Seeking a Place on the Island
Refugee Children's Experiences of Diaspora in England

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to understand how asylum seeker and refugee children experience the diasporic condition in England. Departing from the post-modern perspective of identity, I examine how their multiple positionalities, such as ethnicity, gender, country of origin, language and religion are appropriated by the host country situating the children as different. I suggest that underlying this process is the issue of racism, which associated with institutional practices and discourses such as discipline, multiculturalism, assimilationism and a belief in child innocence constitute and position these children as the other. I argue that they do not simply accept the deterministic practices that locate them as the other but rather that they act as agents in responding to the discourses and practices.

The main ethnographic work was undertaken in a primary school. This is because of the role and significance the school plays as an institution in producing and reproducing concepts of childhood as well as determining the social spaces to be occupied by different children.

To understand the experience of diaspora in England, other settings and institutions, such as, the house, the family and a charity organisation which works with refugees were also taken into consideration in the interviews and my interactions with the children. Questions related to other conditions were also taken into account like reasons for migration and life history in the country of origin. Instead of producing a rigid set of generalisations, I privileged the complexity of what was seen and heard. Thus, deep and contextualised case studies were undertaken with seven children with the purpose of drawing a rounder and more insightful picture of their lives.

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Introduction

Introducing the context of the research

There is a widespread and common sense assumption, based on a developmental perspective, which proposes that, due to psychological immaturity, children are passive and neutral assimilators of the social codes surrounding them. For the issue of migration, this implies that children are expected to rapidly "adapt" to their new environment. This means learning a new language, establishing peer relations, fulfilling the social expectations of several institutions and individuals, and so on. George (2000) observes that in the USA, for example, migrant children are denominated as 'one-point-fivers', considered neither first- nor second-generation.

This indeterminacy means that the children are not fully-constituted persons, and therefore have not left much behind them in terms of life experiences. It is as if children's life histories are not important enough for the building of a life in the new country. Thus children are often viewed as *tabulas rasas*, and these "tabulas" are only regarded as acquiring any significant shape during or after their adolescence years.

This thesis provides a critique to these assumptions. I set out from the notion that children, and in the present case, specifically refugee children[1], actively use their life experiences to give meanings to the realities imposed by the process of forced migration. They are not the neutral child often imagined as white middle-class and English. The term "refugee children"' is related to several subject positions, such as country of origin, ethnicity, colour, gender, language and religion. These positionalities are also taken in a very mobile and contingent way by the several institutions and individuals who make up part of the children's surroundings.

Informing these institutions and persons, there is a complex web of discourses where notions of childhood are intermingled with the history of politics of migration, including the first piece of legislation regarding immigration control: the 1905 Aliens Act. Although this act is exactly one century old, the notion of unfamiliarity, of strangeness still plays a structural role in the way particular migrants – particularly

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[1] For practical reasons, throughout the thesis I use the terms "refugee" and "asylum seeker" children interchangably, apart from the moments when some reference to their migratory status is necessary.

non-whites originating from former European colonies – are regarded and positioned by the law and various sectors of society.

Past and present meet in the diaspora space. Brah (1998) observes that this concept is not related solely to the experience of the population who goes through geographic dislocation. This is the space where migrants and natives meet, constituting the economic, political, cultural and psychic dimensions of their daily lives. This is the space where identities are constituted, contested, reaffirmed and disavowed. It is also the locale where the notion of purity is a failed project – even if this is not acknowledged – pointing out the hybrid condition of migrants as well as natives.

Throughout this thesis I seek to understand how refugee and asylum seeker children experience the diasporic condition in England. I examine how multiple powers like racism, concepts of childhood, family history, experiences in the country of origin, as well as their diverse subject positions - gender, ethnicity, colour, social class, ethnicity – determine their lives in the host country. At the same time, I establish a dialogue between these factors and how the children respond to them according to their particular perspectives. I do not seek, in this way, to establish a rigid set of generalizations. Setting out from a qualitative approach I aim, instead, to promote insights into the richness of these children's trajectories. I understand that institutional responses to their presence must consider this group not in a homogenous way – although all of them have experienced some kind loss and many have gone through traumatic situations – but as a miscellany of needs, desires and expectations.

The notion of miscellany, directly related to plurality, is a central notion in my work. It is related to the post-structural concept of identity, which decentres the rational and unified model proposed by the modern project. Identity is now considered in a more complex way. It is mobile, uneven and never ready (Hall 1992, 1993, 1997). The post-structuralist theoretical position meets post-colonial studies when we consider that in the context of the present research, identity and subjectivity are frequently seen as a result of a "post-colonial" encounter. From this meeting, dualities – black and white, west and east, men and women - were constructed as a way of affirming a pattern of normality (Fanon 1986, Ghandi 1998, Hall 1993,

2003b). Postcolonial theory acknowledges the fact that, from this very moment, self and other can never be thought of merely in an oppositional way, but as being constituted through having the other as a point of reference and vice-versa (Bhabha 2002, Hall 1992b).

This work intends to fill a gap in the social sciences regarding the daily lives of refugee and asylum seeker children and the complex powers that compose their experiences in England. The issue of refugee children is, very often, studied through the discipline of education where, as expected, their circumstances are analysed in relation to the academic system[2]. This is not my perspective here: I do not intend to produce a primarily educational study. Nevertheless, the educational institution was the privileged site of my participant observation. This is because I understand that the school plays a central role in the constitution/reproduction of concepts of childhood and in socially positioning children according to their various subject positions. I privileged a primary school institution because there is still less in the literature about children of this age range, and a considerable discrepancy in relation to ethnographic works carried out with primary and secondary school children. Connolly (1998b) observes that this is a result of the influences exercised by the developmental paradigm in the social sciences promoting, the notion of young children as immature and not possessing the competency to make sense of their lives. In this way, besides observing and interacting with the children, I carried out in-depth interviews with them and some of the people, carers and teachers, who make up an essential part of their lives.

Why have I chosen refugee children?

Although I am Brazilian - having been born and raised in my country - my father is an American who migrated to my city with my mother, a Brazilian woman who lived in United States for a few years. This history of migration, from what we know, can be traced back to my father's grandfather. My great grandfather migrated from Russia to the United States, running away from the Pogroms - institutionalized

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[2] See, for example, Arnot and Pinson (2005), Kalekin-Fishman, et al. (2002), Hyder (2001), Jones and Rutter (2001), Lodge (2001), Rutter (2001b), Stead et al. (2002).

persecution of Jewish people in that region. Arriving in the United States, my great grandfather's first name – Louis - was transformed into an American surname – Lewis - obliterating our Jewish roots.

I grew up asking my father about our *real* surname and the details of this history of exile. My father did not know anything. The only account he gave me was that his grandfather crossed part of Europe by walking. This mythical image of people crossing borders has since then fascinated me. It pointed to the possibility of a person reinventing and broadening the history of a family through the expansion of geographic and cultural spaces. The fact that my father did not have any information of this diasporic history is a clear example of repressing the past and assimilating the reality and possibilities of the new country.

In the later years of my adolescence, my sister and I established an agreement that if one day we became rich, we would hire the services of a detective to go back to Russia and discover our family history. We never became rich, and therefore could never afford to hire a private detective. For a while I was frustrated for not having or not even knowing my real Jewish surname. It was like my history was somehow stolen from me. I had the illusion that one day I would get to know where we come from and would be able to appropriate a fragment of a history that, although suppressed, determined our present fate.

This search was a search for one origin that seems to be irrevocably lost somewhere in Europe. Although this narrative seems to have faded away, it still, unconsciously, operates in the present time, promoting new kinds of migration and exchange of histories: from Europe to United States; from United States to Brazil, from Brazil back to Europe. And when I reached a kind of origin, it directed me to other origins – which became starting points – the origins that some children shared with me. It was this blend of life histories and experiences - those of the children and my own - mediated by the diasporic condition that allowed me to write this thesis.

How the thesis is structured?

This thesis is structured around five chapters. The first sets up the theoretical argument of the thesis and is divided into three parts. It begins by exposing the academic, religious and literary concepts of childhood that inform the way individuals, institutions and academics regard and socially position children. This is followed by an analysis of the public response to the migration of people from Commonwealth countries up to contemporary issues of asylum. Underlying this response is the issue of the constitution of British identity through the disavowals of the presence of people who became othered. Finally, I look at the way the law and the hegemonic media have referred to refugee children in diverse ways according to their status as refugees and as children.

The second chapter presents the methodology that underpins my research. I set out from an account of my personal trajectory of migration, explaining the implications of this process to the thesis. I then discuss the ethical implications of the feminist concept of partiality; how its exposure is a condition for the researcher's responsibility in relation to what is seen and written. The constitution of the field is a major subdivision of this chapter. Here I introduce the city where I carried out the research project – Moulton – and the two institutions where I undertook the participant observation: a charity organisation – Moulton Refugee Association – and a primary school – Green Park Primary and Nursery School. I discuss the negotiations of my entry and ethical commitments in relation to gatekeepers of both institutions as well as my impressions of the settings. In the final section I discuss how the research was conducted. I conclude with a discussion of the importance of utilizing a multi-method approach and by presenting the children and the conditions of my approach towards them.

The three main chapters are related to my findings. In the third chapter I analyse how the children respond to institutional and individual racism according to the interaction of their various positionalities. In the first part I examine how three black African children – Mariana, Armand and Malaika - deal with the racism, which underlies the school's practices, according to their attributes of colour, gender, body

image, experiences back home and family structure. In the second section I look at the way children in the school position a Kurdish girl – Deniz – as the other, taking her language and "foreignness" as attributes of differentiation at the same time as examining her strategies of resistance. The last section is dedicated to the matter of religious intolerance, where Kirpal, a Sikh boy from Afghanistan is the target of bullying at school. In parallel, I analyse how he conceptualizes this matter considering the experiences back home as an important reference point.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to a description of how the school positions the refugee children as different according to several institutional discourses and practices. Basing my arguments on observations in classrooms, assembly, and the staff room, and on interviews with the class teachers, I consider the matters of discipline, assimilationism, multiculturalism, and the belief in childhood innocence as othering features and as a denial of social conflict.

The fifth chapter relates to the way the various children deal with the issue of geographic, cultural and social dislocation and reconfiguration. Using in-depth case-studies I analyse how they experience in particular ways several matters of their daily lives that are not related exclusively to the matter of racism or to the educational setting. This is a privileged moment when past experiences are systematically made use of in order to give meaning to a entirely new world. While the third chapter was structured around the children's attributes taken as factors of differentiation – colour, gender, language, religion and country of origine – this one is organized by taking the children themselves as "categories" of analysis. This is the space where other settings and institutions – Moulton Refugee Association, the house and the family – are considered through the interfaces of the children's lives.

Finally, I present a conclusion where I articulate the main issues across all the chapters, giving a more rounded picture of the influences in the children's lives as well as their strategies for existence in England.

1. Between the Interplay of Childhood, Migration and Ethnicity

In this chapter I am going to look, through a historical perspective, at some key concepts of childhood that, although decades or even centuries old, still operate nowadays, informing individuals and institutions of the way children must be perceived and which practices should be directed at them. The importance in considering these concepts also derives from the fact that they indicate which are desirable children and which are those considered out of place, pointing to the ways refugee children are perceived in relation to normative conceptions of British children. These accounts are followed by an examination of how the issue of migration has, since the 1940s, played a part in determining the constitution of British identity, establishing who is regarded as insiders and outsiders in relation to the idea of nation-state. Special attention will be given to the continuities and ruptures between the public response to this migration and to the contemporary flow of asylum seekers. Finally, I shall look at the ways that the British legislation and press have been discursively affecting lives and positioning refugees and refugee children according to their identitarian positions of refugeeness, gender and generation.

From the "birth" of childhood to children as complex individuals

Childhood, more than being a phase of the human cycle, must be understood as a discursive formation, as a conjunction of statements and practices that change over time, determining the various ways we understand children. Nevertheless, these changes of perspective should not be regarded necessarily as definitive ruptures. There is no such thing as a progressive line of change in the way we conceive childhood. Instead, there are legacies that are contested, incorporated or operate side-by-side, informing the ways that several sectors of society perceive diverse children.

Separated worlds: the birth of the modern child

Social historian Philippe Ariès was one of the pioneers in denaturalizing the notion of childhood. Drawing on pictographic work, he claims that during the Middle Ages European society did not have the concept of childhood. Through analysis of

paintings of noble children, as well as the diary of Henri IV's doctor, he observes that children were portrayed as miniature adults, wearing the same kinds of clothes as them. No sign of generational differentiation traversed such representations; the only distinction made visible through the clothes was the degree of social hierarchy. Ariès also considers daily activities with the purpose of strengthening his thesis. He observes that when children were not working together with adults, exercising the same kind of labour, they were taking part in the same sort of games, including sexual ones. Intimate body contact, involving the sexual organs, as well as language that was overtly erotic, used to make up part of relations between children and adults (Ariès 1962).

Ariès suggests that it is from the seventeenth century that the noble or bourgeois child starts to be dressed in a different fashion from adults. This fact was more noticeable in relation to boys, while girls would be dressed in a similar way to women until the eighteenth century. For a long time, childhood referred solely to noble or bourgeois boys. Children of artisans or peasants would continued to be dressed in the same way as adults, maintaining the old way of living: through clothes, games and work.

In relation to the matter of the eroticization of the body of the child, it was only at the end of the seventeenth century that moralists and educators eliminated the habit of sexual fondling children. They studied in detail the sexual behaviour of children in order to assist Jesuits with the inculcation of a feeling of guiltiness into ten- to twelve-year-old children. Every corporal intimacy between children and adults began to be forbidden. It was decided that language should be sober and children should be watched in order to ensure they did not kiss, touch or look at each other in an intimate way during the act of playing. Children should also pay attention to the behaviour of adults, forbidding them to kiss or touch them. This is the moment Ariès claims constitutes the origin of the concept of childhood. Children begin, finally, to be differentiated from adults.

Archard (1993) criticizes Ariès' thesis, observing that his argument is driven by what he calls "presentism", an attitude that consists of evaluating categories and

values of a historic period in the light of the researcher's own time. According to Archard, what Ariès identifies as the absence of any notion of childhood in the Middle Ages is actually the absence of a contemporary notion of childhood. This notion is based on the idea that to be a child is to inhabit a world with clear rules that separate it from the world of adults. Although Ariès' thesis of the non-existence of the concept of childhood until a certain phase of Western history has been questioned, his work is immeasurably valuable for showing us that, up to certain point, childhood was not considered in the same manner that we take for granted nowadays. He removes childhood from the realm of essentialism, challenging the perception of this category as being universal and immutable, inviting us to exercise historical contextualisation.

The importance of Ariès' work also lies in the fact that it informs us that these historical differences are orientated through class and gender. Thus he enlightens us with the idea that in any historical period the generational dimension does not relate in the same way to every person of the same age group. Nowadays we can observe, for example, that in the case of refugee children, their status as children is, at times, dismissed in favor of a perception of them solely as refugees. In this way, the notion of childhood as a distinct phase with peculiar qualities that require particular consideration - like additional support and special protection - is undermined when refugee children receive the same kind of treatment as adult refugees.

The notion of childhood as being constituted as separate from the world of adults informs the way several institutions in England deal with, and represent, refugee children. As we shall have the opportunity to observe, such discourses and practices do not necessarily relate to each other solely through convergence, but also through opposition and contestation.

Under the crossfire of innocence and evil: childhood as an investment in the future

The separateness of adults' and children's worlds can be seen in the dichotomous representation of childhood propagated by Christianity, which continues to play a major role in our contemporary conceptions of childhood. The earliest

representations, dating back to the eleventh century, perceive the child as inherently innocent. Having newly arrived in the world, the child has not been yet corrupted by society, and is seen as being nearest to God. Through such a perspective, however, growing up means an inevitable degeneration, a distancing from the original perfection. If children do not commit any sin it is due to the fact that they do not know how to do it (Archard 1993).[1]

It is in the work of Rousseau, most precisely in the book *Émile*, that the religious concept of childhood innocence is appropriated, reworked and related to the modern project of futurity (James et al. 2001, Jenks 1997). Regarding children as inhabiting the realm of nature, Rousseau sees them as carriers of an immaculate purity and absolute happiness. In opposition to nature, civilization is seen as a corrupted/corrupting state. From such a perspective, adults are regarded as being almost inevitably drawn into a condition of unhappiness and corruption, since they allow themselves to be shaped under the appalling rules of social institutions, which constrain the child's natural growth. The very first phrase of the book is exemplary of such a sharp and dichotomist vision: 'God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil' (1963: 5).

The solution to such fatality is provided through the work of education, which comes from three sources: senses, man and things. The education of senses, the only one out of our control, refers to the internal growth of the organs and faculties. The education of man relates the use we make of such growth, and the education of things, to the experience of the environment. A state of harmony between the three types of education is reached when man is trained for 'himself', avoiding contact with people surrounding him, and following the principles of a tutor, who, in the case of the book, is Rousseau himself (Rousseau 1963).

In opposition to this private education, Rousseau envisages a public system. In this case, society must have reached a stage of free political and ethical community

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[1] This perception of the child as being ignorant of how to perform any misconduct seems to point to the notion of incompetence, a notion that has a special place in a paradigm we are going to investigate more closely in the next subsection: the notion of developmentalism.

and each citizen would obey the rules of general, not individual, principles (Rousseau 1963). Cassirer (1963) observes that this assertion constitutes a rupture with the realm of metaphysics, displacing God as the main ruler, locating in society itself the responsibility for its own healing.

This is the point where the modern project of futurity is made explicit. In order to produce citizens who are fit for society, without being influenced by the corrupting pressures of its institutions, children must be educated first by their mothers and later by a tutor (Rousseau 1963). What follows is a pedagogical treatise based on the relationship between the author and an imaginary child, Émile. Rousseau explains, step-by-step, through daily situations, how children must be guided in order to be equipped with reason, becoming good citizens and leaving behind their state of weakness, foolishness and helplessness.

Childhood, as an investment in the future through the work of education, also finds its place in the evil child. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Puritans understood children as born with Original Sin[2]. Children were then seen as naturally inclined to wickedness, which would be corrected solely through a rigid disciplinarian upbringing (Archard 1993). We have already seen through the work of Ariès how daily practices of children, such as playing and corporal and spoken languages, started to be forbidden and corrected (Ariès 1962). The evil child is, together with its doubled opposite – the innocent child –, another precursor of the modern conception of childhood.

It is facing the acceleration of structural changes like the division of labour, industrialization, urbanization and the displacement of belief in religious rules to scientific ones, namely technology and progress, that the child becomes the centre of attention, being corrected and trained according to new patterns of rationality. There occurred an institutionalization of the interest in the child's health and well-being, as well as a preoccupation with the child's morality. The child became the object of

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[2] Cassirer (1963) observes that although Rousseau was a fairly religious man, this is a point of rupture between him and the Church. In the seventeenth century, Rousseau claims, that children are born as inherently innocent, refuting, in this way, the Original Sin thesis. As a consequence, Christophe de Beaumont, archbishop of Paris condemns *Émile*.

schools and public policies, and occupied a privileged place in the family. A strong commitment towards regulatory childhood is born (James et al. 2001, Jenks 1997). Being cared for, educated or rigidly disciplined, children in their evilness or innocence are an investment in the future. They are the possibility of continuity of the modern project of progress.

A project of progress is still alive and operating across current dualities that position some children as evil and others as innocent. Nevertheless, we can observe that the concepts of innocent and evil child do not operate in a totalizing way. They are often oriented by class and ethnicity, with innocence being epitomized by the white middle class child (Giroux 2000). Certainly a white middle class child may be represented as evil, but in such cases the evilness is considered more shocking because it is not expected. The interplay of both concepts – innocent and evil - points out desirable children and those considered out of place.

In the case of refugee children, this exclusion tends, at times, to be complete due to a process of extreme denial of their presence in the nation-state. Under the signifier 'refugee' there are dozens of possibilities of being other. They come from numerous countries, have numerous ethnicities, speak numerous languages, and are devoted to numerous religions. They represent what I would define as the unidentifiable other. I am going to discuss this concept in more detail later in this chapter. At the moment, it suffices to say that the unidentifiable other cannot be fixed into a set of expectations that would serve the objectives of governamentality. Refugee children are positioned by several institutions in diverse and contradictory ways in relation to the two possible ways of being a child - the evil and the innocent – and through the signifier of refugeeness - the unidentifiable other – that places them in the realm of adulthood.

On the way to maturity: childhood and the developmental paradigm

The scientific rationale for the modern notion of progress and the universalization of the concept of childhood, found in developmental psychology a solid basis that still guides contemporary perceptions and practices towards children

in several spheres. It played an essential role in the sociological approach to childhood and is still operating, as a guiding discourse, in common-sense, political and educational conceptions of childhood (James and Prout 2000a).

Developmental psychology has its contemporary basis in the Piagetian paradigm of the constitution of thought and intelligence, which presupposes a linear and hierarchical development of stages from sensorial-motor to formal operations. Having biological apparatus as the foundation and condition of such determinacy, the child is seen as moving progressively from a state of self-centeredness and focus on concrete and immediate experiences, to the top of the scale: adulthood. At this moment the child will have reached the stage of logical propositions while also distancing themselves from immediate experiences. The final result is a fully complex apprehension of reality (Piaget 1972b) [3].

Some scholars have directed tough criticisms towards Piaget's assumptions, on the basis of his ethnocentric conception of humanity and over-biological determinism regarding the constitution of the individual. For example, Archard (1993) observes how, in the study of the development of intelligence, Piaget was driven by the Kantian categories of space, time and causality. Jenks (1997) claims that such an assumption is crosscut by an ethical accomplishment, which has the adult, rational, Western male as its final goal.

Jenks' criticism constitutes not only an epistemological/academic statement; it is also related to generational politics of daily life that position children, very often, as incompetent, as unaware of the reality surrounding them. As we shall observe in the chapter five, in the case of refugee children, many times, the notion of childhood as a phase distinctive from adulthood on the basis of lack of maturity guides some parents

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[3] Piaget seems to inherit from Rousseau the notion that the child moves on from delimited and hierarchical phases of apprehension of reality. There is a clear similarity between both approaches. In Rousseau the first phase is characterized by learning through the senses – until the age of five – to a stage where the child is initiated to tutoring - from five to twelve years old - to a stage of rationality, when the child can go beyond the observation of facts, being able to compare through the exercise of reasoning. The distinction between the authors is that Rousseau follows Locke's theory of knowledge, which presupposes a lack of innate principles, while Piaget clearly refers to internal, biological dispositions. For supporting historical material see also Craston (1991).

towards an attitude of secrecy in relation to the historical background that determined the family's diaspora.

James et al. also criticize what they see as extreme biological determinism:

> Developmental psychology capitalizes, perhaps not artfully but certainly effectively, on two everyday assumptions: first, that children are natural rather than social phenomena; and secondly, that part of this naturalness extends to the inevitable process of their maturation. (...)
>
> Piaget's child, poor biological creature that it is, is imbued therefore with a grand potential to become not anything, but quite specifically something. (2001: 17)

Jenks (1997) argues that in this context the child is captured by a theoretical rationale that renders her/him historically and socially dislocated from any sense of reality. Although a Western model of intelligence guides Piaget's developmental model, I disagree with Jenks in relation to his perception of Piaget's theory being driven by a totalitarian biological determinism. Although in the work *Psychology and Epistemology – Towards a Theory of Knowledge* first edited in the year 1970 Piaget affirms a parallel between, for example, the differentiation of tissues in the embryonic phase and the evolution of knowledge, and a similarity between the methods of developmental psychology and biology, he claims an interdependent relationship between biological development and social factors:

> Developmental psychology moreover represents an integral part of developmental embryology (which ends not at birth, but on arrival at the state of equilibrium which is the adult sate), and the intervention of social factors does not detract from the validity of this assertion, because the organic development of the embryo is also in part a function of the environment. (Piaget 1972a: 17- 18)

In the book *The Child and Reality – Problems of Genetic Psychology*, which was first published two years later than *Psychology and Epistemology*, Piaget claims that developmental factors are determined by 'biological factors', 'equilibration facts of actions' - which are very much related to the interplay of internal dispositions and external circumstances -, 'social factors of interindividual coordination' and 'factors

of educative and cultural transmission'. From the four factors intervening in the child's development, it is only the first one that is exclusively related to a biological determinism. While the second - equilibration facts of action - proposes a close interaction between internal and external factors, the last two - social factors of interindividual coordination and factors of educative and cultural transmission - are related only to cultural and social aspects. Piaget draws on the functionalist sociological tradition of conception of society as his theoretical foundation. More than a biological perspective, he has a socialization standpoint on the life cycle:

> August Comte rightly claimed that one of the most important phenomena of human society is the formative action of each generation on the following one, and Durkheim arrived at the collective origin of moral feelings, legal norms, and logic itself. But there is only one experimental method to verify such hypothesis, namely, the study of the individual's progressive socialization, that is, the analysis of his development in terms of the particular or general social influences which he undergoes during formation. (Piaget 1972b: 143 -144)

From this assertion we can conclude that Piaget was not promoting the idea of a socially neutral child. The universalization does not concern the constitution of the subjectivity of the child regarding the content of what is apprehended, but how information is incorporated in different ways throughout cognitive development. It sets up the notion of children being structurally different from adults - as being immature - but it does not imply that children are all the same around the world.

Nevertheless, the universalizing notion of childhood as a delimited phase, with children seen as having distinctive qualities and competencies in relation to adults, has been appropriated as the means of constructing a universal consensus around who children are. An important example, which will be analysed closely in the final section of the present chapter, is The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This document outlines clear procedures to be adopted by nation-states throughout the world based on specific visions of childhood. Another example is the way the notion of childhood as a specific phase operates as an influential discourse in the social sciences and, more precisely, from the socializing perspective. It is this viewpoint that we are going to turn our attention to now.

When childhood became a social construction

During the 1950s, the concept of development with its three predominant themes - rationality, naturalness and universality – was translated from psychological discourses to sociological accounts through the theory of socialization (James and Prout 2000a). Setting out from a functionalist approach, the socialization perspective sees society as a stable system that requires the inculcation of its rules by individuals. Such individuals, always represented by children, are seen as passive objects who internalize the socialization; who learn without questioning (Hill and Tisdall 1997, James and Prout 2000a). This perspective constitutes a dictatorial relationship of society over children, defining them solely as a depositary of social norms. If, in the psychological model, children were, in a way, naturalized, in the sociological model society is taken as a stable system which shapes children according to its regulations. In this respect James et al. observe that 'The socially developing model is not therefore attached to what the child naturally is, so much as to what society naturally demands of the child' (2001: 23).

Until such a moment childhood had not been constituted as an independent topic in the social sciences. Children were only considered through the broader thematic of the family. Interest was directed to the way social norms were reproduced through the generational progress (James and Prout 2000a). Jenks discusses the authoritarian approach of the social sciences towards children:

> The child is, once more, abandoned in theory. Real historically located children are subjected to the violence of a contemporary mode of scientific rationality which reproduces itself, at the expense of their difference, beyond the context of situated social life. (1997:25)

The 1970s witnessed the emergence of a new paradigm in the sociology of childhood: social constructionism, which has proclaimed a radical rupture in relation to the developmental rule. According to the new perspective, which partially guides my own understanding of childhood, this phase must not be taken as a natural phenomenon, but as a stage of the life cycle, structurally present in every society, which is understood in diverse ways according to particular cultural, social, and

historical contexts (James and Prout 2000b). James and Prout observe that through such a perspective, biological matters are not taken as factors *per se*, but they offer the ground for culture to constitute meaning: 'The immaturity of children is a biological fact of life but the ways in which this immaturity is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture' (2000b: 7).

As such, the social constructionist paradigm presupposes that childhood is historically, socially and culturally constructed. According to such a standpoint, universal and taken-for-granted notions of childhood must be refuted. There is a shift from the search for social-structural causes that essentialize social phenomenon, like childhood, to a search for how such phenomena is constructed in the consciousness. The sociologists of childhood, James et al. (2001), precursors of the adoption of such paradigm in their field, argue that since plurality is taken for granted instead of universalism, judgement should be suspended in order to avoid ethnocentric postures. In this way, every statement is considered to be guided by our very particular understanding of the world.

However, it seems to me that such a form of social constructionism presents the danger of falling into a liberal perspective of limitless acceptance of social practices. Rogers (2003) indicates a more critical alternative that is also shared by the discipline of cultural studies (Johnson et al. 2004), namely that in the study of the production of knowledge, issues of power must always be taken into account. This critique of early forms of social constructionism is related to a major shift of the theoretical field around culture. A fundamental influence has been Michel Foucault's critique of an essential human identity.

For Foucault every society has its own regimes of truth, systems of production and circulation of statements through power that subject individuals. He takes truth away from the realm of idealization when he affirms that 'truth is a thing of this world, it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint' (1980: 131). Foucault's intellectual trajectory is demarcated by the description of regimes of truth constructed by the social and natural sciences. He then turns to scientists when he suggests a challenge to the production of the regimes of truth:

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticise the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses – or what's in their heads – but the political, economic, institutional régime of the production of truth. (1980:133)

As an example of this assumption, Foucault (1998) observes that in the year 1867 in a village of France, a farm-hand was seen, in the fields, receiving caresses from a girl. This act has been performed several times before and was considered a trivial fact. Nevertheless, on that precise day the man was reported to the family of the girl, then to the mayor of the village, and after successive reports to different authorities, he ended up being examined by two doctors. The report was published. What follows is Foucault's amazement with the development of the whole situation, an amazement that could cause serious disgust from our contemporary position of ethics relating to child abuse:

What is the significant thing about this story? The pettiness of it all; the fact that this everyday occurrence in the life of village sexuality, these inconsequential bucolic pleasures, could become, from a certain time, the object not only of collective intolerance but of a judicial action, a medical intervention, a careful clinical examination, and an entire theoretical elaboration. (1998: 31)

Although the importance of this episode for Foucault relies on the fact that he is interested in the productive character of sexuality - for example, that the man was made to speak about his sexuality to experts - it cannot be dismissed that the evidence is also related to the emergence of a new conception of childhood. It points to the fact that an acceptable sexual communication between adults and children became, at a certain point, forbidden, reconceptualizing the generational dynamic. This account has the purpose of reminding us that the way we conceive childhood and the way children must be addressed is largely traversed by historical, cultural and social contingencies.

Discourses of childhood guide practices that have effects on the lives of real children. And these discourses are constructed under conditions of power imbalance, where privileged institutions and subject positions present more possibilities of agency. I suggest that if, on one hand, a universalist conception of childhood commits

the symbolic violence of denying the possibility of existing in the world differently from Western ways, an unconditional relativist reading of the particular fails in addressing the power conditions that determine people's lives.

For example, the sociological literature on the rights of the child is emphatic in agreeing that documents like The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child present an ideal and universal conception of childhood that was constructed by the countries of the North and exported to the countries of the South (Boyden 2000, Burman 1994, Ennew 1995). Ennew (1995) observes that, in the case of street children, since the Convention constructs an ideal child, a child that fits the parameters of Northern conceptions of childhood - a safe, happy and protected child that must rests on the domestic ambit – street children seem to became out of place, out of childhood.

In the year 2000 I undertook research in my own city – Recife - on the daily life conditions of children who can be found on the street (Lewis, 2001). These are children who go there to work at traffic lights, selling water and chewing gum or cleaning windscreens; children who socialize, beg and work in the sexual market on the square; and children who spend the whole day living – including sleeping - on the pavement. Recife, which in the year 1999 had around 460 children on the streets during the daytime (Mello 1999), was the pioneer in implementing two programs, 'Active Searching' and 'Welcoming Time'. Both programs, legally based on the Child and Adolescent Statute - which is based on The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child - seek to take children that are working, 'roaming', sniffing toxic substances (glue), and begging, off the streets.

The intervention consists of social workers accompanied by a policeman going to the street and inviting the children to go to a hostel – that the children described as filthy – or threatening the parents' of these children with the withdrawal of their rights over them. Nevertheless, very often, no alternative was offered to improve the life-conditions of the children who often had families who were fairly dependent on their strategies of survival. I could observe that these public interventions were applied more effectively particularly close to the campaign for re-election of the mayor. This

is a moment where the children on the street become more visible, since the majority of the population feel threatened or bothered by them. In this way, a policy that is based on the notion of child protection is actually applied with the objective of "cleaning" the streets. The eight months that I spent on the streets of Recife doing my fieldwork allowed me to perceive the stigmatising rule of such practices. Some children and their parents refer to such policies with fear, and report a sense of being "outside the law" (Lewis, 2001).

The issue of power, which occupies the core of the discipline of cultural studies, is also privileged in the feminist perspective. And it is considering the matter of power that this perspective sheds a light onto the doubtful character of relativism. According to Haraway, this posture plays what she calls the "god-trick", the possibility of 'being nowhere while claiming to be everywhere equally' (1991: 191). She criticizes a scientific standpoint, which makes claims of truth without localizing the tools for determining this gaze in the various positionalities of the scientist. Her argument constitutes a criticism of an objectivity that claims neutrality, dismissing the fact that scientists are implicated in the production of the knowledge. She claims that scientists need to take responsibility in relation to their assumptions and alliances – such alliances being related to political positions and people in the field:

> We don't want a theory of innocent powers to represent the world, where language and bodies both fall into the bliss of organic symbiosis. We also don't want to theorize the world, much less act within it, in terms of Global Systems, but we do need an earth-wide network of connections, including the ability partially to translate knowledges among very different – and power-differentiated – communities. We need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meaning and bodies, but in order to live in meanings and bodies that have the chance for a future. (Haraway 1991: 187)

Childhood and the new politics of identity

Haraway's desire for modern critical theories of the production of meanings and bodies that point to the possibility of connections can be found, in relation to childhood, in a field where the sociology of childhood and youth, cultural studies, geography, and education meet, sharing some common features. The regular ground

of these studies, which was crucial in the construction of my theory and praxis, relates to the understanding of childhood and/or youth as social categories that must always be understood in conjunction with other determinants like class, gender, sexuality and ethnicity. As already observed in the last section, the social constructionist concept of childhood sees this category as determined by specific social, historical and cultural contingencies, avoiding essentialist standpoints.

The research tradition that subscribes to the amalgamation referred above challenges the socializing concept of childhood, which sees children as mere depositaries of social rules. Instead, children are taken as agents actively interacting with the social signifiers and practices that compose their daily lives. In this way, a complex dynamic of determinism and agency is considered, with children seen as being constituted at the same time as constituting their worlds. Here ethnography is the method par excellence since it provides the space for children's voices to be heard. Hence, children's social relations are studied in their own right, and not only as social entities constructed by adults.

For example, researchers have explored: the way teenage girls interpret the issues of class, gender and age that intervene in their worlds (McRobbie 1991); how teenage boys perform and constitute their identities regarding their subject-positions of gender, ethnicity, class and sexuality through and/or against discourses and practices of the school's context (Frosh et al. 2002, Mac an Ghaill 1988, 1994, Sewell 1998); how primary school white and black children experience, reproduce and challenge racist assumptions and practices through their peer group relations (Troyna and Hatcher 1992); how through the act of playing, primary school girls utilize gendered and sexualized repertoires in order promote and reproduce a subversive counter-culture to the official school ethos (Grugeon 1993); and, again, how through the act of playing, young working-class girls explore concerns in relation to their future identities (Steedman 1982).

Some of those ethnographies follow a theoretical turning point in cultural studies where the post-structuralist critique of culture is largely appropriated. This perspective challenges the notion of culture as an essential, pure and homogeneous

system, privileging a more complex account (Johnson et al. 2004). This has wider implications regarding the notion of identity. If culture is not a homogeneous and taken-for-granted system, the identities that are constituted are no less multifaceted. In this way the modern notion of identity as unified and stable is widely contested. According to this perspective identity is multiple, pointing to the possibility of persons occupying several, and even contradictory, subject positions according to contingencies (Hall 1993, 1997, 2003a).

These works also question the relationship of self and other, arguing that it is not based solely on a dynamic of exclusion. In this respect the post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha (2002) observes that in the constitution of social difference a complex interplay of projection, introjection, displacement, etc. takes place. Drawing from the psychoanalytical perspective, he concludes that self and other are neither located outside each other nor operate in a separate way. They function internally, where there is not a clear demarcation between self and other: the other is already internalised and the self is projected over the other.

As an example of the complex interplay of the various subject positions and the self/other dynamic in the constitution of (masculine) identities, Frosh et al. (2002) conducted a large-scale ethnographic study based on interviews with seventy-eight boys from twelve secondary schools in London. They acknowledge not only the necessity of linking the constitution of masculinities to other social categories like class, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. They also propose that masculinity is performed; it is relational. Therefore, the interaction between the various subject positions is not fixed; it is re-dimensioned according to circumstances. As an example, they analyse how the whiteness and masculinity of the interviewer intervenes with the way boys from diverse ethnic backgrounds discuss masculinity and ethnicity. Contradictions and distinctive accounts are found when some boys discuss such matter among other boys and others are interviewed individually. In this way, Frosh et al. infer that the self/other dynamic is very present determining, in a very mobile way, how the boys give meanings to their experiences, feelings and perceptions during the interview process.

In this section I draw a number of considerations regarding religious, literary and academic notions of childhood. The importance in exposing them derives from the fact that they play a major role in the ways refugee children are positioned by several institutions and individuals who constitute part of their daily lives. They are positioned according to their multiple identitarian characteristics – gender, colour, ethnicity, country of origin, language – in relation to notions of innocence, evilness, the possibility or not of being part of an universal notion of childhood, as agents or not of their diasporic condition, and so forth. In this way, life in diaspora is also going to be determined by the generational matter. In considering the roles these notions of childhood play in the refugee children's lives, I opt throughout the thesis, for decentring the mater of refugeeness from the male adult refugee.

Nevertheless, concepts of childhood do not operate alone in relation to these children. Any ethnography based in England that aims to relate to their lives has to consider how the issue of racialization underlies the politics of migration. In the following section I am going to look at the way such politics have, throughout the decades, constructed a national identity at the expense of constituting people from former English colonies as "other".

