think about these parts as forming a 'complete' whole – 'you make me complete'. In this sense, then, marriage is metaphorically structured in terms of twinship and these 'structural metaphors' (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 61) help us to know how to act *as* married couples. As Lakoff and Johnson point out, metaphors are not simply a matter of language but are integral to our thought processes. These conceptual tools help to structure our social actions and thus shape the ways in which we live. Practising 'marriage' in talk therefore involves affirming this togetherness and closeness.[80]

Some of the parents seemed willing and eager to perform these qualities. For example, some parents repeatedly asked their partners questions in order to invite them to share the narrative floor with them and thus to co-produce a performance of unity:

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[80] Whilst within late modern society, marriage may have become less prevalent and partnerships increasingly terminated and initiated on the basis of an assessment of what the *relationship* can offer both partners, commitment and open-ness are still prized and the two-ness of this union is still upheld (Giddens, 1992). Indeed Giddens points out that the 'pure relationship' emerged out of the ethos of 'romantic love'.

Allison	I mean I suppose your parents aren't that old are they? But my parents were old weren't they? *[Looking to Mike]*
Mike	My parents were a little bit older than we were when we had the boys. I was 23 you were 24 weren't you? *[Looking to Allison]*
Allison	Yeah, yeah.

Clare	And he always said, dint ya? When we went for us first appointment, anti-natal appointment, he still said, he said when they were giving me a scan, he said, *[looks to Anthony]* didn't ya?
Anthony	I said, well he was showing us heart and you know, 'and that's head and that's heart' and you could just see that flickering you know, and I said to her, 'well look on bright side there 'int two duck'.

Given that consensus is an important part of performing togetherness and two-in-one-ship, it is vital that any disagreements be avoided or quickly ironed out. By asking questions and swapping glances, each parent momentarily seeks approval for their narrative. Some disagreements did however break out:

Kate	So would you say that being a parent of twins is any different to being a parent of say, like Jeremy [their older son] for instance?
	[...]
Malcolm	I think we're very lucky. Something special I suppose you know. We're lucky to have something special.
Pam	But then you're lucky if you have a baby anyway, whether it's one, two, three or whatever. Cos you automatically take it for granted that you're going to get married and you're going to have children and it's not necessarily the case is it. And every baby's special.
Malcolm	So you don't think it's any different?
Pam	Only from the point of view of bringing them up and you know

feeding them and all the rest that goes along with it.

Kate   What... do you mean it was more hard work?

Pam   Yeah, cos you've got three as opposed to one, in that respect.

Malcolm   So you don't think you're lucky you think it's been more hard work?

Pam   Oh no. No, I think-

Malcolm   *[Interrupts]* Then you think you're lucky.

Pam   Well, yeah. erm... but lucky you know... I mean we're lucky that
                we've had three healthy babies, healthy children.

                [Malcolm sits there looking unhappy at Pam's response]

Malcolm thus tries to get Pam to agree with his own response – to give the impression
that they both feel the same and thus to re-form the 'we' group. However, notions of
'good mothering' conflict with Malcolm's perspective; Pam wants to stress that she sees
all her children as 'equals' (i.e. there are no favourites). Malcolm impatiently tries to
clear the disagreement up:

Malcolm   Is this something we're going to disagree on?

Pam   Well what are we disagreeing on... that we're not lucky? I'm saying
                we are lucky. But you can't say that you're more lucky having twins
                than you are having one.

Malcolm   What the question was, do you regard yourself any different, being a
                parent of twins, than being a parent of just a single person. A single
                child... it's got to be different hasn't it?

Pam   Well it is different yeah.

Malcolm   Yeah. Why is it different?

Pam   *[Laughing]* Cos you've got two instead of one.

Malcolm   That's the question. *Why?*

Pam   Oh alright then, I misunderstood.

Conflictual narratives thus potentially serve to undermine performances of unity and the authority of the 'we' voice.

Other examples of this emerge from accounts of sister relationships. Thus Mauthner (1998) found that sisters may finish each other's sentences and possess intimate knowledge about each other's lives. Moreover, like twins, they may utilise discourses of 'best friendship' to help them to narrate their experiences (Mauthner, 2000).[81] Pillsbury's (1998) study of an American basketball team also showed how the coach emphasised the value of the 'team' over and above individual players and how, in line with this, some team players often spoke utilising the plural pronoun 'we'. Like romantic partners, part of the practice of being a team is to be altruistic, that is quite literally self-less.

