

Roots and Routes:
Identity Development of
Researcher and Researched in a
Jewish Youth Movement Context

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Abstract

This thesis examines the issue of ethnicity and kinship and explores the advent of identity formation, specifically in a Reform Jewish context, via youth movement participation. Through the mediums of informal education, focus group discussion and individual semi-structured interviews, I engage in an exploration of identifying what it means to be Jewish, how youth movements augment and abet Jewish identity formation, and the boundaries that exist between young Jews and their host communities.

Youth movement youngsters are observed *in situ* and Grounded Theory (Strauss, 1987; Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1992; Glaser, 1998; Glaser, and Strauss, 1968) is employed to elucidate their engagements and interactions. Three case studies (Stake, 1995) are then presented to illustrate the experience of youth movement “graduates”. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, 2004; Smith and Osborn, 2003) is used to consider the dimensions of their relationship to Judaism, their youth movement and mainstream society.

I conclude that Jewish Identity is a combination of the Motivational and the Situational imperatives. The combined values of religion, culture and national affinity provide the motivational forces. Situational factors inducing Jewish identity amongst youth movement members are the ever wider boundaries they create for themselves and that are created for them. The first boundary of these youngsters that I identify is their movement loyalty relative to other Jewish youth movements; the next is their Reform Judaism within a wider Jewish context and the broader category is their “Jewishness” in a wider society. This “Jewishness” is expressed through the desire for Jewish Continuity (the future of the Jewish people) and the perpetuation of the feeling of “otherness”.

The final chapter charts my developing identity as a researcher. I pose and answer questions taken from throughout the thesis to illustrate my trajectory along the route of becoming a researcher and interpolating my Jewish roots and their significance in my identity development.

1. Introduction: Grooming for Leadership

Outline

This thesis examines the issue of ethnicity and kinship and explores the advent of identity formation, specifically in a Reform Jewish context, via youth movement participation. Through the mediums of informal education, focus group discussion and individual semi-structured interviews, I engage in an exploration of identifying what it means to be Jewish, how youth movements augment and abet Jewish identity formation, and the boundaries that exist between young Jews and their host communities.

I start by exploring the nature of adolescent development in order to ascertain what the current research suggests adolescents should be capable of. In particular, I look at the identity development theories of Bronfenbrenner, (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Bronfenbrenner, 1990) and postulate some nuances and corollaries to his theory.

Youth movement youngsters are observed *in situ* and Grounded Theory (Strauss, 1987; Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1992; Glaser, 1998; Glaser, and Strauss, 1968) is employed to elucidate their engagements and interactions. Three case studies (Stake, 1995) are then presented to illustrate the experience of youth movement “graduates”. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (Smith, 2004; Smith and Osborn, 2003) is used to consider the dimensions of their relationship to Judaism, their youth movement and mainstream society.

Context of the study

“Jews have created educational institutions expected to safeguard our heritage and transmit it to its future carriers, our youth” (Bekerman, 2001, page 463)

Having been a member of a Jewish Youth Movement through my childhood, adolescence and early adult years, I was acutely aware of the wealth of opportunities that were on offer to me and the diversity of experiences in which I could engage. From my pre-teens I was aware of being groomed for peer-leadership – advised that I was leadership material and that my behaviour should reflect the fact that I was likely to be emulated. I knew then as I do now that I was not natural leadership material at the age of nine. I assume that I was led to believe that I was a natural leader in order to quell the enthusiastic

renegade in me. It worked. Having been told I was a leader, I became one. I became a person whose opinions counted amongst my peers, who organised my peers into teams, who was confident to speak my mind and to represent others. I also recognised the responsibility incumbent upon me to act in a responsible manner to ensure that the rest of the group behaved accordingly. I was thus inducted into the philosophy of “*Dugma Ishit*”, “leadership by example” common to many youth clubs (Smith, 1988). Lior, Martin et al. (1999) elicited four reasons for skill enhancement from interviewees: an appreciation of one’s independence; a supportive environment; a feeling of self confidence; and applying or practicing the newly acquired skill in a real situation. It seems apparent, on reflection, that my leaders had instilled in me a sense of confidence that was to lead to opportunities to practice leadership and the concomitant skill acquisition – or so I came to believe.

What is remarkable about this set of circumstances is that my leaders were not eminent professionals, and had received no formal leadership training, but were 17 year-old school pupils who had risen up through the youth movement hierarchy themselves, to become leaders by dint of their enthusiasm and commitment alone. Chazan (2003) suggests:

“To be a truly professional informal Jewish educator one needs [...] a knack for group dynamics; the ability to be inter-active and to listen; the ability to engage others; and the ability to impart ideas and values twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. One has to be accomplished in many areas [...] often demonstrating proficiency over and above that required of teachers.”(online)

In due course I was to follow the path of my predecessors rising, at age 20, to serve a year’s term of office as Education Officer for a national Jewish youth movement – despite having no formal tertiary education. It is my experiences during those years that lead me to hypothesise that adolescents in youth movements are given exceptional opportunities to gain life skills that are otherwise unavailable to teenage children. According to Cohen and Bar-Shalom (2006) “membership in the temporary community ... continues to have major impacts during time away from it” (page 57). Thus my membership in this temporary microcosm of life, I believe, was to continue to have a lasting impact on my life in terms of the social skills it left me with, my sense of Jewish identity and my commitment to education.

The movement I belonged to was Habonim. Typically, we had branches throughout the UK (and other countries) where weekly meetings would take place. Youngsters from the age of 9 would meet with others in their age groups for a couple of hours of fun and informal education. The media used to educate us were vast and varied, from active games to drama to discussions and everything in between. Any medium that our leaders could think of was employed to give a message or stress a point or evoke an ideology. As we got older, delivery methods grew in sophistication so we found ourselves embroiled in balloon debates, simulation games and leadership panels. Our leaders were always only a few years older than us, with the oldest members of the movement being 23. The movement calendar was punctuated with special events such as the celebration of Jewish festivals and the highlights were the residential camps held in both winter and summer where we came together for a concentrated few days of informal Jewish education, strengthening of friendships and deeper exploration of our movement ideology.

Habonim's ideology was upheld by the three "pillars" of Judaism, Socialism and Zionism. We believed, therefore, that every one of us should end up on a kibbutz in Israel. There were plenty of other organisations with a similar structure. Some more religious; some further to the right politically; some further to the left; some operated on a peer-leadership basis whilst some preferred the top down model of leaders being a few years older than their charges; but all used the same medium of instruction - that of experiential learning, of *Dugma Ishit* (Personal Example) and informal education. *Peulot* (educational activities) were planned to engage the youngsters whilst giving them a message. Always there was a message.

Chazan (2003, online) lists techniques of informal Jewish education as being culled from influences of social work, therapy, and even good school classes or seminars. Re'em (2001) suggests that peer teaching leads to empowerment.

Throughout my movement experience (from young participant, through youth leader, to policy maker and beyond to becoming professional staff), I was acutely aware that I had opportunities not accessible to my non-movement counterparts. Many of my peers and charges in the movement went on to become famous comedians, musicians, television producers or rose to the forefront of many other professions. It has always been my belief that this was

due to their taking the skills they acquired in the movement into their professional lives.

Thus, for example, Sascha Baron Cohen would have experimented endlessly in developing his comic personae in front of an appreciative and supportive audience of young charges and peers before arriving at Ali G; I remember that Dan Patterson formulated innumerable games for his charges to play before pooling them together in “Whose Line is it Anyway?” for the radio (and subsequently, television) some years later; and I recall David Baddiel would use every opportunity in the youth movement to exercise his acerbic wit before becoming a comedian and writer.

Journalist Jonathan Freedland (1999) remembers the “insane degree of responsibility foisted on such young shoulders”. He suggests that having been in *loco parentis* to 100 children camping in Holland at age twenty, “almost anything is manageable”. Youth movements provide a platform for oratory skills, presentation skills, facilitation skills and many more. In his article, Freedland (1999) cites playwrights, Arnold Wesker and Mike Leigh; television producer Dan Patterson (“Whose Line is it Anyway?”); comedians David Baddiel and “Ali G” and musical producer Howie B (manager of U2, Massive Attack and Ry Cooder). Mike Leigh says of his time in Habonim, “everybody was open and democratic and working together towards a goal, the spirit of which goes right the way through my productions” (Nathan, 2008). There are many other professionals of note, all of whom declare that they are using the skills that they developed in Habonim (the movement they and I have in common) in their professional lives. Indeed, Dave Labi, former head of Habonim youth movement has recently set up his own film company. He remarked that “Habonim does foster a lot of creativity. Making a film is like running a summer camp. The preparation is like programme-writing and the end product like the camp itself” (Wine, 2004).

A teaching colleague at a boys’ independent school once remarked to me that one can tell the boys who belong to the Jewish youth movements because they are so skilful at getting the younger children organised on the residential weekends. There is a tendency to think of these individuals as having innate strengths in leadership qualities or organisational ability. However Jeffs and Smith (2002) note that there is nothing incidental about these skills. They

propose that “it is the interaction, at a largely non-conscious level, of [their] critical faculties with the environments and behaviours [they] encounter” (p124). In other words, I believe that these youngsters have been tacitly learning how to engage with their charges, and what constitutes good leadership, throughout their youth movement experience.

Thus the germ of this study emerged as a desire to test the thesis that youngsters who undergo a Jewish youth movement involvement develop life skills ahead of their non-movement peers.

I am conscious, of course, that I have a professional bias towards a favourable verdict and my research will therefore need to display a critical perspective and a willingness to acknowledge negative verdicts.

Once I had read through the thesis, I was able to interrogate it to gain a better understanding of my own research trajectory. The following questions arose from that reading and are deliberated in the final chapter.

1. Amidst the plethora of identity theorists, why did I alight on Bronfenbrenner? (Chapter 2)
2. Am I an insider or an outsider through this research?
3. Why is it important to recognise the personae that I adopt?(Chapter 4)
4. What are the lessons learnt from the exaggerated professionalism?(Chapter 4)
5. What is the significance of the esoteric use of Hebrew? (Chapter 4)
6. Why did I fail to draw conclusions from my first set of data, the focus group work? (Chapter 4)
7. Why did I concentrate on “threshold” youngsters for my interviews?
8. In the case study interviews, why: (i) did I not raise exaggerated professionalism (which arose in Chapter 4) and (ii) does exaggerated professionalism not arise naturally from my subjects?
9. What does the “manic laugh-fest” (that I witness in youth leaders during their free time) represent? (Chapter4)
10. What is the key to skill acquisition as demonstrated by the activity in Chapter 4?
11. Having diagrammatically represented my perception of the causal relationships of the themes I explicate from the leadership camp data (Chapters 4 and 5), what meaning can be ascribed to these diagrams? What is the validity of my session in terms of a contribution to research?
12. Why do I move from favouring quantitative to preferring qualitative means of data analysis?
13. Why do I decide to use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis for my case study analyses?
14. Why did I pull back from the indoctrination argument? (Chapter 10)

2. Adolescent Development

Introduction

In this thesis I test the proposition that the youth movement members whom I will be researching demonstrate a sense of responsibility, social ease, advanced cognitive abilities and a strong sense of Jewish identity. In order to explore this position, I propose first to examine the literature with regard to adolescent development in the areas of cognitive, moral, psychological and socio-cultural aspects. My purpose here is not to deal exhaustively with such a vast area of research but to look for theories which resonate with the themes emerging from my data.

There have been many researchers since the early twentieth century who have attempted to categorize adolescent development, although there is no single theory which encompasses all facets of adolescent development (Berzonsky, 2000). All theories, according to Berzonsky, seem to accept that adolescence is a time of flux and the development of a set of rules or behaviour patterns for the future, although there are a variety of perspectives.

Many theories (e.g. Piaget, 1960; Kohlberg, 1969) assert a step-wise development process. Typically, the “Developmental Readiness Hypothesis” (Peskin and Livson, 1972) states that children move naturally from one developmental stage to the next once all the relevant physical and psychological factors are in place. However, according to Petersen and Taylor (1980), they can be pushed into the next developmental stage before they are cognitively and emotionally ready. According to Bekerman (2001), the self is continually being updated and shaped via social discourse. He refers to “the central role played by discourse in the social semiotic mediation which shapes knowledge” (page 466). Consequently, I wish to explore whether exposing youngsters to a Jewish youth movement experience with its debates, social engagement, informal education and the responsibilities that they will encounter could augment development of a certain kind of maturity as exemplified by Petersen and Taylor (1980) above; or expand their knowledge base as postulated by Bekerman (2001). This maturity may account for the commitment that I have

witnessed for youngsters to take on responsibilities of leadership and event planning at a relatively young age.

The concept of adolescence as a discrete stage only emerged at the turn of the last century (Bullough and Kridel, 2003). Studies (e.g. Baird, Gruber et al., 1999) suggest that the brain is a dynamic organ undergoing much of its development during the adolescent years. Thus the physiological evidence backs up the sociological, psychological and educational research findings (Piaget 1960; Kohlberg, 1969; Marcia, 1980; Dewey, 1997) that adolescence is a discrete phase distinct both from childhood and adulthood. However, physiological evidence does not take into account the complex relationship of Erikson's psychological, social, historical and developmental elements (Perosa, Perosa et al., 2002). Nor does it consider the strength of commitment advocated by Marcia (1966). Neither can this research take into account the influences of the family system and the adolescent's position within it or, indeed, social interactions of learned or reinforced behaviour patterns or cultural influences.

Could it be that the adult population at the turn of the last century were simply oblivious to the changes that their progeny were undergoing due to their own pressures and because Western youngsters a century ago were expected to enter the workforce and adopt positions of responsibility in society? Indeed, much of the last century was preoccupied with war and its aftermath. Young men – in essence, often only teenagers – were forced to grow up rapidly in defence of their country; young women had to grow up to take the place of men in society. Hobsbawn (1995) refers to the 20th century as spawning the birth of the youth culture.

Transitions nowadays are far more fluid than they were in the past, due to the greater amount of choice and variation accessible to the average youth today (Lawy, 2003). As a result, transitions may have a longer time frame while youngsters undergo a wider range of experiences and face a wider range of choices. Lawy suggests that young people need to find “meaningful ways of giving value to their lives” (p 332). However, is it more than simply the amount of choice that leads to a longer adolescent period, but also the expectations modern western society has of its adolescents? Youngsters are encouraged to explore their most suitable career path; they are also encouraged to “live”

before settling down (e.g. student Gap Year, Rumspringa of the Amish, campus life). Finding a career path can sometimes take a few trials or dead ends and society tends to be much more tolerant of this nowadays (as evidenced, for instance, by the increased willingness of some universities to encourage applications from gap year students or mature students). Such sociological openness would lead to the undermining of the notion of developmental stages since people have less of a sense of themselves as belonging to a particular stage than perhaps they once did.

Van Geert (1988) divides development theories into two constituent parts. The “State Model” concentrates on the developmental stages whilst the “Sequence Model” looks at the dynamic factors that account for the transition from one stage to the other. Despite taking dynamic factors into account, I believe that van Geert still fails to explore the notion that certain elements of each stage may appear in different sequences or at different rates. It must be considered that the differing pressures exerted on individuals as a result of individual circumstances and specific situations could lead to variation in development patterns.

Indeed this is backed up by Lawy (2003) who criticises the entire concept of developmental stages as they focus on the achievement of an identity stage as a “resultant outcome” rather than the process of transformation. He prefers the use of the word “transformation” to “development” as the latter suggests a predetermined path. Lawy postulates that there is a complex set of factors, and their inter-relationship, that lead to the process of transformation. According to him, development theories focus on “external factors and influences” (page 332) rather than “changing the nature and shape of individual understanding” (page 332). However, the possible flaw in Lawy’s argument might be that a certain degree of physiological readiness must be achieved if self-understanding and meta-cognition are to take place.

Burland and Davidson (2002) declare that there is little evidence to support the view that innate abilities do exist. Nonetheless, they insist that there is general, if tacit, assumption amongst psychologists that innate abilities do exist. They add, however, that there exists evidence to suggest that children are shaped by their experiences. They also go on to add that the transition from adolescence to adulthood is the most significant of the life-span changes and that this transition

is stressful both for the individual concerned and for those around them. This assertion troubles me. Admittedly, adolescence is the first experience that some youngsters have of developing a sense of independence. Added to this are the novel and unfamiliar experiences of sexual interest and physical change. However, I remain unconvinced that the transition from childhood to adulthood should **necessarily** be stressful when it could equally be interpreted as a time of discovery, of the advent of liberty and of engagement in an increasing array of socio-cultural experiences (Hobsbawn, 1995). Rich (2003) found that whilst there were many more papers referring to adolescence in terms of such concepts as anxiety, anger or depression than there were on concepts such as joy, happiness or satisfaction, this can be attributed to the fact that much more research is conducted on the negative aspects of adolescence than on the positive ones. He contends that researchers prefer pathology. Indeed, the entire November 2003 edition of the Journal of Youth and Adolescence is devoted to “Positive Psychology” (Rich, 2003, page 1) in order to redress this imbalance.

Developmental Theories

Following a broad examination of the literature, I chose to concentrate my research into adolescent development within the Cognitive, Moral and Socio-cultural aspects. My initial research included the topics of Physical, Emotional and Behavioural development. However, these were discarded once my empirical data emerged. Themes which emerged in my subsequent data informed the choice of these as the pertinent areas upon which to concentrate theoretical exploration.

(i) Cognitive Development

Dultz and Towbin (1993) state that natural learning (that which occurs without academic prescription and purely for self satisfaction) is the most important for all aspects of moral, ethical, emotional and psychological development and maturation of personality, identity and character. This supports the hypothesis that experiential learning is key to development (Kolb, 1984). It would follow from this precept that youth movements have an added advantage in that their subject matter is often interesting to their participants and is usually put across in a fun way. Bruner (1960) suggests that such interest “is the best stimulus to learning” (p 14).

Piaget (1960) focuses on natural laws rather than social process. Piaget's pre-adolescent "Concrete Operational" stage, in which the individual develops a mastery of logic and rational thought, is succeeded in adolescence by the Formal Operational stage characterised by a development of hypothetical reasoning. Critiquing of Piaget's stages would suggest that not all children go through these stages in discrete steps but there is the possibility of a much more "messy" transition, with elements of each appearing in different orders. Many children may be able to manage concrete operations earlier than Piaget suggested. Indeed, it may be postulated that some people may fail to achieve the Formal Operational stage altogether or are not given the opportunity to develop this level of thinking. In addition, Piaget's theory fails to take sufficient account of the role of language in informing hypothetical thinking. I would add that youth movement children have an advantage in this regard since the informal style of education encourages the style of thinking postulated in the formal operational stage. Despite the inadequacies of Piaget's theory, his ideas led to an appreciation of the limitations in children's thinking and generated interest in research in this field.

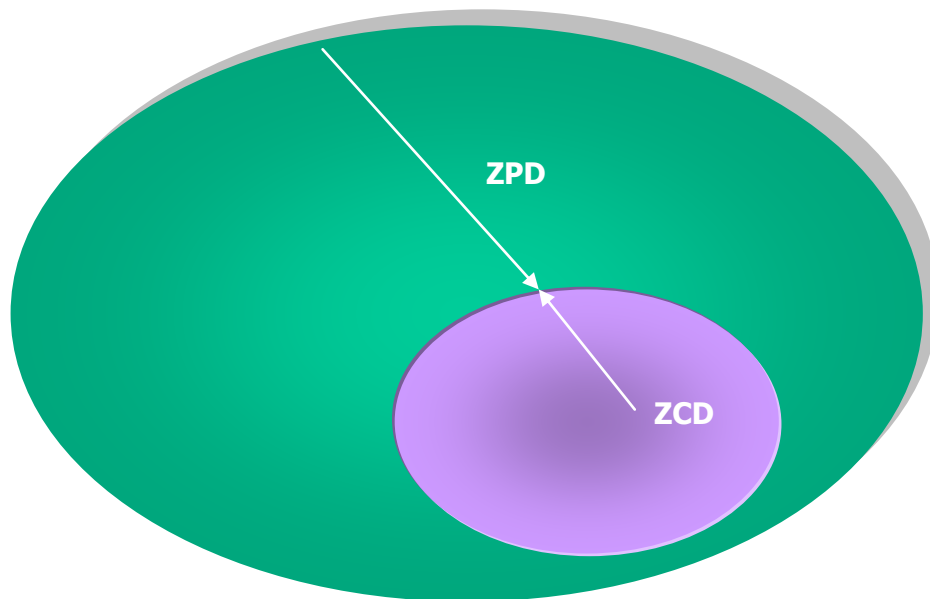
By the late 1960s, according to Davidson (1988), Piaget himself was dissatisfied with his classifications. He felt that there was more to development than his earlier groupings.

In Vygotsky's cultural theory, according to Harland (2003), learning results from collaborative problem-solving. Via problem-based learning, students develop content knowledge alongside cognitive and meta-cognitive skills. Development follows on from learning and learning creates what Vygotsky calls a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1930/1981). (See figure 2.1.)

Vygotsky (1978) defines the zone of proximal development as:

"the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (page 86)

Figure 2.1 *Vygotskian constructivist theory – after Harland (2003)*



Key:

The zone of current development (ZCD) – what the learner can achieve via independent problem solving.

Zone of proximal development (ZPD) – the potential distance the learner could reach with the help of a more capable peer.

After successful instruction, the outer edge of the ZPD then defines the limits of the new ZCD.

In other words, the ZPD is the learning and developmental potential that the child possesses, the differential between where they are now with where they can reach.

Kinging (2002) cautions that there is a broad continuum of interpretations of Vygotsky's ZPD theory from, on the one hand, the proponents who suggest that discrete bits of knowledge or specific skills are transmitted via social interaction to, on the other extreme, the theorists who dwell on the development of meta-cognition and a collective process by which new forms of social activity are generated. Thus, given the fact that Vygotsky's work has been variously translated into English from the original Russian, it may be as well to approach some interpretations of his work with a degree of scepticism.

However, it is encouraging to believe that there is no definitive limit to the abilities of any child and that, given the right environment and encouragement, any child may achieve beyond what genetic predisposition alone might predict.

Indeed, Vygotsky's work suggests that children perform at a developmentally more advanced level when assisted (Smagorinsky, 1995). This implies the possibility of a range of potential rather than a fixed potential. Even though Smagorinsky does not clarify whether this advance is permanent or only transient for the duration of assistance being proffered, it does lend weight to my suggestion that children who come through a youth movement environment may have greater opportunities to develop skills which they may not otherwise have had the chance to do. They not only have the chance to learn from peers and elders but also get to trial new skills; to play both "teacher" and learner and gain from both experiences.

Vygotsky's theories (e.g. 1987) are predicated on verbal exchange. Learning is dependent on the abilities both of the learner and the more capable other. In the case of the former, the learner needs the ability to assimilate information, to communicate difficulties, formulate pertinent questions and the willingness to try out new skills or knowledge; the more capable other needs to be able to communicate effectively in a manner that will promote learning and at a level that is conducive to understanding by the learner. The instructor also needs to encourage articulation by the learner. However, my hypothesis goes further in suggesting that children in youth movements develop socio-cognitive skills by

virtue of not only watching and learning from their elders, but also by being given the opportunity to try out new skills without the fear of failure. The youth movement, in my professional view and from my experience, seems to provide a cushion, a matrix of support in which one can experiment and thus gain confidence to exhibit these skills in real life.

Vygotsky placed great emphasis on the social nature of cognitive development. However, the limitation of this theory is that it fails to take into account the role of the child in shaping his/her own development. The theory focuses on process rather than outcome which is harder to test. I wonder if a youngster faced with any new situation will learn from it, particularly if he/she is interacting with it. For instance, I would be interested to explore the possibility that performing a task in a supportive environment for the first time leads to confidence and skill acquisition.

The findings of Goos, Galbraith et al (2002) support those of Vygotsky by claiming that when children play together they are able to assimilate their partner's knowledge and regulate their partner's behaviour so that they tend to act above what might be anticipated as an expected level of development. In other words, children are able to make collaborative progress by assimilating each other's knowledge and skill levels. Thus it is not only from more capable others that learning takes place but also from those with equal but different experiences and knowledge.

All talent, according to Kleon and Rinehart (1998)

“develops through interplay - sometimes over many years - between native gifts on the one hand and opportunities and challenges on the other” (online).

It is the opportunities and challenges inherent in youth movement culture and education that I wish to explore.

Kleon and Rinehart's assertion points to a possibility of a child going through a youth movement's informal style of education developing a higher sense of responsibility, a pronounced ability to process logical thoughts and enhanced tolerance and open-mindedness. This might be based on the emphasis on teamwork, the responsibility of youth leadership and informal education taken on at a relatively early age and the opportunities to utilise one's "native gifts" as

part of each youngster's individual youth leadership armamentarium and thereby augment the learning of their youth movement colleagues.

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and Social Cognitive Theory (Rice, 1996, pages 44 - 45) suggests that children learn by observing the behaviour of others. This is referred to as "Modelling" whereby significant adults may include parents or youth leaders in church groups. When family influence declines peers become increasingly influential. Indeed, Smith and Smith (2002) suggest that society is in fact changing to the point where friends take on the roles and importance of family members. This is an important point that may support the theory that youth movements augment social and moral development. Not only are movement youngsters in groups of peers, but also they are very often led by people who are only a few years older than themselves. Thus they will have the friendships from their peers from whom they derive influence but also "friends" who are a little older and more experienced. A child not having the benefit of the youth movement or other extra-curricular experience will normally only have, as their peer group influential structure, those in the same year within the school stratification in which he/she exists. It is possible, therefore, that such a child will not experience the same developmental pressures or opportunities as those who have the additional advantages of youth movement relationships.

(ii) Moral Development

According to Kohlberg's theory of moral development (Kohlberg, 1969), moral decision making increases in its complexity with age. A child's cognitive capacity and social structures combine to promote an increasing ability to differentiate self from other when considering moral issues. However, Kohlberg's theory is based on a 20 year study of moral development in boys. No girls were included in this study. Studies on the hormonal influence on development of different parts of the brain during adolescence endorse the commonly held belief of behaviour orientation (Begley, 2000). Women, according to Begley, are more caring and devoted to developing their interpersonal relationships. Men are more prone to concentrate on equity and justice.

Thus a bias emerges whereby women, who are evaluated under Kohlberg's construct, will be stuck at stage 3 due to their orientation towards caring,

empathy and compassion whereas men will be able to achieve stage 5 as they are allegedly prone to concentrate more on equity and justice.

There is also something to be said of the era in which the data were procured. In the immediate post-war period, there was a hitherto unprecedented rise in economic growth and affluence; and Western society became focussed on personal liberties. However, in this post-modern period of political correctness, political awareness and social conscience, I wonder if more people might not achieve the highest status of “Principled Conscience” for which Kohlberg struggled to find exemplar subjects.

An immanent critique of Kohlberg’s approach and resulting theory uncovers considerable weaknesses. Firstly, much of the data is derived from how people **said** they would behave in a given set of circumstances. This begs the question as to whether they would actually behave in this way when confronted with real scenarios. This is not to suggest that his subjects were dishonest or deliberately misleading in their responses. However, we can only speculate if one’s intentions will necessarily match one’s deeds. In particular, when real lives are being affected and real consequences are going to ensue, there are far more factors, consequences and ramifications for individuals to consider than in hypothetical scenarios.

In addition, Kohlberg’s theories are based on responses to a set of very specific hypothetical scenarios. Although Kohlberg derived his theory more from the reasoning than the answer, it could be suggested that different scenarios may elicit different responses depending on the respondents’ respective levels of impartiality and levels of both experience and teaching. Kohlberg’s work ignores the issues of religion and culture. Strict adherence to a religion or belonging to a particular culture may impact on Kohlberg’s results. Merry (2005) suggests that “most people have intuitions that are extremely difficult to relinquish because of the sort of upbringing they have had” (page 400). In order to gain complete reliability, the same data would need to have been derived from several cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Comparisons would need to be made and convergences across the boundaries highlighted. Indeed, one has to take into account how religion might have impacted on Kohlberg himself and how his own religious viewpoint might have led to the development of his own morality. My subsequent research in this thesis suggests that one

cannot exclude the contaminating role of the researcher in the development of the research.

Taking an exogenous view, the degree of autonomy achieved by the individual subjects also needs to be taken into account. According to Merry (2005) autonomy involves the “ability to weigh evidence that might run counter to one’s current set of opinions or beliefs with a view to revising one’s position” (page 400).

When dealing with moral issues, it is conceivable that a child growing up in a profoundly religious home might demonstrate a higher moral stage at an earlier age than his secular peers due to the religious doctrine instilled in him from an early age (not necessarily from conviction but from being taught about “right and wrong”). It would be interesting to repeat Kohlberg’s research comparing subjects from religious households with those from secular homes, ensuring that there was an equal distribution of males and females. Even given a certain amount of selection of subjects, the nature of human experiences and heterogeneity of personality is such that unequivocal results might be unattainable. The subjects are likely to have had different personal experiences with respect to the hypothetical scenarios. It is conceivable that individual experiences may have shaped the thinking of some respondents.

I am fascinated by the outcomes of Kohlberg’s research since its results are centred on the discussion process without interactive dialogue. In other words, Kohlberg elicits an analytical explanation for each conclusion without the benefit of his subjects sharing ideas, building on a core thought through debate and discussion. Perhaps Kohlberg could have taken his experimental design one step further by observing a focus group grappling with his scenarios. This may elucidate the extent to which individuals in a group are influenced by each other on such issues as morality and decision-making. Discussion and debate are the mainstay of the Jewish Youth Movement and it will be interesting to research the power of discussion, of transactional analysis, to influence the outcome of the thought process; and thereby, the developmental process as conceived by Kohlberg.

As Kohlberg’s early research focussed on boys (Crain, 1985), and Kohlberg himself might have been influenced by his Jewish background, the veracity of his results may have been affected by comparing groups from different ethnic,

social, cultural, religious and secular backgrounds. It might be worth noting any differences in moral development that arise from religious teachings, social constraints or cultural conventions. Does one's attitude to biblical or scriptural texts, for instance, influence the thought process for religious groups? Similarly, extant laws and social mores may influence the thinking for diverse social, ethnic or cultural groups.

Minnameier (2001) refers to three stages of moral development as being (i) Intra - where concepts are differentiated. At this stage there is a recognition that others have needs, desires and feelings; (ii) Inter – others' feelings are equal to or on a par with one's own and (iii) Trans – integration of all the ideas into a collective whole without the need for ordination or hierarchical arrangement. Scheindlin (2003) adds that children experience significant moral emotions such as shame, empathy, guilt and concern “from an early age” (page 179). I think it is important to consider the role of language at this juncture. The question arises as to whether a child can be cognisant of such emotions as, for example, embarrassment, shame, empathy and guilt if they have not encountered these concepts linguistically. If these are innate emotions they ought to occur in the absence of the appropriate language. However, I feel that it is important to consider the possibility that the advent of language may augment and embellish any sentiments that may naturally occur. We cannot ignore the possibility that the ability to articulate an emotion may just lend it authenticity.

According to Minnameier (2001), these stages “become apparent in circumstances where they are not satisfied” (p. 322). It is conflict, according to the theory, that brings about the next development stage. Thus, it might be argued that having to work as part of a leadership team, or in an instructional capacity, will render the young leader higher on the ladder of moral development due to the “conflicts” of having to perform tasks with which the youngster is unfamiliar or lacking in confidence. Indeed Crawford (2001) claims that ethical and moral development proceeds in the same way as the Vygotskian zone of proximal development (ZPD) which might suggest that young youth movement leaders having to make decisions might stretch their moral aptitude and teach them to think analytically and critically and to arrive at ideologies on the basis of sound moral reasoning.

Garb and Rapoport (1998) refer to adolescence as a period of intense religious fortification amongst the Orthodox Jewish females whom they researched. Religious practices, according to their findings, are at first followed out of conformity. However, thought is followed by understanding, leading to a willingness to carry out religious practices. This progression is reinforced by Moshman (1993) who confirms that logical reasoning emerges in early teens although cognitive development continues throughout adolescence. Many of the youngsters with whom I shall be dealing come from secular Jewish households, albeit with profoundly Jewish attitudes to society such as the importance of charity, learning, Jewish history and heritage. To them (and me) the notion of understanding leading to religious practice is anathema. However, in the context of a religious upbringing, one can understand the process and extrapolate for the secular child that logic and reasoned analysis emerge from convention and, by extension, that induction into youth movement ideology may occur in the same way. Ormond (1991) reveals that there is a progressive sophistication of decision-making throughout adolescence so that meta-cognition becomes increasingly better developed. This does not shed light on whether it is a biological predisposition or an experiential effect. The biological basis for moral cognition is certainly a forceful argument but can its true potential be realised in the absence of experience and opportunity?

(iii) Psychosocial Development and Identity Formation

The concept of “self” as a modern positive discipline, worthy of theoretical and empirical study has come a long way since being described in 1680 as the “Anti-Christ” (Bekerman, 2001, page 463).

Erik Erikson’s (1950) theory encompasses eight life-span stages. Adolescence, according to him, is pivotal, being the period during which personality and identity are established. Positive resolutions to crises lead to cementing of identity formation. This is important, according to Erikson, before the next stage can commence since a solid sense of identity is necessary for partnership formation. Melgosa (1987) cites Erikson (1950), claiming that three areas of problems can arise during the adolescent stage. These are sexual, ideological and occupational. Melgosa deems occupational as the most important as it is central to the adolescent’s fitting into society and hence adopting an identity.

Adams et al (2000) suggest that identity-achieved individuals (i.e. those who are self-assured and have a sense of self) are the least self-focused. This allows them to be more sociable and gives them more self-certainty, confidence and assurance. Thus it will be interesting to explore whether working in a youth movement and having to focus on and to be responsible for others, will consequently lead to confidence and assurance in youth movement teenagers. However, the caveat to this argument must be the examination of cause and effect. In other words, does the lack of self-focus lead to confidence or vice versa? It is equally plausible that an inherent self-confidence frees the individual to focus outwards.

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental stage, being the period during which personality and identity are established (Erikson, 1950). Participating in Jewish youth activities, such as camps and youth movements, at this age can have a significant and persistent impact on “fostering a proactive and positive ethnic identity” (Cohen and Bar-Shalom, 2006, page 43). Focus turns from self to social functioning and self-presentation; positive resolutions to crises lead to cementing of identity formation. This is important, according to Erikson, before the next stage can commence since a solid sense of identity is necessary for partnership formation. Marcia (1980; 1988) classifies four identity statuses: achievers (committed to a life path), moratoriums (commitments yet to be made), foreclosers (taken on commitments based on adoption of others) and diffusers (no commitments). Identity achievers, according to him, are the most successful.

Identity formation, “i.e. exploring a variety of ideological alternatives, trying them out, and subsequently making commitments to those values and lifestyles that fit one’s personality best” (Adams, Abraham et al., 2000 p 78), is associated with thinking and social cognition processes and is a requisite for the development of a sense of self (Adams, et al, 2000).

Kalakoski and Nurmi (1998) found that the most extensive advances in identity formation tend to occur during tertiary education rather than during school. They attribute this to the opportunities afforded at this level and to the catalysts inherent in the transition from school to university.

If we consider some of the opportunities on offer to high school youngsters in a youth movement setting, opportunities such as those for decision-making and

choices; self-reliance and responsibility or intellectual and social stimulation, we may be able to extrapolate that these might parallel the opportunities elucidated by Kalakoski and Nurmi. All of these are potential common elements both on campus and in youth movement settings. It might be interesting to elucidate which elements of the transition to tertiary education are responsible for Kalakoski and Nurmi's observations and whether they are reproducible independently of, and earlier than, the university experience.

It is tempting to believe that the exploration of ideology, as proposed by Adams, Abraham et al. (2000), such as goes on in youth movements is a key component of personality development. However, this relationship fails to identify whether socio-cognitive ability follows identity formation or vice versa. Indeed, this declaration similarly fails to address whether either status can be contrived or accelerated in any way.

Interestingly, Streitmatter (1988) suggests that social and cognitive development may be more advanced in females since they are more identity developed. She adds that ethnic minorities may become significantly more foreclosed than their peers.

Ethnicity can be a fundamental influence in shaping identity, promoting a positive (or negative) self-image and developing self-esteem (Davey, Fish et al., 2001). Ethnic identity is of particular importance to Jewish adolescents due to the need to undergo individuation and identity formation whilst, at the same time, exploring the extent to which Judaism may play a role in their lives (Dubow, Pargament et al., 2000). Ethnic identity is "a critical component of the self-concept and [...] is of particular importance during adolescence." (Roberts, Phinney et al., 1999, page 301) and, "it is primarily in adolescence that the issue of ethnic identity assumes importance" (Shaffer, 1996, page 352).

However, Dubow et al (2000) go on to declare that "a clearly defined concept of Jewish ethnic identity has eluded scholars" and that "Jewish ethnic identity poses unique problems for social scientists" (p 419).

Indeed, the Multi-Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) developed by Phinney (1992) and used by others (e.g. Phinney and Tarver 1988; Roberts, Phinney et al, 1999; French, Seidman et al, 2000) does not take Judaism into account as an ethnic entity. Admittedly, the questionnaire was developed for American

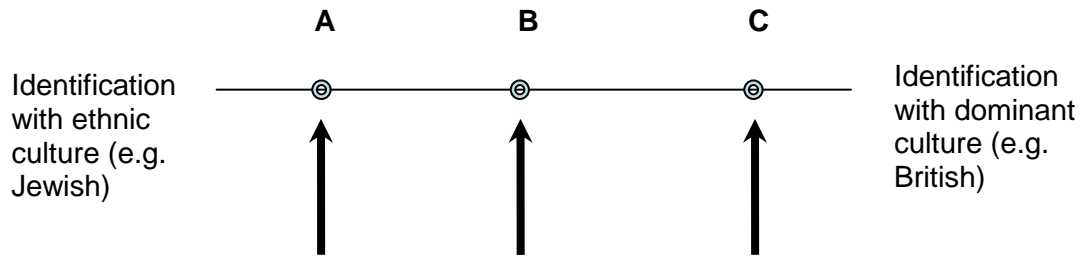
consumption and would need to be adapted for use in this country. It allows for the following ethnic options:

- (1) Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- (2) Black or African American
- (3) Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- (4) White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- (5) American Indian/Native American
- (6) Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
- (7) Other (write in): _____

In a personal communication (Appendix 1) Dr Phinney admits that “it is unclear how to categorize Jews, i.e., as a religious group or ethnic group”. I find it problematic that Judaism is not an ethnic option. Whilst many Jews may describe themselves as **anthropologically** Caucasian, this fails to take the question of their **ethnicity** into account – that sense of being Jewish; of “otherness” (Appendix 2), of belonging to a wider Jewish family (Cohen and Kahn-Harris, 2004). There is an apparent difficulty with these categories. For example, I would not ascribe myself as option 4 (White, Caucasian...) but would add “Jewish” to the “Other” (option 7) category. As a “descent religion” (one which relies on biological descent) (Cohen, 2002) Judaism has an ethnic dimension.

Two recognized models for assessing degree of acculturation are the uni-dimensional (or linear) and the bi-dimensional (or orthogonal) models (Lee, Sobal et al, 2003). (Figures 2.2 and 2.3) The uni-dimensional model represents how one might self identify as more of one culture or another. It suggests a mutual exclusion, an attendant loss of identification with one culture with the gaining of identification with the other.

Figure 2.2: *Linear Model of Acculturation (Letters represent hypothetical individuals who have self-identified somewhere along the scale of being either British or Jewish)*



In contrast, the bi-dimensional (orthogonal) model recognizes that elements of cultural identity may be acquired whilst still retaining a sense of identification with the original. Indeed, it offers an illustration of the division of acculturation into its attendant aspects of assimilation, separation, marginality or integration (figure 2.4).

- A. If one relates closely to ethnic culture but is unfamiliar with or distant to the dominant culture, this would be regarded as **Separation**
- B. High levels of identification with both is **Integration**
- C. Neither familiar with ethnic culture nor immersed in mainstream culture equates to **Marginality** and
- D. One who identifies strongly with mainstream but not with the ethnic culture is demonstrating **Assimilation**.

Figure 2.3: *Orthogonal Model of Acculturation: British against Jewish Identity.* The y axis denotes the degree to which an individual might self-identify as Jewish. The x axis denotes the degree to which individuals self-identify as being British. Unlike the Linear Model, the two are not mutually exclusive.

(These graphs are hypothetical illustrations based on Lee, Sobal et al (2003). Plots for both graphs are a random example of two data sets for illustrative purposes only. They do not represent real data.)

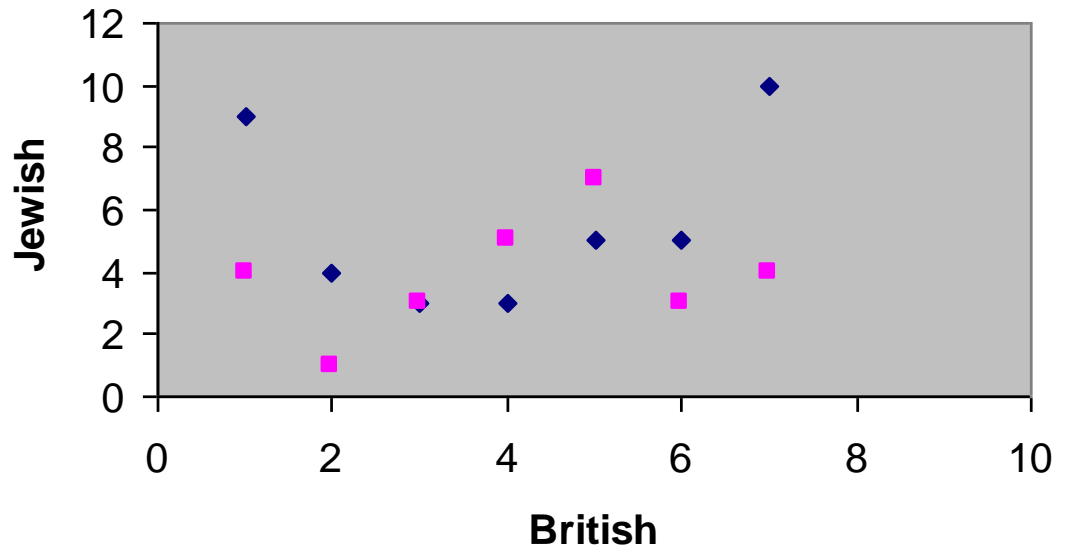
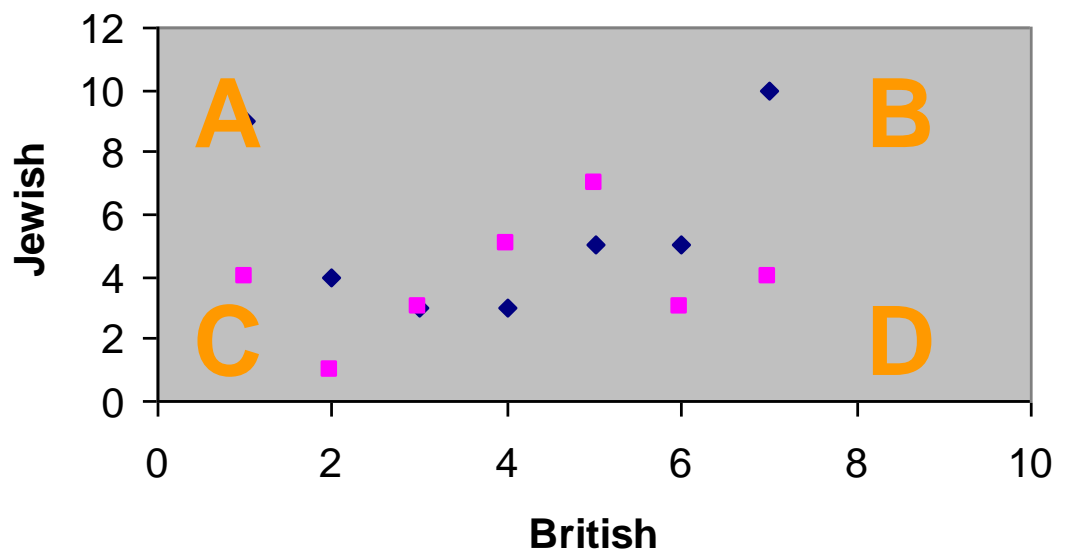


Figure 2.4: *Orthogonal Model of Acculturation based on: British against Jewish Identity now illustrating issues of Separation(A), Integration(B), Marginality(C) and Assimilation(D).*



However, neither of these options fully grapples with the complexities inherent in cultural identity. Indeed, it has been suggested that we all have multiple identities although there has been little research on the complex relationships of the inter-group identities that an individual may possess (Roccas and Brewer, 2002).

Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) "Ecological Model of Development" (Figure 2.5) may shed some light on this complex issue. It may be possible to extrapolate from this work to infer a Jewish model. The theory considers the influences on an individual's development and their resultant identity formation. It is comprised of a Microsystem, Mesosystem and Macrosystem whereby the child is "nested" within these influential layers. There is a constant interaction between the individual and their environment and between elements of their environment to elicit an impact upon development.

Microsystem refers to the family, close friends and school; Mesosystem takes into account the inter-relationship that factors from the Microsystem might have and the Macrosystem considers ideologies, attitudes, mores, society, customs and laws. In addition, there is the Exosystem which is comprised of elements of the child's society which will have an impact without the child interacting with them. For example, a parent's professional capacity will impact on the standard of living experienced by the child.

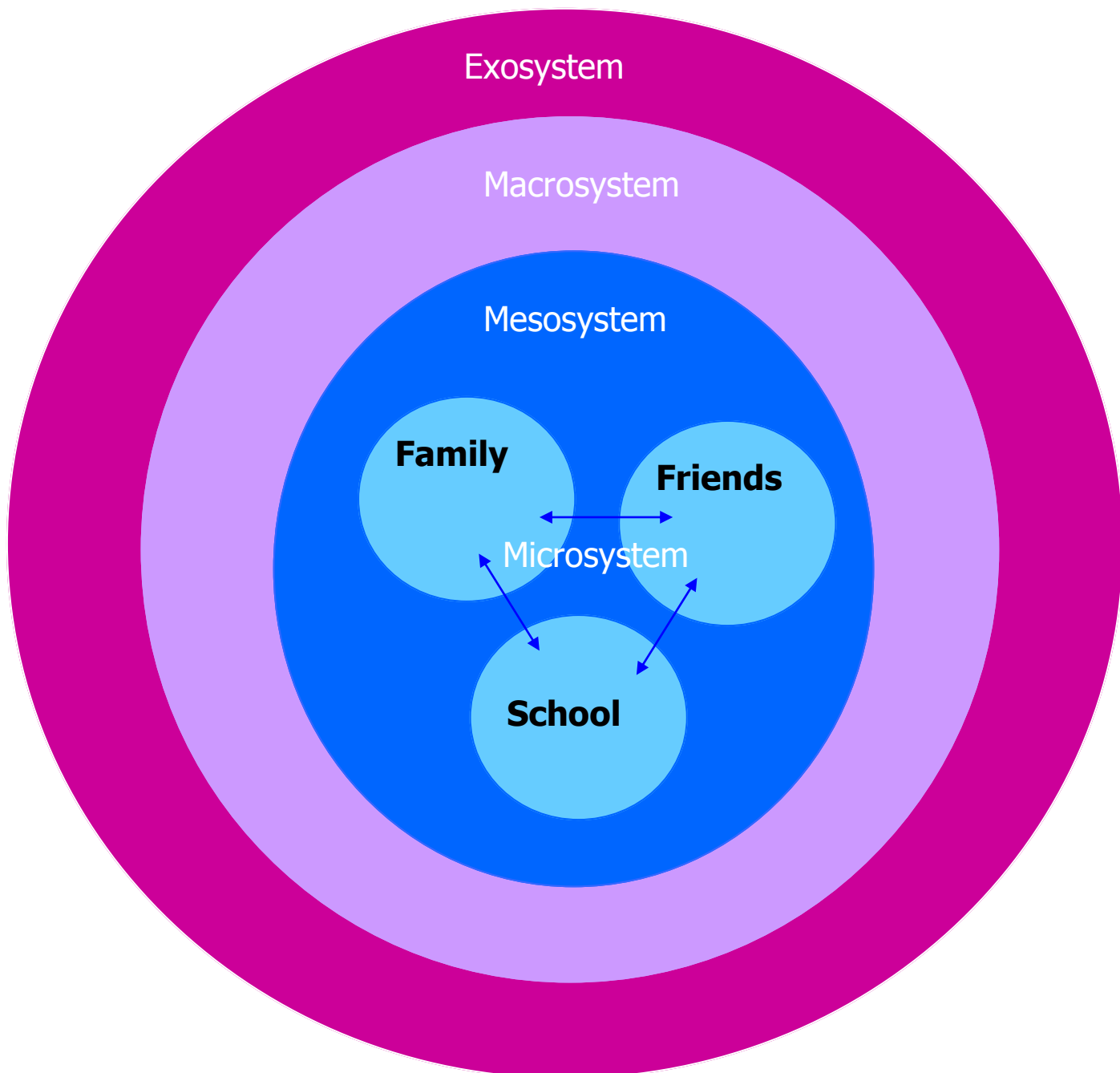
Examining Bronfenbrenner's hypothesis, in my view, invites speculation over a number of issues:

- 1. To which culture do Jewish youngsters perceive themselves to belong?*

Where an individual has separate Jewish and non-Jewish friendship groups (Microsystem) or ideological influences (Macrosystem), the "nested" influences no longer seem to offer a neat representation. Figures 2.5-2.7 depict the variety of Jewish nuances that may be applied to Bronfenbrenner's concentric circles in an attempt to diagrammatically portray some of the myriad possibilities and to exemplify the complexity and ramifications of adding ethnic identity into the identity formation mix.

Figure 2.5: *Representation of Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Development*

<u>Key:</u>	
Exosystem	Elements of society impacting indirectly on an individual
Macrosystem	Elements of society at large
Mesosystem	Interactions between elements in the Microsystem
Microsystem	Elements with a close relationship to the individual



2. *Do Jewish youngsters live in different cultures at different times?*
(Figure 2.6)

For instance, Dubow, Pargament et al (2000) refer to the considerable stress in early adolescence of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony compounded by the need to continue with their normative existence. This rite of passage involves many months of intense studying and anxiety. Added to this is the tension between religious demands and the social activity of their secular lives.

What I find fascinating about the implications of Bronfenbrenner's hypothesis (and, by extension, my conjecture about how inhabiting separate cultures simultaneously might affect individuals), is the myriad potential relationships that could ensue between elements of the microsystem, both within and between the mesosystems. I wonder whether intra-system relationships are likely to have more of an influence on the social development of an adolescent than the inter-system links. However, it may just be that the notional borders of the mesosystem are absent in real life and issues are just dealt with as they arise.

3. *Is there a fuzzy/leaky overlap between the Jewish youngsters' Jewish "mesosystem" and non-Jewish "macrosystem" ...*


Another possibility I envisage is that of the "leaky" model (Figure 2.8). Fleming and Spicer (2004) refer to the "porosity" of boundaries. The Jewish child, postulated in this model, actually inhabits both cultures simultaneously and flits seamlessly between his Jewish cultural environment and wider society. He takes elements of his Jewish self to his non-Jewish friendship groups or school classroom and, similarly, returns to his Jewish home with elements taken from wider society. Figure 2.8 depicts a theoretical fuzzy overlap that could be postulated between the mesosystem of the youngster's Jewish life and the macrosystem of his non-Jewish life.

4. *... or are the circles separate and distinct with Jewish kids moving between the two? (i.e. are there two distinct circles, two overlapping circles or one circle within another?)*

On the other hand, do these youngsters live in a culture within a culture much like Bronfenbrenner's original nested concentric circles (Figure 2.5) with Jewish elements nested within other community elements?

Figure 2.7 depicts a situation whereby the inner circle represents the Jewish life of a youngster. The mesosystem, like in Bronfenbrenner's original, is the interaction of these Jewish elements. The macrosystem represents those elements of the youngster's non-Jewish life which impact on him directly. Examples might include his mainstream school, catching the school bus together with non-Jewish peers as well as interacting and socialising with non-Jewish friends, reading books, newspapers and magazines, and so on. However, the exosystem in this scenario becomes more significant than Bronfenbrenner's original hypothesis would suggest. Events in the Middle-East and the way they are depicted in the media may impact on other people's attitudes to Jews. Similarly, one Jew is often judged on the actions of another so that individuals may find their relationships with their non-Jewish peers are governed by a history of which they are unaware and about which they can do nothing. Sometimes anti-Semitic attitudes appear to prevail for no apparent reason and the individual can only deal with its manifestations without being able to deal with the root cause.

Figure 2.6: Representation of Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Development to depict two separate cultural Mesosystems that may be inhabited by Jewish youngsters.

Key:	
Exosystem	Elements of society impacting indirectly on an individual
Macrosystem	Elements of society at large
Mesosystem	Interactions between elements in the Microsystem
Microsystem	Elements with a close relationship to the individual
	Example of a theoretical potential interaction between two mesosystems

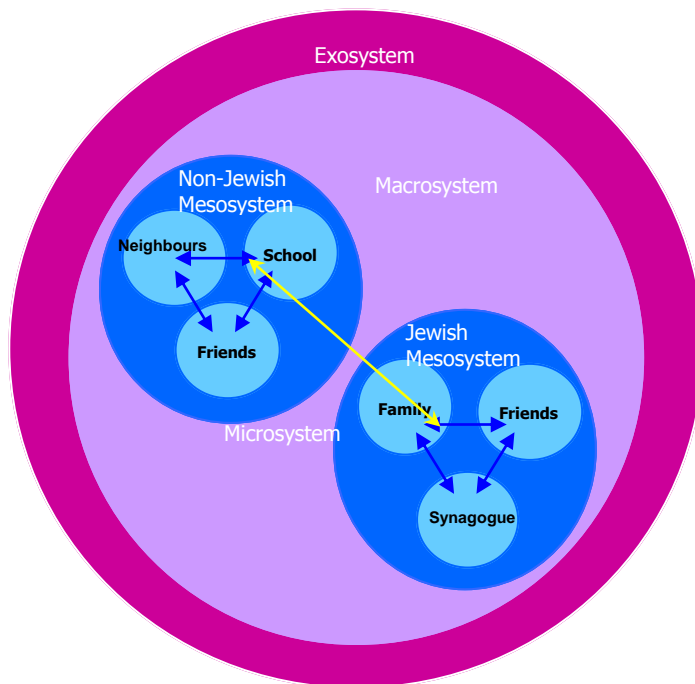


Figure 2.7: Extrapolation of Urie Bronfenbrenner's Bioecological Model of Development to provide a Jewish model.

Key:	
Exosystem	Elements of the outside world which indirectly impact on a Jewish child specifically. For example events in the Middle East may affect how non-Jews perceive Jews and how they relate to them.
Macrosystem	British society at large and the relationship the Jewish child has with it
Mesosystem	The interactions of these elements and the effect they may have on one another
Microsystem	Different aspects of Jewish life that may be experienced by a Jewish child

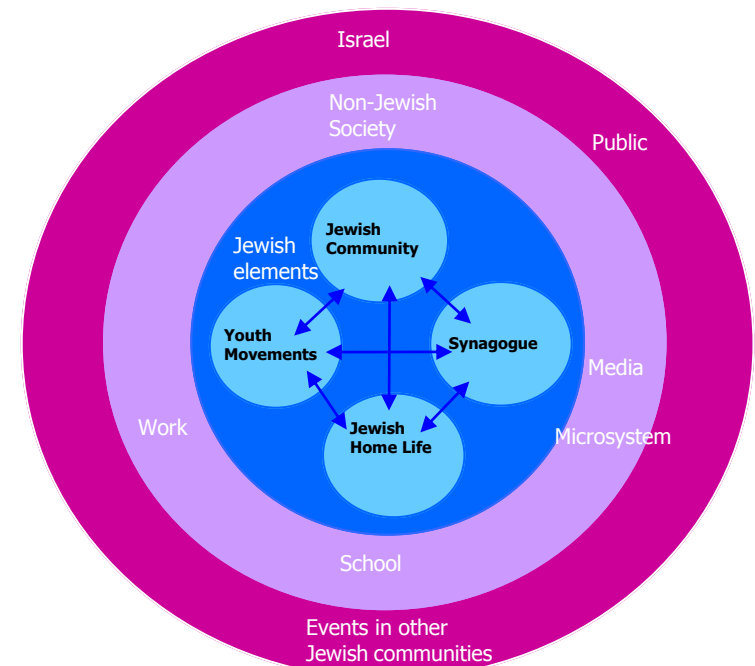

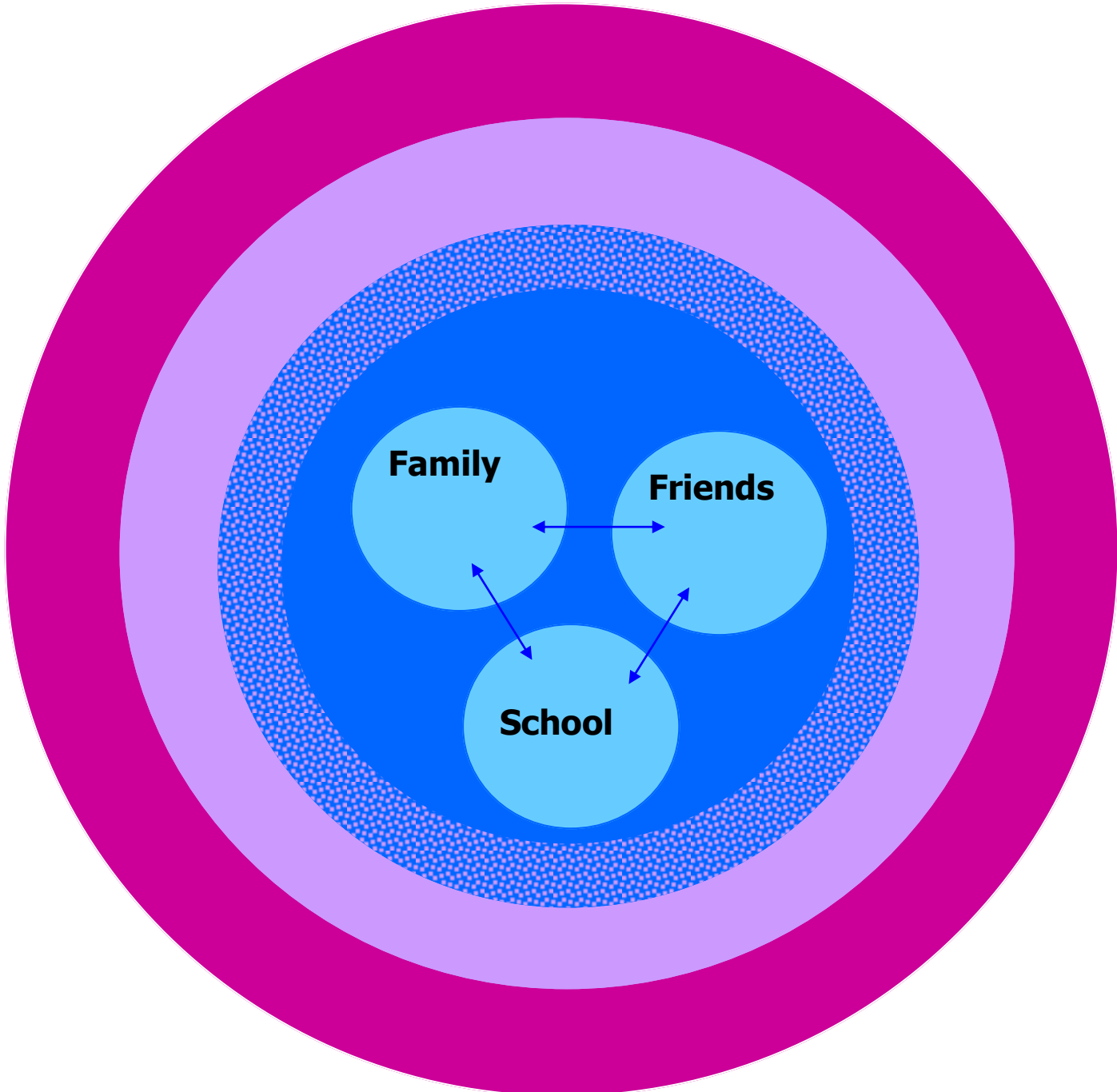


Figure 2.8: Based on Bronfenbrenner's "nested" model with an added fuzzy overlap whereby an adolescent's Jewish environment (friends, family, schooling, synagogue, religion school etc.) overlaps with the wider society with "leakage" occurring between the two.

 = Overlap between two environments.



Regardless of levels of religious observance or cultural integration and assimilation, having an historical heritage different to the mainstream (e.g. immigration, persecution, genocide (Sinclair and Milner, 2005)), suggests a degree of alienation from mainstream society that may be experienced by Jews (in common with other ethnic minorities) in this country. There are also some rituals, cultural practices and use of occasional language (such as the insertion of the occasional Yiddish or Hebrew words into a conversation) that may set them apart. Sinclair and Milner (2005) found that this use of language provided a “unifying symbol of identity” (page 101). Additionally, there is the converse issue of being perceived as being something a little different by others (Dubow, Pargament et al, 2000) (for example not celebrating Christmas or even having a Christmas tree, reluctance to eat certain foods, etc.).

A study (Cohen and Kahn-Harris, 2004) commissioned by one of the leading Jewish community organisations coined the term “familism” (Page 21) to represent the sense of belonging, camaraderie and ethnic identity expressed by the moderately engaged Jews they interviewed. They describe a sense of being different together. The elements that this group were found to have in common were that they felt more ethnic than religious. They displayed a strong attachment to Israel and a desire to perpetuate Jewish life. Despite having an attachment to a synagogue, God and spirituality only play a minor role. Sinclair (2005) notes that “Jewish identity can and does survive without religious faith” (page 94) and cites the notion of “symbolic ethnicity” whereby identity is based “solely on nostalgic allegiance for the symbols of Judaism” (page 94). They go on to state that “participation in a Jewish youth movement was a significant predictor of strength of Jewish identity” (page 102)

5. How does occupying two distinct cultures affect them?

If Jews do inhabit two distinct cultures (however this may be represented diagrammatically), how does this affect them? It might be suggested that having an understanding of an additional culture affords educational opportunities and a mind-broadening experience not available to mainstream youngsters. However, it could be argued that any community (e.g. neighbourhood, church congregation, old school network, rambling association, pub regulars etc.) is nested within mainstream society and therefore all individuals should benefit from such diversity and would occupy different communities at different times.

Indeed, we should consider that a multidimensional theory (Jackson and Smith, 1999) of social identity is indicated.

Schachter (2004) suggests that “two dissociated worlds allow a person to live in each one to its full extent in a way that would not be possible if he or she attempted to integrate them” (page 190). Thus identity is neither defined by one realm nor the other. It is defined by the ability to inhabit two or more realms, to create several selves and to embrace different “realities”. This, in Erikson’s parlance, may indicate a lack of maturity. However, I postulate that it is a necessary status maintained by any dual culturalist. Far from demonstrating a lack, it may be that such individuals harbour cultural and existential wealth. Indeed, Schachter (2004) argues that “certain contemporary theoreticians have contested the concept of the mature individual as necessarily striving towards an integrated and consistent sense of identity” (page 168). Thus it may be more cogent to argue for possession of several identities without risking the suggestion of pathology.