From black and white dualism to 'bizarre languages': when the other became multiplied

In this section I will look at the public response to migration in the British context since the invitation of people from Commonwealth countries to attend the shortages of the workforce during a period of economic growth in the middle of the last century. I am going to analyse the continuities and ruptures between the response to such a migration and to contemporary asylum seekers.

New Racism and the insular identity

'Are you one of us?' Margaret Thatcher's question, widely plagiarised, can be taken as a perfect summary of the politics of identity that defined the relations

towards migrants from Commonwealth countries who came to Britain from the 1940s to the 1960s in response to the national need for an additional workforce. The prospect of people from former British colonies making up part of the national identity was received with an attempt at building a mythical belief in a nation ethnically unified by its whiteness. This attempt dismisses the contradiction of the formation of the nation-state. The paradoxical configuration of a delimited boundary regarding the national geographical space, economy and culture was possible through an expansionist colonial mission which ensured that, through exchange of commodities and culture, hybridization became one of the nation's constitutive features. Far from being 'pure', British national identity was, through its colonial and global ties, particularly hybrid (Hall 1993).

However, if, during the colonial phase, the English were going *there*, getting in touch with "new" people through maritime enterprise, guaranteeing the comfortable illusion of purity regarding national borders, the contemporary prospect of receiving people from former English colonies in its territorial space threatened the illusion of homogeneity. One response to such a threat was the political right's construction of a theory that, at the end of the 1970s and during the 1980s, propagated racism, not in terms of difference in colour or on biological grounds, but through difference of culture, identity and way of life. This discourse was forged on the grounds of the constitution of the notion of oneness in opposition to the outsiders – immigrants – and insiders – African-Caribbean and Asian people (Barker 1981).

In this respect, Lawrence (1982) identifies how African-Caribbeans were regarded as a bastard, misplaced people who did not have a precise identity since they occupied a problematic space in-between Britishness and the slave inheritance, which in its turn, linked them to a lost route from Africa via the Caribbean. The Asian community, on the other hand, were seen as composing an identifiable national identity, made possible through a strong cultural link that represented a threat to the British identity.

The writings, speeches and political programmes based on the New Racism focused on the avoidance of race as signifier, seeking to evade accusations of racism.

Cultural differences became the privileged concept, as a way of excluding the "different".

> What is clear from these writings is that a range of discourses on social differentiation may have a metonymic relationship to racism. The semantics of race are produced by a complex set of interdiscursive processes where the language of culture and nation invokes a hidden racial narrative. The defining feature of this process is the way in which it naturalises social formations in terms of racial-cultural logic of belonging. (Solomos and Back 1996:19)

Solomos and Back (1996) problematize the notion of the newness of the concept of New Racism. They argue that racism in cultural and national terms constituted a substantial part of the colonial definition of the other[4]. In this respect, Gilroy (1993) claims that one of the aspects of the newness of the New Racism relies on its wide range of political opinion. It unifies members of the right and left, advocates of racist and anti-racist ideologies. Blackness and whiteness became opposite categories not because of biological differences, but because black and white people were seen as having cultures essential to their ethnicities while their cultures were seen as incompatible with each other. As a result, their identities were seen as irreconcilable.

In this context, from a culturalist perspective - which essentializes culture and considers it to be homogeneous, immutable and irreconcilable in relation to "other" systems - ethnographies were carried out positioning African-Caribbean and Asian children as caught between two cultures. Culture was considered to be the sole determinant of the relations between these children and the hegemonic society. As a way of interpreting, for example, the low performance of African-Caribbean children at school, this perspective saw the family configuration of these children as the main factor responsible for their academic "failure". The main problem was seen as related to the absence of a father-figure. This model of family structure was seen as highly problematic because it was incompatible with the classical model of nuclear family.

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[4] In relation to that, I would add the racism regarding Jewish people, a population that was, along the centuries, contested as not being European due to what was perceived as its distinctive and closed cultural system.

In this way, the family structure of some sectors of the African-Caribbean community, and its children, were pathologized (Lawrence 1982).

Mac an Ghaill observes how, at the beginning of his PhD research, he was guided by such a cultural perspective. His methodological commitment during fieldwork to listen to the accounts of secondary school African-Caribbean and Asian children gave him the opportunity to challenge this standpoint. He concluded that, instead of cultural differences, it was institutional racism, allied to the children's responses to it, that prevented them succeeding in the educational context (Mac an Ghaill 1988, 1993) [5].

Returning to the political response, an assimilationist ideology based on the monoculturalist paradigm was adopted as an answer to what was seen as a cultural deficit. This perspective sought the eradication of ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences with the purpose of absorbing the immigrants and their descendents into an imagined homogeneous British society. In the school's context, language centres were set up for provision of English as a second language and a policy of dispersal of black pupils was introduced under the argument that too many black students in a school would have a negative consequence to white students as well as to the plan of a harmonic multiracial institution (Brah 1998, Troyna 1992).

These assimilationist policies reached not only migrants and their descendents from the Commonwealth countries. They also applied to refugee children. A continuous pattern of response can be traced back two hundred years from the 1970s to the 1680s, where Huguenots and European Jewish children were rapidly assimilated into English society with the latter being discouraged from speaking Yiddish in the schools, and having their education centred on English literacy (Rutter 2001b).

A parallel can be observed between the politics of marginalization of African-Caribbean and Asian children and refugee children in the present context. For example in the year 2002, a clause in the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill

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[5] Other authors follow a similar argument, which can be identified, still, in the contemporary context (Blair, 1998, Connolly, 1998, Gillborn, 1998, Williams, 1995 and Wright, 1992).

proposed the exclusion of newly-arrived asylum seeker children from the mainstream educational system (Curtis 2002). African-Caribbean and Asian children were dispersed throughout schools in order to not threaten the majority of white children; asylum seeker children have been, under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, dispersed around the country with the pretext of decreasing the workload on London and the South East (Document 1).

In the present context, refugee children have become one of the primary depositaries of the notion of the other. Other, here, relates to those persons who are considered to be outside the norm, and who do not fit a desirable set of qualities and expectations. They are then excluded, positioned as outsiders in order to maintain the social and symbolic norm (Hall 2003b). This is not to say that discrimination and governmentality do not make up part of the lives of African-Caribbean and Asian children. Instead, as I am going to make more explicit later, I suggest that the presence of refugee children makes the interplay of identity more complex, with Britishness becoming ever more positional.

Racist assumptions and practices never reach society in a uniform or absolute way. Dissident voices have always represented opposition to racist movements in the European context (Solomos and Back 1996). We shall now look at two perspectives that emerged as reactions to the new racist perspective and its monoculturalist ethos.

Celebrating and opposing (?): the multicultural and anti-racist perspectives

The multiculturalist perspective, which constituted a reaction to monoculturalist and assimilationist practices imposed by the New Right, saw racism as a consequence of ignorance in relation to "other" cultures (Rattansi 2003). According to Donald and Rattansi (2003), in proposing the celebration of cultural diversity, it presented a positive as well as negative consequence. The affirmative aspect refers to the fact that communities had their claims acknowledged and valued on the official level.

The negative aspect relates to the fact the celebration of "diversity" dismisses disparities of opportunity regarding class, gender and ethnic background that still traverse the lives of diverse communities in Britain (Brah 1998, Donald and Rattansi 2003, Troyna 1992). It welcomes diversity, but not on the basis that all cultures are different in relation to each other. It exoticizes diverse cultures since they are understood as different when positioned against the notion of a dominant national English culture. In this way, such an approach still displays the logic of political assimilationism (Donald and Rattansi 2003). In the school context it has provided what is seen as a culturally relevant curriculum and teaching assistance, with the objective of making the home and the school cultures compatible (Troyna 1992). According to Brah (1996) it constitutes a discourse and practice that 'minoritises' the other and 'ethnicises' ethnicity through the over-valorisation of certain attributes. People are then locked into a rigid set of assumptions, which dehistoricizes the relations among several groups at the same time that culture is considered in an essentialist and homogeneous way.

The anti-racist perspective saw the multiculturalist over-valorisation of culture as the main or unique site of ethnic issues as highly problematic. It drew an important critique against the idea of racism as being constituted as an individual experience. Anti-racists were also suspicious of the term "culture" because it was coined as the main concept around which the New Racism expressed and legitimated its prejudices. In this way they also challenged the notion that different traditions are the core of ethnic tensions. They claimed that racism should be located in the institutional context, revealing a history of power inequity among groups of people distinguished on the basis of race (Donald and Rattansi 2003). The actualization of such a perspective in the educational context offered the opportunity, for example, to move away from the culturalist perspective, examining in a critical way how racism is constructed through a set of beliefs in British society (Troyna 1992).

Nevertheless, some critics argue that anti-racism can also be driven by a culturalist perspective. Gilroy, for example, observes how early versions of the anti-racist movement were caught in the same culturalist perspective as the New Racism, reproducing the notion of black and white people rigidly separated by cultural

differences. As illustration, he describes how the matter of 'transracial' adoption and fostering was marked by conceptions of ethnic absolutism on the part of black workers in the social services and local authorities. Gilroy observes that The Association of Black Social Workers and Allied Professionals proposed to the House of Commons Select Committee that black children should be adopted solely by black families; in the cases where a black family could not be found, the child should remain under the care of the local authority instead of being adopted or fostered by a white family. Such determination had, as an objective, the promotion of an environment where the child could have motivation for the development of a 'positive black identity' (Gilroy 1993).

Racism is in this context seen as a monolithic experience that does not problematize the various forms of its constitution. As a result it simplifies the diverse ways that different communities are positioned by this kind of power (Donald and Rattansi 2003).

This new notion of culture, based on the post-structuralist paradigm, acknowledges that culture is not a rigid set of beliefs. It is, rather, mobile and is played through the multiple constitutions of identities of its members. In this way, the experience of racism is not constituted in a single fashion. It has to be thought of in conjunction with other sources of inequalities such as gender, social class, generation, sexuality, etc (Brah 1998, Connolly 1998a, 1998b, Gilroy 2003, Hall 2003b, Mac an Ghaill 1999). On the other hand, a singular and essentialist version of blackness can be utilized in a strategic way. For example, Mercer (1994) argues that the black community can appropriate the concept of blackness being constructed as a way of reversing a notion embedded with negative connotations into a positive affirmation.

In practical terms, a post-structuralist perspective on anti-racism can be utilized as a way of avoiding a mere rationalist approach. In the schools context, Epstein (1993) proposes that classroom culture should be changed to allow space for the children to discuss, through their biographies, issues/experiences of racism associated with other sets of social inequalities. Epstein's proposal suggests that the

division based exclusively under the black/white dualism must be contested on the grounds of a more multiplied constitution of identity and social relations.

On the way to negotiation? When multiplicity became part of the encounter

As we have observed, during the 1970s and 1980s the social sciences and the anti-racist movement in Britain considered the process of racialization exclusively through the signifier of the black and white dualism. Here, the privilege of colour racism subsumed other forms of racialization that would multiply the mechanisms and experiences of differentiation (Mac an Ghaill 1999). According to Hall (2003a) the term black was employed as the sole signifier for building an identity that could give a sense of solidarity among ethnically, culturally, linguistically diverse populations in their resistance against racism. Hall points to the fact that nowadays a new politics of identity and racialization has been, not replacing, but displacing the one above cited. The new, multifaceted politics of identity and differentiation fragments the individual and/or community into a set of subject positions that multiplies and makes more complex this kind of power.

Now is the time for plurality. The post-modern paradigm has as its main strand the decentring of the rational and unitary subject of modernity epitomized by the figure of the white middle-class male European. Notions of singularity and purity have been contested under the argument of a fictional absolutism that denies the inescapable factuality of diversity (Hall 1992, 1997, 2003a). Ethnographies have been carried out examining how young men have constituted their identities, not only on the basis of ethnic confrontation/differences, but, as well, on the basis of exchanges that enable the constitution of new experiences and perception of the self (Back 1996, Frosh et al. 2002, Mac an Ghaill and Haywood 2003). These meetings occur in the location that Brah (1996) denominates as 'diaspora space'. This notion, different from that of diaspora itself, does not only constitute the site where migrants and their descendants actualize their lives and identities; it is also inhabited by those who are constituted as natives. It is the local where notions of insiders and outsiders will be constructed as well as challenged, and where exchange happens through the interplay of economic, political, cultural and subjective processes.

We are all hybrids. But what does that mean in terms of the politics of daily life? Does it mean that giving up the notion of purity makes us all the same in terms of power and privilege? Does it mean a celebration of plurality in itself? Who celebrates? Under which conditions is each plurality constituted?

I remember that about two years ago I was in a café bar and was introduced to a man who was speaking to a common friend in Arabic. We then started to have a chat about where each of us comes from. He told me that he left his country, Iraq, twenty-five years ago, when he was thirteen years old. He described a rather extraordinary route of migration and settlement: Algeria, Czech Republic, Sweden, back to Czech Republic, and England. Impressed with the idea of how culturally and subjectively rich such an experience must have been I stated 'Wow, you are a citizen of the world'. My immediate response was not permeated by questions about the reason for his migration, how he had to deal with so many ruptures and reconstructions, if that was his choice, or if such trajectory made him happy. His response to my statement made me feel absolutely embarrassed: 'I was saving my life'. Just one phrase was enough to make me aware of how I was subjectifying him according to an optimistic conception of plurality that, if not carefully contextualized, ignores the discriminatory powers that constitute some histories.

Why then, is plurality important in the context of this research? I found in Gilroy's words the perfect answer: perfect not simply because of its complexity, but because it directs itself to the politics of the daily life:

> The plural is important here for there can be no single or homogeneous strategy against racism because racism itself is never homogeneous. It varies, it changes and it is *always* uneven (Gilroy 2003: 60 - 61).

Plurality is also important because the asylum seeker represents a new threat, since the signifier 'asylum seeker' is in itself plural. The asylum seeker represents, in racial terms, an infinite possibility of fragmentation/contamination of the notion of purity that continues to prevail nowadays, however much under the facade of a multicultural society.

How multi is the contemporary multicultural Island? When asylum seekers became part of the matter

At the beginning of my fieldwork I went to discuss the condition of the asylum seeker children with one of the coordinators of the Educational Local Authority of Moulton. Speaking about the difficulties the LEA faced when asylum seeker children originating from diverse countries arrived in the city she observed, with a smile on her face, that they had to deal with 'bizarre languages'. Her statement does not point solely to the pragmatic fact that they had to communicate with children whose languages were semantically and structurally so different from her language. Rather, it is traversed by an adjective that has a negative connotation. Bizarre amplifies the notion of difference, transforming it into the complete other. This concept of other has no point of identification, of commonality; it means the negative of the acceptable, the complete opposite of normality. The trouble for her seemed to reside not only in this extreme difference, but was because this difference became, all of a sudden, multiplied.

Until the 1980s – a moment of significant increase in the number of persons seeking asylum in the UK – Irish people and people originating from Commonwealth countries were the main population from which a sense of Britishness was constructed through opposition. Several nationalities, religions and languages were dismissed by the majority white population mainly under the terms African-Caribbean and Asian. These expressions simplified and compressed the numerous subject positions occupied by its members as a way of managing an anxiety that could become overly multiplied. Instead of directing this anxiety at the Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Jamaican, Barbadian, Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Punjabi speaker, Patois speaker, and so on, this anxiety could become more manageable and easier to cope with if it was directed to just two signifiers: Asian and African-Caribbean.

Asylum seekers disrupt this logic. People are aware that they come from dozens of countries, speak several languages, and are practitioners of diverse religions. The unevenness of their presence can be attested by the government's obsessive attempt to be aware of the origin and constant change of the ranking of the

countries of the arrivals. As can be seen in the table bellow the Home Office traces the national origin of asylum seekers throughout the years. And the pattern is never absolutely stable; it becomes, in this way, in imaginary terms, out of control.

Table 2.1 Applications[1] for asylum in the UK, excluding dependants, by nationality, 1995 to 2003

									Number of principal applicants
Nationality	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 [2]	2000 [2]	2001	2002	2003 [P]
Albania	110	105	445	560	1,310	1,490	1,065	1,150	595
Czech Republic	15	55	240	515	1,790	1,200	825	1,365	70
Macedonia	n/a	15	20	50	50	65	755	310	60
Moldova	10	*	20	25	180	235	425	620	380
Poland	1,210	900	565	1,565	1,860	1,015	615	990	95
Romania	770	455	605	1,015	1,985	2,160	1,400	1,210	550
Russia	n/a	205	180	165	665	1,000	450	295	280
SAM [3]	n/a	400	1,865	7,395	11,465	6,070	3,230	2,265	815
Turkey	1,820	1,495	1,445	2,015	2,850	3,990	3,695	2,835	2,390
Ukraine	n/a	235	490	370	775	770	445	365	300
Other Former USSR	765	960	1,325	2,235	2,460	2,275	895	1,245	625
Other Former Yugo.	1,565	620	375	535	2,625	2,200	65	90	50
Europe Other	770	1,035	1,575	1,260	200	415	335	300	80
Europe Total	7,050	6,475	9,145	17,745	28,280	22,880	14,215	13,235	6,295
Colombia	525	1,005	1,330	425	1,000	505	365	420	220
Ecuador	250	435	1,205	260	610	445	255	315	150
Jamaica	150	125	130	105	180	310	525	1,310	965
Americas Other	415	205	155	165	240	155	170	240	230
Americas Total	1,340	1,765	2,825	975	2,025	1,420	1,315	2,290	1,560
Algeria	1,865	715	715	1,260	1,365	1,635	1,140	1,060	550
Angola	555	365	195	150	545	800	1,015	1,420	650
Burundi	95	60	85	215	780	620	610	700	650
Cameroon	85	105	175	95	245	355	380	615	505
Congo	60	75	90	150	450	465	540	600	320
Dem. Rep. Congo	935	660	690	660	1,240	1,030	1,370	2,215	1,540
Eritrea	245	135	125	345	565	505	620	1,160	950
Ethiopia	565	205	145	345	455	415	610	700	640
Gambia	1,170	245	125	45	30	50	65	130	95
Ghana	1,915	760	350	225	195	285	190	275	325
Ivory Coast	245	125	70	95	190	445	275	315	390
Kenya	1,395	1,170	605	885	485	455	305	350	220
Liberia	390	330	205	70	65	55	115	450	740
Nigeria	5,825	2,900	1,480	1,360	945	835	810	1,125	1,010
Rwanda	135	60	90	280	820	760	530	655	260
Sierra Leone	855	395	815	565	1,125	1,330	1,940	1,155	380
Somalia	3,465	1,780	2,730	4,685	7,495	5,020	6,420	6,540	5,090
Sudan	345	280	230	250	280	415	390	655	930
Tanzania	1,535	225	90	80	60	60	80	40	30
Uganda	365	215	220	210	420	740	460	715	705
Zimbabwe	105	130	60	60	230	1,010	2,140	7,655	3,295
Africa Other	360	275	220	305	400	615	555	845	695
Africa Total	22,545	11,290	9,515	12,380	18,435	17,920	20,550	28,390	20,370
Iran	615	585	585	745	1,320	5,610	3,420	2,630	2,875
Iraq	930	965	1,075	1,295	1,800	7,475	6,680	14,570	4,015
Middle East Other	755	600	675	745	1,045	1,330	1,165	1,115	1,080
Middle East Total	2,295	2,150	2,335	2,785	4,165	14,415	11,265	18,315	7,970
Afghanistan	580	675	1,085	2,395	3,975	5,555	8,920	7,205	2,280
Bangladesh	665	645	545	460	530	795	510	720	735
China	750	820	1,945	1,925	2,625	4,000	2,390	3,675	3,450
India	3,255	2,220	1,285	1,030	1,365	2,120	1,850	1,865	2,290
Pakistan	2,915	1,915	1,615	1,975	2,615	3,165	2,860	2,405	1,915
Sri Lanka	2,070	1,340	1,830	3,505	5,130	6,395	5,510	3,130	705
Vietnam	5	10	10	35	105	160	400	840	1,125
Asia Other	385	270	255	615	1,120	1,025	1,040	915	655
Asia Total	10,685	7,885	8,570	11,940	17,465	23,230	23,480	20,755	13,155
Nationality not known	50	60	105	190	765	450	160	145	55
Grand Total	43,965	29,640	32,500	46,015	71,160	80,315	71,025	84,130	49,405

(1) Figures rounded to the nearest 5 with * = 1 or 2.
(2) May exclude some cases lodged at Local Enforcement Offices between January 1999 and March 2000.
(3) Serbia and Montenegro (SAM) replaced Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) from 5 February 2003. SAM comprises the Republic of Serbia, the Republic of Montenegro, and the Province of Kosovo (administered by the UN on an interim basis since 1999).
(P) Provisional figures.

Source: Heath and Hill (2004) – Home Office

A way of escaping the anxiety of dealing with such multiplicity is to appeal to the strategy of stereotyping. Hall (2003b) observes that one of the characteristics of this mechanism is to reduce and fixate "difference", banishing what is not acceptable. In this way, the various possibilities of being the other are simplified around the signifier "asylum seeker". In research carried out in the South West, West Midlands and London to understand the patterns of prejudice of white adult people towards minorities groups, Valentine and McDonald (2004) observed that travellers, Gypsies, asylum seekers and refugees are the groups which figure at the very top of the list, being followed by ethnic minorities. This last group is the target of only half of the number of those who express prejudice against the first two groups. Asylum seekers and refugees constitute the group towards whom the most open and transparent prejudice is directed, often expressed through anger. It seems that the prejudice towards such group is socially accepted, since there is no disavowal in its expression. Another conclusion reached by the authors is that there is a tendency for the interviewees to identify any non-white person as an asylum seeker.

Such results seem to validate my suggestion that, at least on a manifest level, there seems to be a partial, though problematic, acceptance of African-Caribbean and Asian as constitutive of the national identity. This seems to be a result of decades of contestation. The same pattern can be found in the field of race-relations and migration policies. Schuster and Solomos (2004) observe that during the first mandate of New Labour in 1997 there was, at least at the official level, a commitment to tackle discrimination suffered by the African-Caribbean and Asian British people, following the Macpherson Report relating to the murder of Stephen Lawrence, a young black man killed by a white gang in the street. The recommendations of such a report broadened the isolated issue of his murder, expressing concerns towards institutional racism.

As a response to the report there was the constitution of the 2000 Race Relations (Amendment) Act. It was seen as a step towards the issue of racism since it extends to the public authorities the obligation to tackle and prevent racial discrimination. Although it was generally welcomed as a movement towards the promotion of racial equality, it also received criticisms concerning the area of

immigration. The Act did not extend the function of public authorities to include issues of immigration and asylum. Schuster and Solomos continue their argument, inferring that the legislation did not assume a humanitarian perspective seeking the inclusion of asylum seekers. Instead, it has crudely threatened their welfare and political rights (Schuster and Solomos 2004). In this way, it is made explicit, at the official level, that asylum seekers are not part of the project of the nation-state. It has set up a differentiation in the positioning of African-Caribbean and Asian people and asylum seekers.

An article published in The *Guardian* (19/03/05) entitled 'For far too long, we have left patriotism to the extremists' is exemplary. Its author, David Blunkett, who occupied the position of Home Secretary under the Labour Government from 1997 to 2004, claims a sense of Britishness and Englishness based on diversity and tolerance. Nevertheless, his argument presents serious elisions, contradictions and a clear exclusion of refugees from the place of national identity.

The article was published some months before the general elections of 2005 where the Conservative Party constituted the main opposition to the Labour Party's attempt at reelection. Immigration constituted the main agenda of the Conservatives' campaign, which constantly claimed that Labour had been adopting soft policies towards immigration, which opposed the interests of development of the national state. In this context, national belonging becomes one of the privileged guidelines of the confrontation.

In the first paragraph of the article, Blunkett states that what unites some left-wing British politicians is 'an understanding that identity and a sense of belonging need to be linked to our commitment to nationhood and a modern form of patriotism'. The modern in his argument seeks to relate to something new, to a patriotism that is not, in any way, indebted to an interrupted history of racialization. However, as we shall see, it still follows assimilationist guidelines dating back to the policies of the 1970s relating to the African-Caribbean and Asian population. Apparently, seeking for the votes of the non-white British community, Blunkett claims an apparent opposition to the rigid notion of national identity propagated by the New Racism:

I believe Britishness is defined not on ethnic and exclusive grounds but through shared values, our history of tolerance, openness and internationalism and our commitment to democracy and liberty, to civic duty and the public space. (...) This vision embraces the diversity of our state and unites us through our values, history, culture and institutions. It provides a shared framework for national and local identities. Thus an overarching British identity is compatible with – indeed, is actually strengthened by – the celebration of the national identities of Britain. (Paragraph 6)

Nevertheless, soon after, he reveals that this idea of tolerance and commitment with diversity actually hides an assimationist project that targets immigrants under the notion of shared citizenship:

My contribution to this debate has been an emphasis on the development of shared citizenship. I have long argued for a self-respect and respect for others, and an understanding of our identity and sense of belonging. (...) That is why I introduced tuition and tests in English for those seeking citizenship for the first time, as well as citizenship classes and affirmation ceremonies. (Paragraph 7)

Shared citizenship in this context signifies a homogeneous identity through the imposition of a language, beliefs and practices that seek generalization. When Blunkett employs the concepts of self-respect and respect for the others, he is not actually proposing a mutual acceptance; he is, rather, proposing a project of assimilation of immigrants into a set of expectations of Englishness. As an example, in 2002 the Government presented to parliament the White Paper, 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain', which proposes that the 'celebration of acquisition of citizenship' must include the swearing of an oath of allegiance to the Queen (Home Office 2002a). In this way *they* have to conform to the British way of life; *they* have to celebrate becoming British.

Once more Blunkett seems to appeal to tolerance through diversity, including the asylum issue to apparently challenge the narrow right-wing concept of Englishness:

One reaction to the lack of definition of Englishness has been the promotion of an exclusive Englishness and an appeal to the particular. Predominantly championed by the right, this is characterised by its opposition to Europe, to immigration and asylum and a general insularity and defensiveness. It uses the

language of "insiders" and "outsiders", claiming that outsiders threaten English identity. (Paragraph 15)

Nevertheless, as we observed earlier, the dichotomy outsider/insider is not excluded from the government's project of national identity. Near the end of the article, Blunkett seems to conclude with who makes up part of the British identity and how this identity, based on diversity, has the white Englishman as norm:

> A debate, therefore, about knowing who we are and where we belong, about how we develop a common home that is welcoming to others, is vital for our wellbeing and for developing, though patriotism, our embrace of those whose culture, colour, religion and lifestyle are different. First-generation immigrants can be proud to be Pakistani and British or American and British, and those rooted here proud to be English and British. (Paragraph 18)

The counterpart to such norm, the 'different' ones, are the Americans – allies in an imperialist war which ended up with the invasion and subjugation of Iraqi - and the potential voters originated from Commonwealth countries, who were once, formally constituted as the opposite of British identity. Once more, refugees, a category that has been for centuries making up part of the constitution of the British population, are left aside. The notion of tolerance and praise for diversity as constitutive of the British identity dismisses the racism suffered by part of the British population. The contradictions of such amalgam are elided in order to set up an opposition to the outsiders of the national state's constitution.

If during the 1980s the politics of the constitution of identity had as its major opposition the population from Commonwealth countries, from the 1990s onwards it has been, not replaced, but primarily focused on another kind of migration; the forced one. Asylum seekers and refugees became, at least at the official level, the main population from which a sense of Britishness can be constructed. In this way, the black/white dualism is no longer a category that can alone explain the politics of racialisation and contestation in England. Nevertheless, the discourses and practices that were drawn throughout such a dichotomy during the 1980s like ethnic absolutism, assimilationism, multiculturalism and anti-racism have been utilised by diverse institutions in order to make sense of a population that demands a reconfiguration of the notion of Britishness. This reconfiguration points out to the

possibility of a multiplicity more complex than the one achieved during the post Second World War era.

I am going to look now at the legislative and press responses to the presence of asylum seekers. The importance of working with such institutional discourses derives from their significant role in determining national identities and the daily experiences of persons who are designated as insiders and outsiders, nationalizing some and transforming others into aliens (Epstein and Johnson 1998).

Ways of exclusion: the legislative and press response to the presence of refugees and refugee children

In this final section I am going to look at the ways the immigration law and the press have responded to the presence of refugees and refugee children. The reactions of these institutions not only construct representations of these groups, but they also have real effects on their daily lives (White 2002). Following my argument in the first section of the chapter, I am going to demonstrate how, according to the government, refugee children are rather often positioned as refugees – the unidentifiable other – instead of through the dual logic innocent/evil often related to other groups of children. The importance in examining the responses towards refugee adults relies on the fact that it offers a basis from which the refugee children's positionalities can be analysed through analogy/opposition. This is due to the fact that childhood is a category that is always constructed in relation to adulthood (Hill and Tisdall 1997).

It is not my intention to draw an exhaustive and detailed examination of legislation and the press. Such activity would go beyond the scope of this thesis. My purpose is, rather, to observe how a pattern has been established in the way refugees have been positioned by privileged institutional apparatuses.

The swamp remark: when refugee children became visible

The issue of the integration of refugee children into British society gained public attention when a clause of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill 2002 proposed the exclusion of 3,000 new asylum seeker children from the mainstream educational system in order to receive education in accommodation centres where, it was also proposed, they would live (White and Travis 2002). Several associations in the United Kingdom expressed their concern over such proposal: the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL), the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) have all written to the Home Secretary, David Blunkett (Refugee Council 2002).

The bill was justified by the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, through an expression commonly used by the New Right in relation to the arrival of migrants from Commonwealth countries: 'swamping'. In the 'Radio 4's Today' programme he stated that

> Accommodation centres are commonplace in many parts of the world and will enable people to receive education and health care on the premises. While they're going through the process, the children will be educated on the site, which will be open. People will be able to come and go, but importantly not swamping the local school. (In Johnston 2002)

His proposal of withdrawing asylum seeker children from the mainstream educational system locates them as outsiders. It seeks their segregation in relation to British children, opposing the former against the ideal conception of childhood: the protected and innocent one, the one that is constituted through the Western norms. While such a Western conception of childhood has been universalized through documents of international law, not all children are perceived to fit in.

The universalizing conception of childhood is epitomised by The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This document was ratified in the year 1989 and expresses conceptions of childhood, indicating procedures to be followed by the signatory countries in relation to the protection of children, their rights and

participation in society[6]. The philosophy of the document is based on equality among children, with them having the same inherent value as they grow-up (Franklin 1995). It also determines that the nuclear family should be responsible for the protection and welfare of children and when the family fails it establishes the state as immediate party responsible for the children.

When the UK ratified the UN Convention in 1991, it made clear that a specific kind of children would be excluded from the universalizing conception of childhood. It made a reservation to article 22[7], which states that when receiving a refugee child, accompanied or unaccompanied[8], a host country must guarantee the protection, humanitarian assistance and rights prescribed by the Convention. This constitutes the UK's seminal decision, regarding international law, of formally defining refugee children as outsiders. The consequence of this procedure is that the position of refugee children as children is, very often, undermined by the politics directed at refugees in general.

Who are the asylum seekers and refugees?

The international definition of a refugee was determined by the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. This Convention resulted from the need for protection for Europeans and the guarantee of their rights in the aftermath of the Second World War (1945), and has been expanded to displaced people around the world (UNHCR 2004). According to the first article of this convention a refugee is a person who has:

> well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality

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[6] When signing the Convention a State Party has a formal obligation to meet its demands.
[7] A reservation indicates where a provision or article is not acceptable to a State Party (Hill and Tisdall, 1997).
[8] An unaccompanied asylum seeker child is a person who at the moment of claiming asylum is, or appears to be, under eighteen years old, who is applying for asylum for her/his own right and who has no adult relative or guardian responsible in the host country (Home Office 2002b).

and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it[9].

In Britain, the official definition of asylum seekers states that they are those individuals who are waiting for a decision from the Home Office about whether they can stay (Rutter 2001a). The asylum seekers who are eventually recognized as refugees are granted indefinite leave to remain in the territory.

The existence of conflict in a country, including discrimination of minorities, civil war and ethnic conflict, constitutes the main cause of forced migration to the EU. The search for sanctuary in EU countries is determined by the notion that they present a high level of peace, public order and democratic institutions. Although economic factors play an important role in the search for refuge - since European countries can offer a good standard of living through developed welfare and health systems to those who often come from countries devastated by conflict - the poorest countries still the ones that absorb the largest amount of asylum seekers (Castles et al. 2003).

In the year 2001, Pakistan hosted 2,199,379 refugees and asylum seekers, Iran 1,868,011 and Afghanistan 1,226,098 (UNHCR in the UK 2004), while the UK hosted only 71, 370 - excluding dependents - (Heath and Hill 2002). In the year 2002, UK figured as the eighth among the European countries in receiving asylum applications in relation to the number of inhabitants (UNHCR in the UK 2004).

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[9] Among the criticisms of such a definition is the claim that it does not recognize internally displaced persons (IDP). These are the people who, although forced to abandon their homes for the same reasons of refugees, remain within the borders of their country. Although the number of IDP is higher than of refugees, they are often left without proper assistance and protection and are not under any international legal instrument (Castles et al. 2003).
Another criticism levelled towards the definition, which directly concerns people who crossed international borders, refers to its exclusion of people who fled armed conflict. Other international laws like the European Convention on Human Rights can be evoked to protect those who fled armed conflict and are not under the protection of the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. African and Latin American countries have also developed treaties to protect people affected by armed conflict (Rutter 2001a). Such limitation of the Convention opens up the space for the UK's government to refuse asylum to those who are in obvious need, subjugating them to legislation that brings uncertainty to their lives.

Number of asylum applications per head of population

ASYLUM APPLICATIONS AND TOTAL POPULATION IN WESTERN EUROPE, 2001 AND 2002					
Asylum country	Total Population ('000) (*)	Asylum applications per 1,000 inhabitants		Ranking	
		2001	2002	2001	2002
Austria	8,210.5	3.7	4.6	1	1
Norway	4,469.0	3.3	3.9	2	2
Sweden	8,842.1	2.7	3.7	4	3
Switzerland	7,283.2	2.9	3.6	3	4
Ireland	3,803.1	2.7	3.1	4	5
Luxembourg	442.9	1.6	2.1	9	6
Belgium	10,249.4	2.7	2.1	4	6
United Kingdom	**59,647.7**	**1.5**	**1.8**	**10**	**8**
Netherlands	15,863.7	2.1	1.2	8	9
Denmark	5,293.2	2.3	1.1	7	10

Source: UNHCR in the UK (2004)

According to research of MORI Social Research Institute (2002), although in the year 2002 UK hosted 1.98% of the world's asylum seekers and refugees, the public believed that Britain hosted nearly a quarter (23%). On a global scale, the poorest countries are responsible for hosting the vast majority of refugees: almost two thirds of the refugee (Scottish Refugee Council 2005). On a global scale it is clear that the countries that have better infrastructure to support refugees are the ones that have been withdrawing themselves from such responsibility; in this way, the larger part of the refugee population, two thirds, lives in poor countries and, one could guess, in unsatisfactory conditions.

Figures from the Home Office show an increasing tendency to refuse refugee status or give any kind of protection. In the year 1984, 33% of asylum seekers were granted refugee status in the UK, 39% were given exceptional leave to remain, and 28% were refused (Rutter 2001). The new figures from the Home Office demonstrate that in the year 2004, from a total of 46,035 applications for asylum only 3% (1,515 people) were recognized as refugees, 8.6% (3,840 people) were not recognized as refugees but granted discretionary leave, and 3.3% (1,515 people) were not

recognized as refugees but granted humanitarian protection[10], while 88% (40,525 people) were refused any status or protection[11] (Home Office 2004).

	1984	2004
Refugee status	33%	3%
Other form of protection	39%	11.9%
Refused	28%	88%

Britain's clear intention in deterring new applications is mirrored by tough measures relating to asylum seekers. These measures become part of a matrix where each point informs the others – press, policies, public response – resulting in the complete stigmatisation of refugees and asylum seekers. Labour came into power after eighteen years of Conservative administration, which implemented a draconian response to the presence of people seeking refuge. At that time, being driven by a campaign in the press of scapegoating of asylum seekers, public opinion was already hostile towards refugees and asylum seekers. Even in the school context, terms like 'bogus' and 'scrounger' have been directed at refugee children. Some of the children who participated in my research also referred to the fact that they have been harassed not only in the school context, but also in other public spaces like the street. Since the year 1997, and at the present moment, at the end of the second mandate, the Labour party has, instead of informing the population about the actual facts of asylum and seeking for an inclusive society, endured a campaign of disavowal of the presence of such a population (Rutter 2001, Schuster and Solomos 2004).

The exclusion of vulnerable children

The Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, passed by the Conservative government, introduced the 'white list of safe countries'. Such countries are

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[10] Discretionary leave and humanitarian protection are granted for up to three years. They are granted for people who, although are not seen as falling into the category of refugee, are considered to be in need of humanitarian protection (Ward 2004).

[11] Some critics of the asylum policy observe that protections like exceptional leave to remain are a government stratagem to refuse full refugee protection. They observe that people who are granted this kind of protection – and the same logic can be applied at the present moment to humanitarian protection and discretionary leave – would be granted full refugee status in the past (Rutter 2001).

considered safe and their nationals are under little risk of persecution (Ward 2004). We must remember that the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees considers a refugee as a person who has a 'well-founded fear of being persecution'. Therefore, the status is not related to specific countries, but is based on individual cases where the person's life is seen to be at risk. The Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 maintained the same procedure, introducing a list of 'safe countries', with the asylum applications from these countries considered 'clearly unfounded' (Ward 2004).

The first list of safe countries where no right of appeal would be considered in cases when a claim was refused was announced on 7th October 2002. The ten countries were Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. On the 6th February 2003, six more countries were added to the list: Albania, Bulgaria, Jamaica, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania and Serbia and Montenegro (previously the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). In June 2003 the Home Office announced that seven more countries would be considered safe, with appeals from its nationals certified as 'clearly unfounded'. They were Brazil, Equador, Bolivia, South Africa, Ukraine, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Failed asylum applicants from these countries are fast-tracked through Oakington reception centre in Cambridgeshire, where people are held under detention powers (The International Amnesty UK 2003).