One aspect of talk, however, which may be more particular to twins, is the public repertories of talk conducted with strangers. Adult couples rarely come under such a public gaze. Questions about their closeness and intimacy would more likely be considered a breech of 'privacy'. However, since, as Chapter 2 pointed out, twins arouse our sense of awe and fascination, promising what we all want (in terms of emotional closeness and understanding) they become a source of public intrigue and are thus potentially accessible by 'strangers'.

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[81] However, this thesis suggests that, because twinship is discursively constructed as a concentrated version of siblingship, sisters who narrate an intense and unconditional emotional closeness may be compared to twins and can potentially utilise a (cultural) notion of 'twinship' to help them to describe just how close they are.

Conclusion

Talk can be both enabling and constraining; helping twins to compose and perform particular versions of self whilst also limiting the success of these performances. Talk provides an important means through which life course identity is conveyed. Narratives of closeness may become especially useful resources for older child and adult twins since in allowing them to signify their status as twins without necessarily having to look the same or be together, they allow them to both potentially obtain social status and symbolic capital for being close companions – something we still envy in them – and also uphold their status as unique and independent persons. Although twins compose and negotiate their identities through talk, these identities are constructed across the internal-external dialectic of identification. Not only do these personal accounts also often reflect broader family narratives but they are likely to have emerged from and through the telling and re-telling of stories about 'being a twin' that are explicitly requested during public repertoires of talk. Although many aspects of the twins' talk (such as speaking in the plural pronoun 'we' and co-construction) cannot be labelled as 'twin talk', these public routines of talk seem more particular to twins and reflect the public intrigue surrounding them.

Chapter 7: Conclusions: Moving through life as a twin

'... all identities are by definition social identities, Identifying ourselves or others is a matter of meaning, and meaning always involves interaction: agreement and disagreement, convention and innovation, communication and negotiation'

(Jenkins, 2004: 4)

Introduction

What does it mean to be a twin? How do twins conceptualise their identity? To what extent can twins 'escape' or shape their identity as twin? These questions, which formed the basis of the research, were outlined at the start of the introduction. By way of a conclusion, I want to return to discuss some answers to these questions and show how this study can contribute to theorising on childhood and identity.

What does it mean to be a twin?

Chapter 2 examined the cultural backdrop against which our dominant understandings of twinship are set. This chapter argued that sameness, togetherness and closeness constitute three key defining features of British (Western) conceptualisations of twinship. Twins are thus expected to look the same, spend their time together and to have a close relationship with one another. In this sense, identical twins, representing

the very epitome of twinship, come to stand for all twins. In so much as they are thought to possess these qualities, twins constitute a concentrated version of 'ordinary' siblingship. Hence being a twin also means being something *more* than a sibling.

Moreover, discourses of childhood run parallel to discourses of twinship helping to suggest that being a twin also implies a sense of being a 'child'. Whilst children are dependent beings in the process of becoming fully formed individuals, twins constitute a dyadic unit who lack individuality and independence. Children must develop into persons by establishing a clear sense of self and independence from their parents. Twins lack individuality and must achieve a sense of bodily distinctiveness and uniqueness. Twins are interdependent and must separate from each other as well as their parents. Twinship thus represents an intensification of the symbol of the child and, in line with this, is discursively constructed (by 'experts,' parents and twins) as something that children should (in the main) grow out of. This thesis therefore allows us to see, as if in magnified detail, the contours and limits of personhood which in turn help to mark out childhood as a specific social space within the life course. Put another way, it is because twins are expected to leave behind aspects of their twinship in pursuit of adult personhood that twinship shows up the symbolic boundary marking out childhood from adulthood. Importantly, central to this understanding of how twins *should* grow up, is a conceptualisation of the life course as a series of fixed stages. Thus as Hockey and James note, 'the more rigid pattern of the modern western life course which emerged in the mid-nineteenth century [still] continues to occupy a hegemonic position' (2003: 57).

How do twins conceptualise their identity?