I find this concept of occupying different communities reminiscent of “Third Culture Kids” (Fail, Thompson et al., 2004). The idea of the TCK was first coined (Useem, Useem et al., 1963) to refer to children of military or embassy staff, who frequently spend long periods of time in countries other than their country of birth. The concept alludes to the difficulty these individuals find in fitting in to a new environment whilst no longer having a sense of belonging in their “native” environment either. Their sense of belonging is now derived from association with others in similar circumstances. Elements of each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience (Polluck and Van Reken, 1999). The comparison does not hold true on a literal level; the Jewish child’s “travel” is a notional one – the transition between their Jewish and non-Jewish worlds.

Despite all of the above, Jews in Britain (with the exception of the ultra-orthodox community) are, to a large extent, assimilated¹ into British culture and society (Sacks, 2005). Modood (2005) refers to three concepts of assimilation. These are: socio-economic opportunities and outcomes; socio-cultural mixing; and civic participation and belonging. The Jewish community in Britain can certainly be thought of as operating within this paradigm on all three counts as

¹ Although Sacks uses the term assimilation, he does not differentiate between assimilation, acculturation and integration (see figures 2.2 and 2.3).

they have been absorbed into every sphere of British life (Gilbert, 2008). Modood differentiates between *assimilation* (where the ethnic group makes adjustments towards the mainstream society) and *integration* (where the adjustments are in both directions). Whilst there is a certain reservation about making adjustments to an Anglican society (Jews will never be church-goers, for instance), British Jews certainly operate on an economic, socio-cultural and civic level in an “assimilated” way. The reservation I articulate here is expressed by one of my interviewees who talks of living within a “bubble”. There are also concerns of anti-Semitism expressed by my respondents. Thus, while outwardly “assimilated” (according to Madood’s three criteria above), British Jews may still be expressing a small degree of estrangement from mainstream British society. Perhaps this is a necessary means of maintaining their Jewish identity. Another of my respondents offers:

“I am a member of the Jewish People ... and we’re a People with an ethnic common history and a common culture and it’s something that I get a lot out of – being Jewish and being part of this culture and this *Kehilla*” (community).

Alba and Nee (1997) comment that the term assimilation has “fallen into disrepute” (page 826). Perhaps this is precisely because of the imprecision of the term and the multitude of nuanced interpretations that can be ascribed to it. Perhaps it is simply because, in an empathic age that values “political correctness”, we are sensitive to the needs of an immigrant or ethnic population to retain its identity, “individuality” and cultural integrity. Indeed, Alba and Nee purport to move away from the “normative or ideological applications” (page 827) of the past towards a utilitarian understanding of the social dynamics of ethnicity. In fact, this social dynamic might be diagrammatically portrayed much as I have portrayed the “leaky” version of Bronfenbrenner’s model (figure 2.8).

Gaining an understanding of the term assimilation as a composite concept and breaking it down into its possible component nuances of acculturation, integration, adjustment or absorption (the term favoured in Israel for their immigrant policy) provides me with an understanding and helps to sensitise me to possible interpretations and distinctions of the concept in my interview data.

6. *What happens when there is conflict or, conversely, cohesion between the two microsystems occupied by Jewish youngsters?*

If relationships between two or more Microsystems are cohesive, does it follow that smooth development will occur? On the other hand, when friction occurs between two or more Microsystems, as can potentially be the case of a minority group living within a wider community, does the effort of juggling the two create a deeper, more analytical, more well-rounded individual than one who does not have these added dimensions? The young people whom I have observed in Jewish youth movements tend to display and will admit to a social ease and an air of confidence. It would be interesting to test (i) if this observation is generalizable and (ii) if so does it arise as a result of the cognitive skills required to assimilate their two cultures, to resolve the tension of being Jewish and being British? Indeed, extrapolating from TCKs (Fail, Thompson et al. 2004), it has been suggested that straddling two cultures can be considered a positive experience. Dubow et al (2000) refer to the role of ethnic identity as a protective resource for adolescents.

7. *Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1978) talks about bootstrapping or coaching cognitive development through guided exploration. Can Jewish identity similarly be bootstrapped?*

If, as Bruner (1996) states, conflict shapes the mind and augments moral and social development, then this juxtaposition of two cultures would suggest that cultural or religious Jews in the Diaspora face earlier or more advanced development than their non-Jewish peers. Indeed, this lends credence to the possibility that “bootstrapping” (Vygotsky, 1978) of Jewish identity can take place within the framework of a youth movement experience. The youth movement experience simply adds yet another cultural dimension and richness to their lives through which they express their Judaism.

Dubow et al (2000) found that a sense of ethnic identity can be both a source of stress and a resource for coping. Whilst being part of a minority group is identified in the study as a stressor, being able to seek cultural/social support from fellow Jews is cited as a coping mechanism. Dubow et al qualify their research with the caveat that

“students more embedded within Judaism have a set of resources for coping that is more accessible and more compelling to them than to Jewish students who are less identified with their ethnicity” (page 436).

Thus a Jewish adolescent in a youth movement might derive more in the way of coping resources than his non-movement counterparts (if all other affiliations remain the same for both).

I recently facilitated a couple of focus group discussions on the subject of Jewish identity at a local and a national Jewish educational conference. The first group comprised 18 adults who had chosen to come to my session from a choice of 8; the second comprised 36 people. Appendix 2 represents the responses of the groups to my request to depict their feeling of being Jewish in a word or phrase. I used some of Bronfenbrenner’s diagrams as a hook on which to hang my subsequent discussion. Interestingly, the consensus was to reject this representation entirely because, the group felt, the issue is far more complex than can be credited in a diagram. The respondents offered images of dissected multilayered pies with layers replaced by other layers; there were Venn diagrams with multiple circles and then still more circles on the outside; others suggested that this was still too simplistic – each of the circles had to be spinning on its own axis whilst still intercalating with the others. One respondent added the element of time. Indeed, Bronfenbrenner himself did update his nested circles to include the temporal aspect (Bronfenbrenner, 1995). I believe that the complexity we were struggling with is summed up by Appadurai (1991) who coins the term “ethnoscape” which he describes thus:

“... the landscape of persons who make up the shifting world in which we live This is not to say that nowhere are there relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship, work, and leisure, as well as of birth, residence, and other filiative forms. But it is to say that the warp of these stabilities is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion.” (p 192)

Comaroff and Comaroff (1992) refer to a

"... meaningful world [that] is always fluid and ambiguous, a partially integrated mosaic of narratives, images, and signifying practices" (p 30)

Thus it is not only the individual who is constantly changing, potentially flitting between cultures, identities and environments, but the world around us is doing so too.

Conclusion to Literature Review

Having examined some of the cognitive, moral and psychosocial theories surrounding adolescent development, my research has highlighted:

- (i) Collaborative and experiential learning are widely held to be beneficial to education;
- (ii) Debate and discussion augment the development of ideology and a moral code and
- (iii) Adolescence is a time of important identity formation

The following sheds light on the connections I made between my literature research and my interviews.

- (i) **Collaborative and experiential learning are beneficial to education and to ideology formation.**

During my research I found that these devices of collaborative and experiential learning are employed by Jewish youth movement leaders to educate their participants.

During adolescence, individuals are actively investigating their roles as future parents and workers and are practising for adulthood (Call, 1996). Helpfulness and mimicry are therefore used as a means of gaining the competences they will need in fulfilling these roles. In conclusion, therefore, I propose to investigate whether a youth movement setting provides an effective preparation for the responsibilities of adulthood and parenthood. Experience of a youth movement provides an opportunity for adolescents to take on responsibility for education, welfare, finances, organisation - and a whole host of other areas of concern - and gives them the framework of discipline (for instance, planning and preparation of activities and having to get up on a Sunday morning to run them). Additionally, according to Mortimer, Finch et al. (2000), work leads to increased self confidence, responsibility and a feeling of usefulness. Positive work values result, along with an appreciation of the value of both money and education.

Mortimer, Finch et al (2000) assert that it is widely recognised to be developmentally beneficial to have a reciprocal caring relationship whereby we are cared for by people who are, in turn, dependent on us.

The negative counter-argument (Mortimer, Finch et al, 2000) suggests that the pursuit of paid employment detracts from normal developmental psychosocial

pursuits. However, I would argue that this may not hold for the individual working in a social environment such as the local pub where the adolescent's friends may visit or, indeed for the child in a Jewish youth movement since the work is both unpaid and combines with social interaction. Indeed, in many cases, it provides the focus of social life for many youngsters.

Jack: This is my life (Chapter 9)

Dultz and Towbin's (1993) position that natural learning is key to education supports the view of experiential learning being beneficial while Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development and the learning theories of Goos et al support the notion that progress is made through collaborative assimilation. Roth et al (1998) synthesise this information in the youth provision context. They found that programmes which engage youth on a long term basis help adolescents to become fully functional, engaged members of adult society. Interviewees in this research agreed. Each was able to give me an indication of life skills that they have gained which are directly attributable to their youth movement experience.

Abigail*: I am good with young people because I talk to them on their level. I don't patronise them, which, I guess, is something that I have developed through RSY-Netzer.

Tracy*: I think I'm more confident ... in groups especially. I really don't have a problem talking in groups. I don't necessarily think in a straight and narrow way.... Uhm ... in terms of activities I would plan, in terms of the way I go round ... I'm quite happy to go round a problem. I think youth movement people ... I've noticed that all my friends are the same... if we can't do something one way, we'll try another, and we'll try another until we get a way to do it. We're quite persistent like that.

Jack*: It's given me all the *hadracha* (youth leadership) skills, made me more confident and it's given me a social life. My whole social life is based around my movement friends. When I am doing medicine, I often notice little things that I know how to do that other people can't do. Like, when we're doing presentations, it's the first time that anyone's ever stood in front of a big group.

* **Not their real names.**

A further item of interest is the readiness of school leavers for their university experience. Up to 20% of students fail to come to terms with the academic and social demands of university life (Lowe and Cook, 2003). The study by Lowe

and Cook (2003) emphasises the importance of peers to the new students and concludes that students held inaccurate perceptions of university life before embarking on it. It follows, then, that youngsters from youth movements will settle into university life much more readily than most because they have a much wider circle of friends, from a number of cities, derived from attending national movement events together, particularly large summer and winter camps and a shared gap year programme. Indeed, they often choose their university city on the basis of the potential youth movement involvement there. They also have greater exposure to what university life entails by their association with their leaders who are usually university students.

A recent study (Phillips, 2004) suggests that teenagers are unable to foresee the consequences of their actions which might, according to Phillips, explain why teenagers are more prone to acting compulsively and to taking risks. However, youngsters in many youth movements benefit from hours of debating and analysing scenarios or enacting simulations. Perhaps this training enhances their cognitive ability in their capacity to anticipate consequences. Indeed, Giedd, quoted in Brownlee (2005) states that exercising the brain lays down the neural networks of the brain. He likens changes to a pruning process, stating that it operates on a principle of use-it-or-lose-it. Synapses (neural connections), which are exercised, will be retained whilst those that are not, atrophy. This, however, is a thoroughly reductive assumption if taken to be an inevitable determination.

(ii) The development and adoption of an ideology, in some ways, emulates that of a code of morality, insofar as debate and discussion augment the process.

By looking at the three stages in Minnameier's (2001) moral development, we may begin to see that his highest stage of moral development includes the integration of others' ideas into an assembled whole via discussion and debate. Allen et al (1999) found that discussion and debate and instruction in communication, substantially improved critical thinking skills. Minnameier also found that conflict was necessary to advance from one stage to the next and Crawford (2001) highlights the need for interlocution for moral development to proceed.

In my data, Tracy (chapter 8) is particularly keen on the issues of discussion and debate:

you're not going to take someone else's belief on if they just tell you, you should believe it... I think it's educationally weak. Well I think it's also morally irresponsible... and not a great model on which to run activities.

She qualifies that remark with the following statement:

I think the debate is uh... important that the debate happens - which is why I am proud to be part of that movement.

Abigail shares this view:

the ethos is very much about informed decision making and I think it is a really important value

If we all have different distributions of a range of “intelligences” (Gardner, 1983), then it stands to reason that children with youth movement experience will be more intellectually advantaged than those without. The school classroom favours certain types of Gardner’s intelligence categories. Logical, linguistic, musical and even spatial are catered for in the formal environment to some extent. However, in addition to those, inter- and intra-personal and bodily kinaesthetic will also be engaged by youth movement activities. Indeed Chazan (2003) states that the informal Jewish educator is a “total educational personality” (online).

(iii) Adolescence is a time of identity formation which can be employed by Jewish youth movements to develop both movement as well as Jewish identity in their members.

By attempting to contextualise the theories of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986, 1990) in a Jewish framework, I have endeavoured to illustrate the interdependence between the developing adolescent and his or her assorted social milieus.

The nested circles hold true in a Jewish context where my interview subjects all responded with a sense of their Jewish place within British society and also of their Reform place within Jewish, British society.

Abigail: [my movement] really inspires young people with their Jewish identity... uhm and in particular Reform Jewish identity, also Reform Zionist or Zionist identity

Tracy: I'm not a secular Jew. I'm a Jewish Jew. You know, I'm a Reform Jew, a religious Jew

and

I think our view of status quo is different to general Brits

Jack: living in the Diaspora and not being very religious, my connection to Judaism is Israel. So you've got to be getting connected to Israel to have a connection to Judaism and a Jewish identity

All of my interviewees showed a strong sense not only of being Jewish but particularly, of allegiance to their movements.

Abigail: I felt I was RSY-Netzer through and through

Tracy: you get the feeling that you are ... you definitely WERE this group of people

Jack: I think that FZY is definitely the best movement for me ideologically

Hamilton et al (1988) found that there was improvement in skill acquisition, attitudes, self awareness and independence amongst adolescents who carried out voluntary work. This was certainly a theme that emerged from my interviews.

Taking all of these theories that I have examined into account, they are interesting in terms of the part they played in the development of research into adolescent development and the advancement of our understanding of the complexities inherent in the transition from child to adult. However, how can any of them tell the full story, the story of the messy reality of every child's search for his or her adult self amidst the milieu of physical, social, environmental, cognitive and meta-cognitive transformations? Consequently, it would be erroneous to regard all youth as belonging to a homogeneous category or sub-culture. Even within Western society, considerable and persistent variations and inequalities exist in respect of class, wealth, family circumstances, health, lifestyle and environment.

In conclusion, I intend to explore whether experience of a Jewish youth movement is a developmental asset in the advent of responsibility, social aptitude and preparation for later life and what their perception is of their Jewish identity.

Tracy sums up the idea of the benefits of Jewish youth work by saying, “I think you tend to have a higher standard of enjoyable participation ... uhm ... Interest is directly proportional to participation, which I would say is very good, which is the reason why youth work is so good”

3. Search for the Hero Inside Yourself: The Pilot Participants (n=9)

Introduction

It had been my intention to research the advent of life skills and the augmentation of confidence amongst Jewish youth movement members. However, shortly after considering how to proceed, I was asked to deliver a session at a gathering of Reform religion schools from across the northern region. I was given to understand that my session would be primarily for the teenage teaching assistants. To that end, I designed an activity with a view to eliciting discussion on the merits of the opportunities of trialling skills in a non-judgemental, non-threatening environment. My intention was to pilot it on this group before taking it to a training camp for youth leaders.

The participants were attendees at a “Northern Cheder [Religion School] Day”. Reform synagogues from throughout the north sent their pupils, teachers and parents, as well as professional educators, to participate in a conference entitled “Heroism for Beginners” on the topic of Jewish and Biblical Heroes throughout time. The children got together in year groups for a variety of activities whilst parents, teachers and teenage teaching assistants were able to choose from a variety of sessions on offer to help them with their teaching or parenting.

The event was focussed around children’s activities whereby they were divided into groups by school year. Two sessions of one-and-a-quarter hours each were offered – one in the morning and one after lunch. The children were accompanied to the event by a variety of adults. Most of these were parents, some were teachers, some were assistant teachers (teenagers) at their Religion Schools and some were just interested parties. For those adults not involved in running the children’s sessions, there was a choice of three sessions each, for both the morning and for the afternoon session. On arrival, participants signed up for the workshops according to their own interest. My session was called “Search for the Hero Inside Yourself” and the promotional description read as follows:

“We all, at some time, face situations that make us uneasy or apprehensive. This session focuses on skills to deal with diverse situations such as cheder (religion school) teaching, parenting and group leadership”

The session started with ten respondents all of whom were female. All were parents of religion school children, one of whom teaches at a religion school herself. Following my introduction, one decided to leave because she is a qualified primary school teacher and felt that she would not gain anything from the session. This left nine participants, all of whom were mothers of children aged between five and eleven and two of whom I knew already.

The session focussed on attempting to get participants to carry out a task which they express reluctance at doing. I was hoping to gather data as to their feelings both before starting and after performing with a view to gathering data on their perceptions of relative comfort or discomfort.

Method

I facilitated a focus group discussion based on an activity designed to get participants to perform a task they felt uncomfortable with. Focus group methodology has become popular in the last decade or so due to the rise in popularity of qualitative methods of research (Wilkinson, 2003). Interaction is the key feature of focus groups since “sense-making is produced collaboratively” (Wilkinson, 2003; page 187).

See Appendix 3 for Lesson Plan.

Before the session four large posters were placed around the room each with a different heading: **FACILITATION, DESIGN, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT** and **PRESENTATION**. Participants were asked, on entering the room, to place their names on the left hand column of the poster relating to the skill in which they were most confident and on the right hand column of the skill in which they felt the least confident. I then intended to facilitate a discussion during which the participants were asked why they felt uncomfortable with the respective skills and what qualities they felt were needed to be able to carry them out.

Groups were then assigned from the “least confident” side as follows:

1. One group (least confident in Design) were assigned to either design a poster advertising a forthcoming event for the Religion School or to design a worksheet for a class to complete.

2. Another group (least confident in Curriculum Development) were asked to plan a lesson based on the festival of Chanukkah.
3. Two facilitators were chosen – one for each group with the instruction that all discussions are facilitated through them and nothing gets done without group consensus.
4. Two presenters were selected to showcase the group work at the end.

The groups were allotted 15 minutes to prepare their assignments after which the person allocated the presentation task reported back to the main group.

Finally, in plenary, there was a discussion to reveal reactions and responses to being put into the position of having to perform a task in which they were not confident. The aim of this discussion was for participants to articulate and thereby highlight in their own minds, the growth of confidence I anticipated them developing.

Following this, participants were asked to write a note describing their post-activity attitude to their assigned task. Results were then to be analysed to elucidate any emerging themes.

Rationale of the tasks

The first activity of placing their names was simply so that I could assign respondents to groups according to their least favourite option. I asked them to first put their name where they felt most comfortable in order to prevent them second guessing what I was going to ask them to do.

The discussion of why they put themselves on the particular lists was supposed to be so that participants could start to think about what it is that they are so apprehensive about, with the hope of any irrational apprehensions being assuaged by thinking it through.

The performing of the various tasks was so that individuals could gain experience which might generate confidence and thereby feel more assured about carrying out this task in the future. Ajello and Belardi (2002) suggest that reality can be transformed by activity and, according to Beard and Wilson (2002), “the foundation of much learning is the interaction between self and the external environment, in other words the experience” (page17). I was expecting

that the first realisation would be that performing the task was not as uncomfortable as participants had expected. However, I also anticipated that, after having performed the task, respondents might have gained a certain amount of comfort with it, based on familiarity and experiential learning.

My intention was that the Presentation element would serve two functions. One was to display their positive creations, which in itself would bolster confidence. The other was to serve as a platform for one of the tasks – i.e. some individuals were being asked to present and this was the skill that I was hoping to augment in those individuals.

The post-activity note was intended so that respondents could start to articulate their thoughts about the task. By writing down their thoughts, my hope was that they would crystallize their response to the task.

The rationale behind the discussion at the end was for it to serve as an analysis, which would allow respondents to come to the realisation that they had actually moved on from their starting point. They would gain by hearing comments from others. Smagorinsky (1995) suggests that development is socially mediated. Therefore, only after discussion can any progress take place. Indeed Haenen (2002) declares that “psychological functions are encapsulated and distributed in a community of learners” (page 159). Additionally Crawford (2001) suggests that all learning is fundamentally dialogic. Thus the purpose of a plenary discussion was to consolidate learning through critical reflection on shared learning experiences.

Data Collection

Data collection was by means of several media

1. Note taking by myself. Whilst this was invaluable to remind myself of proceedings on the day, it was limited due to my not being an “objective” observer and having to place facilitating the smooth management of the session as a priority. This reflects a tension inherent in an action research role.
2. Participants’ written comments. Participants were asked to write a comment on a “Post-it” note and stick it on the relevant poster. This allowed collection of data from every individual and gave an overview,

which ensured that comments were pertinent to the activity that individuals performed. However, limitations existed in terms of time and the amount of space allowable on each “Post-it” note.

3. A recording was to be made of the discussions to allow full comments and strength of feeling to be captured and transcribed. The Olympus Digital Voice Recorder DW-90 was employed for this purpose.

Many researchers (e.g. Silverman, 1998; Freebody, 2003; Cohen, Manion et al, 2000) recommend triangulation in the process of data capture as a method of corroborating the evidence. Freebody (2003) suggests that “... reliability is enhanced through the use of multiple data-collection procedures” (page 77). He goes on to list “observation, interview and site documents” (page 77) as possible arenas for data collection. Indeed Cohen, Manion et al (2000, pages 112-114) define six different types of triangulation. They define my method of using different media on the same situation as “methodological triangulation”. In my later data collection exercise I found it invaluable to compare my transcribed account with my own observations. Combining the two gave me added insight and allowed me to attribute recorded voices to scenarios. The Post-it notes were an important additional part of the exercise because it enabled me to elicit an account from every individual participant; something not achievable from the focus group discussion. However, my reservations are that, when writing, youngsters may feel the need to write positive comments because it is what they think I want to read. Thus, by triangulating these with my own observations and with their accounts given in a group situation, I have corroborating or undermining evidence to support or challenge the written responses.

Background to the study

Eilam (2002) postulates that the process of learning consists of three stages. During the first of these the learner expresses the newly acquired concept. This “utterance clarification” (page 20) makes sense of what the individual has just encountered. Next, they must elaborate and generalise the core concepts. This starts some time after utterance begins but may overlap. This allows internalisation of the new concepts. Following this stage, schema integration begins. Repetition and familiarisation leads to automation and ability to

manipulate the concept allowing flexible use and application. This pilot work corresponds to Eilam's theory insofar as the introductory discussion to the session is the utterance clarification, assigning of the tasks is the elaboration and performance of the task is the integration.

According to Vygotsky (1930/1981), it is through others that we develop ourselves. Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) theory suggests that we are able to acquire skills, which he refers to as "tools" (page 144), by learning from those with whom we perform a task or whom we watch performing a task. Reciprocal teaching (Berk, 2003) borrows from this idea to reinforce classroom skills. This technique was originally applied to pupils with poor reading skills but was then adapted for use in other school subjects. Children work in groups to facilitate discussions where they undergo four cognitive strategies: questioning, summarising, clarifying and predicting. This, according to Berk (2003) improves their reading comprehension. It also improves their ability to empathise with their peers, boosts confidence and improves group interaction and creates a Vygotskian zone of proximal development whereby pupils assume more responsibility and are able to comprehend more. Indeed, Tudge and Winterhoff (1993) suggest that argument, debate and verbal analysis can augment logical thought. Moreover, Gardner (1990) asserts that talent always arises via an interaction between natural ability and the opportunities and challenges that one faces over many years. It seems that articulating one's thought processes helps to make sense of them and aids decision making and opinion formation. Kohn (1990) reasons that the increased ability to accept others' points of view, during co-operative learning, can lead to improved levels of pro-social behaviour.

Jewish youth movements use a style of education that is referred to as "informal education" (Chazan, 2003) which is commonly peer-led, uses personal example and imparts its message through camps and activities.

Rose (2005) says of the concept of the Jewish Youth Movement that it "has a strong ideology, and focuses its activities and educational content towards that ideology". The style of education is informal, combining learning through games, discussions and activities with a message.

"Each event and program is designed to maximize fun and social opportunities, as well as the provision of education in an experiential context and mode"; and

“at the centre of their methods is the focus on experiential education” (Rose, 2005, online).

Barry Chazan (2003) defines informal Jewish education as:

“an individual-centred and highly interactive educational approach focused on learning through experience, with knowledgeable and committed educators who use group process and a ‘curriculum’ of Jewish ideas and values to create a holistic educational culture” (online).

He goes on to stress several crucial elements of the process including that it be interactive, a group experience and that by focussing on the individual, it is engaging. He adds that “... informal Jewish education is a ... theory or philosophy about educating people that emphasizes choice, high degrees of interactivity, a flexible conception of content or subject matter, accessible ‘teachers’, and much group process”. Group process, dialogue, and experiencing are at the centre of the practice of informal Jewish education. Thus, one can see elements both of reciprocal teaching (employing the four cognitive strategies) – where questioning, summarising, clarifying and predicting augments understanding and of ZPD – where the group experience leads to individuals learning from each other. Both of these are supported by Tudge and Winterhoff’s (1993) suggestion that such verbal interaction can augment logical thought.

As such, it follows that these youngsters may benefit from the youth movement experience by stretching their zone of proximal development and improving both their cognitive abilities and their pro-social behaviour.

My own corollary to this thinking is the postulation that performing a task engenders confidence, which in turn, enhances skill development. Vygotsky (1978) defines the ZPD as:

“ those functions that have not matured yet but are in the process of maturation, functions that will mature tomorrow but are currently in an embryonic state ”.

(page 86)

Meijer and Elshout (2001) go on to remark that anxiety can lead to reduced performance. Thus youngsters who are repeatedly exposed to unfamiliar situations such as group facilitation, chairing meetings or delivering lessons

may find that their anxiety levels progressively decrease with each exposure, as familiarity increases, thereby enhancing performance over time.

Results

Task		How did you feel on being asked to undertake the task?	How do you feel now that you have undertaken the task?
Facilitation	1.	Shy, indecisive, felt that others could do the job better	Same really
	2.	I felt that I needed more time to think about the task, collect ideas.	The end product was satisfactory, although not as bad as I thought
	3.	I would feel much more comfortable doing the design. Dread Embarrassment	Would still not want to facilitate. No change really
Design	4.	Blank Useless Didn't know what to do Slightly resentful On edge	Recognise that I can do it as part of a team
	5.	Unsure	It depends on the situation – who the design is for? Young children ok but anyone older I would still not be happy to design anything
	6.	Confident Wanted to take control Worried if people thought I was taking control	The same
	7.	I know I can do it (to a certain extent) but I don't like it or feel I'm very good at it. I generally look at things I like and then change them to suit my purpose.	Worry about doing <u>art</u> .
Presenting	8.	Resentful –Cross (Nervous) (Embarrassed)	I can do presentations to a sympathetic audience and not feel too bad
	9.	Cross – Not another poster! Interest. Challenge of not stepping into "role".	Still need "help" (respondent's quotation marks) with drawing but not ideas.

The prevalent feeling was that there was nothing gained by having had the experience of having to do a task that they were unwilling to undertake. There was a general acceptance that we often are put into positions where we have to perform tasks that we are uneasy about doing. However, this does not mean that we get better at doing them. One respondent suggested that one needs skill for certain tasks and simply doing the task does not develop this skill. However, another participant offered this insight:

“We are all put into positions every now and again where we have our arms twisted to do something for the community. But we only do it because our arms are twistable”.

This suggests that we need a certain amount of willingness before adoption of a task will augment our ability to do that task in the future. Bruner (1960) posits that interest in the material is the best stimulus to learning.

One respondent who was asked to facilitate one of the groups remarked:

“The strongest thought was that I would feel much more comfortable doing the design. And it was the embarrassment of having to hold back with my design ideas”

This individual was actually excellent at the facilitation, seeking everyone’s approval and ensuring that the tasks were fairly shared out and that everyone was playing their part. She felt, however, that as a facilitator, she was not in a position to share her knowledge – only to ensure that everyone in the group had their say. This prompted a discussion on the definition of “facilitation”.

Some felt that in order to be a good facilitator, you should not allow your own thoughts to surface. Others felt that the art of facilitation is to ensure that the discussion is well managed and steered in the direction that the facilitator wants it to go. Indeed, a dictionary definition on the Palm Pilot handheld device (“Noah Lite”) that was consulted at the time, suggested that facilitation is about allowing others to benefit from one’s knowledge.

Discussion

This was a disappointing workshop for a number of reasons. Both the focus group itself and the data capture were unsatisfactory but provided a valuable

pilot from which to gain experience to improve the delivery and data capture for a future session.

Recorded data capture was unsatisfactory since I was using a new device (Olympus Digital Voice Recorder DW-90). I had tested it for audibility of sound at a variety of distances and a variety of acoustic situations. It has three settings for altering sound quality. However, what I did not realise was that the trade-off for sound quality is recording time and, at the setting for best quality of recording, the device was limited to 17 minutes. This meant that I had to delete the first part of the discussion, when I noticed that it was full, to focus on the end of the session.

Due to the late arrival of one of the buses to the event, all sessions had to be cut by fifteen minutes. This meant that discussion time had to be cut. My priority was to ensure that the tasks were performed and that respondents appreciated that by doing them, they gained confidence. I therefore chose to cut the discussion at the beginning. I asked the group to brainstorm the skills needed for each of the skills but ignored the question of what about each skill made individuals feel uneasy.

On reflection, this was too vital a discussion to cut from the proceedings as it meant that there was no point of reference for respondents to now appreciate that they felt less uneasy than they had at the start.

I have to admit that the tasks set were facile. The very nature of performing a task in a workshop setting renders it “unreal”. Indeed, one respondent commented that she felt really uncomfortable about being asked to present, but then added,

“I didn’t really mind when it came to doing it because I know I’ll never see these people again and they weren’t going to judge me on my performance, but I couldn’t do it for real”.

In other words, she felt comfortable performing the task within the context of the group.

The presenter from the other group reiterated this sentiment by stating:

“I felt able to talk to the group because it was a supportive environment”.

One disappointment was that none of the assistant teachers, who are all in their teens, were available to attend sessions as they were working with the children. This meant that all those attending my session were adults. I was unprepared for the strength of feeling of the respondents in being asked to do something they did not want to do. One participant in particular who was asked to present, portrayed her strength of feelings by the distinctly dejected look on her face. I believe that this strength of feeling was because the group was entirely made up of adults. Kemp (2001) states that Vygotsky's theory of a "Zone of Proximal Development" fails to take anxiety into account. I had designed the activity for an audience of teenagers and was expecting a mixture of adults and teenagers but was surprised to receive only adults. I speculate that adults have a cumulative experience of attempting tasks and their response to this challenge is likely to have been jaded by their experiences in the past. For example, "not another poster" from the Post-it notes above.

Amongst the other issues that contributed to a disappointing session was the nature of the room and the number of participants. The room we were allocated was extremely small with a huge table taking up the bulk of the space, meaning that the amount of movement that I had planned was not practical. My intention in getting respondents to stick their comments on the posters using "Post-it" notes was to create an amount of interaction and informal discussion. In the event we had only enough room to sit around the table that was there with no free space at all. So after the initial writing of their names on the posters, I decided that notes would remain on the table. Inevitably, this resulted in less informal interchange of ideas and meant that respondents only had their own ideas without having been influenced by others.

An interesting upshot of the group consisting entirely of non-teaching individuals was that nobody had put their name on the poster for Curriculum Development, neither expressing comfort nor discomfort. This meant that both groups ended up doing a poster. It remains to speculate as to whether doing a curriculum development activity would have altered the responses of the participants. I believe that it would have made a difference to the perception of the group. The individual who expressed her consternation with the comment "not another poster", would not be in the same position when asked to do

something she had never attempted before. Clearly, this was a design fault on my part since I was expecting the clientele to be religion school teachers.

This session did serve as a very useful pilot as it provided the opportunity to test the logistics and design of the session on a more forgiving audience before trialling it on youngsters. However, it was woefully inadequate in terms of data capture and, therefore, can serve no useful purpose in terms of generating theory.

Next

I later had the opportunity of carrying out the same procedure on a group of sixteen year-old trainee youth leaders on a leadership training seminar. As this is the age group for which the activity was originally conceived, I hoped it would be a lot more effective. The group would be much larger, making the exercise a little more realistic and interactive. The posters actually had to be presentable; the presentation had to be audible and informative and the facilitation had to achieve a cohesive end result. This makes the reactions and trepidations all the more real. Perhaps, most importantly, the reason these individuals were there was because they have come with the express purpose of picking up youth leadership skills. My thinking was that this ought to make them much more open to suggestion and willing to take on board an element of unease at having to perform an unfamiliar task.

I had a longer time for the session with the implication that the discussions before and after the activity became more productive. Additionally, I had extra staff on hand to observe the smooth running of the activity, when I split the group up, and to assist in the management of the movement.

We were in a conference centre with superior facilities and much more space allowing full use of the juncture in the plan where participants are to walk around, look at the posters and converse with each other.

I set the recording device up by connecting it to a laptop computer. This would enable much longer recording time. Thus the memory will not limit the amount of discourse that can be recorded.

4. “Everything you do, you learn through it”: Developing Confidence

The Scene

I arrive just before dinner and all is quiet. The kids are not in evidence and the youngsters in the kitchen are on full throttle bopping to very loud radio music whilst preparing the dinner for 25 sixth formers and their 8 staff. It is this juxtaposition of responsibility and youthful exuberance that reminds me why I'm here.

I have arrived in Kent at a youth leadership camp run during the Christmas holidays for youngsters from a Jewish Youth Movement called Reform Synagogue Youth (RSY). The venue is “neutral territory”. It does not belong to the youth movement but is being rented by them for the purpose of this training seminar from a church organisation. It is therefore unfamiliar to the leaders, participants and to me.

I am running a session tomorrow on gaining skills. I have come the night before for two reasons. The first is so that I do not have to leave my home in Manchester at an ungodly hour in order to get to my morning session on time and the other is so that I can brief the leaders of the camp on how they can help during my session. My purpose in coming here has been expressly to run a session on skill development and collect data from it. I am now surprised to find that I am becoming increasingly interested in observing the behaviour and attitudes of the leaders and not only their charges. I begin to realise that I am on a journey of discovery – exploring the different ways of seeing the same scene, discovering the plurality of selves who will be interacting with these youngsters.

This divergence from my original purpose suggests that I will be using a variety of sets of lenses (Peshkin, 2001), observing many facets and focussing on different elements of the experience. Peshkin (1988) cautions that subjectivity is “the quality of an investigator that affects the results of observational investigation” (p. 17). It is important, therefore, to be aware of the lenses of subjectivity with which I approach the scene. Researchers, according to Peshkin (1988) “should be meaningfully attentive to their own subjectivity” (page 17),

adding that they should “systematically identify their subjectivity throughout the course of their research” (Page 17).

I am feeling something of the “old woman”. The music is far too loud and I find myself wondering how they can possibly work and conduct conversations in this din. Then I realise that I have found another “self”. I am aware that the “eyes” (or “I”) I am dealing with here are those of having been there myself. I was that leader; I made those choices; I portrayed that professionalism. I am now on the alert for the other personae that I will be encountering. I realise, too, that the “old woman” is definitely another perspective, another set of eyes (Peshkin, 2001) from which I am seeing this scene.

The twenty-year olds in the kitchen are part of the leadership team who are running this camp. Like all youth movement “graduates” that I tend to meet, they come across as confident, self-assured, socially adept, highly motivated and focussed on delivering a professional product.

Joe² is the chief cook for the weekend and is putting some final touches to the meal at the same time as cleaning the surfaces and while his assistant is washing some dishes. This meticulous attention to detail in cleaning the kitchen, getting the right amount and balance of food out at the right time and the issuing of directives which his team is following all point to a focus on a professional product. He looks vaguely familiar and I introduce myself, asking where we’ve met. Bizarrely, his answer is that I was on holiday in Europe last year. Now I am aware that I was on a tour of Prague, Budapest and Berlin over the summer but **he** was not there. Then it clicks. I was on holiday with his parents. I did not meet him there but had met him at a Jewish conference the previous year. I ask him how the camp is going. His assessment of the camp and of the kids demonstrates his confidence and ability to evaluate professionally and with a focussed attitude. His ease of conversation with me, a friend of his parents and a director of the organisation he is serving (and in which he hopes to work professionally), illustrate his self-assurance and social aptitude. His motivation is evidenced by his spending the bulk of his Christmas holidays cooking for 50 people with no remuneration or reward other than the feeling of satisfaction he will derive from doing the job well and the camaraderie in the staff room at

² **All names used in this research have been changed to preserve anonymity.**

night. We chat amiably about how the camp is going and what the kids are like. Then all hell breaks loose...

It is a very good natured, high-spirited hell, but a noisy one nonetheless. The kids have been in a session about communication skills and are now fired up with enthusiasm. They all enter the dining room en masse and I have trouble differentiating between the 16 year-old participants and their leaders who are all in their second year of university. I have come across two of the leaders before but the rest melt into the milieu of youngsters. A number of individuals come up to introduce themselves to me. I am a director of their parent organisation (Reform Synagogues of Great Britain – RSGB³) and they are keen to make a good impression on me. The distinction is now becoming clearer. The fact that the leaders go out of their way to introduce themselves to me is a demonstration of their professional attitude.

Supper is an organised mixture of queuing for food, lots of singing and even more shouting. Here I find another persona. I am witnessing the me that was once a participant at such camps. I know that the noise I am witnessing now as an outsider is one of friendly competitiveness – one side of the dining hall sings louder than the other; one side can chant retorts that are cleverer and wittier than the other; one individual has a deeper understanding of the last session than another. I listen as these exchanges take place and am reminded of similar conversations 25 years ago.

I find myself thinking that these kids are immersed in the educational experience of the camp in a way that may well change them forever – as it did me. This is not simply a professionally derived thought, but also one that arises from recollections of my own experience as a participant. The fact that educational content is inserted into every activity – including mealtimes and bedtimes – contributes to a concentration of educational content not achievable in the context of formal, classroom-based education. Experience of involvement in residential camps, both in a youth movement setting and on school trips has taught me that this is the case.

³ Since writing this, the organisation has changed its name to the Movement for Reform Judaism

There is an activity after supper. They will be watching a video followed by a discussion about its content. The kids are given a half hour break in which to “chill”. I watch some of them in the hall playing robust ball games and generally being teenagers. They seem unperturbed by this stranger in their midst.

I start to gather information by speaking to the leaders and to formulate impressions of them from my own observations. They all come from middle class Jewish households around the country although most are from in and around London. They are all in year twelve at school (none have left school either for college or career purposes). On the whole the boys are playing the more robust games whilst the girls are in groups talking to each other. However this is not strictly the case and there are some girls playing ball with the boys and some boys talking to the girls. They seem comfortable in each other’s company and display an air of social ease and self-assurance. Much of the talk around the room seems to be devoted to the events and training sessions of the weekend and many of the groups are earnestly analysing one tenet of informal educational techniques or another. They come across as a caring and compassionate group of individuals who have a genuine concern for one another. I watch the concerned reaction as one boy receives a blow to the head from the ball.

Somebody calls Ethan and I realise that this is the son of friends whom I last saw when he was 7 when his family moved away from Manchester. I am struck by what a nice person he has turned into. He’s short for his age and definitely has his own style when it comes to dress sense but he interacts with his peers like a *mensch*, a gentleman, a “good” person, someone you can count on and rely on.

As I watch him and have these thoughts, I identify another “persona” in me. The Jew. As Reform Jews, none of us is particularly observant and some, like me, may even be atheists. Yet we all identify ourselves culturally as Jews. We experience elements of life which set us apart on occasions. My choice of the word *mensch* comes naturally to me but needs explanation and interpretation in a wider society. Similarly the Jewish youth movement culture specifically has its own language. For instance *peulah* translates literally as “activity” but more

specifically, in a youth movement context, as workshop, session, alternative/informal lesson. *Chanich* is “one who is being educated” but refers to participants in a Jewish informal education setting specifically. (There is another word for pupil and yet another for student.) *Madrich* – leader, “one who shows the way” – is so much more; educator, counsellor, confidante, advisor and role model. The esoteric⁴ use of language provides a comfort zone. Thumma (1991) states that “the ideologies and practices of many religious groups encourage a self-concept organized around one's religious identity” (page 334/5). This use of esoteric language feels to me like being in a club or wearing a uniform – akin to the secret handshake of the Freemasons.

Now, it becomes clear why they were unperturbed by my presence. They do not know me; I do not dress like them; I’m much older than them. Yet I am one of them – I am Jewish. Here, in this backwater of rural Kent, I find it ironic that I fit in. I am, at least in this respect, recognised as “a member of the club”.

Everyone starts to arrive in the hall on time for the scheduled activity (watching a video is on the timetable) but the leaders are nowhere to be seen. Slowly the leaders drift in about fifteen minutes late with a non-committal air and nothing seems to be happening. One of the leaders sits in the corner and refuses to join his colleague who continually calls him to help round the kids up. He appears completely unmotivated and sits by himself refusing to interact with the kids and burping loudly. This surprises me. George is one of the leaders with whom I have worked and whom I know well. He has been working in my community, training a group of young leaders and running youth activities in our synagogue. He has always come across as extremely professional and highly motivated in his dealings with the youngsters. Another leader is dressed in her turtiest finery and is behaving very inappropriately with some of the young impressionable 16 year-old boys. She waltzes from group to group leching and flirting with them. Some other leaders are gossiping unkindly with the participants and yet others are hiding in the toilets and chatting loudly. It soon becomes clear to me that we are in the midst of a simulation. The aim is for the young leaders-to-be to identify inappropriate behaviour and to recognise the sense of professionalism

⁴ **I am mindful that this term may be interpreted as my struggle to maintain an outsider perspective whilst continuing to be an insider. This is not my intention. I do not use the term 'esoteric' to suggest my exclusion but, conversely, to highlight my inclusion to the exclusion of those not conversant in Hebrew or Jewish Youth Movement jargon and culture.**

that they need to adopt. Eventually, one of the leaders turns up with the video in her hand but no machine in evidence. She says that they could not be bothered with the effort of finding where the machine is kept and so they are going to do something else. The group is then split into smaller groups, each with a male and a female leader. There is no revolt, no expression of surprise or disappointment; the kids go to the groups to which they are assigned and nobody mentions being let down by the fact that watching a video was on the timetable and these leaders did not have the professionalism to make sure that it happened.

I attach myself to one of the groups to observe⁵. It is explained that they were doing a role-play exercise and the participants are asked to identify the “types” of bad leader that they witnessed. The group I am with are adept at this and state that they knew what was happening from the outset. Indeed, in my experience of similar simulations, the participants tend to be so good at this sort of exercise that they usually manage to pick up on far more than the leaders have actually planted and may start to analyse some of the genuine mistakes that the leaders may have made. They were playing along, which would explain the lack of disappointment. As with so many of the activities and workshops they have attended, both at this camp and others before, much of the educational content is imparted in this way, by means of activities, sketches and games. They seem familiar with the approach.

They are then presented with a series of hypothetical scenarios on a sheet of paper with a questionnaire eliciting how appropriate or inappropriate they felt the actions of the leader in each scenario was. This is followed by a discussion of each scenario and the “right” answers from the leaders. The discussion intrigues me although I am determined not to speak and thereby contaminate the useful information I am gathering. Here I recognise another “self”. I am the researcher, the ostensibly unbiased outsider who is here to take account of all that is expressed by these youngsters.

⁵ **It is worth noting at this point that I have not audio recorded anything other than my own session during the day and half that I spent there. I felt that to do so would be discourteous to the leaders who have been so generous in allowing me a slot in their timetable. I was not invited to observe any other parts of the timetable and have simply taken it upon myself to do so, seeking *ad hoc* permission as I did so. I did take some field notes but tried to do this inconspicuously so as not to divert attention from the leader facilitating the discussion.**

One hypothetical scenario, that I observe the group discussing, involves the use of a bouncy castle for a group of young participants on a residential camp. The situation presented to the youngsters to discuss is that campers are given strict instructions not to use it unless supervised by a leader and only to do so during the allotted times on the timetable so as not to create disruption to the educational content. The hypothetical scenario continues that, once the kids have been sent to bed, a small group of leaders start to play on the bouncy castle while they are waiting for all the leaders to assemble so that the leaders' meeting can commence.

As a teacher, I would have no problems with this behaviour whatsoever. There is kids' time and there is staff time. There are clear boundaries and both staff and pupils are aware of "out of bounds" areas (both physical and conceptual) that staff can enter but pupils may not. Additionally, the concern was about disruption to timetabled activities. This does not disturb anybody. However, the discussion centres on "*dugma ishit*" (leadership by example) and the consensus seems to rest on it being a poor example to the kids who could not join in as it was past their bedtime. This is yet another example to me of the highly professional (often to a fault) position which leaders in youth movements seem to adopt. Their example to the participants must be above reproach at all times and not open to interpretation or debate. It is as if, because of the relative closeness in age of leader and led, the leaders have to exercise an exaggerated professionalism in order to be respected and obeyed. I am becoming increasingly aware that this exaggerated professionalism is an emerging theme. The leaders display it in their execution of the camp and their charges demonstrate that they are keen to pick it up by their response to this discussion.

Like all the youth movements of which I have experience, "*Dugma Ishit*", leadership by example is a central theme (e.g. Weisberg and Stein, 2005; RSY-Netzer, 2006). It is written into their leadership manuals, discussed endlessly in leaders' meetings and repeated continually like a mantra in its Hebrew form to new leaders by their more experienced counterparts at skills-based camps such as the one we are at. Both our 16 year-old participants and their twenty-year-old leaders know that they must behave impeccably and be above reproach at all times, leaving no room for doubt as to their professionalism and sense of duty. This attitude surfaces several times in the discussions I am observing.

Another scenario under discussion centres on the distance that leaders must maintain from the kids. They must never have the same relationship as with friends and must never get so close to their charges that these waters become muddied. I know this is important and I used to keep to this myself when I was a youth leader. However, observing them now with my middle-aged eyes, I am acutely aware of the closeness in age between the leaders and the led. One girl in particular, argues vociferously that this is an important precept that underpins the type of education that they are involved in. I feel a compulsion to cross-examine her and determine why she feels it is so important. I do not. I continue my silence and listen to the flow of the discussion. I note that the middle-aged woman, the ex-participant, the ex-leader and the teacher are all personae that are struggling to surface at this point. I am pleased that the “impartial” researcher takes precedence. Not that I disagree with her but I wonder why she feels this is so important in a youth movement setting when the leaders are so close in age to their charges and when they have already discussed (and agreed) that informal education is so much more appealing than school education.

After an hour and a half, the session comes to an end and the leader of the group I have been observing generously offers me an opportunity to add my comments. I seize this opportunity to ask the girl about why she thinks relationships should be delineated between leaders and their charges. I stress that I agree with her but wonder what makes youth movement education more desirable than school education if the same rules apply. Her answer is that the style of delivery is different and the expectations of the leaders are different. From my experience as both a supply teacher and a permanent teacher in a variety of schools, I would agree with her. I have observed many teachers walk into a classroom and expect a certain amount of displeasure from the children in being asked to perform a task; a certain amount of insubordination is accepted, even a degree of failure to comply. However, there is also an imperative to get through a syllabus. No such imperative exists in a youth movement. The kids come because they want to. All contributions are valid and everyone contributes to the success of the meeting in their own way. Success or failure are not measured by amount of curriculum covered but on how much participants have gained from it in terms of enjoyment, learning and sense of satisfaction. Assessment is informal and often incidental; if the planned session does not

appeal, the leader will often change tack, using her experience or her professional judgement to do something that appeals to the youngsters. They are generally interested in the topics and the fact that the leader is closer in age to them than their teachers often means that they can share problems and issues with them that they would not take to a teacher. The youth leader is still, however, in a position of power and this is tacitly recognised by participant and leader alike. There are still disclosure issues. For instance, every trained leader is aware that certain information needs to be passed on to the appropriate person. However there may be a degree of leniency in terms of the extent to which this may apply.

It is now bedtime. Normally, participants of this age would be trusted to go to their dorms and put themselves to bed or stay quietly talking without getting unruly. However, this is a leadership seminar so an *ad hoc* decision is taken amongst the leaders to demonstrate “dorm time” – the part of the evening during which leaders will spend quietly getting to know the kids on their own turf while they settle down.

I use the time to prepare my posters for tomorrow’s session in the leaders’ room. At around 12.30 the leaders start to arrive in the staff room for the daily meeting. This is a remarkable troupe of leaders. Usually, there would be a head of camp, a vice head and then the rest of the team, each of whom will have responsibility for some detail of the camp. On this occasion, all the leaders are the same year group, which means that most of them have known each other for 11 years, having spent summer camps and winter camps together, having been on a 5-week tour of Israel at 16 and a 3-week tour of Europe at 17. Some of them have also spent time in Israel together on a youth leadership year-course between school and university. I have chatted with the professional head of the organisation who tells me that they all genuinely like and respect each other. She is a year or two older than the leaders and refers to herself as “Office Contact” so as not to appear in an elevated position above the leaders. The truth is that she is ultimately responsible but is happy to put her faith in the professionalism of this team. She too is displaying the exaggerated professionalism that I identified both in the leaders and the participants. She is keen to defer responsibility to those who are nominally in charge of the running of this camp. This is despite the fact that she is ultimately accountable. When

putting the camp together, they found it hard to elect a head and vice, to elevate one of their number above all the others. They have therefore decided that the best way would be to have a different head each day, each with responsibility for the programming and details of their respective days.

Today's head chairs the meeting and we go through the day's events, analyses and criticisms. We discuss the kids and their respective needs. We go over what could be changed in terms of agenda and timetabling issues for tomorrow. For instance there is a recognition that there needs to be slightly more rest time as the feeling is that the kids are overloaded with information and exhausted from the activities. So this is put into the programme for tomorrow. At one point the cook is consulted so that his plans for meals and mealtimes are considered and addressed. We talk about what went well and whether the kids achieved our objectives. This is a very professional meeting. Eight twenty-year-olds with no formal training are taking the training of their charges very seriously indeed.

It is increasingly clear to this researcher that the exaggerated professionalism that I have already witnessed several times continues unabated behind the scenes.

Tomorrow's head takes over. He has already put tomorrow's timetable on a sugar paper poster and we go through each activity with a fine tooth comb to ensure that each leader knows what part they are playing, what preparation needs to be done and what the aims and objectives are. We get to my activity and I describe what I want to achieve. I point out that the participants may well be feeling very uneasy during the activity but that the exercise will develop their attitude to taking on tasks and learning by so doing. I stress that the point of the exercise is not to actually get the kids to do things that they do not want to do (which is, in fact, the essence of the activity) but to elicit a thoughtful analysis from them following the activity so that they start to realise that their development as leaders is in their own hands and that by taking on unfamiliar tasks, they will learn and become more confident about doing them.

We determine that I will need the help of four leaders; two will help me draw up a list of which activity each of the participants will be assigned to doing and two to just egg things on if proceedings happen to lapse whilst the participants are performing their tasks in their separate groups. The discussion centres on

whose turn it is to have a break and the duty time is evenly spread among the group. Eventually four leaders are allotted. This compassionate attitude seems to be a theme both amongst the leaders and their charges.

From my activity, we move on to the next. And so on... until the day is planned in intricate detail with very little left to chance. Then something extraordinary happens.

The evening degenerates into a manic laugh-fest. The duties of the day have been discharged and our leaders have reverted to being students. Their professionalism, even in off-duty mode, has not faltered, however – any cigarettes that are consumed are smoked behind the bushes so they are not spotted by any of the children who may just be wandering by; no alcohol is consumed as they are still responsible for twenty-five teenagers - but they are having fun. I am once again witnessing the juxtaposition of conscientious dependability against youthful exuberance. Laughing, joking and generally behaving like we expect youngsters to behave – but their joviality is expressed as an exaggerated, overstated exuberance as if the pent up enthusiasm and responsibility of the day is giving vent to a concentration of high spirits for this brief period when they are not on display. This does not surprise me. I remember it well from my own time as a leader but I have never stopped to analyse it before. I am transforming from ex-leader to researcher once more.

By three a.m. they start to peel off to bed in the knowledge that they need to be up early tomorrow for another day's leadership.

The Session

My session starts immediately after breakfast. The kids arrive and are sitting around the floor in a circle in anticipation. There are chairs stacked up against the walls. I prefer to sit on chairs so I get them all to fetch a chair and return to the circle with it. I introduce myself, not as “Director of Northern Development” but as Kim's mum. Kim is a year younger than this cohort but already a leading light in terms of her commitment to this youth movement and many of these kids know her. There are expressions of recognition - nay admiration - around the room. Confirmation that I have chosen the correct

introduction. This is the first time that I have let the facet of “proud mother” creep into my work.

In order to put them at their ease and to contextualise my session, I start by reviewing what they have already learnt since they arrived two days before. They tell me that they have learnt about communication and there are some very good points from the group about what is involved in good communication. One or two other points are made about what they have learnt. I praise them:

“I’m getting the feeling ... you’ve only been here a day and you are already starting to pick up skills. You probably haven’t trialed them out yet but you are learning stuff simply by interacting with it”⁶

I am acutely aware of the dichotomy of my need to procure “uncontaminated” data against my role as an educator. I am beset by a sense of guilt over using these children as subjects knowing that this is my primary motivation in running the session. After all, I am an educator; I should put the educational needs of these kids before my own self-interest. I attempt to assuage this guilt by throwing in some nebulous extraneous pedagogical information about why I have chosen to sit on chairs rather than on the floor. This is, after all, a training week and they may use this information during their youth leadership careers.

Incidentally, just a piece of information about communication. When we came in I asked you to all bring a chair. I noticed last night that you were sitting on the floor and the reason we are sitting on chairs is because I hate sitting on the floor. Now, I could have been sitting on a chair and allowed you to sit on the floor. What would have been wrong with that?

That wouldn’t have been very fair.

Okay, fairness might come into it. What else?

It would be kind of like imposing and ... like... you’re not bringing yourself down to our level. And like keep yourself (she gesticulates higher) and like make people unfamiliar with you.

Absolutely. It’s a well-known communication thing. I know that you’ve done communication already so I just thought I’d add a bit. If you go to the doctor or the dentist or any professional – teachers aside because they like to be above you – but, they will try and put you on a level with themselves to put you at your ease, unless they are trying to impose their will on you. So if ever you want to ... uhm

⁶ I had always intended to record the session that I was running. However, it didn’t occur to me until the following night that there was a wealth of data that I could have recorded in the 24 hours that I spent at this camp prior to my session, observing the participants and their leaders. This is the first time that my recording device has been switched on since arriving the day before.

... teach something to your *chanichim* (youth group participants), you have to literally get down on their level. Otherwise you come across as being superior.

At this point I want to introduce them to what they will be doing. I have placed posters around the room with the headings: Facilitation, Presentation, Planning a *Peulah* (informal lesson) and Design. It is important that the participants know what each activity entails before I can embark on getting them to interact with the posters by expressing their favourite and least favourite. I would have liked to spend more time on this section in order to ensure that they were fully cognisant with each of the skills. However, time constraints force me to limit this section. It is only when listening back to the tape that I realise just how didactic this has been and I begin to wonder whether I have allowed enough time for discussion to ensure that the participants have understood what the respective tasks they are about to undertake will entail. Judging by the results, the only task that the children had never encountered was the facilitation task and the individuals allocated to this task were both very weak at it. In addition, the design task was misinterpreted so they ended up focussing on their lack of ability to draw. So it remains for me to speculate as to whether this part of the session was any use at all. Had I had more time, I would definitely have made sure that each task had been understood before continuing. I ought to have asked a few pertinent questions about what we had just described to make sure that the message had been correctly conveyed. I reluctantly realise that these failings are the teacher in me. Not the educator who used to ignite young minds, but the imparter of knowledge who has a syllabus to get through in a limited time period.

Now if you look around the room ... (I point to the posters I have placed on the four walls with respective skill headings), I have identified four skills which are... .. not key but certainly that you will need in the course of your *hadracha* (youth leadership) experience. Um ... in no particular order. Just in the order that I am looking at them. Facilitation. Does anybody know what I mean by facilitation?

I am greeted by blank stares and quizzical looks. Eventually someone offers a suggestion. Something about facilities – making sure you have the correct facilities to run the activity you have planned. I try to negate her answer in a positive way but it is hard when she is so far off the mark and I fail to come up with anything sufficiently encouraging. I mutter something about it being a very

good guess as the words are so closely related but that's not quite what this word means. I feel for her. She's been very bold in attempting to get the discussion going and has had her contribution rejected. There is no way for me ease her discomfort and I move on to the next contributor.

Is it like encouraging people to make stuff happen?

Okay, yes. It's kind of making stuff happen. (I choose to use the contributor's turn of phrase) **And when you use it in [youth leadership] ... it's what I am doing now. I'm making this session happen. Facilitation is when you steer, when you chair a conversation - you're making sure that everyone has their say and you are bringing in the right people to speak and ... er steering the conversation towards ... often what you had as a defined end.**

I find it disconcerting now to read the transcript. The only answer I have received is one short sentence and I have retorted with several lines of my own. I know that I was feeling pressurised for time but I cannot help feeling that I should have spent more time probing for more contributions and then consolidated them. My attempt to work with the phraseology that I have been given, along with my trying to contextualise the concept, leaves me with a very inadequate definition. This is no doubt concomitant with an equally inadequate understanding of the term by the group.

Presentation

Is it like putting across an idea?

Good okay. It's like public speaking; it's about all the things you need to do to "present" an idea, to show an idea.

Planning a [informal lesson] ... that should be fairly obvious. Does anyone want to say what I mean by that?

Putting it together and deciding what to do.

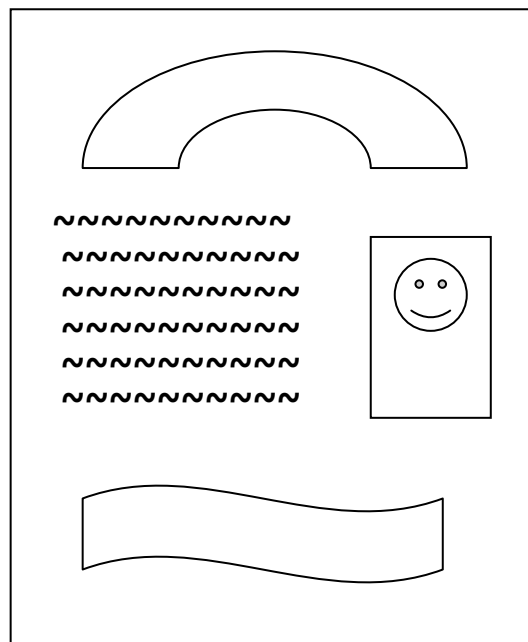
Yes. What about design?

Yet again a brief answer from the group. I have consistently failed to elicit from them whether the majority have understood the nature of the task. This bodes ill for their ability to carry out the task.

I am concerned that they should not be confused between designing a poster and actually drawing/creating one. So I decide to define this one myself. I make it

clear that it is not about the ability to draw but about positioning of pictures, text and patterns; the size of lettering, the colours used and the spacing. However, I have done this verbally and a graphic demonstration would have served me much better. A quick sketch on the flipchart, to demonstrate that I did not intend for the use of actual letters or pictures, just a design layout, would have got the point across much more effectively.

Figure 4.1. *An example of how I could have demonstrated the design task – using shapes rather than words and pictures.*



The next task is for them to place their names on the poster of the skill which they would feel, first the most, and then the least comfortable performing. The thought behind this part of the session is twofold. Firstly, it offers me a list of names from which to choose participants to actually undertake an activity that they are expressly uncomfortable about doing. However, I could just have asked for a show of hands and this would have speeded up the proceedings. My secondary aim here is to allow time for interaction. I am hoping that there will be some exchange of ideas whilst the children wander round the room and congregate around the posters. This may enhance their understanding of the task and may augment their own attitudes towards each of the tasks.

What your task is now, is to go around the room... On the left hand side... you see all these posters have two columns ... this is what I call organised chaos...

I refer to this activity as organised chaos because, although the movement and interactions of the group are unstructured, and there is a lot of wandering around the room, this is inherent in the design of the activity. It is organised because I want it to happen, and yet chaos because there is no predetermined way that I want them to interact with each other.

On the left hand side of the posters, on the left column ... I want you to put your names – and make it clear so we can read it – uhm on the left hand side, ... of the skill that you feel most confident about performing as a *madrach* (youth leader). If you are going to be a *madrach* (youth leader) you might be a background person who prefers to do planning rather than presenting. Or somebody might prefer planning and not design. Whatever. Grab yourself a felt pen and write your names just on one sheet.

I am concerned that they should recognise that there is no such thing as the “perfect youth leader”. Each will have strengths and weaknesses.

They go away to do this and, as anticipated, there is much discussion about where to put their names. I have deliberately spaced the posters so that they are each on their own wall to encourage a certain amount of gathering around each poster and hence some discussion. I call them back.

What I want to do with you now is to think about what you’ve just done and I want you to think about why you put your name on the lists that you did. And I’m going to ask you in a second. So just think for a couple of seconds, what is it about that particular skill that, ... obviously there are more skills that we haven’t identified and you might have put your name if they were there,...but just think about, of the four that you were offered, why you put your name on that particular sheet.

It’s the aspect [of youth leadership] that I enjoy most (planning). Because I find it kind of fun to think out and plan how it’s going to be.

Do you have some experience of that?

Yes

Okay, good, it’s the aspect she enjoys. Anybody else like to say why they put their name where they did?

Well I'm quite artistic and I'm pretty good at art and stuff so I thought ooh Design would be cool.

I think presentation seems to be more fun. I like to be up and active and always with the children and everything ... to get them going and put across the information in like a fun way which they can interpretate (sic) as meaningful and educational – of course, in a fun way.

Yeah, I'm the same as Jamie (the previous speaker). I put down presentation because you are allowed to like see one person's reactions – like what he's been planning - and like... learn...like how ... like skills that you need - like how to interact with people and stuff like that.

Do you have some experience of this?

Yeah

I put presentation because it's like -...[long pause and then an embarrassed...] uhm yeah... it's... it's... I don't know. I forgot what I was going to say.

You've lost it? Okay, if I could ask you...(Aside to the previous speaker) Come back to me if you remember.

If I could ask you: Did anybody put your names down on a sheet where you have no experience at all but you think you might be good at it?

I thought it would be... like... easy to... like...plan an activity (much laughter from the other participants – and in particular, the few leaders that are seated around the room). What? (The speaker has not understood the source of amusement).

[Wunc].

The next contribution is indecipherable due to the continued reaction of the group to the last speaker.

Even the fact that the group has picked up on the amount of planning that goes into the average meeting, points to their perception and appreciation of professionalism exhibited by the leaders. I detect an aspiration to the exaggerated professionalism exhibited by the leaders.

Yeah I put presentation because I thought it would be like less hassle.

Right. I've got one more running around task that I want you to do. What I want you to do now is, on the same sheets, put your name on the

right hand side of the skill where you feel the least confident or the least happy about doing it.

They do this amidst more deliberating and debate and return.

Okay, my next thing is - just for a couple of minutes, talk about maybe reasons why we put ourselves on the other side – on the discomfort side. Anybody got a thought that they want to share?

Often, during this dialogue, I start my piece by using words, such as “okay”, “right” “my next thing” or “next”. These terms have a functional role to play in the discourse. On the surface, they simply portray the role of positive reinforcements or reassurances in response to the contributions from the participants. However, they also act as flags denoting the next phase. They thread the narrative together a bit like beads on a string and alert the listener to the fact that either the pace or the topic is about to change. They thus modulate the discourse.

I went around and I wasn't too sure what to do and like I noticed facilitation immediately and ...like... it sounds quite complicated

Right, so it's kind of like something that you had no idea what it is. Is that what you're saying to me?