Besides the fact that the idea of safe countries goes against the definition of a refugee proposed by the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, The International Amnesty UK observes that all the seven countries considered safe in June 2003 present 'Human Rights Issues of Concern'. In assuming that people from some countries cannot fit into the category of refugee without considering individual cases, the government denies sanctuary to adults and children in legitimate need of protection.

As an example of the illegitimacy of such a procedure, in the year 1993, seven children who lived on the street in the city of São Paulo, Brazil - one of the countries included in the white list - were shot by policemen during the night while they slept in

front of an eminent cathedral. This is a strategy widely utilized by children who live on the street. Since the moment of sleeping renders them completely vulnerable, as a way of protection, they spend the night in places where there is greater chance of passers-by. In this way, they seek in the eyes of the public protection for their lives (Lewis 2001, Silva and Milito 1995). This massacre, named after the cathedral, became widely known as the Candelária Massacre and gained massive public attention because of the number of children murdered. Nevertheless, violence from the police force against street children is not an isolated case in Brazil. Children who live on the streets refer to the policeman as one of the most threatening and feared figures in their daily lives (Hecht 1998, Lewis 2001, Silva and Milito 1995).

One boy who survived the shooting was left with several injuries, including a blind eye and facial paralysis. Since the policeman accused of the atrocity waited for years to be tried without being in custody - a very common practice in Brazil - it was understood that the child who survived was facing serious danger, and while not receiving formal protection from the Brazilian government, was sent, with the support of NGOs, to Italy where he has been living since[12].

This case, that seems to undoubtedly fit the category of refugee – 'well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of membership in a particular social group' - would have been, since June 2003, considered by the British immigration law as 'clearly unfounded'.

Restrictions of social rights and the invisibility of asylum seeker children

The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 imposed a policy of dispersal of asylum seekers throughout the country, with the justification of decreasing the workload in London and the South East (Document 1). The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) was then introduced, which co-ordinates the planning for supporting asylum seekers and their dispersion (Ward 2004). While asylum seekers passed to local responsibility, the involvement of the local press, as well as most of the national

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[12] Account based on personal memories.

tabloids, promoted greater public hostility towards them, resulting in larger incidents of racial violence and the asylum seekers being stigmatised as bogus in their search for exploiting the welfare system of the country (Rutter 2001).

The government's response has been to keep asylum seekers dependent on the system; since the year 2000 they have not been allowed to work. As a result they have been obliged to rely on state benefits that allow them only 70% of basic Income Support (Scottish Refugee Council 2005). In this way, at the same time that the government does not permit the asylum seekers to integrate in society by exercising a role that would confer occupational identity, it also stigmatizes them, sending the message that they do not have the same rights of survival as the British citizen. It also substantially decreases the opportunity of a more adequate standard of living of adults as well as children.

Another government strategy to penalize asylum seekers has been the complete withdraw of asylum support under the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. Section 55 prevents NASS from providing support for asylum seekers who have not made their claim for asylum 'as soon as reasonably practicable' after arrival in the country - although the length of time considered to be reasonably practicable is not specified, the result of such policy has been the destitution of thousands of asylum seekers, resulting in them being left without food and shelter, living on the streets even during the winter time (Labournet 2005).

This is a case where the asylum seeker children's positionality as children, entitled to special needs, is taken into consideration. The government states that under these circumstances, support will be given to the main applicant and the household in cases where he/she has a dependent less than eighteen years old. Unaccompanied asylum seeker children are also exempt from this procedure. I suggest that the discrepancy between both procedures, the decrease of the basic Income Support, including the families who have children, and the guarantee of support in a case where several have been made destitute, is related to the issue of visibility of asylum seeker children.

Making asylum seeker children destitute and forcing them to live on the streets would make visible for the general population the fact that some children had been denied basic rights of protection. This would be in complete discordance with the representation of childhood in a country where there is a consolidated notion of children as vulnerable people in need of special protection. The visibility of asylum seeker children guaranteed their full status as children, dismissing, in this case, the vulnerability forced upon people who are primarily seen as asylum seekers.

Changing status: when asylum seeker children become invisible

Whereas the applicability of Section 55 in relation to asylum seeker children was undermined by the fact of their visibility to the population, a way of withdrawing their rights while keeping them out of the spotlight is to disallow them refugee status at the same time as not referring directly to them.

Since 1984, the government has increasingly granted 'exceptional leave to remain' (ELR), which is granted at the discretion of the Home Secretary 'for administrative and humane reasons'. In the past, such status would be granted to people who, although endangered, did not fit the category of refugee under the 1951 UN Convention. Critics of the British government's asylum policy argue that people who in the early 1980s would be granted refugee status are now granted ELR. ELR does not grant the same rights as refugee status and has to be renewed periodically. People with the ELR face more difficulties in gaining access to grants and further higher education (Rutter 2001a).

Since April 2003, ELR has been replaced by 'humanitarian protection' (HP) and 'discretionary leave' (DL). Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave are granted for up to three years. According to the Home Office the introduction of HP and DL 'is in line with the Home Secretary's decision to restrict grants of leave to unsuccessful asylum seekers who are recognised to be in need of international protection or to have other compelling reasons for not be removed' (Ward 2004: 21).

Employing a rhetorical strategy, the government dismisses the issue of denying full protection to asylum seeker children. They render these children invisible solely utilizing the category 'main applicant' when presenting the percentage of people allowed any kind of status or protection. Another category that we can conclude is made invisible is women. Since universally speaking men are commonly considered to be the main locus of decision-making about family unity, women also seem to fall into the logic of disappearance. In this way, the government takes the adult male as the norm to be accountable in the politics of inclusion/exclusion[13]. The tabloids also perpetuate the logic of this norm. Through such press coverage, the issue of asylum, often related to negative connotations like swamping and crime, are commonly accompanied by pictures of young adult males, reinforcing the idea of asylum seekers as potential threats.

By redefining the status of people that should be granted refugee status, the government submit people to a situation of uncertainty and anxiety in relation to their future. There is no guarantee that in three years time the situation in a determined country would be suitable to receive those who had to flee. This fact was attested during my fieldwork, where through interviews, some families revealed the anguish of having the leave to remain periodically renewed, preventing them from having a precise expectation of their future. The consequence in relation to the politics of migration and the composition of the nation-state is a circulation, instead of settlement, of non-white people. Humanitarian protection and discretionary leave seem, in this way, to search for a compromise between guaranteeing some legal and moral protection for those in need, and the undertaking of controlling the inclusion of those desirable for the composition of the nation state.

Between criminalization and invisibility: the paradox of being a refugee child

When the UN Refugee Convention was incorporated into UK law through the Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993, in a contradictory manner it was

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[13] In this respect Treacher et al. (2003) observe how the model of nuclear family imposed by European host countries render the experiences of refugee women invisible and silent. Since men are seen as the main representative of this institution they are the ones understood by the public sphere to be the main political agents.

accompanied by a ritualistic process of criminalization of refugees. Although the practices that imply this criminalization have adults as their major target, it does not exclude children from being stigmatized. The Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act 1993 allows detention of asylum seekers while their claims are being decided, as well as introduces fingerprinting for all asylum seekers with the sole exception of children under five years old (Statewatch online resources 2005).

Being fingerprinted, the child is located as one in need of strict governance and scrutiny. Here the governance does not refer to the control exercised over the national children that are being enforced under the hegemonic social codes. It is rather about being positioned as outsider.

In the fourth quarter of the year 2004, 1515 people who claimed asylum were detained at some stage exclusively under immigration powers. Although 89% of the detainees were adult males, reinforcing the gendered and generational notion of men as being in more need of control, 25 people under eighteen years old were detained together with their families (Home Office).

According to the Refugee Council (2003), in the year 2003 the government set up the aim of raising the number of bed spaces in detention centres from 2,000 to 4,000. At that time around 10% of the places were designated for children. The primary objective of such centres was to detain people immediately prior to their removal. Nevertheless, Home Office officials announced in Parliament that people could be detained on arrival and kept under such circumstances during part of, or throughout all of, the process of asylum claim. In 2001 it was announced that families with children would be under all the criteria for immigration detention without any limit of time being imposed for such detention. Although the government claims that people are detained for short periods, the Refugee Council states that in numerous cases people are detained for several months and the average for families is over 20 days.

Crawley and Lester (2005) claim that around 2,000 children are detained every year in the UK under immigration law. In a study carried out with 32 detained refugee

children, the researchers found that the extent of detention varied from 7 days to 268 days, and half of the children observed (16) were detained for more than 28 days. In detaining asylum seeker children for the purpose of immigration control, the government avoids recognizing the hegemonic childhood's status of these children, positioning them solely as asylum seekers.

Innocents and invisibles: the press response

The response of the press has been presented in a clearly dichotomous way depending on the political stance of each newspaper. The most liberal ones like *The Independent* and the *Guardian* have opted to highlight the issue of childhood and criminalization when referring to asylum seeker children in detention centres. *The Independent* (Goodchild and Dillon 2003), for example, published an article in June 2003 under the title 'The Scandal of Britain's asylum children'. We must observe that the title positions asylum seeker children as insiders; they are 'Britain's asylum children', and not solely asylum children who are in Britain. The next headline, which gives a summary of the report, states that:

> Bradley is only nine months old but he was sent to a detention centre and treated like a prisoner. Every year thousands of youngsters are locked up, while others are abandoned to live alone in bedsits. This is the story of what Britain does to refugee children.

Another article in the same newspaper published in May 2003 brings into the title a more explicit reference to the criminalization of asylum seeker children: 'Girl of 14 lives like a prisoner. Her crime? To be an asylum-seeker in Blunkett's Britain'. Although the beginning of the article makes reference to an adult, Beriwan Ay's mother, the description of the condition revolves around her. What follows in the report is an insider's description of the conditions of imprisonment through a gaze that is limited and partial:

> Beriwan Ay shares a cramped room with her two younger sisters, her brother and mother. There are four single beds and a bunk bed but the walls are bare. Through a small window that opens only a fraction, all she can see is a high fence.

The Guardian follows the same strategy of denouncing the generational specificity surrounding the detention of asylum seekers. Under the title 'Judge locks up refugee children' published in August 2002, the newspaper describes the misfortune of an Afghan family who was sent to a detention centre prior to their deportation (Bright 2002). In the same fashion as the articles of *The Independent*, although the case study is related to a family, it focuses on the condition of children. The issue of criminalization of asylum is then also presented as a generational matter. The idea of innocence as opposed to criminality is reinforced, positioning the asylum seeker children as more vulnerable and ill-treated than adult asylum seekers.

The tabloids, on the other hand, opt, very often, to make the issue of asylum-seeker children invisible while criminalizing adult male asylum seekers. The Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, commissioned a report after an increase in harassment against asylum seekers in the capital. Between August and September 2003, research was conducted by a team from Kings College London who monitored the press coverage of refugees in national, local and community newspapers. In one week, there were 56 stories about asylum seekers in the newspapers researched. The newspapers which had the greatest number of articles relating to asylum seekers were *The Sun*, *News of the World*, *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday*. The team argued that some articles presented content that promoted alarm and fear through alleging an indeterminate influx of asylum seekers or through suggestions of criminality (ICAR 2004).

White (2002) observes the impact that hydraulic metaphors have on the imagination of a population who fears being taken-over by outsiders and who feels in need of the protection of well established borders:

> In the UK hydraulic metaphors imagine flows of migrants (water, blood, diseases) leaving and entering states (reservoirs, lake or the body) that are protected by international borders and immigration laws (dams or surgical instruments). Flows may be 'out of control' threatening the livelihoods of all citizens, thus 'floods' of refugees or asylum seekers threaten to 'swamp' the state. Representing the state and refugee movements in such a simplistic, but seductively holistic way, legitimises the replacement of polyvocal, complex

and chaotic stories and realities of migrant life with a monochrome universe of truth. (2002: 1056)

As illustration, the front page of the *Sunday Express* January 2004 (Shipman and Tominey 2004) exhibits an intricate interplay of messages that guide the reader to a crest of anxiety, revealing more precise clues to a situation presented as a threat to the entire country. The headline, displayed in capital and bold letters - **'BRITAIN GETS BORDER GUARDS'** - implies a country under threat and in need of special and protecting force. Right at the top, there is a subheading, which indicates the cause of the threat in smaller letters: **'EXCLUSIVE: new force to crack down on asylum'**. What follows is the subheading of the article in bold letters **'MPs ARE urging that border guards are brought in to combat Britain's massive influx of asylum seekers'**.

The expression 'ARE', exposed in capital letters, followed by 'urging', implies an urgency of action against a force that threatens the country at the very present moment. And this force is bound up with the notion or fantasy of warfare, since it has to be 'combated'. The expression 'massive influx' seems to promote the notion of a complete taking over. Remember White's observation of the hydraulic meaning of the word influx. If one thinks about water or any liquid being rendered in a space, it is expected that it will spread itself into any empty space. In this way, water/asylum seekers can be thought of in a claustrophobic fashion, with the population being left with no way out from their presence.

The article in itself is accompanied by a photograph of a queue of male adult asylum seekers described as being on the border of France and UK. Adult male asylum seekers are often displayed as images of people who are supposed to take over the British territory. Nevertheless, the current article presents a surprising exception, displaying, on the second page, a photograph of a family from Eastern Europe composed of the parents and two small boys, around one and four years old. The family configuration is displayed following this sequence: the father in front carrying the younger boy in his arms, while holding the hand of the older child. The mother is about four steps behind the father. Nevertheless, this photographic exception is

accompanied by the clear idea of being 'fake', since the article refers to 'failed asylum seekers'. It is related to the "menace" of the possibility of return of failed and deported asylum seekers to Britain under the EU constitution. The article states that once here, these people will be able to 'legally work and within three months will begin picking up health, education, pension and welfare benefits'. It is very much in line with Blunkett's 'swamp remark' regarding refugee children, implying that they, also, should be kept apart. It also portrays the male asylum seeker guiding the family, ahead the wife and leading two children with his body. He is the one in charge, he is the one who guides the children and the woman. Again, the male is the visible and, in this case, the manipulative one.

The issue of asylum, more than an unspecified hydraulic menace – which plays with people's fantasies of invasion/penetration – also links the matter of the male adult asylum seeker with criminalization. For example, the front page of the *Daily Express* July 2004 (Blacklock 2004) exposes, in capital and bold letters, the **'ASYLUM SCANDAL OF BABY KILLER'** accompanied by the subtitle 'He should never have been here'. The article relates to the case of a failed asylum seeker who murdered his baby child born in England. It positions male asylum seekers as a threat to society, as the ones who should never have entered the country.

In a similar fashion, the *Daily Mail* April 2004 (Craven and Wright 2004) has on its front page the title, again in capital and bold letters **'MURDERED BECAUSE WE'VE LOST CONTROL OF OUR BORDERS'**. The headline of the article displays **'for 19 years, Stephen Oake had dedicated his life to protecting and serving the public'**. The article discusses the murder of a police officer by another failed asylum seeker. The message is equally stereotyping in disseminating the notion of male asylum seekers as criminals and implies a greater threat, since the victim in question is a person professionally trained to protect the population.

'Asylum seeker', which should mean a condition – a person seeking asylum - becomes transformed by the tabloids into an identitarian position which means threat, bogus and chaos. Hall et al. (1978) observe that the mechanism of constitution of moral panic is much more clearly related to the issue of stigmatization - in this case,

racialization - than to actual facts. It is constituted as a way of maintaining the *status quo*, the social order, and the British way of life. It is through this threat, the outsider, that cohesion is reaffirmed.

This representation, which is directed mainly at adult males, transgresses the logic of the asylum issue, transforming victims in need of protection into criminals. On the other hand, it makes a compromise with the notion of childhood as an innocent phase and in need of protection, rendering refugee children invisibles. When they appear, there are portrayed in the company of bogus asylum seeker parents, who bring them to UK with the sole intention of exploiting the system. In this way, these children are seen as innocent, under the powers of unscrupulous (male) adults.

The legislative and press response to the matter of refugee children is indicative of how concepts of childhood and ethnicity are combined in order to socially position these children. The possibility of their presence in England is very much determined by which of their positionalities is going to be taken into consideration. For example, through their refugee status, the unidentifiable other, which I have already mentioned, or as children, in which case is through the notion of innocent child. Another possibility, and very much utilised by the Government is to play with both positionalities in a rather strategic fashion. Thus on the one hand they are considered as refugees - withdrawing their universal rights as children – and on the other hand they are regarded as children, rendering the plight they go through invisible to the majority of the population.

Conclusion

The issue of refugee children troubles any concept of childhood as fixed and unproblematic. In the first section of this chapter I argued that hegemonic concepts of childhood that appeared in specific periods of time which still operate nowadays position children in diverse ways according to their several subject positions and the institutions concerned. These notions operate through confirmation or opposition to

hegemonic concepts of childhood that seek to perpetuate the modern project of progress. According to such a parameter the ideal child is separated from the world of adults and must be guided by institutions that are going to conduct her/him through the dream of advancement.

Nevertheless, such a dream must be restricted by boundaries of nation-states and by the concept of whiteness. The attempt of the propagation of the notion of purity and progress was actualised during the 1980s by the New Right which claimed that the arrival of migrants from former English colonies established a field of incompatibility of "different" cultures. This focus on incompatibility of cultural · differences was translated in the schools through an assimilationist ideology based on a monoculturalist paradigm. The children originated from Commonwealth countries were then taken as the opposite to the notion of ideal childhood.

During the 1990s England witnessed the increase of another form of migration, the forced one. If until the 1980s the notion of the "other" was restricted basically to the African-Caribbean and Asian population, then at the present moment it has became multiplied by the presence of people from several former European colonies. In the specific case of refugee children, generation is going to be crosscut by several subject positions as othering factors being also determined by hegemonic concepts of childhood.

Notions like innocence, evilness, immaturity, need of protection, are considered under contingencies imposed by the interplay of forced migration and the several responses of the host country. In the case of England, a history of colonialism and self-definition through the opposite other has ascribed a racialized condition for children of former European colonies. They are then not understood under the notion of a neutral child. The various subject positions they occupy – colour, country of origin, ethnicity, religion – are understood as multiple threats to a mythical notion of white English. Because their "differences" are so multiple, the government even withdraws them from the hegemonic notion of childhood – as entitled to special rights – making a reservation to the article 22 of the United Nations Convention on the

Rights of the Child, which confers to refugee children the same rights to children from the host country.

What follows, in practical terms, is circumstantial recognition of their status, at times as children, and at times as refugees. Their status as children seems to be particularly recognized when they become visible to the broader population, as could happen in relation to the withdrawal of assistance under Section 55 of the Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, which could have rendered many children homeless, and is therefore witnessed by the broader population.

The invisibility of these children is also utilized in a strategic way by statistical accounts. The number of children deported, therefore endangered, is dismissed under the term 'dependents'. In this way, only the carers "appear" on the numeric descriptions. Invisibility is also a stratagem employed by the tabloids in focusing on the figure of adult (criminalized) males. The more liberal press, on the other hand, focuses on the innocent discourse of childhood, dismissing the plight that adults suffer under the same circumstances. Thus, they confer the notion of vulnerability more to the positionality of the child than to that of the asylum seeker. In this way, the more complex circumstances of asylum – reasons for exile, racism in the host country, implications of European colonialism in the actual situation of their countries - are left untouched.

The notion of refugee children must, in this way, be deconstructed in order to acknowledge that multiple powers like concepts of childhood and othering discourses are intermingled locating these children in diverse ways according to their several positionalities and institutional politics. Regarding the politics of daily life, the "other" now became multiplied and the presence of these children in the diaspora in England has as result a complex battlefield of contestation over the notion of Britishness.

2. The Constitution of
the Researcher and the Field

In the world through which I travel,

I am endlessly creating myself

(Frantz Fanon)

The crucial field, so treasured by qualitative researchers, is not simply a physical geographical space where we *go* to discover a set of social interactions. The field is, rather, a construction based on the meeting of several biographies and the stories that will be told about these exchanges. The present chapter starts with the implications of the researcher in the production of these narratives. I start out from the idea that the position of the researcher is not the same as that of an arbitrary and comfortable writer. The researcher is an individual who, at the same time that she or he writes or speaks, is her/himself written and spoken. Therefore, I am going to discuss my choice for working from a multi-methodological approach, which allows the possibility for a deeper and richer account. This discussion will be followed by an illustration of the settings that constituted the "geographical" context of my research. Finally, I will introduce the participants of the research project and explain the conditions under which the information was gathered/exchanged.

From home to the Island: personal trajectories situating the researcher

Migration determining the subjective experience

It is a Friday morning in August 2001; I am rushing to pack my clothes, books and personal belongings in my two suitcases. The bags are absolutely full and I still have more things to put inside. After packing the final items, my sister sits down on top of the suitcases and I make a huge effort to close them. I need to take as many things as possible; I do not want to *miss* anything. Considering that in only four hours I have to catch an aeroplane, my mum watches the scene with astonishment and asks me why have I waited until the very final minute to organize my luggage. Why should I not? I did not want to leave home.

I spent every single day of my last week going to places I enjoy in my city as if, having fresh experiences, I could take them with me. Months before, I was already suffering a lot from the idea of leaving everything behind: my family that provided love and, when possible, a sense of protection; my friends, one of the best choices of my whole life; my neighbourhood, where I have lived for the last fifteen years; my city, which I am absolutely in love with; the almost daily blue sky and hot weather; the warm sea surrounded by coconut trees; the art scene; places to hang out with my friends or alone; a whole week of an amazing carnival; the informality and warmth of the population; and the food, which is impossible not to be passionate about.

Besides all this loss, people warned me about the difficulties I would face in England, not only because of the experience of migration *per se*, but because of the ethos and geography of the destination. Those Brazilians who had been there warned me that people were very 'cold', while English people in Brazil told me they were very reserved and just make friends among themselves. Everybody was unanimous in complaining about the weather, the colour of the sky and the quality of the food.

At the airport my family and friends gathered again, as a modest repetition of the farewell party from the night before. This was not excessive; I would be away for four years. I remember that getting into the aeroplane was, until that moment, the most painful experience of my whole life. After a few minutes, I could see my city and kept watching it until the image became lost below the clouds. Clouds or tears? Maybe both. It was a hot and sunny day and the sea looked lovely, as usual. I wanted to enjoy the journey, since I had been in an aeroplane just once in my life, when I was twelve. But that was impossible; I spent hours crying.

I had never been to England, only been in touch with a few English people in my whole life, and my English language has always been quite poor. How would I communicate properly? Besides that, there was the issue of cultural differences. My friends used to say that it would be funny to see English people dealing with my 'transgressive spontaneity'. Those were my primary concerns, basic ones, of somebody who was feeling lost, leaving all sense of love, security, and everything that is known behind.

When I finally arrived in England the first thing that caught my attention was the way absolutely everything was organized. I could not quite make sense of the new environment. It took me just eight hours to completely change each and every perspective regarding the culture and space. After a few days here the issue of space and colour became very apparent: all the houses were depressingly orange, the sky was often grey, as well as the pavement; everything was grey, clean, organized, with no sign of life. The rigid spatial organization limited the population to the most trivial interactions in public spaces: nobody could touch anybody. I repeatedly heard the word 'sorry'. What kind of society is it that that sees *touching* a person as a transgressive act? And the colour of bodies? I noticed that many women affirmed their whiteness through aesthetic devices such as having their hair bleached and straightened. The affirmation of whiteness reminded me of the sort of model of colour imported from Hollywood films that, when shown in my country, teaches us that this is the right way to be. I could not recognize myself in them. Questions started popping into my mind: 'What have I done to my life? What kind of choice is this? How is it possible to be happy here?'. I would keep asking myself the same questions for about eight months, always in the company of sad and bitter tears.

Peer relations at the university made explicit for me that my concerns would become more complex. I had, for the first time, the experience of being othered in ethnic terms. I could see a clear demarcation of foreignness in opposition to Europeaness among some students. In my city, being a foreigner is very often quite a positive identitarian position. People will welcome you, invite you to hang out, will want to know where you come from and cheer you if you say a phrase in Portuguese, even if grammatically incorrect. 'Gosh, your Portuguese is amazing!' we say, acknowledging the difficulties the person must be experiencing. In my case, any attempts at proximity were failed ones. Add to this the fact that at that time I had a white English landlady who daily harassed the foreign people – including me - who were living in the same house as her. In other social interactions, I would listen to some people - a very particular sort of white upper middle class English male - laughing with irony when I would say something about my culture or act in discordance with the English rules of politeness. The explicit ethnic barriers at a

personal level contributed to my deep sadness and strong sense of revolt. Now it was not only the culture at blame; nearly every individual deserved my repulsion[1].

At the beginning of my second year I discovered that England is not completely white middle class. I finally moved to Milton, a working class neighbourhood, African-Caribbean in its majority, known by white people as a place inhabited by drug dealers, gun crimes and dodgy people. For me, Milton meant/became home. What a lovely place! People were so similar to the people from my city: they were amazingly nice, spontaneous, and full of life. On my way to the grocery shop I could always give a smile and receive a nice one in return from an anonymous person. Arriving in the establishment, I would have a chat with the owner and, finally, after one year in the Island[2], buy plantain, cassava, inham, and cocada, a coconut sweet - all of them very popular in my city as well as in Jamaica. On one occasion, while chatting with an African-Caribbean man in a chip shop, the man greeted me in a way black people greet - pushing a closed hand against the other person's one - and cheering: 'Brazil, Jamaica, same thing, same thing'. For the first time since I had arrived in England, I felt that the issue of power absent; I was not othered. I had, again, the secure and comfortable feelings of being equal.

The various ways I was positioned in relation to diverse ethnic groups in England indicated to me how the politics of ethnicity operates in diverse ways in different contexts, and how our ethnicity is understood in a subjective way. In Brazil I used to be considered white. Being part of the majority in ethnic terms, and not having experienced the issue of racism myself, prevented me from realizing, until my migratory experience, the subtleness of operation of this kind of power. Entering into the field, and listening to the children and professionals surrounding them made me realize the complexity of this form of differentiation. It clarified to me that what is sometimes explicit for us, can be completely unintentional on the part of the perpetrator. It allowed me, in this way, to adopt a more critical approach towards the

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[1] Although I tended towards generalization on many occasions, meeting with people who, despite occupying privileged positions, did not reproduce the discourses and practices of these positions , prevented me from falling into a completely essentialist stance. Among the people who I met in my first year who understood me and who took into account where I come from, was my DOS, Richard Johnson and my first landlady.

[2] That's the way Brazilin people who live in England refer to the country.

affairs of the field and, consequently, of daily life, rather than a mere moralistic and exclusively accusatory one.

Partiality as an ethical condition of the researcher

My purpose in revealing the above personal account was to expose how my experience of migration, with and all the issues that surround it – ruptures, negotiations with the new reality, the process of becoming othered, identity-reconfiguration – intervened in the composition of the research project: choice of the topic, construction of the field, establishment of relationships, questions to be asked and interpretation.

Johnson et al. (2004) argue that autobiography and ethnography constitute part of a continuum of methods characterizing the dynamic of research *per se*. Drawing on the hermeneutic concept of dialogue they see the relationship between self and other as a moment that brings past, present and future perspectives together in order to transform what is presented as reality. From the relationships between what is offered or depicted by the researcher as the object of study – people, texts, institution – past determinants of the researcher's biography can be reworked, promoting a change in the sense of self and extending her/his partial perspectives of reality. At the same time, the research process, and what is designated as its object and subject, are determined by the researcher's biography and influenced by this intervention. In this respect Titscher et al. (2000) affirm that reflexivity is the fundamental principle of ethnography.

Following the same perspective that asserts the factuality of possibilities of self/other constitution through the process of production of knowledge, Brah claims that

> knowing is not so much about the assemblage of existing knowledge as it is about recognizing our constitution as 'ourselves' within the fragments that we process as knowledge, 'hailing' and being 'hailed' within the discourses that produce us and the narratives we spin; directing socially, culturally, psychically and spiritually marked focus of attention upon that which we appropriate as 'data' or 'evidence'. (2000: 273)

The self/other continuum is a major concept in my work since I share with post-structuralist, feminist and anti-racist perspectives the notion of the impossibility of the neutral production of knowledge and the researcher (Blair 1998, Gillborn 1998, Haraway 1991, Lather 1991, Maanen 1995, Mirza 1995, Paget 1995, Willis 2000). Some authors have reached an agreement around the notion that the concept of scientific neutrality is a myth, a discursive strategy, very often employed with the purpose of dismissing the scientist's compromise with a system based on social inequalities (Gillborn 1998, Haraway 1991, Lather 1991).

As such, a totalitarian and single concept of reality that characterized the modern/positivist project must give way to the possibility of several systems of knowledge as well as interpretations of the reality (Blair 1998, Clifford 1986). According to Haraway one of the main scientific metaphors, the gaze, must be embodied, since it produces situated knowledges. According to her, the scientific objective gaze

> mythically inscribes all the marked bodies, that makes the unmarked category claim the power to see and not be seen, to represent while escaping representation. (1991: 188)

She then proposes the embodiment of the vision, with the scientist locating in herself/himself the source of the production of knowledge. Knowledge through this perspective is always situated, and therefore partial. Since every person speaks/sees from a specific location, they must take full responsibility for their work. 'In this way we might become answerable for what we learn how to see' (Haraway 1991: 190).

Being answerable does not mean simply a change of pronoun from the impersonal third person pluralized/generalised to an assertive 'I' (Ellis and Bochner 2003). It means making explicit where we come from, and from which subject positions we are speaking, in order to clarify to the reader what context is informing the production of our knowledge. Advocating urgency in incorporating the auto, the self, as a source of research in the social sciences, Ellis and Bochner ask us 'Why is it so hard to grasp that personal narrative is moral work and ethical practice?' (2003: 222).

Fine (1998) argues that is only through the working of hyphens, the space between the researcher and the subject, that the social sciences can interrupt their tradition of othering. This interruption is only possible when we make ourselves visible, making explicit our very own contradictions. Understanding the way hyphens or responsible knowledge work points, therefore, to the necessity of explicitness in our political project. It also acknowledges that every social relation is constituted by power (Foucault 1991) and that we are immersed in a discursive net that is constituted in unequal ways.

Therefore, throughout the thesis, I make explicit my very own partialities, at least the ones that I became conscious of. I reveal where I come from, what my personal ethics are, my criticisms as well as my contradictions. I propose, then, that this thesis is a possible truth that was constructed in a specific moment through multiple dialogues, through what was possible to be spoken, heard and written.

Introducing the field

Getting to know Moulton

Moulton[3], the city where my research was based, is a medium sized city in the Midlands, encompassing nearly 300,000 habitants. People who live there categorise it as 'cosy', 'boring', 'small', 'compact', depending on the region of England, or of the world, they come from. But people who do not come from global cities like London are quite unanimous in addressing it as 'quite' or even 'very multicultural'. If we do not politicize this term – multicultural – taking it as simply as referring to diverse groups of people living in the same area, one would be right in describing Moulton as a multicultural city.

A range of foods, dresses, colours, and languages make up the image of the town. Europeans, Asians, South Asians, African-Caribbeans, Africans, Kurds, South

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[3] To follow a pattern of confidentiality, the name of the city as well as the institutions and all the participants of the research were changed.

Americans, etc, give an atmosphere of diversity. Despite the miscellany of people that characterize the city, this variety is quite geographically delimited. Anyone who has lived in the city for a while and has travelled through its various neighbourhoods can rapidly figure out that there is a direct relationship between ethnicity and economic condition. The majority of the population that would be placed in the category of diversity - namely the non-white European inhabitants - inhabit the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods[4].

Some neighbourhoods are characteristically white middle class. One example is Bideford. It is salient that a parallel can be traced between the architecture and housing conditions and ethnicity. Directing oneself to the west side of the city one finds roads constituted of large detached houses with spacious, cared-for gardens and fancy curtains in the front windows. Once, discussing with a lecturer about my relativistic point of view in relation to the city being multicultural, and offering as an argument the economic and ethnic segregation which I thought characterized it, the lecturer said that when she lived in Bideford for a period one year, she never saw a black person inhabiting the surroundings. Few other neighbourhoods could follow this example, being distinctive basically in relation to the size and value of the houses.

Other neighbourhoods on the east and north side of the city could be described as predominantly, although not exclusively, Kurd, African-Caribbean, and South Asian. The majority of houses in these neighbourhoods are arranged like endless chains attached one to another. There is no division between the front door and the pavement. It is not only gardens and garages that are missing in the composition of these houses; the backyard is often very small, merely offering space, basically, to hang out wet clothes on the rare sunny days.

Circulation of food can be interpreted as an example of the geographical distribution of groups of people and the value that is related to them and the spaces they inhabit. Ethnic separation is acknowledged and can be represented by the selection of foods displayed in supermarkets. One of my friends once asked me for

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[4] Detailed statistics of the relationship between neighbourhood and ethnicity could not be provided, since the census available for Moulton divides the city into wards. This division cannot be used as a

the recipe for a dish that I often cooked. I told her that the best spice to be used is from a very famous brand of South Asian origin. This brand can be found in any grocery in Milton and Green Park. The former is a predominantly African-Caribbean and the latter a mostly South Asian neighbourhood. I told my friend that she could find the spice in a very well known supermarket chain that has a branch in the neighbourhood where I live, Green Park, and in Bideford, where she resides. Straight away she pointed out that many of the products that can be found in the branch in Green Park could not be found in her neighbourhood. She was right: one week later she asked me for a spice that could replace the one I suggested .

The fact that certain kinds of food that are acknowledged to be typical of certain groups of people do not circulate through the areas that are socially and economically valorized - the so called "good areas" - not being part of the system of representation of the hegemonic groups of the locality – here represented by the white middle class – is an illustration of how, in the present society, these groups are left in the margins of social and economic capital. This is an example of how the geographical space is not merely a delimited material area. It is a social entity, mediated by systems of representation and of social relations: in other words, it is a social space. According to Lefebvre:

> A social space cannot be adequately accounted for either by nature (climate, site) or by its previous history. Nor does the growth of forces of production give rise in any direct causal fashion to a particular space or a particular time. Mediations, and mediators, have to be taken into consideration: the action of groups, factors within knowledge, within ideology, or within the domain of representations. Social space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information. Such 'objects' are thus not only things but also relations. (2003: 77)

There are three major determinants for Moulton's ethnic composition. The first is what I would call intellectual migration; it is related to people who come from abroad to study, since Moulton has two universities. The second is the labour migration that from the 1940s stimulated South Asian and African-Caribbean people to settle in the city. The last cause of the migration to Moulton is the policy of

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reference in this work as it places neighbourhoods with distinctive compositions like ethnicity, level of

dispersal implemented by the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. This policy encouraged the distribution of asylum-seekers around the country on the pretext of reducing the workload of services in London and South East. In the year 2000, Moulton occupied ninth place in the ranking of provincial cities to receive the biggest amount of asylum seekers under the scheme that started in April of the same year (Document 1)[5].

According to the Moulton Refugee Association, the asylum population in the city was increasing at a rate of around 30-50 per week. The population determined to be supported by NASS (National Asylum Support Service) in this city is 1434, corresponding to 0.5% of the total population. This population is expected to be the biggest in the East Midlands area in the future. The number of asylum seekers in November 2001 in Moulton was approximately 1000 and the total number of refugees - ones who have received a positive decision from the Home Office - has not been recorded, but some estimates claim that they number around 200 (Document 1).

Immersing oneself into the field

Making sense of how refugee children experience the life in England must be mediated by the various institutions that make up part of their daily lives. These institutions deal with the hegemonic conception of childhood, reproducing or challenging this, at the same time as they position children in relation to the numerous aspects of their identities. The children have different accounts relating to each institution. As we shall see throughout this thesis, these accounts are not only a reflection of the way institutions position them. Children are active agents of their own realities; they experience the dynamic of the institutions conceptualizing them in relation to their life histories and individual expectations.

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education, unemployment rates and so on, in the same geographical area.
[5] To preserve the confidentiality of the subjects of this research, I found it necessary to change the name of the city and therefore the name of the charity organization which works with refugee people and asylum seekers there. In this way, the bibliographical reference has had to be altered to follow the pattern of discretion.

In Moulton, two main organizations offer activities for the refugee children [6]: Moulton Refugee Association and the schools - in the case of this study, specifically Green Park Primary and Nursery School. These institutions constituted the major sphere of my field. It was through them that I was introduced to, and got to know, some refugee children and their families, had the opportunity to listen to them as well as observe how the children would interact with adults and peers in different settings. Given that each of the aforementioned institutions constituted very particular and different settings, and required particular processes of negotiation for my entry and for the roles I would assume, I have decided to introduce them separately. I will present them in the chronological order the field was constructed.

Presenting Moulton Refugee Association

Moulton Refugee Association (MRA) was the first institution I got in touch with in order to establish a link with the refugee children. It is a charity organization, which has as its main purpose the offer of support regarding any matter related to adjustments in daily life. My decision to work with this institution was guided by the fact that, being a charity organization, it was not closely regulated by the state - unlike the case of the school - and therefore offered an alternative, less institutionalized setting for the children. It is located on one of the main roads of the city. The centrality of the locality is attested by the assortment of establishments that can be found in the street, which is one of the main shopping centres of the city, a variety of international restaurants – Malaysian, Chinese, Indian, Thai, Italian, Spanish – traditional pubs, trendy bars, kebab shops, hairdresser saloons, a music shop and several newsagents. This centrality was one of the determinants to the placement of the institution in the location since it constitutes an easy route for the refugees and asylum seekers who are not very familiar with the city.