'Identity gives us an idea of who we are and of how we relate to others and to the

world in which we live' (Woodward, 1997: 1). On one level a general pattern has emerged throughout this thesis whereby the youngest children were more likely to identify themselves as twins through drawing attention to or playing up aspects of 'twinship' than the older child twins. For the latter, being an 'individual' takes on added significance as an expression that they are growing up successfully. Hence there is a concern to play down relatedness and play up distinctiveness. In line with this, many of the older child twins drew attention to the mismatch between cultural definitions of twinship and what it was like for them. Hence Ruth and Emma resisted assumptions that they dressed the same and acted the same. Ian explained that although there is a 'law' that twins dress the same, he does not like to. Charlotte and Hannah, Liam and Dan placed themselves outside of the category 'twins' preferring to refer to themselves as 'sisters'/'brothers' and many of these twins also explained how they had 'split up' or tried to carve out their own 'personal(ised)' space. In some respects, different-sex twins Adam and Olivia were less adamant about playing down their twin identities. Adam explained that Olivia sometimes wore his clothes and, like the youngest twins, both pinpointed togetherness as a defining feature of their experience of being twins. However, whilst on the one hand, these different-sex twins may be less at risk from being cast off as 'failed' individuals because they look so different, they may still be stigmatised for their togetherness. Their friends 'get really weird' when 'they' tell them they share a room reflecting the social unease surrounding fears of incest.

On this general level, it is evident that twinship loses some of its salience as twins get older further confirming the cultural matching of twinship and childhood and the sense in which twinship may be conceptualised as a social space within the lifecourse. Related to this, this analysis shows how similarity and difference may emerge as more or less significant at different points within the lifecourse. Young children, firmly

positioned within the parameters of 'childhood', may be allowed to emphasise their sameness. However, as expectations that they should develop as unique persons intensify and take on increased force as twins get older, expressions of difference become important markers of twins' *progress* towards adulthood. This is not to discount the 'double-edged' nature of similarity and difference. In asserting their difference from each other, older children also affirm their determination to be 'individuals' like 'normal' children/singleton siblings and, in affirming their physical sameness, the youngest twins emphasise their difference (as twins) to other children. Thus, although, since the 1980s and 90s, debates about identity and difference have predominated within the social sciences (Holloway and Valentine, 2000a: 2), this thesis reminds us that both similarity and difference are important aspects of identity. Broadly speaking, however, we can also conclude that when individuality is under threat difference may be more heavily pronounced.

Whilst on the one hand this movement away from twinship demonstrates the power of normative life course timetables in signalling entry and exit points for twin identity, obscured within this general pattern are also the ways in which twin identity may be periodically taken up and abandoned. Twins do not simply move from being twins to becoming adults. During the course of their everyday lives, twins move in and out of twinship, returning to take up expressions of sameness as 'just a laugh', telling others they are twins to try to obtain the public attention they now miss, momentarily reforming twin togetherness to obtain comfort and companionship. They may trade on assumptions of interchangeability to maintain friendships or to obtain 'personal' information about their fellow twin. Identities are also constructed and reconstructed across different socio-spatial contexts. The home and school may carry different expectations as to how the body should be presented and positioned in space and help to

structure the extent to which they can gain 'capital' for being twins. This thesis therefore also shows how children may play an active part in securing (or not) their own and each other's social capital as well as being used by their parents. This provides a critique for much social theorising on the family and social capital which tends to emphasise the role that parents play in forming social networks and how these various social relationships influence the child's life chances.[82] As Edwards states, 'absent are conceptions of children as active participants in ... gathering social capital for themselves, parents and other family members' (Edwards, 2004: 8).

The temptation to move back into aspects of twinship seems to increase in adulthood precisely because their (intense) 'childish' twinship has had to be sacrificed. No longer expected to *be* 'twins' these adults may cling on to aspects of twin identity to reaffirm their status *as* twins. The extraordinariness of this identity and the sense of 'being special' that it produces is, it seems, difficult to give up on. Narratives of twin closeness may take on new significance for older child and adult twins as a means of communicating twin identity. Because these potentially allow twins to confirm their 'exotic' status whilst still implying a sense of their uniqueness and independence, this may be one way in which twins can maintain their status as persons whilst still playing up their identity as twins. Indeed, although we do not want these older twins to look exactly the same (because this would contravene our cultural valuing of individuality), we still want them to be close (to prove that the mythic state of closeness is achievable and to reaffirm our faith in this aspect of 'human nature'); therefore public intrigue surrounding the twin relationship will not vanish. Female twins in particular may be

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[82] Coleman's notion of social capital is usually utilised within this research. From this perspective, social capital – social relations between family members and the wider community – feed *down* to influence the cognitive and social development of the child. Hence children consume rather than produce social capital. (Seaman and Sweeting, 2004). Research within this field has therefore been concerned with linking the child's educational attainment and behaviour 'problems' to family social capital (see Hogan, 2001).

more able to cling onto aspects of twinship and the symbolic and social capital potentially available through playing up closeness because expressions of twin closeness fall in line with discourses of femininity. Male twins on the other hand may be stigmatised as 'gay'.