Yes.

I put design because – you know like at school you have subjects in which you're absolutely pathetic. Art is that and just... I hate art.

I put facilitation because it is the only one that I don't have any experience with and I don't really know how to approach it. I think that's probably why... .. I don't know how to do it.

Okay...

Presentation because I don't have any experience.

You'll have guessed that we are actually going to do some of this stuff but what I want to do is actually help you a little bit. This is where I play teacher a little bit.

I say this as I stand up and pick up the white board marker ready to write down their comments. I never was the “chalk and talk” type of teacher but my remark refers to my earlier comment about teachers often preferring to stand while their pupils are sitting in order to exert power over them. I feel the need to now rationalise my

behaviour so that they understand that my motivation is not to place myself above them.

Don't think of there being answers. There are no answers. We are going to generate a list, and I am not going to help you, – a list from yourselves of what skills you need – not talent – what you need to learn to do in order to be a good...

We go through each of the skills and I write down the contributions as the children call them out.

Facilitator

- Fairness
- Communication
- Organised
- Confidence in what you are saying/ subject knowledge

Design

- Innovation
- Understanding
- Pitch for the right age
- Eye for the aesthetic
- Imagination

Planning a Peulah (an informal lesson as happens in youth movements)

- Imagination
- Teamwork
- Concentration and focus
- Structure (for allowing disorganised ideas into a structure)

Presentation

- Be able to project yourself
- Communication
- Energy
- KATYMBA (a Hebrew acronym for: Voice, Body Language, Hands, Eye contact and self confidence - the qualities needed for effective communication)
- Being able to interpret a situation
- Adaptability
- A good listener
- Initiative

I believe that there are two possible explanations for the last list being by far the longest. It is just possible, having generated three lists already, that they have now become comfortable with what I have asked them to do and are becoming comfortable working with me; and are thus finding it easier to generate ideas.

However, judging by the esoteric nature of the contributions, I believe that they have actually extrapolated from the session they did yesterday on communication. They appreciate that presentation involves communication and they are searching their mental images of yesterday's session for the elements that make a good communicator. Looking back at the "facilitator" list, it is clear that they have not made the same connection here. "A good listener", for instance could very easily have fitted there.

In retrospect, I regret not having returned to the other lists and prodded them for some more answers that may have helped them in understanding their tasks.

Okay, Charlie and Yoni have put you into groups. There are two groups. If you are in the design group, you have two options. Either design a poster for an RSY camp or an RSY activity or design a worksheet that you are going to use in your [informal lesson]. I am not looking for art. I am looking for reasons why you put certain things where you did on the poster, why you've used a certain style, what you've done on the sheet of paper and I want you to give that back to me at the end – the reasons why you've chosen that style and what each bit of the poster represents.

If you are planning a [informal lesson], what I want is basically just a plan. I don't want to say ... this particular game and we're going to do it like that. I don't want all the details of how you are going to do everything. I want just a general outline of why you put each activity there and what you are trying to achieve during that particular activity. It's a two-hour [informal lesson]. Divide it up into chunks of time and give me a clear outline.

That begs the question: what are the other people going to do? In each group, one person is going to facilitate. Nothing happens, nothing gets done; nothing gets decided without that facilitator making sure that ... basically they are chairing that meeting. They decide what gets done⁷; they are assigning tasks for people to do stuff. They have to make sure that everyone is happy with what they are doing.

The presentation task is when we come back in the room, you will explain to the rest of us what you have done and why you have done it. Any questions so far?

⁷ I realise, of course, that this doesn't fit in with a strict definition of facilitation. However, it is important to me, for the purpose of the task, that the designated facilitator takes control of the group and takes on a responsibility that I felt they would be unlikely to have experienced before. What I am describing is someone to not only chair the proceedings but also to make the final decisions. My guess is that this is an uncomfortable role for a sixteen-year-old to play with his or her peers.

As a teacher in a classroom, I might have invested some extra time to get the pupils to repeat back to me what the task actually involves. However, I have been lulled into a false sense of security by their apparent maturity, ability to listen and contribute and their compliant attitude. I am also conscious of my time constraints.

The names are read out by the two leaders. They have used the sheets to, as far as possible, assign individuals to tasks that they were least happy with.

The two groups go into separate rooms to perform their activities. I use the time to oscillate between the two and make observations as to the effectiveness of the respective facilitators, the group dynamics and the extent to which they are addressing their remit.

The facilitation of the planning group is poor. There is one individual (not the designated facilitator) who repeatedly takes control of discussions and effectively assumes the facilitator position because she is concerned about getting the task done properly. The designated facilitator tries to come in but is constantly shouted down by the self-professed “more-experienced” individual.

While I am watching the planning group, one of the leaders tries to get the design group going. I had warned them the night before that the participants may need a bit of help if they were getting nowhere at all. However, the leader perceived their weak protestations at no talent to mean that she had to facilitate the activity. This is unfortunate as, by the time I come to observe this group (about three minutes into the activity), the leader has already assigned tasks and split the group to doing two tasks – one doing a poster and the other doing a worksheet. The designated facilitator ended up just watching what the two groups were doing, going back and forth between the two to observe their progress. The enterprising designated presenter has realised that his job has been doubled and recruits his best friend to share the task of presenting.

The individuals doing the worksheet had got so consumed with their task that they forgot that it was about design and not about actually creating an activity for some kids to do. They were designing a wordsearch on the subject of the Jewish festival of Chanukah. I had given warnings of time ending at 5, 3 and 1 minutes with a reminder that I did not need the details to be filled in. Despite this, when I called everybody

back in to plenary, they were still desperately putting letters into the grid they had drawn and carefully considering how to measure out the different words that were needed to be spotted. In the end I had to just grab the sheet from them and implore them to come into the room with everyone else who was waiting for them.

Presentations

Okay, we are going to start with the peulah (informal lesson) planning. Would you like to tell the rest of us what your plan was?

Alright... basically... our peulah [informal lesson] is about the MIAs, ... the missing soldiers in action... Umm... and basically... we are going to... to... create a sort of like... a feeling of I don't know what we would call it ... reluctancy (sic). We want them to understand the feelings that they would be going through. To start off we would ... eh... have them enter into a room...

This presentation is given from the informal lesson-planning group. The presenter starts off very nervously, reading from a sheet of paper with large red script. He looks at his sheet as he reads and then looks down as he delivers. The delivery is generously peppered with the utterances “Uhm” and “basically” amidst long pauses. Mid way into his delivery, he begins to look around as he reads from his sheet and slowly appears to gain in confidence – his voice becomes palpably clearer and he keeps his head up for longer periods of time. The pauses and other utterances become less frequent. He appears to be deferring to his group-mates but also seems to be deriving confidence from the fact that he has the attention of everyone in the room. He continues to hold our attention for over ten minutes.

The presenter of the poster was quite an outgoing individual and came across in last night's focus groups that I had observed as a very intelligent and insightful individual. He actually covered up his discomfort at presenting by injecting humour into his presentation. The presenter of the worksheet was very effective at getting his group's ideas across to the group. Only one presenter had been allocated for the design and the two who are now presenting are best friends and they seem to be deriving support from one another, frequently looking at each other and making inaudible esoteric comments at which they both laugh.

The next part of the session is important for me to gather some data. The researcher surfaces above the educator. I know that I am recording the session but I fear that my recording may be indecipherable. This written data will just reinforce the data from

the discussion. I want them to actually write their points down and place them on the posters. This will help in my data gathering but will also give them some thinking time.

My thinking is that the necessity to write down their thoughts may just help them to verbalise them and reinforce them. It also once again allows informal exchange of ideas while they are putting their comments on the posters.

Okay, I've got one more bit of organised chaos before we start the sikkum [summing up]. And that is ... on the floor you'll see I've put some Post-it notes. If you could each grab like a little....eh bit of Post-it note.. and some pencils here or if you want pens that'll be fine. What I'd like you to do is think about how you might...

[Brief break whilst I break off a wad of Post-it notes and pass it to one of the participants who asked for it]

...think about... You were asked to do ... most of you ...for some it didn't quite work out, but most of you did something where you already expressed discomfort in doing it. Okay?

I want you to think about: number one, how that made you feel in the first instance and also in the second instance how you feel now that you... I mean, I'm not suggesting that you're the best "whatevers" ever ... just think about how you feel now that you've actually done it. Does it make you feel a little bit more comfortable with that? Okay. So two things I'm asking you to do.

This is a leading question, one which, as a researcher I should not have been asking. However, it is a mark of the dichotomy that I am experiencing as both an educator and a researcher. The educator takes precedence, not consciously but being an educator is what is at the forefront of my thinking at that time, getting my point across so that they can go away and participate in the exercise.

I continue to talk whilst the children start to carry out the task.

If you could umm, name the sheets or put initials on them or ... a little symbol, ... just something so I know, which one belongs to the same person umm because its something I'm going to look at to help myself later on, I'd like to know how you feel and be able to actually read your stuff in succession. So a couple of thoughts, one is ... and you can use as many of these sheets as you like. There's a few more over there if you run out. One is how you felt in the first instance, and number that 1... in the first instance being asked to do something that you were a little bit

uncomfortable, and the other is, how you feel now that you've actually done it. Okay?

I have continued to talk whilst the task is being carried out because I notice that some individuals are looking pensive and hope that my continued delivery will clarify the task and elicit some thoughts.

Right, when you've done that, what I want you to do is... find a poster of the skill that you undertook ... (waiting for silence as the group settles down again) find a poster of the skill that you undertook... and put your little Post-it note, or two or three if there are those, together on the poster where you did that skill... Okay?

So the Post-it is how you feel...?

... how you felt in a position where you were being told to do something you didn't want to do and the next one is how you now feel having done that. Okay, so it's a before and after question really.

They complete the writing of their emotional reactions on their Post-it notes and then go and place them on the posters as requested. They do this in a fairly organised and quiet fashion so that I am able to continue talking to them until they return to their seats.

Results

Table 4.1. Results of the "before and after" Post-it note task

Planning

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
1.	Happy that we had to write it in a group and that many people's ideas are better than one	Happy we came up with a good programme. It also leads on to use similar ideas in other peulahs (activities)	Respondent intimates that he has derived support from the group. He is already starting to consider taking on future leadership activities which suggests that the experience has encouraged him to do so.
2.	To start with, I was put into a group in which I knew what I was doing but found that by seeing what other people's ideas were, it was made easier.	After we had done it, we all felt good about the peulah, but I felt our facilitator was not very confidence building, although we all worked together and it made a good activity.	Expression of deriving support from the group and the group support of the weak facilitator. This lends credence to the collaborative (or perhaps Vygotskian) model of increasing their knowledge and abilities by learning from those with different knowledge and skills.
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unsure - Uneasy - Restless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More confident - Confidence boost - Sense of accomplishment 	This is a clear expression of having gained confidence by performing the task.
4.		I did something that I said I was most confident at, so it was reassuring in the sense I was confident doing it. It reaffirmed my belief in the skills as I felt able to do the task. In a sense it was a bit bad though as I felt I was quite imposing on others and dominant as I was confident what I was doing. Does that make sense?!	This respondent was extremely dominating in her group but I get the sense that her recognition of the fact has taught her something. So, while she may not have gained the skill that the activity was designed to teach, she has still gained from the experience.
5.	I was apprehensive about being put in the group I lacked confidence for; the experience was quite reassuring and I wanted the chance to practice.	Having done the activity, I don't feel as though I've learnt any new tips but I do have more confidence in the skills I already had; being able to think up ideas and think critically about others made me more sure that I might just be able to plan a semi-decent peulah this summer. (Thank you)	<p>The "thank you" at the end of this piece is both touching and reaffirming of my vocation.</p> <p>This individual expresses the development of confidence but also the skills needed for effective teamwork.</p>

6.	Did not feel very confident Had little experience Did not know how to put it together.	Much more confident More fun than I expected There was more creativity involved than I once thought I found it really interesting and got involved	I begin to feel a sense of vindication in my choice of approach, demonstrating, as it does, the advent of confidence, enjoyment and skill acquisition.
7.	Before planning peulah, I was not sure if I would have many good ideas for planning it	After planning peulah I found it gave me confidence because even though I may not be able to do it myself, planning in a group allows you to bounce ideas off other people, and you get ideas triggered from what other people have said. It definitely made me feel more confident in peulah planning.	This is an overt expression of gaining in confidence through the experience of working in a team.
8.	Enthusiastic to see how I <u>can</u> plan a peulah	Happy with the outcome but it was hard for me to be listened to as there were so many of us.	A sense of sadness pervades this response for me. I can only hope that this individual believes that they have learnt from the “outcome” and will have more of an input in a smaller group.
9.	Feelings before - unsure - uneasy	Feelings after - more confident - Sense of accomplishment	Testament to the development of confidence
10.	First I thought it would be hard because there were lots of people, but everyone’s ideas came together and contributed towards a successful peulah.		This comment lends weight to the power of collaborative learning to enable skills to be gained from others with different knowledge.

Designing

	Before	After	Discussion
1.	Apprehensive about drawing as I find it very challenging	Still believe I cannot draw to save my life but...I had a laugh and I drew a <i>dreidel</i> (spinning top symbolic of Channukah which we were celebrating at the time)	Despite not expressing confidence, the respondent conveys a much more upbeat attitude to the activity after having completed it.
2.	Wasn't very happy when being told was designing – I can't even draw a straight line with a ruler! But adapted activity to skills I possessed	Feel more confident. However, I didn't design because the design was adapted to the skills I possessed so was confident with the task I undertook.	This response suggests a realisation that confidence arises from adapting the task to existing skills.
3.	Annoyed at being made to do something against my will	Surprise – having succeeded	Perhaps this surprise will translate into more willingness to take on such a task in the future.
4.	Challenged doing something I was not confident in.	Satisfied 'cos I achieved a goal working with others to make it easier	Recognition that teamwork has enhanced the individual's ability to succeed at the task.
5.	Mixed- worried because of lack of artistic talent but ok as we could work together to improve	Better now as it wasn't hard to plan a poster	This suggests that the fear of the unknown has been removed.
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not looking forward to it - Wouldn't make a good poster 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was enjoyable - Learnt ideas about design - Not really any more confident as time was restricted 	Although this respondent denies the acquisition of confidence, he nonetheless confesses to having learnt something. Bizarrely, he has learnt something from a group of individuals who all protested their lack of ability in this field.
7.	When I was asked to design, I did not know what to expect because I hadn't designed much before	Once I had done it, I found that it was a lot easier than I had thought and feel a lot more confident about doing it now	Another clear expression of confidence gained by having performed the task. Fear of the unknown has been removed and may lead to confidence in the task in the future.
8.	I felt a bit low, thinking "how on earth am I going to achieve this?" I lacked confidence!	Afterwards I felt a sense of achievement that I actually accomplished one of my weakest talents!	Recognition of accomplishment.
9.	When I found out I was helping out in the design	Having completed the task I feel that it was not as hard as I first	No admission of confidence here although this

	aspect I felt like I really didn't want to do it. I am very "unarty" and have no real creativity in terms of design.	imagined however I am still low in confidence as I know how bad at art I am.	respondent admits that the task was easier once they had attempted it.
10.	At first I thought it was going to be really hard. But we worked together and in the end we had fun	I now would feel more confident if I was asked to do this activity but I would never pick it as my first choice.	Expression of confidence gained through experience

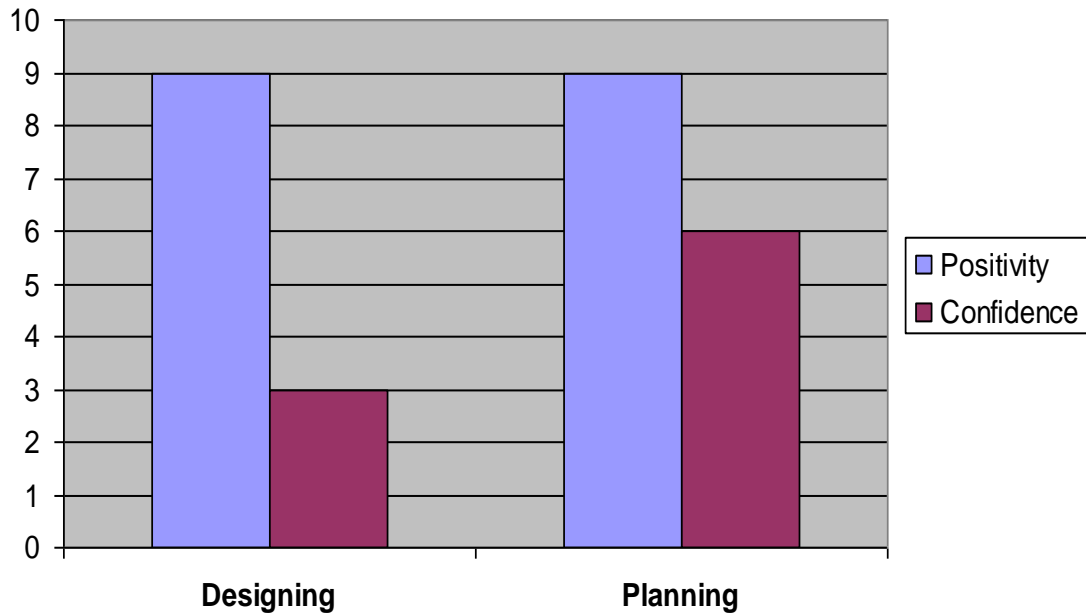
Facilitating

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
1.	When U made me b the facilitation I was stuck and tried to do my best	Now I have done it I am clearer about what I had to do	This is an illustration, not of having learnt how to perform this task, but of having a clear idea of what the task entails now that she has had a go at it.
2.	Not sure I knew what to do	Now I understand more what facilitation is and am more confident	This comment goes one step further than the last in that the respondent acknowledges that with clarity comes confidence and one can assume that this alludes to ability.

Presenting

	<i>Before</i>	<i>After</i>	<i>Discussion</i>
1.	I knew it was inevitable – I felt surprised in a bad way	I felt like I learned a new skill	This is interesting because the individual wasn't taught this newly acquired skill by any of the group nor by any of the supervisors or me. The fact that he feels he has learnt a new skill, is entirely due to having taken it on and had the courage to see it through.
2.	I liked the idea of a challenge	It was easier than I thought	The fact that individual was positive about the challenge seems to be a remarkably mature attitude for a 16 year-old and is representative of the feelings I got from the group in taking on this activity.
3.	I felt scared but cheesy facetiousness helped me through my teenage self consciousness	I feel good	At first glance, the “before” comment would appear to demonstrate a youngster who is very self aware. However, the more I read it, the more I feel that it is a little contrived as if the writer knows that I am going to use his comments for research and wants to make an impact. Nevertheless, even if he is contriving the statement, he still has to have had those thoughts to come up with that statement.

Figure 4. 2. Numbers of children from Design and Planning groups expressing a positive attitude and the acquisition of confidence after completing the task compared to how they felt before starting it



These results are interesting because they illustrate that, overwhelmingly, the children who performed the collaborative tasks articulated a sense of achievement. Those who did not express a sense of achievement were actually still very positive but not overtly so.

For example:

“Still believe I cannot draw to save my life but...I had a laugh and I drew a dreidel”

So it wasn't the challenging activity that he had anticipated.

“Having completed the task I feel that it was not as hard as I first imagined”.

This respondent is not particularly demonstrating positivity but is expressing his loss of negativity.

The one from the Planning group who did not express satisfaction, felt that way because she had been asked to perform a task in which she had already expressed

confidence. She felt that this resulted in her not giving others a fair chance to gain skills. The one on the Design group who did not express a sense of achievement felt that he had not fulfilled the remit since he adapted the task to his own strengths. Both these individuals are expressing the exaggerated professionalism and compassion for their peers that we have already witnessed among the leaders. They are both demonstrating an ability to self-evaluate in order to improve.

It is interesting to note how many (3 out of 10 Design and 6 out of 10 Planning) mentioned acquisition of confidence without prompting. Only one of those performing the solitary tasks mentioned confidence. I can offer two possible explanations for the advent of this confidence. The first is that by simply performing an unfamiliar task and succeeding, confidence is bolstered. The other is that, by working together, those performing the collaborative tasks have been bolstered by the reinforcement of others in their group in a classic example of collaborative learning, supporting the Vygotskian concept of pushing out the limits of proximal development via pooling of group ideas and knowledge and, along with it, the attendant group support.

In addition both the Facilitators and all three of the Presenters expressed a positive attitude following the exercise.

The session continues:

.... What I'd like to do,... we're going to have a chat in a couple of minutes. What we're going to use the last few minutes of this session for is actually to explore those feelings that you had, what basically you've been writing down on your Post-it.

**I'd like to hear from, in the first instance, anybody who has strong views about how they felt about being put into a group that they really didn't want to be in. How did you feel about being put into that group?
Yeah?**

It was a challenge, something new ... 'cause normally you do what you're good at, and you normally do what you know. You don't choose to do what you're not familiar with.

Right, so you're saying challenge is a good thing or a bad thing?

It's not really a bad thing.

Right, okay

I was quite enthusiastic in seeing how, I could do it.

Right... right, so enthusiasm was your overriding sentiment?

Yeah.

I am surprised by these first two contributions. I was expecting a more negative response. Perhaps I have become wary on account of my previous experience of running this session with an adult group. However, it may be an element of “pleasing the teacher” here by saying what they think I want to hear from them. Although, if these two girls really did find the experience a positive one in the first instance, then they are expressing a degree of compliance that I had not seen when I trialled this session out on a group of adults. My memory of that experience is of petulant reluctance. However, I am aware that these young participants have come to this camp expressly to learn these techniques. They are eager to learn – not only what is being taught to them – but also **how** it is being taught. As with last night’s activity, they are receptive to unorthodox ways of learning and to every nuance of the delivery. There is a compound motivation held by these youngsters that was not the case for the adult group. They have come, not just because the course is being staged for them and it is the appropriate stage of their movement education, signalling their accession to leadership, but also because whatever they trial in this “safe” environment, can be translated to real youth leadership in due course and used when they are planning activities.

I, first of all knew I couldn't draw, but then I realised other people couldn't draw as well, so it was like a little “we can't draw” gathering.

(Everyone laughs)

Right , anybody else have any strong view or feeling about being put into those groups.

I just think, like ...it makes quite a difference about the people you're with...

Right ...?

... because, if someone's gonna, encourage you to say things that you want to say, or like shutting you up or something, it kinda like puts the whole thing

down 'cause I think its quite important the people you're with, that everyone encourages you.

I think some people like got inhibited by it, 'cause you were doing something that you were insecure about, some people felt like insecure with other people

**Right? So it slows you down, actually doing it with somebody?
Okay, any others about before... the before feeling?**

It would have been really good if everyone had an individual role. I understand why you did it, but wouldn't it be better to do something you're good at so everyone can get into different roles.

This comment impresses me. Not only is the speaker starting to think like a youth leader and think about what needs to be considered in the planning in order to make it valid and to analyse how I could have improved the planning and running of my session, but he is also tacitly recognising that the fact that he had the support of a group to perform his task made the task that much easier to fulfil.

That's for another session (laughs). But, yes... I mean yes, a good point, yeah. Any others?

Okay, right, now I want you to think about, perhaps a bit more deeply, how you now feel, having done that, having seen all the circumstances and some people here talked about the group dynamic and some people have talked about, umm, the challenge of it and so on. So think about now that you've actually done something that – and I know this doesn't apply to all of you – that you weren't that happy about doing. Were you happy about what you were doing? Did you do it better than you expected? How do you feel about doing it in the future?

At first I was like, oh no I don't have any ideas. Then I realised that when you are with a group and someone else can trigger off ideas in your mind and you can bounce ideas off each other. And someone else will be writing them down. So like obviously when you are planning then you are planning a meeting in a group anyway. I found it was a lot easier than I thought it would be because you get ideas from others. So I valued the group and was able to bring some ideas myself.

That's also what I would say but one of the disadvantages of a big group is that if you are so bad at art as I am, then you sort of detract (sic.) away from the group and let everyone else talk about what they are going to do and do it... and distance yourself and watch them rather than participate.

I address my next question to the previous speaker.

How would you feel about doing that task in the future now that you've done it once and succeeded? I appreciate that it's a facile example but...

Well if we had that topic then I would be alright but because I'm not...I haven't got that sort of mind... an arty, design sort of mind, then I still wouldn't be as confident as other topics maybe.

Right, so you'd be able to do a Chanukah (Jewish festival of lights) poster?

Yeah

I think that with drawing, you are either good at it or you're not ... in design. Although it was a laugh doing it, 'cause we were terrible. But, it's like... you're not going to say no, I won't... I think. But it's up to you if you want to do stuff. Like, I ... if you're not good at it, it's hard. You know. 'Cause you've got people who are doing A' level art. Whatever. They're good at art, you know ... all different styles. It's a completely different ball game if you've not done art for five years and you're completely terrible. You're just sat [sic] doing nothing.

I am generally disappointed with the response of the design group - both in the execution of the task and in the presentation. I had tried to impress upon them that it was not about drawing. I would have been perfectly happy for them to draw a square to represent where a picture would be or a few lines to represent writing. This is where an investment of time for a clearer explanation would have benefited the activity as a whole. I make a mental note to ensure that my explanation is improved if ever I repeat this workshop. I am actually not sure if this is the teacher or the researcher making this note. Am I concerned that I did not put the information over effectively? Or am I worried that my data may be skewed by my lack of clarity? Reflecting back, I believe it to be the former. Whatever data I manage to procure will be of interest and relative to my delivery. However these youngsters will only get one shot at what I have to teach them and I am proverbially kicking myself for my professional ineptitude as a teacher.

Right, okay. Any other feelings about how you feel about having done something that you didn't want to do? ... I have to say that I was very impressed. I mean I didn't ask you to work hard. I just asked you to come up with a design. Where you are going to put stuff. Or I asked you for a plan of a lesson. I didn't ask you to actually do a lesson. I thought that both your plans were well thought out and structured so, despite the fact that you had all stated that you didn't like doing those things, you've all done a very good job. So my question to you is... how do you feel now?

I just want to say that... about being in a group...I can't draw but because I wasn't on my own, I didn't actually have to.

I can't draw to save my life but we were designing a worksheet and could have been slightly more like "designy" ...I thought it was like not really to do with design because we didn't have a design, but I felt that errm because we worked together, it wasn't just your own ideas...it like really helps to work with someone else as well. So if you can't ... you can like bounce ideas off each other and you would generally come with more than you would just come up with yourself.

I know that it was my first choice but I felt a little more confident doing it than previously... than I had done the first time.

Because we were like in a team, it like makes it easier to get things done.

If it was really my first time... like... now, I wouldn't know much about it... rather than just in this [training session],(she uses the Hebrew word) I would have found it more difficult. But if I did it now for real I would be able to do it.

Any other comments?

I am sure it was like hard work when there were so many of us, we couldn't all be listened to.

Which group were you in? Planning?

Yeah.

Who was your facilitator? The individual identifies himself. How do you feel that the group went?

I didn't really know what was going on. It was really hard.

So you felt like a lot was happening and that you couldn't really pull it together?

Yeah.

Okay...

You've got to have quite a lot of compromise because maybe you've got an idea and like not everyone agrees... with that idea. Like you're doing but if you're doing it in a much smaller group, then you'd have much more of your own input.

Uhm ... again... this is going to sound like a complete suck-up comment and I don't want to sound cheesy at all.

(Facetiously) **But you're going to...**

However, I'm going to. (We both laugh). I think it's really good what you did that we can have this little session ...experience what it's like to be part of a little team and you know, things like that. Yeah though it rather like eases the idea of being a [youth leader] .. you know the scariness .

This comment is not only something of an ego boost to me and a reinforcement that, at least as an educator I have been successful, but it also confirms that this session has been far more effective and educational for this group of 16-year-olds than it had been for the adult group on which I trialled it.

Okay I think that one overriding theme has come through and I'll go into that in a minute.

I had not been consciously looking for themes in their discussion but it struck me, as I was conducting the discussion, that the concept of confidence had been aired several times.

What I just want to ask you first is: I think that in a lot of ways the presenter and the facilitator had the most difficult task. Can anybody think why that might be?

Maybe it is because they have to follow every single thing that is going on and like the presenter needs to know exactly what they are going to say ... although it is written down they can follow it and then again not... because ideas might not be used. And the facilitator has to like keep track of who's talking and like keep other people quiet when other people are talking and then like make them take notice of each other.

I think it was more like the concept of having a dual role. There was like two sides to what they had to do. The other people had to focus on the one thing and you had to focus on two.

At first I was thinking like I have to make sure that everything's fair so everything goes okay. If it doesn't...it's like you botched the whole thing. You are responsible for making it go well.

These are all very good comments. I am impressed by the speakers' ability to analyse what other people were doing and empathise with their experience whilst they were in the thick of trying to take on a new skill themselves. They are also starting to think what it may be like when they are practising youth leaders.

Yes, good. What else was it about those particular roles that everybody else didn't have to suffer?

I am disappointed with myself here. I am playing the “what’s on the teacher’s mind” game. This is futile and is counterproductive to thought provocation. However, it is important to me as a teacher that they grasp the different nuances and influences that will impact on their future leadership depending on which roles they choose to adopt.

They were by themselves.

Yes that was where I was leading to before. All of what you said was also completely true but what came out during this discussion session now was that almost all of you have stressed that you were in a group and that that group was kind of boosting you and allowing you to achieve something that you wouldn't otherwise have been able to achieve before and that's why I think that the facilitator and the presenter had more of a job to do. Although, if you think about it a little bit, it was also everyone else's job. And that's kind of your take home message from this ... is that when you go out into the big wide world and do [youth work] and have real [participants] ... you're in a group. It's about teamwork and it's about how you can all work together and don't just stick with... it's very easy to stick with “Oh I'm really good at teaching a song or I'm really good at teaching dancing or at running a discussion” but start to think about “well, I haven't really done it before and I won't say no without recognising what's involved”. So what I'm saying to you is when you're asked to take on skills. Take them on. Think about them. If you're not happy having done them, then perhaps it's not your forte but take it on and allow yourself to learn.

I was just going to say that as the presenter, I sort of depended on people in my group giving me eye contact so I was like given a little like boost of confidence to know that I do like know what I'm talking about and I'm not just chatting up here so yeah...uhm... that helped.

This comment has come from the young man who had presented the planning group's work. It is the first time he has volunteered to speak. His demeanour, his posture and his words and the manner in which he utters them are all expressing the advent of a confidence that had been absent at the beginning of the session. I feel vindicated. For all my ambivalence about data-collection versus teaching something useful, this comment and the manner of its expression above all others reassures me that the group have learnt something valuable.

Good, good. A very good point. Do you feel ... like we were talking about before... do you feel more confident about taking it on again.

Oh yeah! Definitely.

Good, okay. So that's your take home message. Try stuff out. You'll learn as you're doing it. It's all a learning curve. Everything you do, you learn through it.

Having completed the exercise, I am aware of several weaknesses in the design of this study. The skills examined were, of necessity, ones in which I could easily set a short task and therefore, do not necessarily reflect a true scope of possibilities. For instance I could not evaluate their ability to relate to their charges, the educational level of their activities or their ability to assess the level of the participants. As such, the exercise was always going to be (as I put it to one of the participants in the discussion) a facile example and not a comprehensive foray into the acquisition of skills.

The four skills that were being observed were not really comparable. Of the four, two were collaborative tasks in which the participants immediately gained a comfort zone of not having to do very much because others in the group will carry the responsibility. It also meant that those with an innate or learned strength in the field could take over, allowing those who were less confident to avoid doing anything.

This was not the case for the two solitary tasks of facilitation and presentation. The individuals chosen for these were expressly uncomfortable with these tasks (whereas some individuals in the group tasks were placed there because they had put their names on the facilitation or presenting and only two names were needed for each). They also did not have the luxury of having someone else to lean on to either take some of the responsibility or to learn from.

It is clear from my observations of the proceedings that the tasks that were accomplished well were those with which the participants felt a degree of familiarity and which they understood. Planning was good, as was presentation but the facilitation in both cases was poor and the design task was poorly interpreted. This leads me to deduce that my explanations of the tasks to be performed were inadequate. I knew at the time that I was going to need more time but, reading back, it is obvious that instructions could have been a lot clearer. I am certain that a good night's sleep might have obviated this but feel that any repeat of this activity should

include a scripted instruction, an accompanying sheet and an oral probing of the children to make sure they have understood before they commence the respective tasks.

A major flaw in the design of the exercise, from a research perspective, which could not be easily overcome is the fact that much of the discussion, arguably producing some of the most valuable data, was taking place in the groups. Whilst I was able to observe the general goings on in the groups by oscillating between the two, I did not record the discussions from both groups and could not focus on either one in detail. I imagine that a lot of interesting data has been lost by this oversight. However, I feel that my presence to notate in either of the groups would have been detrimental to the material that came out of both of them.

Looking at the transcript two things occur to me. The first is that I had dominated the discussion far more than I had intended and than I ought to have. I tried not to lead comments but I did seem to make my questions lengthy. This observation is not the inbuilt duplicity of researcher versus educator but a genuine concern for how effective I can be at either if I do not allow the participants to learn in a constructivist manner or if I do not create the opportunity to hear their voice.

The other observation that becomes apparent when reading the transcript is that the fluency of articulation when talking in a discussion forum varies widely amongst these teenagers. I wonder if, like the skills I have introduced these youngsters to, their confidence in speaking to a group would improve if I were to increase their opportunities to do so. I am interested to know and left wondering if, by the end of the camp (and many more such focus groups), some of the participants would be able to express themselves in a much more articulate fashion.

Like all educational proceedings, I imagine that most of the educational value of this session continues long after I have left. Like the examples of communication that came into my discussion from the previous session, I like to think that elements of this session will surface in forthcoming activities. I would like to visualise them chatting heatedly over lunch about what they gained and what they now realise and how they are going to implement their newfound confidence. More importantly, I hope that they will be discussing not what they did with me today, but how they will

take on new challenges in the future with a view to picking up new skills. My only regret, as a researcher, is that I do not have ongoing access to these children to get a definitive answer to these queries.

However, two corollaries to this event surfaced some time later. The first was when I ran into one of the leaders at a conference two weeks later. She made a point of coming up to me in the crowded bar one night to inform me that the written evaluations from my session completed at the end of the camp were overwhelmingly positive. I can only hope that positive feedback actually translates to positive action and real learning as well as acquisition of confidence.

The other episode that struck me was a session I attended at an adult conference in February (two months later). The session was set to cover the current peace initiatives in the Israel/Palestine conflict. Being an ex-youth movement member, the person running the session had chosen to do it in a youth movement style. In other words, it was interactive. To start the session, we were asked to write our reactions to a number of comments that were placed on posters around the room, and to attribute them to well known individuals in the arena. Before we could start on the task, an elderly gentleman got up, put his coat on and proceeded to chastise the facilitator, accusing him of making light of a very serious subject. He then left the room and was, some minutes later, followed by another adult participant. The session turned out to be highly informative and very instructive. I could not help reflecting on my own experience of trying to run an adult session using youth movement methods. The scene I witnessed has left me wondering whether adults learn better from a more didactic delivery; or are some individuals just not used to being asked to take responsibility for their own learning due to the system of schooling which they received? I made up my mind to follow this thought up with an interactive adult session.

I came to this workshop with a view to evaluating the ability of youngsters to gain skills by simply being given the opportunity to do so. However, I left with a whole lot more. As the session proceeded I realised that I was witnessing not only the increased confidence levels of a group of kids, but also found myself analytically observing the entire context; the leaders at work and at play, the participants, the hierarchical progression within the movement and myself as a teacher. Most

importantly, as I have looked back at that experience, I am increasingly finding myself and learning about myself as a researcher.

Thematic analysis

Peshkin (1993) divides the qualitative research process into the four stages of description (what happened), interpretation (researcher's views), verification (rereading and coding) and evaluation (thematic analysis). This multi-layered process of reading, rereading, coding and interconnecting is inherent in meta-analysis.

First I identify the players. There are the Leaders, Movement Worker, Participants and
Myself

I identify three supra-ordinate categories, each with their attendant subcategories as follows:

- (i) **Participants' behaviours**
 - Exaggerated Professionalism
 - Care and compassion
 - Use of Hebrew
 - Advent of confidence
- (ii) **My Personae**
 - Teacher
 - Educator
 - Researcher
 - Ex-movement member
 - Mother
- (iii) **Behaviours adopted by myself**
 - Professional intuition
 - Self criticism

Participants' Behaviours

Exaggerated Professionalism

The leaders' professionalism is evidenced by the comprehensive programme they have put together, the super-efficient kitchen staff I witnessed on arrival and the amount of preparation I have observed go into the discussion activity (introductory simulation, questionnaires, printed scenario sheets, printed discussion prompts for the leaders and the division of the group into evenly spread boys and girls including one

of each leader). It is highlighted in my mind because I get a sense that they are perhaps performing as youth leaders above what I would expect as a teacher – hence exaggerated. They seem to be constantly on the alert for educational opportunities, always operating on the principle of “Dugma Ishit” (personal example).

His assessment of the camp and of the kids demonstrates his confidence and ability to evaluate professionally and with a focussed attitude.

At the time of this encounter I did not think anything of Joe’s ability to summarise events and weigh up the effect of the camp so far and its educational value. It was only on a subsequent reading that I was able to distance myself and realise that this is exceptional behaviour for an untrained educator.

The fact that the leaders go out of their way to introduce themselves to me is a demonstration of their professional attitude.

There are several times later during the weekend that I detect what I refer to as “exaggerated professionalism”. This is the first time that I am struck by such an attitude from these leaders who have no formal training and who are only just 20.

The aim is to recognise the sense of professionalism that they need to adopt

The fact that this activity is written into the programme points to the professionalism that the leaders want the future leaders to adopt.

The group is then split into smaller groups, each with a male and a female leader

This attention to detail demonstrates that care has been taken in designing the activity to ensure that both genders are comfortable to contribute to the discussion in the group.

All are adept at this

This ease of getting into role and appreciating the function of the activity demonstrates an aspiration to adopting the professionalism that is being undermined

by the simulation. Such understanding has led to an appreciation of the behaviour exhibited in role play by their leaders, that the kids manage to identify as being “undesirable”.

They are then presented with a series of hypothetical scenarios This is followed by a discussion

This is a well-prepared activity, which takes into account a method of provoking thought before embarking on discussion. It also ensures that all groups cover the same ground and are thus exposed to a uniformity of educational opportunity. The fact that they have been divided into small groups was a consideration that more useful discussion would emerge than if conducted in a large group. Additional pointers to the professionally planned activity are the fact that each group is assigned a male and a female leader to obviate any potential discomfort by one or other gender, the sheets have all been printed ahead of time, making sure that each participant has the material at hand to consult.

I am becoming increasingly aware that this exaggerated professionalism is an emerging theme

Although I have picked up on this on subsequent readings, this is the first time, *in situ*, that I am aware of this theme emerging.

If the planned session doesn't appeal, the leader will often change tack, using her experience or her professional judgement

Whilst this is not an overt adherence to professionalism, it takes a certain amount of skill and proficiency in order to judge when and how it would be appropriate to change tack.

However, this is a leadership seminar so an ad hoc decision is taken amongst the leaders to demonstrate “dorm time”.

Here is another example of the professionalism I have already observed. The leaders are taking the opportunity to teach the youngsters something. This exercise has not

been timetabled but the leaders have recognised its educational value and have slotted it in because they realise how beneficial it will be.

The truth is that she is ultimately responsible but is happy to put her faith in the professionalism of this team.

Here we see that the movement worker has a recognition of professionalism in the leaders and displays it herself by trusting them, allowing a team to be established and deferring to them to do the leadership.

This is a very professional meeting. Eight twenty-year-olds with no formal training are taking the training of their charges very seriously indeed

Every aspect of the meeting had a professional manner; someone is chairing the meeting, giving individuals a chance to speak in turn; the planning of the day has taken every foreseeable eventuality into consideration – even down to consulting the auxiliary staff; evaluations of every aspect of the day are thorough and comprehensive and the needs of the camp participants are considered in great detail.

The discussion centres on whose turn it is to have a break and the duty time is evenly spread among the group

This attention to egalitarian distribution of duty is yet another example, not only of the professional attitude I have witnessed in several guises, but also of the mutual respect and compassion these youngsters have for one another.

Their professionalism, even in off-duty mode, has not faltered

Even in the early hours of the morning when the participants are likely to be asleep, the leaders are mindful of having to set a good example and to have their wits about them in the event of having to need them.

I like to be up and active and always with the children and everything ... to get them going and put across the information in like a fun way which they can interpretate (sic) as meaningful and educational – of course, in a fun way

By stressing “in a fun way” twice, this youngster is demonstrating his awareness that education is most effective when it addresses the needs of those being taught and when they can enjoy the experience.

you are allowed to like see one person’s reactions – like what he’s been planning - and like... learn...like how ... like skills that you need - like how to interact with people and stuff like that

This comment demonstrates a recognition of the need for professional development and the willingness to advance leadership skills, which is one more aspect of professionalism.

I thought it would be... like... easy to... like...plan an activity (much laughter from the other participants – and in particular, the few leaders that are seated around the room).

The rest of the group are demonstrating their professionalism by showing their awareness of how much work goes into planning a session.

While I am watching the planning group, one of the leaders tries to get the design group going

The leader is not comfortable with the inevitable lack of organisation inherent in asking the children to be proactive. This illustrates the amount of preparation and order she would have put into the activity.

It was a challenge, something new ... ‘cause normally you do what you’re good at, and you normally do what you know. You don’t choose to do what you’re not familiar with

This is the second time that I have become aware of the advanced meta-cognitive abilities of some individuals in this group. Not only does the respondent acknowledge that one would not normally choose to do something unfamiliar, but she recognises the benefit of so doing. The comment suggests a realisation that not trying new things leads to stagnation and a failure to improve or develop.

It would have been really good if everyone had an individual role. I understand why you did it, but wouldn't it be better to do something you're good at so everyone can get into different roles

This respondent has started to look behind the activity at the planning and has begun to analyse the ramifications of the teaching techniques I have used.

let everyone else talk about what they are going to do and do it

This respondent is actually admitting that he ought to have played a more active role and thereby demonstrating the existence of a professionalism that he perhaps did not show during the task, a reflective capacity to evaluate his own actions.

You've got to have quite a lot of compromise

Both the use of the word "compromise" and the notion that one's own ideas sometimes need to be subjugated, suggests professionalism.

Compassion and concern

Goldstein (1999) refers to "respect and care for the learner" (page 10) as being one of three key elements applicable to informal Jewish education.

refers to herself as "Office Contact" so as not to appear in an elevated position above the leaders

This choice of title demonstrates concern for the leadership and an anxiety not to overshadow or undermine them.

That wouldn't have been very fair

This is another clear example of how the participants regard each other's needs as an important consideration.

they seem to be deriving support from one another

Here is another demonstration of the compassion and support that these youngsters seem to have for each other.

Use of Esoteric Language

mensch

The use of Hebrew words freely interposed into our speech identifies us as sharing common ground and, by extension, excludes those who do not speak that language or possess that vocabulary. I believe that the same is true of any professional or corporate jargon.

KATYMBA

This use of a Hebrew acronym is an example of a cultural reference that places me in a position of knowledge with the children. It is not a widely used acronym, just one that is used specifically in a youth movement setting. Thus, this esotericism places me in a good position whereby the children start to recognise that I am “one of them”. I later wondered whether it had been used deliberately to try and demonstrate knowledge that they thought I did not have.

... rather than just in this peulah [training session],

The use of Hebrew here signifies that both she and I (and, indeed, the rest of the group) have a tacit understanding of just how much she has developed and how far she has to go.

Development of confidence

but also seems to be deriving confidence from the fact that he has the attention of everyone

This is the first time I notice the advent of confidence after the activity. I observe the development of confidence in this boy with a degree of vindication. This is what I had hoped to witness but I honestly did not expect it to be so overtly recognisable.

I know that it was my first choice but I felt a little more confident doing it than previously

If it was really my first time... ...I would have found it more difficult. But if I did it now for real I would be able to do it.

Yeah though it rather like eases the idea of being a [youth leader]

Being part of a team has clearly been a positive experience for these youngsters. So much so that they feel more confident about approaching youth leadership in a real situation.

so I was like given a little like boost of confidence

This is interesting, the respondent talks of confidence and his delivery certainly portrayed an increased level of confidence as he went on. However, the insertion of “like” at such frequency might suggest that he is still lacking in total confidence⁸.

He appears to be deferring to his group-mates

This statement may, on first examination, suggest a lack of confidence. However, it is precisely the reliance on teamwork that is demonstrating the advent of confidence.

I just think, like ...it makes quite a difference about the people you're with...

This statement demonstrates recognition that the others in the group have had an impact on the final product and the speaker, therefore feels more secure when working in the right group than he would when working alone.

he is also tacitly recognising that the fact that he had the support of a group to perform his task made the task that much easier to fulfil

I realised that when you are with a group and someone else can trigger off ideas in your mind and you can bounce ideas off each other

This recognition of the part played by a team goes further than acknowledging that individuals each play a part. This individual actually recognises that the team actually improved her own performance.

I can't draw but because I wasn't on my own, I didn't actually have to.

⁸ It might be suggested that such prosodic insertions are simply a cultural norm. However, frequent incorporations such as “like” and “you know” can interrupt the flow of speech just enough to allow the speaker to gather their confidence or find the appropriate turn of phrase in order allow them to continue.

you can like bounce ideas off each other and you would generally come with more than you would just come up with yourself.

Because we were like in a team, it like makes it easier to get things done.

I was just going to say that as the presenter, I sort of depended on people in my group giving me eye contact

All of the above four comments illustrate that the participants have recognised that the support they have derived from the group is invaluable in the development of confidence.

Multiple Personae

Peshkin (2000) states that, “a researcher's self, or identity in a situation, intertwines with his or her understanding of the object of the investigation” (page 5). As such I was keen to investigate my alternative “selves” in order to make sense of both my impact on the data I was collecting and also my ability to interpret the data. It has to be borne in mind that these personae do not manifest themselves in isolation. There is a constant tension of several personae “surfacing”. In fact, it would probably be erroneous to say that they were not all there all of the time. What is being referred to here is simply the self awareness of roles being played within an appropriate context.

Old Woman

In the first paragraph, I arrive and am immediately confronted with what I perceive to be “youthful exuberance”. I do not state it yet but it is clear to me, from subsequent readings, that I am already feeling the “old woman”. I am not yet in researcher mode and am simply having a gut response to the situation based on their loud music. It is not until much later that I am able to access the researcher in me to evaluate the part I am playing in this scene.

I later observe the scene with “*middle-aged eyes*”. The relative gap in ages between the participants and their leaders and myself and the leaders firmly places me as the old woman in this scenario. Identifying this persona has come about because I have recognised the relative closeness in age between the leaders and participants. This

brings home to me the fact that they share a youth culture and will have implicit understandings that I can not be party to.

Proud Mum

I introduce myself, not as “Director of Northern Development” but as Kim’s mum.

Only once do I allow “Kim’s mum” to surface. This is a calculated decision and one that is made to deliberately give myself an entrée into a working relationship with the group. I am aware that I only have an hour-and-a half to make an impact and to ensure that I derive some useful data from the session. Thus it is actually the researcher that has promoted the exposure of this persona. It is the imperative of creating a working relationship with the group in a short space of time.

Ex-Leader/ex-participant

At one point I state that “I am transforming from ex-leader to researcher once more”. It is the fact that I am in a situation that I have not experienced since being a leader myself that creates this switch. I am familiar with the situation but am made aware that I am not part of it as I am in the position of observer. This switch leads to my ability to see the situation more “objectively” where I had started by subjectively doing so. However, it is my familiarity with the scene throughout the proceedings, the very fact that I have been a leader and a participant at such events, which allows me to make sense of it and to utilise the data that arise from it.

I realise that I have found another “self”.

No sooner do I find the old woman than I am cast back to my own experiences as a leader. I remind myself that I was once playing the part now being played by the leaders. It is the first time that I recognise that I have switched personae in my evaluation of the situation and that this switch is an important gateway to my being able to view the scene and to extrapolate data from my observations. Indeed, it is at this point that I discover the researcher. I do not recognise it but this ability to appraise the identities that I have already identified, means that I am beginning to be the researcher.

*I am witnessing the me that was once a participant at such camps.....
reminded of similar conversations 25 years ago*

Although I am a complete outsider in that I have never been a part of this organisation and do not know any of the participants, there is a familiarity with the proceedings that gives me a contextual reference that is almost as though I were “embedded”. I believe that this knowledge gives me an advantage because although none of the subjects are familiar with me, I am familiar with some of their activities.

may well change them forever – as it did me

I project the possible transition that the participants may undergo, based on my own experiences. Although this is the ex-participant using the benefit of hindsight, it is this very issue which I am expressly here to research so this observation is one of vindication rather than assertion. I am also using my professional judgement here because it is only through my experience as a teacher that I can make a professional judgement about the quality of their current experience.

It soon becomes clear to me that we are in the midst of a simulation.

I have used my “insider knowledge” to recognise the nature of the activity although this knowledge actually brings out the researcher in me. The knowledge I have allows me to make sense of the situation and to use it to make informed observations.

I remember it well from my own time as a leader but I have never stopped to analyse it before

I am aware, even as I watch the proceedings, that I am seeing the context in a completely different light than if I had simply gone to visit the camp as an ex-leader.

Researcher

Stake (1995) advocates beginning to interpret whilst observing and writing as opposed to waiting to sift through data. This multilayered approach allows initial impressions to form part of the picture of the case which will ultimately emerge. However, he cautions the reader to bear in mind that such interpretations are the author’s views.

There is a danger that a researcher who spends a long time in the field may “go native”. This would result in any initial reactivity being reduced (Robson, 2002).

However, I am in the unique position of being intensely familiar with the context without my respondents being familiar or comfortable with me. Thus I am capable of being the “outsider” researcher because this particular scenario is new to me (I do not know the individuals, have never been to this site, am not familiar with the political nuances of the relationships and only know a couple of the leaders). This outsider status allows me to collect data without concern for the implications for my own relationships, or of the experience impacting on my working environment within the organisation.

Nevertheless, my intense familiarity with the framework (I work in the parent organisation and am very familiar with the organisation, its ideology and what it stands for; I went through a similar system myself; I have children in the same situation as these kids) allows me an instant entrée into the scene, an emic approach. According to Coghlan (2003), “insider research is valuable because it draws on the experience of practitioners [...] and so makes a distinctive contribution to the development of knowledge about organizations” (page 452).

Coghlan (2003) cautions that insider researchers “need to learn how to look at the familiar from a fresh perspective and become open to discovering what they do not see and how their perspective is grounded in their functional role or occupational sub-culture. They need to develop relationships with people who they did not associate with previously, change the nature of pre-existing relationships with them, and become involved with the setting more broadly than they have hitherto in their functional role” (page 456). Little of this applies to me as I am not involved in the internal politics, management or running of this youth movement. I only understand it from the point of view of its ethos, ideology and general principles.

discovering the plurality of selves

This meta-cognition would seem to suggest that the researcher in me is beginning to emerge, despite any reservations that I might have had at the start of the session. I have run sessions like the one I have come here to run innumerable times before; and have been to such residential events many times before but never before have I been in the position of having to analyse them and procure data from them. Thus the

recognition of certain aspects of research so early indicates that I am here in the role of researcher.

it becomes clear why they were unperturbed by my presence

Here I am using my analytical skills to distance myself from the situation in which I find myself and identify the facet of me that the kids can subconsciously detect.

I am the researcher, the ostensibly unbiased outsider who is here to take account

As I recall, this moment is the first time in situ that I recognise that I can be the researcher *per se* and not just in the context of my planned session. It is due to this late realisation that there is nothing in the way of quoted/transcribed data before my timetabled session. However, it is the advent of this thought that allows me to use the observations that I have already made and is, in effect, the pivotal point at which I begin to perform more in the role of a researcher. My choice of the word “ostensibly” adds to my researcher credibility. As a researcher, I am aware of the in-built weaknesses to doing fieldwork. I have acknowledged that a researcher can never be entirely unbiased and am taking it into consideration.

I am pleased that the impartial researcher takes precedence

It is my concern, at this juncture, to procure relatively “uncontaminated” evidence so it is important to watch the scene without asking questions that will diverge from the intended discussions.

I seize this opportunity to ask the girl ...

I am aware, as I hold back, that the girl in question is harbouring interesting views that may display an insight into some of the issues on which I am focussing. This opportunity to speak to the group is invaluable in procuring that information

*I am acutely aware of the dichotomy of my need to procure
“uncontaminated” data against my role as an educator*

The mere fact that I am having these reservations, suggests that the researcher is at the forefront. Although I am here, from the leaders' point of view, to teach a theory of youth leadership, from my own point of view, I am viewing the scene through a filter. The researcher is aware of my sense of guilt and places the teacher in situ as a façade. This meta-cognition points to my emergence as a researcher.

I believe that there are two possible explanations ...

Even as I am eliciting the information from the participants, I am making observations as a researcher. In this instance, I am trying to ascertain what it is that has led them to this educational point. I need to understand if it is their prior knowledge, the development of their ease with me or extrapolation from all the previous lists.

The researcher surfaces above the educator

By being able to recognise the relationship and its repercussions in terms of the delivery, I am acknowledging a research perspective that is always under threat or at least influenced by my intra-personal perception, whilst continuing to play the teacher role.

I found it invaluable to compare my transcribed account with my own observations

Through every stage of the activity, from planning right through to evaluating, I have taken account of having to gather data for my research.

I am actually not sure if this is the teacher or the researcher making this note. Am I concerned that I didn't put the information over effectively? Or am I worried that my data may be skewed by my lack of clarity?

I declare uncertainty as to which persona is surfacing but closer reading would suggest that both are present. The teacher clearly wants to make this a beneficial learning experience. However, the mere fact that the question arises at all, indicates the presence of the researcher.

Teacher

As a teacher, I would have no problems with this behaviour

Here I distance myself from the exaggerated professionalism (theme discussed later) displayed by the leaders and express a recognition that a teacher has different professional boundaries to those of the leaders.

I stress that I agree with her

The reason that I stress my agreement is that I do not want to make her feel ill at ease or uncomfortable in talking to me. By agreeing with her, I am playing the teacher in encouraging her participation. I know that she has been vocal in the previous discussions but I fear that she may not have equal confidence when talking to me, a stranger.

In order to put them at their ease and to contextualise my session, I start by reviewing what they have already learnt

I realise that the youth leader I once was would simply have launched into the planned activity, perhaps with an introduction or “trigger”. However the teacher in me feels that to get them immersed as quickly as possible, I have to make my session relevant and valid and build on what they already know in what I intend to be a constructivist manner.

It is only when listening back to the tape that I realise just how didactic this has been

I am clearly playing the teacher here. Not only at the time but also when reading back. My delivery at the time must have seemed to me much more in the style of what I would have done in the classroom. However, still as a teacher, I am concerned about the learning experience and pick up on the weakness of my delivery.

So it remains for me to speculate as to whether this part of the session was any use at all

Only as a teacher can I analyse the educational effect I’ve had.

This is where I play teacher a little bit

This statement is made to assuage the element of discomfort at having to play the formal teacher role instead of the informal educator. My use of the word “play” is interesting. It seems, on second reading, to suggest that the role is not genuine. I am only playing at it. It is as if I am trying to distance myself from the concept of the classroom, a curriculum and results targets.

As a teacher in a classroom, I might have invested some extra time to get the pupils to repeat back to me what the task actually involves. However, I have been lulled into a false sense of security by their apparent maturity

I had not consciously adapted my approach, but I read the transcript as a teacher and became aware of the discrepancy in approach between what I did and I what I would have done in a formal setting.

My thinking is that the necessity to write down their thoughts may just help them to verbalise them and reinforce them

I have considered the ramifications and learning opportunities inherent in each technique.

My Behaviours

Professional Judgement

There are times during my observations where I make certain assumptions either about the kids, about the leaders or about what is being said. The assumptions I make about the people I am dealing with might be considered to be professionally intuited. However, I believe it goes deeper than that. It is the point at which I combine several personae that I gain this insight. For instance, the teacher in me has given me the experience to recognise certain behaviour patterns; the ex-movement member can recognise the style of a Jewish youth movement kid and Kim’s mum can recognise the types of friends that she would bring home. Thus it has been necessary to develop and acknowledge all of these personae in order to make what appears to be professional judgements since grounded theorists “focus on making implicit belief systems explicit” (Borgatti, online)

they are confident, self-assured, socially adept, highly motivated and focussed on delivering a professional product

This comment is made almost entirely by simply watching them interact with each other and the work that they are doing. I note the instructions that the head cook is giving his subordinates, their willingness to comply; their discussions about the camp, its contents and educational delivery and their interaction with me – more than twice their age and a senior director of their parent organisation.

Experience has taught me that this is the case

My experience of both formal and informal education; and residential and non-residential in both contexts leads me to believe that the close proximity of sleeping in dorms and participating in the same activities, coupled with the shared experiences and adversities, cements their relationships and constantly reinforces the educational content of the programme.

They come across as a caring and compassionate group of individuals who have a genuine concern for one another

This is a professional judgement derived from my observations of them expressing interest in each other's accounts as well as demonstrating the appropriate body language and facial expressions in response to each other's stories. I eavesdrop on conversations in which individuals allow each other to speak; they show respect for each other's opinions, do not interrupt each other and allow conversation to build logically from one point to another.

I watch the concerned reaction as one boy receives a blow to the head from the ball.

I am somewhat surprised at the reaction to the boy being hit with the ball. Somehow, I had expected play to continue, or worse, for there to be an element of mocking at the incident. However, I was reassured to observe concerned questioning from the boys as well as the girls as to the boy's welfare.

As with so many of the activitiesmuch of the educational content is imparted in this way. They are familiar with the approach.

I know this method is a key component of the educational armamentarium of the leaders. Watching the participants at ease in this situation suggests a familiarity with this example of informal education.

Like all the youth movements of which I have experience, leadership by example is a central theme

This comment is made on the basis of many themes. I speak as an ex-leader when I remember some of the leadership training material but I am also aware the Hebrew term for “personal example” is central to such training. I have both delivered and received training that includes this precept many times. I have since witnessed the value of leadership by example being introduced in conversations in a variety of forums. However, it is the bringing together of these personae and experiences that allow me to make such a generalised statement.

From my experience as both a supply teacher and a permanent teacher in a variety of schools, I would agree

Not that I would be so arrogant as to proclaim that something that she and I agree on is a universal truism. It is just that what she says to me, strikes a chord.

they seem to be deriving support from one another

I have watched how they look at each other before presenting each new idea. This action, and their body language, suggests the compassion that I perceive.

They are eager to learn – not only what is being taught to them – but also how it is being taught

I have surmised, from my experience of working with children, that their complicity and co-operation are signs of eagerness to learn. These are skills that they will be employing in their future roles as youth leaders.

Self-criticism

I reluctantly realise that these failings are the teacher in me.

First I portray the professionalism of a teacher – seeking to improve my craft. Then I denigrate the teacher in me who has to keep to a syllabus.

The only answer I have received is one short sentence and I have retorted with several lines of my own

When reading the transcript, I was made more aware of my teaching, although I was already aware at the time that I had not allowed the participants to have ample input. Clearly, part of this self-criticism is the fact that I am playing the researcher and am trying to analyse all of the interactions. However, it is also an example of the meta-cognition that I believe is a positive attribute to have as a teacher and leads to constant professional development and improvement.

I have consistently failed to elicit from them whether the majority have understood the nature of the task

This response is borne of my desire to actually teach them something and for this session to actually make that difference that all teachers seek in their charges.

In retrospect, I regret not having returned to the other lists and prodded them for some more answers that may have helped them in understanding their tasks

I am proverbially kicking myself for my professional ineptitude as a teacher.

I am disappointed with myself here. I am playing the “what’s on the teacher’s mind” game.

All of these comments reflect a teacher who has evaluated her performance in an effort both to get the best from herself and also to ensure that the pupils are deriving the most from her delivery. Cohen et al. (2000) refer to the centrality of self reflection for the researcher who is “part of the social world that they are studying” (page 239). This reflexivity is the essence of action research (Westbrook 1994).

Anti-teacher

I am made aware of the various comments I have made that may sound anti-teacher. This is not because I have a lack of respect for the profession or the talents and skills it has left me with. It is just that when I was a youth leader, I had a professionalism that was never formally taught. Once I entered the profession, I started to appreciate the pedagogical precepts behind what I “knew”. I am now returning to the youth movement setting with the benefit of that pedagogy and am anxious not to somehow cloud the innocence of that informal educational medium. During my teaching career, I frequently reflected on the possibility that, as a young youth leader without qualifications, I was a very effective educator. Thus, in the formality of the classroom, I have always tried to teach utilising my informal training. For instance, I used drama for molecular structure, asked younger pupils to create cartoon characters to exemplify rock types or used simulation games for sixth form classes. As a mature entrant to the profession, I watched myself pick up the requisite formal skills of a classroom teacher, always with the perception that my greatest educative influences were achieved using informal means. As I read through my analyses and reactions to this session, I am picking up on that reticence to acknowledge any didactic approach to my craft.

For instance, at one point, I have a discussion about communication whereby I am keen to reveal to the group how to best communicate with their charges: *“you have to literally get down on their level. Otherwise you come across as being superior”*. However, prior to this comment I remark that teachers do not tend to do this by saying,

“If you go to the doctor or the dentist or any professional – teachers aside because they like to be above you – but, they will try and put you on a level with themselves to put you at your ease, unless they are trying to impose their will on you.

The implication here is that teachers are keen to demonstrate power over their pupils. I think that in the context of the classroom, such management of the group is probably a necessity. However, juxtaposed against the other professionals that I mention and the advice that I am giving, my comment about this behaviour comes across as a pejorative one.

I never was the “chalk and talk” type of teacher

This, apparently pejorative, statement about a didactic style of teaching is designed to qualify my intentions.

Re-examination of the term “educator”

Not the educator who used to ignite young minds, but the imparter of knowledge who has a syllabus to get through in a limited time period.

Both as a student and as a teacher, I have been acutely aware that teaching does not always correspond to learning. I therefore prefer to differentiate between when I am teaching (getting through a syllabus or imparting knowledge) and when I am educating. The latter concept implies that what I have taught has actually translated to what has been learnt.

In the next chapter, I attempt to turn my emerged themes into a theory.

5. ET: Emerging Theory

Methodology and Tools

Grounded Theory

In Strauss's (1987) methodology of "Grounded Theory" there is the suggestion that data is not only the capture of raw data from the field but also the development of "successively evolving interpretations made during the course of the study" (page 10). Glaser (1978) considers Grounded Theory to be a perspective which includes both data and theory. Thus the above has evolved as a series of writing and rewriting to arrive at a point whereby the data have arisen not only from my observations and analysis of the transcripts and field-notes, but also from my examination and re-examination of the analysis to create a "concept-indicator" (Strauss 1987, page 25) model of data analysis. This allows observations and analyses to be compared and contrasted. Glesne and Peshkin (1998) declare that "qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the ways in which they intersect" (page 1). Thus the interpretation of this transcript has undergone many revisions, layering analysis upon analysis to arrive at this meta-analysis. Memos, according to Glaser (1978), "generate new memos... .. sorting and writing do also... .. the memo stage ... [is] never over".

Despite being in favour of quantitative methods, reading *Time for Dying*, one of Glaser and Strauss's (1968) seminal volumes, convinced me that the qualitative route was the one to take given my research topic. Sinclair and Milner (2005) compare qualitative research to use of a microscope as it reveals previously unseen detail. I would add to the analogy that one is able to gain further insight by focussing on different planes of depth or to move from one field of vision to another.