The house is set in the middle of a series of buildings that host other organisations and offices. It is a fairly narrow three-storey house made of red bricks, with a not very cared-for garden and a small gate that demarcates its limits from the

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[6] Besides Moulton Refugee Association and the schools, the City Council, together with Moulton Refugee Association, offers recreational activities for the children in a Community Centre every Saturday. This space is referred to as Saturday Club.

pavement. Entering the building through its red door, one immediately faces the stairs. Turning to the right, one can direct oneself to the first office of the institution. During weekday afternoons, this space is extremely busy with people looking for advice, volunteers, employees, the noise of the telephone, fax machine, photocopier; incessant work, and the often urgent cases to be sorted, give the room its atmosphere. The next room on the same side is the kitchen, which serves as a waiting room during the afternoons and a social space during the "Monday Nights"[7]. It is a small space with about six chairs leaning on two opposite walls, a small sink always full of glasses and mugs, a cupboard, a small fridge and a table with a kettle, tea, coffee and sugar. Behind the stairs, next to the back door, a small toilet can be found.

Heading onto the second floor and turning to the left one finds Ben's office (the coordinator of the institution). Next to this is a large room with a big table in the middle. It has a double function: during the afternoons it is where Steve, a retired solicitor who works as a volunteer, attends to people and gives advice; during Monday Nights, it is the locale for English classes. Carrying on up the stairs, one faces a safety-gate: here is the children's area. The space is divided between a painting room and a playroom. The latter is a vivid space occupied by all sorts of games, dolls, children's books, crayons, a white board, a massive cushion in the shape of a banana, a children's table accompanied by a set of four chairs and a small football table, that is often used by children and adults.

Negotiating entry at Moulton Refugee Association

The process of negotiation of my entry into the institution was a complex one, involving compromise with several gatekeepers who occupied different positions in the organization, and the establishment of several roles. The first person I got in touch with was Ben, the coordinator of the institution, an Iranian man who has lived in Moulton for around twenty years. The first impression I had of him, which was confirmed when I got to know him better, was that he was an extremely warm person, being, not only politically, but also deeply personally involved with the cause of

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[7] "Monday Nights" is an institutional space where asylum seekers and refugees can drop in for socialization, or to learn English. The space is extended to their children, offering them a playroom and

refugees. I looked for him during one of the afternoons when he works at the institution. After I explained the purpose and ethics of the thesis he replied that he thought it was very important to have work carried out about refugee children. For him, an academic production *per se* would justify the inclusion of the institution in the research.

I found it important to give some contribution as a volunteer, since I identified myself with the principles of the institution - helping refugees and asylum seekers in a non-bureaucratic manner - and wanted to offer some contribution on a more immediate basis. Therefore, apart from the role of child-carer during Monday Nights, I offered the service of interpreter.

My contact with Ben assured my entry into the institution, but not the inclusion of the organization in the thesis. The organization's committee, mediated by the chairman, William, must approve this purpose. I got in touch with him after I had been volunteering for some months and had built a relationship of trust and friendship among the members of the institution. In contrast to Ben, William's perception of the value of academic research *per se* was fairly sceptical and quite critical. He wanted to be sure about my intention in circulating my findings amongst policy-makers, my disposition in working as a kind of academic adviser and spokesperson for the institution, and my intention to continue my work as a volunteer when the fieldwork was complete.

I agreed with these requests, since I understood them to be a way of utilizing my research in a political and practical way, going beyond the intention of acquisition of an academic title and pursuing knowledge.

Getting into the playroom

The activities in the playroom make up part of "Monday Night", an institutional space for refugees and asylum seekers - mainly those newly arrived and those with language skill difficulties - to socialize and learn English. It is a very

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volunteers to take care for them, and activities outside the institutional space for teenagers. It functions

informal setting and regular volunteers are responsible for each area. Two coordinators alternate every fourth night; they are Mark, a white South African man in his fifties and James, a mixed race English man in his late thirties. Wendy, a Scottish woman in her late forties is responsible for welcoming people in the kitchen/leaving room. She is always very warm, speaking with a sweet and tender voice and trying to get in touch with everyone, making them feel comfortable. An English woman and man are responsible for the English classes.

The children's space did not have anyone officially responsible. As I am going to argue later, this was a consequence of the way that the adults in touch with the children represented the space, regarding it as mostly as a space for self-enjoyment. The adults who were frequently in the playroom were Korlu, a Western African woman in her early thirties, an asylum seeker herself, and Rajesh, a student from Mauritius in his mid-twenties.

Right before my first day as a volunteer at MRA I was somewhat concerned about how to successfully interact with the refugee children. The fact that they come from cultures I have never been in touch with made me wonder if a rapport would be established. This concern is an indication of how, in the very early stages of my research, I made sense of "other" cultures in terms of strangeness. Instead of projecting this experience as a series of new encounters, I was projecting it in terms of impossibility. The imagined impossibility was not merely related to diverse language codes, but also to diverse cultural codes. I would rapidly overcome this ethnocentric attitude, privileging the universal notion of the human being rather than the specificity of the foreigner/stranger.

In this respect, Pierucci (1995) calls our attention to the objectification effected by the social sciences in relation to the concept of difference. This attitude, which dismisses the possibility of the emergence of a universal conception of humanity, ends up stigmatising the minorities. In the children's case, cultural specificities, and even language differences, could be balanced by our determination to take the activity of playing seriously.

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weekly from 6.30pm to 8.30pm.

The children who took part in the playroom activities were not regular visitors. Some used to go every week for a period of two months and then stopped their visits for good; others would attend very sporadically. On many occasions, Korlu, Rajed and myself would spend the whole evening having a chat because no children would turn up. This was partially due to the fact that, since activities at MRA are not compulsory, unlike those at school, the attendance of the children depended on the availability of their families, conferring the institution with a fairly adult-centric character to[8].

Akasma, a nine-year-old Kurdish girl who came with her family from Turkey, was one of the children who would turn up very rarely and inconsistently. She is a very slender child and quite tall for her age. Her face is quite narrow and her hair is light brown in colour and very long. Akasma is an extremely lively and friendly child, always engaging in conversation or playing with people around her. She always has an expression of attention, of somebody who is actively observing her surroundings. It was Akasma who welcomed me in a very warm way on my first day in the playroom:

> Today was my first day as a volunteer in the Moulton Refugee Association. Arriving there, I am greeted by Isadi, the person who introduced me to Ben. He takes me to the kitchen, which works as a living room, and the first thing I am told arriving there is to help myself with tea and coffee. There are some adults to whom I am introduced. The atmosphere is very laid back with some people preparing coffee while others are having a chat, or just waiting to link up with somebody.
>
> Right after that he conducts me to the playroom. There are two adults - Korlu and Rajesh - and three Turkish children, one girl, Akasma, and two boys who are siblings. I am introduced to the group as being a new volunteer. Akasma asks me where I come from. When I reply Brazil, she tells me in a very emphatic way that she loves Ronaldo - a famous football player from the Brazilian team - and that the first time she saw the Brazilian team playing she fell in love. She then went to the whiteboard and drew the Brazilian flag. I could see a kind of fascination of her in relation to me. Later on, one of the adults was taking pictures of people around to whom she asked to take a picture of me. I told her that he could take a picture of us together. After that we went to play football table with the other children.

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[8] The adult-centric character of the institution cannot be attributed solely to this fact. As shall be pointed out in chapter four, the dynamic between adults and children in the playroom also contributed to the adult-centric configuration of the organisation.

Before arriving there I was a bit concerned about how would be my interaction with the kids, since they were from different cultures. I wondered if I would have problems in establishing a link because of diverse cultural codes. Akasma reception and my interaction with the other boys made clear that such concern didn't have any basis in the reality. The empathy was immediate, the interaction was very pleasant and we had a great fun playing together.

(Field Notes – 21/04/03)

My ethnic background facilitated my first contact with the children in MRA. Two stereotypes associated with Brazilian people - the erotic woman and the skilled football player - mediated my interaction with them. Akasma's connection with myself was clearly traversed by my national identity. At the same time that she looked at me with an erotic fascination and stayed by my side all the time, she also recalled Brazilian national symbols like the flag and the football team, stressing her interest in where I come from. In the boys' case, I explicitly took advantage of the stereotype of the Brazilian good footballer to introduce myself to the game they were playing and establish a link. The fact that my ethnicity was valorized in the context of the playroom, linked with my willingness to play, assured a connection with the children on my first day at the playroom. It was also through the act of playing that a communication was established with the other children at the institution, including Cari and Abi, who also actively participated in the research project.

As we shall observe in more detail in the fourth chapter, the other adults' willingness or not to play, as well as the children chosen by them to play with, constituted important moments of reproduction of notions of childhood, positing the refugee children in diverse ways in relation to these discourses. In the fourth chapter I shall examine the ways these concepts are related to the notions of childhood reproduced by another institution, the primary school. On one hand, Moulton Refugee Association is a space where the children have the option to participate or not, just once a week, for a period of two and a half hours. On the other hand, attendance at school is compulsory and it is a locale where the children spend a significant part of their lives: six and a half hours per day, five days a week. Being, as well, closely governed by central and local status apparatuses, this institution locates the children in relation to several concepts of childhood based on determinants such as class, gender, age, colour, country of origin and religion.

Getting to know Green Park

All the children who took part in the research project live in the neighbourhood of Green Park, an area chosen by the government to provide houses for asylum seekers because of the low price of the rent[9]. Kirpal, Deniz, Malaika, Armand and Mariana all study in the same school - Green Park Primary and Nursery School - which is located in the neighbourhood.

The area is situated in the north of Moulton. The social and economic status of the area can be attested by the architecture of the vast majority of the houses: narrow in length, attached to each other, and lacking any garden. A study published in the year 1994 relating to the social needs of the 210 zones of the county, indicates that it figured 14th in the overall scoring (Document 2) [10]. The indicators used to measure social needs were: low income, unemployment, poor housing, poor health, family difficulties, educational difficulties and lack of skills. Although some of the above indicators utilized in measuring social needs could be criticized, others are indicative that this area was, and continues to be, economically and socially disadvantaged[11].

The locality is predominately composed of Asians, with some white English, Irish, Africans, Kurds and, no doubt, people from other parts of the world. The increase of the presence of students seems to be reconfiguring the status of the location. Although quite working-class in its majority, house prices are going up and you can see young professionals moving in.

The school where I carried out my research is surrounded by establishments that, being related to the habits of consumption and faith of the community, are a reflex of its ethnic and economic composition and dynamic: an Asian take-away, a few newsagents run by Asian families, two halal butchers, convenience shops where one can find products aimed at the Asian community (like basmati rice, curry sauces and a wide range of spices that cannot be found in the big supermarket chains), two

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[9] Cari and Abi live in a Council House, since their family already has refugee status.

[10] During the period of this study, Green Park did not have a considerable amount of students or young professionals. Maybe if the same study had been carried out more recently the results would be affected by the new configuration the area's population.

[11] More up to date and complete data related to Green Park is not available.

mosques, two fish and chip shops, an Asian video shop, three cloth shops with products imported from Pakistan, two secondhand shops - one of them very popular - and a vegetarian food shop.

The pub, a leisure space so important to the social life of the majority of the white English population, and commonly alien to the culture of Asian Muslim people, is absent from the scenario. The closest pub is situated at the boundary of Green Park and the next neighbourhood. It seems to be a compromise of what is ethnically allowed and/or necessary (therefore sellable) in the area. Although the pub, this strong English institution avoided by many Asian Muslims, is absent from the area, the vegetarian food shop, which basically caters to white middle-class demand without being in discordance with the dominant religious predicaments of the area, makes up part of the picture of the vicinity.

Green Park is one of the main areas chosen by NASS to provide houses to asylum seekers. NASS, the National Asylum Support System, was introduced through the policy of dispersal implemented by the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which encompasses the responsibility of dispersing and managing support for asylum seekers. The majority of the neighbourhoods chosen by this institution are considered to be socially and economically disadvantaged. In a way, when they arrive in Moulton, the majority of asylum seekers are economically and socially positioned as working class, since it is in working class areas that they are automatically placed. As a consequence, asylum seeker children study in schools that provide for the demand of a working class population. As we shall see in the next chapter, this constitutes a significant fact in socially positioning the refugee children in the context of the school context.

Introducing Green Park Primary and Nursery School

Green Park Primary and Nursery School was chosen to make up part of the research project because it is the school in Moulton that has the greatest number of refugee and asylum seeker children; approximately twenty four. The school is located in an old factory building made of red bricks. It is on a hilly street and is surrounded by terraced houses which have front-doors that face directly onto the pavement. The

entrance is near the playground and, when there, one can see the main building where everyone must report to when entering the institution.

The three classrooms where I carried out my research – years three, four and five - look quite vivid; the walls are decorated with colourful thematic displays, including photos and names of each child in the classroom, numbers, names of the week, several words starting with a particular letter, and so on. The rooms are divided basically into three areas that situate the children in different ways: the carpet and white board, the tables spread out in the middle or at the side of the rooms, and the reading space.

When sitting on the carpet the children must face the teacher and white board, and basically assimilate the information that is directed at them. It is a very individualized moment, since students are not allowed to speak between themselves. When at the tables and doing exercises, the exchange of ideas is sometimes permitted. In both moments, transgressions on the part of the children are common, whether that means parallel conversations, the exchange of ideas, showing small toys or football cards to friends or bothering a colleague. The reading space can be used for leisure, to complete a reading task, or to punish a child who "misbehaves".

The majority of students are predominantly non-white English (80%), principally Pakistani, (55%), while 8% are Indians. The asylum seeker children are immersed in the 17% that is constituted by mixed race, black Africans, African-Caribbeans, Bangladeshi, Kurds, Afghans, Iraqis, Turkish and Eastern Europeans (Document 3). Although gender distribution is not specified, it seems to be quite balanced. Even though the institution is located in a predominantly Asian locality and the vast majority of its pupils are Asian, the teachers are predominantly white, including the head teacher and her temporary replacement during the former's maternity leave. Besides these, there are two black male teachers and one Asian female teacher. The assistant secretary is a white woman and the school secretary is Asian-Kenyan. A white and an Asian woman occupy the position of dinner ladies.

I found it important to specify the ethnic background of the students and the staff, since this position, together with age, gender and class, will inform the

relationship between both groups of people and among the individuals in each group in diverse ways.

Negotiating entry into the school

My entry into the institution was facilitated by the fact that I studied with one of the Governors of the institution. This former lecturer gave references for my work and methods to the head teacher of the school. I also sent a letter to the head teacher explaining the aims of my research, as well as the ethics. An interview was arranged between myself, and two members from the EMAG team, including Frieda, who became my key contact in the school. This constituted another moment of clarification of my intentions and how I expected to conduct the contact with the children. Frieda asked permission from the teachers of years three, four and five to observe their lectures twice a week. It was agreed that besides observing the lectures, I would engage with the children during playtime.

Participant observation took place between May 2003 and November of the same year. I went to the school twice a week and each time spent the whole day at the institution. One of the days – Tuesday - was specifically chosen because it was one of the days of the week when the assembly took place. I found it important to observe this institutional moment because it transmits essential values that make up part of the school's ethos. The staff room was also another privileged space of observation, since it constitutes a setting where the teachers construct/share a common perception of the institution (Pollard 1985).

Intensive observation was carried out in the classroom context, where complex discourses and practices could be examined. In this setting, besides observing and taking notes, I also worked, at times, as an informal assistant teacher, mainly at the tables where refugee children were placed. My observations were based, in the first period, in Sarah's class (year three – Student: Mariana) and Grace's class (years four and five – students: Malaika, Armand and Kirpal); and in the second period in Grace's class (year four – Student: Mariana) and in Frieda's class (year five –

Students: Armand and Kirpal).[12] The subjects of the lectures I observed were quite diverse: mathematics, literature, sciences and art.

The last setting where I carried out participant observation was the playground. Besides observing the children, I often took part in games and conversation. These constituted moments of great enjoyment, when a closer relationship could be established between the children and myself, and when I could observe how some children were positioned by their peer groups.

My first day at school

Having already started my research at Moulton Refugee Association, and having experienced my first inclusion in the dynamic of an institution in England, I felt a lessoning of anxiety in relation to my immersion in the unfamiliar. Nevertheless, the particularities of the primary school institution in Britain imposed upon me a feeling of extreme uneasiness. I felt like I was going through a similar sensation of cultural impact to the one I experienced when I first arrived in England.

Getting to school, just before nine o'clock, I directed myself to Frieda, who presented herself as a very willing aide to help me understand the dynamic of the institution. After speaking a little bit about the institutional ethos and the timetable, as well as about some of the children, she conducted me to the years four and five classroom. In the classroom, apart from the children, there was the teacher, Grace, and a trainee teacher, Mark. I was introduced by Frieda and presented myself by my first name, Liana. Afterwards, I realised that under the eyes of an English school's pattern of adult/children hierarchy I committed a mistake. Later on, Frieda returned to the classroom and addressed me in front of the class as Miss Lewis.

Being referred to as Miss Lewis made me feel uncomfortable in two ways. Firstly, the title Miss points out to a clear generational differentiation. It demarks generational position since none of the children are called Miss or Mr, but only by

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[12] To begin with, and for a few months, I was not aware that Deniz studied at Green Park Primary and Nursery school. Therefore, no observation was completed for her year. I only carried out an interview with her lecturer, Robert.

their first name. I recalled the way my schoolmates and me used to call our primary school teachers: "mora", teacher in Hebrew (I studied almost my whole life in a Jewish school). "Mora" connotes a mixture of respect and affection; it is a term preserved for teachers, not having the general connotation of adulthood that the term/title Miss carries.

My second concern was related to the fact that my surname is English. Since many children at the school are second generation or foreigners, I was afraid that they would identify me as a white English person or as having a white English background. This concern in making my position as a foreigner clear was an obvious attempt to make alliances with the children. I was torn between the desire for relationship with the children and with the hierarchy, the discipline imposed by the school. My solution to the impasse was to start introducing myself as Miss Liana. Getting rid of my surname and maintaining the title Miss, I tried to make a compromise with the formality of the school at the same time as positioning myself as a foreigner.

After my introduction I sat in a small chair beside the children. My special position made very clear my "in-between" status; not sitting in front of the children differentiated me from the teacher and not sitting on the floor facing the teacher distinguished me from the children. Being a new person in the classroom, and occupying a new role for the group, made me feel a bit like an intruder. I was aware that a more functional role would make me feel more comfortable. The role that would be assumed later would be one of a kind of assistant teacher, a role that sometimes pointed to a break in the hierarchical knowledge between adult-children, since in the literacy and IT classes, many times the children had more knowledge than me.

My second feeling of strangeness towards the school dynamic was related to the strict sense of body discipline. Grace constantly reminded the children that they should sit straight, on their bottoms. When called to attention, the children should cross their arms and face Grace with fixed attention. The detailed discipline in posture was accompanied all the time by interventions over any kind of parallel conversation. These rules constituted the reason for my strong feeling of discomfort.

During dinnertime I spent some time in the staffroom in order to make myself visible to staff and introduce myself. Grace, the class teacher, is a white English woman in her late twenties/early thirties. She rarely tried to establish a close relationship with me. Throughout the research project, she would repeat the same dynamic, directing herself to me very occasionally and speaking only about trivial issues. She never discussed any matter related to the refugee children. I often had the feeling that she was guided solely by a very instrumental pedagogy, focusing exclusively on a good management of the lessons. There are several possible explanations for Grace's unwillingness to develop closer interaction with me – including lack of personal empathy - but there is one that I understand to be crucial. Grace's classroom was the space in the institution where I spent most time undertaking my observations. It is very likely that she regarded herself as the main target of evaluation.

On the other hand, since my first day at school, Frieda often approached me, giving me information about the children and asking me about my perception of them. It was very clear that she conferred great value on the research project. Frieda is a white middle-class German woman also in her late twenties/early thirties. She is a very approachable person, often transmitting a peaceful and cheerful expression. Our relationship developed through our common concerns in relation to the refugee children, as well as through a process of mutual sympathy and empathy, since we were both foreigners. With time, our conversations about the children would be accompanied by exchanges about our own experiences of being away from home: the cultural shock when arriving in England, the process of negotiation, the difficulties and achievements in occupying an in-between position and the prospect of returning (to a different) home.

These exchanges with Frieda constituted to me important moments of challenging a rigid perception of white Europeans as being driven exclusively by ethnocentrism. As pointed our earlier, in the academy there was a clear division between some European students and "the rest of the world". With Frieda, the relationship was established among equals, among people who had experiences to exchange rather than to promote distance. Observing, as well, the way she related to the children in a very kind and concerned way, although at times accompanied by

prejudiced perspectives, made me realise how multifaceted racism is. It helped me to understand that this form of power can be expressed unintentionally, and not always through deliberate acts of patronizing.

While in relation to Grace I did not feel any particular sympathy or antipathy, and with Frieda an immediate empathy, with Sarah, the year three teacher, contact became unbearable to me. Sarah is a white middle-class English woman in her mid–forties who often speaks with a rather harsh tone of voice. While I felt uncomfortable about institutional discipline and the strict hierarchy between children and adults from my first day at school, in Sarah's case the feeling of uneasiness would go beyond my perception of the practices actualized by hegemonic culture and subject positions.

Sarah often shouted at the children, not with authority, but with an extreme authoritarian voice, also traversed by impatience and rage[13]. I felt like she did not like the children at all and took a lot of pleasure in patronizing them with unconditional regularity. When she gave them any compliment, it always sounded fake to me. My impression was that she is the kind of teacher the children would remember with horror when they became adults. She also directed herself to me in a very arrogant way, making it explicit that I was not welcome in her classroom. Since after about two months the relationship between her and me did not change, and since observing her lessons was a source of extreme discomfort to me - I often looked at the clock hoping that time would run fast and wishing I could run away from the classroom - I decided to withdraw myself from undertaking any research in her classroom.

Throughout the study I balanced the feeling of uneasiness in relation to the broad institutional discipline with the possibility of establishing a closer and more relaxed communication with the children. This was possible because of my double position as an outsider to the institution and as a foreigner. Besides the fact that I did not occupy any official position in the school, the teachers often asked me if the ethos of Brazilian culture was more relaxed in relation to the English one. I felt as if there was already an expectation that my attitude would be more relaxed.

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[13] During the interview with Mariana, a former student of Sarah's, I asked her about her impressions of this teacher. Mariana, as well as Conceição, her mother, immediately observed how willing Sarah was to shout at the children.

For the rest of dinnertime I spent time in the playground with the children. During my first day at this space I felt somehow out of place since, apart from me, the only adult present at the occasion was the dinner lady, who did not look as though she was really enjoying herself. Nevertheless, some girls from the classroom I observed approached me and an immediate conversation took place. They asked me what I was doing in the school, where I come from, details of Brazil, etc. We exchanged some words in our languages – besides English, the majority of the girls in the school speak Urdu – and afterwards they and other girls invited me to play. As soon as we began a game, other girls and some boys approached me asking who I was. My answer was repeatedly that I was writing a book about children in the school.

Grugeon (1993) observes that in the playground boys and girls tend to play separately. I could detect the same pattern at Green Park. My contacts were frequently established with the girls since the boys often excluded me from any conversation as well from their games. Interaction with them was possible only when I convinced them that, in the same way as every Brazilian, I am a great footballer. When I started playing football with the boys, the girls joined me and we established almost mixed-gender teams. My team would be composed of me, some girls and boys, and the adversary group only of boys.

Because I was taking the game so seriously, being honestly emotional about it and doing my very best to score, one of the pupils at school, Carl - who at the beginning of the research often harassed me saying 'you are mad man' - started greeting me with a very gentle and amused tone of voice by the expression 'crazy lady'. His ways of denominating me – 'mad' and 'crazy' – point out to my act of transgressing a certain normality, which regards adults and children inhabiting clearly distinguished spaces. This normality also states that the playing culture is not in any way related to adults.

I became, in this way, the adult who could play with the children and have a less hierarchized form of communication, a kind of "cool teacher". Although the children never quite understood that I was not a teacher, they comprehended that they could get closer to me, spend more time speaking about themselves and asking about where I come from.

Observing and listening to stories: how the approach to the children, cares and teachers was constructed

Adopting a multi-method approach

Constructing possible narratives around the diverse places occupied by the subjects of a research is a complex undertaking, which gains in complexity through the combination of multiple methods (Johnson et al. 2004). Through this amalgamation it is possible to reach insights into the discourses and practices that determine people's lives (Wright 1998).

The major method utilized was ethnographic. Going "out there", learning *in situ* (Maanen 1995), promotes a deeper immersion into the richness of the quotidian experience. More than a mere description, my intention was to capture the power relations that compose the lives of the various members of the research project; to show how they are socially positioned through the experience of migration with the political and subjective forces that traverse this experience.

This is a genre that Maanen denominates 'critical ethnography'. According to the author, throughout this practice,

> the represented culture is located within a larger historical, political, economic, social, and symbolic context than is said to be recognized by cultural members. This pushes the writer to move beyond traditional ethnographic interests and frameworks when constructing the text. (1995: 9)

Maanen affirms that it is impossible to return to the spirit of 'just do it' ethnography that characterized the early phase of this method. Ethnography is no longer about a detached description of a community and a gathering of accounts of its members. There is nowadays a tangible impossibility in neglecting determinants like the researcher's partiality, theories and institutional constraints.

In this respect, Clifford (1986) points out that the fictional character of ethnography has been accepted. Fiction in this context does not have the connotation of falsehood. Rather, it points to the impossibility of an objective apprehension of reality; our account is always determined by our partialities. Making explicit these partialities, the qualitative approach enables us to go beyond the de-racialised and de-gendered world constructed by researchers guided by privileged localities, namely the white middle class masculine academic world (Mac an Ghaill 1993).

When assuming and negotiating the roles in the sphere of the school, it was possible to observe nuances of the social dynamic that are usually not made explicit by the people immersed in established social positions. In the words of Ely et al.: 'The distinguished characteristic, then, of being a participant observer is that it demands a shift of attention (1998: 44). The immersion in the environment of the school allowed me to perceive how the refugee children were socially positioned by institutional discourses, teachers' practices and peer relations as well as how the children actively responded to these determinants. This engagement was followed by an interview process where I tried to understand how the children and their carers experience their lives under the diasporic condition. The teachers were interviewed in order to promote a deeper comprehension of the dynamics that determine the children's lives in the public context.

Composing the case studies

My intention to understand how refugee children are socially positioned in daily life in England was benefited by the choice of a limited number of participants: seven. This option was a result of my desire to undertake a deep and contextualized study through which I could understand how complex powers determine children's lives. The choice of children was guided by practical and contingent circumstances. At the Moulton Refugee Association, Cari, Abi and Deniz – a child who I met at MRA, but developed a closer connection with at Green Park - were the only children who the parents permitted to take part in the research project.

In the school context, I choose to focus on the year which had the largest amount of refugee children at school. Mariana, an Angolan girl, was the only child

who I specifically chose to work with. This choice was guided by my desire to work with a child who spoke the same language as me and who had historical links with Brazil. Brazil and Angola are former Portuguese colonies and during the colonization of Brazil some Angolans were taken to this country as slave force, making part of the actual configuration of the country.

Contact with the children was followed by approaching their families, with whom I also carried out intensive and contextualised case studies. Through contact with them I tried to draw a rounded picture of their diasporic trajectories, including reasons for migration, social relations in the private context, and the experience of caring in such a specific condition. To capture the power relations that determine the children's lives in the public context I also carried out interviews with the class teachers. From their discourses I tried to understand how the children are positioned in relation to the school's broader dynamic.

My method of approaching my interviewees was through a dialogic communication, which was designed to build a sense of respect and trust. This dialogue enabled not only ideas, but also sentiments that shape self-impressions, to emerge. My choice of this approach for the case studies was guided by my belief that the life experiences of the participants of research cannot be separated from the context around them (Yin 1993). In this way, the interviews were carried out with the intention to understand how those children make sense of their lives, taking them as competent of making meaning out of their surroundings (Connolly 1998b).

When analysing the interviews I set out from the post-structuralist notion that histories, experiences and subjectivities are produced within discourses. In this way, though the interviewees' accounts I seek to understand how the children and their families give meaning to life in diaspora and how the teachers perceive them, paying special attention to contradictions and avoidances (Hollway 1989). My intention was not necessarily to establish a rigid set of generalizations or claim an accurate representativeness. It was rather to valorize the complexity of the data, enabling the emergence of insights that must be contextualised in specific locations (Connolly 1998a, Pollard 1985, Stake 1994).

The quality and complexity of the stories that were gathered with each child was determined by a number of factors: the children's personalities, their willingness in speaking about their experiences and sentiments, the sites where the interviews were carried out, the presence of family members during the interview process, the relationship established between me and them as well as the relationship developed between myself and some members of their families, and cultural and linguistic commonalities. The accounts were gathered mainly by interview and through informal conversations.

I did not choose the ethnicity, gender, religion and country of origin of the children who participated in the research project in any way. With exception of Mariana, they consisted of the children it was possible for me to get in touch with, those who the parents allowed to take part in the study, and those who were, themselves, willing to participate. My choices were solely related to age and the sample. I opted to work with primary school children since there seems to be a lack of research in the social sciences regarding this age group. Connolly (1998b) observes that this scarcity is a result of a general perception of the children of this age group as not being mature enough to construct complex understandings of their life experiences.

My second choice, the sample, was guided by my decision in undertaking a qualitative research, privileging the deepness, complexity and contextualisation of the accounts rather than quantity or seeking for rigid generalization. The several positionalities of the children were divided as follow:

Child	Gender	Age[14]	Country of Origin	Status	Ethnicity	Religion
Kirpal	Male	9	Afghanistan	Asylum seeker	Sikh	Sikh
Deniz	Female	11	Turkey (Istanbul)	Asylum seeker	Kurd	Alevi
Cari	Female	8	Turkey (Kurdistan)	Refugee	Kurd	Muslim
Abi	Male	11	Turkey (Kurdistan)	Refugee	Kurd	Muslim
Armand	Male	9	Democratic Republic of Congo	Asylum seeker	Black	Christian
Mariana	Female	8	Angola (Cabinda)	Asylum seeker	Black	Christian
Malaika	Female	9	Zimbabwe	Asylum seeker	Black	Christian

The interviews carried out with the children - as well as the parents and teachers - were semi-structured. Nevertheless, during the process other questions emerged as a result of the responses the participants offered me. Since I was dealing with issues of a specific kind of migration - which implies loss, trauma and experience of being othered - I decided to start the interview with the children by general questions related to the school, followed by peer relations, life in the household and reasons for migration from/life in the home country[15].

> One can find out about something in a number of different ways. However, in any kind of social research, knowing what questions to ask and the ways in which it is best to ask them, as well as knowing which questions *not* to ask and how *not* to ask them, is recognized as one of the keys to a successful research outcome. Indeed, acknowledgement of these and other issues of

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[14] Some of the children changed age throughout the research, since I spent several months during the fieldwork. The ages displayed in the table are related to the time the interviews were undertaken.
[15] See Appendix 1, page 262.

communication is now the cornerstone of reflexive research practice within many, if not all, social science disciplines. (Christensen and James 2000: 1)

The invitation for the children to take part of the interview was the moment where a set of ethical compromises, as well as clarification of the purposes of the thesis, took place. I told them I was writing a book about the experiences of children who come from other countries, and according to their desire, they could take part in what I was writing. Power relations were taken into account at this moment, because of the hierarchical relation between adults and children in our society (Fine and Sandstrom 1998, Raghuram, Madge & Skelton 1998). I pointed out that there was no obligation to take part in the process; rather, they were doing me a favour.

The issue of my place in the school, as well as confidentiality, were explained. I made it clear that I was not a teacher at the school, a role the majority of the children assumed I occupied. I explained I was taking part in the routine of the institution because I wanted to know about the children. Not being a teacher, I reiterated that no kind of evaluation would take place. It was not my purpose either to evaluate or to judge them. I let them know that strict confidentiality would operate in the book – they or I would change their names and their carers' names. Confidentiality would also operate in the school; the secrecy of the information would involve its concealment from this institution. If they agreed to take part in the process, they were not obliged to respond to any question they did not feel willing to.

During the interview process, the children (and their carers) shared very personal and sensitive accounts. I attribute this disclosure to the fact that throughout my contact with them I never utilized any authoritarian attitude – I was the "cool teacher", interacting with them in the playground - never promoted any sort of differentiation, and always presented myself as very open to listen to their accounts. As we shall observe in chapter four, at school there is a difficulty on the part of the teachers in listening to the painful stories that make up part of these children's lives. On the other hand, many families try to protect children from the acknowledgement of the real causes of their exile, since they themselves also face difficulties in speaking about and listening to feelings related to this painful trajectory. Therefore, refugee children do not seem to have enough space to speak about their issues.

I recall that during the very painful years of my childhood I always kept myself quiet in relation to the difficulties faced by my family. I understood that my parents could not cope successfully with their own issues; therefore I did not make explicit to them how these matters were affecting me. This painful choice, made in a very early phase of my life, has always reminded me that children are not immune to the difficulties surrounding them. Instead, some children do not speak about difficult matters because they do not have the space. Bearing this in mind, I suppose the children felt that I was open and willing to listening to their trajectories.

All the questions were constructed in an open way without making direct inference to specific experiences. In this way, I tried to diminish the possibilities of being intrusive, a feeling that accompanied me on many occasions. This feeling only disappeared when it was clear for me that the child was utilizing this space as an opportunity to be heard. This happened in a very clear way with Kirpal; I felt that he made use of this moment to express, to share the emotions that the experience of diaspora has meant for him. I had the same feeling, although not as intense and continuous as in Kirpal case's, when I listened to the other children, with exception of Malaika.

Malaika was the child who offered most resistance in relation to the sharing of her experiences and perceptions. Her responses to the interview were, several times, monosyllabic. I understand this attitude as a reflex of her reserved personality, and as a decision not to share very particular issues with a person outside her intimate circle. Another factor that contributed to her reserve was my change of attitude towards her during the field process. As will be made clear in chapter three, at the beginning of my trajectory at school I was quite protective towards her, treating her like a much younger child. After the summer break I became aware of my attitude of victimizing her and started to treat her in a similar way to how I treated the other children. Her reaction was a complete retreat from acknowledging my presence and establishing any kind of communication with me.

The settings and the people who were present at the interviews also determined what could and should be said. The interviews with Armand, Kirpal, and Malaika were processed at the school, since that was the only space I was in touch

with them. The negotiation of a more neutral location, which would be free from institutional constraints, was not possible since children in general are under the protection of adult authority. I felt that, particularly in Armand's case, the fact that the interview was carried out in the EMAG room – an institutional space designed to assist foreign children and those from so-called "ethnic minorities" – had as a result some safeguard in relation to a more clear opposition to the school's dynamic. In relation to Deniz, I chose the school as a setting since a previous attempt to conduct the interview in her house was undermined by her mother's necessity of speaking about her own experiences.

Cari and Abi's interview took place in my house. This space was chosen by Roghat, their uncle, who was assuming the role of interpreter. He understood that their house was not suitable at the time because their parents were going through a lot of stress. The fact that Roghat has been playing a very important role in their lives since their arrival in England – helping their nuclear family to settle down, helping both of them with the learning of the language, school tasks, emotional issues and offering a role model of a very successful person in the diaspora – seems to have exercised some influence in the children's stress in relation to the aspirations in the new country.

Mariana's interview was undertaken at her house. I sensed that her mother, Conceição, felt suspicious in relation to the questions I could ask her. Conceição was, at that time going through the painful process of appealing against a decision of the Home Office of deportation. This experience, linked to the fact that she was still only at the end of her first year in the country, without speaking the language, having a doubtful relationship of trust with the solicitor who was taking care of her asylum claim and feeling out of control of her life as well as her children, made her fairly suspicious of people around her. At the end of the interview with Mariana she said, surprised, 'Was only that?' as if she was expecting me to ask questions of which she could have disapproved. Because of her presence at the location of the interview, Mariana revealed only what was agreed by her family she could be aware of.

My intention to conduct an interview with at least one of the carers of the children was unsuccessful. Frieda, one of the participants of the EMAG team,

contacted the majority of the children's carers at the school. Malaika's older sister and Armand's aunt did not want to take part. I understand their refusal as a sensible decision of not disclosing important aspect of their lives to a stranger. Aasem, Deniz's mother, agreed to take part and clearly utilized this space as a moment of sharing her painful trajectory.

Conceição, Mariana's mother, did not want to be interviewed because, according to her own words, she did 'not want to remember all the painful past'. In her case, informal conversations and leisure times with her and her children offered me accounts/perceptions that composed a fairly complex scenario of Mariana's life. In relation to Abi and Cari's parents, Roghat suggested it would be better not to include them, since they were experiencing a considerable amount of distress due to family problems. Again, the informal contact, and the establishment of friendship between Roghat and me throughout the research process, provided me with some of the answers I was searching for.

The interview with Ajeet[16], Kirpal's mother, took place at the school. Since Ajeet does not communicate fluently in English, one of the teachers who speaks the same language as her and who has been giving her some support in relation to language and practical matters assumed the role of interpreter. There is a possibility that the presence of this member of the school during the interview prevented her from assuming a more critical posture in relation to the institution.

I took the option to reproduce selected parts of the interviews with fidelity, since I understand that the diverse ways people express themselves are identitarian characteristics based on specificities like country of origin, gender, age and social class and so on. Any intervention in these forms of expression would deny where the interviewees come from, imposing on their speeches an acceptable model of communication that is usually ethnic – white – and socially – middle class - oriented. Nevertheless, some transcribed expressions, which do not follow classical English ways of speaking, can be a result of my difficulty in understanding what was said since neither me nor the children, their carers and Frieda are native English speakers.

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[16] See Appendix 2, page 264.

This is also a consequence of the fact that I opted to transcribe the interviews myself. I believe that in doing so I could be more precise in relation to emotions, contradictions and resistances that are constitutive of the ways people narrate their stories.

The teachers chosen to be interviewed[17] were Frieda, Grace, and Robert, a mid-fifties white English man, responsible for year seven and Deniz's teacher. At the end of the analysis of the data, I sent Frieda my accounts of the observation of the school and we had three meetings that allowed closer discussion in relation to our assumptions[18]. These constituted a moment where we could exchange some standpoints and where Frieda had the opportunity to see the institution from another perspective. Although at many times she disagreed with my interpretations, at some points she observed that the analysis made her think in a different way. Some results of these dialogues are presented throughout the thesis mainly in the form of footnotes.