Following Hall (2000) and Jenkins (2004), this thesis therefore also contributes towards an understanding of identity as processually worked out and negotiated. Although twins may try to give some impression of authenticity – this is who I *really* am – in trying to assert their own individuality, this in itself is a social identity and not, as Craib would have it, a 'core' identity which separates 'my' identity from my 'social' identity (Craib, 1998: 4). 'Our new search for a *real* self may then have done little more than add another self-conception to the [existing] stock' of identities which we already have (Cohen and Taylor, 1976: 207) and which are themselves constructed across the internal-external dialectic.

More broadly, by examining twins' experiences of being twins, this thesis also contributes to the relatively under-researched field of sibling relationships within sociology and anthropology. Sibling ties have traditionally been studied under the banner of psychology where researchers have, amongst other things, focused on sibling influences on adjustment and development (Stoneman, 2001; Kaminsky and Dewey, 2002), links between sibling relationships and parental/marital relationships (Hoffman and Edwards, 2004) and the development of empathy and understanding displayed by siblings (Howe, 2004).[83] However, advances are being made within sociology and anthropology. For instance, Mauthner (2000) has examined the narrative constructions

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[83] These topics often overlap in the literature.

of sisterhood provided by girls and women; Punch (Punch, 2004) has examined how children may use their siblings as resources for helping them to avoid or cope with carrying out certain household tasks and McNamee (1999) has examined sibling strategies for controlling access to computer and video games within the home. This study has examined how twins make sense of, modify or resist their sibling identities as 'twins'. Importantly, this analysis has shown how twins may position themselves and be positioned by others at various points on the 'continuum of siblingship' demonstrating that sibling identities are not fixed or essential but are social identities that are in process. Moreover, it shows how siblings provide each other with valuable 'human resources' to construct their identities – a point that will be taken up later on in this conclusion. Finally, it points to the conclusion that twinship may constitute one differentiating feature within the category 'childhood'. In her social analysis of twinship, Elizabeth Stewart suggests that twins be considered to be a 'subgroup' within the minority group 'children' (2000: 164). Certainly, in purely statistical terms, twins still constitute a minority group of children. Ideologically, they are also constructed as 'different' sorts of children, with more intense problems and difficulties in establishing individuality and independence. In this sense they are a minority within a minority. However this should not be taken to imply that these children constitute one monolithic group. To say that twinship provides a specific structuring context for twin children is not to say that these children will all experience twinship in the same ways but to recognise that ideological constructions of twinship may set up a series of more intense contradictions between who they are (as twins) and what they *should* become (as adults) which will then be navigated by individual twins in various ways. One difficulty in acknowledging this, however, is that it perpetuates understandings of twins as 'Other' – a status which many of the older twins often wanted to play down in favour of being 'normal'.

Further research needs to be conducted on siblings to examine the differences and overlap between children's experiences of being 'twins' and being 'siblings' in order to more fully understand this aspect of children's lives and identities. Certainly, following the argument presented here that twinship *is* a social identity, it would be possible for siblings to feel like and be treated as twins. Differently aged siblings can indeed be spotted dressed in identical outfits – appearing as if they were twins. How does the lived experience of being a sibling compare to being a twin? How do family dynamics such as family composition, birth order and gender shape children's experiences of siblingship? How do twins define and practice what it means to be a 'moral' or 'good' twin and how do these compare to those given by and in relation to siblings? Although the latter two questions have not been examined in their own right within this thesis (because the focus here has been on examining how twins use space, talk and their bodies as resources for negotiating their identities), the data collected for this thesis would help to begin this analysis. Such an investigation would both broaden out our understanding of the significance of siblingship for children and acknowledge the important work that children do in constructing the 'family'.

To what extent can twins 'escape' or shape their identity as twin?