As my research progressed, I became increasingly convinced that it was only by examining the micro-engagements of my subjects, their meta-cognition and self-awareness, that I was able to scrutinize their differential identities. Qualitative methods lent themselves readily to this concept.

Books on the subject of methodology in the area of educational research (e.g. Glesne and Peshkin, 1998; Cohen, Manion et al, 2000; Silverman, 2000; Wellington, 2000; Flick, 2002; Cresswell, 2003; Freebody, 2003) gave me some pointers about qualitative research methodology. I then embarked on a foray into the works of

Glaser and Strauss subsequent to their collaborative works (Glaser, 1978; Strauss, 1987; Glaser, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

It became clear that something of a battle had been raging between Glaser and Strauss and that there was no “correct path” (refer to quotation below) to follow. For instance Glaser begins his book, *Emergence vs. Forcing* by stating,

“I, Barney G. Glaser, have come to the conclusion that it is up to me to write a cogent, clear correction to the many wrong ideas in *Basics of Qualitative Research* by Anselm L. Strauss and Juliet Corbin, 1990, Sage Publications. The many wrong ideas in *Basics of Qualitative Research* are too subtle for the average reader and user of grounded theory to follow, to compare to previous work and to critique. These readers should be set back on the correct path to discovery and theory generation using grounded theory”. (Glaser 1992)

His use of the terms “wrong ideas” and “correct path” are positivistic statements which are troublesome for the student of Grounded Theory. Even the use of “forcing” in the title (*Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence vs. Forcing*) is a hugely emotive term which sets the scene for his assault on Strauss’s work. Where Strauss is fixated on the rigidity of “canons of good science” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, page 266), his prescriptive recommendations make coding instructions easier to follow. Glaser is much more flexible. He recommends that his adherents “simply code and analyze categories and properties with theoretical codes which will emerge and generate their complex theory of a complex world” (Glaser, 1992, page 71).

Consequently, the approach used to analyse the previous chapter is based on the Grounded Theory techniques primarily from Glaser who describes Grounded Theory as

“a general methodology of analysis linked with data collection that uses a systematically applied set of methods to generate an inductive theory about a substantive area” (Glaser, 1992, page 16).

It is this inductive attitude of Glaser which I pursued in allowing a theory to “emerge” from the data. Figure 5.1 illustrates the process I undertook (on the right) juxtaposed against the recommendations of Strauss and Corbin (1998) (on the left).

Focus Groups

Some researchers (e.g. Dunne and Quayle, 2001 quoted in Brocki and Wearden, 2006) argue that data procured from focus group encounters is likely to be no

different from that yielded in one-to-one interviews. However, one must take into account that the number of voices to be heard in a focus group situation cannot compare to the individual attention and interaction afforded to an interviewee. Add to this the group dynamic, and the result is a markedly inferior method of data collection. For instance, some individuals may be intimidated by the group setting; others may seek to dominate the discussion. Bloor et al (2002) point out that “participant over-disclosure may be a problem in focus groups drawn from pre-existing groups” (page 91) although, on the other hand, “pre-existing groups may contain some sub-groups who may be inhibited by others” (page 91). “Although some people may be intimidated by the prospect of a group discussion [...], group methods offer reassurance to others” (Kitzinger and Barbour, 1999, page 9). Wilkinson (2003) regards the notion of participants being inhibited to reveal matters of a personal nature as a misconception, suggesting that “the group context may actually facilitate personal disclosures” (page 185).

Sim (1998) refers to this as a “safe forum” (page 346) in that participants are not compelled to contribute if they feel discomfort in doing so. In any event, to equate a focus group to the interview would require as many individual interview sessions as there are members of the focus group, to allow each member’s story to be told. Focus groups generated 60-70% of data when compared to interviews (Morgan, 1996).

Kidd and Parshall (2000) found focus groups to be confrontational and that “agreements or disagreements are fundamental processes that influence the nature and content of responses as the group progresses” (page 294). Similarly, Kreuger (1994) states that the focus group is a “socially oriented research procedure” (page 34) by which he means that there is interaction amongst the group and that individuals are influenced by the discussion. Similarly, Duggleby (2005) found repeated evidence of “supportive helping interactions” (page 833).

A deficiency of the medium, according to Kidd and Parshall (2000) is that participants may modify their answers according to the perceived consensus of the group. Additionally, they state that a researcher may take individual viewpoints to be representative of the group.

It is debatable whether my group work can, in fact, be defined as a focus group. Morgan (1996) cautions that “focus groups should be distinguished from groups whose primary purpose is something other than research” (page 130). My primary purpose was education.

Instruments and Data Collection

Not having direct regular access to subjects of a valid group size or age, my research was contingent on being done in the context of my work, as and when the opportunity arose. Accordingly, sessions where data capture was to take place had to be designed to fulfil the dual purposes of my professional brief with capture of data for research as my secondary purpose. My brief, on this occasion, was to deliver a session on skill acquisition to sixth formers on a youth leadership camp. The lesson plan design needed to incorporate opportunities both for learning and for data capture. My priority had to be the teaching of the group so data capture had to be faultless and assured so that I could concentrate on delivery of the lesson. I therefore determined to gather data by triangulating my observations with digital voice recording of the proceedings and the participants’ own written responses to my specific questions. My lesson plan (appendix 3), therefore, included opportunities for the participants to write down their reactions as well as opportunities to air their views. Thus providing me with a written and a spoken record.

Before activating the recording device, permission was sought from the group with the assurance that all contributions would remain anonymous and that all names would be changed. Similarly, for written responses, participants were told that it would not be necessary to give their names. However, it was important, where two or more pieces of paper were used per individual, that those that were written by the same person be identified and grouped together. Consequently, participants were asked to use a symbol on each sheet rather than their names or initials.

Writing and Coding

1. Write an account

As soon as I had carried out the lesson, I wrote down what had happened along with my observations. It is a simple account of the sequence of events, (including the transcribed recording) and my responses to them. This served as the matrix from which data were ultimately to emerge. Glaser suggests that “all data of whatever type is grist for the mill of constant comparison to develop categories and their properties” (Glaser, 1992, page 24). Thus, my subsequent responses to my initial account were also included as data.

2. Tabulate written data

I then added a table containing the written responses of the participants. They had written down their feelings both before and after the exercise. The table contained three columns; one for their responses before carrying out the task, one for after and one for my memos and notes. Along with my written account, both the comments and my memos on this table became raw data from which themes were explicated.

3. Transcribe recording

Lastly, I added the transcript of the recording. I now had a fuller picture of raw data – my observations, the children’s written responses and a transcript of our discussion.

4. Analyse and critique

After writing my account and adding my initial thoughts, I left the project for a fortnight and returned to it able to take a fresh approach. According to Glaser (1998), “one must discover their own pacing recipe for their research” (page 50). My “pacing recipe” is to distance myself from my writing to allow it to fade a little from the memory so that I can read it almost as an outsider, giving me perceptions unobtainable when it is too familiar.

I read through the account and critiqued it, analysing my response to every contribution and nuance and recalling (and recording) my feelings at the time of carrying out the session and adding new responses where they occurred. I made observations and wrote memos both in response to my own written account and to the spoken and written words of my subjects. I did this several times, on each occasion adding fresh comments and critiques.

5. Code

Using this account along with its accompanying analysis (which now formed a contiguous piece), I studied it for recurring themes. A series of colour coded highlights were used to identify the different categories of theme and memos were added to the text to elucidate some meaning. This is open coding, “the analytical process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, page 101). Glaser refers to this stage as "raising the description to a theoretical level through conceptual rendering of the material" (Glaser, 1978, page 84). Coding is a fluid process (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) comprised of a series of activities carried out concurrently.

Whilst acknowledging the “overview approach” (Glaser, 1978, page 58) as a *bona fide* technique for generating Grounded Theory, Glaser favours the “line by line” approach. This approach forces verification and saturation and reduces the likelihood of overlooking important elements and results in a comprehensive theory. Strauss and Corbin (1998) concede that, whilst being the most laborious, it is usually the most “generative” technique (page 119). However, they do offer both the overview and the sentence or paragraph approaches as valid alternatives.

I found that the initial identification of categories, determined by reading the entire text paragraph by paragraph, focused my attention on them to invite speculation, analysis and comparison. Postulations could then be made about the relationship of the categories both to the scene in general and to each other specifically.

In some cases memo was added to memo in a multi-layering of meta-analysis. This, too, was done several times to uncover as many themes as possible and to identify them wherever they arose in the text.

6. Conceptualise thematic relationships

Having identified the major themes that emerged from the focus group and the reporting thereof, it is important to recognise that these themes do not actually relate anything of importance until they are contextualised and their relationships are identified. Strauss and Corbin (1998) call this stage axial coding stating that “the purpose of axial coding is to begin the process of reassembling data that were fractured during open coding” (page 124). It is about finding the relationships within categories. “By developing the hypothetical relationships between conceptual codes

... which have been generated from the indicators, we ‘discover’ a grounded theory.”
(Glaser, 1978, page 55)

For instance each of the personae adopted by myself would constitute a subcategory which relates to the core category of “me”. According to Bulmer, (1979),

“Concepts in themselves are not theories. They are categories for the organization of ideas and observations. In order to form an explanatory theory, concepts must be interrelated” (page 6).

Thus it is vital to organise the themes and categories into a system whereby there is an understanding of which issues impact on which others, which emanate from which and what, if any, effect they have upon each other.

7. Create a diagram

An experimental diagram was produced in an attempt to illustrate any potential relationships between themes that I had conceptualised. This took several refinements until I was satisfied that the diagram recognised the relevant themes that I had elucidated and had done so in a fashion that I felt was representative of the causal relationships.

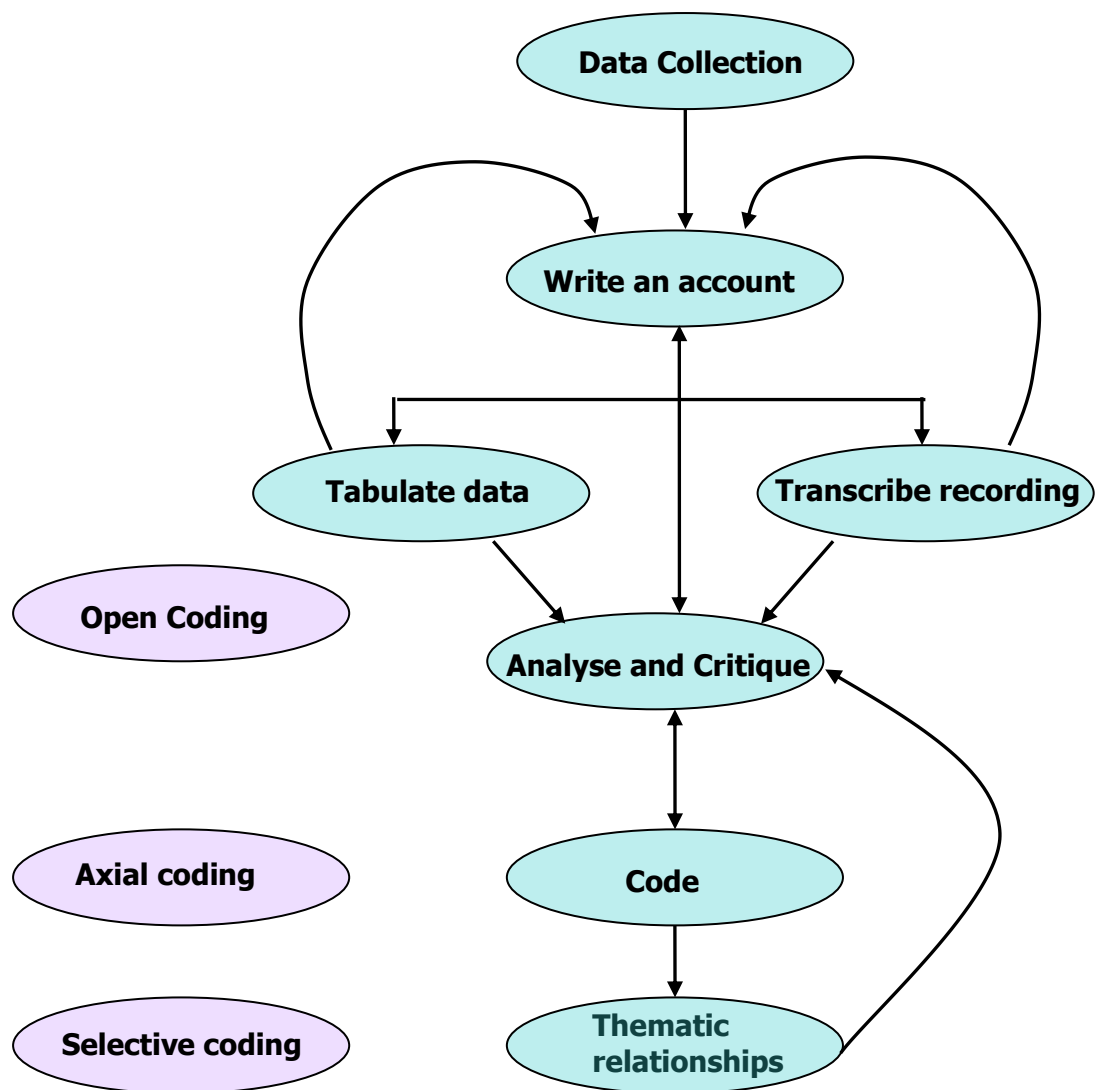
According to Wellington (2000),

“theories are used to explain *why* specific events and patterns of events occur as they do. [...] they are explanations constructed by human beings...” (page 26)

This is referred to as selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) because one has to select the key themes and occasionally discard ones that do not add to the substance of the theory.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the process described above.

Figure 5.1 A diagrammatic representation of the methodological process. The green ellipses refer to the stages I identify whilst the mauve ones refer to the stages as delineated by Strauss and Corbin (1998).



Emerging Theory (ET) Phone Home

Open Coding

I started by identifying three categories of themes during my open coding. First were the characteristics or behaviours that were exhibited. These were attributable to people, thus creating the second category. There were four subcategories comprised of people (players) who played a part in the unfolding scene. In addition I noticed that I had adopted several roles during the course of the proceedings so I scanned the material for the multiplicity of personae adopted by myself throughout the scene and the behaviours that those personae elicited. So the primary or supra-ordinate categories I found were

- (i) players
- (ii) behaviours/characteristics of participants
- (iii) my personae
- (iv) my behaviours

In essence the players actually constitute the main thematic categories whilst the behaviours they exhibit are properties – as are the personae adopted by myself.

Axial Coding

Each of the supra-ordinate categories was comprised of a number of subcategories.

Players

Leaders, Movement Worker, Participants, Myself

- (i) **Participants' behaviours**
 - Care and compassion
 - Exaggerated Professionalism
 - Use of Hebrew
 - Development of confidence
- (ii) **My Personae**
 - Teacher
 - Educator
 - Researcher
 - Ex-movement member
 - Mother
- (iii) **Behaviours adopted by myself**

Professional intuition

Self criticism

Therefore, in reality, the list should be represented thus:

Players			
Leaders	Movement Worker	Participants	Myself
Care and compassion Exaggerated Professionalism			Professional intuition Self criticism
			Teacher Educator Researcher Ex-movement member Mother
Use of Hebrew			

However, whichever way I tried to tabulate these themes or represent them linearly, I was unable to adequately represent the complexity of interlinking and relationships between each of the themes and their subcategories that I perceived.

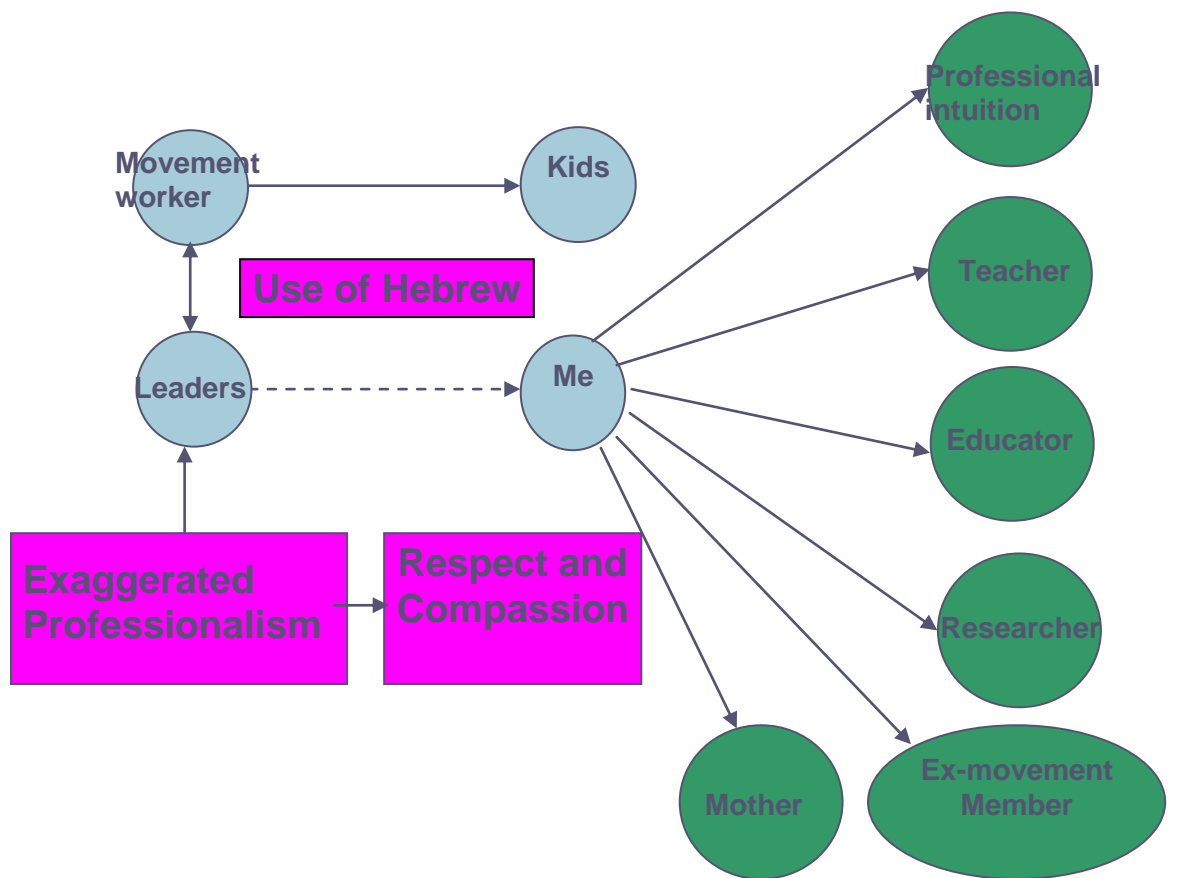
Figure 5.2 demonstrates the relationship I postulated in the first instance. I first placed the players in an order in which I felt that they had an impact or influence on each other and then inserted the behaviours associated with the relevant individuals or groups. Lastly, I inserted the personae associated with myself.

This diagram is my first attempt to represent the emerging themes diagrammatically. The diagram undergoes several incarnations before arriving at one that I felt most closely satisfied the thematic relationships that I perceived.

Much development goes into the consideration of such issues as positions and relationships of themes and directions of arrows.

What follows the diagram is an account of the justification for the position, relationships and arrows depicted therein.

Figure 5.2 A first draft diagrammatic representation of the interconnection of themes and players.



Selective Coding

I had recognised the Exaggerated Professionalism as being a recurring theme during the initial coding process. I wondered if it was something that was shared by everyone or whether it was passed on. By reading and rereading the account, I concluded that the participants would not have started with a sense of professionalism and I had witnessed it in its most extreme form in the leaders. Consequently, I identified the Exaggerated Professionalism as being derived from the leaders and passed on to their charges. I also recognised that the Movement Worker demonstrated this behaviour trait and wondered if she was playing the professional role because of her position vis-à-vis the leaders. I have worked with her on several projects and am seeing her now at her most obviously professional. This could be because she is in the presence of participants or it could be because she is taking her lead from the team who are running this camp. Inevitably, the professional attitude was passed on to the participants, both because it was being taught to them overtly and also because they were picking up the nuances of behaviour expressed by the leaders. It might also be considered that the leaders were displaying professionalism due to me being present. However, having considered it, I have discounted this possibility since much of the evidence – e.g. meticulously planned activities with pre-prepared printed materials, team prepping for the exercise I witnessed, printed answers depicting the “right” way to behave under a variety of circumstances, and the attitudes of the participants themselves (who don’t know me) – was prepared well in advance of my arrival. Most of the leaders did not know I was coming (only that someone was coming to do the session allocated to me) before the event so this would not have influenced their actions.

I placed a dotted rather than a solid line from the leaders to myself because I did not feel that I was gaining a professional attitude from them but did feel the need to convey a unified message to the kids and took my cue from the behaviour of the leaders. I decided that the Respect and Compassion was a direct result of the professionalism and placed it accordingly on the chart.

Central to our understanding of each other was the use of esoteric language. Not only were Hebrew words employed that we all understood, but some acronyms and youth

movement specific Hebrew language as well⁹. This, I felt, was a unifying behaviour that was central to the relationship between us all. So I placed it in the middle.

Bearing in mind that my activity with the participants constituted a small fraction of the analysed account, my time of 75 minutes with the participants is actually negligible in respect of the day and a half of observations that I report. Most of my observations are therefore of participants with their leaders.

Lastly, I placed the personae displayed by myself as traits associated with me. But which way to face the arrows? These are personae that are part of me and have made me and have sculptured the relationship that I have with the other people in this situation. On the other hand, each of these personae emerged as a result of my being in this situation and may not emerge in other situations. Indeed, I may find a different assortment of personae in other situations. Therefore, I placed the arrows emerging from myself, the player, towards the personae, the personalities.

Having constructed this model, I found it to be deficient. The Movement Worker was hardly involved and yet the diagram has given her a central role in passing on Professionalism. The Respect and Compassion did not seem to have a direction. It was there but the diagram failed to take account of its impact on and relationship to the proceedings. I had to interpret from the written account and coding what part this characteristic had played in the overall scheme. I also decided that the use of Hebrew actually underpinned the entire seminar such that an outsider coming in to the scene would not be able to participate fully nor gain a full understanding of what was going on. Additionally, there were a number of behaviours that the participants exhibited that emerged as a direct result of my session. These had to be inserted into the diagram.

Figure 5.3 reflects these changes. I recognised that the Exaggerated Professionalism led to the display of Respect and Compassion but also began to realise that both were having an impact on the behaviour of the leaders. I removed the Movement Worker from her position of centrality but kept her in a position of influence. Thus, the

⁹ **Participants and leaders, as a rule do not speak Hebrew. Leaders may learn it on their gap year in Israel, but rarely fluently. However, it is the mark of the Zionist youth movements that Hebrew terminology is employed for commonly used words. These will include terms denoting location such as dining room; words denoting education such as learning activity; words relating to roles such as leader, participant, cook etc or words related to types of activity such as discussion, play, free time etc. This ethos of using Hebrew is designed to create a connection to Israel and a sense of belonging to the Jewish People.**

Figure 5.3 Diagram altered to reflect position of movement worker, non-centrality of Hebrew, and direction of the arrow from Exaggerated Professionalism to Respect and compassion. Behaviours exhibited by the participants are also included.

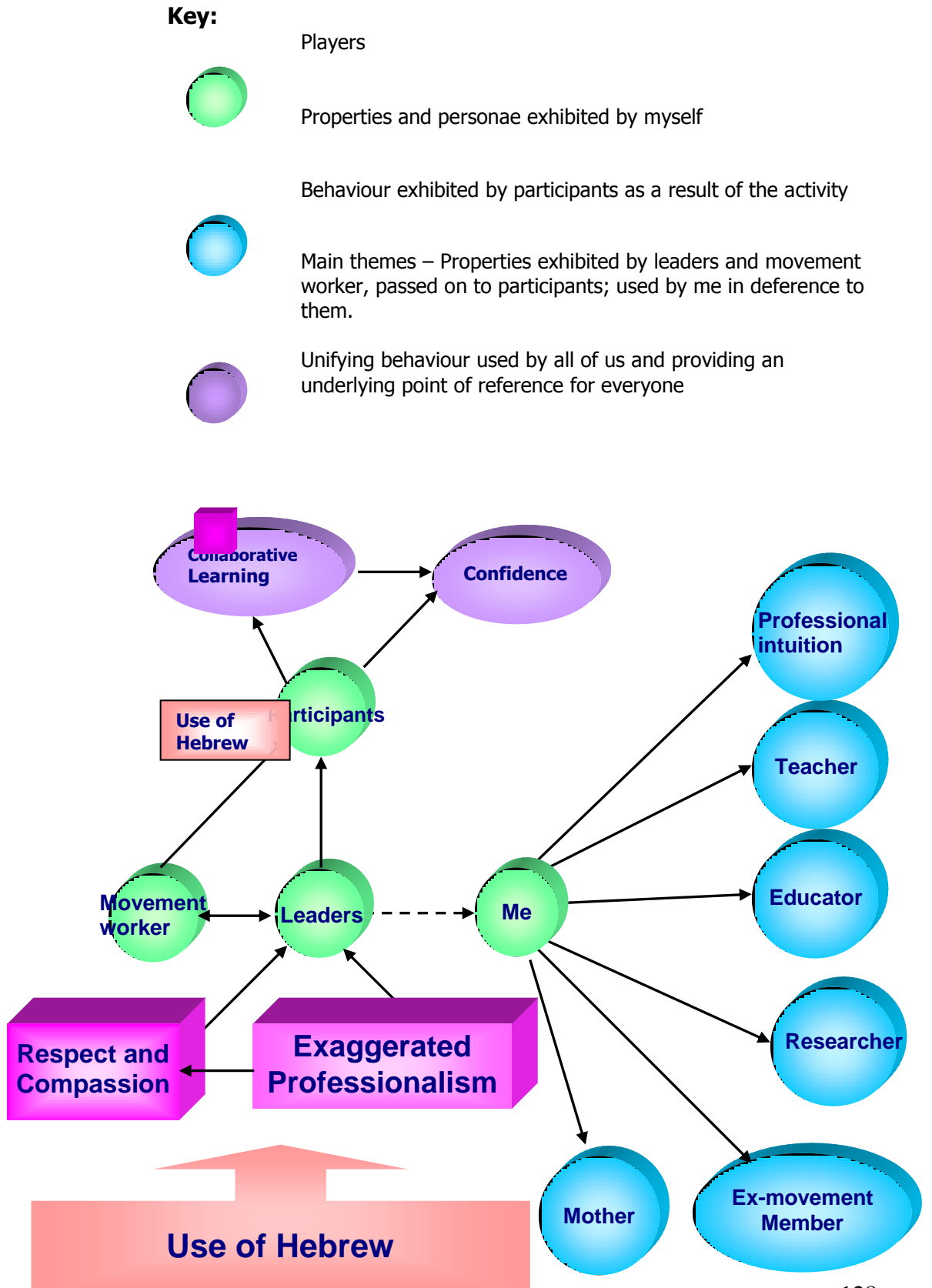


diagram reflects her influence in demonstrating a professionalism but also allows a direct influence from the leaders themselves.

In figure 5.3 I reflected on the Use of Hebrew and placed it as a buttress holding up the rest of the proceedings. It does not connect directly to anything but is there stabilising the entire session. Without it, communicating with each other would have been hampered; with it, we were able not only to understand each other with regard to the esoteric issues surrounding Jewish Youth Leadership, but were also able to signal to each other a certain unity.

I also added the traits adopted by the participants. They had demonstrated and talked about learning from each other collaboratively in what I identified as a Collaborative style of learning. They also identified the advent of confidence. I determined that the confidence had arisen as a direct result of working together and sharing ideas and strengths. But it also arose from simply performing the respective tasks and having the experience of having performed them once. The arrows reflect this relationship.

As the diagram emerged, Figure 5.3 started to feel that it was beginning to represent the codified data that I had acquired until I realised that I had omitted the teamwork issue. This, after all, was overtly central to the advent of confidence. It is what the participants had referred to several times in their discussion. Many of the participants had mentioned it and I had certainly observed it. I placed the Teamwork before Collaborative learning and removed the arrow from the participants to the confidence bubble. This would reflect confidence having arisen as a result of working together and learning from each other. It is just possible that confidence could have resulted from having performed the tasks by themselves. But the fact remains that they did do it with others and it is therefore an unsubstantiated postulation to say that confidence arose by simply doing the task.

Next I considered the issue of Hebrew once again. What if it were removed entirely from the scheme? What if I had no command of Hebrew at all? We would still be able to communicate with each other. The kids may have caught me out with their use of esoteric language but would have found another way to communicate their intentions to me in those circumstances. Thus, the use of Hebrew could not be considered to be an issue that underpins the rest of the relationships. It was something that we all shared but I felt was not essential. I therefore returned it to its

central position (figure 5.4). This does not reflect a centrality in the scheme but reflects something that we all shared. The use of a separate colour rather than arrows to illustrate the use of Hebrew is significant in that it was not a characteristic either passed from one individual or group to another nor was it essential to the success, failure or data collection of the session. It was just there. Something in the background that we all shared; something that unified us to a certain extent and something that helped us to deal with the task at hand. However in figure 5.4 it was just hanging without demonstrating a relationship to any other characteristic or person so I placed it (figure 5.5) abutting all the characters.

The diagram was starting to look representative of how I felt the themes integrated and interrelated to each other at this point. The interrelationships seemed to make sense and, an added bonus was that it actually started to look more symmetrical thus demonstrating a balance of the data in the written account.

Only one theme remained outstanding, that of self-criticism by myself. It was not a persona that I exhibited but something that came out of my response to reading the account. I realised that it was the tension between the educator and researcher working in tandem that generated the self-criticism. The researcher had to operate in a certain way, to plan certain activities into the session in order to obtain data. Meanwhile the educator was keen for the participants to derive as much learning as possible from the session while ensuring that the constraints of the timetable were adhered to. These conflicts led to the advent of self-criticism. The educator was not always able to do her best in teaching if she was concentrating on both gathering data and fulfilling the role that the leaders wanted from her. Figure 5.6 has the additional concept of self-criticism added to it, stemming from the interaction between educator and researcher.

I also realised that the Professional Intuition must be a product of the teacher so made that relationship clear on the diagram. It no longer arises from myself but from the persona of teacher which I exhibit.

Figure 5.4 Reflecting return of Hebrew to central position to suggest unifying behaviour and addition of teamwork leading to the Collaborative learning already observed.

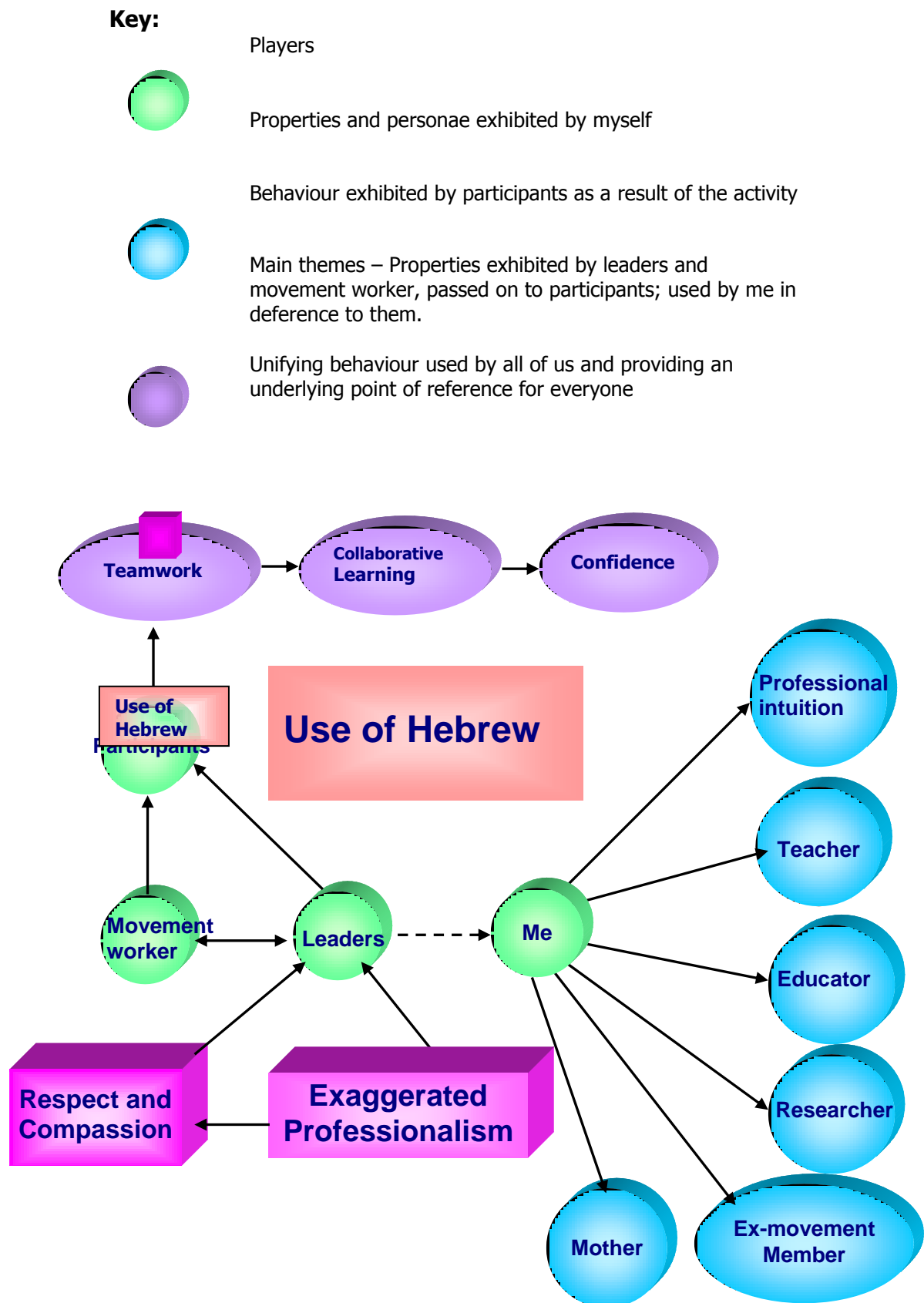







Figure 5.5 Shows return of Hebrew to its background position unifying everybody

Key:

-  Players
-  Properties and personae exhibited by myself
-  Behaviour exhibited by participants as a result of the activity
-  Main themes – Properties exhibited by leaders and movement worker, passed on to participants; used by me in deference to them.
-  Unifying behaviour used by all of us and providing an underlying point of reference for everyone

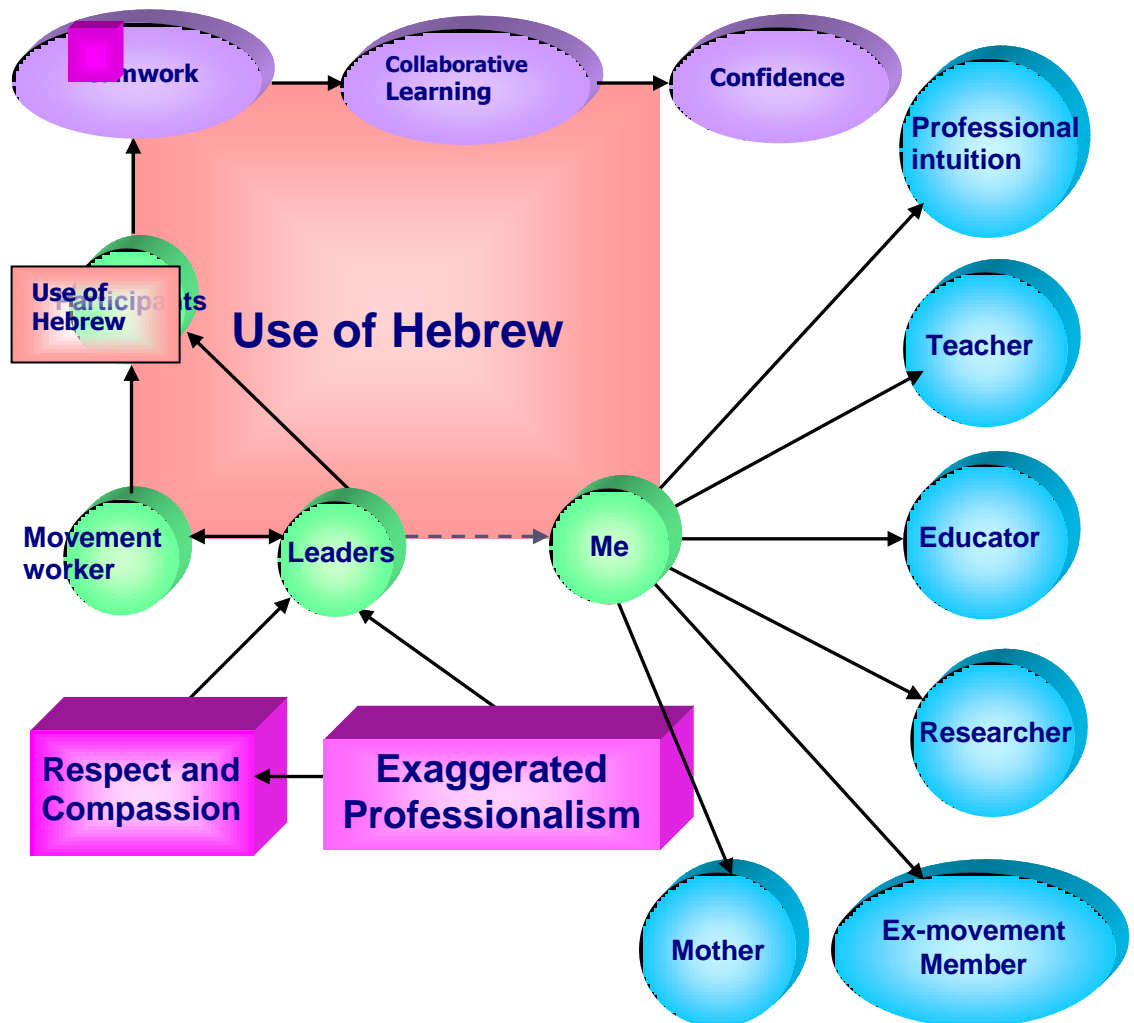


Figure 5.6 Reflects addition of a directional arrow from teacher to professional intuition and adds self criticism arriving from the interaction of Researcher and Educator

Key:



Players

Properties and personae exhibited by myself

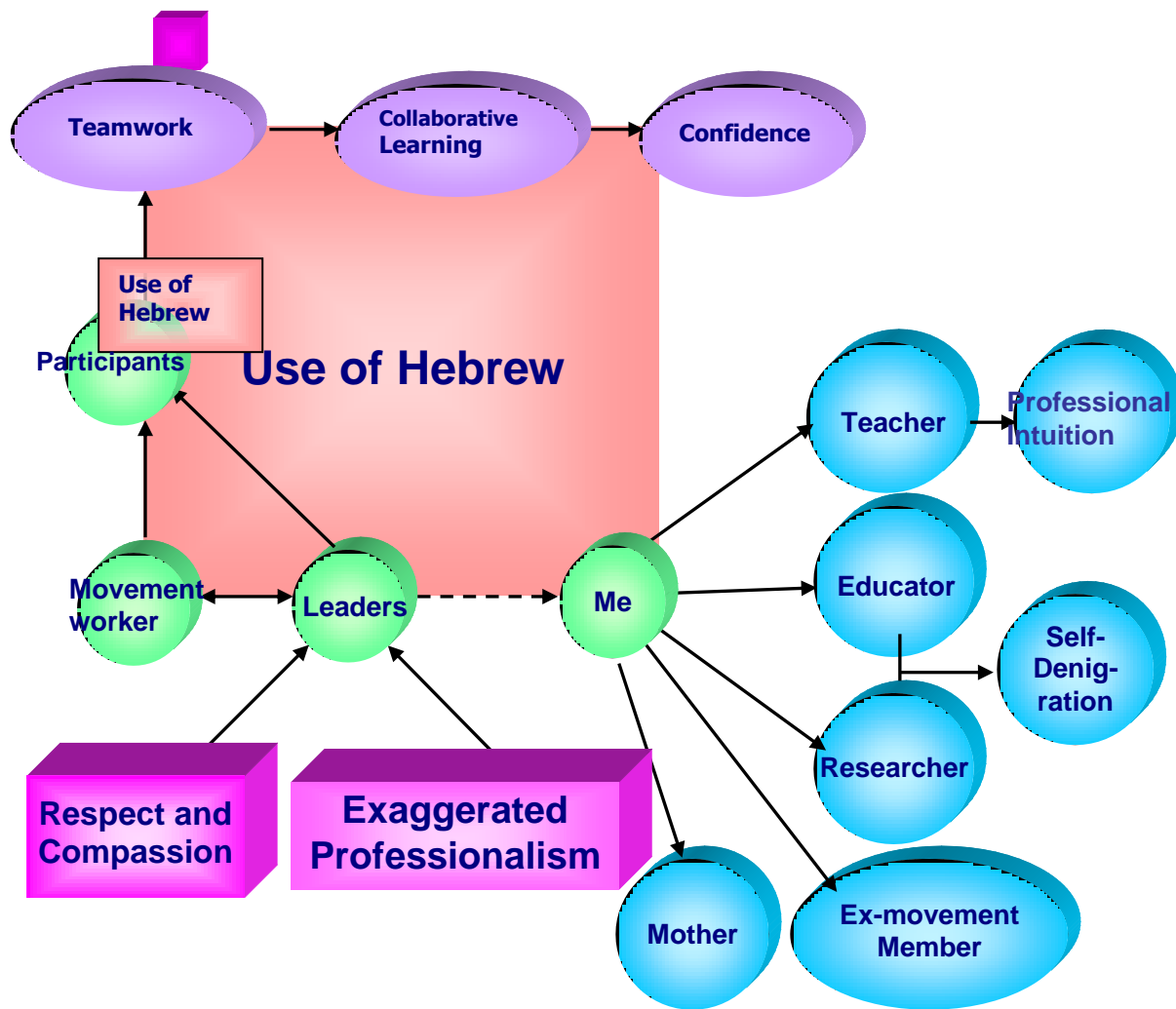


Behaviour exhibited by participants as a result of the activity

Main themes – Properties exhibited by leaders and movement worker, passed on to participants; used by me in deference to them.



Unifying behaviour used by all of us and providing an underlying point of reference for everyone



Conclusion

I am mindful that my research does not present **the** theory but **a** theory as “focus group transcripts have multiple meanings and several different interpretations” (Litoselliti, 2003, page 91). However, it does represent a start to the process, a framework from which to proceed. It can be regarded as a hook upon which to hang further research; a hypothesis whose variables, having been established, may now be explored.

In summary, three main categories of theme were explicated. These were players, personae adopted by myself and characteristics or behaviours. Exaggerated professionalism and respect and compassion were traits that were passed on from the leaders to those with whom they had dealings. As a result of interactions, the participants gained in confidence by exercising teamwork as well as learning from, and relying upon, each other. Whilst carrying out this exercise, I exhibited several personae. Two of these personae were in conflict with each other resulting in new characteristics emerging. The use of Hebrew, as an esoteric, unifying means of communication, provided the backdrop to the entire sequence.

Next

It had originally been my intention at this stage to attempt to repeat the session with another group, either from another youth movement or a subsequent year group. I would then have been able to refine my findings and explore the theories that I had begun to develop. I contacted all of the other youth movements with whom I had some connection to offer to run a session on skill acquisition. Understandably, however, they declined my offer as they felt that they would like to cover their own educational output. Coming from another movement, I might have represented something of an adversary. However, more importantly, the justifiable response that I received was that they would prefer to be in control of what gets taught to their own movement members and there was a concern that my session might not fit in with their own scheme or my not being completely *au fait* with their ideology.

I also asked the subsequent leadership of RSY-Netzer (this is a sabbatical post which changes every year) if I could repeat the session to the following year group. Unfortunately, they had decided to completely revamp the training camp programme

to be more ideological than skills based and they could not find a place for my session on their schedule.

This left me with a half baked theory and no means of corroborating or testing it further. I now had no option but to find a new avenue of research.

I opted to pursue the interview/case study methodology as I was finding increasingly, when talking to youngsters in the movements, that they had so much insight to offer on their youth movement experiences and invariably exhibited considerable understanding of the capacity for their involvement in the movement to change their outlook.

6. Three Case Studies: Methodology

Case Study

A case study is a research strategy aimed at gaining a heuristic understanding of a situation via several means and sources of data gathering (Stark and Torrance, 2005), involving the “development of detailed intensive knowledge about a single ‘case’, or of a number of related ‘cases’” (Robson, 2002; page 89). Eisenhardt (1989) states that case study research is particularly appropriate for new areas of research. She states that: “[the] resultant theory is often novel, testable and empirically valid” (page 532). Case study research relies on neither a particular data collection means nor a particular methodology (Yin, 1981). Assumptions are made in case studies that “things may not be as they seem” (Stark and Torrance, 2005; page 33). In-depth probing is required to elucidate what might be represented by the case. Regardless of the means of data gathering and the variety of sources of data, the commonality to all case studies is that they lead to an in-depth study (Stark and Torrance, 2005). Stark and Torrance (2005) state that case study research is

“an ‘approach’ to research which has been fed by many tributaries [...], stressing social interaction and the social construction of meaning *in situ*” (page 33, original quotation marks and italics).

A case is a bounded system (Stake, 1995). This could be the youth movement, the particular camp that I visited, the cohort of participants or one or more individuals within the movement. However, boundaries between phenomena and contexts in case studies are unclear (Stark and Torrance, 2005; Yin, 1981). Acting as a “snapshot”, illuminating one aspect, one moment in time or one individual (or small group) means that extrapolation remains open to interpretation, both by the researcher and by the reader. “Qualitative enquiry is subjective” (Stake, 1995; page 45). The strategy offers a starting point from which to explore a research area more closely. Generalisability is only possible because of the reader’s ability to recognise the case as an illumination of more general issues (Stark and Torrance, 2005). The aim of case study research should be to gain an understanding of the impact of the case and to engender improved policy-making or decision-making as a result (Stark and Torrance, 2005). Cohen (2000) admits that questions of reliability and objectivity may be raised but goes on to defend case study research by commenting that it makes

no claim at generalisability. All a case study can claim is to have produced data from a specific case (child, group, class, etc.), in a particular setting, located at a particular place and at a particular time.

Eisenhardt (1989) states that case studies may be used to fulfil a variety of aims: (i) provide description; (ii) test theory and (iii) generate theory. I had visited this leadership camp with the initial aim of running a session to start to test my previously held theory that involvement in Jewish youth movements enhances the development of confidence. However, I ended up providing a description, shedding light on some of the complexities and interplay in an exemplar Jewish youth movement residential activity. I had started to observe the context of my session with a researcher's eyes. It was not until later that my research journey took me down the route of generating theory. Details of experimental design emerge during data collection and analysis (Robson, 2002).

This visit to the camp sheds light on the bounded system of the youth movement camp. Later interviews describe the respective bounded systems of the experiences of individuals.

According to Stake (1994), case studies can be divided into three types (Intrinsic, Instrumental or Collective). The following case studies fall into the "Instrumental" category. This means that they were "used to provide insight into a particular issue or clarify a hypothesis" (page 92). This is distinct from the Intrinsic case study used to gain a deeper insight of an interesting case or the Collective case study which examines a group of similar cases.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

I decided to move on to interviewing individuals because I realised that the focus group setting, from which I had initially taken my early data, is extremely esoteric and not easily accessible by a non-movement member. I also venture that a focus on individuals would illuminate the type of person who may be in attendance and with whom I am working. The issue I am trying to clarify is the effect on individuals, in later life, of a Jewish youth movement involvement.

The case study I am highlighting is the youngster at the threshold of leaving their Jewish youth movement (or having recently left but maintaining peripheral involvement).

I initially attempted to code using Atlas/ti software with a view to undertaking a Grounded Theory (Glaser, 1978; Glaser, 1992; Glaser, 1998; Strauss and Corbin, 1998; Charmaz, 2003) approach. I adopted a line-by-line approach to coding. However, once coded, I considered the results to be clinical and hollow. Whilst I was able to ascribe a code to most lines of the text, the process seemed contrived. It did not provide me with the richness that interrogating the text for meaning, significance, connotations and implications proffered. I felt that any interconnections I posited were based on structure rather than understanding.

I found it much more meaningful to try to analyse what the respondent actually might be saying and what might be concealed in what they were saying – the meaning behind their choice of words, their gestures, their prosodic features. I thus embarked on a psychological methodology. I decided to use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis which is much more about ascribing meaning to a dialogue, - the “subjective perceptual process” (Chapman and Smith, 2002, page126) - than about finding interconnecting words or phrases. “One cannot do good qualitative research by following a cookbook”. (Smith and Osborn, 2003, page 40).

The ensuing analysis is considered to be Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as it borrows extensively from the subjects’ struggle to interpret their own experiences whilst taking into account the researcher’s hermeneutic study (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

IPA is a method used principally by psychologists which enlists the analysis of the participants themselves whilst also utilising the analytical input of the researcher. Brocki and Wearden (2006) note three characteristics of an IPA methodology. It involves: (i) self-reflection, the interviewee’s attempt to interpret their own experiences; (ii) the dynamic reciprocity of the researcher’s interpretation and influence and (iii) the acceptance that there is no predetermined hypothesis to test.

Although the vast majority of published work using IPA has been in the field of psychology, it is by no means exclusively the case (Brocki and Wearden, 2006). Brocki and Wearden (2006) postulate that its primacy in psychology is probably just “an accident of birth” (page 89) due to it first being used within that field and, I would add, probably perpetuated by appearing in psychology journals. Larkin, Watts

et al (2006) acknowledge its potential usefulness in “many other areas of the human sciences” (page 105). Indeed, in a personal communication, Larkin adds that “questions about experience are inevitably psychological”.

Although related to Phenomenology (see Giorgi and Giorgi, 2003 and Titchen and Hobson, 2003, for an account of Phenomenology), IPA has evolved as a distinctive methodology over the last ten years or so (Chapman and Smith, 2002).

Phenomenological research is concerned with identifying “the ‘essence’ of human experience concerning phenomenon” (Creswell, 2003; page 15). Phenomenology concerns itself with social phenomena as seen from the “the actor’s point of view” (Freebody, 2003; page 36). IPA, on the other hand, includes the researcher’s intrinsic role in emergence of data (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

Despite being a psychological tool (and this research being in the sociological/educational, possibly even anthropological field), I felt that the method of analysis lent itself to this research since the exploratory themes such as examination of belonging versus alienation; identity issues and personal values all probe deep into the heart of meta-cognition and self-understanding. They all rely on a certain amount of self awareness and a personal epistemology of, and response to, these themes.

Additionally, Smith and Osborn (2003) refer to the intrinsic role of the IPA researcher as part of the landscape. IPA recognises the inevitable subjectivity of the researcher (e.g. Larkin, Watts et al., 2006 and Brocki and Wearden, 2006) and harnesses it to procure rich data, rather than disregarding or dismissing it, thereby rendering the data contaminated with an unacknowledged “self” or “selves”.

As an ex-movement member myself and currently working for the Movement for Reform Judaism (RSY-Netzer’s parent organisation), it was important to recognise the role that I played in understanding the setting and being part of the developing conversations. The fact that I have many shared experiences with my respondents and have an insider’s knowledge, within which this research is contextualised, meant that I could not ignore the dynamic interaction nor my potential influence on the data procured. I also have a very close relationship with each of my interviewees. Had I not been so involved, my questioning might have been more probing at times when I

needed to elicit greater understanding. Conversely, it might also have been more superficial in the case of nuances or significances which might have passed me by.

Whilst also borrowing from Discourse Analysis (see Willig, 2003, for an account of DA) in that language is a key element in the qualitative analysis, it differs from DA in that IPA relies on the respondent's subjective cognition, thoughts and beliefs. It is concerned with the chain of connection from the physical condition, through cognition and on to verbalising. That is, it is embodied as well as discursive. It also relies on the centrality of the researcher who "is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their personal and social world" (Smith, 2004; page 40).

Smith and Osborn (2003) identify three characteristics of IPA, namely the Idiographic (whereby each case is examined independently before seeking divergence or convergence); the Inductive (allowing the unexpected to emerge rather than testing hypotheses) and the Interrogative (in-depth analysis of the data, looking beyond the text towards interpreting on a psychological level). IPA allows a hermeneutic inquiry (Smith and Osborn, 2003) which may lead to postulating ideas that the respondent might be "unlikely, unable or unwilling to see or acknowledge themselves" (Smith, 2004; page 46). Shaw (2001) regards this emergence of the unanticipated as the technique's major asset.

IPA facilitates engagement with issues which are "complex, dynamic and dilemmatic" (Chapman and Smith, 2002, page 127). It therefore lends itself to the thematic emergence of the complexities of identity, the dynamism of alienation and belonging and the dilemmas of indoctrination – all themes which emerged during this research.

Hermeneutic Analysis

Working, as I do, for a Jewish organisation, I am familiar with the theological hermeneutics of textual analysis. Over centuries of Jewish tradition, Jewish texts have become layered with commentary which is published alongside it. Bringing this tradition to the research "table" was therefore a simple and logical step for me to take. Indeed Heywood and Stronach (2005) confirm that "hermeneutics emerged from biblical studies" (page 115).

There is a sense, when endeavouring to interpret a transcript, of seeking to gain an understanding of how (or if) language shapes life and how (or if) life shapes language (Brown and Heggs, 2005), the “hermeneutic circle” (page 293).

Brown and Heggs (2005) identify four forms of hermeneutics which they identify as “the process of interpretation” (page 293). The first, Conservative Hermeneutics, is an attempt to decipher the author’s intentions. This was not my objective. They also identified Critical (or critical social theory) and Radical (or post-structuralism) forms of hermeneutics. I pursued a mode of “Moderate Hermeneutics” (page 293) which takes into account that interpretations are not final. They are part of a temporal continuum whereby there are intermediate “truths” which form a cumulative tradition. Hermeneutics takes individuals and their situations into account (Heywood and Stronach, 2005). This resonates with Jewish tradition and with my personal understanding and experience of hermeneutics. A range of interpretations are permissible, each acting as an entrée to one’s own understanding or re-evaluation. Ashworth (2003) distinguishes between the hermeneutics of meaning recollection and that of suspicion. I attempted the latter, to “challenge the surface account” (page 19).

Participants (n=3)

IPA tends to focus on a homogeneous sample (Chapman and Smith, 2002) allowing the researcher to generate data from a “closely defined group for whom the research question will be significant” (Chapman and Smith, 2002, page 127). Indeed, Smith (2004) suggests that it is “possible to conduct an IPA analysis on a single case” (Page 42). The consensus, according to Brocki (2006), is moving towards smaller sample sizes in order to preserve the minutiae contained in each interview. It stands to reason that the more comparative interviews one conducts, the fewer the convergent themes are going to be.

Respondents were selected for their membership in Reform Jewish communities and their involvement in and commitment to a Jewish youth movement. They were all threshold members of their movement, meaning that they had either left but retained a connection or were about to leave. Such congruence lends a degree of uniformity and credibility to the ideological outlook being explored. Smith and Osborn (2003)

recommend a homogeneous sample since a purposive sample leads to more significant data in response to the research question.

I conducted four in-depth interviews in total. All interviews were videotaped and transcribed. The first served as a pilot and no data were taken from that interview (Appendix 5). It served to hone my interview skills, practise my analytical techniques, highlight any discrepancies in the question framework and refine my technical data capture expertise. Following the pilot I did make some adjustments to some of the questions and to the technical capture method. In addition, when talking to youth movement members other than my respondents I always made field note entries and these were occasionally used to corroborate my emergent thinking.

Not all transcriptions were used *in toto*. Irrelevant sections were occasionally removed. These included where respondents veered off subject completely or concentrated on a theme or subject which was not within my field of interest. In particular, Tracy’s interview focussed at length on her experiences during her gap year in Israel. Whilst I certainly feel that these experiences are extremely important in shaping her, I did not feel that they add anything to my thesis which centres on the youth movement involvement.

Table 6.1: *Interviewee details*

Name	Age	Education	Movement	Current involvement	Occupation	Other movement involvement
Abigail*	27	M.A.	RSY-Netzer	Peripheral – left but vicariously involved via synagogue connections	Youth and Community Worker	Habonim
Tracy*	25	B.A.	RSY-Netzer	Threshold – left but still agreeing to staff camps	Youth Worker	Hanoar Hatzioni leadership course
Jack*	21	2 nd Year student	FZY	Involved – Leading “Israel Tour” and locally involved on campus. Likely to leave in the next year	Medical Student	Habonim
* All names have been changed All data pertinent at time of interview						

Interview Schedule

Interviews were conducted using a list of semi-structured interview questions which Chapman and Smith (2002) assert is “the best way to collect data for an IPA study” (page 127), allowing the researcher and respondent to enter into dialogue. This meant

that, although questions were written down, they were not followed as a script but the answers were sought in the context of the flow of the conversation.

The major advantage of using a semi-structured rather than structured interview protocol is that it offers a great deal of flexibility (Smith and Osborn, 2003) allowing one to ask supplementary questions as they arise. It enables the researcher to elicit depth or clarity or to differentiate between areas of concern if necessary. Although a guide can be prepared beforehand to act as a checklist for all areas that need to be covered, the order of the questions can be altered according to the flow of the conversation. Freebody (2003) recommends that the researcher “begin[s] with a predetermined set of questions, but allow some latitude in the breadth of relevance” (page 133). Smith and Osborn (2003) regard entering the psychological and social world of the respondent as the important factor.

As a less formal style of questioning, semi-structured interviewing might put respondents at their ease as the style is more conversational. This may lead to more considered answers and more in-depth exploration. My experience during this research suggests that allowing free flowing conversation can often elicit not only the answers but sometimes also the reasons for the answers. Smith (2004, page 57) argues that this style of interview produces richer data.

The disadvantage can be that lines of questioning may evolve during individual interviews in response to the answers with the result that comparability may be reduced. According to Smith and Osborn (2003, page 57) semi-structured interviews offer less researcher control than in structured interviews and may be harder to analyse. However, the corollary to that is that the use of open-ended questions may feel less intrusive to the interviewee. He or she is able to take the response to where they want it to go and to where they feel comfortable taking it.

Broadly speaking, the questions I was seeking to answer or issues I was seeking to explore were:

1. Current youth movement involvement.
2. First involvement.
3. Can you tell me a little about the youth movement to which you belong?
4. Approximately how much of your time would you say is taken up with movement stuff?

5. Choice of movement to become involved in.
6. The point at which this became the movement for you.
7. Any other movement involvement?
8. If not, how can you be so sure that [your movement] has the most to offer? If yes, how did you make the decision to choose [your movement]?
9. If things had been different, could you ever see yourself being a member of a different movement?
10. The “sales” pitch. If you were to encourage youngsters to join your movement, what would you say to them?
11. Impact of your movement involvement.
12. Do you think you could not have achieved any of those things without the movement?
13. Did your choice of university depend on involvement in youth movement activities there?
14. Outside of the obvious youth movement issues, do you feel you have gained anything from being a member of [your movement] that can be used in “the real world”?
15. What impact do you think that being Jewish has on your life?
16. Would that influence be different without the youth movement experience?
17. Is there anything else you would like to add on the subject of your youth movement experience and its impact on your life?

However, these were just the core areas I intended to explore and none of the interviews followed this exact pattern.

Analytical Strategy

The advantage of videotaped interviews over audio recordings is that I was able to take prosodic features into account. When analysing the audio transcripts, it was not always obvious why gaps, pauses or emphases occurred. However, the addition of video was able to shed light on some of these. I found video to be so much richer. It offered the "reasons" for the pauses, the gesticulations that go with the articulations, facial expressions that suggest what is behind what is being said and expansive gestures that paint a picture. I did not include these in my analysis but I did take them into consideration when attempting to make sense of the text, reading the transcribed text whilst listening to, and endeavouring to keep an intermittent eye on, the video.

Transcriptions were hermeneutically analysed for differential interpretations. The text was interrogated until it offered meaning and answers. On each reading, questions were posed and the answers sought within the confines of the text as a whole. Ramifications, connotations and implications of the text were explored until significance emerged. Themes were then explicated from the analysed text of each interview, before seeking convergence across the interviews.

Once themes that were common across the interviews had been identified, relationships between themes were explored until a plausible account emerged.

7. Abigail¹⁰: We're all in it for Continuity

B

This interview is just about getting a history of your youth movement involvement. So could you tell me when you started to get involved and how you started to get involved?

A

Okay. Uhm ... I had heard of RSY-Netzer¹¹ through my synagogue, which was Finchley Reform, when I was growing up. And it was always kind of ... other people went ... and I did try ... I did go on a residential weekend when I was about nine and hated it...

I wonder why she felt the need to try if her perception was that “other people went”. What was the imperative to do so? What was it that made her carry on going? What did she hope to get out of it? “I did try” reflects a reticence, a degree of arduousness. What were her expected rewards, that she would surmount these obstacles?

... uhm ... and then I think it was peer pressure that kind of got me on Shemesh¹² when I was thirteen. Uhm... but I used to suffer terribly with homesickness so, if I had gone when I was nine, I would never have stayed on really.

The implication here seems to be that by age thirteen, she was able to get through her homesickness, had the maturity to be rational about her circumstances. I find myself wondering, what is homesickness? Is it that she missed her parents or just the comforts of home? Or maybe it is the familiar environment that she misses? Maybe this is not yearning for home but more about the cumulative aspects of being away; the novel experiences, the new social order and unfamiliar daily routines. An “away-sickness”, perhaps? Although she uses the term “home-sickness, she does not elucidate what it is about home that she is missing. There is no reference to home comforts, to parents, to familiar surroundings, to pets or familiar food or anything else associated with “home”.

Perhaps homesickness is just something that needs to be endured, regardless of how old one is when first experiencing a residential event. Is it a rite of passage that leads

¹⁰ **Not her real name**

¹¹ ***RSY-Netzer* This is the youth movement of the Reform Movement. It stands for Reform Synagogue Youth – Noar Tzioni Reformi. Netzer is the international umbrella organisation of all Reform youth movements. The words mean Zionist Reform Youth**

¹² ***Shemesh* is the generic title for all the summer camps run by RSY-Netzer. It literally means Sun in Hebrew**

to the ensuing feeling of affiliation? The initial alienation before the feeling of belonging? This is an important point which suggests that movements need to address the issue of when youngsters are most open to the new experience of residential events and when is the optimum age, at which to involve and engage them.

I also wonder what "peer pressure" actually means in this context. Is it the case that she felt the need to attend so that she could be a part of what the majority of the "cool" people were doing or is it that her friends exerted some pressure on her to join them?

Uhm so I went ... went on the summer camp and it just carried on from there really. I went on the next one and then I carried on all the way through.

Why did she go on summer camp if she had not enjoyed the weekend experience? There is a sense that she enjoyed it more at thirteen than she had at nine but also that others were enjoying it (the friends who pressurised her to go and the "others", the cool people encapsulated in the statement "other people went"). "I went on the next one and then carried on all the way through" suggest an inertia, a certain passivity. It suggests that it is what you do when you have gone on one camp; you go on the next. Is that why she continued despite her unhappiness?

B

So, hang on, you went when you were nine. What did you go to when you were nine?

A

I went on the national Garinim¹³ weekend at the Sternberg Centre¹⁴

B

So just remind me, what's Garinim?