In relation to the other institution where I carried out research, Moulton Refugee Association, the feedback of my perceptions of the institutional dynamic was discussed throughout the fieldwork with coordinators and volunteers. To the main participants of the research - the children - the return was made through the transformation of each interview into a small book, which I returned to the ones I could get in touch with. I hope that the interviews will constitute a partial archive, a written memory, maybe to be appropriated in the future, as a way of recounting and/redimentioning their experiences.

Conclusion

The option of utilizing a qualitative methodology allowed me to develop a deep and complex approach to understanding of the lives of some refugee children. The main limit of working with contextualized case-studies was related to the

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[17] See Appendix 3, page 265.
[18] Frieda was the only person in the school chosen to discuss the findings because I understood that she was one of the professionals at school most committed to the refugee children. Another reason was the fact that she was the professional in the institution with whom I developed a closer relationship.

impossibility of establishing a greater set of generalizations. Nevertheless, the subtleness that was reached through this practice produced insights into how to deal with complexities that cannot be translated into percentages. It also helped me to comprehend how diverse powers operate on daily basis, promoting a clearer understanding of people's relationships.

Fundamental to this journey was the exposure of my very own partialities and negotiations with other subjectivities. Making my origins and relationships explicit gives the reader an opportunity to understand, in a lucid way, my political project. And it was from the complexities and limits of these meetings that a possible, rather than an absolute, narrative emerged.

3. Racism Constituting

Experiences and Identities

As we observed in the first chapter, an increase in the migration of refuges from the 1980s has challenged the hegemony of previous modes of racialization based solely on the signifier of colour. Racism has become pluralized through the reappearance of ethnic and cultural differentiation (Hall 2003a, Solomos and Back 1996). This form of discrimination makes up a part of the lives of refugee children in England, positioning them as different in relation to the various sectors of their social sphere. It gives them the materials to build up relationships with the people surrounding them.

Racism does not operate in a uniform way. Like any type of discourse and social interaction, it is multifaceted in its expression as well as in the responses given by those who experience it (Connolly 1998a, 1998b, Gilroy 1993 Troyna and Hatcher 1992). In the same way as all dominant discourses, it does not exist in isolation; it operates in the social body by overlapping, articulating and contradicting several social positions, namely gender, religion, age, language and class (Brah 1996, Connolly 1998a, 1998b, Gilroy 2003, Hall 2003b, Mac an Ghaill 1999). According to Connolly:

> Racism is not simply a unified and unproblematic set of beliefs and practices but is inherently contradictory and contingent and can only be understood in terms of how it relates to other systems of inequality including class, gender and sexuality. (1998a: 134)

As such, racism ensures that the experience of being a refugee child cannot be understood in a uniform way. It is also pluralized through the diverse ways in which this form of power interacts with the children's social environment. When analysing the determinants of the conditions of communities and their children, Rattansi (2003) calls attention to the necessity of connecting issues of racism with the diverse systems of inequalities that exist, in order to avoid essentialism. He suggests that such a frame of reference provides a more complex reading of the social interactions since it recognises the numerous layers that compose the discourses and practices of racism:

> This type of analytical framework posits a range of views from strong versions of racism to weak versions of ethnocentrism. It has a number of advantages. It recognizes that most discourses, and especially individuals, are likely to express a complex combination of strong and weak racism and ethnocentrism (and nationalism), and that these may change in emphasis in different

historical institutional and interpersonal contexts. It has a theoretical structure which allows for the possibility of a variety of 'racisms', depending upon how various elements of 'race', ethnicity and nationality are combined, how they are articulated with gender and class, and how they are related to theories in the natural and social sciences and notions in popular cultures and common sense. Also, by restricting itself to particular discourses, specific practices of discrimination, and particular unequal or discriminatory outcomes (although bearing in mind that discourses themselves involve acts or practices of expression). (2003: 36)

The interaction of such locations demands new performances and notions of identity. The building and rebuilding of identity - this ability that we have for remaking and re imagining ourselves - is, in the refugee children's case, intrinsically related to the experience of migration, to the continuity of the life in a new country (Rutter 2001b) and how they are going to be confronted by the several discourses and practices related to them. There will emerge, therefore, a complex net of positions and experiences such as race, class, gender, language, religion, color and foreignness, operating in diverse ways in relation to the children.

Although some patterns of interaction could be observed in relation to the experience of racism suffered by the children, it was not my intention to establish a rigid set of generalisations. What I could conclude from the observation and interviews carried out with the children and people surrounding them is the existence of multiple possibilities of experiencing and dealing with racism, as well as relationships between the discourses that generate such experiences and those at a national level. As I will go on to exemplify, such relationships are not constituted on the sole basis of consensus, but many times by contradictions, in relation to the ideal notion of childhood.

'Since we arrived in England we are becoming white'[1]. The (im) possibilities of whitening for black refugee children

Although the complex ways racism operates have been giving space to new discursive strategies that takes ethnicity and culture as means of "othering" (Solomos

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[1] This title was taken from a discussion with Mariana during one of the art groups.

and Back 1996), the issue of colour has not been displaced. Since the germinal times of colonialism, up to the so-called "post-colonial" era, it continues to exist, operating as a differentiating signifier that transforms peoples in races. The binary dynamic black/white constitutes a complex battlefield, since its performance is not actualised solely outside, where black and white divisions are made explicit through discriminatory social interactions. It operates inside, given that whiteness became desirable for peoples of both colours.

In the book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Frantz Fanon analyses the constitution of the subjectivity of the black man as a result of the colonial encounter. Concluding that as a consequence of the colonial violence whiteness became the norm, he states that:

> The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white. Long ago the black man admitted the unarguable superiority of the white man, and all his efforts are aimed at achieving a white existence. (1986: 228)

According to the author, there is an impossibility of ontology *per se* of the blackness of the black man since it is always constituted in relation to the white man. The black man no longer exists alone; his action is always directed to the other. It is through this movement towards the white man that the colonised man searches for self-recognition.

Although Fanon contextualises his work, warning us that he is solely referring to the Antillean man, several times throughout his book he recalls the possibility of universalization. Even though his generalisation is extremely insightful and carries the important common pattern of internalisation of the white norm, it does not allow space for a more complex set of interactions, one that is multiplied by the several social positions that interrelate with the blackness; in other words, the various possibilities of being black.

One of the possibilities ignored by Fanon is gender difference. Homi Bhabha calls our attention to this lapse when, in the foreword of the book, he points out that Fanon's use of the category man 'usually connotes a phenomenological quality of

humanness, inclusive of man and woman and, for that very reason, ignores the question of gender difference' (1986: xxvi). I would observe at this point that Fanon's intention to produce a phenomenology of the human kind does not only exclude the gender category legitimising the male as the norm; it is also generationally oriented. I propose that the male adult model has to be decentred to allow the recognition and analysis of other interplays of unequal relations.

Through immersion into the white world, the black children conceptualise blackness and whiteness in a very particular and positional way. The construction of their racial identity is confronted with the white norm, cross cut by gender, family discourses, country of origin and the desire – and its absence – of identification with the dominant culture. It is these interconnected narratives and experiences that this section of the chapter addresses.

Family desire and cultural heritage

Mariana is an eight-year-old girl who came to England from Angola with her mother and two teenage sisters in the year 2002. She originates from Cabinda, a former protectorate of Portugal which is very rich in petroleum. In the year 1975 troops from Angola invaded the territory, annexing it their construction of the Angolan national state. Both of Mariana's parents were members of FLEC (Front of Liberation of Cabinda's Enclave), a political group which fights for the region's independence. Cabinda has had its minerals exploited by multinationals while the majority of the population lives in a condition of extreme poverty (UNPO 2005).

Mariana's father was sent to jail and assassinated by the Angolan government. Her mother, Conceição, was also sent to jail and tortured, but, being left alive and set free, managed to flee the country together with Mariana and her two teenage sisters. I met Mariana and her mother in the school when they were being introduced to the institution. From that moment we developed a relationship based on friendship, where our experiences of life abroad were often exchanged. Mariana is a very lively child, extremely charismatic and quite self-confident. She is slightly overweight, has a dark brown skin, long curly hair, often fashioned as braids, large eyes and an expressive smile with dimple on each cheek. When she walks she often gives the impression of

showing off. She engages with people around her very easily, being a very pleasant child to be in contact with.

During the Art Club[2], Mariana makes a drawing of three girls and one woman as white with blond hair. Suspicious that she is representing her nuclear family, I ask her who they are and she confirms my prediction. I point out that the people in the drawing are white, to which she replies: 'When we were in Angola we were morena[3], but since we've arrived in England we are becoming white.' In this respect Bhabha observes that

> the black child turns away from himself, his race, in his total identification with the positivity of whiteness which is at once colour and non colour. In the act of disavowal and fixation the colonial subject is returned to the narcissism and the Imaginary and its identification of an ideal ego that is white and whole. (...) looking/hearing/reading as sites of subjectification in colonial discourse are evidence of the importance of the visual and auditory imaginary for the *histories* of society. (2002: 76)

Mariana's denial of her blackness – 'when we were in Angola we were morena' - can be interpreted in two ways. Since arriving in England she realises that her colour is out of order; she denies that she has ever been black. In this way, the desire to be white is uniquely attributed to the experience of migration. Another possibility is that the process of whitening has started back in Angola, becoming more dramatic on the way to completion in England. At this point I want to bring in her family's narrative, since in her discourse she points out collectivity - 'we are becoming white' - in referring to her whole nuclear family.

In informal conversations with her family, during afternoons we spent together enjoying ourselves, we tried to build up some identification between our cultures, a process very common among foreigners as a way of constructing relationships

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[2] The Art Club was an initiative taken by the Local Education Authority with the purpose of providing a space for the refugee children to express themselves. What became apparent for me is that the facilitator responsibly for such activity focused more on the expression of artistic and recreational skills than with emotional issues. Such perception about the purpose of the space was later confirmed by Frieda.

[3] Portuguese word for white people with brown skin. It is interesting to observe at this point the positional character of colour. While in Brazil and Angola morena is characterized as a white colour, in England it is going to be categorised in diverse ways. For instance, my English black friends characterise my skin colour as mixed race, while in Brazil I am seen as white/morena.

through commonalities. While I was trying to make sense of Brazilian culture in terms of our heritage in relation to Africa[4], I ask Conceição what identification they have with Portuguese people - the people who colonised the region where she comes from - and Brazilian people. She says that they do not have any identification with Portuguese people since they do not have the Portuguese blood running in their veins[5]. On the other hand she says, referring to Brazilian people, that we have their blood running in our veins and in a contradictory way she states: 'We came from you'. Surprised, I reply that it is the opposite: we are the ones who came from them.

What I could not make sense of at that moment was the fact that she was speaking about the present situation. She and her two teenager daughters were telling me how they know how to dance samba (a famous Brazilian dance), how in Angola they buy clothes imported from Brazil and, most importantly, how they often watch Brazilian soap operas.[6] Brazilian soap operas not only represent, but reproduce without challenging, the result of a society that has the colonial condition as its heritage; a racially stratified social structure with black people occupying its lowest layers.

Similar to the quotidian life, the satellites emit images of black people on the margins. With rare exceptions they are the submissive housekeepers, the manual workers, the criminals, the children who live in the streets, the uneducated, the ones who live in the shanty towns or are locked up in jail, and so on. White people are the ones who interpret the desirable models. They live in nice houses, have highly skilled jobs, they are the patrons, the romantic couples, the main characters. Even though

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[4] During the colonization of Brazil, people from the western and southwestern regions of Africa were brought by Portuguese people to work as slave force. The city where I come from was one of the first and most important ports of entry of African people. Therefore, the culture there, as in other parts of the country, has a very strong African heritage.

[5] Such speech is going to be contradicted later by her account of identification with the settlers during her childhood.

[6] At another moment, when speaking with another Angolan woman, she tells me that in England she listens to 'Cidade Alerta' (Alert City), a Brazilian television program based on a police/ investigative style drama, which describes crimes that occur daily in Brazilian bigger cities. It is interesting to point out that it is common practice among foreigners to have television connection with the countries of origin. It seems that at the present moment, with Brazil being localized as a new power in relation to Angola and possibly with another African countries as well as Portugal, it is happening a reconfiguration of the process of economic and cultural colonization. Regarding the colonial condition, Leela Ghandhi's observes that 'the colonised's predicament is, at least partly, shaped and troubled by the compulsion to return a voyeuristic gaze upon Europe.' (1998: 11). At the present time however, even on reaching Europe, some Angolans direct the gaze to Brazil.

they also play negative roles, such villains exist to operate in the dynamic of the white world. White people are the centre and the very end of the narrative. In short, they are the models of identification.

All the actresses and actors Conceição and her daughters refer to are white. If that is the Brazil they know, is that the Brazil Conceição was referring to when she stated 'we come from you'? The lapse of the mother is captured by Mariana and appropriated as a transitional mask – in Angola they were morenas - but now that they have reached the metropolis[7], they are becoming white.

An intricate net of family history and desire allied to the process of migration collaborates in Mariana's whitening process; and the body is the very locus of the transformation of her subjectivity. Speaking about the care of the body and about concern with appearance, Conceição recalls her childhood making sense of her body through a colonial situation that is also crosscut by adult authority. She relates, with a tender and nostalgic expression, that during her primary-school years, the teacher, who was a Portuguese woman, a settler – at that time Cabinda was a formal colony of Portugal - was often telling the girls that a woman should always take good care of her nails and hair. Referring to this teacher as 'senhora' – the Portuguese word for female master – Conceição says that she tries to transmit her idea to her daughters.

Following the teacher's instructions and taking care of the body, Conceição internalizes the master's discipline, identifying with her and transforming her demands into a way of life that must be transmitted to the new generation. To paraphrase Fanon, for the black woman there is only one destiny and it is white. Following the mother's history, Mariana's identification with the white world is processed through her body, with the school as a site of consummation. But such a process is intimately linked to the experience of migration and to Conceição's expectations in relation to the new life.

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[7] Although historically England has not formally colonised Angola, I consider the dynamic established between the people of both countries as a colonial encounter, since a superior value is inexorably attributed to the population of the former.

When I first met Conceição, she had been in the country for about six months without have been going through the painful and uncertain process required by refugee status. At that time, England was the land of possibilities. When in Angola, her elder daughters did not go to school for four years and Mariana has never attended one. Now the older children are studying, and in her words, 'even having singing classes'. One of her daughters said that maybe she could become a famous singer in the future[8]. Conceição says she would probably like to study as well, that maybe she could go to university and become a doctor, something she always dreamed of being. The idea of change of perspective is clear: 'I want to do in this country what I've never had the opportunity to do in mine'.

Conceição evokes the projection of her desire in relation to Mariana when she says that her daughter wants to become a doctor as well, and that this aspiration is probably due to the fact that this is the profession she herself wants to pursue. She points out again that England received herself and her daughters and is giving them opportunities that they could not have in their own country. According to her, the way of responding to the country's benevolence is through a movement of adaptation: 'I have to adapt myself to the new country'.

The body that disciplines is the body I want to have

Body, migration, and the mother's expectations interconnect to compose Mariana's process of whitening, and here this process will be examined in the context of the school. In such an institution, the norm is the disciplined body. Teachers constantly use an authoritarian voice to remind the children how they are supposed to behave while sitting on the carpet: always directing their gaze at the teacher; keeping arms crossed, the back straight, the 'bum' leaning against the floor; not establishing any kind of parallel conversation or commentary. The atmosphere is of absolute control and formality. When I ask Mariana if there is anything at school she finds difficult or uncomfortable she answers:

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[8] This initial optimistic perception of life in England was soon transformed by racial harassment experienced by the girls in the school context. It was also accompanied by the harsh response of the Home Office towards their claim of asylum, which stated that the reasons they offered for the claim were untruthful.

M: What I don't feel comfortable with is for me to stay, is for me to stay all the time like that. Is to stay all the time sitting down. Because the teacher is mak, is mak, is all the time making in the board.

L: So you think it is boring sitting down all the time?

M: Yes. Is boring. But when it is on the chair it isn't boring.

L: So why do you think it is boring to stay on the carpet and not on the chair? What is the difference?

M: The difference is that we always stay in there like that. We are always waiting, always waiting [at this moment she crosses her arms]. Always waiting, always waiting, always waiting [with an emphatic tone]. And I stay there looking at the teacher. The teacher always talking, always talking. And after, when we sit on the table, it is a bit tiring, but we are writing. And later on we can make everything we want.

L: Ah, I see. What you find boring is to stay still?

M: To stay like that [she makes a very serious expression, keeping the spine straight and the arms crossed; the posture the teachers impose on them].

At the same time as being clear about the discomfort in relation to the school's discipline, Mariana is extremely conformist in relation to such demands. During one of the first observations of Sarah's lectures – Sarah was Mariana's first teacher - I noticed that she was the most disciplined child. Although I felt fairly uneasy in the setting and realised that some children had apprehensive expressions, Mariana remained focused on the teacher's demand, responding with a serious face and immobile body.

I felt extremely suffocated in the classroom. The atmosphere was very oppressive and the demand of discipline higher in relation to Grace's lectures. I felt like Mariana wanted to conform to the setting like her mother wants in relation to England. When the children were asked to be ready, Sarah observed that Mariana was the most well behaved child, facing the front and putting the finger on her lips, being in complete silence.

(Field Notes – 27/06/03)

Her body is the docile body described by Foucault's obsession in deconstructing the disciplinarian society. In the book *Discipline and Punish* (1991) he argues that during the eighteenth century the body became the privileged site of the exercise of power. What is the novelty of such phase if, according to Foucault, in

every society the body is supposed to be located under the constraint of strict powers?

> To begin with, there was the scale of the control: it was a question not of treating the body *en masse*, 'wholesale', as if it were an indissociable unity, but of working it 'retail', individually; of exercising upon it a subtle coercion, of obtaining holds upon it at the level of the mechanism itself – movements, gestures, attitudes, rapidity: an infinitesimal power over the active body. Then there was the object of the control: it was not or was no longer the signifying elements of behaviour or the language of the body, but the economy, the efficiency of movements, their internal organization; constraint bears upon the forces rather than upon the signs; the only truly important ceremony is that of exercise. Lastly, there is the modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space, movement. (Foucault 1991: 136 - 137)

Foucault refers to the disciplinarian power as a force that cannot be localised or possessed by any individual or group. Instead, it works as a chain, circulating, traversing everyone in the social body (1980, 1991). Even if power acts on people in an asymmetric way, with some groups being especially exploited and dominated by its workings, nobody is free from its subjugation; power relations permeate all the levels of quotidian life (Hall 2003c). Commenting on the Foucauldian conception of power, Gandhi speaks about its 'claustrophobic omnipresence' (1998: 14).

Although I agree with Foucault in relation to the pervasive character of power, I would suggest it must be localised since it establishes hierarchies positioning people, reinforcing roles and propagating inequalities. The picture of the classroom is a representation of such inequalities: a white teacher sitting on a chair directing her gaze upon ("looking down on") mostly non white children who are sitting on the carpet (in a physical and symbolic lower position in relation to the teacher), ordering them about how their bodies should look.

Similar to her mother, Mariana follows precisely the commands of the white body. It is a desirable body, a body to be identified with. During the interview process, she was the only child who qualified the teacher in terms of the body. When asked what she thought about Grace, she first replied 'Beautiful'. The classroom, the privileged location of intellectual production and cultural assimilation is one of the sites where Mariana performs her acknowledgement of white supremacy. The

discipline is internalised not only through the manifestation of a conformed body, but also by the surveillance of the bodies of other children, through the identification with the role of the teacher:

> During Grace's lecture, Mariana was sitting very quietly. When she got into the classroom she didn't speak to me. It seems that any expression of affectivity is left outside; she behaves in a much-disciplined way. She even disciplines other children bossing around, giving them their notebooks, and directing her to them with a very serious expression. She tells a white friend of hers to make silence during the exercise.
>
> Grace reminds the children that in the day before she asked them to think about a work they would like to do in the classroom. 'Which job would you like to have as a monitor of the class?' She writes on the whiteboard the first task: "trays on the table". Mariana puts her hand up straight away. She seems to be very keen on taking part of the activities of the school and to please and even internalise and reproduce the authority.

(Field Notes – 10/09/03)

In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1972), Paulo Freire warns us about the identification of the oppressed in relation to the oppressor:

> at a certain point in their existential experience the oppressed feel an irresistible attraction towards the oppressor and his way of life. Sharing his way of life becomes an overpowering aspiration. In their alienation, the oppressed want at any cost to resemble the oppressor, to imitate him, to follow him. (1972: 38)

A way of life is predominantly actualised and expressed through the body, which is, in its turn, traversed by the culture materialising its rituals. In the classroom, Mariana's usual expression of affection towards me throughout a body communication - touching me, directing her gaze at me while smiling - is substituted by indifference. Her body is becoming the individualized body, a body disassociated and distant from other bodies.

In addition, her eyes wonder around; they have no mercy toward other children. Her willingness in exercising the role of monitor is interpreted as a searching for approval by the white woman connected to a desire of occupying a powerful position mediated by the institutional setting. Fanon (1986) reminds us that the action

of the colonized is always directed to the other. Such movement is not exercised as a means of communication, but as a search for self-validation through approval. In order to receive the endorsement of the white woman's gaze, Mariana has to become like her. Or, in order to become like her, Mariana searches for the unconditional approval of the white woman's gaze. Either way, the result is the same: she is becoming white.

Mariana's monitoring gaze is reinforced by the institutional approach of positioning the children, not only as the aim of surveillance, but at the same time as its perpetuator. The children who internalize discipline should apply it to their mates. In this way, the surveillance not only becomes more effective through its application where the teacher's gaze cannot reach, it also positions some children as models to be followed:

> When Grace asks the children to 'be ready' she says that are always the same children who behave well, Aamir and Mariana. Mariana looks at the other children smiling proud of herself.

> (Field Notes – 05/11/03)

> Mariana puts her hand up and tells Grace that two girls in front of her are speaking. Afterwards she repeats the same action, informing Grace that two boys are talking. At both times Grace thanks her and tells the kids off.

> (Field Notes – 17/09/03)

Wright points out that in the classroom context, teachers have a tendency to typify students based on the notion of an ideal pupil. Such notion

> is a construction which is drawn primarily from the lifestyle and culture of the teacher concerned. (...) The ideal pupil for teachers is likely to be a child who acts in ways which are supportive of teachers' interest-at-hand, who enables them to cope and so on.' (1992: 28)

Being a model means an unconditional conformism in relation to a set of values and expectations. It is attending to the demands of the other through the internalization of its assertions. Mariana's compromise with the predominately white new country is going to be completed through the acceptance of a new name.

When Mariana became Mary

During the classroom observation I notice that the teacher and children are anglicising Mariana's name by calling her Mary. I ask her how come people are calling her by that name, she responds that in the first day at school the teacher asked her what she would like to be called, Mari (the short name for Mariana, that her family and I use to refer to her) or Mary. She responded Mary. I ask her why she made such a choice and she replies that the teacher and the students would not 'understand' her name.

A closer look at the interview transcript reveals a more intricate process of assimilation through the emergence of her double consciousness:

L: There is something I am curious about. Why at school people call you Mary?

She responds recalling her own choice, implicating herself as an agent regarding the alliances that are established in the new country:

M: Because I prefer the name Mary.

L: And how did it start the idea of calling you by Mary?

M: My teacher Miss Stuart [Sarah] asked me 'Do you want to be called by Mary or Mariana?' [both names spoken with English pronunciation]. Then I said 'Mary'. She said 'That's fine, we are going to call you Mary. So we will keep it like that, that's fine, it is Mary'. Then one day, my teacher Miss Bell [Grace] saw at the Register that my name is Mariana [spoken with English pronunciation]. So she said, 'Is it your name Mariana [English pronunciation]. Is it your name Mary? Do you want me to call you Mariana [English pronunciation]? I said 'Yes'. Everybody started calling me Mariana [English pronunciation]. But I was not liking it very much.

Although Mariana studies in a multiethnic school where children are named via several linguistic backgrounds, she seems to understand her name as being out of place, since she affirms that neither the teacher nor the students would understand it. Being outside the possibility of intelligibility of people surrounding her, at the same time as being offered an English name, Mariana seems to see herself as the *estrangeira/estranha*. In Portuguese the word *estrangeira* (foreigner) clearly derives

from *estranha* (stranger). In this way, Mariana understands her name and herself as strangers since they are foreigners.

Sarah offers Mariana two possibilities of being named that are going to locate her discursively in relation to the cultural politics of the new country. Being Mary - adopting a new name, an English one - demarcates a rupture with her past. Africa is erased from her identity in favour of a total assimilation. Language, in this context, is clearly utilised as a tool of deculturalization (Mac an Ghaill 1988). The second option, her name spoken with an English pronunciation, points not to a denial of her past, but to a process of 'redimensioning', demonstrating what can emerge in the new context.

L: You prefer Mary? (English version).

M: Um hum.

L: So why didn't you say that your name is Mari? Because Mary is an English name, isn't it?

M: Um hum. Because they are not going to know that.

L: Do you think so?

M: They are going to say that loosely.

L: Do you think so?

M: Um hum. Because one day, I didn't know how to speak English when I was in Miss Stuart's lecture. I just said Mari, they didn't understand.

L: She didn't understand?

M: Who?

L: Miss Stuart.

M: The teacher? No. I had to write it down on the white board.

Mariana perceives the impossibility of people saying her name with a Portuguese pronunciation/reference as an impossibility of addressing her old sense of self. She seems to reject the possibility of translation of her name, where a negotiation could be established between what she brings – her name, her self – and the cultural referential of the new people surrounding her. Past and present are forced into

negotiation under the circumstance of geographical and cultural dislocation. In this respect Hall claims that:

> There can, therefore, be no simple 'return' or 'recovery' of the ancestral past which is not re-experienced through the categories of the present: no base for creative enunciation in a simple reproduction of traditional forms which are not transformed by the technologies and the identities of the present. (2003a: 258)

In Mariana's case, the impossibility of negotiation of her name/identity seems to be due to her perception that the politics of daily life in the school polarizes people between colours. In this way, she clearly demarcates the institutional spaces, doubling her consciousness as well as the ways she presents her self:

L: And by which way do you prefer to be called, by Mari or by Mary?

M: Um... (Pause). Here at home they call me Mari. At school they call me Mary.

L: And which way do you prefer?

M: Um... (Pause) Both.

L: Both?

M: Um hum.

Indeed, at school, Mariana becomes Mary; she internalises the rigid institutional discipline and chooses to make a radical rupture with her origin through the adoption of an English name and the representation of a blond nuclear family. At home, by contrast, she is lively and warm and constantly referred by her Portuguese name.

Returning to Hall's conception of identity, he proposes a notion that opposes the modern project of stableness and fixity. Identity now is not about an essential subject. It is about a politics of representation which points to diverse possibilities of being or becoming according to the interplay of discourses, histories, practices and positions that do not operate in an unproblematic fashion. Now is the time of contradictions and antagonisms. Situating the emergence of such a subject in the

"post-colonial" world, he takes the experience of forced migration as one of the locales of its emergence. Referring to the impact of the processes of both "free" and forced migration on the construction of identities he states:

> Though they seem to invoke an origin in a historical past with which they continue to correspond, actually identities 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 come from', so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves. (1997: 4)

For Mariana there is no going back. Since Sarah proposed to her the desirable white world, she chose to be Mary and Mari. The conscious split that demarcates the impossibility of being Mariana with an English pronunciation makes it clear that, at the present time, her fate is, in the words of Hall, ''not a matter of black-skin, white-skin' but of *Black-skin, white masks*'' (2003a: 256).

Realising the inappropriateness of her colour and country of origin when reaching the white world/metropolis, Mariana accepts an English name as way of assimilating herself to the politics of race of the new country. The choice of an English name is not only a matter of semantics, it is the possibility - together with the choice of a disciplined body - of dismissing the history that determined who she is – or who she was. "Mariana" relates to a black African girl. "Mary" relates to a "morena" girl who is making a compromise with the painful seductions of the colonial world.

The hierarchy of others: Armand's africaness in the classroom

It is my first day of research at school and Frieda directs me to the year four and five classroom[9]. This is the classroom that has the biggest number of refugee children in the school: five. The teacher responsible for the group is Grace, a white middle-class English woman around thirty years old. My impression of her throughout the whole process is that although she is always very nice and polite, she

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[9] Both years were joined together in the classroom, although there were exercises with different levels directed to each year.

is not very committed or even interested in the issue of the refugee children or the inequalities that surround the lives of the children in the school as a whole.

At the beginning of the lecture she raises the question 'What make us all different in relation to our friends, to our families?' In addressing the question to 'us all', she is not relating to difference in the sociological sense, where categories are established in relation to patterns of normality, being crosscut by power relations (Woodward 2002). She is rather bringing into focus the idea of the individual: somebody who is constituted through a process of differentiation without necessarily being 'othered'. 'Us all different' represents the differences among equals - at least ideally. One of the children gave the best exemplification of such idea: fingerprints. Indeed, fingerprints do not have gender, colour, ethnicity, age or language. It is something that represents us all as unique without necessarily telling where we come from[10]. The other children answer age, DNA, name and appearance.

Mac an Ghaill points out that the non contextualization of the notion of difference can result into a dismissal of the opportunity of utilising it as a conceptual tool for raising awareness, and consequently challenging the systems of inequalities it promotes:

> the popularity of the term difference has resulted in its becoming overly inflated, with little conceptual clarity of what it means and how it might contribute to the transformative nature of the politics of racism, while engaging with broader issues of social justice, civil rights and citizenship. In particular, in many current texts in which difference is portrayed as positive, there is a failure to provide a more rounded picture of difference as being marked both symbolically through representational systems *and* materially and socially through processes of inclusion or exclusion of social groups. (1999: 50)

Grace responds that all the characteristics mentioned by the children – fingerprints, age, DNA, name and appearance - make us different and immediately raises the question of coming from a different country. It is important to point out that

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[10] Although the purpose of the fingerprint has a rather different aim, namely, to inform the State's mechanisms of control our identity, accompanied by all the characteristics that compose it. But the fingerprint *per se* is solely the impression of a part of our body that is, in theory, different from the equivalent impression of any other person in the world, and thus being the best representative of the idea of individual.

in their answers none of the children choose country as a category of differentiation. They were speaking from their own experience based on generational hierarchies (age), the notion of an individualised body (DNA and fingerprints), and a body out of the dominant pattern of weight aesthetics (the girl who brought up the category appearance is an overweight child).

In bringing up the category of country, the teacher moves away from the universal domain that cannot be localised - 'us all' - and instead establishes differences through an *external* geographic location. Difference now is about locating people as different, moving from the subject dynamic 'us equals us' to the exclusivist relationship 'us versus them'. All the refugee children agreed with the assertion that the fact that a person comes from a different country locates such a person as different as well. For each one of the refugee children, of course, the process of migration positions them as different.

Grace then starts reading a story of a person who went to a 'very different country'. The book's main character and narrator is a blond boy who, by the context of the story, could be guessed to be English. The narrative centres around the representation of a *different* country and the child's experience of strangeness towards the new culture and environment. Right at the beginning of the recitation of the story, Grace makes a nasty face inducing the children to express disgust and amazement. A collective 'yuck' accompanies the contractions of her face. In the place represented by the book, the traffic is a mess, the hotel full of disgusting insects, a naked man sweeps the road and cows wander around.

Afterwards she asks the children to guess which country the story was relating to and adds that maybe some of the children come from there.

Child 1: Israel.

Child 2: Africa.

Grace: Good try.

Child 3: China.

Grace: No. It is India.

Grace is precise in one point: some of the children descend from India. I would suggest the majority of them do, if we take into account that Pakistan was, before the process of decolonization of the country, part of its national composition. Her statement – that some (or the majority) of the children come from such a different country – allied to the book's illustration - a white English child in an "exotic" place – represents the actualization of a colonial dynamic through the process of othering. [11]

Through utilisation of the school's resources that imprisons some people into a set of fixed and exaggerated representations - the so-called stereotypes - she offers to the children oppositional images that have as a result, at one hand, the production of racialized subjectivities, and at the other, desirable models of identification (Bhabha 1994, Hall 2003b, Rattansi 2003). Commenting on the harmful effects of colonial education which emphasizes the temptations of English literature and culture, Gandhi affirms that 'To speak in the desired way is, from now on, to also learn how to speak against oneself.' (Gandhi 1998: 13).

Said (2003) reveals how since the end of the eighteenth century, Europe has systematically been producing discourses and images about the so-called Orient, transforming the geographic space, as well as its population, into the other. He notes that the division of concepts between Orient and Occident is not a natural classification of distinctive material geographic locations. It is a Western construction that, through the establishment of oppositional notions, justifies a colonial situation. The discourses and ideas about the Orient and their material effects - settlement, establishment of bureaucracies, colonial rule - Said denominates Orientalism.

Orientalism reveals less of what the Orient is in reality than about the West itself. Said reminds us that in studying Orientalism he is not concerned in searching for correspondences between Orientalism and the Orient; instead he is interested in what is said about the Orient and the power configurations that produce such discourses: 'Orientalism responded more to the culture that produced it than to its

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[11] At the end of such lecture Grace directs herself to me and states 'I hope this helped you'. We must remember that that was my first day of research and that she knew I was going to work with refugee children. It is clear that she was not aware of the fact that she was herself differentiating the children, promoting their exclusion is a discursive way. She was speaking also through institutional resources – books – and the institutional discourse of celebration of diversity – multiculturalism – that is going to be analysed in more details in the next chapter.

putative object, which was also produced by the West' (Said 2003: 22). According to the author, it reflects the West's will to know as a way of domination, of subjugation, not allowing a space for the voices of the ones that are being spoken. It mirrors, as well, the West's purpose in strengthening its identity through the oppositional other.

'A very different country': Grace's words set up the context to establish hierarchies among cultures. She is not evoking any new ideas of Oriental/Occidental power relations. Such information already makes up part of the children's idea of global inequalities and they make that explicit through their exemplification of 'very different countries': Israel, Africa and China. What Grace does is to reinforce the discourse of the other, positioning the vast majority of the children in the classroom as 'very' different as well as establishing hierarchies between such differences.

When a child refers to Israel as an answer, she remains in silence. Right after, when a child answers Africa, she replies 'good try' reinforcing the idea of such a place being more different in the hierarchies of the others in relation to Israel[12]. When a child answers China she simply replies 'no' and gives the answer. If Africa is a 'good try', what makes it 'very different'? The children are going to answer through what they know from their life experiences:

> Grace: Do you think that if you come from a very different country from England, does it make you different? We are very lucky in this school because we have different people. Put your hand up if you lived in a different country. How is it different? It might be food, religion, weather, mountains.
>
> Armand: People, they have different colour.
>
> Malaika: The language.
> Angelina: Weather.

As referred in chapter one, public discourses of national identity offer the means by which individuals operate through the exclusivist logic of race. Grace's statement positions the nation-state as a normative point of reference of differentiation. The delimitations of England's borders set up racial identities:

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[12] Frieda observed that 'good try' could also be interpreted as an incentive to a child who might experience some learning difficulties. According to this interpretation, instead of referring to the response 'Africa', Grace was actually directing herself to the child's act of contribution. Anyway, the message to the children remains the same: Africa is a 'good try'.

The politics of 'race' in this country is fired by conceptions of national belonging and homogeneity which not only blur the distinction between 'race' and nation, but rely on that very ambiguity for their effect. Phrases like the 'the Island Race' and 'the Bulldog Breed' vividly convey the manner in which this nation is represented in terms which are simultaneously biological and cultural.' (Gilroy 2002: 45)

Grace's question was an attempt to celebrate the cultural diversity in the school, without being aware that, in fact, she was othering some children, constructing them as different in relation to a normative referent - the white English person. Implicit in her statement is the notion of England and its population as a unified referent that should operate in a dualistic way: England/white versus different countries/non-white. Her discourse promotes a double exclusion: the refugee children and the English children from Asian background (Gilroy 1992, 1993). In this way, her whiteness and the whiteness of the character in the book are taken as the norm. But, as pointed out earlier, there is a hierarchy as well as several possibilities of being other. And Armand, a Congolese boy, makes explicit that colour is one of the possibilities.

A body to be highlighted: the black male's body and reproduction of stereotypes

When I first met Frieda to set up the agreement in relation to the research, she presented me with a brief account of each refugee child. Her descriptions were basically related to the children's gender, age, year at school and country of origin. Armand was the only child who received a more detailed portrayal. Armand is an eight-year-old Congolese boy who left his country when he was only five years old, coming to England to live with his aunt who has been here for a few years.

He is a lively child, very communicative and with great sense of humour. He is quite slender, has a bald head, large and expressive eyes and dark brown skin. The reason for his migration was the loss his whole nuclear family in a volcano disaster in his city Goma. The volcano Nyiragongo, which is known as active since 1994, killed 2000 people in the year 1997. Goma is a very unstable region where several armed groups are in conflict and power is in the possession of rebels. Its economy is dependent on aid, smuggling and the arms trade (Wisner 2002)

Armand was described by Frieda as having behavioural and social problems, presenting difficulties in interacting with other children. Being individualized, Armand becomes the symbol of the child-problem. He is the one to be spoken about, to be separated from the group. His presence is continuously highlighted through his constant demands for attention and the interpretation the teachers make of his behaviour. He is the one to be seen and not to be heard. His blackness, allied to his gender, gives the means for the teachers to relate to him. His life history and his needs are completely overlooked.

Grace's account of the differences between countries – and people - in terms of cultural differences is followed by an attempt at universalization of the notion of mankind: 'We all need the same things to survive and live happily and to live properly'. She provides a paper for each child to write down what they think everybody needs in order to survive. Armand writes down 'family' and after that, 'parents'. Grace disagrees, demanding other kinds of needs, 'like when you are thirsty'. Her restriction to biological needs constitutes a search for univerzalisation of the conception of human being. In doing this she tries to establish a common pattern amongst all cultural differences, not taking into account the specificity of life histories of the children. There is an impossibility in dealing with Armand's very particular needs: family, parents, the ones that he, at a very early age, has irrevocably lost.