Identity is constructed across the internal-external dialectic of identification. As the grounding for human social action, bodies exist in relation to other bodies. During our embodied social interaction others classify our bodies as we in turn, classify them. This means that our internal perceptions of who we are cannot be divorced from external constructions. It is never enough to simply assert an identity because that identity has to be validated by others. Hence, in Chapter 4 we saw how although some of the non-identical twins told children at school that they were twins, these children did not

always believe them. This 'external' response fed into and helped confirm Hannah's assertion that they were just like 'sisters'. As an identity chiefly defined through bodily sameness, the body may both enable and constrain children's negotiations of twin identity. Identical looking twins may find it more difficult to escape being identified as 'twins', their bodies communicating messages of identity on their behalf. For these twins, as Chapter 5 discussed, space may be an effective resource for helping them to escape from being 'known' as twins, providing distance for them to 'split up' and thus also concealing any embodied expressions of sameness. Because identical twins have come to symbolise what twinship means, different looking twins (especially different-sex twins) on the other hand may find it easier to exit their twin identities whilst on the other hand may also find it more difficult to 'pass' as twins – something they may need to do in order to justify their status as 'twins' and claim any capital available for having a 'special' relationship.

We cannot necessarily simply (immediately) be anyone we choose to be. This thesis therefore utilises Shilling's notion of the body as an 'unfinished entity' in order to show how theories of identity must take the physicality of the body seriously. In this sense, this thesis provides a critique against Foucauldian perspectives that see the body as being *produced* through discourse and also reminds us that 'body projects' (Giddens, 1991) may be restricted or delayed by the corporeality of the body. We also need to take into account the amount of power we may or may not have over governing and controlling the presentation of our own bodies. In Chapter 3, we saw how parents managed the presentation of their young twins' bodies. Finally, we must situate these bodies in space so that we see how they are classified or constrained by other bodies.

Chapter 5 took the spatialisation of identity as its focus point. This analysis of children's bedrooms showed how children actively use space as a resource for negotiating their identities. Although the 'separate' room provides a container for the 'individual' self, the shared room encourages embodied performances of 'childish' twin togetherness. Older twins may, therefore, actively transform these shared spaces into two separate places to symbolically disconnect this 'unity' and construct themselves as discrete entities. Spaces however, like the identities they help to construct and reflect, are not fixed but may be opened out and closed down in different situations for instance to obtain 'privacy' or seek companionship. Related to this, notions of childhood innocence may help to constrain young children in finding alternative ways of developing 'personal' space outside of the family home. Inside the family home, the bedroom may provide some escape from adult surveillance and, especially in the case of the 'single' room, also some escape from the controlling force of one's twin. This chapter therefore builds on and adds to the growing body of literature within the social study of childhood which recognises children's roles in shaping and transforming the spaces of childhood (Holloway and Valentine, 2000c).

Importantly, children also control each other's negotiations of identity. Thus Chapter 4 drew on Morgan's notion of 'bodily density' to capture the relatedness of twins' 'body work'. Chapter 5 showed how twins provide each other with valuable human resources for locating and identifying the beginning and end points of the self in space. Building on contemporary analyses of children's talk as a form of social action, Chapter 6 showed how twins often require the presence of the Other (twin) to talk up difference and distinction. Paradoxically, then, older children require the help and assistance of their fellow twins in order to effectively be 'individuals'. In this sense, they may find it difficult to step out of the very 'relatedness' they often want to escape from. Yet,

through talk, twins socialise each other so that they agree on the precise dimensions of their differences. Children, therefore, actively participate in shaping their own and each other's identities and in doing so contribute to the running of everyday social life. In managing their own bodies and the spaces within which these bodies move, they also participate in resisting, modifying and reproducing cultural notions of twinship. This thesis therefore adds to the growing stock of childhood ethnographies which positions and identifies children as competent social actors. It shows how they play a vital part in constructing their own and each other's childhoods and therefore provides another critique against models of the 'passive' child advocated and perpetuated by traditional sociological theories of socialisation.

This, however is not to discount the structuring forces which help to shape children's lives. As James and Prout note,

> A more satisfactory theoretical perspective would be one that could account for childhood as a structural feature of society in the moment of its impinging upon children's experiences in daily life and the reshaping of the institution of childhood by children through their day to day activities. In essence, it would address both structure and agency in the same moment (James and Prout, 1995: 81).

Although this thesis has examined the structuring contexts for children's experiences of twinship and the agency contexts within which they actively shape their own and each other's lives in two separate parts, links have been made between the two throughout this thesis to give an indication of how structure embodies action and action structure.