A

9 – 12s. I was about nine or ten. I certainly was not the youngest

¹³ *Garinim* The movement is divided into age groups all of whom hold specific age-appropriate summer camps and mid year events such as residential weekends. Garinim is the youngest group and literally means seedlings.

¹⁴ Sternberg Centre is the headquarters of the Reform Movement in North London. The campus houses the head offices of the Reform Movement and those of the youth movement; a primary school, a Jewish museum; a rabbinic school and tertiary college as well as a synagogue and a variety of conference facilities. Small residential events are occasionally held there.

One gets the feeling that, had she been the youngest, she would feel vindicated for being home-sick. Perhaps there were youngsters there who were younger than her who were not experiencing homesickness.

B

And did you not make any friends there? Or you just felt overwhelmed or what ... why did you not like it?

A

Homesickness

B

Just homesickness?

I am still not sure that I know what homesickness is.

A

Yeah.

B

You were round the corner ... (laughs)

A

Yeah my parents lived literally about ten houses away. And I knew lots of people because I knew them from synagogue because Finchley Reform was a big ... big ... kind of giver to Shemesh but ... I just ... yeah ... I just uhm ... didn't want to be there.

So, we can exclude location and people from the reasons for her homesickness.

B

Okay. And the Shemesh that you went to at thirteen, what was it that hooked you?

A

Uh, well actually, looking back on it, I didn't have the best time. I really didn't. Because I was not in the cool group... uhm ... and at that point it was the thirteen and fourteen year-olds together so I was in the youngest [group] and I was very intimidated by the older ones... they were all snogging and I'd never snogged before... you know all this stuff was going on that I just wasn't part of ... uhm ... but it was peer pressure that got me back and actually it was only the third camp that I really had a brilliant time. By then I was hooked. But I mean, I did have my own group, I became friendly with, ironically, some Leeds girls¹⁵ and we do still keep in touch.

She uses a number of references to allude to her alienation and marginalisation from the group. Each acts as an emphasis of the last. The fact that she is not in the cool crowd, is in the youngest group, is inexperienced, she was not part of some "stuff" are all illustrations of her compounding sense of alienation. This begins to shed light on her "homesickness". So, "away-sickness" does not seem to cover it. It feels to me

¹⁵ **Ironic because Abigail now lives in Leeds having met and married her Leeds husband**

like an issue of social marginalisation or alienation. One can picture the immigrant, the new or bullied primary school pupil watching proceedings from the side of the school playground and get a sense of what Abigail is experiencing. She may not be an immigrant, a new pupil or bullied but, like an immigrant, a new pupil or a bullying victim, she is not party to the esoteric goings on, to the language, the “in” jokes or the camp rituals. She is watching the “school playground” with envy, awaiting her invitation to become involved whilst observing and assimilating the rituals. Not only her invitation, but the acquisition of sufficient elements of the “uniform” and “culture” to be able to be included.

So, perhaps the “sickness” being referred to is the lack of familiarity with the rituals. It corresponds to van Gennep’s (1960) preliminal stage before “crossing the threshold” of belonging after undergoing a rite of passage.

Van Gennep refers to three stages to a rite of passage. The first is separation (which he refers to as preliminal); next is the transitional phase (liminal) where there is a suspension of normal roles; lastly rituals and beliefs are incorporated in the post-liminal stage where the individual is symbolically reborn. We can explore several different notions of preliminality and find that the paradigm holds up for each one.

Social: Abigail is away from her school friends and family.

Geographic: She is away from home and her familiar surroundings. She may only be a short distance from home but she is not sleeping in her own bedroom, eating dinner with her family or watching television in her living room.

Symbolic: There is the introduction of Hebrew words and jargon and there are certain rules and regulations to which she must become accustomed.

Ritual: There are unfamiliar routines to be followed and rituals to perform that she would not normally follow at home. These include the usual regulations one would expect to help the camp run smoothly. For example, timetables, cleaning rotas and social order would result in a relinquishment of a certain amount of freedom. Even “snogging” is a ritual; the enacting of a sexual being, is a ritual that Abigail has yet to go through.

Cultural: Being a participant on camp would include saying “grace after meals” and participating in religious services. There are numerous Hebrew words she would have to become familiar with and movement-specific vernacular.

Cognitive: She is gaining new knowledge and learning. Each camp is themed on an educational basis and all activities have an educational objective. This is a departure from the domestic existence of most youngsters.

Boundaries: She has left behind the freedom of deciding her own bedtime or dictating how to spend her free time. There are new rules to be followed and social constraints to adhere to.

Conceptual: They are actually separated from mainstream society for a short time. Each camp or residential event dictates its own set of norms and rules and creates its own inimitable microcosm.

Temporal: I have even heard of some camps setting everyone’s watches backward to complete the illusion of separation from mainstream society. Certainly it is common for “normal” conventions of time to be ignored with mealtimes and bedtimes often being far later than might be found elsewhere.

Thus it would seem that Abigail is undergoing novel experiences, on a variety of levels, all of which suggest the preliminal stage of the rite of beginning to become a committed member of this youth movement.

However, it is the establishment of her “own group” after three camps that leads to her becoming engaged. Why would she persist in going if she was unhappy? If we are to continue the new pupil or immigrant allusion, there is probably an increased settling in with each camp. She is learning the “language” and cultural nuances; things are becoming familiar.

B

Okay, could you now just tell me a bit about RSY-Netzer

A

RSY-Netzer is the Reform Synagogue Youth movement, uhm ... which ... the main strength of which is that it really inspires young people with their Jewish identity... uhm and in particular Reform Jewish identity, also Reform Zionist or Zionist identity ... uhm and they ... uh... the main events are overnight – the residentials. In particular the summer events uhm ... and of

that, the highlight really being “Israel Tour” at age sixteen when you go to Israel for a month and it’s been going for over twenty years¹⁶.

Why is “Israel Tour” a highlight? Visiting a foreign¹⁷ country in the Middle East, on the face of it, ought to represent the height of alienation and the furthest conceptual distance from home. Yet this is a highlight. I suspect it is the bonding; being together day and night for five weeks and forging shared aims and pursuing shared goals against the “adversity” of being in a foreign place and having new and alien experiences together. This would suggest that the group is now “home” to her. The movement is now the backdrop against which identity is both forged and reinforced. Abigail speaks of three identities which she incorporated. These are Jewish, Reform and Zionist (and permutations thereof). It is the advent of these identities, or belief systems, which illustrate her postliminal incorporation of the movement culture and her ultimate sense of belonging to the youth movement.

There might seem to be a paradox between Israel being a foreign country and the expression of a Zionist identity. It is the Zionist identity which might answer the question as to why “Israel Tour” is a highlight. She has been preparing for it throughout her movement life. If she is to carry on belonging to this Zionist youth movement, she must foster a love of Israel. This is instilled in her through the movement’s activities. Visiting Israel is just the culmination of that conceptual journey, the rubber stamp of affirmation and affiliation.

B

One of the things I want to pick up there is the Reform. Why is it important? Why is RSY-Netzer different from the other movements?

A

Well I have worked with and experienced other Jewish youth movements in Britain and I think it’s really important for RSY-Netzer to maintain its Reform identity because ... uhm ... Reform Judaism¹⁸ is unique. It does form

¹⁶ The movement was actually a series of clubs in synagogues around the country which came together under one ideological banner in 1982

¹⁷ It might be expected by a non-Jew that Jews regard Israel automatically as “home”, much like any Diaspora community regards the land of its forefathers as home. However, culturally, linguistically, geographically, environmentally, architecturally, gastronomically and in many other respects, Israel is very different from Britain and from the West. Therefore, a teenager visiting it for the first time from Britain is very likely to regard it as foreign. From my personal perspective, I would say that the prevalent *mañana* attitude is Mediterranean and the manners and matters of personal space are Arabian. Many cultural norms are also taken from the large Eastern European influx that Israel has experienced over the years.

¹⁸ Reform Judaism is the progressive proponent of Judaism, believing in the tenets of the Torah whilst adapting it to modern needs whereas Orthodox Jews believe that the Torah was literally handed down to Moses by God

part of the spectrum of Jewish communities in Britain. So ... uhm... so ... so ... when I say Reform, I mean that the values that they carry through on the camps and the rituals that they perform and the spiritual elements are all kind of embedded in Reform ... in the Reform movement currently and also in practices previously ... uhm ... and the ethos is very much about informed decision making and I think it is a really important value.

This begs the question, informed by what and by whom? And, indeed how are they informed? Surely these youngsters are not joining a given movement because of its ideology. They join for social reasons. They are Reform Jews due to their parents' choice. How can it be "informed decision making" if we are asking our youngsters to make the same choices as their leaders have made? We are asking them to ultimately subscribe to the same ideologies and foster the same concerns as those of the movement to which they belong. They are being asked to embrace Reform, to become social activists, to have liberal views. These youngsters start in the movement at the age of nine. How can they have developed a sound ideology by that age? My guess is that it is about social conformity. In order to continue to enjoy the social engagement when one becomes involved in a youth movement, a certain amount of the prevailing ideology has to be adopted. One does not want to engender dissonance nor to return to the early days of marginalisation so one adapts. Perhaps not consciously nor deliberately, but subconsciously and imperceptibly. I wonder, is this indoctrination?

B

So, it's vital, you think that Reform kids go to a Reform camp?

A

Well there's two schools of thought. I think that for the pluralist¹⁹ youth movements, I think that it's important to have a Reform presence ... uhm ... because they're not pluralist otherwise. But I would rather that kids were ... uhm experiencing and playing around with and enjoying Reform Judaism rather than always being the token Reform Jew which is what I perceive to be happening in the other movements although this was a few years ago 'cause I'm not really involved in other movements.

In the weeks following this interview with Abigail, I notice an exchange on the RSY-Netzer website which centres on just this subject. The following passage is taken from this exchange written to the RSY-Netzer website. It was written by a member of

¹⁹ Pluralist in this context refers to youth movements which accept youngsters from across the Jewish spectrum where all beliefs are respected and there are no expectations to conform.

a Reform community who belongs to FZY²⁰. It illustrates the strength of feeling for the “Reform presence in pluralist movements” argument.

Person X:

“... FZY is a much poorer option for young people in Britain especially for non-orthodox youth” (quoted from an earlier post).

Person Y:

“After reading this conversation this was the one thing that hurt me the most. I am a Reform Jew; I don't believe in God but I am a firm believer in being Jewish and in Zionism. For me the main part of my Jewish identity is my involvement with the youth groups, that's what makes me feel Jewish. FZY is a pluralist movement and it really is. Whilst on an FZY event I don't feel pressured to be more religious than I want to be nor no less, I can do as I please. This makes me feel welcome but also gives me the chance to socialise with Jews from other more or less religious upbringings. In fact I feel on FZY as one of the few Reform Jews that it is my duty to make sure that it is not seen as the cop-out option and I think that FZY is an important place whereby we can educate others about what being Reform really means. I have in the past encouraged Orthodox friends to attend the FZY Reform service and they have really enjoyed it. What is so important about pluralism is that it allows everyone to feel welcome.”

Contrary to Abigail's suggestion of being the “token Reform Jew” this contributor feels a sense of duty to educate others about what it means to be Reform. He is also demonstrating the “informed decision-making” that Abigail regards so highly by seeking out social interactions with those of different religious upbringings and by encouraging Orthodox friends to attend Reform services.

B

So which other movement have you been involved with?

A

Just like, in terms of ... I went on Habonim²¹ when I was ... I went on winter camp when I was about fourteen ... because I didn't know if I wanted to go camping with RSY-Netzer²² that summer ... so I went on the winter camp and had a decent enough time but I decided that actually RSY-Netzer was my movement.

²⁰ FZY, a “pluralist” Jewish youth movement whose ideology is based on the defence of Jewish rights, Jewish culture, Social action and the encouragement of immigration to Israel.

²¹ *Habonim* is a socialist youth movement whose origins lie in the *Wandervogel* youth movements of Germany (espousing freedom and shaking off the restrictions of society). Habonim was founded in 1929 to encourage settlement in Israel and on kibbutz in particular

²² The camp she would have attended with RSY-Netzer was under canvas whereas Habonim was indoors for that age group.

She is now calling it “her” movement. Compared to the movement where she has only had one residential experience, RSY is now “home”. It took an unfamiliar experience to illustrate that she has achieved “incorporation” or post-liminality. It is only by juxtaposing the new alien experience against the familiarity of her RSY-Netzer experience that she is able to recognise her sense of belonging.

B

Okay

A

So I tried them out and I remember that the services were very secular and focussed on the creativity ... which RSY-Netzer do do but the ... uhm ... they did it without bringing in any of the traditional religious prayers - which RSY-Netzer do. So I have had hands-on experience of Habonim when I was about fourteen.

Her unfamiliarity with the services serves as an example of the cultural nuances with which she is familiar in RSY but unfamiliar in other movements. She appears to have incorporated the RSY-Netzer services and now regards as the “norm”.

B

I didn't realise that you had had an involvement with Habonim. So the question must arise, what your choice was based on ... the issue you pointed out was that it was the religious aspect

A

No, it was purely social

Confirmation, here, of the social conformity.

B

Okay

A

I mean at fourteen ... I went to Habo and I know girls from my school who went to Habo and I ... and I sort of went with them but they... (she hesitates) ... you know but they had their Habo friends. So even when I was on camp with them, it was very difficult for me to feel completely integrated. I wasn't the most confident, the most popular girl ... uhm ... so ... I realised that I should stick with what I've got really ... with the established friendship group that I did have in RSY who are, still now, really good friends.

Once again we see several examples of marginalisation when she tries out another youth movement; the fact that she “sort of” went with the girls from her school, the fact that they had other friends, Abigail's difficulty in feeling integrated, her lack of confidence, and her perceived lack of popularity. However, this time there is no need to conform. She can return to her social “home”, “stick with what [she's] got”, where her established friendship group is and where she is familiar with the culture.

B

You mention confidence. So you felt you had more confidence by being in the RSY environment?

A

Only because ... because I went ... It was because at RSY-Netzer, I was there with my friends from synagogue so that was ... and Alyth²³, actually. It was Finchley and Alyth for me. So to go on RSY, you know, with them ... we all went kind of as a group on RSY whereas when I went on Habo with some of the girls from my school, (she was at an all girls school) and they were already established Habo people ... when we were on the camp, they were all in their Habo group and I didn't ... I was even more on the periphery of what was going on, I guess. But I do remember some really good peulot²⁴ actually at Habo. And that's why I still maintain that I like them.

She remembers the peulot, the educational content, and states that she liked this movement. Education and ideology are what Habonim is about and yet it is her status in the social milieu that dictates her affiliation.

B

Okay

A

I like the values, I like the ethos. You know, if socially, I'd have been really in, I could have been Habo.

This is very interesting since, in an effort to turn the collective of Reform clubs into a movement in the early 1980s, an ex-member of Habonim was recruited to effect the strategy. RSY-Netzer still feels to me like the religious equivalent of Habonim (which is completely secular in its outlook). It espouses freedom of expression, social conscience, egalitarianism and Zionism, all attributes shared with RSY-Netzer. To Abigail, it feels like her ideological home but not her social home. Socially she is in the preliminal stage in Habonim where in RSY she has already achieved post-liminality. It is interesting that, ideologically, she feels that she belongs in Habonim but she is socially happiest having established her home in RSY. This would seem to be the stronger pull factor than the ideology. This reinforces my earlier argument of social conformity being the driving force behind "informed decision-making". She was impressed with the educational content (and, by inference, the ideology), the values and ethos. However, her friends are in RSY so she will subdue any discontent that she harbours with the ideology or values in order to maintain her social status.

²³ Alyth is the colloquial name given to North West [London] Reform Synagogue which is situated at Alyth Gardens in Temple Fortune

²⁴ Peulot are educational activities that occur in youth movements (sing. = peulah)

This is not necessarily done on a conscious level but may be subliminal (in a psychological rather than pertaining to liminality in the anthropological sense).

B

Okay, so you've gone to camps. We've got to about "Israel Tour". What was your involvement from there? You know, just give me a history of how you engaged.

A

I think it's also important to kind of actually ... Well, I don't know. It's important for me, to identify the transition from the camp at age fifteen, *Bet*²⁵, which was, as I said under canvas, through to "Israel Tour" 'cause that was the camp that I felt part of ... I felt I was RSY-Netzer through and through. It was definitely under canvas. So I think one of the things that always when I was a teenager ... I think being a teenager was horrible. I really feel for teenagers. Certainly for me it was, actually still is, about acne and weight and clothes, you know fashion. All those anxieties still do play a role in my life ... uhm ... but I'm much more confident with who I am. Whereas then, you know, as a teenager I never was so I think being under canvas where the most beautiful girls actually didn't have a shower for two weeks as well ... so it just took away that barrier and I actually **spoke** (she stresses the word) to these girls for the first time ... and the boys. Because I felt ... does that make sense?

This is interesting because, of the youngsters I have spoken to about the pivotal point at which they felt they belonged to the movement, all feel that the one where they are under canvas was the best camp (despite there being much more attractive camps at different ages – including one which is in Europe) and the one where they became engaged with the movement. This may be because this camp occurs at an age (15) when adolescents are starting to develop their identities (Erikson, 1950; Adams, Abraham et al, 2000) or it may actually be more attributable to the factors that Abigail is expressing, the removal of barriers to create social cohesion. Alternatively, does the camp system simply exploit the stage at which the children are at in their identity development process?

Having removed the barriers from socialising with the previously inaccessible crowd, she is now "RSY through and through". This is a strong core identity claim, perhaps borne of a degree of social conformity in both directions. First her adopting some movement behaviours and now some of the "beautiful girls" actually talking to her, have combined to contribute to the development of her RSY identity. Not only RSY contemporaneously, but persistently, since many of the friends that she made then are

²⁵ *Bet* is the name of the camp for the 15 year-olds

still her friends now in her late 20s. At this post-liminal phase of reincorporation into adult society, she is a fully fledged member of RSY-Netzer (“through and through”).

B

Yeah. No it’s very interesting because I see you as a very confident and a very goal orientated individual and you always know what you want and have gone out and got it so you know, you’ve actually identified that pivotal point where that’s happened

A

Absolutely. It was the realisation that ... yeah ... just about the layers in a way, of people.

This is a depth metaphor, redolent of the identity claims she has already made elsewhere. This corroborates her “RSY through and through” comment. Here the layers are peeled away to reveal the RSY central core.

And just that that was all so shallow and peripheral. It was what I was most anxious about and yet it was a side issue.

One has to question whether it is not just about being under canvas. Could it, perhaps, be the advent of a degree of maturity that has allowed her to finally see beyond the superficiality? Would she have seen through the layers had she been exposed to this scenario at a younger age? The reverse question also has to be asked. Would she have come to this realization without the leveller of being ‘dirty’ together (“where the most beautiful girls actually didn’t have a shower for two weeks”)?

And that, sort of, took me to “Israel Tour” and ... The other thing about “Israel Tour” was ... uhm ... you know it always attracts people who haven’t been on camps previously so ... but it was definitely social so some of them ... you know, the Alyth non-RSY crowd ... came on tour and by that point, we were solid friends. Really, really close friends so ... uhm ... you know, within my tour, I was in, you know, one of the major sort of influencing players in our tour. And we also had ... that split between tour two and tour three²⁶ and tour two and three actually spent a lot of time together. So there was that moment when people actually knew “Ooh it’s Abigail”. And the established RSY-Netzer crowd and all of that but it just really threw the cliques in the air really and re-established them and I was definitely “in” at that point. Socially, I’m talking about.

The evidence of being “in” is manifold. She has made solid friends (emphasised several times); she is an influential “player”; when the two tours come together,

²⁶ **“Israel Tours” have around 30 people each. If a given movement has more than this, numbers will be split to provide an additional tour. Although, the separate tours may meet up in Israel and do some shared activities, most of the time they are on their own and tend to develop a distinctive group identity from the time forged together**

members of the other tour spot and identify her by name. In addition, the fact that there were “non-RSY” people there whom she already knew, reinforces her being in the centre of the social milieu.

Uhm... and the other thing about “Israel Tour” was ... uhm ... I mean, again, thinking about the homesickness, and being away for a month ... you know just the confidence of actually being away for a month and I don't remember being homesick at all. I remember phoning home and ... Actually, interestingly enough, I remember coming back from camps and not being able to tell my parents what I'd done for two weeks. Just shutting myself in my room and crying that it was over, even though I hadn't had the best time. Crying 'cause I hadn't made more of. I don't know; that kind of stuff.

Is this just about having regrets at not having made more of it, having let the opportunities slip away? I think it might be more than that. If it were simply about regrets, one would expect that to be a persistent sentiment, not one that she emerged from after two weeks. I wonder if she is wrestling with juggling her two “homes”. There is a discomfort at admitting to her parents that she has a new “home” and at not feeling quite so “at home” as she did before she went away. There is also the added component of guilt at knowing that she should.

Another possibility is that she has become institutionalised. The microcosm created on a two week camp meets all the criteria for a “total institution” (Goffman, 1961). Barriers of sleep, activity and place of eating are non-existent; all activities take place in the company of a large group of people; there is a tight schedule; and all the activities are performed to fulfil the aims of the organisation. If she has been institutionalised, what she is now demonstrating is her difficulty in dealing with her home life since it has no barriers, no large group, no strict schedules and no aims to aspire to.

But “Israel Tour” , I remember when I came home, saying, “Aaah, we did this and na na na...” And, actually that, again, was another moment of ... uhm ... reconnecting with my parents in a way that I hadn't ever really done before, after RSY events.

By the time she returns from “Israel Tour” at 16, she is able to “reconnect with” her parents. Perhaps this arises as she is reconciled to inhabiting those two homes, has the maturity to recognise it as a natural progression. Alternatively, perhaps it is because a tour of Israel, is much less routine on a day to day basis, offers new and exciting experiences and novel educational opportunities. During “Israel Tour” ,

therefore, she may be less likely to have experienced the institutionalisation that a two week residential camp set on a single site may induce.

B

So that's interesting. So the ... coming home and not talking to your parents, you say you couldn't? When you say you couldn't, you felt ashamed of things? Or you felt embarrassed? Or..?

A

No, no, no. It was just kind of, they wouldn't understand. It was just a kind of, you know, ... different thing, even just to articulate it. Actually, if you are interested, I do have it in my diary – some of it but I would have to (she makes a sign with her hands as if marking out) ... proofread it first.

She repeats “no” three times, in emphatic denial. There is nothing that she needs to hide. It is just that she has moved on and not brought her parents with her. As if to further emphasise her openness, she offers to show me her diary.

“**They** wouldn't understand” and “a different thing” are both comments that suggest that she has moved on; she is a more mature person than the one who left the house a few weeks ago. There is now a deep change in her relationship with her parents – it is a “different thing”.

This expression of a “different thing” adds credence to my theory of the two “homes”. She finds it too difficult to bring the scenario from the one home into the other. It is reminiscent of how one hears adopted children talking when they have established contact with their biological families. They often do not wish to unite the two as this would upset the harmony of both realms.

A

Yeah, so it wasn't that I was embarrassed. It was just more... I mean I think you, you know, on shemesh²⁷ ... I mean however it goes over a two week period, you know the last night they really kind of you know made sure that the last night everyone has a fantastic time AND THEN you stay up all night AND then have the long journey. So it was just kind of you know exhaustion as well and complete overtiredness and, you know, finally sort of being in my own space ... I think it was just that difference of spending two weeks completely being never alone with yourself and then sort of being in my room and ... silence. You know just sort of

The finality of being “in her own space” connotes a bereavement. Is she perhaps grieving for the extremes of sociality that she was experiencing at camp? She juxtaposes the two extremities – the intensity of the camp experiences and the

²⁷ Shemesh **actually means sun but is the name given to RSY-Netzer's summer camps.**

solitude of home. This is the least articulate she has been all through the interview. It is as if she is now grappling with the reality of the significance for the first time. She could not even express it to her parents at the time, felt uncomfortable articulating her post-camp sentiments or even to make the comparison. Now she is becoming aware of the huge impact the event had had on her life and the turning point that the camp represents, as well as the depth of symbolism. Perhaps she is finally giving herself permission to have inhabited two realms.

We talk a bit about some specific memories from her movement days.

B

Very interesting. Now, I have just been watching your face and how you are lighting up about all of this and it's ... uhm ... would you say that those memories, from your movement era, are the ones that stick with you the most? Your movement memories? Or is that me just being presumptive?

A

Which era? 15 and 16 years old?

B

Well, I suppose the height of your involvement as a *chanicha*²⁸. In terms of that age. You know 15, 16, whatever,

A

Oh, you mean for me and the rest of my life?

B

Yes, would you say that that was the highlight of your life at that time or not?

A

Well, I think, as I said about being on tour with these very good friends of mine, it gave me something outside of school to ... uhm ... be involved in and also 'cause it involved boys. At school I was cool 'cause I had friends who were boys. So after school, you know, we'd meet up with the boys and we were cool because everyone else just got the bus and we'd like hang out with them. That actually carried through to 6th form - that we used to meet them and stuff. And ... yeah ... it was definitely part of it.

So, now, not only is she "in" within her movement but, having these friends – who were boys - actually gives her a degree of credibility at school as well.

B

Okay, so we get to "Israel Tour" . Then and there's that little bit in between, before you're going on shnat, your A' level years. What was your involvement at that time?

A

... so we came back from tour in August and myself and a few friends ... That time on RSY, they did not allow all 17 year-olds to do Shemesh²⁹. So we

²⁸ *Chanicha* is a female participant (m= chanich)

²⁹ This refers to these youngsters acting as junior leaders at camps

thought, well let's us apply to do Sheleg³⁰ so we can do something for this year group ... you know, for our year ... and we'll go to Marbella in the summer. And also do Kayitz³¹. So we did ... we were the cooks on Sheleg which was brilliant 'cause again there were only six or seven of us and it was me and my friend Richard who ... for me he was like definitely like a key person. And so we did it and my friend Lisa and then there were these three others who, again, were like the cool kids from way back when and now actually we were a little clique on Sheleg so that was pretty cool. So we did that and then me, Richard and Lisa and some others went to Marbella because Richard's parents had a flat there and we had a great time and then we went on Kayitz.

From the youngster who suffered terribly with homesickness, we now see a confident, sociable teenager willing to go on an unstructured foreign holiday with friends. She is now in a comfort zone with friends, has her own clique and no longer needs either the familiarity of home or the structure of an organised camp.

And Kayitz was awful. There was a particular group of people who went on Kayitz to go to Amsterdam basically and just ruined it for us.

This whole paragraph describes hanging out with the "cool" people, the "key" players. There was the creation of a cool clique. Life, social life in particular, is good. However, along comes a negative element who ruined it for her. You almost get a sense of them as interlopers trashing the house after gatecrashing a party. This further reinforces the suggestion that she feels very much that her RSY friends have become a second "home". Interlopers are unwelcome, particularly those whose ideology or motivation are not in synch with her own.

B

Is this to do with the Red Light District? Or Drugs?

A

No, Drugs.

I ask her about her student years and she tells me about her choice of university course. She finishes by telling me about her choice of university

A

I did apply to Lancaster, Leeds, Manchester. I think I applied to two at Leeds actually... I can't remember the others. I guess I knew I wanted somewhere that had a Jewish ... scene³².

³⁰ *Sheleg Winter camp (literally snow)*

³¹ *Kayitz Tour of several European cities for the 17 year-olds (literally summer)*

³² **There is an interesting phenomenon whereby Jewish students tend to flock to the same universities. The particular universities may go in an out of vogue from one intake to another, but**

We continue to talk a little about her movement involvement during her university years.

B

So now the question is would you be doing this job if you hadn't been through RSY-Netzer

A

No.

B

So what is it that you do in your current job?

A

I am the Youth and Community Development Worker for Sinai synagogue. It's my second academic year in the post. My first year was very much hands on youth work, building a youth strategy on the ground and this year it's very much managing that with two students who we employ for eight hours a week to run the youth activities. My job is now to manage them, to work with them, for them to run the stuff to free me up to do more stuff with the actual strategy, building education, working with the cheder³³ and also spilling into student and young adult work as well.

B

Okay. Now I know you as a very organised individual and I am sure that you have many other skills as well. So my question is, what has RSY specifically given you, that allows you to do this job?

A

The vision

B

Just the vision?

I wonder what she means by this vision? What sort of vision would be needed to do youth work in a synagogue?

A

Not just, but the main thing is you know that I often sort of think how much easier my life would be if I were just a lawyer or an office worker where I have responsibilities and work friends and I can turn the computer off at five o' clock and not have my weekends taken up and have conversations at dinner parties where people know what job I do

This does not describe vision so much as commitment. There is certainly a degree of commitment fostered by being a leader in a youth movement. This is twofold. The first is the sense of working to give back to the next generation what one has derived

there always tend to be about three university towns with a high concentration of Jewish students. This is another illustration of the sense of belonging experienced and sought by Jews of all ages and the unwillingness to experience being the "other".

³³ Cheder Religion school in a synagogue akin to "Sunday school"

from the last. There is also a sense of commitment to one's peers. Once one is involved in a youth movement, there is an oft-expressed feeling that "if I don't pull my weight, I am letting my friends down and leaving them with a heavier workload".

I mean I have said, and I do say that so long as there's a job [in the Jewish world] that needs to be done and I enjoy doing and there's the money there for me to do it, I'll do it.

This is a reinforcement of the level of commitment needed to fulfil a job in Jewish Youth Work or Community Development.

B

The vision is very interesting but what about your skills. Are they skills you think you might have inherited from your RSY experience?

A

Well, people say that I am good with young people because I talk to them on their level. I don't patronise them, which, I guess, is something that I have developed through RSY-Netzer and I guess has made sure that it's a continuum from when I was there and carries through to where I am now. I haven't really thought about this before but I don't see myself as a 27 year-old talking to these kids or to young people. I see myself as Abigail talking to Joe ... or whatever. And I am just interested in what they have to say and nurturing and encouraging them so I guess, because I have constantly been involved in it, it hasn't been this break, that I surprise myself when I think, "God I'm almost thirty". Let's hope the kids don't see it like that.

We then have a short discussion about the merits of training for a formal qualification in youth Work relative to the informal, lifelong learning that Abigail has undergone in a movement context to achieve the expertise that she has attained. We now turn to the subject of Jewish youth movements as distinct from other youth provision.

A

... I think a lot of the secular stuff is about empowering the child so, often [external funders] won't fund faith based things because it's seen to be indoctrinating them

Is that the case? I am not aware of an overt fear of indoctrination. I do not know but I suspect that, if there is a resistance to funding faith-based youth provision, it may be borne of a concern that youngsters should not be given a biased outlook that is at odds with mainstream British society.

so ... you know ... what we do, is it indoctrination? Well I don't think so but it certainly is promoting a certain life style and certain life choices.

Is that not what indoctrination is? The concise Oxford dictionary defines it as “imbue with a doctrine, idea or opinion”

Actually, I'd like to say that they don't really have much choice because they are born Jewish or they are Jewish so, you know it doesn't quite fit in very nicely with what British youth work strives to achieve

This reflects how much “in a bubble” she is (she mentions the “bubble” later). Of course there is a choice. They can choose to walk away from their Judaism; they can choose to remain Jewish but not be involved in Jewish youth provision in any of its guises; they could be involved in the mainstream equivalents (e.g. the Scouts), or “British youth work”, as she calls it, and not have anything to do with the Jewish movements. Indeed they could choose from a multitude of Jewish youth movements of any political persuasion or religious affiliation or those with no political or religious leanings. I think this might be the “vision” we have already encountered. Abigail is so isolated within the Reform Jewish world that she fails to recognise that there are other options.

Abigail makes a firm distinction between Jewish Youth Work and British Youth Work. Both are being offered in Britain, to and by Britons, and yet there is a distinction. There is a separateness being described that suggests that, being a Jew, Abigail can not consider herself to be a part of the mainstream in terms of the experiences she is offering her charges. She is British by virtue of her nationality and Jewish by virtue of her religion and ethnicity. This bestows on her a special type of “Britishness”. She belongs to a small sector of British society – Jewish Briton. Whether or not this marginalises her from British society will be discussed later. Certainly, belonging to a Jewish youth movement denotes a separatist notion.

B

Okay, I'd like to come back to indoctrination, actually. But just two things that came up before. One's jargon and one's volunteering. You talk about the jargon in the broader youth work sense - but do you not think that you use a lot of jargon that you're maybe not aware of.

A

Oh, absolutely. I do try as hard as possible to explain it but, again, in terms of the vision, you know, I want to use Hebrew and I want people to be familiar with things like RSY-Netzer or UJIA³⁴ or whatever. ... you know, they do

³⁴ UJIA – United Jewish Israel Appeal. An organisation responsible for raising money for Israel and for British Jewry

need to know those things. So I don't shy away from using it but I do try to make it accessible.

Maybe we are starting to shed some more light here on what she may have meant by "vision". She wants to spread the word about her doctrine. One can almost be forgiven for entertaining comparisons of "gospel" or "evangelism" when hearing her talk of the importance of this element of informal education.

B

The other bit was volunteering. You said that your kids are desperate to volunteer. What would you say that that was a result of?

A

I've not done any research on this. I think some of it is a release from school because, what I think is a lot of the kids who come, who are involved at Sinai [synagogue], are on the periphery at school.

This has a certain resonance from Abigail's own childhood experiences. Is she guilty of interpreting this scenario, based on her own past? Her perception suggests that the youngsters with whom she deals are involved because they do not have a sense of belonging anywhere else. Does she know this of these individuals or is she just remembering her own childhood?

I certainly know of one who was bullied and had to move school and all the rest of it so, you know... it's undoubtedly about school and social groups. So what we've created at Sinai [synagogue] is a very strong social group of pretty much ... well not all the kids... but all the kids who want to be involved are involved in that group. So they enjoy it because it's their chance to catch up and I think especially at Sinai [synagogue] where we've got members living in York, Harrogate, North Ripton ...³⁵ you know, they're sometimes the only Jewish kid in their school. And they're very aware of their Jewish identity and are very confident with it but maybe don't feel confident at school with it. So they enjoy coming to synagogue and being Jewish together and doing Jewish stuff together. They're very lucky.

So the "vision" is about providing a safe haven for youngsters to reinforce their Jewish identity.

B

Indoctrination. I said I was going to come back to it. Now, what's the difference between ... you delineated indoctrination and promoting a certain life style. So why is it not indoctrination if essentially, we are taking them down a certain path? We are giving them a lot of information; we're

³⁵ **Traditionally, Jews have tended to live in nucleated communities with a synagogue at the heart. This is due to the proscription of driving on the Sabbath. Observant Jews therefore need to be within walking distance of their synagogue. Reform Jews do not follow the letter of the law and are therefore free to choose whether to drive or not on the Sabbath. Therefore, they often live further away from the heart of a Jewish community than their Orthodox counterparts.**

cramming them into residential weekend activities which research suggests is a sort of heightened way of educating. So why is that not indoctrination, do you think?

I make this remark almost as a reference to some of the cults we as a society have witnessed over the years. For instance Jim Jones' "Jonestown", the Moonies, the Branch Davidians and others. They have used communal living as a method of indoctrination. Participants are secluded from outside influences and mainstream society. Free choice in terms of what to do or eat is limited. Control is established via timetabling, mealtimes, amount and types of food on offer, themed discussions and organised activities. This is not to suggest that youth movements set out to achieve indoctrination. However, I do believe that the circumstances and conditions that are created, along with the heightened emotional commitment and the social intensity, all collaborate to achieve a degree of "education" via imperceptible means. The youth movement only manages to do this for short concentrations of time (the odd weekend, summer camp or winter camp). However, for these short but intensive bursts, is not the result the same?

A

Well I think ... well I haven't looked up the dictionary definition of indoctrination which obviously you should do first of all. But the way I perceive indoctrination is it's not giving any choice. And it's a sort of ... negative underhand edge to it. Uhm... and I think what we struggle with, in the Jewish community today, is Jewish experience ... uhm ... and I think ... you know... I was reading this article about ... you know... the biggest challenge to Jewish continuity³⁶ is the secular world, where we have all the civil rights, all the democratic rights, as our non-Jewish neighbours and actually people being brought up not experiencing anything Jewish so I guess what I am offering them is not indoctrination; it's just experiences.

She talks of her "non-Jewish neighbours", delineating a boundary between herself and them. She also talks of offering "Jewish Experiences". She seems to value these experiences in maintaining these boundaries for her young charges. Her lack of articulation here suggests a degree of discomfort – perhaps with the realisation that she might have been guilty of indoctrinating impressionable youngsters. This is something that she has only just asserted is "negative" and "underhand".

And it's saying, this is a way to live your life. It's not saying, you choose this way. It's saying, come here to experience a Reform Jewish weekend or

³⁶ **Jewish continuity refers to the notion of preventing the disappearance of the Jewish community through intermarriage and assimilation.**

Jewish leadership or Jewish festivals. So it's very clear what we're offering. It's not saying, oh you know ... it's not outreach. It's not going to them in a camp or taking them to the cinema and then, when you get there, telling them, Oh by the way, it's a film about how you should live your life. It's saying, we're going to watch a film about this; we're going to learn about ... You know, so it's being very clear and on the table as to what it is they are experiencing. And I think also, especially within Reform Judaism, as I said before, it's about informed decision making and I think what we do is focus on the decision making and not the "informed" bit.

I still feel that this is an indirect form of indoctrination. It is indoctrination about making informed choices and a liberal mindset. Not that I disagree with imparting a liberal viewpoint but it still feels like indoctrination. In my view children should be proffered the skills and opportunities to ask whether the moral, ethical or religious codes they have been meted out are justified. I do not agree with her definition of indoctrination. Just because we are being upfront about our aims, I do not believe that it means we are not being indoctrinating in our methods. Agreed, we do not give the answers. Yes, we provide alternatives and material for informed choices. However, we certainly promote the "correct" or preferred values, ethos and ideals. How else can we account for youngsters entering the movement with no doctrine and coming out several years later with a uniform outlook and value system, one that represents those of the movement that they went through? If they did not, the movement would not work. The youngsters need to grow into leaders and continue the cycle and sustain the movement.

B

That's it, really except to say, is there anything that I haven't covered, that you would add? In terms of the impact that RSY-Netzer or any other youth movement has had on you

A

Well, I think that the other thing that might be worth mentioning is the anti-Semitism issue because I think I'm very confident in being Jewish and an informed Jew.

What constitutes an "informed Jew"? How informed does one need to be? Does "informed" cover all aspects and facets of life? Or just Jewish ones?

Obviously, in terms of the work I do, and living in Britain and all the rest of it, I think, particularly now, where ... I mean I was just reading the JC³⁷ this

³⁷ JC stands for Jewish Chronicle, the Jewish national weekly newspaper

morning and like the first ten pages were about like you know how this community hates us, how these cartoons³⁸ ...

“Living in Britain” seems to be a separate category in her head. Abigail has only ever worked in the Jewish world. She seems to need to reconcile that fact with the fact that she lives in Britain.

You know it’s all about how CST³⁹ have predicted that we’re going to spend £5,000,000 on security this year ... but I am blissfully unaware of all that stuff in my own little bubble and actually that does put me at risk and puts the kids who are under my responsibility at risk. I don’t think we should scaremonger but I think that the world I live in is not reality.

If the world she inhabits is not reality and she lives in an exclusively Jewish “bubble”, how can she profess to being an “informed Jew”? This reinforces my argument about indoctrination. She is informed, by her own admission, only within her own limited sphere, her “bubble”.

I wonder if the choice of terminology is deliberate. The term “bubble” evokes several qualities. Initial reading would suggest insulation, isolation, insider/outsider boundaries. However, the term actually denotes transience. There is a tenuousness of a formation that might burst at any time, may shrink to nothingness or coalesce with its neighbours, might no longer be in existence unless we augment it. It also evokes something which is transparent – all our wares on display within; to be criticised, lambasted or attacked. At the same time we can consider a bubble to be something shiny and reflective. You look at us within and you see multiple reflections of yourself. A bubble gives a distorted view. Perhaps her perception is that when outsiders look at us, they get a distorted view of what it means to be a member of the Jewish community. Additionally, you see changes, swirling patterns of colour, a community on the threshold of transformation, adaptation and assimilation.

B

Do you see any way of balancing that – “the world that you live in” - reconciling with that issue of being in a bubble?

A

Well, I think that it’s a really positive thing, as I said before, kids who go to school where they are the only Jewish kid, come to a space where it is a safe

³⁸ **This refers to the global Muslim backlash to the appearance of cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed in the Danish press.**

³⁹ **CST stands for Community Security Trust. This is an organisation made up entirely of volunteers who take it upon themselves to guard Jewish functions and events against any anti-Semitic attacks.**

space for them to be Jewish and to experience and experiment and say what they think. You know, again in school, if they are the token Jewish kid, then they have to say what Judaism says as opposed to what they feel. Especially regarding Israel. I find that I advocate on one hand and then within Jewish circles I'll say, "Well, what about this?" or "isn't that awful?" or "I can't believe that policy" or whatever.

She describes the phenomenon of being two people or inhabiting two worlds. She is either in a non-Jewish world having to represent Judaism (or Jewish concerns) or she inhabits a Jewish world where she can be free, for instance, to be critical of Israel.

So I think that certainly there is the benefit of creating the bubble because in most people's lives, and in my life, you do have to go outside the bubble when you go to dinner parties with friends or ... go shopping ... or read the paper or whatever.

Not only is she conscious of the notional boundaries she has already alluded to, but she is actively encouraging their existence. They are not boundaries behind which she hides, but ones that she herself manufactures ("creating the bubble").

There are those moments when you are living in reality. I think the transition, though, as someone who is now in a position where I am responsible for youth provision, and I think that transition where I am going into that height of responsibility does need to be more on kind of where that boundary is. And what we need to be aware of with the boundary of the bubble.

"Living in reality". What is her reality? Abigail's entire existence is within the Jewish "bubble". This must be considered as her reality. Yet "reality" seems to refer to something that she has to step outside of her "bubble" to achieve. One only lives in this reality for certain episodes such as dinner parties and shopping, or "moments".

I know that JL [her successor in the Youth and Community worker job] has talked about the need for continuing professional development of chanich⁴⁰ to madrich⁴¹ to youth worker to ... you know, whatever. So I am now one of three full time professional staff at [synagogue] apart from the administrator and the rabbi so in terms of professionals in the Jewish community in Leeds, a huge weight falls on me. A big responsibility.

I am struck by this sense of responsibility that Abigail seems to take on. She is only one youth worker in one synagogue. There are other synagogues in Leeds, with other youth workers, and there are other ways of being Jewish. In fact there are other ways of leading very fulfilling lives without pursuing Jewish activity. One gets the essence

⁴⁰ Chanich = **Participant, one who is being educated**

⁴¹ Madrich = **Leader, one who leads the way**

of Continuity from this speech. Not only the continuity of the Jewish people, as has been mentioned before, but also the immediacy of continuity of Jewish youth provision.

B

So that's interesting. So you've got this responsibility that you've indicated. If you'd have just been plucked from a youth workers' course or something, do you think that you'd still feel that same sense of responsibility or ...? I mean, what you're describing to me is something very global as opposed to, "I'm just responsible for educating these kids". You're really talking about their whole ... you know, much more besides what you can do with them for two hours a week or whatever. Do you think that's come up through RSY or is that something you'd feel anyway?

A

I just think that, to use the analogy, although I don't like it of the battle, like I said about continuity, I guess we're all in it for continuity, really. We're all in it for survival and I am not talking about any threats externally. I am just talking about how Jewish people now are not forced into being Jewish. It's a choice. And for most people, they're not choosing positively to be Jewish so what I am doing, hopefully, is equipping them with the passion and the skills and the ideology to be positively Jewish.

I can't remember what the question was, now, globally?

Interesting. Now the issue of continuity has become a battle. It is not a battle against adversaries. It is a battle against complacency. It is a battle to ensure that Jewish people make the "right" choices.

B

No, I'm just interested in that sense of responsibility you give yourself for the Jewish elements of these kids' lives. And I am wondering if it's just because you have that job? Is it because you're you? Or is it because of something that has come up with you through the movement?

A

But, when you say, that job, it's not like the job was advertised and I applied for it. It's like something that DG (her head of department when she worked for the youth movement) once said to me, which was, you don't apply for jobs in the Jewish community. You make them. And that has been my experience. It's so rare to have a job that you actually apply for. Certainly at Sinai [synagogue], I remember finishing movement work and I remember [the rabbi] phoning me and saying, you're coming to Leeds next year. What do you want to do in the community that we can pay you for?

B

So, it's you rather than ...

A

Yeah, so I'm just fortunate that I am in a situation where I can do something that I want to be doing and feel like I am here to do. Like I said, I do believe

that this sort of stuff should be happening and lucky that someone pays me to do it. Unless the money gets cut which, in these sorts of jobs, is the reality.

B

Yes, too true. That's excellent. Thank you.

Several questions arise throughout this discourse which I need to address using the data from the interview. As this was the first interview, it served to set the scene for the following interviews both in terms of the issues raised and the techniques employed. To that end I scoured the text for questions that I posed during the analysis and for the answers that arose either in the course of either the interview itself or my interpretation of it. The following six questions, to some extent, informed the next interviews.

1. Why would someone continue to expose themselves to social encounters of the sort that take place in a youth movement if their initial experiences have not been positive?

There seems to be an almost imperceptible incorporation of the culture of the events and, by extension, the movement. Abigail has returned because she enjoyed each camp towards the end more than she did at the beginning. There is a continuum with each experience whereby she is taking on more and more of the nuances of the culture, becoming more and more socially engaged and feels more and more "at home" in the movement environment.

2. What does the expression of "homesickness" represent?

Van Gennep (1960) uses the model of "liminality" to describe ritual and belonging. There are many parallels with his work on faith communities and what is being described here in terms of youth movement belonging. Homesickness parallels van Gennep's first (preliminal) stage where the individual is not yet embroiled in the rituals and culture. There is at this stage a longing for the old whilst gradually embracing some of the cultural nuances of the new. Until one has embraced enough of the new to feel "at home", one experiences homesickness.

3. What is it that makes the post-GCSE "Israel Tour" a movement highlight, despite personal frictions, issues of security and long periods away from home?

"Israel Tour" is the last "camp" that youngsters go on as participants before becoming leaders. It is, therefore the culmination of the educational experience that

they have worked towards since joining the movement (often at age nine). All of the education in the Zionist movements focuses on a love of Israel, without ever going there - until age sixteen. The educational path culminates in the reality of the trip to Israel. Additionally, its duration is double the length of any of the camps the youngsters have attended before so it offers enhanced opportunities for bonding and more opportunity for making new friends.

Abigail speaks of three identities which she professes to have incorporated. Judaism, Reform Judaism and Zionism are the pillars of RSY ideology. It is the advent of these identities, or belief systems in her, which illustrate her post-liminal incorporation of the movement culture and her ultimate sense of belonging to the youth movement through having done so.

4. How do our movement members develop and maintain a uniform ideology which is passed on from one generation of participants to the next?

Central to the movement ethos is its informal education. Ideas, concepts and facts are constantly imparted through the educative process at camps, at weekly meetings and at residential weekends and trips. That is the overt passage of ideology from one generation to the next. There is also the covert or imperceptible means of the participants gaining the ideology. This is about identity formation and social conformity. In order to feel accepted by the group, one adopts the group ideology, one agrees with what is being talked about in groups and accepts majority attitude on matters of opinion.

5. It is interesting to note the passion for youth leadership and for advancing an ideology expressed as a “vision”. What is this vision and how does it motivate a former youth movement participant to continue Jewish Youth and Community Work?

The “vision” seems to be the strength of feeling, the passion that Abigail has developed through her youth movement years and on into her adult years. It is a vision of well informed Reform Jewish youngsters who can make the “right” choices for liberal attitudes, social action and environmental awareness; it is also about giving such youngsters the confidence to be who they are in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and even a multi-denominational (in a Jewish context) world.

It is also her vision to educate such youngsters, despite having no formal educational qualification using informal educational techniques. It is this confidence, bordering on arrogance, which I have found to be so prevalent amongst youth movement leadership.

6. Abigail observes that barriers are broken down in RSY with the result that it encourages equal social standing. How is this achieved?

In RSY, as in many other Jewish Youth Movements, efforts are always made to ensure that youngsters are felt included and equal in every way. Leaders' handbooks (e.g. www.habodror.org.uk/chinuch/documents/hdukhadrachaguide.doc 2007) talk of "leadership by example" and issues of caring for the individual and for society. For instance, one youngster, a second year student at Cambridge and leader in RSY-Netzer, once remarked to me: "Dugma Ishit (Personal Example) is the absolute foundation of Hadracha (youth leadership)". However, these youngsters often still know each other outside of the context of the youth movement. They are often all too aware of the inequities between them. These are displayed, for instance, in differences in clothing, areas where they live, size of house and cars their parents drive. Even the friends they hang out with at school will have "tribal uniforms". During early adolescence, a time when teenagers are notoriously self-conscious and aware of differences, these differences can often build barriers to friendships. RSY removes these barriers and impediments to equality when, at age fifteen, the designated camp is one that is under canvas. During a concentrated fortnight a community is created where none of the outward signs of difference are relevant and the similarities are exploited. Bonding is enhanced by having to tackle the group tasks of keeping the camp going together – for example cleaning and dinner duties.

8. Tracy: We see the World in a Similar Way

B

Okay, we'll start with a history of your youth movement involvement. So can I ask when you first got involved and how you got involved

T

My parents decided that it was a good idea for me to go on an RSY-Netzer⁴² camp.

I wonder why her parents decided that it was a good idea. They must have perceived some benefit. Extrapolating from what we have learnt from Abigail's interview, they are likely to have been motivated by Tracy's ability to mix with other Jews, to feel a sense of Jewish identity and to, in the long term, meet and marry another Jew – Jewish Continuity.

They'd heard about it through the shul⁴³ magazine, I think, and so at the age of eleven ... It was the summer between my primary and secondary I was booted off to Chiltern Cantello down in Somerset. I had a wicked time ... but I was very, very annoyed at the time.

The use of the term "booted" is a very emotive one, followed immediately by reassurance of what a great time she had; but then a reiteration of the annoyance at her parents having made major decisions on her behalf. This sandwiching of the good time she had between two negatives towards her parents' action perhaps denotes an independence, an indignation at someone else having to make decisions for her. The fact that her parents sent her is there, on both sides of the sandwich. However, still supplying the meat in the middle of the sandwich, the important essence of this account – the fact that she had a wicked time. It doesn't apparently matter what her parents had to do with it.

B

You were very annoyed to go?

T

Yeah, I didn't know anyone and there were all these people who came from a strange culture - posh.

She illustrates her alienation on two counts. Not only did she not know them but they were culturally "different" to her.

⁴² RSY-Netzer Reform Synagogue Youth. Netzer is the umbrella organisation comprised of the branches around the world.

⁴³ Shul = synagogue

B

Okay, so you get along there. Were you instantly having a good time or did it take you a while to settle?

T

No, I remember I was just chatting with a girl who was there and it was fine. It was really nice. We had a good time. Uhm ... a few bits were a bit scary, I remember being away from home for such a long time and ... you know

“It was fine”, “It was ... nice” and “good time” are all expressions of the same sentiment. Repeating the sentiment suggests both emphasis of the good time and the fact that it was unexpected. It is so unexpected that she has to reiterate the sentiment several times to make sure that it is understood. Or perhaps she has to reiterate it to herself – as if saying it several times will make it truer.

She also expresses feelings of homesickness. This is perhaps the reason she has to emphasise the good time that she has had. The good time is concurrent with feelings of homesickness. She has to reiterate that it was good because, actually, she was feeling pretty miserable.

B

How long was the camp? Two weeks?

T

Two weeks, yeah. All your normal insecurities, people developing at different rates. You know, some people had kissed boys and some people had breasts and some didn't... It was all, you know, apart from the normal stuff, I loved it.

One gets the sense that Tracy feels that the alienation she is experiencing at camp is a sentiment she would experience anywhere. She refers to the insecurities as “normal” but she “loved it”. This seems to be an environment where she is happy to feel alienated. There might be a case for suggesting that she was made welcome or comfortable in other ways.

B

But it was a huge age range, was it? Were you one of the youngest?

T

I was eleven but the oldest on camp was twelve so, no... So, I'd come in the middle year. You could come at age nine so I wasn't the youngest. I was the middle age. But I think it's better to be around there than to be a younger age.

Why better? Is the implication here that the youngest children are the most alienated? They have the most “developing” to do, the most to learn and more rite of passage experiences to go through – such as “kissing boys”.

- B
And then you carried on going to camp after that?
- T
Yeah. I went to ... always the summer camps. I didn't miss a summer camp... ever, I don't think, after that. I went to quite a few winter camps. I really enjoyed them. Quite a lot of my friends used to go to them.
- B
And your friends were from...?
- T
Loads of places. Did you mean geographically?
- B
Well yes, because you say a lot of your friends. Presumably, they're not your local friends?
- T
No, they were friends that I could meet up with, basically. The ones I'd met on camps. So they'd be from London or Cambridge or some from Manchester. So I'd get to meet up with my small group of friends who I loved ... and we would have very little contact for the rest of the year and then we'd meet up again at camp. It was great.

The advent of friends seems to play a large part in her returning to camp time after time. Making friends seems to be a huge factor in the transition from pre-liminal to post-liminal involvement.

She describes friends coming from all over the country. This parallel to the “ingathering of the exiles” from the Diaspora almost seems like a very Jewish thing to be doing. Tracy lives in a very non-Jewish area so her annual sortie to camp is the reinforcement of her Judaism. She mentions that she does not see some of these people, whom she describes as friends, from one year to the next. The fact that they all come together annually for camp, and still regard each other as friends, is testament to the intensity of the camp experience.

- B
And what about ... You obviously had a bunch of school friends as well?
- T
Yeah
- B
Did you manage to reconcile the two lots of friendships? Did you ever manage to mix them or were the two always very separate?

The phenomenon of separating one's identity in such circumstances is understood by Cohen (2006) who states that “participation in the temporary community formed at the camp enables these youth to explore and develop a more proactive type of identity” (page 57).

T

They've always been very separate. My youth movement friends still don't really know my school friends. Uhm ... I don't see them in the same light.

Interesting. Although Tracy is adept at managing the two social circles, the thought never crosses her mind to bring the two together. Not seeing them "in the same light" suggests a contextualisation of each set of friends. Perhaps there is an intuitive understanding of the fact that her school friends could never have a sense of belonging to the youth movement friends who have undergone a series of initiation rituals and rites of passage to have developed a sense of loyalty to each other. This is reminiscent of "Third Culture Kids" (Useem, Useem et al, 1963), youngsters brought up in foreign countries. These TCKs have been found to have more in common with each other than with either compatriots from their place of birth or individuals from their host country. It almost seems as if Judaism, and in particular, the Jewish Youth Movement, plays the role of a Third Culture, one in which Tracy finds commonality with others, and outside of which she is an alien.

B

I know you just said that you didn't see them from one year to the next but did you ever do anything in between?

T

Oh yeah, we'd meet up and stuff. And sometimes, with some of them we'd meet up ... I remember my parents driving up to North London quite a lot and complaining about it.

Her parents obviously felt so strongly about the benefits of her involvement that they were prepared to make the sacrifices of time and effort to assure her continued involvement.

Uhm ... but some of my good friends I didn't see like from year to year.

Although she does not see them from one year to the next, she still describes these people as "good" friends. There must be something in the strength of the bond of commonality between them that is able to sustain these relationships in this way.

Some of them we did. But it wasn't organised for us. We used to get the address list at the end, which would have everyone's phone numbers and everyone was very excited about receiving it and very annoyed if someone's name wasn't on it or ... if they lost their copy or something. It was like gold dust - that stuff.

Even though she has local friends, these friends are likened to “gold dust”. What is this bond that is so much stronger than the day to day contact she has with her local friends?

B

Okay and what about movement stuff. Were there any weekends in the middle of the year?

T

I don't know. I never went to one.

B

Right, so your only involvement at that time was camps.

T

My involvement, yeah. It was all organised for me. As in, my parents got the forms, sent them off, told me I was going.

There seems to be no question in her parents' mind. They appear to regard attending camps with the same degree of importance as any other extra-curricular activity that a child might pursue, such as ballet or music lessons. I wonder if this is because her parents are American. In America, youngsters attend camps every summer as a matter of course. Jewish youth movement camps are probably the closest thing in Britain to that culture of camp attendance.

B

Oh right, okay. Until what age?

T

Uhm ... Until ... I mean, I would get excited about it. It wasn't like I was negative about it. I just knew that it would get done for me and that that was what I was doing over the summer. I think I really only thought about it properly when I was about fifteen... with the uh ... camping. And I was actually really looking forward to that - just the fact that it was camping, a very different experience and slightly more challenging

B

Tell me about that, actually, 'cause that's a very interesting point.

T

I think I was... I wasn't somebody who was particularly interested in like games or anything so I was a bit nervous about this whole thing...

... we all felt like there would be a difference in culture - which there was because it wasn't about who looked the prettiest and who did this and who did that. It was all about, well we all smell; we're all disgusting; we're all cold at night ... you know and ... so I think it was quite good bonding. I definitely found that.

Could this shared adversity be the crucial factor in a creation of the post-liminal state? It certainly gives the impression of being a levelling experience. “We all” is mentioned several times, as if to stress the unity that was created. Not just “we” but

“we all”. In contrast, perhaps it is her other friends (the non-movement, non-Jewish ones) who competed to be “the prettiest” or to have certain experiences. Conceivably, it is this competition that gets in the way of bonding.

B

So, compared to other camps, that was the one that kind of got you hooked?

T

Yeah, more than “Israel Tour”, actually. That’s the one I enjoyed the most, anyway. I really liked it and I actually think it was good education all round. Not just Jewish but also an understanding of the outdoors, an understanding of: you don’t have to do everything comfortably, nicely. It’s sometimes nice to do things in a rough way and uh ... you have more control over it ’cause basically, you’re in a field. So you can do what you want really. There’s no sort of boundaries.

What does she mean by boundaries? First reading would suggest physical boundaries. However, extrapolating from Abigail’s interview, and also from the concept of “competition” having been removed, there might be a suggestion of notional boundaries. Friendship groups have dissipated and there are no cliques. The boundaries preventing certain friendships have been removed. In fact, I would posit that there are boundaries, just not recognisable as such. The new boundaries are ones of inclusivity, of sharing and of bonding. They are boundaries of all being smelly; all being disgusting; all being cold at night. They are all sharing the same experience and facing the same adversities.

B

So you’re kind of building your own little microcosm?

T

Yeah, definitely, and you get the feeling that you are ... you definitely WERE this group of people. There is nothing else to your group apart from the people, which was quite nice really. If you like them. Yeah, it was very good.

One gets the sense of the creation of a novel community, the communal post-liminal experience. “Nothing else ... apart from the people” can be interpreted on so many levels. There is the exclusion of the outside world, the loyalty to everyone else in the group, the sense of group bonding, the importance of the new relationships one is forging. Indeed, here is confirmation of another boundary. If the outside world is to be excluded, then a boundary must be in place to do so.

B

Okay, so looking back, I get a feeling that that was your pivotal camp.

T

Yeah and partially also 'cause there were three Ukrainian guys who came there, which was where I first heard Russian⁴⁴. So they came to our house for a week beforehand and a week afterwards. So, for me, they were very much part of it as well.

The arrival of three Ukrainians to her otherwise mundane existence must have sparked something in Tracy. Not only does she highlight the episode here, but she actually went on to do a degree in Russian. Additionally, if they stayed with her in the week preceding the camp, they would have all made their way to the meeting point together. This would have made her feel like she was arriving as part of a team.

B

So they were the reason that you got interested in Russian?

T

Yeah, it was the first time that I had ever heard Russian.

The suggestion is that this encounter has led Tracy to her choice of university degree.

B

Can you just tell me a little about the youth movement to which you belong?

T

I belong to a youth movement called... well I belonged. I was involved in a youth movement called RSY-Netzer, Reform Synagogue Youth. Netzer standing for "Noar Tzioni Reformi" which means ... Zionist Reform Youth and it's part of a world movement called Netzer Olami⁴⁵. It was really great because it involved a lot of contact.

The first thing she mentions, before ideology, before education, before even a description of the movement, is the social contact.

I mean the fact that it was international was quite a positive thing. I met people from all over the country, similar background, similar beliefs; different types of activities and ... It was good, especially when we became leaders.

Lack of similarity must have been influential. At home she hardly mixes with Jews whilst here she is coming together with a variety of nationalities, all of whom are Jewish. It is the TCK experience. She feels most at home with other Jews, other "outsiders".

Leadership seems to be a hugely positive element of the whole experience. Despite the responsibilities, the limitations on social life and the hard work involved, the rewards of leadership appear to overshadow the negative points. Even now, in 2007,

⁴⁴ Tracy did her degree in Russian

⁴⁵ Olami = World or International. Netzer Olami refers to the umbrella organisation of which RSY-Netzer is a member

the movement is seeing its largest membership growth in many years due to the introduction of a formal leadership training course. I wonder what it is about becoming a leader that is so attractive to youngsters in their mid-teens.

So the movement is quite large. It's ... I don't know about the figures. It runs quite a lot of camps in summer - maybe four camps, five camps... It also runs an "Israel Tour" which I believe has three tours this year - each with around forty participants and then it does leadership training for its older members, which is probably the reason why it's so popular.

Here is confirmation that becoming a leader is a positive experience, affirmation that the opportunity to become a leader is one of the big attractions of membership. I imagine that the social reciprocity is bound up with the responsibility to make this a rewarding experience.

Uhm ... yeah ... it provides high quality, fun, Jewish informal ... and also social education. I think that's really important.

B

Now I know that you're not in the movement any more but when you were a student and below, how much of your time would you say was taken up with movement stuff?

T

When I was at university, I led the local RSY group so that was once every two weeks we did an activity. So that would be about ... including the calling up and the actual doing of the activity - maybe four or five hours a week, maybe.

I have found that these hours are not atypical of a student youth leader contributing towards a youth movement. This is typically completely unremunerated work. It is a huge commitment of time. The rewards to these youngsters must be considerable.

What else did we do?

It is interesting that she has moved from "I" to "we". Does this start to answer the question of why she is so committed? The social bonds and sense of belonging are replete.

Right we'd go on activities such as Veida⁴⁶ which is the decision making body. So that's four or five days in a year; I'd do⁴⁷ summer camps which would, all in all, be about five weeks' worth, including the preparation and

⁴⁶ Veida = AGM

⁴⁷ To "do" in this context implies to be a youth leader

time away. I'd do the winter camp usually, which is another couple of weeks including preparation. Uhm ... if there was any fun weekends going, I'd definitely be up for it.

By this she means that, if she was asked to be a leader on a residential weekend or other event, she would be willing. Despite the time in planning and running the event, she is willing to commit herself to this. It indicates that the rewards outweigh the effort. I wonder what these rewards are. She has already mentioned the social aspect. I suspect that the people she is closest to are those who are having (or have had) similar experiences. There is the camaraderie of being part of a leadership team; there is the appeal of being in a position to ignite young minds.

Uhm ... yeah, I spent quite a lot of time actually, when I think about it. It was all good. I enjoyed it.

There is an answer. She enjoyed it!

B

Okay. Obviously your parents sent you along to RSY-Netzer. Have you ever had any experience of any other youth movements?

T

Yes, I went for a leadership training when I was about 13 - 14 sort of very, very basic, quite rubbish hadracha⁴⁸ course run by HaNoar Hatzioni⁴⁹

Is this derogatory comment a result of her current allegiance to RSY-Netzer or is this a true evaluation of the course? Given that she was only thirteen, we would not expect it to be very high powered educationally.