Attending to Grace's command, Armand "rubbers out his needs". His subjective pain has been completely dismissed. At the end of the needs list, he reinserts the word family and he asks me for support in the spelling of the word instead of Grace. He understands Grace's impossibility to listen to his needs and, although Grace tries to suppress these needs, Armand continues making them visible. Grace and the other teachers at the school can only see his colour allied to his maleness.

Fairly often in the classroom, Armand presents undisciplined behaviour. He speaks when told to be silent, stands up when he should sit still on the carpet, at times does not focus on a task, makes jokes and teases some classmates. A common scene is for him to receive warnings and punishments, such as having his "name on the board" - a disciplinary approach consisting of exposing children's names on a white board

which is divided into a "sad" side, relating to the undisciplined children, and a "happy side", relating to the disciplined children - or to miss the "golden time" – an extra period of leisure every Friday afternoon.

I understand Armand's call for attention as a call for help. He seems to be the only refugee child at the school who has lost all the members of the nuclear family[13]. His lack in terms of family members can be allied to what is considered to be the inappropriateness of his colour and gender, as a consequence of the process of migration. He asks too much because he lacks too much.

Armand's behaviour also constitutes a reaction to institutional racism. Although he is not the only child who opposes the school's discipline, he is often the one to be picked out. A common scene is for only his name to be called out by the teachers when other children are behaving in the same way.

> During the lecture Grace complains that Armand and other children were wandering around other tables: 'Not only Armand, other children as well.'
>
> (Field Notes – 13/05/03)

> I realised that although Gabir is constantly talking during the lecture, he is not labelled as troublemaker, like Armand. Akash is making funny noises, but Mark[14] doesn't call his attention, like he often does with Armand.
>
> (Field Notes – 05/06/03)

Both extracts from the field diary are examples that multiplied throughout the research. They testify to the teachers' attitude of highlighting Armand's presence, either by picking him out from the group and transforming him into a personification of the collective misbehaviour - 'Not only Armand, other children as well' - or by

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[13] A certain imprecision regarding the life history of refugee children at school relates to the fact that the children and their families are not obliged to inform the institution if they are refugees, nor any aspect of their life histories. Frieda observes that although the right of secrecy is understandable and must be respected, it imposes difficulties to the school's intention is accessing the children's emotional needs. She also states that paradoxically this puts the teachers in a more comfortable situation because they find it very difficult to deal with the particular emotional issues of refugee children. We are going to look at this issue closely in the next chapter, related to institutional discourses and practices.

[14] Mark is a white middle-class trainee teacher in his early thirties.

overlooking the other children's transgression. In stressing Armand's misconduct, they are positioning him as the one in need of control[15].

He became the institutional depository of the idea of the anti-pupil. When interviewing the teachers about their perception of the refugee children, Armand is often the one to be primarily discussed. According to Rutter, 'Refugee pupils' experiences of racism in schools mirror what is happening in the wider community' (2001b: 136). The teachers' responses to his presence are a repetition of the way teachers have responded to the Afro-Caribbean boys in English schools in general, labelling them as troublemakers, presenting an expectation of misconduct and seeing them as a threat to their own authority (Blair 1998, Connolly 1998a, Gillborn, 1998, Mac an Ghaill 1988, Williams 1995, Wright 1992).

At one point, Frieda shows me a drawing he made during the art class. The picture represents two men fighting and two apart close to a volcano. She says that that was the first time he has spoken about his family's death. I take the opportunity to tell her about my impressions of the needs of some refugee children. I report to her my understanding that his often demanding behaviour constitutes a call for help. I point out that from my point of view the discipline and punishment directed toward him would not resolve the problem. I express my concern in relation to the discourse that is related to him; that if he continues to receive successive warnings he could end up being positioned into the stereotype of the black male troublemaker.

She responds that the problem with Armand's behaviour is more 'complex'. According to her there is a whole literature related to the 'problem' of black males and that many black kids come from a disorganized family structure. She states that the fathers of such children often leave the household, not providing a male figure for the boys to identify with. She points out that Armand's case is not the worst one. In the school there are other black male children who are much more problematic, including a boy - from African-Caribbean heritage - who often says that he wants to commit suicide.

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[15] Frieda tried to have a more positive approach, congratulating Armand when he behaved well. Although I understand such conduct as an attempt to help him, not stigmatising him, it falls into the same logic of the warnings: he is constantly highlighted.

These discourses around the family structure can be found in a particular literature related to the African-Caribbean community. Lawrence (1982) points out that race-relations sociology with its culturalist perspective tends to inspect the lives of black families, pathologizing this institution. Through the lenses of such paradigm, the African-Caribbean family would function as a handicap to the healthy development of its children, since it presented the absence of a father figure that was supposed to control its members. The author reminds us of the gender issues underlying such an idea. According to him, the family organization of some sectors of the African-Caribbean people is seen as problematic only if one shares the patriarchal conception that women are incapable of rearing children without the presence of a male figure.

Lawrence reminds us of the effects that the academic power-knowledge system has over the daily lives of people, since it gives the conceptual tools for the practice of national and local governamentality:

> it becomes necessary to challenge the orthodoxies of 'race/ethnic-relations' sociology. It is necessary not simply because it might contribute to academic debate, nor even because this field of enquiry provides a theoretical cover for racist ideas. Of more importance is the fact that their 'theories' about black people help to shape public policy at every level, from the exalted heights of the Home Office to the humbler ranks of the school staff-room. (1982:97)

Guided by a literature that was produced by a discriminatory gaze - that of the white western male - Frieda not only presents a racist and sexist theoretical referent, at the same time she generalizes the concept of blackness, overlooking the heterogeneity that composes such a sector of the society. We must remember that Armand is not African-Caribbean, he is African; and that his father has not left his house, he died, together with the rest of his nuclear family.

Frieda cannot understand his behavior as a result of his tragic life history, as a call for help; nor can she understand it as a reaction to institutional racism where, as already pointed out, it is common practice among the teachers to pick only on him

when other children are misbehaving as well. His color, together with his gender, is taken as the only references to his condition at school[16].

The literature Frieda referred to are based on the political principles of the New Racism that during the 1980s utilised the notion of culture as a strategy to dismiss racialization based on colour. It considers, in this way, the notion of African-Caribbean culture as intrinsically problematic, bringing tension into daily life relations. It pathologizes the black community,[17] dismissing black boys' responses to institutional racism, and in Armand's case, I would add, dismissing his responses to his life history. Mac an Ghaill reminds us the dangers of the emphasis on cultural relations:

> Bringing these accounts together may serve to show the serious limitations of the dominant 'race-relations' ethnic approach. This culturalist perspective focuses upon the black students' distinctive cultural attributes and suggests that social behaviour is primarily to be understood in terms of culture. The dominant social images constructed by this approach see the black community as a problem. Ethnicity is assumed to act as a handicap of their assimilation or integration into British society, resulting in their relative social subordination. So, for example, the differences in the educational attainment of Asian and Afro-Caribbean students is frequently explained in terms of the pathological structure of the Afro-Caribbean family and kinship organization. This is often contrasted with the cultural unity and strength of the Asian extended family network, providing the necessary support for the 'second generation'. (1988: 1- 2)

During the interview I carried out with Frieda, the issue of Armand's behavioural problems came up once again. When relating to the fact that he has left school because he moved to a predominately black neighbourhood, [18] she states that she thinks that it was a better solution for him. According to her, Green Park Primary and Nursery School better suits Asian children than black children because of the predominance of the former in relation to the latter. Once again, the naturalization of

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[16] Frieda observed that for her it is already obvious that Armand's life history is the main cause for his behaviour. Nevertheless, this was never made explicit throughout the fieldwork or interview. She also referred to a 'vicious circle' where Armand ends up being picked on because of his frequent disruptive behaviour. She acknowledges that he is picked on but, in her words, 'strongly disagree that it is because of his colour'.

[17] At this point I am using the concept of black community in a broader sense, following Frieda's logic of "undiferentiation" between Afro-Caribbean and African people.

[18] The neighbourhood she was referring to is African-Caribbean in its majority.

patterns of socialization based on cultural differences offers the conceptual tools to what is in fact an issue based on racism.

I point out to her that once when speaking about Armand's problems, she referred to Carl, another black boy who was facing more difficulties than Armand, as a way of generalising the idea of black boys as problematic. I ask her once again, what does she think are the causes for this to happen:

> F: I don't know. I mean statistically, there is lots of research, and I don't know why, but, black boys often have behaviour problems in schools. This is what research says. And, as well because we used to have another black boy, John, he left two years ago, and he was very difficult as well[19].
>
> L: But John he comes from Jamaica yeah?
>
> F: But I think he was born in England and I think he has never been to Jamaica.

Since Frieda gave an example of two black boys from different ethnic and cultural origin, and having, in this way, used only the attribute of colour in her generalisation, I asked her more directly about the issue of colour:

> L: So he (John) has African-Caribbean descent, while Armand is African. So do you think it is a matter of the colour, you think?
>
> F: It could be, I don't know. It could be. I mean, well, I don't know, but what research says, well, I don't know whether this is true, but is also the role models, that offer. They live only with the mum, or a female carer, and they don't know dad. And this is the same thing with Carl and Armand, and it was the same thing with John as well.

At this point I try to challenge her arguments to make her think about other possibilities that contribute to Armand's problems at the institution:

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[19] Frieda commented that such a notion does not necessarily express her ideas. According to her, this is the result of research that is often proposed as guidelines on courses offered by the LEA related to the issue of black boys. She stated that no other evidence was offered to her and in a contradictory way states that she is 'neutral'. I asked her if she does not agree that this research has the power of influencing people's ideas. She agreed, and then presented a more individualistic approach, saying that every year there are a couple of children who are troublemakers and that they can also be Asian (the vast majority of the school's students). She adds that on the other hand she has a black boy student who is extremely well behaved.

L: But Armand, he had a family, didn't he, in Africa, before he came here? So he's case is different isn't it?

F: Yeah, yeah, this is what research says.

L: But there is a high rate of pregnancy in white young woman, and many of these children they grow without a father as well. Many white children.

F: Yeah, yeah.

L: This just came into my mind because if the black boy doesn't have a male figure at home, the white boy doesn't have as well.

F: I think is also the role model they have like, around them, like you know, in music, or whatever. I think this is, this probably adds to that as well.

L: Which role model in music?

F: Like the rap musicians and things like that.

L: What do you think about the rap musicians?

F: The rap singers, the black ones, I think how they portray themselves, they are portrayed, is like the cool guy. And probably this is what, this adds to that as well. They probably want to be like that, cool, and... I don't know; this is the first time I really think. (Laughs a lot)

Again, Frieda makes sense of the issue by directing it to the black community, particularly to the problems found in African-Caribbean family structure. Not following the demands of the classic nuclear family, it fails in "producing" children compatible with white English institutions. According to Frieda's understanding, when the masculine model is absent for the black boy, an inadequate one will act to compensate. The black male is a problem that is transmitted throughout generations and reinforced by the media. We can find here the discursive stratagem pointed out by Solomos and Back (1996) in relation to the New Racism, which produces the notion of race without making a clear allusion to it. Connolly contextualises such a device in the school's setting:

> In this sense it could be argued that once Black boys, more generally, have come to be discursively constructed as disruptive and aggressive, then this provides the essential context within which a whole range of other discourses, which do not make explicit reference to 'race', can tend to reproduce the child's racialised identity. (1998a: 94)

The idea of the black community as a problem that can be transmitted through generations is expressed by Frieda's concern in relation to Armand's future. As pointed out earlier, Armand moved to Dalton, a predominantly African-Caribbean neighbourhood. The area is known in the city as a fairly violent place due to murders, robbery and drug traffic.

> F: Well, I think Dalton is probably a good place for him. But unfortunately in Dalton is quite of a gang crimes and things like that as well. So I hope that he's strong enough to keep away from that.

Allied to the notion of a problematic community is the idea of Armand as a potentially violent person, since he has to be 'strong enough to keep away from' a life of crime[20]. Such an idea is confirmed by the classroom situation when, again, his behaviour is differentiated from the group's conduct.

During one of the RE lectures, a school teacher was invited to converse about his religion, Christianity. After speaking about his church, he quotes the Ten Commandments. 'Put your hands up if you think it is nice to kill', he asks the children as a way of disseminating his religion's morals. Although ten children put their hands up to make fun of the situation, Grace directs herself to Armand, and only him. She looks straight at him with an expression of concern and amazement and asks in an inquisitorial way if he 'really' thinks it is nice to kill, dismissing the fact that, in the same way as the other nine children, Armand was merely joking. By expressing concern, Grace cannot take his action as a metaphor, as a linguistic strategy through which the person understands and experiences 'one kind of thing in terms of another' (Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 5). Instead, she positions him as a *real* threat, interpreting his attitude through the light of the stereotype of the black violent male.

The essentialist conception of Armand's behaviour is expressed through other staff at the institution. On one occasion, seeing him having an argument with some

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[20] Frieda argued that she was not speaking particularly about Armand. According to her, some neighbourhoods in England do not offer leisure spaces for children and during the holidays children get bored, thus becoming more susceptible to committing crimes. She points out that while in Germany, living in the countryside, she never felt bored, she always had the fields to play in. In the city, by contrast, the children just have video games and television, which, in her point of view, are not proper leisure activities for children. Frieda presents in this way a notion of childhood crosscut by the dichotomy innocent/evil. From her perspective, the innocent child is understood through a romantic idea of not only a playing but also a bucolic phase.

girls at the playground, I asked the dinner lady what was going on. She replied: 'Armand doesn't need a reason to start a fight'. The fact that there is no reason for him to start a fight means that he is not reacting to anything outside him; he is simply responding to his irrational drives. In this way, the idea of him as a troublemaker is naturalised.

Armand is aware that the institutional response to his presence is a reaction to his colour. And it is through the supra-invested body that he expresses his opposition to the discriminatory way the social relations have been constructed.

The metaphorisation of the body: when the anger becomes hunger

During one of Mark's lectures Armand was chatting with Gabir, a boy from Asian background. Angry, Mark, a white trainee teacher around thirty years old, orders Armand to sit in front, beside him, without referring to Gabir, who was Armand's partner in the activity. Armand expresses his opposition to Mark's attitude by walking extremely slowly and by resisting sitting down beside him. Mark reacts by shouting extremely loudly in a very arrogant way. Throughout the lecture Gabir is chatting with another boy. Mark asks gently for him to stop, without asking him to sit beside him like he did with Armand. Although both boys were presenting the same behaviour, the teacher responds by making a distinction in his treatment of the situation, making clear that Armand is the only one in need of control.

In research carried out in a multiethnic primary and nursery school, Wright (1992) concludes that the attitudes of teachers influenced the ways that white children perceived children from "ethnic minority" background. In Green Park Primary and Nursery School the teacher's attitude of reinforcing the idea of Armand being a troublemaker, locating him within the stereotype of the disruptive black male, sets up a space for the children to express their exclusionary approach towards him.

As a fragment of the observation that followed the incidents described above demonstrates, the teacher's inequitable response will be followed by an unjust treatment of the children in relation to Armand:

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At the beginning of the exercise a boy from Asian background says Armand has only five minutes of the golden time. Armand tells him to 'shut up'. At the same time Anne, a white girl, annoys him touching him with a pencil. He then throws something on her.

Not only the teacher, but the kids as well are harassing him, especially in a day when Mark is being particularly tougher with him. It seems that the teacher's behaviour opens a space for the children to pick on him as well. Gabir stands up wanting to get out near to the playtime. Smoothly, Mark tells him to sit down. Right after he tells Armand to sit down as well, but at this time, with a rather firmer voice. During the playtime, seeing that Armand is up set, I ask him what is going on to which he replies 'the teacher is naughty with me'. He doesn't want to keep speaking about the subject.

(Field Notes -24/06/03)

Although no direct reference was made to his colour, Armand knows that it is a determinant of his relationships at school. He understands his difficulties in socializing with the children as a racist problem. Once he told me in a joking tone that he would like to paint his skin with white. During the interview I reminded him of the incident and asked him the motive behind such a desire.

L: Do you think if you would color your skin, if you would be white, do you think something would be different?

A: Yeah.

L: What would be different?

A: Eh, the children would might call me a new person, at school. And you know, if I, I, if I'm the new person at this school yeah, you know how many children are wicked, lots of children, yeah.

L: And you would be a new person in here?

A: Yeah, if I am a new person. So I, I'm knowing now. I say that because I want to, I want to have lots of friends. At that day yeah. Hum, I ha (interrupts), I ha (interrupts), I haven't got lots of friends. You know, you know Shanen, Olen, Amir, yeah. And they, do they know my name because in the dinner hall when I, when I was kidding in my dinner yeah, and she, eh, I think three persons come and talk to me like if they 'What you doing mate, come and sit in our table.' That's what I want to be, to have lots of friends.

Being a new person, being accepted, means an alteration of color that is impossible and undesirable to Armand. Painting the skin does not represent an actual

change, it is a faking performance with a pragmatic goal: the building up of peer relations. Unlike Mariana, who made a compromise with the school's discipline, going through a process of whitening, Armand resists it because he knows that an expression of the school's control is directed at his color. During the day described at the beginning of this section, when Mark was constantly targeting him, Armand told me he was not going to do the exercises ordered by him because he is 'naughty'. His resistance is a clear opposition to the unfair way he has been treated. Right after that he states that he wants Mark to go out of the classroom.

Afterwards, when the children are distributing some bananas to the group[21] Armand asks for two of the fruit saying he is 'hungry'. Mark does not allow him to eat this amount. When having an argument with a boy about a remaining banana that they both want to eat, Mark directs himself only to Armand ordering him to stop. At the very end of the lecture Armand tells me: 'Nobody likes me because I am not beautiful'. He identifies his body as the reason for the disaffections in the classroom, a body that carries out the sign of inappropriateness, that does not fit in, that stands out by encompassing the transgression of the group, and that resists the white norm.

It is to the body, ultra-invested by social relations, that Armand turns to express his reaction to the unequal way he is treated by the teachers and his peers. The body that has become the sign of lack of social abilities is the body that needs to be fulfilled and which opposes the surroundings. The teachers at school often complain that Armand always wants 'more than the other children'. Frieda points out that at the beginning of life at school, Armand was constantly demanding more food than the amount supplied during dinnertime. The school's response was based on a disciplinarian practice, pointing out to him that he cannot have more than the other children. As already argued, this constitutes a collective failure of imagination in relation to his life history. It represents as well the impossibility of recognizing institutional racism and its implications to Armand's life in the new country.

It is significant that Armand claims an extra fruit on a day when he became a constant target of the teacher's and children's harassment. 'Nobody likes me because

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[21] Up to year five the school distributes fruit to the children on a daily basis.

I am not beautiful' - the expression of his awareness that his colour is taken by the group as out of order - is made explicit to me, the one who is not taking part in the discriminatory process, the one who can listen to him and make sense of his elaboration. Again, Armand cannot be listened to by the school; he can only be seen.

When it is not possible to signify emotions through words, the demands turn towards the body. Armand's bodily needs are an expression of his emotional demands:

L: Tell me something, what do you think about the school?

A: I think is good. But sometime I hate.

L: Do you? Why?

A: Some time when I get hungry.

L: When you get hungry?

A: Yeah. Like someone if do something wrong to me and I, I be hungry.

L: Ah, you get angry?

He responds affirmatively with his head.

L: OK, and like what, for example?

A: Like hungry for... (pause) fight back the teacher will say, 'No, don't kick back'.

L: Ah, you mean, when a child beats you...

A: Yeah.

L: And then you wanna beat back and the teacher tells you not to beat back?

A: Yeah.

L: So what do you think about it?

A: I think, is sometime, when I get hungry I wanna do that[22].

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[22] During the interview with Deniz, a Kurdish girl from the school, I asked her if she thinks people treat Armand in a different way because of his colour. She responds positively and adds: 'The children want to fight with him, so they want to make him angry. That's why he's get naughty boy, he's kicking people'.

Armand's considerations about the peer relations at school are traversed by the linguistic lapse. It is important to notice that when I ask him if he is in fact referring to the word angry, he agrees. Although he is aware of the differentiation of pronunciation, he keeps swapping the words. They are two words intimately related to the school context where he expresses his emotion by a visceral necessity. He locates his subjectivity in the body because it is his body that constitutes the site of his social relationships, self-image and needs.

The body that makes itself present through the needs of a child that lacks too much is the same body that is highlighted by institutional prejudice. The school's pressure in naturalizing Armand's behaviour generates, at times, confusion in his self-perception.

The need for surveillance

When I ask Frieda if the refugee children suffer any kind of prejudice because of colour, she responds affirmatively, although she dismisses any possibility of Armand being the individual who experiences it. The rejection of any racial issue involving peer relations positions Armand as the one to be blamed for the failure in socialization:

> F: (Pause) If, is about black colour, yeah. But again, we don't have many black children. I think probab (pause). Well Armand, was sometimes saying somebody called him black. But, I didn't really believe him. I don't think this actually happened. Because when you ask him, I think he got something wrong and, so, he was... I don't know whether he was aware of it, or...
>
> L: Aware of what, sorry?
>
> F: Aware of the fact that he was black or I, I, I, I don't think people did that to him.
>
> L: Why do you think children wouldn't do that to him?
>
> F: Hum, it was more the fact how he, he presented it to me. Like, I think he wanted attention; he wanted somebody else getting into trouble, because Armand got into trouble a lot of times, for other reasons. So I think this was his way getting children into trouble. But it didn't work.

L: And why do you think he was getting so much in trouble?

F: I (pause). I think he was, I don't know. Probably, he, his social skills are not very developed, and once I talked to his aunty about this. He is very egocentric, so he was the centre of the universe in a way. And he always thought, you know, he couldn't cope with the fact that, hum, other children have to go with something as well, or, other children in the class discussion would get, you know, a say or something. It always was me, me, me. And I think he found it really hard to cope.

At the same time that Frieda dismisses Armand's call for help, she positions him as a troublemaker. According to her, he is not the one who suffers the injustice; he is the one who perpetrates it. He, as an individual, is the one to be blamed; he manipulates the situation, making up a story to put other children into trouble. He is also the one who locates himself as an outsider. Being aware of his blackness, Armand is the agent of his exclusion. It is his own gaze, not the children's and teachers' gazes, that constitutes him as different. Again, he cannot be heard.

The institution's discourse positions Armand as the cause of his disaffection concerning peer relations, and this generates a contradiction in the way he understands the constitution of these relationships. Following the interview that was cited in the last section, where Armand expresses his hunger/anger at school, he talks about his desire to beat some children back:

A: I think, is sometime, when I get hungry I wanna do that.

L: You wanna do that?

A: Yeah. But when I get hungry. But I think sometimes is no good.

L: For the teacher to do that?

A: For me to do that.

L: Ah, to beat back?

A: Yeah.

L: And why do you think that sometimes the children they beat you?

A: Sometimes is my fault too (emphatic).

L: Why?

A: Because I just push, eh, people for no reason.

L: No reason? Really?

A: Yeah. Sometime. Eh, not all the time, sometime I do that.

L: Without reason?

A: Um, um, um, no, I mean no reason. Um, I think, is for reason because... You know like today yeah? Someone push me yeah? Tomorrow, I will push him.

L: So there is a reason.

A: Eh, eh, now, eh, eh, I took, eh, like today, yesterday yeah, someone push me and today I push him and that she, eh she gonna say to the teacher yeah, I push him for no reason.

L: And is there any time that there is no reason, or always there is a reason?

A: Always reason.

We can see at this point a topic that has already been brought out by the dinner lady during playtime: a reason, or the absence of it, for Armand's actions. At some point, he seems to internalize the idea of naturalization of his behaviour, 'Because I just push, eh, people for no reason'. In racialized situations, Frosh et al. (2002) warn us of the importance of understanding how the children understand and contextualise the experiences of themselves. Although Armand is aware that his difficulties at school are also the result of his encounter with the white world, the quotidian positioning him as a troublemaker seems to build up some confusion in terms of responsibility through the denial of experiences of racism. When I ask him what does he think about the teachers at school, he answers in terms of the amount of punishment he receives and by obliterating the name of the teacher who most often targets him:

L: What do you think about the teachers, Mr. Bolton (Mark), Miss Bell (Grace) and Miss Beuer (Frieda)?

A: Good. But I think Bolton was better, he is good than all the teachers.

L: Was he good, better then the others? Why?

A: Because, eh like I do something wrong yeah? Eh, she won't, he won't put my name in the board. He would give me three, three warnings.

L: Ah, that's why?

A: Yeah.

L: So do you think that he was better than the others?

A: Yeah.

L: But I remember that there was one time that you were a bit sad with him.

A: Hum?

L: I remember that once in his classroom you were a bit sad with him.

A: Sometime.

L: Why were you sad with him?

A: Ah (bothered), I don't know. I mean; he's not really the better teacher. Loads of teachers are better than him. Sometime I get sad with him.

L: Why do you get sad with him?

A: I don't know.

L: You don't know?

A: I forgot.

L: You forgot? OK.

A: Like, eh, I know. Like if I three warnings yeah? And, and my three warnings finish yeah? When I put my name in the board yeah? And, I feel (small pause), eh, hungry for that.

L: And the other teachers, what do you think about the other teachers?

A: The same.

L: Why the same?
A: Because some time they do the same on me. Eh, Mr. Bolton but, they don't really give me lots of, like, free chances.

'I would suggest that perhaps one of the mechanisms by which racism works is to prevent people suffering from racism from naming the oppression' (Williams

1995: 157). To Williams' words I would add the *oppressor*, since by materializing the oppression through the one who impinges it, a more strategic confrontation could take place. And Armand's confrontation is sometimes substituted by a close relationship to the oppression expressed by the school's surveillance. Such connections can be found when he compares two institutions that have rather different purposes.

The play centre presents a dynamic quite contrary to the school's one. It is a space with the sole intention of providing children's socialisation and recreational activities, and is not cross-cut by a disciplinarian motivation. James, the main play carer, is an extremely kind person. When he has to make any intervention in relation to the children using his adult authority, he does it in a very smooth and fair manner.

When I ask Armand to give me his impressions about the play centre, he responds by contrasting it to the school's discipline and by describing it through the adults' authority, to which he often reacts:

L: And what do you think about the play centre?

A: Is good.

L: Why?

A: Because I play, but some time is not good because in the play centre there are only three, some time it's five people. Really the play centre need to have three adults but, eh, there are lots of, there, there are more than three children at the play centre, that's why I think. The school is some time better because when in **all**[23] way round the teachers will see you.

L: Sorry, the school is better because all way round the teachers will see you?

A: Yeah, if you do something wrong.

L: So you like that in the school, that the teachers will see you when you are doing something wrong?

A: Yah. (Categorically)

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[23] The words inscribed in bold indicate an emphasis on the intonation of the speaker.

For Armand, the message of the school is clear: he is intrinsically disruptive. The teacher's authority, reinforced by the children's conduct, inverts the situation, positioning him as the problem and not as a contestant of the oppression. If he is seen 'all' around it is because he needs it.

We have to notice however, that Armand's panoptican desire constitutes a conflictive dynamic of resistance and acceptance of the school's surveillance. Fanon (1986), discussing the dual character of black men, states that this clashing condition is a result of the situation of violence and oppression they find themselves immersed in. In this way, the white norm - the oppressor's position - is the desirable one. Foucault instructs us that the success of surveillance is realised through its internalization:

> Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercise it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers. (…)
>
> He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. Bu this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporeal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects: it is a perpetual victory that avoids any physical confrontation and which is always decided in advance. (1991: 201, 203)

In needing to be seen 'all around', Armand locates the source of the surveillance outside himself. The adult's gaze has to be kept there, exterior to him all the time, to make sure that he is going to be captured at some point. In this way, he perpetuates the conflictive situation and spreads his resistance throughout the several sites of the school. Consequently, he does not allow himself to go through a real subjugation, since even when an ambivalent situation appears, he keeps resisting.

When I finished the interview with Frieda and switched off the tape recorder, I

told her how I thought it must have been difficult for Armand being forced to migrate after losing all his nuclear family and that I wondered how much he had gone through in his life at such a young age. She remained in silence for a while looking fairly contemplative, and then stated that I was making her feel sorry for him, and that she was thinking now that many times he has told her that he felt himself treated in an unjust way at school.

Armand was not listened to; he was only seen.

The body that evanesces and the sign of vulnerability

The colour of the skin imposes on black children a constant reminder of their bodies. Being black is not being the neutral non-racialized white child, who, being part of the norm, is commonly defined by their first name. Being black is to live through the everyday being named by an adjective. It is to be related to a colour that defines the self in racial terms. Being white is to be a person. Being black is to be racially demarcated. While Armand and Mariana respond to institutional racism by making their bodies visible - the former by resisting the school's discipline and the latter by making evident her acceptance of it - Malaika takes the option of situating her body through a rather discrete demeanour. The evanescence of her body constitutes a defence against the gaze that demarcates it as out of order. When her body appears, it is performed through signs of vulnerability; she presents herself as a baby child. This double self-presentation seems to constitute Malaika's unconscious strategy of dealing with her own needs and institutional demands. She either disappears or claims protection.

During the supervision process I was troubled by a feeling of uneasiness when I thought about the place of Malaika in my research. I felt I was somehow leaving her outside the process. When I was speaking about the issue of racialization through colour in the school's context, only Armand and Mariana would appear. At one point, I told Richard Johnson I thought I did not have enough data to include her in the writing up of the thesis. I pointed out that she has not appeared anywhere, either in my accounts of the fieldwork, or in the interview process; not even the teachers would speak about her. Malaika simply did not appear. Richard Johnson then raised a

question that helped me to make sense of Malaika's evanescence: 'How does she present her body?'

Malaika is a very thin and small girl. She has very short curly hair, dark brown skin and very delicate features, and although she is one of the older children in the classroom, she is by far one of the smallest. She is very quiet and, when speaking, does so with a very small voice. She often stands with her chin facing down, and her eyes have a very unprotected and insecure expression. During lessons she is very disciplined as well as quiet. When she puts her hand up to ask or answer some question, she does it with reluctant eyes. Her discreet behaviour is also reflected throughout the interview process. Our meeting was performed in a very rapid way; her answers were monosyllabic. She does not seem to have problems regarding socialization. During playtime she is quite active, always interacting with a constant group of girls.

Malaika did not want to expose the reason for her migration to Britain. She came to Britain together with three older sisters and her parents are dead. Her older sister told Frieda they came to England searching for a better life. Although no precise information was given in relation to the reasons for the diasporic movement, it is known that Zimbabwe faces serous human rights abuses. People who oppose the dictatorship of central government can face torture and death. Besides this fact, a politics of confiscation of lands of the white minority and its redistribution to the black population without any intention of egalitarianism and proper support has left thousands in starvation. Another large part of the population became vulnerable to attacks of violent gangs supposedly composed of military veterans being obliged to search for displacement (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 2004).

When I first met Malaika, I was taken by a very strong feeling of sensitivity and felt a desire to protect her. Every time I directed myself to her, it was like I was speaking to a much younger child. My tone of voice would completely change, infantilizing her. I could see Grace using the same intonation when dealing with her. It seems that she evokes and needs such a response from people around her. My awareness that I was somehow victimizing her - treating her like a baby - made me review my approach towards her and after the summer break I related to her in a

similar way to the other children, without "making her smaller". From that moment, Malaika completely ignored me and any attempt at rapprochement was unsuccessful.

The child's construction of self-image is a highly complex occurrence. An interplay of several locations contributes to the way the child sees and presents her/himself, determining, also, the way she/he assumes the role of pupil (Pollard 1985). In Pollard's words:

> Self-image, of course, has a social origin. For each child it is the product of their unique biographical experiences and the social backgrounds, cultures and interactions in which they have participated. In the classroom when they take on the socially ascribed role of pupil they have to present their 'self' and to manage the impression which they create in the particular context of school. (1985: 42)

An important aspect of Malaika's present existentiality concerns the fact that her older sister has a newborn baby. It seems that her response to the family's reconfiguration is to identify herself with a very needy baby. The performance of such babyness is compatible with her evanescence strategy at school: when she shows herself, she does it in a safe way, a way that is not going to evoke or generate any kind of contestation on a racial basis. As I am writing about Malaika's babyness, I remember a racist account of a friend of mine who makes a connection between cuteness, colour and generation. In a very straightforward way she once told me that she finds black children 'cute', but when they grow up she finds them 'ugly'. Maybe Malaika is aware that the smaller she is the more acceptable or "deracialized" she is. My supposition is that by making herself smaller, Malaika shows a kind of intuition that the generational issue is likely to supersede the racial one.

It is important to point out here that the peer group Malaika makes herself part of in the school's context is the same group that "received" Patricia, a white girl who has a blind eye and a problem in relation to the body's development – she is very much smaller than the other children of her age, including Malaika, who is quite tiny. During Patricia's first day at school, Grace asked the children who was going to 'look after her'. Angela, an overweight white child, who also makes up part of Malaika's group responded that she would. There is only one child in the group who does not present any disfavoured characteristic in relation to the body. It seems that difficulties

in relation to the body, and the opportunity to look and be looked after, constitute important features of Malaika's social relations.

Malaika shows her self/body only when she has the opportunity to be looked after. Although mostly she "evanesces" in the school environment, three incidents significantly reveal her presence at the institution. And all three of these incidents are related to her body. The first one concerns her condition as a refugee child and the other two, her condition as a black child.

The teeth of the outsiders

It is Tuesday morning and the children are gathered in the main room to take part in assembly time. The subject of the meeting is the National Smile Week. A teacher speaks about the importance of taking care of teeth in order to have an attractive smile. She then asks the children to show 'how beautiful their smiles are'. Immediately I look at Malaika. Her teeth caught my attention the second time I saw her. They are fairly unhealthy, presenting a black colour and looking eroded.

Malaika seems to be the only child who does not smile. She hides her teeth closing her mouth while the other children attend to the teacher's command, showing off the requested gesture. I have a strong feeling of concern. I think about her health and self-image. She seems to have a very low self-esteem – Frieda has already told me she has the same perception of Malaika.

I start to think about the responsibility of the school in relation to her. Since the discourse of English society stresses very much the protection and responsibility toward children, and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child points out the State's responsibility when the family is unable to care for them, I wonder what is the role of the school regarding the well-being of the refugee children in general.

During playtime I go to the staffroom. The teacher who was leading the assembly speaks about the incident with Malaika, laughing about the condition of her teeth. She describes how Malaika closed her mouth when she asked the children to

smile. Frieda and Grace, who is Malaika's class teacher, join her in an mirthful reaction to her account. One of them points out that the NHS considered the school to be the worst one in Moulton in relation to children's dental health. Frieda then speaks about Asos'[24] teeth, saying that they are yellow. Grace makes an expression of disgust and asks her to stop speaking about the issue since she is eating.

> I was absolutely astonished and with a strong feeling of indignation towards the whole situation. They were having fun with a condition of extreme social disadvantage of those children. All of the teachers were very white, very healthy, very middle class enjoying themselves with the uncared situation of the children who are in a fairly vulnerable circumstance. Another point that shocked me was the fact that they directed the offence towards two refugee children in front a researcher who is working with them. It was as if they were behaving in a way they found very acceptable.
>
> (Field Notes -13/05/03)

Pollard points out the critical importance of the staffroom as a space where some consensus is built up among the teachers. According to him,

> it is the territory of the classroom teacher and a critical area in which confidences are exchanged, tension is released and the staff culture of the school develops. Thus, despite the variation which will undoubtedly exist in the views of each individual, the primary-school staffroom often provides a place from which a degree of cohesion in teacher's views of school life emerges. (1985: 20)

Once again, the body is taken as a point of reference for exclusion. It works as a referent of belonging to a group and marks the hierarchy of such placement. A white middle class group of adults, being spatially distinguished from the rest of the school in the delimitations of the staffroom, stresses the physical condition of the children. The differentiation is not only related to the teachers, but to rest of the city: it is the worst school in terms of the children's dental health. The demarcation becomes even more specific when the children who are individualized, taken as examples of the damaged body, are two refugees. It is clear from the accounts of such an undesirable body that at this moment the refugee children are taken as the personification of

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[24] Asos is another refugee child from the Kurdistan part of Iraq and studies in the same class as Armand and Malaika.

outsiders. They have a lesser body, a body that lacks, a body to be laughed about and a body that provokes disgust. They are the ones who do not fit in[25].

In her book *Purity and Danger* (1994), Mary Douglas affirms that relationships in certain societies are organized around the dichotomy of purity versus pollution. Since the conception of ritual pollution is analogous to the vision of social disorder, the act of to separating, punishing and purifying are actions that systematize a disordered experience. It is through separation that order is established.

Observing that in Western society, the idea of purity is anterior to the discovery of the bacterial transmission, which occurred in the nineteenth century, Douglas points out that the notion of purity is not simply related to care with hygiene. It also concerns a respect for order and for convention. She concludes that the basis of the notion of purity is a symbolic conception, in the same way as it occurs with ritual pollution of the so-called traditional societies. The conception of pollution is intimately related to the idea of morality, since the integrity of the social structure is questioned when a transgression occurs. If the transgression takes place, the society adopts coercive actions.

Rodrigues (1999) adopts a more critical approach in relation to Douglas' thought. He states that the notion of impurity not only establishes the order of the society, it also establishes hierarchical relations:

> As much as closer to the centre of power, as more distant to the pollution; as much peripheral in relation to the centre of power, more intimate with the dirty or garbage. There is never a definition of 'impure' without the existence of a power that wants itself close to the pure and that defines a hierarchy based on its position. (1999: 92)[26]

The next day I go to the school and I approach Frieda to express my concern in relation to Malaika's health. I report to her that Malaika's physical condition drew

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[25] In this respect Frieda's answer could not be more honest: 'I was quite shocked to read this and I'm feeling quite bad. That's all I can say'. She carries on observing that, although she was not trying to justify it, she understands that this attitude is a way of dealing with the children's problems. She also states that this is not an isolated case, and that this type of observation is not directed solely to refugee children.