Parents, especially mothers, take a lead role in directing their children's childhood, preparing their children's bodies for public presentation and providing them with

various spatial contexts (both at home and at school) within which to negotiate their identities. The analysis presented in Chapter 3 showed that, on the whole, parents want their children to be twins before they 'grow up': they encourage their young children to be together and to look the same/similar. The power parents have in shaping and controlling the form and content of their children's childhoods means that children can only opt out of these decisions later on, when they are deemed competent enough to make self-determined choices. Hence, children may spend their childhoods within spatial contexts that encourage embodied expressions of twinship. In this sense, parents may encourage their children to take on various embodied ways of being such as looking the same and being together. However, the second part of the thesis showed how, in making their own choices about how to dress, children actively resist these attempts to inscribe practices of twinship into their everyday actions. Similarly, even where older twins are placed together in one room, they may change the shape of this space, transforming it into two places in order to step outside of the 'childhood' (space of co-dependency) that has been created for them and resist the assumption that twins belong together. However, the Chapter 6 on talk showed that although children may not have developed embodied expressions of sameness and togetherness as 'second nature', they do continue to symbolically express their dyad status through talk. In this sense, it seems that twins may find it difficult to completely exit practices of twinship. Symbolic expressions of unity convey the shared understanding and knowledge they have of each other. Through talk, the past 'childhood' (of 'relatedness') is thus continued into the present so that even where the actual conditions for the production of this linguistic habitus may have all but disappeared (with adult twins living apart from each other) the modes of talk that have (at least in part) emerged out of it still persist.

Conclusion

Twinship is a social identity that is culturally constructed through notions of sameness, togetherness and closeness. It both represents a concentrated version of normative notions of 'siblingship' and an intensification of the symbol of the 'child'. The latter means that in deconstructing twinship we also learn something about the social construction of childhood. Twinship contradicts western notions of (adult) personhood. 'Growing up' therefore carries expectations that twins will 'split up', get their 'own' interests, and develop their 'own' personalities and tastes. Childhood is thus revealed as a period of training and becoming, a space for development where children learn how to *become* unique and independent adults. Yet, although, in line with normative lifecourse timetables, twins are often keen to show that they are growing up successfully, their stories also reveal that moving through life as a twin does not involve a simple linear transition from 'twinship' to adulthood. Rather, twins also move in and out of their twin identities at different times and in different situations. The extraordinariness of this identity is hard to give up on and older twins may still attempt to obtain social and symbolic capital through it. The body, space and talk constitute three resources that may variously enable twins to play up or play down their identities as twins.

As an illustration of Jenkins' theoretical perspective on social identity, this thesis draws attention to the embodied and situatedness of identity. Identity is negotiated across the internal-external dialectic where similarity and difference take on various degrees of significance (across the lifecourse) depending on the extent to which individuality is deemed to be important and under threat. Within this process, children play a vital role in constructing their own and each other's childhoods. Children do not

passively absorb cultural information but actively participate in the making of social life and the social structures that emerge from and through it. Ultimately therefore, this thesis provides a contribution to the new sociology and anthropology of childhood which promotes the valuing of children as competent social actors.

Appendix 1: Vignettes

Vignette 1: Jack and Joe – joining the local hockey club

Jack and Joe are twins. They are 12 years old. They both like playing hockey and want to join their local hockey club. One Monday they decided to visit the club to ask how to join. The owner told them that they would have to come along to the club and play a game of hockey with the other members in order to see if they were good enough to join. They were told to come back on Friday.

For the rest of the week Jack and Joe practiced their hockey. Jack was sure that he would be good enough to join but Joe was less confident. When they woke on Friday, Jack was excited and couldn't wait to play the hockey match, but Joe was nervous. At 5.00pm they arrived at the hockey club and got changed ready to play. Jack was put in the red team and Joe in the blue team. At half time each team had scored one goal. Jack and Joe felt they were playing well. As the second half began, Joe scored a goal. The other blue team players ran to congratulate him and the game went on. 5 minutes before the end of the match, Jack dribbled the hockey ball towards the net and hit it as hard as he could, but the goalkeeper saved it.

At the end of the match the whistle sounded and the score was two goals to the blue team and one to the red team. The players shook hands and went inside to get changed. When the owner came to tell Jack and Joe the decision, they stood silent. Joe had been accepted but jack hadn't.

Vignette 2: Clare and Gail go Swimming

Clare and Gail are twins. They are 10 years old. They are in the same classes at school and know a lot of the same people. In their spare time, they also spend a lot of time together. Every Tuesday the girls go swimming and every Saturday they play piano. One Tuesday Gail had to go to the doctors. Their mum said that she would not be back in time to go swimming with Clare. Clare was quite pleased to be going by herself for a change. When Clare arrived everyone asked where Gail was and why she had not come to swimming club. Clare told them where she was and then chatted to them for a while about her day before the swimming started.