It was in a weekend and I didn't really like it. It was quite ... I think socially, I found the people to be unfriendly and the quality of the programming was not good.

Her rationale for it being "rubbish" starts with an account of her social exclusion. This seems to represent such an important part of the whole episode. Indeed, it has been suggested (Jackson and Smith, 1999) that "high levels of in-group identification may blind some people ... and lead them to unfairly judge members of opposing or different groups" (page 120). Perhaps she is "unfairly judging" the educational content in the same way.

⁴⁸ Hadracha = **youth leadership**

⁴⁹ HaNoar Hatzioni – **a politically neutral pluralist Jewish youth movement**

Are they really unfriendly or is it just the case that she has not had the chance to incorporate the rituals enough to feel a sense of belonging? In any event, she is judging the movement based on her single weekend experience. She was quite young and the educational content would have been pitched to her level. Perhaps, too, she may have been judging the content on the social experience. If she was not having a good time socially, perhaps this jaded her ability to enjoy the programming.

This episode mirrors Abigail's experiences of trying another movement. What she is describing is the sense of alienation she is experiencing at not fully fitting in.

And it was also a little bit unthinking I thought. A little bit like "this is what we believe" without any of the debate, which I think is important.

B

And why is the debate important.

T

Because that's what Judaism is, isn't it?

I propose that it is more than that. So what if that is what Judaism is? There must be a reason why she believes it is a positive characteristic for Judaism to possess. Debate implies an interlocutor, involvement and engagement, a social interaction. Just having information imparted does not include or engage the recipient socially.

B

Interesting. Okay. Not from a pedagogical perspective?

T

Well, yes. It's rubbish. I mean you're not going to take someone else's belief on if they just tell you, you should believe it. "Israel's brilliant". "Okay!" I think it's educationally weak. Well I think it's also morally irresponsible... and not a great model on which to run activities.

B

So RSY does that effectively, the debate part?

T

Yeah. I think the debate is definitely there. I think there's ... you know, if you say, I don't like what's going on in Israel or I am against this, then people will talk to you about it and it's interesting. And not just to change your mind but actually to say "Yeah you might be right there". I think there's ... people do discuss it at the leadership level as well. It's not just discussing with your chanichim⁵⁰ so they agree with what you say. I find that quite empowering ... sort of ... as a young person as well.

⁵⁰ Chanichim = participants

So this issue about debate is about empowerment. For a youngster to be given the chance to air their views and to actually be heard might be unusual in some environments.

B

Okay, so how do you reconcile the fact that you've got ... maybe nine-year-olds coming into your movement; you've got an ideology. The nine-year-olds aren't coming into the movement because of what you stand for. They're coming into the movement for social reasons. How do you reconcile the fact that at the other end ... when they are coming out the sausage machine, they're actually all in agreement with the ideology?

T

Well, they're not. I think that your premises are wrong. I think ... it's more than ... I think that the responsibility of the youth movement ... a Jewish youth movement starts off with education ... uhm Jewish education and it's a Reform Jewish environment so therefore there are certain values which are put across in the Jewish education - like egalitarianism, responsibility, ... uhm ... being aware, education, inclusivity.

How do we educate towards one viewpoint without indoctrinating? These are all admirable concerns to be educating about but they are still a biased viewpoint. Is "inclusivity" perhaps the key? If one is being made welcome, made to feel as if they fit in, why would one not accept whatever ideology goes along with that, or leads to that sense of belonging and welcoming?

I think they are informed values and I think that they get put across through the way people do things. The methods are Reform, if you like but I think ... and so the idea for ... especially for the young ones ... is very much, "we want you to come, we want you to have a good time, we want you to learn a few things about where you're coming from, who you are, in terms of your own background culturally". Whenever I have worked with the younger ones, it's a very simple level of education.

Is that not indoctrination? Keep it simple. Make it fun. Teach something while you are doing it. The online Oxford English dictionary defines indoctrination as "cause to accept a set of beliefs uncritically". If it is "not even at the debate level", then this must be indoctrination. The debate comes later, perhaps. Once they are onside. It occurs to me that the rituals, the camaraderie and the informal educational techniques employed in the youth movements, can be interpreted as indoctrination. It may not have nefarious aims but it has the same subliminal methods.

It's kind of not even on the debate level. Often it's "Jews of the World" or the themes could be things like "The Books of Moses", you know. The themes are chosen well, I think.

Chosen well, for what purpose? Is it to appeal at the appropriate level to each age group? Our charges would reject our message if it were presented in a less enjoyable fashion. It is important therefore, for learning to take place, that the education is both simple and fun and pitched at the right level in order to be well received.

B

Do you think we are indoctrinating them?

T

Indoctrination and education are a very fine line and I don't think that indoctrination is necessarily a bad thing - if you're doing it obviously. Therefore, it's not indoctrination; it's not manipulative but people are quite clear. I don't think all the leaders do share the same opinion which I think is very valuable. And you see that; and they are quite willing to share that with you which I think is a really good value. And I know I always was as a leader. Like if I was unsure about something, or if I didn't agree with something and I was asked by one of the chanichim, "what do you think?" I'd tell them. 'cause I think that's the question. You know they do look up to people. I think the debate is uh... important that the debate happens - which is why I am proud to be part of that movement.

Merry (2005) justifies the inculcation of a set of values in children. He refers to this as "proper moral instruction" (page 409), adding that it leads to the development of a capacity for critical thinking. However, he goes on to suggest that "the debate" is not always necessary. He illustrates this point in his discussion on antiracist teaching. It would be folly, he asserts, to suggest that good antiracist instruction should include both antiracist and racist perspectives.

But I think a lot of people left as well. You know, you don't have to stay in a movement.

What would cause them to leave if they were enjoying themselves? I believe that many leave because they have not incorporated the belief system entirely into their repertoire. So this would counter what Tracy said earlier on, "I don't think all the leaders do share the same opinion". No, when they feel sufficiently alienated by their out of kilter beliefs, they leave.

You know, when you get to the age of sort of 14, 15 if you decide that you're not actually interested in the Jewish bit, or actually you're more aligned with Orthodox Judaism or you just ...

Interesting, there is no secular option in this argument. This lends credence to my position. She is so indoctrinated into this religious Jewish youth movement that the idea of a secular Jewish option does not occur to her.

you know, if you are completely anti-Israel, then maybe you leave. Maybe, you'd stay involved. I know a lot of people who did stay involved but I think what you were asked to do was not to be... I don't think anyone from RSY asks you to support Israel or you're out. You have to be interested and you have to have an opinion. And I think that that's a sound educational model because it's not good enough to be passive about things. I think it is okay to say and as a Jew you have to have an opinion. It may be indoctrination to say that but I don't care.

Here is the dawning of realisation that it may, after all, be a form of indoctrination. In this entire long monologue, I have not interjected once but she has finally come to this admission through her own development of thoughts and evaluation.

I think there's some level of education which ... I mean at what point does indoctrination just equal just passionate education? And at what point do we say, "well actually these people can choose"? Indoctrination is only effective I think when you stop counting yourself as an individual.

When countering adversity, as Jews often do (particularly during times of Middle-East turbulence), there is a tendency to band together, to seek solidarity from each other. I liken it in my mind to a shoal of fish seeking refuge in numbers, darting back and forth in unison. Is this what she means by "no longer counting yourself as an individual"? I think it probably depends on the degree to which one is taken in by the defensive argument.

Having just realised that she has admitted to a degree of indoctrination, she seems to be seeking a reason to conclude that it can not be that.

These kids want to come. And I think we're not that good manipulators. If we were then I'd be worried. A bunch of seventeen-year-olds ... really!

Sure, they want to "come" but do they still hold the same belief system that they joined with at nine as they do when they leave at 23? I am not sure that being a seventeen-year-old is a good enough defence. An indoctrinated 17-year-old is perfectly capable of perpetuating the methodology that indoctrinated them.

B

Okay, can we just go back to half-way through that point where you were saying you could always leave. In a hypothetical world, if RSY-Netzer didn't exist, where would you go to? You, personally. Can you see yourself in another movement?

T

Yeah, I'm sure. I just happened to go to RSY ... in a way. But I do actually think ... like I think the Liberal movement⁵¹ is very good. I think that Noam's very good - which is Masorti⁵² ... uhm ... maybe Habonim⁵³ but they weren't very active where I was living.

The fact that the movements she describes are all ideologically similar to the one she belongs to, suggest a comfort zone. Is this another pointer to indoctrination?

B

Okay, your sales pitch. If you were to, say you've got an eleven-year-old and he's got eighteen youth movements in front of him, what would be your sales pitch for RSY-Netzer?

T

Well, first of all, you don't get the eleven-year-old. You get the parent.

B

Yeah, okay, so what would you say to the parent?

T

It depends if they've got activities in their synagogue or not. I mean ... at [the synagogue where I am employed as a full-time youth worker], for example, it's quite easy because, you know, they'll know other people from the synagogue. Their friends are going.

You'll say, you know, as a youth worker I'd say, this is a really ... this might be something that you're interested in.

She starts by stating that you make your pitch to the parent but immediately her example addresses the youngster. I wonder why this is.

It's a summer camp. It runs for two weeks. It's a good chance for you to have some independence. It's a good way to learn a bit more, to be in a Jewish environment. It's a good way to meet other Jews from around the country ... uhm ... it's got interesting programmes; there's lots of sports available... uhm; it's a good chance to make friends and go away with some people you know already. For some people you might say it's a personal challenge. You might enjoy this.

I find this interesting. One of the movement's stated aims is education but she has not mentioned it once; nor has she mentioned anything about ideology. If she is using the

⁵¹ RSY-Netzer's sister movement. Religious beliefs are very similar; camps are separate but the Europe and "Israel Tour" s are combined with the Reform movement.

⁵² This is another non-Orthodox youth movement although it is slightly more traditional than Reform or Liberal.

⁵³ A left wing secular movement

social and active side to encourage participation, then it must be indoctrination. Bring them in to have a good time and then educate them when you get them.

Uhm ... if you're talking about the parents, you can say things like "it's a chance for your young ..." similar things, basically. Although you'd probably be a bit more obvious about them meeting other Jews and you might want to say to them that it's a great way for them to ... without negating cheder⁵⁴, it's a good way for them to think positively of their Jewish background.

Even to the parents, there is no mention of education. She has acknowledged it to be in parallel or opposition to cheder but would not use it in her sales pitch.

B

So, if we can just move on to cheder, then. Cheder versus movement. What's your stance?

T

I think you need both of them, to be honest. I think a well-run cheder, for the kids who attend, is a really good thing and I think that it's also very good for the ones who are young teachers.

(The thinking behind this is that it is customary in Reform synagogues, for the youngsters who have completed their Bar Mitzvah⁵⁵ to return to religion school as teachers or helpers. This keeps them involved and retains their interest in Judaism and the community).

When I went away for my year abroad, I knew quite bit about Jewish history; I knew about the Maccabees and I knew how that linked into local Greek culture; I knew these things because I had to teach them. It wasn't the most efficient means of learning but it was deeply ingrained. I knew the stuff because I'd been teaching it.

B

They do say that the best way to learn something is to teach it.

Have I stumbled on the essence of the success of youth movement education here? By the time we are senior leaders, we are engrossed in our ideology and enthusiastic about its message. Is this because we are teaching our young charges and are thus impelled to be familiar with our message?

We talk at length about her cheder experiences, both as a pupil and as a young "teacher". She seems to harbour much negativity about the education at cheder, the

⁵⁴ Cheder = **Sunday school, religion school**

⁵⁵ Bar Mitzvah (female – Bat) = **a rite of passage which takes place at age 13**

poor quality of teaching, the formality of the delivery and the rote nature of the knowledge acquisition. She ends this discussion with a few examples of “really good debates”, “good discussions”, being “listened to by an adult”.

B

Okay, so there was an awful lot of informal style of education going on. So what would be the difference between that and youth movement stuff?

T

Well, I think it doesn't happen. I mean I am giving you the examples of best of cheder. Most of the time we had rubbish cheder.

This certainly backs up my own experience. We need to consider why this is the case. Why are our religion schools so uninspiring whilst our youth movements are the opposite? I believe we have already addressed part of the answer when we discussed some of the “teachers” being youngsters themselves. They do it because they are being paid, not necessarily because they have a passion for either the material or for working with children. However, they have little or no experience of teaching and, at thirteen, little credibility amongst their pupils. Conversely, youth leaders, despite their lack of formal training, are somewhat older (albeit, only by a few years); they have worked their way through the movement with frequent informal training, experienced a variety of delivery styles as participants and had frequent opportunities to try their skills; and they are often imbued with a passion along the way (if not, she has already told us that they usually leave before they get to the age where they are taking on responsibilities within the movement).

T

[Regarding youth movements], I think you tend to have a higher standard of enjoyable participation ... uhm ... Interest is directly proportional to participation, which I would say is very good, which is the reason why youth work is so good, I think.

Participation. It is not about the quality of the education. It is about participation. The social interaction once again being demonstrably more important than the ideology.

I think informal education ... the problem with informal education is that you don't get the detail. You don't know what year this happened or that happened because it's just the idea. It's basically secondary. Everything you do is secondary education. You have formulated ... you take the facts, you take what you want out of the facts – as in like the values – and the values you're passing on.

This seems to delineate Tracy's definition of the difference between formal and informal education (cheder versus youth movement). At cheder you get knowledge and facts and in the movement you get values - the ideology, passion and ideas.

You're not so interested in ... you know... in uh whatever, in 70 AD the Temple was ransacked. You know it doesn't really interest you that much ... or 30 AD, I don't even know. I think that the youth ... I mean what you're trying to do is kind of different. As long as both are high quality, I think that you need both. And I would be very much against removing cheder ...

The values she talks about are an example of the passion required for youth leadership. The implication here seems to be that setting youngsters on the "right" moral path is the ideological aspiration, far more important than equipping them with facts. It seems that it is not about teaching History (or Judaism or Religion or any other subject). It is about educating **children**.

B

Okay, if we can just get back to your movement history. You talked about your camps and so on. What made you stay involved through your university years and beyond? Plus you went on Shnat⁵⁶. Do you want to tell me about all those experiences?

T

And "Israel Tour"⁵⁷?

B

Yeah talk to me past "Israel Tour" .

She goes into an extremely long discussion about how she loved Israel, its culture, its history, its people and so on. However, she eventually reaches the crux of the matter which was that she had a particularly rotten time because she did not get on with the people who were in her group. Her friends were in another group. However, she decides to make the best of it when one of her leaders discusses the prospect of her undergoing leadership training when she gets back. She returns to the UK, begins leadership training and starts to plan her gap year in Israel.

T

... And then ... and then I also thought about the idea of going on shnat⁵⁸. I thought, yeah, maybe spending more time in Israel will be a good thing ... learning about all these issues ... you know, dealing with the complexities of it and ...

⁵⁶ **Movement gap year**

⁵⁷ **Four or five week summer trip to Israel for youngsters following their GCSE year – offered by most of the Jewish youth movements**

⁵⁸ Shnat = (literally "year of ..." short for Shnat Netzer – Netzer year) the movement gap year.

What are these complexities? There is a tendency for modern, thinking, liberally minded Jews to harbour an ambivalence towards Israel (Cohen and Kahn-Harris, 2004). There is a connection, a history based on relatives or acquaintances living there, perhaps childhood visits or just the fact that it feels comfortable to be Jewish there. However, Israel is a place, like any other, where leaders make political decisions which can be contentious; wars, battles and terrorism are a constant threat and opinions are divided on every issue. Tracy seems to be expressing the need to make sense of it all, to spend her gap year in Israel learning what is behind the issues and giving herself enough information to decide what stance to take.

... so I had that to look forward to in my sixth form. I went on camps because, you know, doing the training ... It was really good because I sort of thought, "ooh I'm really looking forward to this summer. Ooh I can write a programme on this and ooh that'll be quite fun and let's do this". (Laughs) My sense of what's cool is somewhat skewiff but uhm ... I thought it was wicked. I just thought it was so exciting we could do, like a massive wide game⁵⁹ based on the ten plagues. I mean ... it's brilliant. You know, lots of fun. So it was good because I felt there was lots of options to do fun things which I was getting something out of.

Tracy anticipates her leadership role with glee. Is it the allure of responsibility? Is it, as she states, the opportunity to introduce fun ideas to the camp programmes? She also expresses the excitement of being able to be creative. Perhaps that is where the allure of leadership lies. As a participant, one is herded and participates in what is arranged for them by others and often kept in the dark as to where it is leading or what comes next. However, as a leader, one can make the decisions, one can think creatively about the experiential learning process to make it as enjoyable, engaging and educational as possible. It seems that "getting something out" is dual layered. Not only is she anticipating that the programmes she lays on are fun, but she will gain from the knowledge that she has affected the education of some individuals in a positive way.

and I was also enjoying being with my friends which was really important. If my friends weren't involved, I wouldn't be. That's quite clear. It's the same with every group, I think.

Here is confirmation of the centrality of her friends to her involvement in the movement. Her assurance that it is the same in every group alludes to the sense of

⁵⁹ **An active game played over a large area – usually outside**

belonging that she perceives is engendered in all of the youth movements. Ultimately, it is still about being part of the “club”. Is the social side the ultimate reward in and of itself? Does it provide the backdrop in which the educational delivery can take place? Or perhaps, its cocooning effect provides the confidence in which youngsters like Tracy can flourish and become the impassioned, idealistic young leaders that she has become?

T

So ... yeah... then I put the money together, fundraised for shnat, went, had a really good time.

B

So, your experience in Israel the second time around, was a more positive one because of people? Or because of programming?

T

Ah definitely. The whole thing. I mean the way the programme is put together was nice. We had ...uh ... four months on something called Etgar (literally, challenge) which is like ... sort of ... you live in a flat with other people from your movement and you ... your time is quite well divided between free time and programme time. It was quite intense, the programme time but you also had two days off a week which you could do what you wanted with. At the time there wasn't such a ... it wasn't so strict about where you could go and where you couldn't⁶⁰. I used to quite happily take myself off and work out what I wanted to do. Hebrew, ... like I'm quite good at languages so Hebrew was good. And the education was fantastic. Absolutely fantastic. Just made me think about things I'd never thought about before. I think it actually structured the way I thought.

Was it the education *per se* that structured the way that she thought or was it the fact that the education was being delivered in Israel, the place that the education was all about? Perhaps it was the social context in which the education was delivered.

B

And who was delivering the education?

She mentions the names of several people who happen to have been in the same movement as me at around the same time.

B

Habonim!

⁶⁰ Since the start of the second intifada (Palestinian uprising), and the increase in number of Palestinian suicide attacks on Israel, organised programmes in Israel have been extremely vigilant about the situation and often, if there is intelligence about a possible attack, entire groups can be on complete “lock down” (confined to quarters). There are also strict rules about such youngsters not being allowed to use public transport or stand in queues of any sort, which is where many suicide attacks have taken place.

Even twenty-five years after having left the movement, I still hold a strong allegiance and loyalty to it.

She goes into some considerable detail about the course contents and her gap year experience in Israel which I have not coded or included. This is not because I do not think that it forms an integral part of her youth movement experience. Nor do I think that it was not invaluable in shaping Tracy as the person she is today and her thoughts and belief system. I am convinced that it did. I believe that the experience was all of that ... and more. However, I have chosen to focus on the youth leadership side of the movement experience and not on the gap year. As such I have chosen to leave it out as a factor.

B

I know you've not long been out and you're still very much embroiled in movement stuff so it's a bit hard to divorce yourself but my question is, what do you think the movement has done for you?

T

The movement *per se* or ...?

B

Your movement experiences.

T

Oh, the movement experience, okay. I think it's funny. When you go to different places you see people who haven't had experiences like this. I think I'm more confident ... in groups especially. I really don't have a problem talking in groups. I don't necessarily think in a straight and narrow way.... Uhm ... in terms of activities I would plan, in terms of the way I go round ... I'm quite happy to go round a problem. I think youth movement people ... I've noticed that all my friends are the same... if we can't do something one way, we'll try another, and we'll try another until we get a way to do it. We're quite persistent like that. I think our view of status quo is different to general Brits.

Tracy identifies confidence, presentation skills, teamwork, problem solving skills, lateral thinking and analytical skills.

I observe the use of "we". She is demonstrating being part of something, a member, a social unit. "All" her friends are the same? Could she be making assumptions here or are all her friends really similar in this respect? It is just possible that, as friends, they have developed a parallel way of thinking but it is equally possible that the movement experiences that they have shared have honed this mode of thinking and approach.

It is interesting that she should differentiate herself and her friends from “general Brits”. That sense of alienation described by Third Culture Kids (Useem, Useem et al, 1963) is very evident here. She is British but she is not a “general Brit”. She is a special Brit, a Jewish Brit. Being in that special category of Britons, Tracy suggests, gives us certain skills and a certain outlook.

B

The status quo of ...?

T

You know, the way something is run, is the way it's always run. I've got a lot of friends who would say, “no, bollocks, that's unacceptable. I'm going to provide an alternative.” And they don't just criticise.

She has now moved from using the term “we” to using “they”. It is as if she does not want to be associated with the critical or negative aspects she is describing – despite the fact that she is referring to her friends.

I think that's the key thing. People don't just criticise things they don't agree with. And a lot of the things they don't agree with might come from their Jewish values. It might not. But the way you approach a problem, I think is very good. I think it's very mature... and I think it's lacking in British society.

But Jewish youth movements in Britain are **part** of British society, albeit a tiny minority but British society nonetheless. So this alienation is self-imposed. She is effectively saying that we are better, “the way we approach a problem”, we are “very mature”, we possess qualities “lacking in British society” are all comments which remove her from mainstream British society.

B

So, as a Jewish Youth Movement participant, you feel you have more confidence, more maturity, whatever than your British peers? So therein lies the question, what about other Jews who don't belong to youth movements? What's coming across is that you feel that being Jewish, along with all your other experiences, that you have an advantage in having belonged to a youth movement?

T

Yeah, definitely. But I think Judaism as a whole, if you know about it at least, is a tradition of debate. It's not a tradition of answers. It's a tradition of questions. I think that lends itself to people being critical of the world in which they live... in a positive way ... and sometimes in a negative way. I think the youth movement helps with the action ... I think.

So there is something within Judaism - not specifically Jewish youth movements - that creates the confidence and maturity? However, many Jews do not associate with

other Jews often enough to access the debate she describes; many are not involved in organised religion or may not encounter other Jews. It is the movement environment that Tracy has expressly already attributed to her Jewish feelings. Therefore, being in a youth movement perhaps simply means a community of Jews being Jews together – not only together but together in the heightened bonding experience of residential camps. If Tracy had not joined this movement, one suspects that she may never have encountered this tradition of debate she prizes so highly. So one cannot discount the part played by the movement in perpetuating the “tradition of debate”.

B

Okay, thanks. I think we’ve pretty much covered everything. It just remains for me to ask you if you feel that I have left anything out which would shed any light on the impact that having had a youth movement experience has had on you.

T

I reckon that 70% of my best friends are from the youth movement.

Once again, the element at the forefront of her mind is the invaluable opportunity for bonding that the movement has afforded her. This is reminiscent of the old school tie concept, the notion of making your friends, during your school years, who will later set you up for life in one context or another.

... and that’s partially because we grew up together but also because we see the world in a similar way. That’s it.

They actually did not grow up together. These are people whom she met at camps twice a year, and maybe at an event or two in the interim. Recommendation indeed of the bonding capacity of the movement experience. Seeing the world in a similar way is the essence of this research. What way is that? And how has it arisen? **Why do** they hold a similar outlook?

9. Jack: A Firm Believer in Being Jewish

B

Okay, this is going to be an interview about your movement experience.

J

Easy!

The instantaneous reply suggests that this is something that he is very comfortable with. As we will see in the unfolding interview, Jack's movement experience has formed a large part of his life and continues to dominate both his social life and his extra-curricular campus activities.

B

Describe your current youth movement involvement. What are you doing at the moment in your youth movement?

J

At the moment I'm at the end of FZY⁶¹, really, because afterwards you either do movement work⁶² or that's it. And this summer I'm going to be taking⁶³ "Israel Tour" .

A lamentation perhaps? "I'm at the end", immediately preceded by "at the moment", as if to reassure himself that it was not always thus and perhaps it will only be a transient state. This is then immediately followed by the disclosure that he is leading "Israel Tour". We know from later in the interview that tour is significant to him, and from previous interviews, that it is significant within the British Jewish community. Perhaps he is trying to reassure himself of his continuing involvement.

B

Okay, do you do anything on a week to week basis or monthly at all?

J

There's quite a few Bogrim⁶⁴ in Birmingham and we have occasional events where we meet up and there's often weekends and things. I recently did the "Intro to Tour⁶⁵" weekend for kids that hadn't done FZY stuff before.

⁶¹ FZY = Federation of Zionist Youth, a politically neutral movement which welcomes all elements of Jewish youth regardless of religious orientations

⁶² In most movements, it is considered the culmination of commitment to offer a year's term of office to the movement as a paid employee when one has completed one's degree. Normally there are three posts, Head of the movement, Education Officer and Events Organiser. As a medical student, Jack will not be in a position to offer this commitment as his degree will take five years by which time he will no longer be a youth and will be pursuing his professional career.

⁶³ By "taking" he means he will be leading a group of youngsters on their summer tour of Israel. There are professional guides but the leaders are responsible for the educational content of the tour.

⁶⁴ Bogrim = literally graduates, refers to those movement members who are of university age.

⁶⁵ "Tour" is a concept in its own right. It is used with an inherent understanding of its place in the scheme of Jewish youth movements, the highlight of one's movement experience and the best opportunity for leaders to instil some Jewish education in their charges.

B

So, tour ... Can you tell me a little about tour?

J

It's when 16-year-olds go to Israel for a month ... and ...uhm ... go round Israel and, hopefully we try and get them involved ... and get them to discover their Jewish identity and that kind of thing.

Jack tells me later that he is an atheist and yet he regards the “discovery” of Jewish identity, engagement with Judaism, as an important pursuit for his charges.

B

Okay and why did you want to be a leader on “Israel Tour”?

J

'cause I enjoy doing hadracha and it's the ultimate challenge ...

He enjoys hadracha. Why?

... 'cause you're in a tzevet⁶⁶ of four instead of the whole of camp⁶⁷. Everything you've got to deal with yourself. Uhm ... also, I didn't go on Tour⁶⁸ myself and it's a chance to do it. It's such an important part of being a British Jew, to go on tour. I feel that I've missed out and that I can make up for it in this way.

In a survey of moderately engaged British Jews (Cohen and Kahn-Harris, 2004), 86% of respondents said either that they had sent their children on an organised trip to Israel or would do so when they have children who are old enough.

If he is to be part of this fellowship, this cohort or generation of British Jews who belong to a youth movement, he needs to have gone through all of the rituals in order to feel as if he completely belongs, to achieve that post-liminal status. It seems not to be about his movement but more about feeling that he has undergone what everyone else has undergone. As a committed movement member who gives a great deal of his time and energies to FZY, he communicates a sense of having missed out on one of the essential rites of passage of being a British Jew.

He has already communicated that the development of his Jewish identity is important to him. Now we see that specifically being a member of **British** Jewry is

⁶⁶ Tzevet = team

⁶⁷ Usually, on camps, there is a large team of leaders offering a ratio of around one to three.

⁶⁸ The year that Jack was due to go on Tour coincided with the Intifada (Palestinian uprising) and it was deemed by many parents (myself among them) to be unsafe to send their children to Israel. As a result, many of the movements today are suffering from a dearth of young leaders. This reinforces Jack's comment of it being the best opportunity to work on his charges' Jewish identity. Many youngsters left the movements due to their lack of engagement with Israel at that time.

too. At the moment Jack conveys an element of being an outsider, looking forward to achieving his full status as a British Jew by participating on a group tour of Israel, albeit as a leader.

B

Why is it an important part of being a British Jew?

J

Because ... well, from a personal point of view ... well, because everyone does it ...

Through the juxtaposition of “from a personal point of view” with “everyone does it”, we get the sense that he is actually suggesting that he feels on the outside now but that he wants to be like everyone else.

... but personally, because living in the Diaspora and not being very religious, my connection to Judaism is Israel. So you’ve got to be getting connected to Israel to have a connection to Judaism and a Jewish identity.

His only connection to Judaism at the moment is actually via the youth movement.

However, as a Zionist movement, it expresses its ideals by grappling with the Israeli issues. Israel is thus seen by Jack as central to his ability to engage with Judaism.

There is also possibly the element of him being at “the end” of the movement. How, as an atheist, do you engage with Judaism when the source of your engagement is no longer open to you? One gets the feeling that he needs to find a substitute focus for his Judaism when he leaves the movement. That focus will be his engagement with Israel.

B

Okay, and why is that connection so important?

J

Because I am a member of the Jewish People ... and we’re a People with an ethnic common history and a common culture and it’s something that I get a lot out of – being Jewish and being part of this culture and this Kehilla⁶⁹.

It is sometimes understandable when Hebrew words slip into conversation since they have an esoteric meaning or are not directly translatable. However, there is a perfectly direct translation for the word Kehilla, community. By using the Hebrew, he is somehow reinforcing his need to belong to this community, this Kehilla. One gets the sense of, “not only am I a member of the community, but my use of the

⁶⁹ Kehilla = **community**

esoteric language demonstrates that I have achieved a level of belonging through the ritual of language acquisition”. In common with all of these interviews, there is a generous sprinkling of Hebrew terminology throughout this discourse. This is tacit confirmation of me as an insider. It is assumed that I understand both the terminology and its context. It implies that articulated sentiments are expressed to me as an insider with the implicit understanding that I completely identify with them, and appreciate their ramifications.

And so, by having a connection to Israel, that’s what keeps me Jewish.

This is confirmation of the idea that he needs to engage with Israel to complete his liminal journey.

And, as Ahad Ha’am said, Israel should be at the centre of Jewish culture. It doesn’t need everyone to live there but that’s where Jewish culture is defined. So that’s why it’s important for me.

Is this a case of self-justification? He knows that he will not be able to live in Israel for the foreseeable future so he aligns himself with Ahad Ha’am⁷⁰ whose philosophy fits in with how Jack sees himself – supporting Israel from afar, engaging with her on a cultural level, but not fully embracing her as a homeland. This reference to Ahad Ha’am feels like the notion that we tend to read the newspaper that confirms our existing political beliefs; he is quoting the Jewish philosopher who corroborates his values and beliefs.

B

Okay, moving away from that topic, how did you first get involved in youth movements?

J

Well, that was the first time that you could go to Habonim and [my parents] told me that I could go to Habonim or keep going to the Beavers... I think I had outgrown [The Beavers] by then... ’cause they wanted me to have a Jewish education.⁷¹

B

And are you pleased about that?

J

Well, yeah.

B

⁷⁰ Ahad Ha’am – (Real name, Asher Ginsberg, “Ahad Ha’am” actually means “One of the People”) A Jewish philosopher of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

⁷¹ By “education”, he means the sort of informal education that is imparted in organisations such as Beavers, Scouts and Jewish youth movements

What do you think would have happened if you'd stayed in Beavers and gone on to the Scouts?

J

It wouldn't have happened.

This is a demonstration of his complete post-liminal incorporation of the Jewish youth movement model. He is incapable of seeing a scenario in which he would have sought an alternative.

B

Couldn't you see yourself staying through Cubs and then going on to Scouts?

J

It wouldn't have happened.

His assertion is final. He is not even going to consider the hypothetical possibility, not going to engage with that unthinkable prospect.

B

No? Okay, you talked about joining Habonim. Tell me a little bit about your "career path" through Habonim.

J

I used to go to Habonim. They had weekly activities that I used to go to on most weeks in [my neighbourhood]. And then every year I went on camp. I went on (he counts up on his fingers) ... 6 camps – for 6 years, until I was 15.

B

So what was your involvement? Did you ... were you just a chanich⁷² then?

J

A little while after the camps, I started getting involved in FZY. I was in Habonim until I was fifteen and I started doing FZY when I was 14.

This strikes me as a strong commitment. For six years he attended weekly events as well as summer and winter camps. There must have been a strong motivation for him to leave the movement and change allegiance at the age of 14. Interestingly, though, he fails to actually answer the question. I am exploring his involvement in Habonim and he tells me of his switch in allegiance. Is there something unsavoury about his six years in Habonim that he would rather not dwell on and would rather avoid divulging to me?

But I stayed involved in Habonim and I was a leader on a winter Machaneh⁷³; that was the last thing I did which was when I was ... it must've been ... 2002

⁷² Chanich = **participant**

⁷³ Machaneh = **camp**

Indeed, he stayed involved in both movements for some time. The transition from one to the other, although motivated by strong forces, was a difficult one.

B

So you're telling me that you joined FZY. Why was that?

J

Because, on a weekly basis, that was the best thing going on. At 14 I was a little too old for the Habonim activities and there was no-one going to them anyway.

It seems the social element was no longer as attractive in Habonim as it had become in FZY.

And FZY was much more educational, much more mature, I guess.

B

Mature?

J

Habonim ... because the weekly activities were aimed at younger people, it was more just messing around.

So, it seems that there were no further opportunities for engaging in Habonim; no more rites of passage. With the absence of opportunities for engagement or establishing allegiance, he was open to switching allegiance, for finding a movement that would offer those opportunities of belonging. The social aspect seems to be connected to the ritual aspect. Without a decent number of individuals with whom to engage, the activities themselves became less engaging.

When I went to FZY I felt like I was actually getting more out of the activities.

B

So you're talking about the educational content being more rewarding?

J

Yes

B

You had a bit of an overlap and that was the deciding point? It wasn't about the ideology? It was about the educational content that you were getting on a week to week basis?

J

Well, I was on the committee⁷⁴ for FZY in the first year. Then in the second year I remember I went to the Habonim madrichim⁷⁵ meetings and I was

⁷⁴ **As a peer-led group, FZY is run by a committee elected by and consisting of its members who run educational activities, camps and events for their peers. This is distinct from the top down model of many of the other movements where the older members lead the younger members and run the movement.**

⁷⁵ Madrichim = leaders

going to start taking over the Ken⁷⁶ there and I was going to quit FZY and carry on with that 'cause I wanted to be in Habo 'cause I grew up in it and my parents grew up in it. But I changed my mind and decided to run for chair of FZY instead.

I wonder if being able to take on responsibility at this stage was the attraction. It has been suggested (Epstein, 2007) that, when treated like adults, teens invariably "rise to the challenge" (page 63). Rising to the challenge suggests that there needs to be some motivation. Perhaps that motivation is the enjoyment derived from both holding a position of responsibility (and the inherent rewards of seeing the resulting success) and of being afforded that responsibility.

B
So was there an ideological attachment? Talk to me about the different ideologies.

J
I don't know if there was or not.

It would seem then that the movement itself, or its ideology, were not the primary attraction. What then? My previous interviews suggest a strong social element in choice of movement affiliation.

B
So at the time it was social? At the time you chose FZY over Habonim - for social reasons?

J
I can't remember how I was thinking then. I mean I know ... the problem with Habonim is that it is socialist and I am not a socialist.

This suggests that he joined this movement regardless of its philosophy or ethos. The ideology only became an issue a little later. Once he was old enough to start thinking what his movement stood for, Jack took the decision to leave. I am not sure that he moved towards an ideology or just away from one that he did not seem to connect with.

I think I was always aware of that. But, in terms of secular identities, it is the only place ... the only movement there is that has that.

There is a certain irony here. He felt at home in Habonim since it is secular like himself. Yet there was the compulsion to leave. Why? Surely its socialist ethos could not have outweighed the secular identity that he prizes? In any event, the issue of

⁷⁶ Ken = regional branch of the movement, literally a nest

socialism has long been a topic of heated debate (from my own experience) in Habonim. Additionally, with the fall of socialism around the world and the collapse of the kibbutz ideal (to which Habonim is affiliated), there is now a move away from socialism to concentrate on social action and social justice instead.

I think I chose FZY ... not social ... but because I was doing it every week with people that I wasn't particularly friends with. There was just me and Jonny⁷⁷ who I was friends with. He was my co-chair....So I chose it because I thought I could get more out of it at the time... and also I actually didn't like the people in Habonim.

Despite his protestations of it not being social, he joined because he did not like the people in his previous movement. He must, therefore, have been seeking a more acceptable social alternative. So whilst he did not join because of friends already in the movement, he did join with the hope that the social side would be an improvement on his former experiences.

We talk a little about his knowledge of some of the other movements and I enquire as to whether he can make a value judgement about FZY being the best movement for him.

J

I saw the interaction between all the different movements. I think that FZY is definitely the best movement for me ideologically because ... you've got, obviously, the religious movements that obviously aren't for me. That then leaves me with RSY, LJY, Noam, Hanoar Hatzioni and Habonim... AJ6 ... BBYO. So AJ6 and BBYO⁷⁸ are a waste of time. They have no ideology as far as I'm concerned. Although I am sure that they'll say that about FZY. Then RSY, LJY and Noam are all religious movements

He starts by categorising RSY, LJY and Noam as not belonging to the group of religious movements but then disregards them as religious movements. These three are, by definition, religious movements as they are all affiliated to synagogue organisations (Reform, Liberal and Masorti, respectively – all within the confines of Progressive Judaism as distinct from Orthodox). However, as a Jew whose family

⁷⁷ **Not his real name**

⁷⁸ **RSY and LJY are sister movements aligned to Progressive Judaism**

Noam is similar but slightly more conservative

Hanoar Hatzioni and Habonim are similar – both secular but Habonim is left wing and Hanoar Hatzioni is politically neutral

AJ6 = Association of Jewish Sixth Formers

BBYO, Bnei Brith Youth Organisation, politically and religiously neutral but devoid of ideology

belongs to a Reform congregation, Jack seems to regard this as “less religious” or perhaps it is a less “threatening” form of religion or a more acceptable one.

and despite not being Orthodox, they focus on religion more than they focus on Zionism. Hanoar Hatzioni has a very similar ideology to FZY but it doesn't exist in Manchester and there's no way I would have ever got involved in it.

He spends a long time discounting the other movements and giving reasons for not having attended those. However, there still is no sense of having positively chosen his movement for ideological reasons.

I am not sure about socially but I am sure that I could've grown up in that and it might have shaped how I was differently.

I think this is the first time during an interview that I have had a tacit understanding from an interviewee that his movement experiences have helped to shape his thoughts, shape him as a person.

But FZY is pluralist and ... even though, in terms of membership, it's mostly Orthodox, it does allow you the opportunity to practice Judaism as you want and I think I have a very individual kind of Judaism which can't be put into a box so much. I don't even fit into the Habo⁷⁹ box, which is socialist and I wouldn't say I was necessarily completely secular but I probably fit in there...ish.

So, it is a “pluralist” movement. It is one that Jack feels accepts him for who he is and what he represents. This is not a positive ideological motivation, though.

In FZY you can define your own terms and it's also important for me to be in FZY because, with everyone else being Orthodox, it's a chance to educate about the Reform movement and about being “another kind of Jewish”, being a member of another kind of Judaism other than Orthodoxy and it's a problem in Britain at the moment, in my opinion, that most [Jewish] people are Orthodox. They don't really care about Orthodoxy but they wouldn't be anything other than Orthodox.

It is interesting that he should leave the word “Jewish” out of his sentence about Orthodox Jewish people. Is it because he is talking to me about his Jewish life? Or is he so immersed in his Jewish life that “Jewish” is taken for granted when referring to people. It is almost as if the view is: “everyone I associate with is a person; all people I associate with are Jewish. Therefore all people are Jewish”!

⁷⁹ **Habo is short for Habonim, a culturally Jewish, secular youth movement with no stance on faith issues. Jack agrees with this ideology but not with its socialism.**

B

Okay, interesting, lots of issues arising out of that. Firstly, you talk about “pluralism”, can you define that for me, please.

J

Well, FZY is politically and religiously pluralist. So that means that politically, the movement doesn't have a stand but individual members can say what they want. And, religiously, it means that we try and cater for all people who consider themselves Jewish... and within our camp framework, you should be able to practise as you want but also be part of the wider community with everyone else in the movement.

B

You talk about “the movement” is pluralist. Do you think that that translates across the board to the individuals within the movement?

J

No

This is said immediately and emphatically, suggesting an experience or episode of lack of tolerance.

B

Okay, do you want to tell me why?

J

'cause ... well our Mazkir⁸⁰ at the moment is definitely not pluralist and he hates pluralism and a lot of other people high up in the movement are also anti-pluralist. The problem is that pluralism isn't actually written in our constitution. It's more just that that's the way the movement has gone, although I hope that it'll be changing next month. I am not even sure that I am personally pluralist myself ...

I find this example of self awareness is an excellent illustration of well developed metacognition. As a self-confessed relative outsider in terms of his Jewish beliefs, one might anticipate that he should expect tolerance from others. However, he has recognised that he is not completely able to tolerate others either.

... but I fit into a pluralist environment...

Interesting, the juxtaposition of the terms “fit in” and pluralist. It seems that he is saying that the only place that an “outsider” fits in is in a place for outsiders. He is an outsider because he is a Jew with no religious beliefs. He had been a secular Jew in a secular Jewish organisation but did not agree with their politics – again, making him an outsider. Here, in FZY, he fits in because they have neither faith nor political leanings. Everyone is an outsider.

⁸⁰ Mazkir = General Secretary. This is a term borrowed from the socialist ethos. The general secretary is in fact the head of the movement. In movements such as Habonim, RSY and Bnei Akiva who have their origins in socialist thinking, this is an entirely appropriate term. It just seems a little out of place in a non-socialist context.

... and I know that pluralism and tolerance are words that go together and it means, not only you can believe what you want, but you've got to also believe that other people's views are valid. And I don't know if I believe if people who hold religious views are valid because I think that they are talking a load of rubbish. But it's about being able to live and function together which works effectively ... in my opinion, although a lot of more Orthodox members might argue that differently.

This last comment suggests that he still feels alienated from the Orthodox members of his movement. However, he has already commented on the lack of validity he affords his Orthodox "friends". This suggests that he himself is actually suppressing a certain amount of antipathy towards the Orthodox believers. Tolerance seems to be the keyword here. "Tolerance" is distinct from acceptance. Tolerance implies putting up with rather than accepting as equally valid. Without the outward signs of allowing everyone to practise their own form of Judaism or support their own political affiliation, this makeshift society might fall apart.

B

Okay, so the last thing that came out of that little piece was about feeling the importance of representing Reform Judaism. Why is that so important to you?

J

Within FZY, there's no-one else to represent Reform Judaism. And, even though I don't consider myself a Reform Jew, I consider it a valid form of Judaism. And at the same time I am representing Reform Judaism, I am representing alternative kinds of Judaism to Orthodoxy

So, is he just motivated by a need to "educate" the Orthodox element of other forms of Judaism?

... and my belief, as a secular, atheist, Reform Jew, is that Judaism is more than just the religious aspect. I want other people to know and understand that. And I also think that there are a lot of people out there who might be lost to Judaism if they don't take on similar views. And we've got all these kids on camp ... and I remember someone telling me that they met someone ... on the last weekend I did⁸¹ ... saying "do you believe in God?" and you've got to try and tell them that there's more to being Jewish than the religion and that's what we should be doing as a Zionist movement.

B

So there's a bit of a dichotomy there. You're talking about Reform Judaism which is a religious type of Judaism. How do you reconcile the two? You feel that it's important to represent Reform Judaism and yet you don't believe in God and you are an atheist.

⁸¹ This refers to a weekend residential camp where he acted as a leader. The aim of the camp was to prepare participants for the "Israel Tour" they will be doing by both introducing them to some of the educational content and by starting to form some group bonding.

J

Well, I think I said it already. I believe it is a valid form of Judaism. For those who do believe in God, there's no reason why the religion shouldn't progress - and it did until it got stuck in Poland⁸².

What is he saying here? On the surface, it seems to be that he would like to promote Reform Judaism as an equal or parallel form of Judaism. It is "valid" and therefore should be equally as acceptable as any other form of Judaism. However, his reference to getting "stuck in Poland" and its pejorative connotations suggests almost an evangelical dedication towards Reform, as if he'd like to entice Orthodox youngsters towards Reform Judaism.

B

So, is not your form of Judaism, i.e. the secular, cultural Judaism, a more inviting or attractive entree into it for people who have, if you like, lost their way?

J

Well, I try and do both but within the confines of the FZY framework, there are not enough people to run a secular service but there is an alternative service which is run. And anyone can do that so that ... There is a shortage of people to run them but, theoretically anyone can do it. Whereas the Reform service, I am needed to do that. And it means that, because I take the Reform service, that I get boxed by other people as one of the Reform so I have to stand up for the others who are there.

He has become an advocate for Reform, a "Reform evangelist" by virtue of being "boxed". He does not attend synagogue services when he is home (he has told me this off-record) and is an outspoken atheist, but feels the need to lead services when he is in his movement context. This feels almost like a vicarious or inverted form of indoctrination. He feels the need to represent Reform Judaism at camp simply because that is the impression that people have formed of him.

The notion of a "secular service" is completely anathema to me. Why, because it is Sabbath, should those atheist or cultural, secular Jews who attend the camps and residential activities, have to attend a "service"? Could not alternative activities be arranged if this is a "pluralist" movement? It would appear that despite the lip-service being paid to "pluralism", the movement is still operated from a religious perspective.

⁸² This is a reference to the extreme Orthodox Jews, Hasidim, whose movement originated in the mid-18th century in Eastern Europe and whose garb still reflects that era.

B

So, it is interesting. I asked you a question about cultural Judaism and you have actually answered about services... so ...

This researcher is becoming too evident. Rather than let it slide and bringing it home to transcribe and analyse, I have started to analyse in situ. I am not sure that this is a positive move. Brocki and Wearden (2006) debate whether the interviewer influence should occur within the interview setting or be reserved for the interpretative stage. They remark that “there is a role for the interpretative facet of IPA in data generation as well as data analysis” (page 91).

J

That’s because that’s how different streams of Judaism manifest within the movement... ’cause most of the time, in a pluralist environment, it’s not really going to make a difference. It might affect what we say in a discussion but it’s only when ... FZY tries to do everything together but the one thing we can’t do together is services so it’s the only time when the streams split off and when there’s several different things going on.

B

I think you’ve already answered this question – could you have seen yourself in a different movement if things had been different?

J

I could have been more involved with Habo if the people were different.

B

So it was about the people. That’s what sent you away from Habonim.

J

Well, yeah

B

Okay, let’s move away from your involvement. If you were ... Say, there’s several movements lined up all making a pitch to a nine-year-old potential member. What would be your pitch to join FZY? How would you persuade a nine-year-old

J

A nine-year old? We don’t take them at that age because we don’t think that they can be ideologically challenged in the same way as a fourteen-year-old

This use of “we” feels like indoctrination. “We” don’t take them”, “we” don’t think...”. This is the party line. Has he stopped to evaluate this for himself? Has he ever tried to “ideologically challenge” a nine-year-old?

B

Okay, the fourteen-year-old.

J

It’s an opportunity to interact with other streams of Judaism and that’s the best way to strengthen your own beliefs and work out what you want and ...

that's it. I mean, at the age of fourteen, people aren't choosing their movements based on the ideology as I am sure your thesis is about.

B

Why do they choose their movement?

J

They're choosing it socially, so the ideological pitch isn't going to mean anything. You've got to pitch it to them as "we've got the biggest camps" and that most people go on it because it's the best.

B

Okay, I didn't ask you for an ideological pitch. I asked for your advert to your movement. So you think that the ideology is important but you think that they think that the social side is more important?

J

Yeah

This is an interesting exchange. It feels as if he wants to pre-empt my analysis of this interaction. He "knows" what my thesis is about (when all I told him is that it is about youth movements). He assumes that I must be more concerned with ideology than friendship groups or social imperatives. It is, after all, a thesis and ideology seems to him to be more of an academic pursuit than social interaction. He comes across as having a sense of duty to give me his perception of valuable data. If he informs me of his theories, perhaps I can jot them down wholesale and present them as valid theory. Is this how he sees his role as an interviewee?

B

Okay, let's move on. What do you think that the movement has done for you as an individual, as a person? In terms of your growth and development.

J

It's given me all the hadracha⁸³ skills, made me more confident and it's given me a social life. My whole social life is based around my movement friends. When I am doing medicine, I often notice little things that I know how to do that other people can't do. Like, when we're doing presentations, it's the first time that anyone's ever stood in front of a big group.

Jack is a second year medical student. However, he mentions this aspect like it is a peripheral aspect to his life. Movement and Jewish stuff first; career pursuit and that which takes up the bulk of his day next.

B

Do you think that it's translated to other areas of your life, outside of your current student or movement life?

J

That IS my life.

⁸³ Hadracha = **youth leadership.**

This is analogous to a Third Culture Kid (Useem, Useem et al, 1963) scenario.

Jack's dominant culture should be demarcated by the confines of medical school in a British university. Yet he defines his "life" as the Jewish Youth Movement.

B

You talked a little bit about medicine. Has your movement experience in any way influenced your decision to choose either your university or your ultimate career choice?

J

I actually chose this university before I made many of my movement friends whom I made on my gap year. But I would've chosen it because it's got the biggest Jewish community⁸⁴ out of all the student communities and that's where I am going to have the most Jewish life. That's what's important to me.

B

Now, I know you're not a doctor yet but if you think about some of the skills that you've picked up over the years in the movement, do you think that there are any skills that you think that you've developed – both as a *madrach*⁸⁵ and before that as a *chanich*⁸⁶ – that might help you in your career as a doctor.

J

Well, yes, but I don't think that I can pinpoint what they are because I've been involved for so long that I've picked up the skills passively along the way. I don't really notice what ... uhm ...

B

Okay. You mention that the movement effectively has made you what you are today. Do you think then that you would be different person without having experienced the movement?

J

Well, every single thing we do has a million different consequences so I can't even imagine. So how can I even begin to answer that question?

B

Earlier on, you were unsure if there was an ideological reason for your joining FZY. I just wonder, do you feel that you agree with the movement's ideology now?

J

No, I don't believe in *Aliyah*⁸⁷.

B

⁸⁴ **This refers to Birmingham University not the city of Birmingham where there are, in fact, very few Jews.**

⁸⁵ **Madrach = Leader**

⁸⁶ **Chanich = Participant**

⁸⁷ **Aliyah = emigration to Israel**

Do you agree with the rest of the movement's ideology?

J

Well

He thinks for long time so I prompt him:

B

Why are you a member? What are you proposing to the kids - as their madrich?

J

I am proposing that they should be Zionists and that they should have a strong Jewish identity. But one of the four aims of the movement is Aliyah. I think that I am actually in the majority on my opinions but at Veida⁸⁸ this year, a lot of the louder, more significant people in the movement were talking about Aliyah being one of the most important aspects of being a Zionist, one of the most important things to being a Zionist and one of the most important things in our movement. But it's not necessarily something that I believe in or agree with.

As a medical student, Jack knows that he has four years' study plus several more career advancement years ahead of him. This would put any thoughts of emigration on hold for a decade at least. Is he really not interested in living in Israel or has he discounted the possibility of living in Israel because to do otherwise would only lead to frustration? When he says that he does not believe in Aliyah, perhaps he is expressing the fact it has to be out of the question for him in the foreseeable future. Maybe to convert it into an ideological issue makes it an easier decision to live with.

B

What, by the way, are the other three aims of the movement?

J

Magen, which is Defence of Jewish rights; Tzedaka (he looks at me as if to say, I don't need to translate that, do I?) [righteous giving and just behaviour, often also associated with charity]; and Tarbut which is Jewish culture.

Apart from Aliyah, the decision to go and live in Israel, the other aims seem uncontentious. This seems like an easy movement to become engaged in.

B

So are you a proponent of those.

J

Yeah, but it's difficult not to be.

B

Because?

J

⁸⁸ Veida = **AGM**

Because they're not controversial. Also, those four things, the reason why they were chosen is because they are from the Jerusalem Programme of 1968⁸⁹. The Jerusalem programme defines Zionism and we've taken those four aims from the Jerusalem programme. So together they're supposed to make up Zionism so, if I consider myself a Zionist, then I have to agree with at least the other three.

B

How can you account for someone becoming involved with a movement without a clear notion of what it stands for but then being completely in agreement with its ideology by the time that person leaves? Would you say that was attributable to indoctrination? And your movement specifically; do you think that FZY indoctrinates the kids?

This issue is now asked as a direct question as a result of the discussions that came out of my previous two interviews. Charmaz (2003) suggests that by simultaneously collecting data and analysing it, a development of the research direction is enabled. "Emerging analysis shapes your data collection". (page 86). "The specific sampling decisions evolve during the research process itself". (Strauss, 1990, page 192).

J

Well, this goes into a much wider argument of what the definition of indoctrination exactly is. We're all impressionable human beings who are all born with a genetic factor that can go in a million different ways. The whole way we come out of life is going to depend on the nurture factor... and our influences. The reason I am in a youth movement to start with is because of the influences of my parents. So, everything that goes on in the movement, which is a big part of your life, is obviously going to affect the way you come out.

B

So, in effect, you are saying that you think that the movement does play a part in influencing the outlook of youngsters.

J

Well, yeah. For instance, if you look at everyone that comes out of Habo and ... like that's an extreme example ... and they're all Somehow, they all ended up being cultural, secular, socialist Jews. It doesn't really make any sense

B

Okay, then, away from the movement ... we've already established that the movement experience has had a huge impact on your life. What about being

⁸⁹ This is a reference to the definition of the aims of Zionism as deliberated and adopted at the 27th Zionist Congress held in *Jerusalem June 19, 1968*:

- The unity of the Jewish people and the centrality of Israel in Jewish life;
- The ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland, Eretz Israel, through Aliyah from all countries;
- The strengthening of the State of Israel, which is based on the prophetic vision of justice and peace;
- The preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish and Hebrew education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values;
- The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.

Jewish? Can you divorce being Jewish from having had a youth movement experience? Has -

J

(He cuts me off) No.

B

Has Judaism had any impact on your life that the movement hasn't?

J

Well I try ... well Judaism is the most important thing in my life. It defines about 90% of what I do but that's all within a movement framework and that's why I'm part of a movement – to keep me Jewish.

I wonder where the first part of this answer was going, “well, I try ...”. Does this relate to his searching for an alternative since he is nearing the end of his youth movement experience? His entire engagement with Judaism is via his youth movement. Yet, he soon will have left the youth movement. So, does he try to find Jewish meaning elsewhere? Does he try to replace the youth movement? Does he try not to let Judaism be so central to his life? What exactly does he try to do that he is struggling with articulating?

B

Is there anything else about your movement experience at all that you feel you would like to share with me in terms of your movement experience and its impact on the rest of your life in general?

J

No

B

The reason I chose to interview you was because of something I read on the internet. You posted it on the RSY website a couple of years ago. I'd like you to read it.

He reads:

J

“After reading this conversation this was the one thing that hurt me the most. I am a Reform Jew; I don't believe in God but I am a firm believer in being Jewish and in Zionism. For me the main part of my Jewish identity is my involvement with the youth groups, that's what makes me feel Jewish. FZY is a pluralist movement and it really is. Whilst on an FZY event I don't feel pressured to be more religious than I want to be nor no less, I can do as I please. This makes me feel welcome but also gives me the chance to socialise with Jews from other more or less religious upbringings. In fact I feel on FZY as one of the few Reform Jews that it is my duty to make sure that it is not seen as the cop-out option and I think that FZY is an important place whereby we can educate others about what being Reform really means. I have in the past encouraged Orthodox friends to attend the FZY Reform service and they have really enjoyed it. What is so important about pluralism is that it allows everyone to feel welcome.”

B

Okay, thanks. So what's your first reaction after reading that two or three years later?

J

The same. I feel just the same. Nothing's changed really.

B

The reason I particularly wanted to interview you as an individual was because I had seen that piece on the website. Can you give me a little bit of the background as to why you wrote that piece?

J

It was about movement bashing and about how all the RSY people on their website were saying how FZY is not as good a movement as RSY. And I was trying to show how FZY has an important place in Jewish society and how it is also doing positive things for the Reform Movement.

He comes across as someone who is definitely a fully-fledged member of his movement. He feels the need to defend it in the face of hostility. Despite having originally been a member of a different movement, he must have gone through a sufficient number of liminal experiences or rites of passage to ensure his loyalty.

B

Okay, so you've been in this movement of yours for about 7 years. Would you say that it now actually forms a part of your identity? What I am hearing from what you just said is that your identity is very much associated with your movement. Would that be a fair assumption?

J

Yeah, definitely.

Although this is something of a leading question, the unswerving answer does serve to confirm my hypothesis. Not only has he developed a loyalty or allegiance to his movement but it has actually become a part of him, an integral component of Jack the person.

10. Conclusions and Convergence of Themes: Perspective at a Locus in Time

Thematic Analysis

“The division between analysis and writing up is, to a certain extent, a false one, in that the analysis will be expanded during the writing phase”

Smith and Osborn (2003, page 76/77)

In the previous chapters, I have analysed and attempted to offer my interpretation of the respective discourses in an atomistic fashion, focussing on the minutiae. I shall now offer a thematic analysis based on the themes I explicated, their possible associations and causal relationships, thereby attempting to pool the data to form a more holistic picture. “Here the analysis becomes expansive again, as the themes are explained” (Smith and Osborn 2003, page 77). Thus, whilst we have seen these excerpts from the interviews already, they were previously seen in a context of interpretation. Those that are repeated below are in the context of justifying the themes attributed to them. Any new analytical material, similarly, serves the purpose of validating their position with respect to the specific theme.

The convergent themes I found are: **Boundaries** (Jewish versus Non-Jewish, Reform versus other streams of Judaism and Movement Loyalty); **Third Culture Kids**; **Jewish Values** (Religious, Cultural and National). I organise these into the Motivational and Situational categories of **Jewish Identity**.

Boundaries

These interviews were littered with episodes and examples of boundaries, dissonances and crossing of thresholds. There is the initial alienation versus the gradual acceptance and concomitant state of being accepted; there are boundaries of Jews in a non-Jewish mainstream society; there is the Jewish sanctum that Abigail refers to as being within a “bubble”; there is the struggle to maintain a Jewish identity; there are the liminal experiences which enabled them all to become fully-fledged, engaged members of their youth movements; there are the boundaries of commitment which juxtapose these individuals against their non-movement peers. These disparate themes of boundary can be expressed as the following of progressively more distilled or refined constructs: (i) the boundaries between Jewish and non-Jewish, (ii) the boundaries between Reform Jews and other Jews and (iii) the boundaries of commitment and loyalty to a specific Jewish youth movement. Each of

these constructs serves to home in on the particular allegiance of the individual, the essence of his or her engagement with Judaism.

Fleming and Spicer's (2004) research into organizations uncovers the concept of the geographical boundary dividing the workplace from outside of it. The same might be said of the boundaries described above. One, for instance, ceases to be a youth movement member when one is not in a youth movement setting. One might draw an analogy with rooms in a house. Crossing the threshold, for instance, from the kitchen to the dining room, one ceases to be a cook and becomes a diner. In the interim rooms such as the hall or the landing, one can be either. Temporal aspects add to the complexity. There are times of the day or week that one adopts a persona. One crosses from one time structure to another, moving, for instance from being a school pupil to a family member or to a youth movement participant.

There are parallels that may be drawn here between these geographical, conceptual and temporal thresholds and the "I's" (Peshkin, 1988) or lenses (Peshkin, 2001) with which I viewed the leadership camp that I attended at the start of this thesis. So, perhaps an analogy might be similarly drawn between my subjective "I's" and their occupation, at different times, of different ethereal "rooms", crossing the imaginary thresholds of identity.

Jewish Versus non-Jewish

There is an abiding sense of Judaism being so much more than a religion, a culture or an ethnicity. Ironically, it takes Jack, the atheist, to illustrate the point.

[going on "Israel Tour" at age 16 is] "such an important part of being a British Jew"

Here he expresses his cultural affiliation and then goes on to add his ethnicity to the cultural milieu:

"because I am a member of the Jewish People ... and we're a People with an ethnic common history and a common culture and it's something that I get a lot out of – being Jewish and being part of this culture and this Kehilla"

Bhabha (1994) postulates "an interstitial future, that emerges *in-between* the claims of the past and the needs of the present" (original emphasis, page 219). Nowhere is this more evident than in Jack's struggle in pursuit of an identity beyond the youth movement culture.

“Judaism is more than just the religious aspect. I want other people to know and understand that. And I also think that there are a lot of people out there who might be lost to Judaism if they don’t take on similar views”.

This last comment relates a consideration of “Jewish Continuity”. It seems to suggest that if atheist Jews like himself were only to discover other (secular) ways of expressing their Judaism, they will not be “lost to Judaism”. The corollary to this is that assimilation and intermarriage will not prevail and the Jewish nation will continue. Jewish education, both formal (Jewish schools) and informal (youth movements) are central to combating assimilation (Short, 2005).

I am tempted to offer “even as an atheist” but I think it should actually read, “because he is an atheist”, Jack is concerned with getting 16-year olds “to discover their Jewish identity” and has made a life choice based on his feelings of Jewish affiliation:

“I actually chose this university before I made many of my movement friends whom I made on my gap year. But I would’ve chosen it because it’s got the biggest Jewish community”

Tracy is very clear about her Jewish existence. She separates her Jewish and non-Jewish worlds:

“They’ve always been very separate. My youth movement friends still don’t really know my school friends. I don’t see them in the same light”.

She also reflects on the divergence of Jewish perception from mainstream perception when she offers, “I think our view of status quo is different to general Brits”. This implies that, not only does she separate her two existences, but that she believes that she is actually inherently different from her non-Jewish friends because she thinks differently. In fact, she is identifying herself as a particular type of “Brit”, as distinct from a “general Brit”.

She holds a definite view of what it means to her to be Jewish. Being in a youth movement allows youngsters to “learn a bit more, to be in a Jewish environment” and “it’s a good way for them to think positively of their Jewish background”. So despite describing Jews as “very different”, she sees that difference as something rather special, a positive difference rather than a marginalisation.

Abigail, on the other hand has a gloomier outlook of the status of Jews in Britain.

“... kids who go to school where they are the only Jewish kid, come to a space where it is a safe space for them to be Jewish”.

We get a sense of the laager mentality from this observation. It feels as if she is painting a picture of there being a bunch of disparate misfits all coming together to escape being different.

This is followed by such statements as:

“this community hates us”

“ I think that the other thing that might be worth mentioning is the anti-Semitism issue”

“I just think that, to use the analogy, although I don’t like it of the battle, like I said about continuity, I guess we’re all in it for continuity, really. We’re all in it for survival and I am not talking about any threats externally”.

These are all statements which reflect Jews as outsiders in respect of mainstream society. Worse, they are persecuted outsiders – they need to find a “safe space” to be Jewish; they are hated amidst an atmosphere of anti-Semitism and are battling to ensure the continuity of the Jewish people. She does, however, offer a positive solution. Being part of the Jewish community is a positive social construct.

“I am blissfully unaware of all that stuff in my own little bubble”

So, Abigail’s position is very clear; we need definitive boundaries to retain our integrity as Jews. We need to be inside of our designated boundaries, our “bubble” in order to be content. By focussing inwards, towards the Jewish community, she can maintain her “blissful” ignorance of the adversities of the outside world.

She talks of her charges gaining confidence within their Jewish environment and deriving enjoyment from being Jewish together juxtaposed against their mainstream existence where they may feel a little marginalised.

“they’re sometimes the only Jewish kid in their school. And they’re very aware of their Jewish identity and are very confident with it but maybe don’t feel confident at school with it. So they enjoy coming to synagogue and being Jewish together and doing Jewish stuff together”

There is a demarcation between the school life that she remembers and the youth movement involvement.