[26] My translation.

my attention since the beginning of my visits to the institution. I point out that I wonder what should be the role of the school; how could such an institution give some support to the refugee children since at times it is impossible for their families to give them proper care. Frieda describes the bureaucratic difficulties in dealing with Malaika's health. According to her, the NHS works independently from the school, having its own procedures. In a regimented society the institutions are absorbed by a regulatory system that does not take into account the needs of individual cases.

Malaika's self-presentation as a baby child, associated with the concrete fragility of her body, was not enough for the teachers to acknowledge her needs. Her body is a "lesser body"; even when it stands out for what it lacks – health - it is overseen, or it is seen by an inappropriate gaze. It is a gaze that inscribes the body through the ambit of difference. We must remember Grace's remark cited in the section 'A body to be highlighted: the black male's body and reproduction of stereotypes' (page 116), where she universalizes the notion of being human through essential necessities: 'We all need the same things to survive and live happily and to live properly'. However a hierarchical notion of those who matter seems to exist. This hierarchy is informed by the gradations of "foreignness" one is constituted by. And Malaika's body is a body that cannot be properly imagined nor represented.

The impossibility of representing the black body

One of the mornings during playtime Frieda approaches me with concerned eyes. She shows me a drawing created by Malaika and worriedly points out that she painted people with the black colour in a forest. Frieda was trying to persuade to me to help her make sense of such an image utilising my background in psychology[27]. I reply that I think there is not anything extraordinary when somebody paints people with the black colour, especially when the person is black herself, and comes from a place where the majority of the population is such a colour. She looks at me with a slightly surprised expression and responds that she has not thought about the fact that Malaika comes from a place where the population is mostly black.

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[27] Frieda was aware that I had a degree in psychology, being specialised in Clinical Psychology.

The need to analyse the drawing makes it clear that for Frieda such representation is out of order. Her approach is exemplary of Hall's questions in relation to otherness and representation:

> Why is 'otherness' so compelling an object of representation? What does the marking of racial difference tell us about representation as a practice? Through which representational practices are racial and ethnic difference and 'otherness' signified? (2003b: 234)

The black colour must be represented only when ethnicity is emphasised (Brah 1996), when the subject is about the other, the different, when stereotypes must be reaffirmed or when issues of race relations must be discussed. The ethnic other does not represent the trivial. The trivial must be decoloured; it must become white. In such context the black colour has to be rendered invisible and people must be represented by the white colour because white is the norm. It is the only possibility of a desirable reality and the transgressions of such desire have to be analysed.

How does Malaika deal with the issue of her self-image, if she cannot represent herself by her colour? And where is she, by the way? She disappeared. Malaika seems to respond to the resistance of affirmation of her blackness through a strategy of evanescence. Making the body invisible constitutes an alternative to an oppositional –Armand - as well as assimilationist – Mariana - behaviour. Her attempt in representing her colour is denied, it has to be diluted to reach the acceptable patterns of white aesthetics and desire.

During one of the Art Club afternoons, the facilitator introduces self-portraits of the Mexican painter Frida Kahlo. She then provides each child with a small mirror and asks them to draw a self-portrait with the help of the image reflected by the mirror. Taking into consideration the encoded nature of language, Said states that in that system 'there is no such a thing as a delivered presence, but a *re-presence*, or a representation' (2003: 21). The re-presentation of the self does not constitute a duplication of reality. Even what is presented as reality in a material way is ever-changeable. There is a fatalistic condition of impossibility in apprehending reality due to its temporal condition. What is present at this very moment is already past, being rearranged by a subjective impression.

In the case of the self-portrait, its actualization is always strongly represented through the individual's history and subjectivity. The face Malaika represents on the paper is not a faithful reproduction of the inverted image provided by the mirror. The representation of the nose draws my attention: it is rather bigger than hers. The amplification and African shape of the nose is a demarcation of her blackness. It is the re-presentation, re-affirmation of where she comes from.

However, blackness is problematic; it has to be diluted. At the end of the task Malaika declares she doesn't like it and she looks fairly dissatisfied. Karina, another refugee girl from Eastern Europe directs her gaze to Malaika's portrait and laughs, making fun out of it, declaring that the nose represented looks like a 'bat nose'. I intervene telling Malaika I find the portrait extremely beautiful and pointing out that I disagree with Karina's observation, stressing the multiple possibilities of a body being attractive. Malaika is not persuaded by my argument. She throws the drawing away and makes another one, this time with a smaller, more discrete nose.

> In the white world the man of color encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of certain uncertainty. (Fanon 1986: 110-111)

Malaika presents and represents her body in a discrete manner as a way of avoiding the location of herself under the aim of the white gaze. The interrupted smile, the blackness that cannot appear, the little voice, the shyness, are possible responses for the way refugee and black children have been positioned by the school: as outsiders.

'You go back to your country; you are not living in Great Britain'[28]. Britishness and the exclusion of Kurdish children

Colour and gender are not the only determinants of refugee children's lives. Geographic borders associated with language are taken as marks of belonging. The notion of Britishness as inclusive of the children descending from the Commonwealth countries and Ireland is utilised by some children as a way of excluding refugee children. Here, the concept of foreignness is taken as an exclusivist condition, demarcating the impossibility of accepting their presence.

Deniz is an eleven-year-old Kurdish girl who came from Turkey with her parents and older brother. Since the foundation of the modern republic of Turkey in 1923, the central government has tried to repress Kurdish identity. Although the major conflicts occur in the southeast part of the country - the Kurdistan part appropriated by Turkey - Deniz's family, originated from Istanbul, suffers persecution for engaging in political activities regarding the civil rights of the Kurds (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 1997b). In this country any expression of the Kurdish identity, including the utilisation of the language, is considered illegal.

I first met Deniz in the Moulton Refugee Association and later at the Community Centre. The times I saw her in both institutions, she looked quite a vivid, sociable and self-confident child, constantly interacting with people around her. She has a very white skin, long black and sleek hair, and eyes the same colour as the hair. She is very tall for her age and looks a bit older than eleven. After a few months of research in the Green Park Primary and Nursery School, I was taken by surprise to discover that she studied in the institution. I first saw her in a distinctive area of the playground isolated from the main playing space. The only child I saw her interacting with was Semra, a second-generation Turkish/Kurdish girl who studies in the same year as her and is considered to be her best friend.

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[28] The title was taken from an extract of the interview with Deniz, when she recalls the way some Irish/second generation Irish people harass Kurdish people in the public space.

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When I ask Deniz what she most likes to do at school she answers in terms of aspiration of empowerment through the perfection of the English language:

D: I would like to speak English properly.

L: That's what you would like to do, to speak in English properly?

D: No[29], when I come to, this school first, do you know the Pakistan peoples? Then they just say something to me English, who I can't understand.

L: The children, you mean?

D: That's why I'm, um, I'm getting angry for them. So that's why I tried to beat them up.

Some boys from Asian background were utilising a similar strategy of exclusion with me as a way of defying my authority as a female adult. When a group of four boys addressed themselves to me in Urdu while making fun out of me, I responded by using my foreigner background as a strategy of confrontation. When I started speaking in Portuguese with them they would immediately stop the harassment and would request me to translate my speech. The agreement I imposed was an exchange of information. I would translate to them what I was saying if they would do the same in return. At the same time I would argue that in the same way as them, I could name them in several ways in my own language.

In Deniz's case, her condition is far more disadvantaged for several reasons regarding her position among the children. First, as a child she could not benefit from the generational hierarchy, being unable to utilise adult authority when that would suit her. In addition, she was in the school, not as a result of an occupational choice, but because of a situation of social and economic disadvantage. And finally, at the beginning, she could not speak any language in common that could establish a confrontation and negotiate some resolution. Not being able to speak any of the languages from the children's repertoire, she is perceived as the absolute other, and left outside any possibility of socialisation.

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[29] I understand the negative statement as an indicative of a past time; speaking English is what she *wanted* to do when she arrived at school.

Another important point to be highlighted is the language that was chosen in both situations. In my case, the language utilised for confrontation by the boys was Urdu. Apart from the obvious fact that the use of English would give rise to an open confrontation, Portuguese, as well as Urdu are both considered to be foreign languages. With Deniz, the language chosen to practice the harassment was the national official language. In my case, the boys were positioning themselves as Asians; in Deniz's case, as British.

It is clear from the example mentioned above that the boys were employing their identity as British and Asian in positional ways. I want at this point to recall my assertion from the first chapter that states that the notion of hybridity as a term that should be celebrated since it is taken as trangressive for contesting any notion of purity (Brah and Coombes 2000) must be analysed under the power relations that underlie the meeting between new ethnicities and "others". As such, I propose that we should look at the

> ways in which hybridity is constituted and contested through complex hierarchies of power, particularly when used as a term which acknowledges the mixing of peoples and cultures. (Brah and Coombes 2000: 2)

We must observe that what is going on at this point is not only a matter of languages that are semantically distinctive from each other. There is also a hierarchy among languages that reflects the superior value of people descending from certain parts of the world, and children are very aware of that.

Recalling my own childhood back in Brazil, I remember one episode when I went to a working class area and clearly utilised my American heritage. Being among a group of several children I presented myself as the daughter of an American man. Although I was not able to speak any word in English I told the children I could say some words in such an idiom in exchange for a few candies. I pronounced three words in Portuguese with an American accent and could see the fascination stamped in the children's faces, followed by the circulation of candies. On the other hand, a few years before this episode, I had a child of Japanese descent as a neighbour and I never had the curiosity to ask anything about the language of his ancestry. The others are

not discriminated against by children because they are different in some way, but because this difference is a demarcation of inferiority.

In the actual context, the language that excludes is the practice of a discourse that sets up boundaries of belonging in the host country. It is a way of positioning the immigrant as somebody from the other side. The children's discrimination in relation to Deniz's presence is in accordance with the Government's regulation of inclusion for migrants on the grounds of linguistic competence. As we could see in the first chapter, the White Paper 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain' (Home Office 2002a) imposes English tests as one of the conditions for the acquisition of citizenship. The acquisition of the language in this context follows an assimilationist stratagem that seeks for the uniformity of social codes. It also informs individuals, including the children at school, under which circumstances a person is considered British.

However, Deniz understands the need for mastering the hegemonic/official language not as a way of assimilating herself, but as a means of being able to manage the daily social relations:

D: But **now** I can understand whatever they told me. So if they say something in their language to me, yeah, just tell them 'mess'.

L: When they were telling you things that you wanted to beat them up, was because they were saying nasty things to you. That's why you were angry? What kinds of things they were saying?

D: They just saying that 'we don't want you, you are stupid, so you are...' They say something in their language.

L: Why do you think they were saying that you are stupid?

D: I don't know. They want me, they don't want me here. They shouted me as well, I can speak English when they happening. Eh, do you know that children years six fours? They all wanted to beat me up.

At this moment Aasem, Deniz's mother[30], intervenes and speaks for a quite a while. I understand that she was reminding me or allowing Deniz to point out, that children are not the only perpetrators of the discrimination she is subjected to:

> D: I got teacher, in the school, I don't wanna tell you the year, so, you will remember, so you will know my teachers. So he just was shouting at me, and, I can't speak English that times. So, and...
>
> L: What was he doing?
>
> D: She just shouted at me.
>
> L: Ah, was a woman?

At this point I interrupt and negotiate with her the disclosure of the teacher's identity in order to contextualise her situation in relation to the broader dynamic of the school. Assuring her that the pattern of discretion would be applied to any information she would give me, she asks Aasem's consent and reveals that the teacher she was referring to is her actual class teacher. Miss Evans is the same teacher who was leading the National Smile Week Assembly and who afterwards made fun about the unhealthy condition of Malaika's teeth.

> D: She, she was shouting at me, and (pause), when I'm talking to her yeah, and she just shouting at me again, and again, and again. And when I was come to home my mum nervous blooding[31]. So when a get angry, yeah, or when I get sad, yeah, my blood, eh, blooding[32].
>
> L: And this teacher, why do you think she was treating you, do you think, was she treating the other kids in the same way as you?
>
> D: She wouldn't do anything to the Pakistan girls or boys, cause; there are loads of Pakistan people in here. So, there are not too much people in our school[33], there are in year four, cause that time was only Semra and me.
>
> L: So, what do you mean is that she was treating you in a different way than the other kids?

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[30] One of the interviews was done at Deniz's house with her mother taking an active part in it. Most of her interventions in the interview were done in Turkish - Aasem does not speak English very well - with Deniz reproducing what her mother was saying.

[31] I think at this point Deniz was referring to the fact that Aasem has a blood pressure problem.

[32] Deniz seems to use the concept of blood as a metaphor to indicate her distress. Aasem's constant reference to her blood pressure problem - caused by the distress of the requirements of refugee status – seems to have been transformed into synonym of the word adversity.

[33] The people she is referring to are the refugee children.

She makes an affirmative gesture with her face.

L: And why do you think she was treating you like that?

D: I don't know. I think, um, that's why I am Turkish or whatever.

L: You think is because you come from another country?

Silence.

L: Do you think is because of the fact that you are a refugee?

Deniz responds locating the teacher as making part of the reference system of the broader population that sees refugees in general as "bogus":

D: (Pause) So they, do you know, when they are working, yeah, they spend money, and the States they give money to us, it goes round, round, round. So they just say 'We are paying money and you get it back'.

L: And do you think this teacher, she thinks in this way?

D: (Pause) I think.

Aasem: Everyday I am going to school, my children, children say 'Hello Miss Evans'. (Aasem mimics the teacher moving her head, turning it to the opposite side with a bad expression).

L: Really? (Surprised) And you saw that, she was turning off her face? (Aasem agrees moving her head) In front of you as well?

D: My mother was every time crying when she comes to my school.

L And did she do that in front of your mum as well?

At: No, she doesn't do it to my mum. And my mum just saying hello to her and she does that (the same facial expression that Aasem did before, meaning that the teacher was also treating Aasem in a uneasy way).

L: Ah, she was doing that to your mum as well?

D: Yeah.

What follows is Deniz's translation of Aasem's statement of Miss Evans' qualities as a teacher:

Deniz translating for Aasem: Eh, do you know Miss Evans? She is kind teacher. She is every time teaching me to speak English. So, she is good teacher I **know** that. But, she was doing that kind of things to me. But, eh, do you know what, when I living, when I was living year five, I just said that, I just said that, tell Miss Evans yeah, and I said, um 'you, you was a good teacher'. And my mom buy a flower to her. And we buy Turkish delight, everything. We just buy loads of thing to her.

It seems that this distinction of the discriminatory practices and educational competence is not elaborated exclusively by Aasem. When I carried an interview solely with Deniz, she was very keen on affirming her desire to improve her English language, and how the academic life in England can favour her occupational future[34]:

D: So when I go in university in England, if I go Turkey yeah, I can be the head teacher of a school. I can speak English, so I've been in a school in England, so I can be head teacher in school.

L: So what do you mean is that the fact that you've been in England gives you a kind of power? Is something like that?

D: In Turkey yeah, no head teachers can speak English. **No** head teachers. I went to school in Turkey and I asked my head teacher that if he can speak English or not. He said to me 'No, I can't speak English'. I think, if I go to school in England, if I go back to Turkey yeah, I wanna be school teacher or something. I can be head teacher.

The fact that the English language is valorised does not imply an assimilationist compromise on Deniz's side. Instead, it means that she is actively engaging with the opportunities that life in diaspora offers her in order to plan her future life.

Making clear that what happens with the refugee children does not happen in isolation in relation to broader society, daily contact with the community is brought into the argument:

Deniz translating for Aasem : So, we have the same things in England as well. Um, there are **loads** of people just saying those when we are walking on the road, yeah, they just saying 'Go back to your country'. We feeling bad you know? They said 'You are refugee, you need to go back to your country, we don't want you here'.

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[34] This fact is going to be described and analysed in more details in the fifth chapter.

L: And who is the kind of person who says that? Is white people, or Asian, black…

A: English, always white people.

D: And Irish (super imposed on Aasem's speech). English and Irish.

A: And Irish.

Here it is clear that although Deniz is translating Aasem's thought, she appropriates part of the same experience, revealing this by the use of the pronoun 'us'. Racism is not exclusively a dynamic of the adult world and therefore directed only to/by adult people. The child does not circulate freely, imperceptible and immune to the discriminatory gaze. Being a child does not mean being limited to the generational position; it is, in Deniz's case, being named as a foreigner.

> D: And Irish. When Irish people say that to us, and they just reading or repeating again. And, the last time, they were just saying that to us 'you go back to your country, you are not living in Great Britain'. That's what always say.

The colonialist concept of Great Britain, which was an English construction to subjugate Ireland, Wales and Scotland, is in this context appropriated by Irish people (and/or their descendents) as a way of exclusion of the others. A complex interplay of identity and belonging is set up to demarcate who are the outsiders in racial sense.

In an informal conversation with a Kurdish teenager I learnt that in the neighbourhood – remember, a very Asian working-class area – second-generation Irish teenagers call Kurdish teenagers 'nigger'. The differences have to be highlighted by an attribute of colour that is absent. The category black can only be thought of in relation to its double opposite, white. Neither designation should be taken as a natural attribute that would essentialize groups of people. They are historic-political constructions that are actualized, aiming at the establishment of privileges.

Mac an Ghaill (1999) questions the limitation of understanding processes of racialization through differences of colour. The dichotomy of black and white leaves the Irish question invisible. He argues that there is a tradition in sociology of de-racialization of the Irish community under the argument that such racialization is

more historical than factual; that it is cultural, being restricted to jokes; that it is less serious than the colour racism suffered by people who derive from the Commonwealth countries and that although the Irish community may experience similar disadvantages common to the black community like class location, their whiteness assures them a privileged position as part of the majority white community. During the 1970s and 1980s Irish community workers and academics gathered empirical evidence that the Irish community experience discrimination in various institutional spaces like migration, work, health, education, policing and legal system and welfare rights. In this way, Mac an Ghaill observes how the issue of Irishness highlights the importance of linking the matter of colour (whiteness) to other positions like social class, national belonging, and migrant labour.

Being othered by English society in racial terms, some Irish teenagers seem, in this situation, to demarcate Britishness in terms of whiteness and Europeaness. To make explicit the fact that the exclusion is absolute, they racialize Kurdish teenagers, not merely as non-British, but as the double opposite black. We shall observe that these teenagers appropriate the concept of Britishness by relating it solely to white people. There is a double and concomitant exclusion; the refugees and the black British population. Kurdish children are becoming the others of the others, and for that to happen, differences, even those that do not exist, have to be evoked. Commenting on the complex interplay of positionalities in the construction of national identities Bhabha observes that

> it is in the emergency of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjectivity and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated. How are subjects formed 'in-between', or in excess of, the sum of the 'parts' of difference (usually intoned as race/ class/ gender, etc.)? (2002: 2)

The refugee children have been recognized as outsiders by some Asian and Irish children in the neighbourhood and the school as a way of affirming their Britishness. Following my argument presented in the first chapter, although on an official level Asian and Irish children are considered fully British, in the politics of daily life this positionality is contested and hierarchized. For example, in one literature lecture, Grace observed that the children in Green Park are fairly

disadvantaged in this area; they do not have the same competence as the white middle class children in the mastering of the English language. Nevertheless, she was not taking into consideration the fact that the vast majority of white middle class English children master only one langue, while the majority of children in Green Park masters two or even three languages. In this way, the Asian languages and the Asian background is not taken into consideration in the definition of Britishness.

It seems that the new racist concept of Britishness based on an ethnic absolutist perspective has not been completely dismissed. It has been reconfigured where alliances and contestation have been multiplied: Irish children affirm the British identity at the expense of Kurdish and black children; Asian children affirm Britishness in opposition to a foreign (Kurdish) language. "Kurdish children" become, in this way, a signifier to be opposed when non-white first-generation English people affirm their Britishness.

Under turbans do not fit in: religion as a sign of differentiation

Colour, language, country of origin: the several ways the refugee children have been othered is bound to become more diverse when the issue of religion is taken as a mark of racialization. Kirpal, a nine–year-old Sikh boy, came from Afghanistan with his parents and younger brother,[35] fleeing the Taliban's violence. Kirpal is a very sweet child with an open and cheerful smile. He is quite overweight, has big cheeks, white skin and large dark brown eyes.

At the end of 2000 around 3.6 million Afghans were living as refugees in other countries. Since the year 1992, after the fall of the communist regime, several groups started fighting for the control of the country. The Taliban was a radical Islamist group initially composed mostly by Pashtun Afghans refugees who were religious students in schools in Pakistan. Arriving in power in the year 1995, the group spread violence and the imposition of a strict interpretation of Islam. In the year

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[35] Another brother was born when they were in England.

1996 1.2 million of the Afghan population was composed of internally displaced people, 1.2 million refugees in Pakistan and 1.4 million refugees in Iran. At the end of the year 1996 the country had the lowest life expectancy and infant mortality of the world. Civil war, displacement, human rights abuse and deprivation composed the scenario of the country (U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants 1997a).

Although in Afghanistan the Taliban violently punished non-conformists through their religious rigid rules, Kirpals mother, Ajeet[36], observes that the condition of the Sikh population in the country was more vulnerable, since alongside the Taliban's aggression they suffered persecution from the majority Muslim population. According to Ajeet, some people from the Taliban used to get into their house and beat her husband up, once having pushed her. The children witnessed the violence and responded by screaming. Life in the country was daily permeated by fear, and the house represented the only relatively, although not completely, safe place:

> L: You said it was very difficult in there because you are a Sikh in a Muslim country. Do you think Kirpal was suffering as well because he was Sikh, or only adults that suffered that?

> A: He used to get scared; he used to get wet quite a lot at nighttime. Is just all fear thinking that you know, because we were pressured by Muslims because we were Sikh. We used to feel that they wanted us to be Muslim, because we were Sikh. They didn't want us to be Sikh, they wanted us to be part of them and we didn't want to be. So we were sort of pressurised by that.

The process of migration resulted in some relief in relation to the religious persecution Kirpal and his family used to suffer in Afghanistan. This fact had a fairly positive impact in Kirpal's well-being. According to Ajeet, after settling into life in England, 'He doesn't have a fear, he doesn't wet himself, he looks happy.' On the other hand, intolerance still permeates their lives, and Kirpal experiences it as a member of a family group and as an individual.

Ajeet recounts that the family had a next-door white family who was harassing them. Although the City Council moved Kirpal's family from the area, the other

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[36] Since Ajeet speaks very little English, the interview with her was carried out in Green Park Primary and Nursery School with the interpretation of a teacher at the institution who speaks Urdu and who has been helping her with practical matters related to the language.

family still follows them and the children. Besides that, the fact that the children of the family who promotes the harassment also study in Green Park Primary and Nursery School constitutes a point of contact, persecution and stress:

> A: That's the only fear we carry, because they know where we live now because they follow us and they shout 'We know where you are living. We know your house. We'll come to you'. They shout 'Sikh, Sikh, Sikh'. And they abuse us in that way.

Although the school is a site preferable to the house because it offers more activities to Kirpal and he very much enjoys the lessons and 'all the teachers', he first makes sense of such an institution in terms of harassment. The daily life in the school's playground is also permeated by bullying:

> K: Eh, when I come here, some people were bullying me because they were saying I've egg[37] in my head. I don't like this. Told my teachers, I told Miss Bauer (Frieda), Miss Bell (Grace - his class teacher), Miss Adams (the head teacher), Miss Preston. They were still doing, they get in trouble, and that letter home. And they just still doing that to me.

> L: They still doing that?

> K: Yeah. **Now** they doing as well. Now they doing at playtime, they doing that. I just give them three chances. I don't wanna be fight yeah? I just give three chances. I said, they want me, I said, eh I said 'don't bully me yeah'. I gave, they come, then, then, then they come again, bulling me again. Then they come again, then I get angry, them, them, I gonna fight. I just can't, just stop my self (angry). That's why I just, (pause) hit them.

For Kirpal it is very clear that the origin of the harassment is due to racism:

> L: And what do they do to you? They bully you...

> K: Yeah, hitting me. Taking my ball out of my, joking very, outside the school.

> L: And why do you think they do that to you?

> K: I don't know, because I'm a Sikh. And I got this thing on my head.

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[37] By egg, the children in the school were relating to the under-turban that the Sikh boys wear to evolve the hair which they are not allowed to cut. According to their religious rules, the boys must wear such accessory during the whole day.

The sense that there is continuity in the experience of racism suffered back home and in the life of the host country is made explicit when I ask Kirpal the origin of the children who committed the harassment:

K: Afghan (pause), eh, I don't know. Some from Af, Af, Afghanistan, some from Af, Pakistan.

L: Do you come from Afghanistan?

K: Yeah.

L: So, even kids from Afghanistan they do that with you?

K: Yes, there are, when I was about six, the people were hitting me, getting stones, eh, heating on my head, all blooding, went hospital. Like, they all saying, you got egg in your head. People, eh, taking my, this off. And, they do here as well. Do you know Armand yeah? Armand in Miss Bauer class? He doing that as well to me.

L: Taking out your (he interrupts me).

K: Yeah.

L: You told me children were throwing stones on you, that was in Afghanistan, or in England?

K: In Afghanistan.

Kirpal's initial account of the experience of racism is confused, without a clear temporal and spatial distinction. His lapse when referring to the origin of the children who were committing the harassment – 'Afghan (stops-lapse), eh, I don't know. Some from Af, Af, Afghanistan, some from Af, Pakistan.' - constitutes a transposition/presentification of the persecution suffered back home. The fact that he refers to children of Asian descent as Afghans indicates that these children are now occupying the place of those who threatened him in his country.

After describing the experience of bullying suffered at school, Kirpal evokes a religious account based on violence promoted by Muslim people in relation to Sikhs in Afghanistan:

K: You know like, eh, our Guru, Sikhs, we got eleven Gurus[38]. We got ten Gods and you know the Pakistanis? They keep, eh, keep telling our God to cut their head and cut their, eh, what that called?

L: The beard?

K: Yeah. Pakistani told them. But we are not allowed to cut our hair or this thing. Because we are Sikh, our Guru told us like that. Eh, we had a fi (interrupts the word), eh, Gurus and Afghanistan had a fight and when they were there.

L: There where?

K: You know Pakistanis? Really they do. Eh, one Guru, you know the big, eh, mass of, eh, dole, I think was. They put the hot water, very, very hot, eh, they put one of the gurus inside it and got all bones out.

L: That really happened?

K: Yes

L: When?

K: I don't know, that, I, I didn't see it. I just, just seen the book. That really happened, I seen the film (emphatic). You know like, there is cross word like, eh, Jesus, he died yeah? Some people to do Sikh, two or three people standing up, like eh, Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, saying, praying like that the... (emphatic). What's that called? (Long pause) God! I can't, I don't know what that's called in English. Soul, soul, soul. You know soul? It was going up. You know our head? We call like that, all over done, and all get, all blood come out. But three of they are Sikh. They do that like that, then they had a big fight.

My ethnocentric question in relation to the "veracity" of Kirpal's account – 'That really happened?' - is an irrelevant one. The factuality of the narrative is not important. What matters is that it plays an important role in Kirpal's perception of the relationship between Muslims and Sikhs based on religious intolerance and the brutal way the Sikh population experiences such a relation.

This perception of brutality is once again told in a fictitious way when he describes the event of children in Afghanistan throwing stones on him. According to

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[38] According to Brar (1998), the word "Guru" is a Sanskrit word which means teacher, honoured person, religious person or saint. For Sikhism the word Guru means the descent of divine guidance to mankind provided through ten Enlightened Masters. It is applied solely to ten Gurus who founded the religion starting in 1469 with Guru Nanak and ending in 1708 with Guru Gobind Singh. After that it only relates to the Sikh Holy Scriptures the Guru Granth Sahib.

his mother, in Afghanistan he never attended school and the only children he played with were the ones from his household.[39] Fantasy and reality are not distinguished in Kirpal's narrative[40]. This is how he expresses the suffering he has been going through in an uninterrupted way:

> L: Kirpal, what do you think has changed at school, since you arrived at school until now? What do you think changed? Is there anything that changed?
>
> K: Yeah, eh, eh, I wanna change the school like, everybody be kind with everyone and **don't** bully anyone.
>
> L: And is there anything that changed? When you arrived in here, up to now?
>
> K: I wanna change this, eh, child stop bullying me. And, and stop hurting me.
>
> L: Right, you told me what you want to change. And, do you think something changed? Did something changed?
>
> K: No.
>
> L: Everything is the same, from when you started? (He confirms moving his head)

Everything the same, from when he started means not only an unchanged dynamic in the school's context. For Kirpal, it means a continuity of the experience of racism re-dimensioned by the process of migration. Such a fact is actualised when the signifier Afghanistan is evoked in a repeated but partial way when he recalls the origin of the children who bully him: 'Afghan (stops), eh, I don't know. Some from Af, Af, Afghanistan, some from Af, Pakistan.'

Kirpal is an extremely sweet and calm person guided by a universalist and egalitarian conception of human beings. When I ask him what are the differences between boys and girls he replies 'We are all the same.' Regarding ethnic/religious matters he first generalises from the encounter between Muslim and Sikh people as being based on a racist dynamic. Then afterwards, he reconsiders his perception, not

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[39] They used to live in a big house together with the extended family.

[40] Another issue that seems to have contributed to Kirpal's confusion between fantasy and reality is related to the trip from Afghanistan to England. Such a trip, which will be described and discussed in detail in chapter five, constituted a moment of extreme terror.

essentializing such a relationship, but distinguishing the Muslim children who position him as different from the ones who do not:

> L: Do you think is there differences, like, with whom do you most like to play? Like, do you think is there differences between playing with Pakistani children, or black children, or white children? Do you think is there differences in there?
>
> K: Yeah.
>
> L: Which differences?
>
> K: (Pause). First thing, Muslim don't like Sikhs, and, eh, I (small pause), I (small pause) really used to play with eh black people. I like black peoples as well. I like every single people, but, if (pause), if somebody don't like Sikhs. I don't play with them. If some Muslims are good in here, my friend, if Fahim, he is good, he is Muslim too. We don't talk about like this. He's, he's my friend. I usually play with them.

Kirpal's strategy to deal with the bullying suffered at school was, at first, to report it to the teachers. He is aware that the teachers' response – sending letters to the houses of the children who were offending him - was not enough to tackle the racism. Faced with the inability of the institution to deal with the harassment, Kirpal starts to adopt a rather macho attitude:

> K: I just, give them three chances. I can't give them more. I just, get angry. When they start to pushing and, hitting me, I don't, care. I just, I just close my eyes and, just say 'Help me oh God'. I just, I just, when they punch me. One day, you know Gabir? Gabir yeah, he was saying, 'You will fight, yeah. Everybody is scared of me in this school'. I said 'No, they never'. Then Miss Adams (the head teacher) was see us and 'You will get (small pause), you will loosing chances'. And he said, 'No, I was not'. Then, then we had a fight, big fight and they, they called his friend, I didn't call my friend because I don't want them in my trouble. I was fighting Gabir. Then he, Gabir's friends punching me in my face, in my back. Eh, I punching them back (smooth tone of voice in this last phrase).

During one of the playtimes I saw Kirpal adopting such a macho attitude. He was standing alone close to the main wall of the playground, presenting a defiant-heroic body posture while shouting at some boys 'Do you wanna get me? Come and get me'. His egalitarian gender conception gives way, at this moment, to a very macho performance. The peer relations in the new country reconfigure his notion of

masculinity, encouraging him to adopt a very positional approach. The masculine performance adopted in the peer group's context is based on the concept predominant in the English speaking countries. This concept is mainly built around a particular perception of the male body, a body that is driven by and performs action (Connell 1995).

Kirpal's change of response towards the racism suffered at school is a result of the failure of such an institution in dealing with the issue of racism. And such failure is due to several discourses, beliefs and practices adopted by the institution that are going to be closely described and analysed in the next chapter. The process of migration reconfigured Kirpal's experience of racism based on religious persecution. If in England he experiences a more protected environment, on the other hand he is encouraged to respond to this form of discrimination in a more active way since racism now makes part of his daily interactions.

Conclusion

When arriving in a new country, refugee children are confronted with specific responses that are a result of the hegemonic culture of the host place: the diverse ways different groups in such a country represent them as children; and how the children themselves will experience the new place and respond to the multiple questions that their presence evokes. As such, being a refugee child does not constitute a uniform experience. A net of positionalities – colour, gender, social class, language, country of origin and religion – and past experiences is constructed throughout their existence, crosscutting the diasporic condition.

The seductions of the white world were presented to Mariana previous to her process of migration. In Angola, Brazilian soap operas, which portray whiteness as the desirable reality, and her mother's history of mirroring the white body of her teacher/master during her childhood, made up part of her family's repertoire. But England is whiter, and Mariana accepted the school's offer of an English name and its

disciplinarian imposition as a way of swapping colour. She regards the process of migration as a condition and opportunity of becoming white.

Armand's response to institutional racism constitutes the negative of Mariana's. For him, assimilation is not a desirable solution. His colour, associated with his gender and his willingness in making his needs explicit, is understood by the institution as the personification of the stereotype of the black male - intrinsically disruptive and potentially violent. Armand responds to the institutional dynamic of highlighting his presence through successive warnings and punishmentby resisting, making himself even more visible. Nevertheless, the purpose of Armand's strategy of making himself visible is to make himself heard. The school ignores this fact, continuing to highlight his body.

If visibility seems to be a fundamental condition of black people in the white world, Malaika chooses to make her body/self invisible. Her strategy of evanescence seems to constitute an alternative to her failed attempts of affirming her blackness. Instead of making the decision to be either a black girl or a white girl, she opts to become a baby girl. Reinforcing the generational identity, she struggles in erasing her blackness.

If for Mariana and Malaika the process of accommodation implies an assimilationist attitude, in Deniz's case, it points to a pragmatic way of dealing with life opportunities in the new country. Although she is aware that her foreignness, including her language and her condition as a refugee, are factors that transform her into the other, she utilizes her resistance in a very positional way: fighting harassment from other children's while taking advantage of the educational system to improve her language in order to assure a better occupational future.

For Kirpal the confrontational situation between Muslims and Sikhs has been made actualised by the process of migration. The sign of religious identity on his body constitutes a constant signifier of difference. Nevertheless, he is not guided by strict dichotomies nor uniform responses. He understands that positionalities should not be understood in an essentialist way, and constructs positive interactions with some Muslim children.

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As observed in chapter one, refugees are viewed by the general population and law as the "unidentifiable other". The multiplicity of their subject-positions that are taken as othering factors is always uneven, escaping intentions of control. In the school context, on the other hand, through a more direct contact the refugee children have their identitarian positions more clearly identifiable. What follows is a miscellany of subjectification by powers that exclude. In this way, for each of the participants in the research project, the matter of racism operated in diverse ways. The term 'refugee child' was then deconstructed in order to assert that it has elements of gender, colour, ethnicity, religion and country of origin. As a result, the experiences of discrimination multiplied the conditions of being a refugee child in the Island.

4. Institutional Discourses Positioning Refugee Children

As we shall observe throughout the current chapter, the school determines social aspirations in relation to children, regarding differences based on generation, gender, social class, colour, ethnicity, language, religion and country of origin. In the first chapter we recognised that in the hegemonic media refugees are almost always represented through the figure of the adult male. Being made invisible, the issue of refugee children is not widely problematized, apart from moments when a policy is proposed that will affect their lives as a particular group.

The issue of the integration of these children into British society gained public attention when a clause of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill 2002 proposed their exclusion from the mainstream educational system. Several segments of society called attention to the systematic segregation involved in such a proposal and to the positive aspects of having refugee children taking a full part in the schools' dynamics (White and Travis 2002). Representatives of The Association of Teachers and Lectures (ATL), the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT) and the National Union of Teachers (NUT) wrote a common letter addressed to the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, condemning what they saw as a segregative proposal. This also made clear their own understanding that mainstream schools are fundamental to the integration of refugee children (Refugee Council 2002).

Nevertheless, the educational institution does not operate in a social vacuum. The power relations that traverse its sphere are related to the inequalities that determine the lives of people in the broader society. Therefore, although the educational system has particularities that constitute its ethos, we must be careful not to see such characteristics as an intrinsic attribute. We need to relate the discourses and practices of this institution to those operating in the wider society (Mac an Ghaill 1988, Pollard 1985, Wolpe and Donald 1993).

In the previous chapter we saw how refugee children in Green Park Primary and Nursery School responded to institutional racism, and the conscious and unconscious strategies utilised by them to deal with this form of discrimination. In the present chapter, we shall look more closely at the way institutional racism operates:

how organizational acts are discriminatory in their effects, although not necessarily in their intention (Gillborn 1998, Mac an Ghaill 1988).

Frieda's position in the school is a clear example of the individual acting in an unintentional way. She was one of the most important contributors to this research. Besides being a warm human being and a very serious and reflexive professional, she is extremely committed towards the refugee children and very much appreciated by them. Nevertheless, although she has positives intentions, she sometimes acts in discriminatory ways. This is a case of 'Individuals not speaking discourse, but of discourse speaking the individual'. This research does not have a moral purpose. I am opposed to the politics of 'naming and shaming' of schools implemented by the central government. The purpose of this work is rather a political and, I hope, constructive one: offering insights with the intention of challenging relations based on power.

It is not my intention to blame individual teachers for the reproduction of racial discourses and practices; rather it is to look at the way racism operates in the institutional space with the intention of helping to raise an awareness among the teachers of the mechanisms of operation of this kind of power (Mac an Ghaill 1988 6). Following Gillborn's advice, we should

> go beyond individualistic analysis of personal 'prejudice' to examine how racism operates as a complex and multifaceted aspect of school life; one that links the wider structures of power in society with the minutia of classroom experience and control. (1998: 35)

The response of the Green Park Primary and Nursery School to the presence of refugee children constitutes a complex discursive net, materialized through daily practices. This response will position the children in distinctive ways: as part of the area they are located in, as individuals and as a group. Some of the discourses and practices that this chapter is going to analyse – discipline, multiculturalism, assimilationism, and a belief in childhood innocence - constitute the basis of educational policies that have guided the school system in England in specific historical periods. It is not my intention study such theories/practices in depth. Rather it is to illustrate – through classroom and assembly observations and interviews with

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the teachers - how these conceptions, still operating in the present moment, giving the school the means to deal with refugee children.