10 minutes into the class, the swimmers were told to find a partner to swim with. Clare was pleased that she would not have to choose Gail, instead she chose Kerry.

Clare and Kerry swam ten lengths and then the class was interrupted by a late arrival. It was Gail. She must have come back from the doctor's early.

Vignette 3: Chores at Tea Time

Kelly and Bill are twins. They are 10 years old. They live with their mum, and sister Clare who is 13.

When they come home from school, Kelly, Bill and Clare all have chores to do around the house. Kelly has to wash the pots after tea, Clare has to dry them and Bill has to put them away.

One day, when mum was out, Bill nipped across the street to see his friend Michael, leaving Kelly and Clare to tidy up on their own.

What happens next ...

Vignette 4: Jane gets a boyfriend

Jane and Paul are twins. They are 11 years old. Every Friday they attend their local youth club together. One Friday at the youth club, Jane was chatting to her friend James. She has known him for a long time but she knows that he has told one of her friends that he would like to go out on a date with her. After talking to James for quite some time, James asked her if she would like to go out to the cinema with him. She agreed.

The following Friday, instead of going to the youth club, they go out to their local cinema and decide that they would like to see each other again.

Appendix 2: Adult twin questionnaire

ADULT TWINS

Just in case you don't already know, I am a PhD student at the university of Hull. I am based within the Sociology and Anthropology department and my thesis is concerned with exploring what it means to be a twin.

I am interviewing child twins, adult twins and any family members that want to get involved.

Seeing as though we are unable to speak face-to-face, I thought that I would prepare some subject headings that you could write about. If you wanted you could tape yourself talking about your experiences or alternatively, you could jot down a few things. These headings are just ideas that I have come up with. You don't have to stick to them if you don't want to. I have kept them as broad as possible so that you can talk to me about things that are important to you. You can write as much or as little as you want to.

Generally speaking, I am interested in finding out your experiences of being a twin. How you remember being a twin when you were a child, how things were as you were getting older and how things are now. The following headings might be useful talking points for you to write/talk about:

- Information about yourself – name, age, identical/non-identical, position in the family (for example, are you the eldest, middle, youngest child etc.), living arrangement (do you live with parents or away from parents).
- An introduction to the people in your family
- What it was like being a twin when you were a child
- What it was like growing up as a twin
- What it is like now

You might comment on:
- Any occasions, events, situations that stick out in your mind.

- Any advantages and disadvantages/problems that you have encountered
- How people treat/ed you
- Relationship with your twin and any other family members

You might also say something about:

- Whether you think being a twin was/is any different from being a regular brother/sister.
- What people say (if anything) when they find out you are a twin
- Your ideas about what a twin is and how realistic you think this is

Take your time and write anything that is important to you. Don't be afraid to write a lot, and don't be worried that you've written too little. Any information is important. The aim is to understand what it is like being a twin from the people that live and experience it. After all, you are the experts!

If you want more information or just need to talk to me, please feel free to get in touch. My contact details are at the bottom of the page.

You can send me back your ideas when you feel ready. Ideally this would be before January but if that is a problem just let me know and we can arrange something else.

Thank you for all you help,
Kate

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Tel home: 01482 587203
Email: K.V.Bacon@cas.hull.ac.uk

Information about you and your family:

(E.g. your name, age, identical/non-identical, position in the family - for example, are you the eldest, middle, youngest child etc., living arrangement - do you live with parents or away from parents. An introduction to the people in your family)

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Being a twin:

Memories of being a twin when you were a child:

(E.g. ... Your earliest childhood memories, experiences through infant, primary and starting secondary school. What it was like being a twin in your family/at home when you were child, good and bad sides to being a twin, things that you liked about being a twin, things that annoyed you. Relationship with your twin and other family members, including other brothers and sisters. What you think any other brothers/sisters thought to having twins in the family when you were a child. How you were treated by others. Any situations, events that stick out in your mind...)

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What it was like growing up as a twin

(E.g. ... Any situations/events that stick out in your mind. Advantages of being a twin as you were growing up, problems/ difficulties experienced. Memories of moving through secondary school, girl/boyfriends. What it was like being a twin at home. Your relationship with your twin and other members of your family including any other brothers and sisters. What you think any other brothers/sisters thought to having twins in the family. How you were treated by others....)

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What it is like being a twin as an adult

(e.g. ... Any situations/events that stick out in your mind. Moving out of home, getting a job, going to college/university. How you feel about being a twin now - advantages, disadvantages, problems. How you are treated by others. Relationship with your twin and other family including any other brothers and/or sisters. How you think any of your brothers/sisters feel about having adult twins as their brothers and/or sisters. Girl/boyfriends, partners, marriage, having children...)