“it gave me something outside of school to ... uhm ... be involved in”.

That demarcation had to continue into university life. A Jewish “scene” was an important consideration when choosing a university.

“I guess I knew I wanted somewhere that had a Jewish ... scene”.

Yet, once venturing into that university world, one has to be wary of the threat of crossing the boundary into the world of assimilation.

“... the biggest challenge to Jewish continuity is the secular world”

The statement most illustrative of the concept of the boundary within which we, as Jews, exist mentions boundaries specifically. Abigail is concerned about preserving the boundary between the Jewish and secular worlds of her charges.

“There are those moments when you are living in reality. I think the transition, though, as someone who is now in a position where I am responsible for youth provision, and I think that transition where I am going into that height of responsibility does need to be more on kind of where that boundary is. And what we need to be aware of with the boundary of the bubble”.

This evokes visions of Abigail as a sentry, guarding the “boundary of the bubble” for the youngsters for which she is responsible. Not only is there a boundary, but she deems it vital to preserve and monitor the integrity of that boundary, controlling what goes in or out, preserving its dynamic equilibrium.

The “transition” conjures up issues of threshold and liminality. If Abigail is the sentry, she is necessarily on the threshold, monitoring her charges and monitoring the outside world; making sure that her charges cross safely when it is appropriate, when they are appropriately equipped to do so. We need to consider, if she is on the threshold, which direction is she facing? One gets a sense of her monitoring the outside world, not only for her charges, but to find a place for herself as she prepares to leave both her youth and her movement involvement behind. Additionally, being a sentry is a role that can only be fulfilled *in situ*. This adds to the threshold allusion. When she leaves the setting, she can no longer act as a sentry; she enters some other role.

Reform versus other streams of Judaism

Identities, according to Santos and Buzinde (2007), “are produced and confirmed through interaction with others” (page 323). So when Jack declares that “because I take the Reform service, I get boxed by other people as one of the Reform so I have to stand up for the others who are there”, he is affirming that he assumes a Reform identity by virtue of the “social agents [who] construct and project certain meanings onto the individuals with whom they interact. It is through representational tools that social agents produce cultural meaning among themselves and to outsiders” (Santos and Buzinde, 2007, page 323). Thus Jack uses the delivery of Reform services to project his identity of “other types of Jew” (other than Orthodox) amongst his movement peers.

Abigail finds the fortification of Reform Jewish identity to be inspirational:

“RSY-Netzer is the Reform Synagogue Youth movement, uhm ... which ... the main strength of which is that it really inspires young people with their Jewish identity... uhm and in particular Reform Jewish identity, also Reform Zionist or Zionist identity”.

She is adamant that youngsters should be “enjoying” their Reform identity rather than having to represent it.

“Well there’s two schools of thought. I think that for the pluralist youth movements, I think that it’s important to have a Reform presence ... uhm ... because they’re not pluralist otherwise. But I would rather that kids were ... uhm experiencing and playing around with and enjoying Reform Judaism rather than always being the token Reform Jew which is what I perceive to be happening in the other movements”.

Although Jack is an atheist, he considers himself to be a Reform atheist (i.e. his family are members of a Reform congregation and it is - congregationally, at least - where he feels most comfortable) so it is important for him to espouse the Reform ethos, and represent a Reform stance, in his engagement with other members of his movement:

“it’s also important for me to be in FZY because, with everyone else being Orthodox, it’s a chance to educate about the Reform movement and about being ‘another kind of Jewish’”.

Movement Loyalty

For each of these respondents there seems to have been a “crossing point”, a point at which they ceased to feel alienated and started to feel part of their movement.

For instance Abigail moves from statements such as: “other people went”, “I was not in the cool group” and “all this stuff was going on that I just wasn’t part of” to total feelings of connectedness: “I felt I was RSY-Netzer through and through” and “I decided that actually RSY-Netzer was my movement”.

Tracy sheds light on the process. Despite commencing her movement life with a sense of alienation, “I remember being away from home for such a long time” and “All your normal insecurities”, she goes on to assert that “you definitely WERE this group of people. There is nothing else to your group apart from the people, which was quite nice really”. Jackson and Smith (1999) suggest that “interpersonal friendship [is] a major component of group identity” (page 122). Tracy goes on to declare that “Interest is directly proportional to participation” and her final endorsement, “I reckon that 70% of my best friends are from the youth movement”, supports the theory that a sense of belonging, in a youth movement context, is both afforded by and bound by the close personal friendships and the loyalties one establishes therein.

Jack starts with, “I think that FZY is definitely the best movement for me ideologically”. At face value this statement might suggest that he has chosen his movement for ideological reasons but we soon see the true motivation behind his loyalty: “My whole social life is based around my movement friends”. When talking of his former movement affiliation, he augments this argument when he says, “I could have been more involved with Habo if the people were different”. His sense of social being seems to be more prominent than his ideological affinity.

These close ties form strong in-group bonds and boundaries, establishing a sense of unity, camaraderie and, by extension, loyalty to the movement. True, one would find it hard to stay in an environment that was completely ideologically unacceptable. However, I do believe that a certain amount of accommodation is exercised to facilitate social cohesion.

Social identities are either context or situation specific (Roccas and Brewer, 2002) so if Jack considers himself to be an atheist Reform Jew, he is either an atheist, a Jew or a Reform Jew, depending on his situation. We have seen him representing Reform to his pluralist movement peers whilst his entry on the Reform website chatroom is in

defence of his movement, indicating a strong sense of belonging. Group identity is, according to Jackson and Smith (1999), a construct derived from a contextualised comparison with other groups although they go on to stress that “social identity is most typically assessed without explicit reference to comparison groups. Usually the focus is on attraction to the in-group” (page 122).

We saw evidence of focus on, and juxtaposition to, the in-group in each of the respondents: Jack saying; “I probably fit in there...ish” whilst expressing not being entirely happy with the aims of the movement; Tracy being with “posh” people for the first time and Abigail initially suffering an overwhelming homesickness.

It can be postulated, therefore, that if loyalty to a movement is to be achieved, accommodation has to take place to facilitate social cohesion which, in turn, generates boundaries and in-group bond formation.

Abigail is unequivocal in her support of her movement and the identity issues it espouses: “I think it’s really important for RSY-Netzer to maintain its Reform identity”

Jewish Identity

All three respondents seemed very clear about the centrality, for the youth movements, of adopting or strengthening one’s Jewish identity. For instance, Abigail regarded this as the “main strength” of her movement:

“RSY-Netzer is the Reform Synagogue Youth movement, uhm ... which ... the main strength of which is that it really inspires young people with their Jewish identity”

Tracy does not mention Jewish “identity” specifically but she applauds Jewish education and the social education in her movement and is very positive about being in a Jewish environment and espousing Jewish values.

“It provides high quality, fun, Jewish, informal ... and also social education. I think that’s really important”.

She is very positive about being Jewish together, a communal pursuit.

“... similar background [and] similar beliefs”

She also highlights the values which she feels are inherently Jewish.

“there are certain values which are put across in the Jewish education – like egalitarianism, responsibility, being aware, education, inclusivity”

She certainly states her case definitively and emphatically as to who and what she is.

“I’m not a secular Jew. I’m a Jewish Jew. You know, I’m a Reform Jew, a religious Jew.”

Perhaps this strong assertion of her Reform Jewish identity is due to her background. Tracy’s mother was not born Jewish. She converted to Judaism through a Reform (unacceptable to Orthodox “mainstream” Judaism) synagogue. Tracy lives in a location where there are very few Jews and her father, having been through several careers, is now training to be a Reform rabbi in his fifties. She is also a “Third Culture Kid”, having been born in the United States and moved here as a child. She needs to be positive and assertive about her identity, divorced from that of her parents. Her own sense of who she is and her allegiances are matters that she can exert control over.

Of camps, she says:

“It’s a good way to learn a bit more, to be in a Jewish environment. It’s a good way to meet other Jews from around the country”

If she were promoting her movement to parents she would suggest:

“you’d probably be a bit more obvious about them meeting other Jews and you might want to say to them that it’s a great way for them to ... without negating cheder, it’s a good way for them to think positively of their Jewish background.”

She feels it is important that the youngsters meet other Jews and that they have a positive Jewish experience.

Jack is unequivocal. He mentions the importance of Jewish identity no less than four times.

“... get them to discover their Jewish identity

“So you’ve got to be getting connected to Israel to have a connection to Judaism and a Jewish identity”.

“I am proposing that they should be Zionists and that they should have a strong Jewish identity.”

“For me the main part of my Jewish identity is my involvement with the youth groups”

He states his case clearly and unambiguously so that we are left in no doubt of the importance he attributes to having a strong Jewish Identity and that this Jewish identity is honed by his involvement in a youth movement. Perhaps he is so overt about capitalising on the Jewish identity element because of his atheism. He needs to constantly affirm his Jewish status since it does not quite fit in to the received wisdom of what a Jew should be; a member of a faith based people, a member of a religion.

“... I am a member of the Jewish People ... and we're a People with an ethnic common history and a common culture and it's something that I get a lot out of – being Jewish and being part of this culture and this Kehilla”

The statement above is so clear about his sense of belonging to the Jewish community and yet it still portrays a sense of alienation. “An ethnic common history” says something about being separate from the dominant culture. His emphasis on ethnicity is further authentication of his Jewish status. He may not have the beliefs or faith; he may not believe in the Jewish God, but we can not take his ethnicity away from him.

Schachter (2004) observes that one typology, of four that he identifies, of identity formation is a “confederacy of identifications”. “Rejecting an identification was seen as rejecting part of oneself and as preventing a sense of wholeness”. Perhaps, therefore, it is vital to retain several identity constructs in order to maintain a concatenated whole.

Jack's pride in being a part of this culture, with its own language and cultural issues outside of mainstream culture, leads me to examine the issue of Third Culture Kids (Useem, Useem et al, 1963) which I have found so evocative when discussing the Jewish youth group status in reference to mainstream society.

Third Culture Kids (TCKs)

Throughout my interviewing, transcribing and analysing of these interviews (and the pilot interviews that preceded them), I have been repeatedly struck by the similarity that being a member of a Jewish Youth Movement in a non-Jewish world has to the concept of “Third Culture Kids” (TCKs) and my own experience of being a pupil in

an international school. TCKs are youngsters who live in a country other than their cultural home, where they pick up elements of the other culture, assimilate these elements with their own to create a third culture – one where they have more in common with other foreigners than they do with either their home country or their new host country.

“The cultural exposure, during their highly impressionable adolescence, may have made them absorb cultural and behavioral norms developing a cultural frame of references different from, but assembled by the cultures they have been exposed to; establishing a third culture” (Selmer and Lam, 2004, page 430).

In many senses, being a member of a Jewish youth movement feels analogous to this concept. As a TCK myself (I am South African and attended an international school in Israel), as well as a Jewish Youth Movement graduate, I can see the similarities in the extent of belonging to a peripheral group, one made up of others on the cultural periphery. There are certain cultural nuances, behavioural mores, and linguistic norms which abound in the Jewish Youth Movement which are not present anywhere else – not even within the wider Jewish community. It is a peculiarly esoteric microcosm.

This is illustrated in Abigail’s interview when she refers to her youth movement existence as “being in a bubble”. She later asserts that,

“Well, I think that it’s a really positive thing, as I said before, kids who go to school where they are the only Jewish kid, come to a space where it is a safe space for them to be Jewish and to experience and experiment and say what they think.”

Tracy’s polarisation towards youth movement friends illustrates the unique connectivity she shares with them despite growing up in an area with a very sparse Jewish population.

“I reckon that 70% of my best friends are from the youth movement and that’s partially because we grew up together but also because we see the world in a similar way”.

Jack simply states, “This **is** my life”. There is no question in his mind about this existence being relative to the dominant culture, peripheral to it or outside of it. His entire existence is Jewish Youth Movement. Perhaps this is because he is slightly

younger than my other two respondents. As a student, he can still happily live within that Jewish Youth Movement cocoon. Perhaps Abigail and Tracy felt the same way four or five years ago.

It might be interesting to conduct a longitudinal study to identify relative feelings of insularity and “Third culture” attitudes amongst Jewish youngsters as they emerge from their youth movement involvement.

If parallels are to be drawn between being in a Jewish Youth Movement and being a TCK, then it is worth noting that Gillies (1998) points out that TCKs are “tolerant of diversity, skilled observers, and can serve as a model of multicultural education principles”. It would be impractical (nay unethical) to reproduce the Third Culture environment in its literal sense. However, if we can replicate the Jewish youth movement across the cultural divide, we might be able to generate the same moral consciousness and multicultural awareness.

Jewish Continuity

Why is Jewish identity so important, so central to these respondents? The reason seems to be Jewish continuity. In his study of Glasgow’s Jewish education provision, Mckinney (2004) found that, despite being very different from each other, all the Jewish youth movements “have the common purpose of Jewish continuity” (page 38).

Abigail declares that:

“the biggest challenge to Jewish continuity is the secular world, ... so I guess what I am offering them is not indoctrination; it’s just experiences”

This statement sums up Abigail’s aim vis-à-vis the Jewish education that she delivers. It is about offering Jewish experiences to conserve the Jewish people. The existential threat to Jews is not external; it is derived from the triple concerns of assimilation, low birth rates and intermarriage (Scholefield, 2004). The Jewish population of Great Britain has been falling steadily since the mid-50s (Scholefield, 2004). By offering “Jewish experiences”, we offer the potential to meet future Jewish partners and thereby minimise the risk of intermarriage. Indeed, the Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks holds the lack of engagement with Jewish education in previous generations to account for the increasing incidence of intermarriage (Short, 2005). According to MicKinney (2004):

“One of the aims for any Jewish community is to educate young people to ensure the continued existence of Judaism and of the Jewish people”. (page 33)

When Abigail says, “... we have all the civil rights, all the democratic rights, as our non-Jewish neighbours and actually people being brought up not experiencing anything Jewish”, her distinction between Jews and their non-Jewish neighbours is important to her to ensure continuity. For Jewish continuity to be successful, boundaries have to be drawn between Jews and non-Jews. Jews need to meet and marry other Jews to avoid having non-Jewish offspring. Demarcating a boundary, therefore, ensures Jewish continuity.

Jack, being slightly younger than Abigail or Tracy, sums up his own continuity imperative when describing his choice of university:

I actually chose this university before I made many of my movement friends whom I made on my gap year. But I would've chosen it because it's got the biggest Jewish community out of all the student communities and that's where I am going to have the most Jewish life. That's what's important to me.

By Jewish life, he is referring to his social life. He can continue to live his Jewish existence once he has left the confines of his home, because his choice of university has ensured that there is a critical mass of Jews with whom he can socialise. By extension, this heightens the chances of him finding a Jewish life partner.

Values

The concept of values emerged as a supra-ordinate theme comprising of **religious**, **cultural** and **national** values. We can consider that values are defined as “abstract goals that people consider to be important guiding principles in their lives” (Bernard, Maio et al, 2003, page 64). Aspects of Judaism can certainly fit into that definition.

There is a potential “trichotomous” view of Judaism either as a religion, a culture or a nation. Each of these facets may be true to varying degrees for each individual, with a multitude of possible permutations, taking into account the extent of each, or the relative position one might inhabit on the continuum of each. How one self-identifies can often be down to the degree of religious observance. We know that it is certainly a religion, in every sense of the word. There are rituals, prayers and a god; there are moral codes, practices, rites of passage and institutions. As a religiously observant Jew, it might therefore, be easy to identify being Jewish as a religious affiliation.

What, however, if we are born into a Jewish family but do not believe in God? Can we still be Jewish? The halacha⁹⁰ considers anyone who was born of a Jewish mother to be Jewish. So Judaism is inherited; and there is evidence of a genetic heritage (Hammer, Redd et al, 2000), a common Jewish ancestor. Accordingly, Jews can certainly be considered to be a race with biological integrity.

As for culture, there is a wealth of literature, music and art. There is the language of our European antecedents (Yiddish), of our Eastern antecedents (Ladino) and the language of Israel and the bible (Hebrew). There are also the traditions and rituals to which Jews can affiliate. These include the rites of passage such as Bar Mitzvahs and circumcision of the boys, traditional meals over the festivals and the celebrating of the Sabbath.

Let us consider each of the Jewish values, as identified in these interviews, in turn - Religious Values, Cultural Values and National Values.

Religious Values

Gamoran (2007) sees informal Jewish education, for example youth movement education, as having “extraordinary potential for enhancing not only values and skills, but also the cognitive domain of Jewish practice, knowledge of content embodied in sacred and contemporary texts upon which Jewish tradition and continuity are based” (page 123).

Abigail concurs with this view when she states, “the values that they carry through on the camps ... and the spiritual elements are all kind of embedded in Reform”.

Tracy posits that: “it’s a Reform Jewish environment so therefore there are certain values which are put across in the Jewish education”.

Both are confident about conveying their brand of Judaism to the next generation.

Cultural Values

According to Reimer (2007), informal Jewish education “must initiate Jews into domains of human activities that are valued by our cultural traditions” (page 16). It seems that this is what our young leaders are keen to deliver. My early focus group

⁹⁰ Halacha = **Jewish Law**

work at a leadership camp can serve to highlight the importance of educational values in a Jewish youth movement context.

Abigail says of her youth movement, “I like the values, I like the ethos”, referring to the informal education that goes on there.

Tracy is in no doubt of the significance of the Jewish informal education that she imparts: “I think that the responsibility of the youth movement ... a Jewish youth movement starts off with education”. She lists some of the values as “egalitarianism, responsibility, ... uhm ... being aware, education, inclusivity”.

This describes a loop. Education is so important that we educate about education – meta-education. It is at the heart of the youth movement values. Jack even chose his movement because of it: “FZY was much more educational”.

He does not refer specifically to “values” as a concept but he does allude to what those values are, “we try and get them involved ... and get them to discover their Jewish identity”.

National Values - Connection to Israel

What we see in these interviews is a strong connection to Israel, a national Jewish identity. This relationship between Israel and her Diaspora “creates a dynamic in which reciprocal influences mutually constitute Jewish identity” (Shain, 2002, page 281)

A report (Kosmin, Lerman et al, 1997) found that 81% of British Jews had either a strong or moderate connection with Israel while Cohen (2001) suggests that “voluntarism can be expected to develop a deep commitment to what has been elected” (page 361). From the latter we can extrapolate that the commitment of being a youth leader on a voluntary basis leads to a commitment to the organisation’s central values. Clearly, connection to Israel has to be one of the central values of a Zionist youth movement. However, I do not feel that it is solely via the movement education that one gains that allegiance. Connection to the land of Israel, the Holy Land, is a theological construct (Shain, 2002) and can be considered to constitute the very essence of what it is to be a Jew. This almost renders a Jewish secular Diaspora anathema, a paradox or, at the very least, an anomaly unless we can classify Judaism

as an ethnicity as well as (or instead of) a faith or religion. Judaism, according to Bekerman (2001), is “a religion more or less tied to a nation” (page 462). I would posit that calling Judaism a **nation** tied to a **land** might be more appropriate. For instance, we saw in Jack, an atheist striving to maintain his connection with Judaism via the principal secular option open to him, Israel:

“because living in the Diaspora and not being very religious, my connection to Judaism is Israel. So you’ve got to be getting connected to Israel to have a connection to Judaism and a Jewish identity”

and

“Israel should be at the centre of Jewish culture”

Indoctrination

Indoctrination is an interesting concept. It is not what our subjects set out to achieve as Jewish leaders or even something that they are necessarily aware of. However, it binds all the elements together, underpinning the imparting of a sense of Jewish identity and defining those boundaries. As this is a topic that has been thoroughly debated for over eighty years (Merry, 2005), it is probably safe to say that a definitive stance is unlikely to be achievable within the confines of this thesis.

I wish to consider whether indoctrination is the means by which the Jewish youth movements educate their participants about what it means to be Jewish. Is it the approach taken to allow youngsters to explore ways of expressing their Judaism and finding appropriate meaning, resonance, sense of belonging and exploring their Jewish identity? Cohen (2001) asserts that youth movement values are “transmitted via the structure of the activities themselves, rather than being presented directly” (page 357). This would imply a hidden agenda.

Merry (2005) characterises indoctrination as the loss of autonomy with the concomitant loss of the capacity for critical thinking. He differentiates between indoctrination and moral instruction. On the other hand, Yaffe’s (2003) definition, “causing another person to respond to reasons in a pattern that serves the manipulator’s ends” (page 335) denotes a much more sinister pursuit. I certainly do not maintain that our Jewish youth leaders set out to deliberately manipulate the thinking capacity of their charges. However, I wonder if the techniques that they employ result in a certain amount of unquestioning persuasion.

Indoctrination may be tied up with imparting values and boundaries. My respondents certainly all seemed to be clear about these issues. It is by imbuing our youngsters with a strong sense of self, of community, of morality and ethics, of cultural heritage, of history and perspective, of liturgical hermeneutics and religious practice that we can consider them to be educated “Jewishly”. I believe that the agenda is too long, too convoluted, too layered and too complex to educate overtly without resorting to methods of indoctrination, particularly when we consider the complexity of some of the issues coupled with the very young age of some of our first-timers, when they are too young to engage in critical thinking (Cuypers and Haji, 2006).

It is interesting that both Tracy and Abigail are reluctant to accept or recognise the informal style of education employed in youth movements as indoctrination while Jack wholeheartedly embraces the possibility. His unequivocal opinion is backed up by his “proof”:

“... everyone that comes out of Habo⁹¹ ... Somehow, they all ended up being cultural, secular, socialist Jews. It doesn’t really make any sense”

It occurs to me that one reason for Abigail and Tracy’s discomfort might be borne of the association with some episodes of indoctrination indelibly marked on the Jewish collective psyche. Comparison might be made in their minds with, for instance, the Nazi party or, more contemporarily, the wave of suicide bombers we have witnessed worldwide, and particularly in Israel. To admit to indoctrination would be to associate ourselves with the most deplorable acts of our historical and contemporary adversaries.

I will return to discuss the possible explanation for Jack being satisfied to acknowledge indoctrination within his movement on page 236.

If the values are to be adopted, cognitive support for them has to be developed (Bernard, Maio et al., 2003). Such cognitive support, it is claimed, makes one resistant to counterargument persuasion. “The ability to counterargue attacks is one of the key inhibitors of persuasion” (Bernard, Maio et al, 2003, page 64). Therefore, by beginning our informal Jewish education before an age when the ability, tools or information to develop an argument are well formed, movement education might be considered to be subjecting them to indoctrination.

⁹¹ Habonim, a leftwing, secular, Zionist youth movement

Abigail says of her movement, “The ethos is very much about informed decision making and I think it is a really important value”. By informed decision making, she means having discussions and debates, giving the youngsters the armamentarium to negate challenges to their belief system. “The Elaboration Likelihood Model of persuasion [...] suggests that the strength of an attitude [...] is based in part, on the degree of elaboration or thinking the person has done about the attitude object”. (Bernard, Maio et al, 2003, page 64). Indeed both supportive and refutational defences were found by Bernard et al (2003) to provide cognitive support. However, we must ask ourselves, how do we inculcate our charges with this essential value of “informed decision making”? Is it not via indoctrination?

In my view, it is not enough to simply have choice or be provided with information (for “informed” decision making). One tends to choose from one’s known milieu of experiences or knowledge. I believe that one needs to subject one’s choices or views to critical reflection in light of rational principles.

The successful inculcation of this value of debate and informed decision making can be a double-sided shield. By introducing youngsters to the informed debate so cherished by Abigail and Tracy, not only are we protecting our students from negative persuasions or undesirable principles, but we are also imbuing them with positive values. The “values-as-truisms” hypothesis (Bernard, Maio et al, 2003) suggests that “values do often lack the requisite cognitive support” (page 64) leading to the possibility that values can be imparted via the informal styles of education that Jewish youth movements employ, without cognitive support or debate. Where these values form the backdrop, the hidden agenda to an activity, they may be easily adopted by the participants even if the debate is absent. So perhaps we are averting negative indoctrination by introducing positive indoctrination. Merry (2005) justifies the inculcation of a set of values in children. He refers to this as “proper moral instruction” (page 409) adding that it leads to the development of a capacity for critical thinking.

Conceivably, we are successful at inculcating our charges with our value systems because we start them in the movements at age 9 (some movements, at age 14), before some would hold that they are capable of engaging in a cognitively supported debate. Where Tracy is adamant that it cannot be indoctrination because the

inculcation is coupled with debate, she has not taken the naïveté of the youngsters into consideration. In fact she supports my hypothesis with her comment: “Whenever I have worked with the younger ones, it’s a very simple level of education”. Merry (2005) proposes that instilling certain values in young children does not violate their autonomy since they are too young to attain autonomy. Such instruction “paves the way for future autonomy to develop” (page 409).

For young children who have not yet attained the capacity for critical thinking, “the constituent components of critical thinking have to be indoctrinated” (Cuypers and Haji, 2006, Page 723).

If a definition for indoctrination holds that it is “belief inculcation that fosters a non-evidential or non-critical style of belief”, (Cuypers and Haji, page 727), then we have to look carefully at the way we encourage our children to critically evaluate. The need to critically evaluate itself needs critical evaluation. Cuypers and Haji (2006) conclude that providing children with beliefs before they acquire the necessary critically evaluative capacities is “unavoidably indoctrinative” (page 728). They therefore, propose the paradox that educating youngsters to be critical thinkers is the ideal. However, the constituent components for critical thinking have to be indoctrinated. Tan (2004) adds that “the inculcation of non-rational beliefs to children, far from being indoctrinatory, is in fact necessary for children in the process of growing up” (page 257). The thrust of Tan’s argument relates to religious beliefs. However, I am convinced that the same might be the case for ideological beliefs.

The concept of “primary culture” (Tan, 2004, page 262) bridges the gap between inculcation of liberal views and encouraging autonomy of thoughts and beliefs. Primary culture provides a stability from which to make informed decisions based on a contextualised world-view. Without primary culture an individual might be faced with a multitude of attitudes with little to aid the selection of the most appropriate. Tan’s literature refers to children who are too young to have developed the capacity for critical thinking. However, even older youngsters can be regarded as young children in respect of the maturity of their thinking when exposed to novel concepts and new ideologies. They first need to take stock of the information, be advised of the rights, wrongs and complexities therein, before they can begin to assemble the arguments that will shape their beliefs.

Even though Tracy and Abigail are at pains to emphasise the morality and values-base in the education they are imparting, Schleifer (1976) maintains that we must consider that “moral education *is* some form of indoctrination” (original emphasis, page 154). However, he does go on to defend the practice in terms of its “training of general cognitive capacities” (page 155). Interestingly “the American Constitution, [...] prohibits any kind of moral education, for such education is equivalent to the propagation of belief systems” (Schleifer, 1976, page 163).

Let us consider the “Jewish values” at the heart of Tracy’s ethos of education. Tan (2004) cites Tarris and Semin (1997) in suggesting that the core religious values of caring, honesty and fairness comprise the components of “primary culture”. Despite being adamant about the absence of indoctrination, Tracy is clearly proud to report that she is advocating these Jewish values to her charges. Her values of egalitarianism, responsibility, education and inclusivity are analogous to caring, honesty and fairness.

The issue of indoctrination, autonomy and freedom of thought is fascinating. Where indoctrination for critical thinking ends and autonomous critical thinking begins is a conundrum whose circularity is perplexing.

Hundeide (2003) suggests that “identities, knowing and social membership belong together”. He recognises four steps to becoming indoctrinated. Namely, (i) to be officially labelled as an outsider or deviant, (ii) isolation and dissociation from existing social networks, (iii) a strong feeling of belonging and obligation and (iv) legitimisation. Although Hundeide (2003) refers to research he conducted in Neo-Nazi youth movements, I believe that the same stages can be recognised for Jewish youth movements - which can be somewhat disconcerting for a Jewish youth movement member (or ex-member) and provides a plausible explanation as to the unwillingness to accept that the education we do in Jewish youth movements is indoctrination.

(i) labelled as an outsider or deviant

This is not to suggest the Jews are deviants but being Jewish in a non-Jewish mainstream society can be an alienating experience. Having a concern for, and an affiliation with, Israel can certainly be isolating in light of the political stances which

that country sometimes takes. Failing to celebrate mainstream festivals such as Christmas can occasionally lead to feelings of marginalisation.

(ii) isolation and dissociation

Having experienced the unique bonding experiences through camps, synagogue attendance and Jewish festivals, Jewish youngsters can find themselves estranged from their non-Jewish peers. This is something that was evidenced in all three of the respondents in this research. Abigail and her bubble, Tracy and her separation of her two groups of friends (“They’ve always been very separate. My movement friends still don’t really know my school friends”) and Jack’s entire life being within the confines of the world of Jewish youth work (“This is my life”).

(iii) strong feeling of belonging and obligation

Having to be leaders on camps, planning activities, running youth clubs through the year or getting involved in youth provision on a local synagogue level all demonstrate a remarkable level of commitment. Tracy emphasises the sense of loyalty in her comment, “you definitely WERE this group of people”. Jack’s entire life **is** his movement. We saw it, too, in the early focus group work whereby there was an exaggerated professionalism evident amongst both the trainee leaders and their actual leaders.

(iv) legitimisation

This refers to adherence to an ideology and affirmation of each other’s opinions. In the Jewish youth movements, there is a unifying support of Israel, Jewish education and the “bubble” of exclusion that Abigail referred to.

This brings us back to the question of why Jack is ready to recognise the educational techniques as indoctrination where the others are not. Could it be that he is not entirely committed? In a sense, he may appear to be the most committed. He is certainly the most active at the time of interview. This is because he is slightly younger. The other two respondents were already on their way out of their movement whilst he is still actively involved. We have, however, already seen that he is not entirely in agreement with all of his movement’s ideology. He espouses Judaism and Zionism but is not considering going to live in Israel himself. Additionally, Hundeide (2003) suggests that one of the attractions of joining a youth movement is that it gives members meaning and direction. Since Jack has his life path mapped out in

terms of his plan to become a doctor, perhaps this precludes him finding meaning and direction in the movement. It is a case of cognitive dissonance (Burns, 2006); the one set of ideals has to be relinquished to make way for the new set.

Perhaps we can conclude that whether it is indoctrination or not depends on the goals of the pursuit. If the goal of the education is to elicit a certain set of beliefs or positions, then, in my view, it must be considered to be indoctrination. If, on the other hand, the goal is to develop cognitive analytical capacities, the system is laudable. Thus, we would need to return to our interviewees to establish their objectives before we can pass judgement on the existence of indoctrinatory methodology within their leadership. In conclusion however, Merry (2005) sums it up by saying that, “in order for original types of knowledge or belief to count as forms of indoctrination, they must be held in such a way as *ignore* or *disregard* all testimony that runs counter to one’s own rendering” (page 404, original emphasis). I believe that the declarations of my subjects of the discussions and debates that go on in the youth movement settings, is testament to the strength of reason over indoctrination. On the other hand, there is a certain amount of value and moral education that I do believe is passed on to the youngsters. Rather than it being inculcated, I believe that it is actually the debate and discussion, the posing of difficult scenarios, the hypothetical situations that actually reinforce the desired values in these children. The ability to perceive or predict the negative ramification is instrumental in allowing them to develop a positive moral attitude.

It was not my intention at the outset to examine the nature, aetiology or methods of indoctrination within the confines of this research. A focus on examining whether the education in youth movements can be classified as indoctrination would make a fascinating further study. Additionally, the age of admission to a youth movement might be interesting to pursue in this context. Is, for instance, the educational level at age 14 in RSY-Netzer (which accepts children from age 9) different to that of FZY (which accepts them from 14)? What are the qualitative differences in understanding between a fifteen year-old child who started their movement involvement at 14 and one who started at 9? How can we assess the differences in cognitive assimilation?

Conclusions

The following notes and evolving diagrams denote the development of a theory and the conclusions drawn based on the relational representations of the themes that emerged from the text.

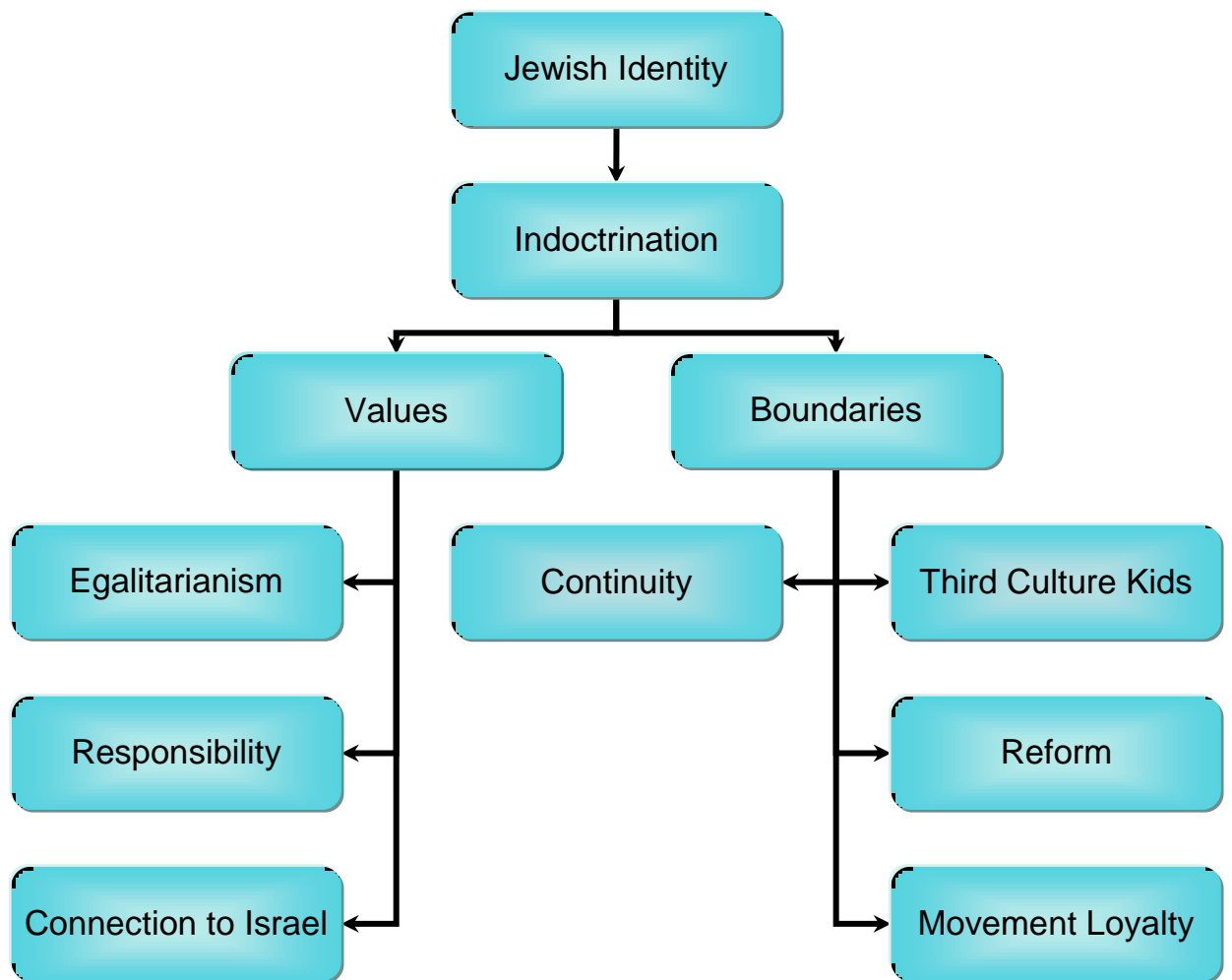
Non-convergent themes were discarded as these represent an individual subjective understanding and can not be thought of necessarily as a universal representation of the youth movement experience. Convergent themes were brought together to form a diagram and to explore the interrelationships therein.

Examining the convergent themes across all of the interviews exposed Jewish identity as a central and supra-ordinate theme, encompassing all of the others. The remaining themes seemed to fall primarily into two categories. There are those associated with, and described as, **Jewish values** and those that describe the **boundaries** within which the subjects operate.

Indoctrination falls outside of these two sub-categories. It is, in one sense, something of a contrived category. It is not, like the others, a state of being or relational stance. It is the potential means by which all of the others are possibly rendered and adopted. Moreover, the topic did not arise, in most cases, in the natural flow of conversation. It arose as a result of my direct questioning of the subjects.

Figure 10.1 illustrates the two categories of Boundaries and Values with their respective sub-categories. Jewish Identity is the supra-ordinate category and indoctrination is depicted below Jewish identity to represent its central role in both adopting values and in defining boundaries. Egalitarianism, Responsibility and having a connection to Israel are all themes connected to the category of Jewish

Fig 10.1 depicts the first stage of graphic illustration of a theory – sorting themes into relationships and groups.



Values, whilst movement loyalty, Reform Judaism, Third Culture Kids and Jewish continuity all allude to boundaries of Jewish Identity.

Figure 10.2 starts to clarify the relationship of Indoctrination to the other themes. Indoctrination can only, in fact, be attributed to the imparting of values. It can not be part of the theory which describes the boundaries that society has engendered for these Jewish youth movement members.

It also separates Continuity and Third Culture Kids into sub-categories of being Jewish. It seemed clear that these two categories are not ways of expressing one's Judaism; nor do they represent boundaries within which Jews confine themselves. They combine to form the essence of what these young Jews concern themselves with in being Jewish. It is therefore the category of Jewish Boundaries, which constitutes the parent category.

The issues of Jewish continuity and of the feeling of marginalisation described as being a Third Culture Kid are both aspects of the issues facing a Jew in wider society. They are two sides of the same Jewish coin.

Continuity is the driving force behind each individual's compulsion to sustain their Jewish identity and that of future generations. The concept of the Third Culture Kid, on the other hand, is the status that Jews might be pushed into adopting by the constraints of society at large.

The only change in figure 10.3 was to change the colour of Indoctrination on the diagram. Doing so illustrates the discomfort I am feeling with having Indoctrination as an equal category in this scheme. Changing its colour may represent its displacement from the main flow diagram without actually removing it.

However, due consideration suggests that Indoctrination does not belong in this theory at all. In figure 10.4, it is removed from the diagram altogether.

Having reached a conclusion on the Indoctrination issue, the matter of values demands re-examination. The categories within the values theme are, in fact, specific notions rather than values. They essentially each represent a different aspect of Jewish values, different aspects of being Jewish. There are religious values (e.g.

Fig 10.2 depicts a clarification of the position of Indoctrination as associated with Values but not Boundaries. This diagram also recognises the issues of Continuity and Third Culture Kids as being a part of the expression of being Jewish.

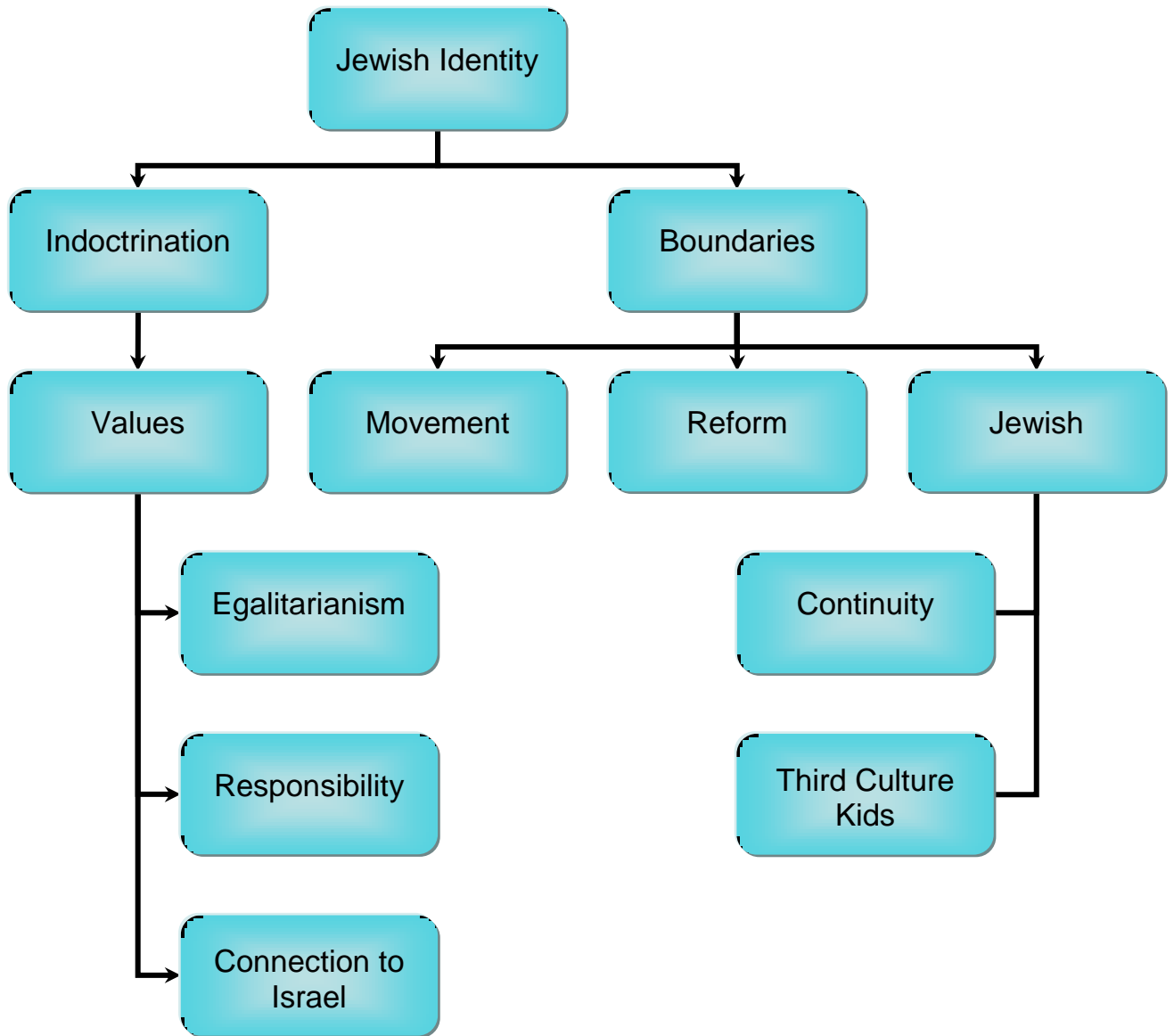


Fig 10.3 An attempt to remove Indoctrination from the scheme without actually removing it from the diagrammatic representation.

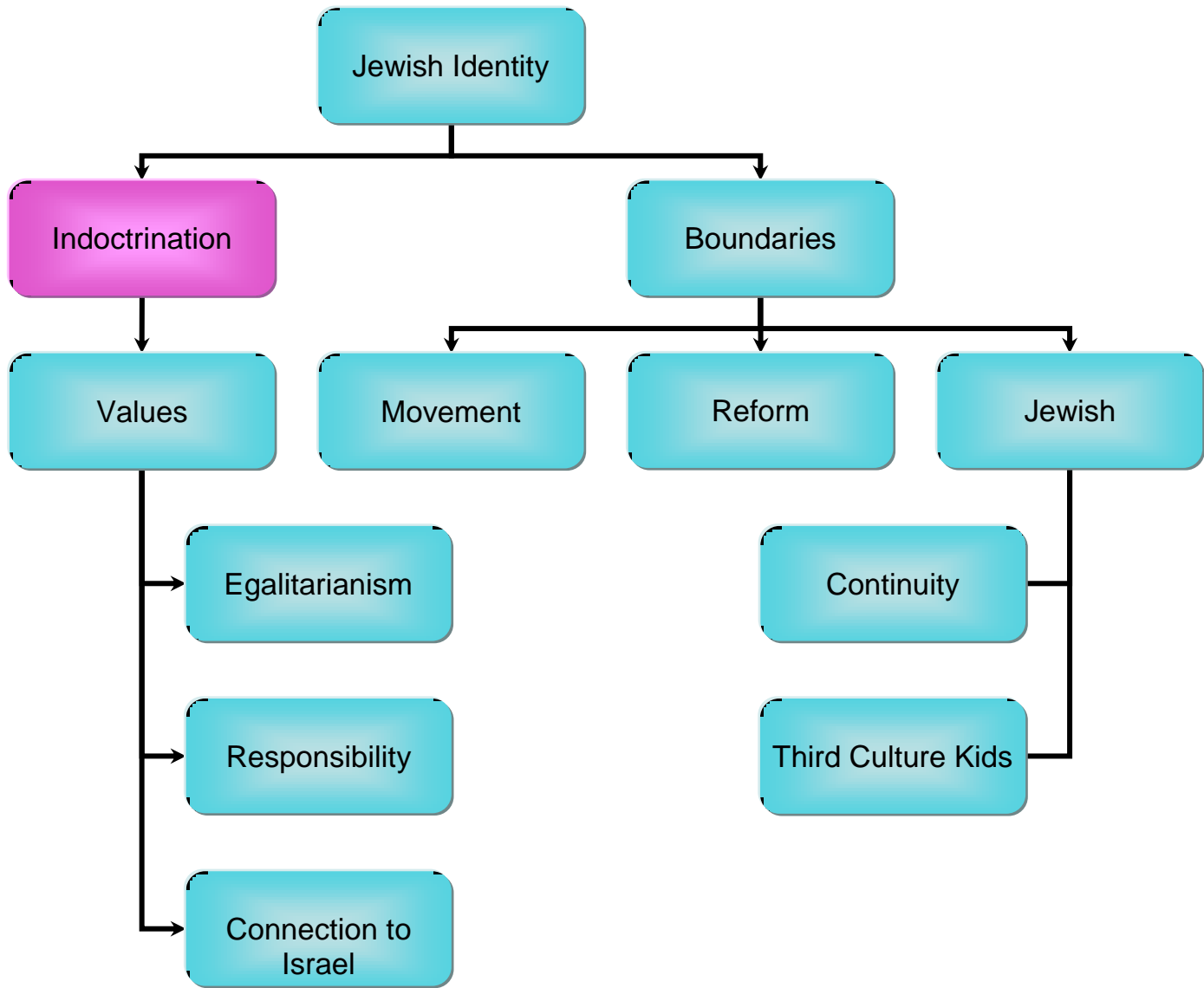
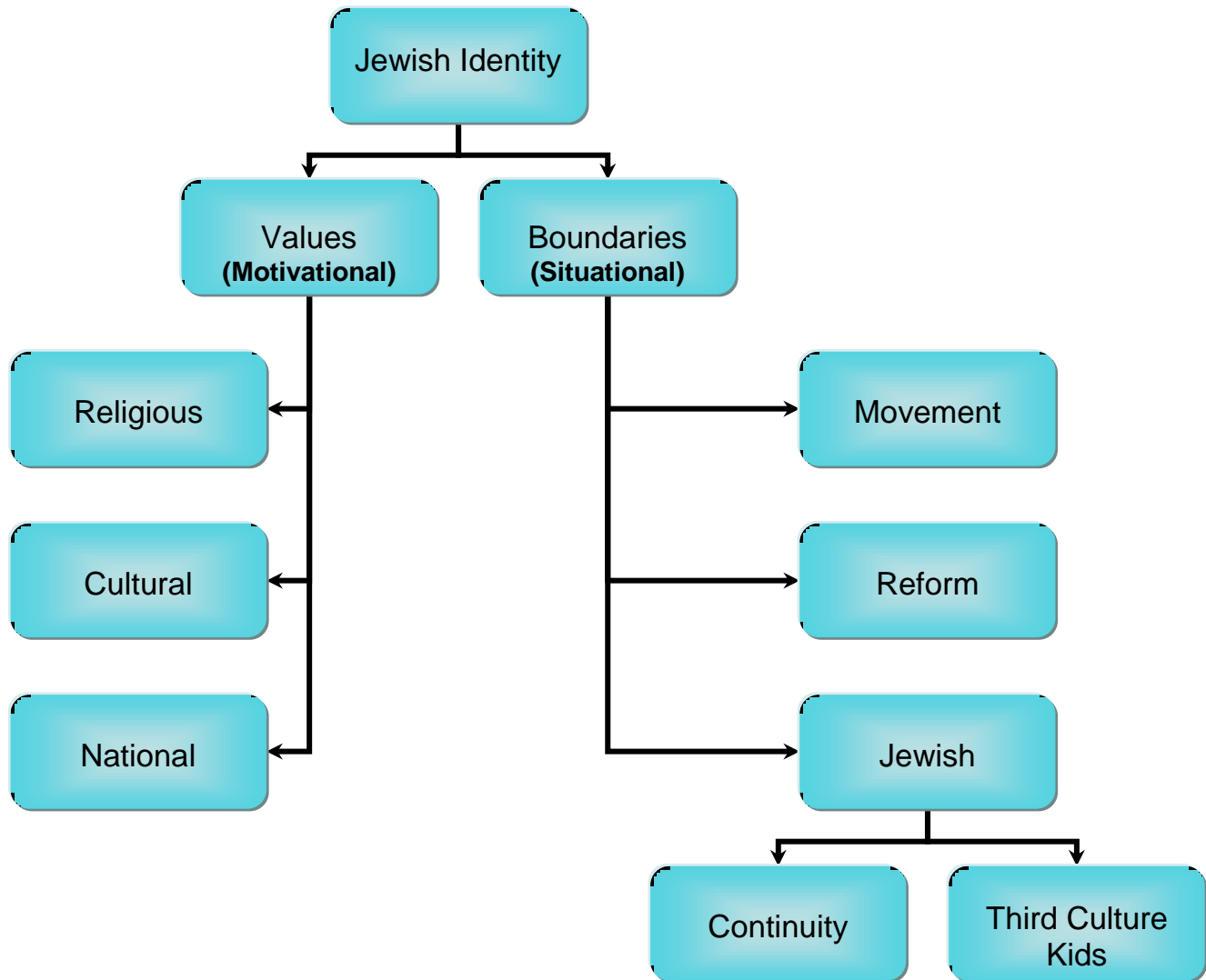


Fig 10.4 *Jewish Identity is dictated by either Situational or the Motivational factors. Situational factors are the boundaries that exist to contain those Jewish feelings whilst Motivational are the values to which Jews adhere.*



prayer), cultural values (e.g. egalitarianism) and national values (the belief in Israel and the defence of its right to exist).

This research suggests that Jewish identity can be perceived via the two categories of: (i) identification via Boundaries and (ii) expressing one's Judaism through its Values.

Jewish identity is a matter of dynamic reciprocity (Santos and Buzinde, 2007) defined by what I shall call the **situational** and **motivational** constructs, and contingent upon the setting and external pressures, "differential identities [...] continually and *contingently* 'opening out', remaking the boundaries, exposing the limits of any claim to a singular or autonomous sign of difference" (Bhabha, 1994, original emphasis, page 219). Cohen and Bar-Shalom (2006) refer to identity as being proactive and reactive.

Our identity boundaries are a combination of what we are defined by, (situational) and how we define ourselves, (motivational). So, identification with feeling Jewish comprises both the inward looking "pull" factors, the motivational concern of Jewish continuity and the "push" factors, the societal construct, a feeling of alienation, of "otherness", a "Third Culture", not belonging to the mainstream, not confined to isolation or insulation but somehow combining the two.

To represent situational (or reactive) Jewish identity, we can consider that one might feel more Jewish in the Diaspora than in Israel where Judaism is the dominant culture; a Reform Jew might feel more Reform in a mixed Jewish context and an RSY-Netzer member might feel more connection to their movement amongst Reform Jews from a variety of movements. This is resonant of thresholds. By crossing from one domain to the next, one's identity, and the influencing factors that govern it, are activated and potentially transformed.

Within Judaism we may further define ourselves by the particular denomination of Judaism to which we are allied. Thus a Reform Jew might feel alienated from "mainstream" Orthodox Judaism; and a Reform FZY member may feel an affinity and loyalty to his movement over a Reform youth movement member of any other movement. I imagine that the same differential situational and motivational boundaries exist within this specificity and this is worthy of further research.

On the issue of indoctrination, the term may conjure up images of brainwashing or mind control techniques. I certainly do not intend it as such. My intention is to ponder the possibility of a certain amount of directional persuasion. Youngsters, I believe, are persuaded towards a liberal stance in the movements I researched. If we are to believe, as Merry (2005) does, that a definition of indoctrination holds that it results in the incapacity for reasoning, then the education that happens in youth movements can, under no circumstances, be regarded as indoctrination. However, the paradox that I struggle to come to terms with is that the subject of RSY-Netzer's (for example) possible indoctrination (a liberal moral stance) is the very deflative capacity that needs to be present to thwart any negative message.

If we are to examine the possible presence of indoctrination through Yaffe's (2003) definition "causing another person to respond to reasons in a pattern that serves the manipulator's ends", then I believe that indoctrination is taking place throughout the educational gamut within youth movements; not just in persuasion to take a moral or liberal stance. Burns (2006) refers to the cognitive dissonance theory. According to the theory, when faced with new ideas that do not fit in with old ideas, people tend to seek to alleviate their feelings of dissonance. They do this by either rejecting old ideas outright or by lessening the importance of the old idea in light of the new idea. This is achieved via incentives. Incentives can include social acceptance, encouragement from the leaders or being offered responsible duties, for instance. They may also be less positive. For instance choices may only be offered within a confined variety. What follows is the "induced compliance paradigm" (Burns, 2006, page 4). I do not believe that any of our leaders deliberately set out to coerce or manipulate the youngsters in their charge but I do believe that social cohesion is achieved through the induced compliance paradigm. Burns (2000) goes on to declare that cognitive dissonance "is a crucial part of the learning process" (page 5) and that "the liberal arts process itself trades on the power of cognitive dissonance to enhance learning" (page 5). One has to deal with the old in order to assimilate the new.

Implications and Recommendations

The youth movement experience of the youngsters interviewed strengthened their Jewish identity and gave them confidence in representing both their ethnicity and their movement allegiance. At face value, there might be little commonality between

Black urban communities in the West and Jewish communities. However as far back as 1943 Wirth (1943) had already contemplated a similarity between the two, “as minority peoples they have many common problems of adjustment and orientation” (page 1). Admittedly, it is over a century since the main wave of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe so adjustment and orientation are no longer as pertinent. However, the sense of marginalisation still persists in some quarters. It might be interesting to conduct some exploratory work with some of our low achieving black (or other ethnic) youngsters to endeavour to elicit a sense of belonging and an ethnic pride along with a moral education. The exact factors accounting for this set of circumstances in Jewish youth movements would first need to be elucidated with an attempt to emulate them in an appropriate ethnic community context.

When trying to account for the belief systems and moral stance of youngsters with a Jewish youth movement background, we need to take into account that the socialisation and education that takes place in the movement setting is not necessarily accordant with what might be delivered in the home. It might be an interesting further exploration to research the relative influence of home and movement on a number of moral issues, particularly focussing on areas of discordance, to identify the more powerful influence.

Merry (2005) focuses on education for autonomy as being central to the development of moral coherence. This is achieved via debate and reflection.

“An autonomous individual will eventually move beyond naked propositions or beliefs and be capable of situating those beliefs against a broader array of knowledge claims and human experience. This individual will be open-minded to the degree necessary to own those beliefs truly and authentically, that is, not *solely* on the authority of others” (page 402, original emphasis).

However, he goes on to say that, “even when some persons think and act autonomously, it is doubtful whether it is always demonstrable” (page 402). This supports my discomfort at what I perceive to be indoctrination. To thoroughly critically analyse a viewpoint before adopting it, one has to be and act autonomously. It begs the question where and how they got the ideas on which to formulate a debate in the first place.

Although autonomy is an underlying principle of rational debate, I cannot help feeling that individual autonomy is at odds with a sense of belonging and its attendant cultural identity, the other chief construct of the Jewish Youth Movement. Indeed as Merry (2005) argues, it is not always possible to discern where a belief system ends and an integral sense of self begins. Do our youth movement youngsters follow a path of social action (such as raising awareness and support for the victims of Darfur) because they have been educated to do so? Or do they do it because they are compassionate, sentient human beings who have been alerted to an undesirable situation that they have the capacity to do something about?

Further work is warranted to explore the paradox of needing to encourage autonomy whilst simultaneously promoting conformity and unity in action.

An emerging concern became the recognition of the power and presence of indoctrination going on in Jewish youth movements. I believe that if we are to consider that discussion and debate are essential elements of the educative process, then it is morally incumbent on the youth leader to be aware of the potential impact on ideological belief he or she might have on the participants whilst leading such a discussion. We need to establish whether it is beneficial or damaging for the leader to reveal their own stance.

Jewish youth movements emerged in Europe at the turn of the century and in Palestine in the 1920s (Kahane and Rapoport, 1997) with a view to pursuing the dream of establishing a Jewish state. Whilst tenets of informal education were borrowed from the likes of Wandervogel in Germany, Boy Scouts in the UK and the Komsomol in Russia, the ideology was adapted to Zionist ideals. Now, however, in the absence of the pioneering imperative, the movements seem to serve the dual purpose of strengthening Jewish identity and preventing assimilation. It seems that the unifying force of the movements in their pioneering days have evolved to serve the needs of their membership contemporaneously. It is interesting to note from this research that the power of Jewish identity and Jewish continuity are now a paramount concern amongst these youth movement members. The movements serve to provide minority solidarity through this strengthening of identity and concern for continuity. I have, through this research, become aware of the notion of Third Culture Kids. I think it would provide a fascinating insight to run a comparative study on TCKs and

Jewish youngsters. It would be interesting to elucidate what alienates each group, what coping strategies they employ, how they respond to the feelings of alienation and how they relate to the “first” cultures – i.e. passport/host or dominant/Jewish. Is being in a Jewish youth movement a further refinement of being a TCK? Or is simply being Jewish enough to make one feel that way? In other words, is being Jewish analogous to being a TCK?

Limitations

It could be argued that the small sample size and homogeneity of the subjects might be considered to be a limitation. However, the data herein can be regarded as a case-study which provides a backdrop against which comparisons can be drawn. Smith (Smith, 2004) argues for a move toward IPA being represented by single-case studies. The result is that, with no search for convergence, fewer themes are discarded. Having non-convergent themes, I believe, leads to a more cumbersome picture which may be less representational than when a single case is studied and analysed for its dominant themes, which I found to be quite consistent across the three interviewees. I did seek convergence and concentrated on only the convergent themes, discarding several non-convergent themes from each respondent. According to Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), data is analysed until theoretical saturation is achieved. However, Brocki and Wearden (2006) argue that there is no point in seeking saturation of themes by extending the sample size as one never knows which is going to be the next interview that introduces new themes. Where, they ask, does one stop?

One needs to take the centrality of the researcher into account. Coleman (2001) says that,

“the person doing the research is the prime research instrument in interpretative scholarship. All data are comprehended through the researcher’s mind as he or she constructs the meaning of the participants from the data” (page 171).

One also needs to consider the part played by the researcher in contributing to and influencing proceedings. It must be borne in mind that, whilst one can endeavour to maintain the principle of open ended questions, the subject of the questions is, in and of itself, likely to be leading. Sometimes, as we saw in Jack’s interview, even the broad topic of the thesis can be enough to give the interviewee an idea of what might

be sought, with the respondent aiming to please by providing the researcher with their perception of what the researcher needs. Data must always, therefore, be considered to be contaminated by the mere fact of the research. Larkin, Watts et al. (2006) observe that “any discoveries that we make must necessarily be a function of the *relationship* that pertains between researcher and subject-matter” (original emphasis, page 107). Therefore, it is imperative to be aware of one’s influence on the outcome of any interview and the resultant ontological conclusions.

The corollary to this is the pre-existing relationship between researcher and respondent. All of my interviewees were, of necessity, well known to me. It might be interesting to conduct a further study to establish the significance of the relationship between researcher and participant and what bearing the relative closeness of researcher to respondent might have on the results.

The ramifications of the data capture techniques need to be considered. The early data capture work that I did was via a focus group scenario. I found that the data capture from a group discussion was inadequate; there were too many people to get in-depth responses from any of them within the time constraints. There might be a bias in the tendency of people to offer their opinions freely due to their self-consciousness. There is the issue of group dynamics whereby some people may feel intimidated to talk in a group while others may dominate the conversation precisely because they are in a group situation and enjoy the attention. Additionally, people tend to adopt different roles relative to the other personalities in the group and their relationship to others. This may modify their contribution. Robson (2002) cautions that “focus group data are a poor indicator of a consensus in attitudes” (page 289).

It is possible that the use of a video camera to record the case study interviews may have contributed to reserved or self-conscious responses. Hirschman (1986) suggests that the use of videotaped interviews can be intrusive. However Belk et al (1988) found that this might have been the case for the initial few moments of an interview but was actually an adjunct to engaging the subjects in the research and any reservations soon dissipated. I did not get a sense that the presence of the video was intrusive or that it altered the responses in any way but the possibility cannot be ruled out. All respondents expressed an initial concern at being videoed. However, once the interview got started, in each case the respondents were so engaged with the topic

of conversation that I felt that they all were completely candid and that reservations were forgotten. I made a point of setting up the video beforehand so as not to draw too much attention to it and made sure that I sat away from it rather than viewing the interview from the screen. Thus subjects were focussed on me rather than the equipment.

Another limitation worth considering is that, during the focus group work, I was trying to engage with youth in the context of youth work provision but cannot be regarded as a youth leader. I am far too old to be “one of them” and far too constrained by my teacher training and professional experience to return to that attitude of a youth leader that I once had. I wonder if any of my research may have been tainted by the different relationship that my group participants would have had towards me compared to how they may relate to their leaders.

Paradoxically, despite not being “one of them”, I felt far too embedded to consider myself an impartial observer. I do not know if this is a positive or a negative issue but it is very likely to have coloured my view of the scene. On the one hand I had all the contextual and insider information to give me grounding in my observations. Whilst on the other hand, perhaps I was missing things that would have been patently obvious to an outsider; things that are too familiar to me to be detected any more – the wallpaper of data waiting to be noticed. Larkin, Watts et al. (2006) refer to “biases and blindspots” (page 113).

Difficulties with getting access to other youth movements and subsequent year groups have meant that I was limited to one movement and one cohort in my focus group work. Thus my research cannot be thought of as indicative of Jewish youth movements but only exemplar thereof. This is the positive thing about case study methodology (Smith and Osborn, 2003). Claims can only be made within the context of the particular case. Homogeneity is sought through purposive sampling resulting in light being shed on a particular case. “In time [...], it will be possible for subsequent studies to be conducted with other groups, and so, gradually, more general claims can be made” (Smith and Osborn, 2003; page 54).

The same could also be said of the interviews. I have a sense, based on prior experience, professional knowledge and reading, that one can extrapolate to the other

movements that the same attitudes permeate across the peer groups. Nonetheless, I have not researched this possibility so am in no position to claim it.

Sampson (2004) divides qualitative researchers into those who strive for an objective “truth” and those who take a relational approach. I am not sure that there exists such a concept as “**the** truth”. Throughout this research I have striven for an understanding, an epistemological ontology – **a** truth, rather than **the** truth. I am in no doubt of the subjective nature of my position and can only hope that this subjectivity afforded me an insight otherwise unattainable to the (putative) objective researcher.

Although this research may not constitute **the** theory, it is a start to the process, a hook upon which further research can be based and the beginning of the development of a hypothesis whose variables can be further tested.

Peshkin (2001) refers to lenses through which a researcher discerns a focussed perception. “Each category [that one scrutinizes] represents a preparation to perceive” (page 240). If we were to take this idea to its logical conclusion, then so does each researcher. I am under no illusion that the perceptions that I offer – the explanations and analyses – are by no means definitive or comprehensive; they offer my perspective at a locus in time.

As a final act of reflexivity, I am struck by the homology of the Reform Jewish values that emerged in this thesis with those that I employ in my research and analysis. Discussion, empathy, openness, liberalism are all qualities that are raised in the course of my data. Ironically, these are the very qualities that I bring to this research. The analysis of the data and the understanding and broad-mindedness in evoking and receiving replies to my research questions, and finding meaning in them, are the qualities that I bring to the research “table”. “Understanding” can be read both in the sense of offering empathy and in interpretation of data (Smith and Osborn, 2003).

Smith (2004) reflects on IPA as “hermeneutics centred in empathy” (page 46). Indeed, as the “People of the Book”, Jews are infinitely at home with hermeneutic analysis of text - biblical study. It is what we do in our synagogues, what we do with our youth movement charges and in our formal and informal educational establishments. By extension, it is how we attempt to interpret the world.

11. All the World's a Stage: The Several Ages of Me

*“All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts”*

The Seven Ages of Man (*from Shakespeare, As You Like It 2/7*)

I started this project with a certainty (and, if I am honest, I still believe) that youngsters who go through a Jewish youth movement gain life skills. All I had to do was to design a research methodology that would “prove” what I “knew”.

I came to this from a science background. My Masters was in Molecular Parasitology and my naïveté was such that I believed I could number crunch my way through what I thought was going to be an education project. I am a teacher so it seemed to make perfect sense to concentrate on skill acquisition and cognitive development.

However, as I begin to interpret the interviews and to make sense of the youth movement experience for the respondents, I am actually shedding light on my own formative experiences. Identities are constructed through the “narrativization of the self” (Hall, 1996, page 4). Thus my researcher identity has articulated itself into being via the narrative of this thesis.

Not only is the reader being enlightened about the process and the significance of events, allegiances and experiences, but this researcher is doing so too. There are several times when my research becomes an epiphany for me personally. For example, the discovery of Third Culture Kids research was a revelation. The fact that it is a research topic at all lends credence to my own sense of alienation both in my adopted country and the country of my birth and also in the place where I spent my formative teenage years. It legitimises my concomitant sense of belonging everywhere and nowhere, of having a conceptual grasp of global culture with a limited and incomplete local cultural understanding (of **any** locale). Nuances and meanings pass me by, television is esoteric, games of Trivial Pursuit are impossible. I am a Third Culture Kid! I have found where I belong – in a Third Culture World.

Similarly, when alighting on the issue of indoctrination, I start to recognise, not what I was subjected to by my leaders but what I as a leader was subconsciously delivering to my charges. My research sheds light on why I did so.

Questions

Acknowledgement of the Fluidity of Identity

1. *Amidst the plethora of identity theorists, why did I alight on Bronfenbrenner?*

I felt that it was important to concentrate my literature review on the skills that youngsters are expected to attain by adolescence because I was looking at skill development. However, those theoreticians who delivered a certainty, or a static notion of how things **should** be, troubled me. I became excited by the Vygotskian notion of pushing out the boundaries, of potential, rather than achievement – how things **could** be. For the same reason, the identity development theories of Marcia and Erikson left me with a sense of unease and it wasn't until I researched Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Human Identity that I knew I wanted to focus on process rather than achievement, on potential rather than certainty and on a route taken rather than a destination reached. The dynamic nature of both Bronfenbrenner and Vygotsky seemed to offer more hope, more scope and more research with which to engage, to interrogate and deconstruct.

Hall concurs with identity as a dynamic construct,

“identities are never unified and, in late modern times are increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They [...] are constantly in the process of change and transformation” (page 4)

Bronfenbrenner's theories seemed to sum up the multitude of influences and fluidity of identity that I myself had experienced and to allow an understanding of how Hall's hypotheses of late modern identity are accomplished. Theorists such as Erikson concentrate on the outcome and on rigid stages of identity development; whereas Bronfenbrenner appealed to me because, like Vygotsky's learning model, Bronfenbrenner's identity model is both fluid and contextually relevant. He takes into account that identities are **constantly** changing, developing and representing. As both a Jew and a Third Culture Kid (Useem, 1963), I am acutely aware of the different people that I present to those I encounter and those identities I have to inhabit in different company, diverse contexts and varied situations.

In previous chapters I made substantial use of analytic concepts and insights from the social psychology of Bronfenbrenner, but in this chapter I have also benefited from

applying the work of Hall on the borders between sociology and cultural studies. Bronfenbrenner and Hall, on the face of it, would appear to offer very different approaches to the matter of identity. However, there are obvious overlaps between the approaches to identity and the process of identity formation evident in both psychology and sociology, going back to the crucial concept of ‘the looking glass self’ developed by Cooley (1962) and Mead (1934) into symbolic interactionism. As a result, in both disciplines the assumption of a dialectic between self and others is commonplace. Bronfenbrenner’s theoretical position can be best described as developmental psychology. Hall, on the other hand, comes from a cultural sociology background and his focus is more on an evolving identity. There is, according to Hall, an identity of being and an identity of becoming, an awareness stemming from the commitment of cultural studies to understand the ‘lived experience’ of culture (as well as identity) and the shaping effects of class, age, gender, and ethnic relations. Thus a reading of both Bronfenbrenner and Hall suggests heuristic similarities between the two which are significant in the present context. Bronfenbrenner’s ‘Ecological Systems Theory’ of identity can be considered to have been groundbreaking insofar as it challenged the traditional barriers of psychology, sociology and anthropology. Both he and Hall, without going down the Lacanian route of querying the concept of identity in itself, acknowledge the external influences on identity development and also the fluidity of identity. From their distinct perspectives, each focuses, not on the individual, but on society, culture, others, and their impact on the individual and identity. Further, and particularly significantly in the present context, both offer significant insights into the formation, meaning and impact of youth subcultures on issues of identity.

Through the work on subcultures, Hall offers a way of understanding and bridging the gap between the nested identities postulated by Bronfenbrenner and the Third Culture Kid identity I both acknowledge in myself and ascribe, to a lesser degree, to the sense of being Jewish in a British society. The cultural studies approach to identity formation and subcultures both recognises that sense of ‘other’ that Bronfenbrenner exposes us to when referring to the extraneous influences on development, and also foregrounds the need to understand the inherent complexities of juggling two cultural identities. On both a personal and academic level, the benefits are clear.

Of course, the irony is that, whilst I was engaging with the theories of identity development, I was busy developing a new identity of my own. I was becoming a researcher

Emerging Researcher

2. Am I an insider or an outsider through this research?

There is an emic - etic tension in my perspectives when I arrive at the leadership camp. I do have an intrinsic knowledge of the type of camp I am visiting and the procedures, programmes and structures therein. I am completely comfortable with the use of esoteric language and the context of the camp. I know several of the leaders and am familiar with the aims. I am also a director of the parent organisation. All of this points to my being an insider. I can also invoke my TCK and Jewish identities at this point. They both allow me to both fit in and understand the environment I am observing.

Yet I have come as a researcher. When I am simply observing the activities run by the camp leaders, I can play the researcher role without contradiction. And yet, I invoke several other personae in the process. This is because I am a novice researcher. I first have to contextualise the proceedings and can only do so through the familiar. I have to process what I am witnessing through the “lenses” (Peshkin, 2001) of a past participant, a past leader and a mother before I can begin to understand and start to process my observations. Without my insider perspective, I would not, for instance, have recognised the simulation activity demonstrating poor leadership. However, I equally need to be observing the scene with a sense of novelty so that I can begin to deconstruct what is happening. Otherwise I consign myself to viewing the “wallpaper of data” (page 249) – that which is too familiar to be noticed any more. This requires the outsider perspective.

As well as coming to gather research data, I have also come to teach, and the tensions I experience between my loyalty to the youngsters and my aim to procure data are evident.

I use my teaching skills to deliver the session by, for example, building on their previous session and encouraging their contributions. However, I am acutely aware that my express purpose for being there is to procure data. This difficulty I experience in assuming the role is perhaps the mark of the novice. Yet, at the same

time, I won't let myself off the hook for my poor teaching skills. The resulting tension denotes the emerging researcher.

Acknowledging my Subjectivity and Sculpting my Identity

3. Why is it important to recognise the personae that I adopt?

Recognising the personae that I adopt allows me to put my observations into context. I can begin to understand the nature of my interaction with the observed. Having acknowledged the inherent subjectivity of the researcher (Peshkin, 1988), it is important to similarly acknowledge that my subjectivity is mediated by my experience, the context and my perception. Without either acknowledging or analysing these facets of my engagement, I risk telling an incomplete story, relating an event that is somehow disjointed, out of sequence or partial. Thus, the recognition of my cast of personae making their proverbial entrances and exits form an intrinsic part of the unfolding scene and must be acknowledged in order to develop an understanding of the scene as a whole. Each persona sees a different aspect.

Hall (1996) offers an interesting illumination of this position. He states that identity refers to

“the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to ‘interpellate’, speak to us or hail us into the place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities” (page 5-6, original emphasis).

We are all a conglomeration of the personae that we adopt. Thus, one might consider that my research identity is being sculpted by the “sutures” of all the identities that I acknowledge (and perhaps some that I fail to acknowledge) and the interactions which I undertake.

I am a Teacher

4. What are the lessons learnt from the exaggerated professionalism?

There are several possible explanations for the exaggerated professionalism that I witness. On the face of it, the age difference between leaders and led must be considered to be the most important. These young leaders are not adults, have no qualifications and have had no formal training. The only means they have at their disposal of getting their young charges to take them seriously and to listen to them is to behave beyond reproach and in an exemplary manner.

There might be some other factors going on. Since writing this thesis, I have had several conversations with leaders to try to reach an understanding of the phenomenon. What I have failed to take into consideration in my earlier chapter is the importance that the youth movement has in their lives. Jack makes it clear, “this is my life” but I have failed to take account of that in my analysis. If their entire life revolves around the leadership they are delivering, then the perceived consequences of “getting it wrong” must be enormous. They have to uphold good practice in everything that they do so that they avoid either having to disgrace themselves amongst the most important people in their lives or, worse still, contemplate no longer being a youth leader and thereby losing their life’s focus.

For many I have spoken to it is just a question of passing on the “flame” of ideology, the beacon of Jewish continuity and a Jewish future. Having a sense of responsibility will perhaps ensure that the mantle of responsibility will be passed on to the next generation of youngsters and preclude any possible dilution through the generations. This begs the question of whether having a passion for a given ideology is a good thing or not. Having an ideology might suggest a blinkered view and the possibility of excluding those who are not of the same view. It is certainly the case that any movement would not exist without an aim or ideology, and belief in it is what gives members a sense of belonging. Any exclusivity is borne not of a sense of superciliousness but of a sense of shared belief. Anyone may share that belief and anyone may, therefore gain that sense of belonging.

There is also the implicit differentiation between education (as goes on in the youth movement) and instruction (as goes on in the classroom). These young leaders know the criticism that they mete out to their own classroom teachers. It is not long since they were pupils themselves. They do not want to fall into the same category as those which they have criticised. They have to be better than their teachers and so adopt an exaggerated way of demonstrating their professionalism.

According to Hall (1996) identity is defined by what it lacks.

“Every identity has its ‘margin’, an excess, something more” and “every identity naming as its necessary, even if silenced and unspoken other, that which it ‘lacks’.” (page 5)

Perhaps what I “lack” is that exaggerated professionalism. I am now a qualified professional, a teacher. Perhaps I no longer need to exercise the exaggerated professionalism that I once did. As youngsters these leaders need their professionalism to be exaggerated to mark it out as professionalism. Otherwise they just end up like children play-acting a role.

I have lost my exaggerated professionalism but with that loss comes a pedagogic understanding and a wealth of experience upon which to base my judgements and my actions. Perhaps the exaggerated stage is what needs to be adopted in order for the professionalism to become second nature as maturity sets in. One wonders if perhaps the professionalism is exaggerated because they have something to hide. What they have to hide is their lack of experience, limited contextual information and lack of professional knowledge. This will come with age and maturity.

If I were not Jewish and not a senior member of staff of the parent organisation, would I still have been allowed in to study and teach this group? From my experience as a leader, I believe that I would have been allowed in to deliver what I was offering to deliver - a session on skill acquisition. However, the context would have been very different and there might have been a need for me to gain their trust. I would perhaps have been regarded as a “visiting expert” but with little knowledge of their framework or circumstances. Once I had left, the leaders probably would have felt the need to add their own Reform Jewish context, perhaps to give my message a little of the outside perspective with a view to elevating their own inside message.

My place on the inside assured

5. What is the significance of the esoteric use of Hebrew?

When reporting on the focus group session that I carried out, I note that my understanding of their esoteric use of Hebrew marks me as an insider. However, when I come to analyse its place in the diagrammatic scheme of things in the thesis, its relationship to the data procured and the understanding I derive, I fail to find a way of actually making a link with my other explicated themes. Giddens (1991) observes that,

“Virtually all human experience is mediated – through socialisation and in particular the acquisition of language. Language and memory are intrinsically connected, both on the level of individual recall and that of the institutionalisation of collective experience” (page 23).

Because language permeates “across time-space distances” (Giddens, 1991, page 23), I am enabled to immediately become immersed in the proceedings. The use of esoteric language invites me in as an insider. Despite my knowledge of some of the esotericisms dating back many years, the oral tradition has ensured its continuum and assured my place on the inside. It is significant, therefore, because the use of Hebrew – not just Hebrew but specific Hebrew acronyms – has mediated a tradition, one that I can slot into across the distance of time-space.

Esoteric language might be considered to be a boundary formation. Such terminology excludes outsiders and thereby can be considered to give the user status, having knowledge and information to which the outsider is not privy. It almost creates a sense of exoticism – both reaffirming the user’s place in the in-group and confirming their difference from the out-group. Perhaps it is a bit like that special feeling a child might feel by being privy to a secret. Goffman (1959) believes that “one overall objective of any team is to sustain the definition of the situation” (page 141). I believe that use of insider language achieves this aim. It is the extension of “linguistic differentiation of ‘I/me/you’” (Giddens, page 52). Using language that only an in-group will comprehend becomes “we/us versus them”. Such rituals simultaneously unite members with each other and separate them from non-members. The fact that the language is Hebrew reinforces Jewish identity and the fact that it is movement specific reinforces movement identity.

Transformation from a Teacher to a Researcher

6. Why did I fail to draw conclusions from my first set of data, the focus group work?

I had originally intended to do several similar sessions and to create a theory based on the parity created by analysing them all. As this became an option that was not viable, it seemed to me that I did not have enough data to draw conclusions. I could not attribute meaning to the small snippets of conversation I had recorded and most of my “data” were subjective observations – insufficient upon which to base a theory. I did not feel that the context, the situation or the small amount of data that I did procure was sufficiently representative of the youth movement experience. There were no data that I felt I could delve into, scratch below the surface and find “true” meaning. I did not know the participants well enough to analyse their small contributions and seek significance in their small contributions.

Had I been aware at the time, I would have realised that the session was in fact not about what I was observing but what I was becoming. It was about my first steps on the research journey, my transformation from a teacher to a researcher, my taking the first helicopter flight to being able to view the situation from above - both holistically and specifically. I did, in fact, have a plethora of data from which I could have explicated a theory of that journey.

Seeing my Former Self

7. Why did I concentrate on “threshold” youngsters for my interviews?

I wanted to concentrate on youngsters who had gone through the bulk of their youth movement engagement and yet were still close enough to it to recognise the significance of the events, with the capacity to reflect on the relationships and benefits of that engagement. As they are facing the outside world, searching for new direction and ways of expressing themselves and their Judaism, I felt that they would be at their most reflexive and reflective and would therefore offer considered accounts of their youth movement experience. Giddens (1991) refers to divorce as offering “fresh opportunities for [] self-development and future happiness” (page 10). I feel that leaving a youth movement is akin to this. Youngsters have to come to terms with the ending of their social structure, support of their friends, recreational pursuits and life direction. These threshold youngsters have to mourn the loss of this phase in their lives and actively pursue avenues to replace it. This, I felt would offer them a heightened awareness, understanding and reflexive capacity for evaluation which would facilitate the procurement of rich data.

Thus, I felt that the threshold youngsters would provide good candidates for research respondents as they are focussing both on their past and their future with intensity and meaning. Their search for new meaning to replace the old and their sense of identity hitherto tied to their movement, means that they are on the verge of pursuing a new identity through transition and transformation.

Additionally, as young adults I was able to enter into a discourse with them on equal terms (as opposed to adult to child) and begin to see my former self reflected in their accounts. I do not think I would have been able to do this either with teenagers or children. The maturity of my subjects’ metacognition and self-reflection helped me to remember my threshold years, the period where I was seeking my own meaning and

fulfilling life pursuits. This is important in the context of my now being able to understand my subjects and their situation. By straddling the insider/outsider boundary, I am able to combine these two perspectives to gain a clearer understanding. The possibility that I am looking at youngsters whose experiences might be about to mirror mine; that they may be following in some of my footsteps creates an interesting tension. No one else could have uncovered the same story. This is our story; the one that I share with my respondents; the one that is unique to our relatedness, our discourse and our mutual journey. Like the use of language, our shared experiences have created a bounded system. Another researcher might have shared a different story and uncovered different issues.

Journey from Youth Leader to Teacher

8. *Why: (i) did I not raise exaggerated professionalism and (ii) does exaggerated professionalism not arise naturally from my subjects, in the case study interviews?*

I didn't raise the issue of exaggerated professionalism in the interviews because I wanted only the innate and intrinsic concerns of the subjects to arise. What I was hoping would come out of the interviews was an inductive and grounded representation of their thoughts and feelings about their experiences in the youth movement. Each was given an explicit opportunity to offer what skills or opportunities the movement had left them with. None developed the idea of professionalism.

Abigail sheds light on her commitment.

B: [...] what has RSY specifically given you, that allows you to do this job?

A: The vision

B: Just the vision?

A: Not just, but the main thing is you know that I often sort of think how much easier my life would be if I were just a lawyer or an office worker where I have responsibilities and work friends and I can turn the computer off at five o' clock and not have my weekends taken up and have conversations at dinner parties where people know what job I do.

Tracy identifies problem-solving, organisational skills and lateral thinking.

B: [...] what do you think the movement has done for you?

T: The movement *per se* or ...?

B: Your movement experiences.

T: Oh, the movement experience, okay. I think it's funny. When you go to different places you see people who haven't had experiences like this. I think I'm more confident ... in groups especially. I really don't have a problem talking in groups. I don't necessarily think in a straight and narrow way.... Uhm ... in terms of activities I would plan, in terms of the way I go round ... I'm quite happy to go round a problem. I think youth movement people ... I've noticed that all my friends are the same... if we can't do something one way, we'll try another, and we'll try another until we get a way to do it. We're quite persistent like that. I think our view of status quo is different to general Brits.

Jack can't even identify specifically what he has gained from his movement experience.

B: Now, I know you're not a doctor yet but if you think about some of the skills that you've picked up over the years in the movement, do you think that there are any skills that you think that you've developed – both as a madrich⁹² and before that as a chanich⁹³ – that might help you in your career as a doctor?

J: Well, yes, but I don't think that I can pinpoint what they are because I've been involved for so long that I've picked up the skills passively along the way.

If it was not their perception that they were exercising exaggerated professionalism, then it would not have arisen. In fact, if they had not really witnessed any other kind of professionalism, didn't, for instance, have a teaching career against which to compare it, then how could they possibly reach the conclusion that I did, in that regard? I believe that the youth leaders would not recognise exaggerated professionalism in themselves. Unrecorded conversations I have had with similar youngsters suggest that they are simply highly committed and keen to use every means at their disposal to both make their "job" easier and to make sure that they are

⁹² Madrich = **Leader**

⁹³ Chanich = **Participant**

doing it “right”, giving back to their charges the benefits that they perceive to have derived from their own experiences as participants.

However, having identified the notion of exaggerated professionalism during my observation of the camp, it sheds light on my own journey from youth leader to teacher.

Underlining my presence as a researcher

9. What does the “manic laugh-fest” represent?

I believe that the fact that the professionalism **is** exaggerated means that leaders need an opportunity to be themselves, to stop play acting and derive the social interaction that is their reward for their time and effort. Added to this is the fact that they have been up very early, running a camp and being responsible for the participants all day. They have done this for several days and they have several more. The time between end of leaders’ meetings and them going to bed is the only time that they have in which to let off steam, in which to drop their guard and not have to sustain the pressure of heightened professionalism.

Observing them in this mode, underlines my presence here as a researcher. I do not need the social interaction, am not seeking a release of pressure nor am I playing a role for the benefit of the youngsters. I am there simply to run a session and to procure data.

Clarity attained by return to the data

10. What is the key to skill acquisition as demonstrated by the activity in Chapter 4?

When I come to analyse what might be the key to skill acquisition, I invoke the advent of confidence as a result of experience. However, returning to the data, it becomes clear that the advent of confidence is the result of the support of their peers. It seems that my focus on whether or not confidence was present was misguided. Having established the presence of confidence, the fundamental quest ought to have been the reason for it. It seems that confidence shares its origins with identity. Both appear to be socially mediated.

Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us. (Hall, 1996, page 6)

Confidence, therefore, is not innate but relational. The movement offers the opportunities to develop confidence by providing affirming experiences and a supportive community of peers whilst making allowances for mistakes.

Turning the magnifying glass on myself

11. *Having diagrammatically represented my perception of the causal relationships of the themes I explicate from the leadership camp data (chapters 4 and 5), what meaning can be ascribed to these diagrams? What is the validity of my session in terms of a contribution to research?*

The validity of the session lies in the success for the children but cannot be considered to contribute anything to research as it is presented. It sheds light on the relationships between leaders, their charges and me as the researcher. It might provide a starting point or focus for further research. However, the validity is compromised by the fact that the “theory” combines players, personae adopted by the players, attitudes and behaviours. There is no parity between these categories and any perceived relationship is forced.

During the Grounded Theory analysis, I include my own responses to the events and unfolding story, as directed by Glaser (1992). This is perhaps a turning point in the development of my researcher identity. I have turned the proverbial magnifying glass in on myself as well as on my subjects. This reflexivity is inherent in me as a teacher. Throughout the account there are incidences of me reflexively learning from my delivery of the session. However, this example of my reflecting on my being reflexive is the mark of the researcher identity.

On page 122 I present a diagram which reveals the process of Grounded Theory as I interpreted it. It is interesting to note the centrality I ascribe to the process of analysis and critiquing. All arrows in the entire process refer back to this stage in a revolving manner.

On page 124 I present a table of explicated themes. It is, with the benefit of hindsight, interesting to note that the entire exercise became more about me becoming a researcher than any other data I managed to procure.

Whilst trying to establish a representative diagram for my Grounded Theory analysis (page 130), a tension is observed between researcher and educator. This tension, only

observable with hindsight and with critical eyes, again focuses on my own reflexivity and in some sense foreshadows the account of the learning exercise being recounted.

However, as the diagram develops, it is clear that my own development as a researcher is underway. I first recognize the lenses through which I perceive the events and then go on to recognise my own behaviours and manner in which I conduct myself. *Pro rata*, much more light seems to be shed on my own actions and behaviours than those of the scene which I have come to observe.

Focussing my microscope

12. Why do I move from favouring quantitative to preferring qualitative means of data analysis?

Returning to the allusion of the microscope on page 115, one can consider that the detailed nature of a culture can only be recognised under the microscope of sociological scrutiny. It is only when we rack up our subject and increase the magnification that we are able to determine the fractured nature of society in detail and the reflexive quandaries and dialectical considerations faced by the individual in a society of choices, of ethnicities, of proximal and distal influences and of transitions and transformations. Giddens (1991) argues that modernity “produces differences, exclusion and marginalisation” (page 6). It is these factors upon which I focused my microscope.

Once I had started to consider the issues and complexities inherent in the subject matter, it became clear that totting up responses, ticking boxes or completing Likert scales were not going to provide me with true meaning. It may elicit **some** answers but would not be able to illuminate the situation, its dialectic, its complexities and its depth to the same degree as a qualitative pursuit. The latter allows meanings to emerge and is not necessarily confined by the questions posed.

Taking the researcher role into account

13. Why do I decide to use Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis for my case study analyses?

Having attempted to analyse my focus group work and leadership camp data using Grounded Theory, I felt dissatisfied with the result. In part this is because I found the results to be contrived and clinical. However, in large part, this dissatisfaction was also due to the need to take the researcher role into account.

It was obvious to me, as the issue of identity came more and more into focus, that the subjectivity of the researcher has to be acknowledged. Any theory, meaning or understanding that arose from my analysis was because of me. Other researchers may reach different conclusions or focus on different areas. I am what made the research what it is. I bring with me my innate understanding, a degree of experience, perhaps a preconceived notion or two. Together with the thoughts and feelings as expressed by the respondents, all of these combine to form the theory as I present it. Another researcher would bring a different mix. None is incorrect or correct. Each is a presentation amongst many possible. IPA takes the researcher role into account.

Additionally, IPA takes the respondents' search for meaning into account. Where Grounded Theory relies on observations, IPA excels at utilising the respondents struggle to reach a meta-understanding. IPA grew out of psychological research techniques. Having recognised that the key element explicated from the data was to be identity, a psychological tool became a sensible choice. Identity is always about the understanding and the representation of the self – inherently psychological in nature.

Perhaps, too, it just felt right because it mirrored many of my other experiences and validated them. For instance, working in the Jewish community, I spent a lot of time dealing with text, analysing passages and finding Jewish meaning for my client communities in the scriptures. Hermeneutic analysis felt easy and productive.

Gaining acceptance as a researcher

14. Why did I pull back from the indoctrination argument?

During my discussion with Abigail, it became clear that indoctrination was at play. Indeed, as the other two interviews progressed, I became more certain. I began to recall my attitude as a leader, taking the ideological viewpoint of my movement (not necessarily shared by me) when addressing my charges. It shed light, not on how I might have been indoctrinating the participants, but on how it might have led to my own imperceptive (at the time) indoctrination. My professional attitude would have meant that I imparted the movement view; perhaps I masked my real views so as to avoid dispute and slowly developed a relevant narrative and critique for myself that supported the values that I was educating.

Having been alerted to the possibility that indoctrination might be employed to educate in Jewish youth movements, I offered to run a session at an annual Jewish conference (Limmud 2007) on the topic of indoctrination in our youth movements. However, I made this offer at a point where I had only just begun to research the topic in the literature. As I began to prepare for my session, I became embroiled in the debates, theories, dialectics and controversies within the literature. It was no longer clear to me.

Much of the literature centres on the loss of critical capacity. For example,

“Causing another person to respond to reasons in a pattern that serves the manipulator’s ends” (Yaffe, 2003, page 335).

“Indoctrination involves a process of knowledge or belief transmission whereby persons are left with crippled reflective capacities with respect to particular content” (Merry, 2005, page 406).

“Indoctrination is belief inculcation that fosters a non-evidential or non-critical style of belief” (Cuypers and Haji, 2006, Page 727).

Some of the literature insinuates a rather devious intention. For example the use of “manipulator” in Merry’s quote above, doesn’t sit easily with my understanding of the youth movement experience. Merry (2005) considers the characteristics of indoctrination to be:

- (i) Beliefs dodge testable facts,
- (ii) Employment of coercion or psychological pressure,
- (iii) Imparting knowledge with the intent to suppress creativity and critical thinking and
- (iv) The extent to which one holds implausible beliefs or acts in illogical ways without them being persuaded by testable rationale

Additionally, Hundeyde (2003) suggests that victims are alienated and disaffected individuals who are easy targets of indoctrination.

All of this sits uneasily with the idea that we are liberal Jews exerting a moral influence on our youngsters. If we are to consider indoctrination as comprising the above-mentioned malevolent pursuit, then it is not what I had intended before embarking on my research in the arena.

How then can what we do in our youth movements be construed as indoctrination? And how do we manage to produce a uniformity of allegiance towards the end of the movement experience?⁹⁴ I arrived at a possible answer when I read Burns (2006) who talks of Cognitive Dissonance. This thesis has already looked at the issues of liminality in terms of the threshold crossing, by the interviewees, from non-membership to a sense of belonging. This would seem to be the key to the issue of indoctrination. Newcomers are exposed to ideologies with which they might not be in complete agreement. In the context of the movements researched in this thesis, these will be benign ideas such as liberalism, tolerance, faith, or social action. Any discomfort experienced by such exposure needs to be alleviated. Moreover, as newcomers, youngsters might do what they can to be socially accepted and this is likely to include agreement. In order to adopt such ideologies that may be at odds with their own, their own pre-existing ideologies have to be forfeited. They elevate the new ideology at the expense of the old, which is now relegated. This is a much more subtle notion of indoctrination and probably does not feel like indoctrination to those experiencing it. Certainly, there is no “manipulator”, there is nobody asking one to ignore “testable facts” and there are no “crippled reflective capacities”. On the contrary, it feels to the subject that they are engaging their reflective capacities because they have to articulate (if only to themselves) why they have rejected their previously held beliefs and adopted the new ones.

Thus, the reason I pull back from engaging with the idea that indoctrination might be at play is because it is not recognisable as such if one refers to some of the literature. What is going on is the pursuit of social cohesion (limited within a sealed group), followed by cognitive dissonance – the relegating of the old ideas in order to make way for elevating the new. This is subtle and the subject (certainly, **this** subject) might be unaware of the process as it is happening.

One can draw on the similarities of the process in youth movements with the process of my becoming a researcher. I had to traverse the terrain from teacher to researcher, to cross the liminal threshold and adopt the critical capacities of the researcher. I had

⁹⁴ **There are, of course, those who leave due to the dissonance in their beliefs from that of the movement. However, I know of many (myself included) who remained involved in the movements until early adulthood despite not being entirely in line with all of the ideology.**

to relegate the teacher and elevate the researcher. In so doing I have sought to gain the qualities of and acceptance as a researcher.

Circularity

As I start to identify the Motivational and Situational influences of Jewish Identity, it starts to feel like the “Push and Pull” factors of immigration versus emigration. I have never studied this and did not read around it for this study. However, I have been an immigrant – twice. It was something that I must have read at 14 when I first immigrated to Israel (my mother having been a Social Anthropology lecturer). This thought is the Third Culture Kid in me. The TCK never leaves me but shapes who I am, how I interact with society and, it seems, how I think as a researcher. Similarly, the Jew has shaped my thinking, shaped who I am and shaped the writing of this thesis.

‘This is, of course, my Jewish I, the one that approves of my own retention of ethnicity.’ (Peshkin 1988, p. 18)

It was only when preparing for the viva that I became aware of the virtuous circularity of the entire thesis. Peshkin’s was the paper that provided the epiphany where I became a researcher. Yet, what motivated him was his Jewish heritage and his desire to maintain his ethnicity.

It is interesting to note how many of the theorists upon whom I alight are Jewish and might be interesting to speculate as to how this factor might have shaped their thinking and influenced their theories. Did I perhaps favour them because their Jewish perspectives are consonant with mine?

Vygotsky, Kohlberg and Bronfenbrenner form the backbone of my Literature Review. One can only speculate whether Vygotsky’s Jewish education, Kohlberg’s religious upbringing and Bronfenbrenner’s attempt to reconcile his twin national and ethnic identities have influenced the development of their respective theories.

In a personal communication, when I asked Professor John Comaroff why so many early anthropologists were Jewish (the subject of a lecture he delivered at a Jewish conference (Limmud in Cape Town, 2008) his reply was,

“My conclusion was that it had little to do with Jewishness per se, but with displacement and the estrangement that scholars bring to their research and

theory-work -- and that, historically, there was a strong correlation between Jews and displacement/estrangement”.

(Appendix 6)

So, perhaps it is the sense of displacement in me, the TCK, that has allowed me to view my observed world with a critical eye, allowed me to become a researcher. However, as I have already noted, being Jewish is in itself, akin to being a TCK so that sense of displacement are both my personal history and my collective Jewish history. How can I separate any element of my makeup from any other? I am the conglomeration of all of the “I’s”, the sum of all of my experiences and influences. How can I be sure which “I” is being brought in to play?

It is interesting that Peshkin’s 1988 paper refers to I’s whereas in 2001 he was referring to lenses. He thus moves from the subjective *de facto* to the objective and manipulated reality. One can change lenses or mix lenses or bring a variety of permutations into play. However, the I’s are static. They have to vie for supremacy. He does concede that it is best to select one category at a time to avoid several vying for attention. However, the concept of lenses over eyes seems to be a development in his thinking.

The circle is also complete because Peshkin’s (2001) attitude focuses on hermeneutic analysis when he describes how the longer he walked on a trail, the more focal points he uncovered. This, he posits, is analogous to the notion that the more times you read a piece of data, the more foci or meanings will emerge. Peshkin’s analogy reminds us of the wealth of information that can be uncovered by exposing the minutiae, much as I had done during my hermeneutic analysis of the interviews.

For instance, when I try to deduce what is meant by Abigail’s use of “the bubble” (page 168) I go into great depth of several connotations that could be ascribed to the term. It is not that I am suggesting she had all (or any) of these connotations in mind (or, indeed, the subconscious). I am simply exploring all of the **possible** meanings, the potential undertones of her discourse. By so doing, I am allowing myself to see what may lie beneath the surface.

“Each category represents a preparation to perceive.” (Peshkin. 2001, page 240)

Discovering Peshkin's viewpoint is partially what led me to carry out individual interviews rather than continuing to try to pursue the focus group work.

Any situation can be examined on a variety of levels and to an ever more refined and detailed degree. Whilst focus groups offer the opportunity for a greater number of voices, and the chance to witness socio-cultural interactions, they lose out in capturing the depth that can emerge when one individual is given limitless time, empathetic encouragement and undivided attention.

Peshkin admits that we perceive from that which we choose to sample. Selection of categories is what serves to focus attention.

My Trajectory

“Self-identity [...] forms a *trajectory* across the different institutional settings of modernity over the *durée* of what used to be called the ‘life cycle’.”

(Original italics) Giddens, 1991, page14

In order to identify myself as a researcher, I need to stand back and examine the path I have taken through this research; my naïveté, my learning curve and my trial-and-error, until I found a research context and methodology which both suited the aims of my pursuit and allowed me to indulge my strengths to procure meaning and context from my data.

It is interesting that I have moved from examining my subjects under a microscope in my first degree of Microbiology to examining my subjects under a **proverbial** microscope in my current work.

Bauman (1996) likens identity to the photos one stores in a family album.

The slow accretion of irreversible and non-erasable identity-yielding events”.
(page 18)

It is true that we recall the photographed episodes of our lives much more vividly than those for which we have no record, our memory being reinforced of the episodes through the concrete, tangible and oft-viewed photographic evidence. Perhaps the same can be said of the identities we acknowledge. I make claims to several identities during the course of this thesis. However, what about those that I fail to acknowledge? If I fail to acknowledge an identity does that render it non-existent? Like the episode of my life that was never photographically recorded, it fades into the

annals of lost memories and unwritten chapters. I am, in fact, a composite of a multiplicity of identities –acknowledged, unacknowledged and concealed. The fact of this research has reified my researcher identity, created new “photos” to overlay on my faded and unviewed older identities.

This begs the question: what is reality? Bauman (1996) refers to activities being “practised by marginal people on the margins of ‘real life’” who came to be “life itself, and the question of ‘reality’ need not be dealt with any more” (page 27). Is something only real if it is acknowledged or scrutinised under the sociological microscope? Does it cease to be real if we avert our gaze? Like the photograph that was never taken, consigning elements of our lives to the haze of anonymity, obscurity or non-existence, eternally to be unrecognised as an experience because of the failure to record it, only that which I perceive becomes known to me. That which I fail to perceive is non-existent in my world.

“[I]dentities are about questions of using the resources of history, language and culture in the process of *becoming* rather than *being*: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves”. (My emphasis, Hall, 1996, page 4)

Bauman (1996) offers the allusion of the identity seeker as a pilgrim – always travelling, never arriving; constantly in pursuit of an ultimate goal. This is in stark contrast to the identity-achieved status conceived by early theorists. Thus, I have been in transit through the development of this thesis, adopting a variety of identities along the way, only to arrive at the “end” of this journey to find that it is but a mere marker along the route of a much longer journey yet to be undertaken.

My Understanding

I have consistently been asked several questions by those who seek to understand the context of my thesis.

1. Is it good for these youngsters to have separate friendship groups?

I believe that friendships are based on a shared experience and a common understanding; that all of our friendship groups are contextualised in terms of our interests and our choices. This research has highlighted that a set of Jewish youth movement friends is important for a Jewish youngster because it reinforces their

Jewish identity and allows them to be the "other" in confidence, knowing that they are not the only "other", that there are people who are experiencing the same sense of alienation, the same rites of passage and the same juggling of identities. With this confidence comes the ability to socialise elsewhere. Whether Jewish or not, I believe that we all juggle different aspects of our lives and different facets of our personalities.

2. *What about those who drop out?*

During my research I came to believe that a youth movement experience is beneficial whatever the duration of involvement. I myself had periods of non-involvement and still regard those periods when I was involved as life enhancing. People I have met and spoken to about their movement experiences, even those who left before the age of 16, have felt that the movement has given them friendships, skills and experiences unparalleled in their lives. We must consider that ANY experience is beneficial and adds to the rich milieu of life's opportunities.

3. *Does immersion in a Jewish youth movement make it difficult to reconcile home life?*

On the contrary, I believe that it is beneficial and an adjunct to home life, particularly a Jewish home life. Having a sense of belonging, with its concomitant social capital, I have learnt, leaves one happy, content and capable of dealing with a greater number of situations than if one were confined to just one life experience. Every experience we have and every situation we encounter gives a greater ability to read the next situation.

4. *How is confidence passed on?*

In contrast to the likes of the Scouts, Jewish youth movements place trust in their youngsters to run events and take responsibility for groups of youngsters. Such trust engenders confidence and engages the youngsters in whom it is placed. This research has shed light on an ideology as being something that the youngsters can commit to. It is this commitment to their ideology that makes them passionate and keen to pass on their enthusiasm.

5. *What is transferrable to other youth groups and other situations?*

Given some of the rhetoric around giving youngsters a voice (e.g. Mitra, 2008), lessons may be learnt from the youth movement where, for instance school councils sometimes struggle to achieve success. Flutter (2006) cautions that giving children a voice on school councils can sometimes leave them feeling frustrated that their views are not being taken seriously if the involvement is not sustained. By contrast, the empowerment experienced by young youth leaders in Jewish youth movements is borne of a long term commitment and a belief in the philosophy.

Giving youngsters positions of responsibility seems to keep them engaged and to heighten their enjoyment, their rewards and their social returns. There are plenty of local youth clubs and youth organisations in Britain. Many provide an opportunity for socialising and offer such activities as table tennis, snooker and the like or for just getting together in a safe environment. Few, in my experience, offer such leadership opportunities and powerful positions of responsibility such as leading camps or organising large-scale events as do the Jewish youth movements. The Cubs and Scouts, for example, offer a range of novel experiences such as outdoor activities or the opportunity to gain a variety of skills. However, the Scouting movement is typified by being led by adult volunteers, not by the youngsters themselves.

There are many ways in which the experience of the Jewish Youth Movement may be passed on to other organisations. An example is the experience of RSY-Netzer. Formerly a conglomeration of independent youth clubs associated with individual synagogues around the country; there was a concerted effort to turn them into a movement. This was done on several levels. First, a director was appointed with experience of leadership of one of the existing movements (Habonim). He was able to use his knowledge and experience to introduce a structure and a strategic plan of learning and sustainable youth provision. Secondly, the new director gathered the youth leaders together to formulate a mutual ideology. Thirdly, youngsters were given leadership positions and other positions of responsibility to bring about the inception of the new movement.

It is these three concepts combined that made the movement a success and sustainable. Namely, (i) a head with experience of leading a similar organisation, (ii) the introduction of a superordinate goal to which recruits could adhere, in which they could believe and strive towards, and (iii) youngsters were given positions of

responsibility which caused most to stay involved and to pass on their commitment to the next cohort of youngsters.

Merton (2004) sums up the essence of youth work,

“Youth work has come to mean a combination of methods or interventions (such as educational group work), marked out by distinctive characteristics (such as voluntary engagement, active involvement, informal education and professional flexibility) and underpinned by a shared set of values [...] It promotes the voice and influence of young people. Fundamentally, youth work with individuals and groups stems from negotiation and mutual agreement. It serves as a springboard for social learning – in its broadest sense – that young people can use to express and achieve their aspirations.”
(Page 29)

There are a variety of possibilities for translating this to other youth organisations.

These would include mentoring, shadowing, exchange programmes and joint events.

(i) *Mentoring*

An experienced leader from one of the Jewish youth movements might be invited in to an organisation to gain an insight into its current activities and ethos. This person could use their experience to mentor an individual or group and make suggestions or offer advice as appropriate.

(ii) *Shadowing*

Potential youth leaders from an organisation could be invited to shadow youth leaders in a Jewish Youth Movement. These individuals could learn by observing how things are done, asking pertinent questions and perhaps be given responsibilities with which they could engage whilst shadowing and being advised by their Jewish movement counterpart. In fact, such potential youth leaders could shadow a selection of people holding a variety of positions of responsibility. For instance, they could spend time with the full time Movement Workers, those individuals who have chosen to spend a year working full-time for the movement. They could equally visit camps and residential events to learn about planning, executing, running and evaluating such an event and to experience firsthand the amount of commitment, dedication and professionalism that goes into running these events. Similarly, they could attend meetings, youth club events and outings and see how the local leaders arrange events and interact with their charges.

(iii) *Exchange Programmes*

A variety of exchange programmes could be considered. These could include inviting leaders from other organisations to be part of a movement's programming for a series of programmes or a residential event and similarly visiting other organisations with a view to supporting, learning from each other and exchanging ideas and good practice. It might be possible to include a visit to another organisation as part of the summer camp programming and actually take an entire camp on a bus to visit, for instance, a Scout camp where joint activities, discussions and debates could take place. A reciprocal return visit could be arranged for a few days later.

Leaders from a Jewish Youth Movement might visit leaders from another organisation (and vice versa) to participate in planning, organising or running an event. In that way the considerations that go into the event can be shared by both parties which will augment the learning and the ownership process.

(iv) Joint Events

Whole groups of leaders from outside organisations or clubs could be invited to participate in dialogue or co-operate in events and programmes.

Special programmes could be developed to concentrate on interfaith or "inter-ideology" dialogue and debate. Similarly, social action programmes could be carried out jointly with other organisations. These could include fund-raising events, cleaning up events, activities to support sectors of the community (such as the aged, homeless, etc). Such co-operation might be more successful than shadowing because the visiting group would have a joint stake in the process and the outcome rather than just being observers of another organisation's activities.

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Appendix A: Correspondence with Jean Phinney

From: Jean Phinney [mailto:jphinne@calstatela.edu]

Sent: Wed 11/01/2006 00:20

To: Belinda Copitch

Cc:

Subject: Re: MEIM

You raise an interesting question. Certainly, it is unclear how to categorize Jews, i.e., as a religious group or ethnic group. I have not done any work on ethnic identity in Jews, but a colleague of mine has, and she might have some suggestions for you. She is Carol Markstrom <cmarkstr@wvu.edu>

Most studies I have seen on Jews have gotten samples from Jewish schools or synagogues, where they could be easily found. But there are many Jews scattered throughout the population who would not be identified in the usual surveys, since the question is not asked. Increasingly surveys use an open ended "Other" category, but I have no idea how often Jews would use that category. I have not seen it used in our work, but there is not a large Jewish population in areas where I have worked. A fundamental question is who considers themselves Jews and how important that it is to them. That would be another whole study -- maybe after you finish your PhD!

Good luck,
Jean Phinney

Belinda Copitch wrote:

>Dear Dr. Phinney,

>

>I am currently pursuing a PhD on the life skills acquired by kids in Jewish Youth Movements in the UK.

>

>Some of my literature review chapter focusses on Jewish Identity and, during my trawl through the literature, I have become very interested in your papers on MEIM.

>

>I am interested to know if you have ever (to your knowledge) had a significant (or any) response from Jewish respondents - and what those responses might have been. My curiosity arises because of my own discomfort in describing myself as European or Caucasian (or similar). I would describe my ethnicity as Jewish (an option which does not appear on your choices but also one that I never see on application forms in this country). Although ethnically Jewish, I am anthropologically Caucasian.

>

>I'd be very grateful if you could let me have the benefit of your experience in this matter.

>

>Many thanks in anticipation,

>Belinda Copitch – Director of Northern Development

>

>Movement for Reform Judaism

>

>t: 0161 831 7092

>

>f: 0161 839 4865

>

>w: www.ReformJudaism.org.uk <<http://www.reformjudaism.org.uk/>>

>

>Registered Charity No. 250060

>

Appendix B: Perceptions of Jewish Identity

Attendees at a Jewish conference elected to come to my session entitled "Immersion, Cohesion or Separation?" The explanatory piece for the session read as follows:

How do we see ourselves as Western Jews? Where do we, as Jews, fit in with Western society? How do we reconcile being Jewish and British? This session aims to employ a variety of media to explore our relationship and attitudes to Jewish identity in the Diaspora.

At the start of the session, after I had introduced myself, participants were asked to summarise the word or phrase that expresses or exemplifies being Jewish in their eyes.

The following two lists are the responses from two conferences at which this session was delivered.

Manchester Limmud

September 2005

- Community
- Family
- Language
- "Rebel with a Cause"
- "Stranger at the Gate"
- Genetics
- Tradition
- Kosher → outsider
- Persecution
- Purpose/direction
- Ethnicity
- Physical presence
- History/heritage
- Culture
- Connection

National Limmud Conference

December 2005

- My family
- Family history
- Israel
- Live Jewish life
- Struggle – values
- Otherness
- Meeting Other Jewish singles
- Brit (Circumcision, literally covenant)
- Kaleidoscopic identity
- Jewish holidays
- Sense of belonging/energy
- Food
- Pursuit of knowledge/debate/analysis
- Jewish "feeling"
- Matrilineal descent
- Torah
- Persecution

Appendix C: Lesson Plan

Skills:

Facilitation
Design
Curriculum Development
Presentation

Total Time: 75 Minutes

Activity:

- 10 4 Lists: Participants add their name to the skill they feel most confident in on the left and least confident in on the right

Materials:

The diagram shows four vertical rectangular boxes arranged horizontally. Each box is divided into two halves by a vertical line. The boxes are labeled from left to right: 'Facilitation', 'Design', 'Curriculum Development', and 'Presentation'. Below the first box, two arrows point upwards towards the vertical line. The left arrow is labeled 'Most confident' and the right arrow is labeled 'Least confident'.

Flip chart paper
Blutak/cellotape
Markers
Paper
Pens
Post-it notes

- 5 Discussion: Why did you put yourself there?
- 10 Discussion: What qualities needed for each skill → Bullet Point list
Why do you feel uncomfortable being asked to perform that task?
- 15 Assign Groups. Those from right (i.e. least comfortable)
1. Choose 2 facilitators – 1 for each group
Nothing gets done without facilitator's agreement and group consensus
 2. Choose 2 Presenters – 1 for each group
 3. Design a Poster advertising an event for cheder
- OR
4. Design a Worksheet for a cheder (religion school) class to complete
 4. Produce a set of 6 lesson titles/topics on one subject. Include rationale for the sequence and an outline of each lesson
- 10 Present productions
- 10 Participants to write how they felt about carrying out that activity on a post it note and stick it onto the relevant board
- 10 Discussion:
- How did it feel to be put into that group/situation?
 - How did you feel when you were doing it?
 - How do you feel about that skill now?
 - What did you learn?
 - Were your expectations met?
 - How likely are you to take on this task in the future?
- 5 Sum up

Appendix D: Glossary

As Hebrew is written (i) using a different alphabet and (ii) using no vowels, the words below appear as transliterations and some of them may appear through the text in slightly different spellings.

Aliyah	Literally, ascent. The process of immigrating to Israel.
Bogrim	(Literally graduates) refers to the student aged members of a youth movement on the principle that they have graduated to become youth leaders.
Chanich/im	Participant/s, literally one who is being educated.
Chanukah	Festival of lights. This is a minor Jewish festival but it takes on more significance as it usually occurs in December whilst the non-Jewish world are celebrating Christmas.
Chanukiah	A nine branched candelabra that is lit during the eight days of Chanukah.
Cheder	Religion school; Equivalent to the Sunday School of the church.
Chinuch	Education
CST	Community Security Trust - An organisation comprised of volunteers who are committed to ensuring the security of the Jewish community.
Dreidel	A spinning top that is traditionally played with on the festival of Chanukah.
Dugma Ishit	Personal example; usually refers to leadership by example.
Etgar	Literally, challenge. This is one of two gap year programmes in Israel provided for members of RSY-Netzer on Shnat Netzer (literally, Netzer year).
FZY	Federation of Zionist Youth. A pluralist Jewish youth movement which only exists in the UK although it has counterparts in the US and in Israel.
GTKY	Getting To Know You. Usually refers to the sorts of ice-breaker games often used to start a weekend or session.
Habonim	A Jewish youth movement founded on the three pillars of Judaism, Zionism and Socialism.
Hadracha	Youth leadership
Hagshama	Realisation
Hagshama Atzmit	Self realisation
Jackson's Row	The Reform congregation of central Manchester
Kashrut	The process of keeping kosher, keeping the Jewish dietary laws.
KATYMBA (KTYMBA)	A Hebrew Acronym (<i>Kol, Tnua, Yadaim, Mabat, Bitachon Atzmi</i> - Voice, Body language, Hand movements, Eye contact and Self Confidence) for the issues of communication to

consider when engaging in public speaking or addressing a youth group.

Kehillah	Community
Kvutzah	Kvutzah literally means group. Participants on camp are divided into smaller groups which do occasional activities together. This gives them a sense of identity within the larger group and makes it easier to conduct discussions rather than the intimidation of a large group.
Latkes	A fried potato dish traditionally eaten at Chanukah.
Machon	Short for Machon L'Madrichei Chutz La'Aretz – the Institute for Youth Leaders from Abroad. This is an institution in Jerusalem which trains youngsters, on their gap year in Israel, in preparation for being youth leaders in their youth movements back home.
Madrich	Youth leader
Mazkir/a	Literally secretary, this refers to the head of the youth movement. It is normally a one year position and is taken by someone who has just finished university.
Menorah	The name of the Reform congregation in south Manchester. It means a candelabra.
Mensch	A decent responsible person with admirable characteristics, a gentleman
Netzer	Stands for Noar Tzioni Reformi – Reform Zionist Youth. This is the umbrella organisation of Reform and Liberal (Progressive) Jewish youth movements worldwide. It also translates as a new shoot, a twig, a new growth and is representative of the fresh approach adopted by the movement when it was established. The logo incorporates a new shoot.
Passover	The festival commemorating the release, by the Pharaoh, of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.
Peilim	Activists
Pesach	Hebrew for Passover
Peula (Plural: peulot)	Literally, Activity. Refers to the type of informal lesson that goes on in a youth movement.
Reform	Modern Jewish movement originating in 18th century Europe that attempts to see Judaism as a rational religion adaptable to modern needs and sensitivities.
Rosh	Head
RSY-Netzer	Reform Synagogue Youth; The youth movement of the Movement for Reform Judaism, an affiliation of 43 Reform synagogues throughout England and Scotland. Netzer is a Hebrew acronym denoting the international umbrella organisation of the movement. It stands for Noar Tzioni

	Reformi (Reform Zionist Youth)
RSGB	Reform Synagogues of Great Britain, now changed its name to The Movement for Reform Judaism.
Schlepping	Yiddish word for travelling or carrying. It denotes an element of arduousness.
Shacharit	Morning service
Shemesh	Literally means sun. This is the name used by RSY-Netzer for their summer camps.
Shnat	Literally means "year of..." and refers to the movement gap year that youth movement youngsters take to teach them both about Israel and youth leadership skills.
Shnat Hachshara	Preparatory year (in Israel)
Shnat Netzer	(Literally, Year of Netzer) Gap year in Israel for the members of Netzer
Shul	Synagogue
Sikkum	Summing up, the point at the end of an activity or session, where the issues that have been raised are consolidated and the session is rounded off.
Sinai	Reform congregation of Leeds
Tafkid/im	Role/s
Tefilla	Prayer
Tikkun Atzmi	Self repair. The concept of first taking care of personal issues within the context of social action and repairing the world.
Tikkun Olam	Literally, repairing the world. The concept is derived from Kabbalistic philosophy but is usually used to denote sound ecological thinking and social action.
Tour	Relates to the summer tour of Israel undertaken by most Jewish youngsters in their post-GCSE summer.
UJIA	United Jewish Israel Appeal – the organisation responsible for raising money for Israel and for British Jewry.
ULPSNYC	The sister movement of RSY-Netzer run by the Liberal Movement. It stands for Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogue Youth. The name has since changed to LJY-Netzer, Liberal Jewish Youth.

Appendix E: Lynn's interview transcript

- B: Can you just tell me about your involvement in youth movements
- L: Uhm ... I am a madricha on camps in the summer and that's about it
- B: Okay, and what movement is that for
- L: RSY Netzer
- B: And tell me a little bit about RSY-Netzer
- L: It's a Reform Movement ... they believe in Tikkun Olam. (long pause) I don't know ... they run camps in the summer for people, there are some events in London but they don't do much in the north
- B: So how old were you when you first got involved?
- L: About 11
- B: And how did you get involved?
- L: Uhm, through the synagogue.
- B: Okay, do you want to explain a little bit about that involvement
- L: I went on a weekend at the synagogue and there I met some people and then I went on summer camp with them
- B: Okay, so what was it about that weekend that made you become involved in the youth movement?
- L: The people that I met and wanted to go on camp with.
There is a momentary distraction of a noise
- B: So it was the people that you met that made you want to go along again, and want to be involved?
- L: Yes
- B: Okay, and what was your next involvement after that weekend?
- L: I went on summer camp
- B: Okay, and do you want to tell me about that?
- L: What do you mean
- B: Do you remember your first summer camp?
- L: Yes
- B: What was the educational content of that summer camp?
- L: I don't remember
- B: Approximately how much of your time is spent on youth movement stuff?
- L: This year or last year?
- B: Let's start with this year
- L: Three weeks
- B: Three weeks, year? And that's a full time residential
- L: Yeah, but last year it was five hours a week
- B: Why was it different last year
- L: Because I was involved in FZY
- B: So you were involved in a different movement last year as well as RSY?
- L: Yes
- B: Do you want to tell me about that movement?
- L: It's a pluralist youth movement. They run summer camps and they run weekly events throughout the year all over the country
- B: Okay, so you were involved in both movements at the same time?
- L: Yes
- B: How did you get involved in FZY?
- L: Through my brother
- B: So you just went along because your brother was going
- L: Yes
- B: And why did you choose RSY as your main movement?

- L: I started in there and that's where my friends were and I was settled in RSY before I joined FZY
- B: Right, so you already had an allegiance with RSY?
- L: Yes
- B: So you're now less involved with FZY. Why is that?
- L: Because I got too old
- B: At what point did you decide that RSY was the movement for you or are you saying that it was always the movement for you?
- L: No, I suppose it was when I was on the FZY committee and I was going on "Israel Tour" and I just didn't like the FZY ideology ... and I thought RSY was more for me
- B: Okay, so it's the ideology that ...
- L: ... not just the ideology; the whole ... the way it was run, the fact that FZY had 480 people on tour and they didn't seem to care about the movement. They just wanted people and on RSY we had 80 people on tour and got more out of it.
- B: If things had been different, could you ever see yourself belonging to a different movement?
- L: Yeah. If I had made better friends there, then probably.
- B: Okay, and which movement do you think might have been an attractive one for you?
- L: I don't know. ... I don't know enough about them because I never went
- B: If you were to encourage youngsters to join your movement, what would you say to them? What would be your selling message?
- L: Well, they'd have to want to learn and not just be going for fun but I don't know ... people who ... people hmm, yeah. (she fumbles for an idea)
- B: Okay, let me put it this way, you've got a kid who wants to join either FZY, RSY or Habonim. Okay, there's a habo person there and an FZY person there and they are each trying to encourage them to come to their movement. What would you say to encourage them to join your movement?
- L: What, do you mean, to encourage them to join?
- B: Yes
- L: 'Cause it's different. If we just want people, then I would say "come and have fun" but if I want people that are going to be RSY people and people that are going to get the most out of it, then I would say people who care about the movement
- B: So you're saying that they need to "married" to the ideology
- L: Yeah
- B: Okay, what are the points of the ideology that you would stress to that person?
- L: Not just the ideology – just generally going on camp and learning and. Not just the ideology but just generally appreciating the educational value of it.
- B: Okay, you've told me that you have had involvement in both RSY and FZY but you are pretty much telling me that RSY is the movement for you, right? Okay, the question then is what has RSY done for you? What do you feel, generally? In any aspects of your life, what has RSY done for you? What has it given you?
- L: I don't know
- B: You don't know? Okay, so if you had to take RSY out of your life, what would you lose?
- L: Well, I don't think I'd be Jewish at all really.
- B: So it's what gives you your Judaism?

L: Yeah.

B: Is there anything else that you think you'd miss if it wasn't in your life?

L: People. I think I get on with people there better than people at school.

B: Interesting. Has the movement done that for you? Or do you just think that you are the sort of person who fits into that movement?

L: It's a whole different atmosphere. It's just being on camp to enjoy it rather than being at school where I am learning.

B: So when you are at school, you feel that your common purpose, if you like, is just to learn with people?

L: Yeah, but just generally, when I am at school, I am spending all the day just concentrating on the work, rather than on the social side.

B: Right ...

L: So on camp I don't really care about that stuff

B: So on camp, it's just about having fun?

L: Yeah, basically. All the education is fun

B: Right, so it's having your education delivered in a fun way.

L: yeah

B: Do you think that the movement has actually taught you anything? Apart from the ideological side – like about Israel and about religion and about stuff – do you think it's given you any skills that you might be able to use outside of the movement?

L: It's given me more confidence

B: More confidence. To do...?

L: The people, really

B: Okay what sort of people skills do you think you've picked up?

L: Just talking with people, talking on the spot, being able to deliver a message, really

B: Okay, so you feel that you have this confidence? Do you feel that you can translate that confidence into your school environment?

L: Yeah

B: Excellent. And do you think that you can achieve that confidence gaining without the movement?

L: I could (she stresses the word) but ... I don't know... I don't think I would get that off school. Perhaps I could have if I had been involved in extra-curricular activities in school, maybe but not in class

B: What are you planning to do or study at university?

L: IT

B: And are you going straight to university?

L: No

B: What will you be doing?

L: A Gap year

B: What are you going to be doing on your gap year?

L: Going to Israel... ... with RSY

B: Okay, do you know anything about that programme?

L: Uhm ... I'll spend some of the time volunteering. The rest of it – learning, studying

B: Okay, and why is that programme attractive to you?

L: Well, I've been in RSY for years and it's kind of the next step. I think I'll enjoy it and I'll learn more about Judaism

B: Okay, but you've also been in FZY for years so why would that gap year not be attractive to you

L: Because it's a rubbish year course with too many people

- B: When you have done your year course, where are you planning to study?
- L: Birmingham
- B: What is that choice based upon?
- L: I wanted to go to a big city and then I wanted to somewhere where there are Jews
- B: Why did you want to go somewhere where there are Jews?
- L: Because I don't have that many Jewish friends now and I don't think there is a wide range of Jewish people in Manchester. In Birmingham I will meet different types of Jews and more people that I'll get along with.
- B: Okay, and are you going to continue your involvement in your youth movement when you get there?
- L: Hopefully. I'll still go on camp
- B: Your choice of Birmingham for university, does it involve any youth movement activities there? Or is that not part of your choice?
- L: No. Well, because the only places there are any activities is London and I really didn't want to go to a university in London
- B: The next question is actually a little broader than youth movement. What impact do you think being Jewish has on your life?
- L: Judaism, not so much. It's just the Jewish social side.
- B: Do you want to elaborate on that?
- L: Well, because I make friends through Jewish things. Like ... my non-Jewish friends, the only people they really know are school friends
- B: Right, so it's about having a wider circle?
- L: Yes,
- B: Is that, do you think, going to help you in your life after school?
- L: Yes, 'cause I'll know more people. I think at school, you're just friends with people 'cause they're there but... There's only a hundred people in the year; there's only a hundred people you have to make friends with so that's all you've got. Whereas out of school, because I know so many people, I can actually be friends with I've got a wider range of people to choose from. I think I am friends with the people I get on with - not just the people who are convenient.
- B: Is there anything else you can tell me about being in a youth movement that you think is attractive, that has done anything for you?
- L: Uhm, I think being with older people that aren't so much older because in everyday life you only mix with people who are your age or your teachers and your parents, who are twenty, thirty years older than you, and you can't really get that much from them. But if you are surrounded by people who are, you know, two, three, four, five years older than you, you can sort of look up to them and ... I think you kind of mature more

Appendix F: Correspondence with Professor John Comaroff



Belinda Copitch <belindacop@googlemail.com>

Jewish Anthropologists

2 messages

Belinda Copitch <belindacop@googlemail.com>

4 January 2009 15:21

To: jcomarof@uchicago.edu

Dear Professor Comaroff,

I have just completed a PhD in Jewish Identity amongst youth movement youngsters. I have a small adjustment to make, before I am awarded my PhD. I have to do a small reflexive piece on my own development in becoming a researcher through the process.

I have been struck by the fact that many of the researchers upon whom I have alighted during the process (yourselves included), have been Jewish and I have started to make some critical analysis of why that should be. For example, Similarly, the Jew has shaped my thinking, shaped who I am and shaped the writing of this thesis.

'This is, of course, my Jewish I, the one that approves of my own retention of ethnicity.' (Peshkin 1988, p. 18)

It was only when preparing for the viva that I became aware of the virtuous circularity of the entire thesis. Peshkin was the paper that provided the epiphany where I became a researcher. Yet, what motivates him is his Jewish heritage and his desire to maintain his ethnicity.

It is interesting to note how many of the theorists upon whom I alighted are Jewish and might be interesting to speculate as to how this factor might have shaped their thinking and influenced their theories. Did I perhaps favour them because their Jewish perspectives are consonant with mine?

Vygotsky, Kohlberg and Bronfenbrenner form the backbone of my Literature Review. One can only speculate whether Vygotsky's Jewish education, Kohlberg's religious upbringing and Bronfenbrenner's attempt

to reconcile his twin national and ethnic identities have influenced the development of their respective theories.

I have just returned from the national Limmud Conference in the UK where I picked up a programme from the Limmud held in Cape Town in August. I notice that you presented a session on just this topic. I would be very grateful for any pointers you could give me to help develop this argument. Either a bullet pointed account of your argument or any notes, references or Powerpoint presentations that you used, would be extremely helpful.

Many thanks in anticipation,
Belinda

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John Comaroff <jcomarof@uchicago.edu>
Reply-To: jcomarof@uchicago.edu
To: Belinda Copitch <belindacop@googlemail.com>

4 January 2009 20:55

Dear Belinda:

Thank you for your message. I am not quite sure how to answer your question, since it is quite a complicated one. My talk at Limmud in CT was not, alas, written or presented through power point, a medium I dislike; it was given as an informal lecture, really. What I did, though, was to outline the contribution of Jews to the development of anthropology - which is considerable indeed -- and then asked what was it about their Jewishness. My conclusion was that it had little to do with Jewishness per se, but with displacement and the estrangement that scholars bring to their research and theory-work -- and that, historically, there was a strong correlation between Jews and displacement/estrangement. I also pointed out that other populations that had similar historical sociologies (subaltern South Asians, Sikhs, for example) had made similar contributions to the growth of the critical social sciences.

Very best

John
[Quoted text hidden]

John Comaroff
University of Chicago
American Bar Foundation