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The future:

(E.g. ... how do you see your relationship with your twin in the future. Do you envisage any problems? Are there any things that you are particularly looking forward to?...)

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You might also say something about:

• Whether you think being a twin was/is any different from being a regular brother/sister.

• What people say (if anything) when they find out you are a twin

• Your ideas about what a twin should (ideally) be and how realistic you think this is

• If you introduce/d yourself as a twin

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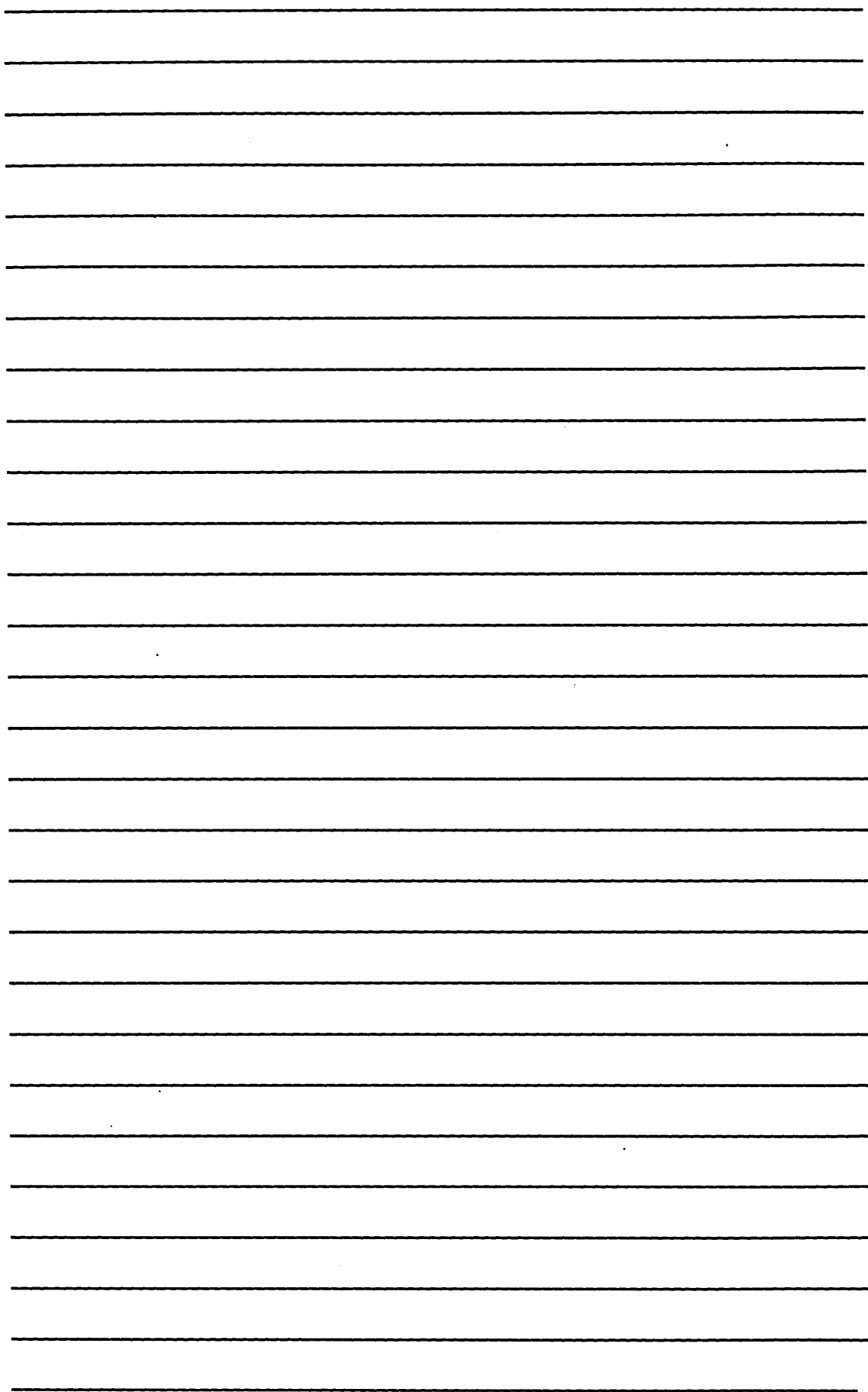_____

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