Discipline as an exclusionary power

In the book *Within School Walls*, Wolpe observes the importance of analysing the exercise of discipline throughout the study of the educational institution due to its presence in all aspects of the school's culture in reaching its individuals:

> Any analysis, it will be argued, must take as its starting point disciplinary control because this is at the very nub of school organization and creates the conditions in which the pedagogic purposes of the school may be realized. This then provides the base point from which the analysis of gender differences may occur because disciplinary measures structure the basis under which all other processes within the school life and *all* participants – female, male, teachers, pupils alike – are subjected to some form of control. (1988: 20)

Although I agree that discipline constitutes the *ethos* of the educational institution, it ought to be contextualised in relation to its implications for the wider society, as well the subject positions occupied by those who constitute its most evident targets. In a disciplinarian society, the role of such a form of power is to prepare individuals to conform to the various aspects of daily life (Foucault 1991). The rituals imposed on the children in the school will be internalized by them and will be actualized outside the ambit of the institution. Referring to the modern era as the germinal moment of the discipline of children by the school, adults and family, Rodrigues (1994) observes that 'At this point is born the ideal of total schooling of society. The ideal of serial production of adults that are adequate to it'[1] (1999: 124).

Regarding the association between the school's discipline and preparation for life in society, Wolpe observes how a discursive strategy is employed by popular culture to conceive the notion of discipline in terms of morality:

> Although disciplinary control may be a necessary condition for the containment of individuals within an institutional context, this functionality is

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[1] My translation.

not reflected in popular culture. Rather the discourse is usually in terms of moral order. What constitutes moral order is variously described, but there are several common features. Moral order is seen as the outcome of proper supervision and training in the home, correct disciplining in school and the teaching of what constitutes the moral code. It is necessary for each successive generation to be taught the correct moral values of society. It results in the development amongst individuals of a rational process which directs behaviour. (1988: 21)

The ritual of space imposed by the school is one of the best examples of the interchangeable character of disciplinarian power in relation to such an institution and daily life. During my field observation, I was impressed with the school's sense of valorization regarding the practice of lining up. Although such practice is applied in schools in Brazil, I would say that overall, it is not as strict as in England. I remember that at school, lining up meant solely walking in an arranged order: one child in front of another one. I cannot recall being obliged to stay completely in silence, facing the front direction, nor a disproportionate amount of time spent by the teacher to organize it. During one of the lining ups at Green Park I counted the amount of time a teacher took to control the children: five minutes.

The demands a teacher makes in disciplining the children at the end of the playtime is a good example of how the rest of the society is invoked in preparation for life outside. During one of the assemblies a teacher complains about the children's lack of discipline and after stating the rituals the students must follow she asks them in a very authoritarian voice: 'How should you line up? What should everyone in the street see? What should we hear?' Her words make explicit that is not only the school that demands such discipline, and that is not only the school that is exercising this control. It is also people outside; the whole of society is implicated in this surveillance.

In Green Park, lining up seems to be an extreme exercise of the teacher's authority. Here, more than a controlled ordering of the institution's space or an institutional assertion, it represents the inculcation of a lifestyle, the preparation for an extremely ordered society. Discipline over the children's bodies is very detailed: they

have to face the front all the time, keep in complete silence and not touch any other child[2].

During the event mentioned earlier, when the teacher spent five minutes disciplining the children to/during the lining up, she was clear about the punitive character of this moment, counting in a loud voice the amount of time the children were wasting at the beginning of lunch time. The punishment in this context is not only utilised as a reaction to undesirable behaviour, but also to promote better conduct that is adequate to everyday life. The lining up ritual is replicated in several contexts: to get onto the bus[3]; in the extremely ordered traffic dynamic; in the cinema, where everybody watches a film in absolute silence, almost not moving the body; respect for the order of attendance in a bank line and so on. In this respect Foucault observes that:

> On the whole, therefore, one can speak of the formation of a disciplinary society in this movement that stretches from the enclosed disciplines, a sort of 'quarantine', to an indefinitely generalizable mechanism of 'panopticism'. Not

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[2] It seems that the issue of discipline is the one with which Frieda finds herself most implicated. After reading this section of the thesis, she observed that in Germany the schools are much more disciplinarian and that when she arrived in England she was trying to reproduce this approach with the children, without success. She then responded to my observations about discipline; according to her, she has not 'stopped thinking about it'. Afterwards she even justified herself to the children at school observing, that her request for lining up is not based on the affirmation of her power. And, indeed, according to Foucauldian principles, she has no power, since power itself cannot be possessed. Instead, power is also "playing" with her, locating her in a determined way in relation to the children (Foucault, 1980).

[3] The issue of the lining up to get into the bus was a point of discordance between Richard Johnson and me. According to him, lining up to get onto the bus in England is a matter of fairness rather than discipline. I decided to conduct a small survey among my English friends who confirmed Richard's assertion. On the other hand, when I put the same problem to my Brazilian friends, they were unanimous in the perception that discipline, and not only a sense of fairness, is at play in such a ritual in England. One of my friends – another anthropologist - added that the fact that English people are so immersed in a disciplined way of life prevents them from realising when it is discipline that guides a certain kind of behaviour.

As I am revising this footnote, the fire alarms of the university buildings are activated. Not being sure if it is a training alarm or not - since I cannot smell any smoke - I get out of the building, just in case. Arriving there, one of the secretaries tells me it is a training session. I start discussing with her the irrelevance of such training. My argument is that everyone knows that when the fire alarm is making a noise, she/he should get out of the building; that nobody should need to be trained to give such a simple response. She replies that it is a legal requirement and that they have to train. We carry on the discussion and she presents the same argument to me: they have to train. The first thought that comes into my mind is 'Why do those who design the safety procedure treat English people as unintelligent? If that happened in Brazil people would start making jokes about the absurdity of the situation'. Again, one could say that it is a matter of safety. For me, however, it seems to be, again, a disciplinarian demand, an over-valorization of the need for people to move in the space in a ordered way, of attending commands without thinking about it, as the secretary did. Obviously it is not a matter of absence of intelligence, it is a matter of being operated through a disciplinarian discourse that guides English people in the most banal aspects of their lives. Paraphrasing Rodrigues, it is a matter of the schooling of the society.

because the disciplinary modality of power has replaced all others; but because it has infiltrated the others, sometimes undermining them, but serving as an intermediary between them, linking them together, extending them and above all making it possible to bring the effects of power to the most minute and distant elements. It assures an infinitesimal distribution of the power relations. (1991: 216)

In Brazil, by contrast, even if in some schools the discipline is more effective and the lining up more controlled/controlling, we cannot see an extension of this kind of power throughout daily life. In this context, whoever gets into the bus first is the one who walks fastest towards the entrance, or a silent agreement is established to let the people who arrived first get into the transport; car drivers frequently get impatient if those in front are driving at a slower pace (a common scene is of drivers trying to overtake the one in front or using the horn with impatience); in the cinema, people sit in a more relaxed way and sometimes make comments about the film to a partner.

In the year 2004, some results of my research were presented at the 24th Conference of the ABA – Brazilian Association of Anthropology. Some members of the public who were watching the presentation were quite impressed with my description of the discipline applied in Green Park. That moment attested that our shared perception of such control as being fairly rigid – as well as the daily experiences above described - points to a common cultural pattern related to discipline.[4] Therefore in the school's case it not only a matter of an isolated institution following a specific ethos; it is about more general cultural characteristics that have been highlighted by my own gaze, which is also culturally determined.

Besides the fact that in England the school's discipline is a preparation for life in the broader society, it is not applied to different groups of people in a uniform way. It positions people differently in the social structure, implying that some people are more in need of control than others. As pointed out in the second chapter, as a result of housing policy, refugee children are allocated to working-class areas, being automatically positioned as socially disadvantaged. In my first day of research in the school, Frieda pointed out to me that the work in such an institution is very

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[4] One of the people at the presentation expressed doubts in relation to the veracity of my account, implying that I could be exaggerating the facts. Another researcher intervened confirming my

challenging. Without offering further explanations, she argued that in Bendington, another neighbourhood, the children were better behaved. Green Park and Bendington are both working class neighbourhoods. Using the children's behaviour as a point of reference, Frieda makes explicit a social evaluation based on the degree of internalization of discipline by the children. In this way, although the school does not regard refugee children as a particular group in need of discipline, the fact that they are allocated to a working-class area makes them more susceptible to this control.

However, as I argued at the beginning of this chapter, although discipline is a form of power that reaches everyone in the school context, its exercise operates in different fashions depending on the subject positions occupied by the individuals. With regards to Armand, the institution clearly positions him in terms of the stereotype of the disruptive black male. Even though, at times, no reference is made in relation to his colour, the issue of ethnicity is made present, positioning him as absolutely different:

> L: Do you think is there some needs the refugee children have that are different from the other children in general?
>
> Grace: I don't think so in general. I do with special cases, different cases. And with one of the little boys who was in my class last year. He, he is Armand. His behaviour was different to other refugee children I ever had in my class before. So he was very needy, he, misbehaved quite often. So he, he had different needs than the others. But the other children, all the refugee had distinctive needs in class just as well any other child had, whether refugee or being from England. And it just depends on the individual and the circumstances to be honest.

Grace seems to understand the concept of need as a synonym of behaviour. When I ask her about the needs of refugee children she answers in terms of their behaviour – more specifically, Armand's behaviour: 'His behaviour was different to other refugee children I ever had in my class before. So he was very needy, he, misbehaved quite often.' She positions him/his behaviour as totally different, since it diverges from the behaviour of all the refugee children, 'ever'.

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description. The fact that someone was suspicious of the truthfulness of my description attests that such practices are strange to most parts of the schools and daily life in Brazil.

Even though Grace begins her statement by avoiding generalizing the needs/behaviour of refugee children, categorising the children as individuals, she ends up classifying their needs/behaviour as uniform, in contrast to Armand's ones: 'But the other children, all the refugee had distinctive needs in class just as well any other any child had, whether refugee or being from England. And it just depends on the individual and the circumstances to be honest.' Once more Grace emphasizes the specificity, the individuation of the needs/behaviour of refugee children. But Armand is the only child to be taken as example, not of what he needs, but in relation to his indiscipline: 'So he was very needy, he, misbehaved quite often'.

L: And which do you think were the needs of Armand?

G: He needed a lot of attention and he needed to realise that he had to share his time, or I had to share my time in the class. That he had to share his time with the children, and his belongings with the other children. And, hum, he needed a lot of loving and, but not in a direct way. So I've been directly by choosing him for things and putting him in a group which would net him in a way and putting him with children who would show him how to work and how to behave. Basically giving him a good role model. He needed a lot of that.

L: In which way he needed role models?

G: How to sit nice on the carpet, how to share his things, how to play with the children. He, he didn't seem to have, he never been to school in England before he came here, so, just the concept is different. So basically is going from the beginning, showing how to do everything, how to interact with each other. So role model in that sense, how to speak to other children, how to speak to adults. So needing role models he is helping other children as well. So sitting with a group, he could do that for, you know, do that with him.

Grace's notion of Armand's needs is not based on what a refugee child must require as a result of the experience of forced migration[5], or particularly what Armand requires as a result of his tragic life history. It is not related to what he needs for himself, or what the institution should offer him. Rather, it is associated with what the institution expects of him: a child conformed to its disciplinarian demands. Even when Grace declares that Armand needs 'a lot of loving', that loving should be

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[5] Like traumatic experiences in the form of kidnapping, torture, persecution and loss of relatives (Rutter, 2001b).

handled in an 'indirect way'. Her solution to his need of loving is not offering love, it is disciplining him, offering him good role model.

L: And why do you think he had these different needs?

G: I think because of his background, when he came to England from an African country, he never been to a school before. Never spoke the language before he came here. His parents have been killed in a volcano in Congo, and a lot of his sisters, brothers and sisters. So he not actually spent a lot of time with children, either. And he's been used to get attention from his aunty who he lives with in England. She was doing a really good job with with him, a wonderful job, she was teaching him English as well. So I think that was, he was... very self-centred, self-absorbed. Because he was used to have the attention from everybody because his family has died, and his aunty took him, it was just the two of them. And, and Goodness knows what it was going through his head, you know. I wouldn't even like to begin to think about how, you know, how his feelings and everything is like gone up.

To my question about the different needs of Armand she first answers in terms of disciplinarian background: 'he never been to a school before'. This fact is not exclusively related to Armand; other refugee children at school, like Kirpal and Mariana, have not attended school previous to their migration to England either. Following that, she cites another fact that is not related exclusively to Armand's experience, but to the majority of refugee children at school, that is the language issue: 'Never spoke the language before he came here'.

The last cause she quotes is the tragedy that happened in Congo: 'His parents have been killed in a volcano in Congo, and a lot of his sisters, brothers and sisters'. However, she does not mention this fact in order to understand it as a traumatic event; instead, it is brought up to explain Armand's condition as a difficult child: 'So I think that was, he was... very self-centred, self-absorbed'. Grace's understanding of Armand's issues is based on the individualistic assumption that he was "spoiled" by his aunt and that he was given too much attention. Now the role of the school is to assure that he will learn new patterns of behaviour suitable to the institutional disciplinarian ethos.

When speaking about Kirpal's difficulties, Grace employs the notion of the individual as a possible cause for his problems, although she seems to understand the impact of his previous experiences on his initial adaptation within the school context:

> G: He found it quite difficult to be honest. And he even wrote stories in the class, which relate to his time in Afghanistan and there was something about guns and I think these things affected him quite badly really. And he had difficulties related to the other children and they did with him as well. They weren't accepting of Kirpal as that happened with the other refugee children I had. For whatever reasons, I don't know whether it was just because he, his personality, so regardless he was a refugee or not. And I do think he past affected him because of the stories he wrote and the facts that he did find happening at the time. I mean, he's not in my class now, so I'm not sure what is his friendship basis now. I don't know who is friends with him.

Once again, Armand is the child to be individualised. His problems are essentalized as intrinsic to his personality. Following Grace's pattern of individualising Armand's issues, Frieda locates discipline as one of the sources of his problems[6]:

> F: I think there were different things with him. I think this was one of his personal problems which probably you know, personal skills he didn't have which made his life in school or in group situations very difficult. He also... (Pause) What was I going to say? (very low tone of voice, like speaking to her self) I think he, you know, he was kind of. He probably found it very hard to cope with the system, the school system that is kind of very open. And doesn't really have, you know, if I compare with German school system like, probably anywhere else in the world, is much stricter in Germany, is also much clear about everything and the expectations. And in England, in the school system is often very kind of (pause)... Eh, I can't find a better word, sometimes a bit wishy-washy, where you know, where the lines are to draw, but everybody seems to know. But when you are kind of a foreigner, not accustomed to the system, is sometimes quite hard to know, where to draw the line. I think he probably have difficulties with that as well.

It is interesting to point out, once again, the cultural perception of the rigidity of discipline in the educational institution. One of my colleagues who studied with me, a German woman, once expressed the same idea as Frieda in relation to the imprecise character of hierarchies in the educational system in England. As pointed out earlier, to me, who comes from a much less disciplinarian society than the English

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and the German ones, discipline in the school is not only clear, but also very rigid. Nevertheless, what matters at this point is not Armand's perception of the degree of discipline in the school, but the teachers' notion that his problems must be interpreted in the light of this form of control.

Being the only refugee child to be individualized, and taken as an example of the undisciplined pupil, Armand is understood to be the one who is out of order throughout all contexts of school's life, since discipline traverses the institution's whole milieu. In Armand's case, the disciplinarian discourse is utilised as a rhetorical apparatus to position him as different without making a direct reference to his colour. Another interpretation is possible and Robert, Deniz's teacher[7], seems to have a different understanding of Armand's needs, relating them to his traumatic past experience:

> L: You said that the families they have kind of individual needs and children as well. Can you see any kind of pattern in these needs, or do you think that that is only individual? Or which needs do think these children individually they have?
>
> R: Well, we had some children who came perhaps without parents. And I can think of one child in fact who I think had an auntie over here, hem, and he was quite traumatized by what happened in his own country.
>
> L: Are you speaking about Armand?
>
> R: Yes, and his needs were clearly very different from family unity that comes and a lot of them seem to have, have, very strong family units. Whereas the children perhaps feel quite secure in the unit but, obviously they have been removed, they are in a different part of the world, hum, a different culture from what they are used to. So I mean, that, Armand's needs were very different because he was you know, he seemed completely traumatised when he first came. So I think there are differences between individual children, yeah, certainly.

Robert relates to a concept that neither Grace nor Frieda referred to in their accounts of Armand: trauma. Armand became for them the depositary of the notion of the child who is failing in accomplishing the modern model of individuality; the child

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[6] In this respect, Frieda later commented that she did not mention his life experience as a cause for his challenging behaviour because, according to her, that was already explicit.

[7] Deniz always refers to Robert in a very positive way. She does not seem to feel or experience any kind of discrimination from him.

who is able to express its issues through the use of reason, instead of conflict (Walkerdine 1985). In parallel to the matter of Armand's racialization – the aggressive black male - there is the also the issue of the teachers' difficulties in dealing with the experiences of the refugee children. In Grace's words: 'Goodness knows what it was going through his head'.

In a questionnaire designed and handed out by Frieda to the staff regarding the refugee children at school, Grace observed that some of these children had parents who died and that she does not know how to support them emotionally. What was going through Armand's head, what Armand lived, is something that cannot be acknowledged. It has to be kept there, with him alone, and the easier or possible solution is to rationalize the entire situation through the commands of discipline. The dream of discipline is the dream of order, of conformity to a set of rules that does not take into account life history, emotions and trauma. It offers the cold illusion of control and of resolution.

During my conversation with Frieda regarding her reading of this thesis, she observed that many teachers do not want to get involved with the problems of the refugee children as a way of not becoming overwhelmed by their accounts[8]. She observed that she also finds it very difficult to deal with these kinds of problems. Nevertheless, there is willingness on the part of the school in offering support for refugee children. For example, they have institutionalized a space – every Monday afternoon – to receive the children's parents and offer any help regarding practical or emotional issues. They also have a box where children can leave a letter regarding any difficulties they are experiencing.

Nevertheless, a real difficulty seems to be established in dealing with the direct issues of the refugee children. Frieda also observed that in a teacher meeting it was decided that the teachers should refer to the matter of refugees during the lessons, although not making explicit to the children that there actually are refugee children at school. In not speaking about the presence of refugee children in the school, the

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[8] She also highlighted the lack of training as one of the reasons for difficulties in dealing with emotional issues of the refugee children. This does not constitute an isolated case, since the literature

teachers are in reality transforming their identity and experiences into a taboo. Stead et al. (2002) observe that invisibility and non-acknowledgement leads to a structural process of marginalization. In this way, the teachers in Green Park are not protecting the children at school from getting in touch with the traumas of the refugee children; they are actually protecting themselves. They cannot speak about it because they cannot know about it. Instead of opening a psychological space to listen to the refugee children, the teachers discipline them[9].

The disciplinarian notion of the "role model", which is actualized by the system of praise, in general punishes refugee children when they react to racist bullying by their peers. The system of praise, based on rewards for disciplined behaviour, works as a stimulus to a desirable performance. The school's main strategy of praise consists in handing some cards to the children - the so-called 'chance cards' – throughout the day. At the end of every Friday, the children put all the chance cards with their names on them in a box. Some cards are then picked out and exchanged for chocolates. Therefore, whoever has more cards, has more chances to gain the prize.

When Kirpal tells me about the bullying of a racist nature he suffers from other children, I ask him who helps him, to which he responds:

K: (Long pause) Nobody.

L: Nobody helps you?

K: Yeah.

L: But you said that you tell the teachers…

K: Yeah, yeah, but they still doing that. Then I stop to tell the teachers.

L: But you said the teachers; they were sending letters at home.

K: Yeah, yeah, but, yeah. Look, when I tell the teachers they still doing this. Then I **stop** to tell the teachers. First when I come to school I never fight, I

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concerning refugee children and education also refers to this difficulty. See for example Jones and Rutter (2001).
[9] In this respect Yule (2001) observes that children in general can be very sensitive to adult's reactions and if they perceive difficulties on the adult's part in listening to their accounts, they restrain themselves from exposing them.

never, ever fight. **All** chance cards pocket **full** of my chance cards. I got every single prize, Miss Bell (Grace), when I was Miss Bell class. When, when they start to bully me, I got **non**-chance card because I **fight** with them.

L: So, you started loosing your chance cards because you were replying, fighting back the children?

K: I just, give them three chances. I can't give them more. I just, get angry.

This institutional method of positive response to the children's behaviour ends up having a negative effect on the individuals who act to contest harassment. It does not take into account the complex net of issues that motivate the children's behaviour, focusing solely on their conformity to disciplined conduct. In this way, it disregards the bullying of a racist nature suffered by the refugee children at the same time as it punishes them when it does not recognise their predictable behaviours.

The system of praise also functions as an additional othering factor in relation to children who suffer racist discrimination from teachers. As we could see in the last chapter, Armand is highlighted by the institution and this exposure is actualized by disciplinary methods. In contrast to Kirpal, he is the target of a more direct punishment as well as of exclusion through the system of praise. In the interview extract below he explains why he gets sad with Mark, the trainee teacher who frequently picks on him:

L: Why do you get sad with him?

A: I don't know.

L: You don't know?

A: I forgot.

L: You forgot? OK.

A: Like, eh, I know. Like if I three warnings yeah? And, and my three warnings finish yeah? When I put my name in the board yeah? And, I feel (small pause), eh, hungry for that.

L: And the other teachers, what do you think about the other teachers?

A: The same.

L: Why the same?

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A: Because some time they do the same on me. Eh, Mr. Bolton (Mark) but, they don't really give me lots of, like, free chances [chance cards].

The fact that he initiates our discussion by avoiding speaking about the treatment conferred by the teachers testifies to the impact this subject has on him. He understands the method of praise to be as penalizing as the public exposure. He starts referring to punitive techniques like the warnings and names on the board[10] and finishes stating that the other teachers adopt the same procedures in relation to him, this time relating it to the fact that he does not get many chance cards.

Classrooms are highly evaluative settings. This is an effect of the structure of broader society as well as the teacher's privileged position. This implies that classrooms are often threatening for children, making them feel vulnerable through constant evaluation. Praise and evaluation have a direct impact on children's self-image and self-respect (Pollard 1985).

It seems that the broader educational system shares the idea of discipline as the solution to the problem of some refugee children, at least, in Armand's case. When I carried out the interview with Frieda, she pointed out that she requested psychological treatment for Armand. A behaviour consultant, indicated by the LEA (Local Educational Authority), went to the school to observe Armand's behaviour and reported that the strategies Frieda had in place were enough to attend to his issues. When I asked her what these strategies were, she responded in terms of a disciplinarian approach that condenses the role-model perspective - already discussed by Grace - and the system of praise:

F: Hum, praise was one. So, hum, it was very much, hum, not telling him, not giving him a negative picture of him. So not saying he's not doing that right, but like go round, you know, if he was messing about and I would say, you know, Gabir was sitting next to Armand, 'You sitting so lovely', and I would go round and eventually he would do that as well. That was one of the strategies. Being very clear with him and telling what is expected. Sometimes

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[10] The warning consists of a threat made to the children inferring that their names can be put on the board. The 'name on the board' is a disciplinary strategy that consists in exposing the children's names on the white board that is divided into the 'sad side' – relating to the undisciplined children – and the 'happy side' – relating to the disciplined children. At the end of the day the children either gain chance cards, or have an amount of time missed from the 'golden time' – which consists in an extra time of leisure every Friday afternoon.

ignoring when he was shouting out and when he would put up his hand and actually say 'Well done' and things like that.

L: Was only you who was having these strategies with him, or the other teachers as well?

F: The other teachers, yeah. I mean, these are normal strategies, you would apply to like, any child, more or less.

We must remember the subject-positions occupied by the teachers who were applying discipline as a strategy to deal with Armand and Kirpal's resistant behaviour: they were all white. Not having ever had the experience of being racialized, it seems to be difficult for them to fully empathise and understand that these children's "disruptive" forms of behaviour are also responses to the racism suffered from the people in the institution.

On the other hand, Deniz points out that she can count on the complicity of a black male teacher when she responds to harassment in a rather aggressive way:

D: In literacy there is Ifzal. I said that monkeys like peoples cause when they gonna eat something yeah, they wash it first and eat it. So he laughs at me and I just fight with him last year. Eh, ripped his coat and teacher did nothing to me because he knows when I do get crossed yeah, I will do something to them. Because when I get very, very crossed, hem do you know Mr. Thompson? So he helps me. He doesn't tell me to head teacher somewhere. He didn't told me to the head teacher because when he was going to tell the head teacher yeah, then a letter gonna come my house. So is gonna go my book. So when I get changing this school that will be bad.

L: And he is the only one who helps you in this way?

D: Yes. But when I get crossed yeah, I don't care the letter. I'll punch his face. (Laughs)

It seems that as result of the history of migration and racialization that traverses the life of African-Caribbean people and their descendents in England they are more able to empathise with the discriminatory way that refugee children are treated, although this is not necessarily always the case. Although the majority of teachers in the school knew the themes of my research, another black teacher, Andrew, was the only person who approached me pointing out the relationship between racism and the lives of refugee people in this country. According to Andrew

– an African-Caribbean man who was born and grew up in Green Park - he cannot understand how some African-Caribbeans discriminate against refugees while their parents went through the same harassment the refugees have been suffering.[11]

Robert's practice and Andrew account are exemplary of the fact that although an institution and society have practices and discourses that are hegemonic they do not operate without resistance. Different subject positions can result in contestation and a possibility of different relationships based on understanding of the experiences of exclusion.

Multiculturalism dismissing ethnic inequalities

In my first day of research at school Frieda tells me that the school is very much suits the presence of refugee children because of its 'multicultural ethos'. The multicultural educational paradigm that emerged in England during the 1970s is based on the conception of equality of opportunities among the students without, according to its critics, taking into consideration the disparities that underlie institutional relations as well as broader society, disparities such as class, gender and colour (Rattansi 2003, Troyna 1992). This paradigm understands prejudice as a result of ignorance and prescribes as a solution the curricular study of "other cultures" (Rattansi 2003). In this way, multiculturalism celebrates "diversity" by trapping people in their "differences", without taking into consideration how theses differences are constructed, or the daily practices of exclusion.

Walking through the corridors of the school and observing the classrooms' decoration, one can see an institutional effort to promote a multicultural perspective. The presence of children's books in several languages, pictures of Mosques, black artists and African children, seem to constitute an institutional effort to send the message "everybody matters", without taking into account the hierarchies established among the people these pictures represent or the powers of the hegemonic culture.

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[11] A friend of mine, of African-Caribbean descent, once expressed to me the same view offering the same account presented by Andrew.

Briefly citing Rutter, one can see that the collapse of the multiculturalist perspective is already acknowledged. Multiculturalism failed to overcome the differences that underlie the groups of people in the school:

> From the mid-1970s multicultural education was criticised as being a liberal response to the deep-rooted problem of racism. Multicultural education did not overcome the underachievement of certain groups of school students, particularly African-Caribbean boys, nor address the many manifestations of racism in British society. Some schools and LEAs began to develop policies which aimed to confront racism and promote equality of opportunity.[12] (2001b: 71)

The issue of multiculturalism also emerges right at the beginning of the interview with Frieda, when she links it to the matter of setting up peer relations when the refugee children first arrive at school:

> F: But I think in our school is not too bad because we have multicultural and lots of these children have somebody in the school who speaks their language.

Robert also shares the point of view that the multicultural ethos discourages the students at school from discriminating against the refugee children:

> L: Do you think the children have some kind of reaction because the refugee children are foreigner, because they have another background?
>
> R: I don't think so. I mean, certainly not in this school because, I mean, we do have children from so many different backgrounds anyway. You know, we always have them. So I mean, I don't think them, I mean, I'm pretty sure that doesn't cause any problems at all.
>
> L: Not even religion, or ethnic background?
>
> R: No, no. I mean; we got a really good programme throughout RE and so on in the school, you know. And a really, a really pretty good understanding I would say of, of, you know, other religions, different religions. We look at, hem, the six major religions in key stage two. Yeah, I mean, I think they are pretty; they are pretty well adjusted. And, yeah, I think everybody is accepted.

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[12] The policies Rutter is referring to are based on the anti-racist perspective that is going to be discussed later in the present chapter.

We must remember Kirpal's answer when I asked him why he thinks the children at school bully him: 'I don't know, because I'm a Sikh. And I got this thing on my head.' The "egalitarian" conception that underlies the multicultural paradigm - everybody having the same rights and opportunities regardless of background – prevents the institution from realising that the refugee children have been positioned as different in relation to the several aspects of their identity. As a result, the notion of individuality is raised, locating the source of the difficulties in the children's personalities.

Frieda sees Kirpal's issues as individual matters. According to her, he has a low self-esteem because of rivalry with a newborn brother[13]. She sees the way he has been differentiated by his colleagues not as prejudice, but as a result of the aesthetics of his clothes. She states that the children bully him because he wears something different on his head. We must remember that Kirpal is a Sikh boy who fled his country due to religious persecution by the wider Muslim population and is, at the present moment, studying in a school where the majority of the children are Muslim. Kirpal is not only wearing something different on his head, he is wearing a sign of his religious identity[14]. The source of the problems Kirpal has been experiencing at school is not solely an internal one. It is also located outside, in the interplay of the social relations and the various ways the institution and its members have positioned him as different.

Following a multicultural perspective of trapping people in a limited set of characteristics/ "differences", Frieda argues that the hybrid cultural background of the neighbourhood prevents the children who grew up there from discriminating against refugee ones:

> F: Yeah, they were born in here, the majority of them. But they still, I mean, the Pakistani children which is our biggest ethnic minority group like sixty per

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[13] I do not deny the impact that the birth of a sibling has on a child's dynamic and interaction at school. Nevertheless, in Kirpal's case, this event cannot be taken as the main cause for his difficulties.

[14] When I gave feedback of this research to Frieda she offered a more reflexive conception of racism pointing out, at this time, that what Sikh boys suffer at the hands of their colleagues at school is racism and not discrimination based on aesthetic taste.

cent[15], I think. They still live in their own kind of community. And they probably, their parents grew up in Green Park, and they will grow up, probably their children will grow up in Green Park as well. I think at the moment some are moving out in other areas, because of the house prices. But it still, and some of them are quite traditional. So, hum, people, is quite hard for them to get out of this. So, and also the language issue. Some of them, you know, at home they only speak Punjabi or Urdu. So in a way, that helps them to understand what it is like, for refugee children. Yeah, I think so.

L: Do you think in general they have, for example, a better understanding of what it is to be a refugee child, than for example, white English children?

F: I think so, yeah, yeah, I think so. But, you know, this is just what I think, that's is just my opinion. I've never worked in a... Well, I've worked in a white English school, but there were any refugee children. So, I don't know. I assume that this is the way. And our children are very open. And also, probably, they don't read the newspaper who say bad things about refugees, they don't. Our children, they don't really read newspapers, or their parents they don't really read newspapers. English ones, at all. So, I think they don't get the bad press about refugee children either.

Underlying Frieda's statement is the idea that the Asian community of the neighbourhood lives in an area apart, immune from the maladies of the outside world. I find it quite difficult to accept the idea that nobody in the Asian community reads the mainstream newspapers or does not even look at the first pages of the editions of tabloids that - as observed in chapter one - very often exhibit explicit campaigns against asylum seekers.

Her assertion that since the majority of the children at school 'live in their own culture', speaking their own language and that this 'helps them to understand what it is like, for refugee children' dismisses the fact that although their culture is different from the hegemonic white English, they are still English children. They do not live in an isolated world, completely apart from the occurrences of the rest of the city or country. Although Green Park has its peculiarities, it is not a completely closed system.

The children in the area are English children and the fact that they speak Punjabi or Urdu at home, does not prevent them from utilising their other language –

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[15] Lawrence (1982) calls attention to the fact that the term ethnic minority is used solely for children with dark skin. His point is attested by the fact that although the vast majority of the students at Green Park are of Asian descent they are still denominated an 'ethnic minority'.

English – to exclude some of the refugee children. We have already seen the strategies utilised by some children at school as a way of differentiating Deniz. These children play with the concept of Britishness and Asianess in a very positional way. The school's response to Deniz's difficulties regarding socialisation follows the assimilationist notion that she did not speak English at the beginning. Although, at the present time, Deniz speaks fairly good English, she still faces social difficulties. I understand Deniz's problems exist not only as result of her lack of knowledge of the English language, but also because she is positioned by the children as different, as the one who speaks a "different" language. The difference of her language marks the difference of her as a human being.

The school disregards the fact that the diverse positionalities of the refugee children - colour, religion, ethnic background, language, and country of origin - are understood by the institution as well as by the other children as factors of othering[16]. There is a culture of overlooking some of the refugee children's difficulties or of individualizing their issues. In this way the school often locates the sources of conflict in the refugee children themselves. It fails to recognise the discriminatory powers that determine social relations at school and in the wider society. As we observed in the last section, it also hides the teachers' difficulties in dealing with certain emotional issues and realities.

This section reiterates an argument already made in the previous chapter, namely, that prescribing knowledge of "other" cultures as a curricular strategy to deal with racism is a failed project. The refugee children have been othered by individuals as well as the institutional racism in their daily lives. Celebration of "other" cultures and intellectual acknowledgement of the "different" cultures neglects to address the inequalities that permeate the refugee children's lives under the veil of a sterile optimism.

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[16] We must remember Grace's attempt to celebrate the cultural "differences" by giving a lecture of a boy who went to a 'very different country'.

Assimilationism as a way of maintaining the status quo

The school's ethos is not constituted in a uniform way; it does not assume the shape of a unique discourse. Contradictory discourses very often coexist in the same institutional space, attesting the multifaceted character of social relations. Parallel to the multicultural perspective, we can observe assimilationist practices based on the monocultural paradigm, which seek the annihilation of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences (Troyna 1992).

Rutter observes that the assimilationist response to the presence of refugee children in English schools dates back many centuries:

> Today's refugee children are the latest in a long line of migrants and refugees who have entered British schools. Although separated by 200 years, the educational response to Huguenots and eastern European Jews was very similar. From 1680 until 1970 schools adopted *assimilationist* policies towards refugees and migrants. Teachers aimed to make 'little Englishmen' out of them as quickly as possible. (2001b: 70)

As argued earlier, what matters here is not the fact that assimilationism constituted a valid policy educational paradigm in a specific historic period. Rather, is the fact that it still plays a role in the school's ethos. The effects of this paradigm are made explicit when the school offers Mariana the possibility of choice of an English name – perhaps trying to make her become a little Englishwoman, in the words of Rutter. This seems to constitute the initial moment when Mariana is positioned as a foreigner. The choice of a child's name is the moment where a set of expectancies, social positions and family desires are bound together in order to locate the infant in relation to its culture, family history, social class and so on. The offer of an English name relocates Mariana in relation to the school's desire, and not the family's[17].

The institution's desires, expectations or needs seem very often to be the initial guidelines when refugee children arrive in the institution. We can examine

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[17] Regarding the contradictory positions/discourses in the institution, when I spoke about this matter with Frieda she expressed a clear concern and opposition in relation to the practice. Being a foreigner herself – we must remember, she is German - she once told me about her discomfort when people

Frieda's words when I asked her what constitute the necessities of the refugee children when they arrive:

> F: I think is quite important to give support when they first come. To make sure they know the routine, they know where to go and things like that. You know, it must be quite scary situation to come to a foreign country. You know, if they're new to the country, they don't know the language, the culture and so on. They don't know the expectations. I think is good to be with them to make sure they understand the expectations and things like that. And then I think second, you know, is to give them the language so they can communicate as well. Those are probably the main things. And make sure they make friends and things like that. But I think they will automatically if they kind of know a bit like the expectations and things like that, and, if the language gets better. But I think in our school is not too bad because we have multicultural and lots of these children have somebody in the school who speaks their language. And that helps, or, is, kind of, got the same culture, or similar culture, or the same religion which, which helps. Is not as scary, I think, for them to come to this school[18].

Frieda's account of the needs of refugee children is intermingled with the institution's needs. She starts her description stating that the school must make sure "they" know the routine; "they" know where to go. Basically, the children must learn to deal with the institution's dynamic. Her discourse starts with a one-way movement: what the children must do in relation to the school. After that she refers to the impact of arriving in a new country and lack of knowledge of codes like the language and the culture. Nevertheless, she does not refer to the acquisition of the knowledge of such codes in terms of empowerment[19]. In my point of view and from my own experience of getting to know the codes, the foreigner knows where she/he stands, and is able, with time, to understand what strategies she/he is going to utilise. This perspective acknowledges the possibility of negotiation. Through this viewpoint the foreigner is

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pronounce her name in funny ways. The partiality of her location in the institution makes her become more sensitive and aware of such issues.

[18] Another point that should be observed right at the end of Frieda's account is the matter of commonalities in relation to religious or cultural background. We must observe that the fact that two refugee children share a common subject position such as, for example, ethnicity, another subject position like religion can be presented in a conflictive way. Identity is not a unified entity, it is fragmented and its several aspects operate in positional ways. As illustration, according to Aasem, Deniz's mother, the majority Muslim Kurdish population are prejudiced against the Alevi Kurdish on the ground of religious differences.

[19] An alternative to this assimilationist practice was the EMAG teachers' creation of a space which offered computer classes to the parents of the refugee children and the establishment of an institutional space for these parents where they could search for advice related to the several difficulties in dealing with the life in the new country.

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taken as an agent, as somebody who makes choices in relation to the several sectors of culture and society: because, of course, culture and society are not homogeneous.

According to Frieda's account, the refugee children must learn the codes in order to be aware of the institution's expectations. The issue of socialization, which she regards as being the second most important need of the refugee children, is again seen as a matter of their conformity to the demands of the environment: 'And make sure they make friends and things like that. But I think they will automatically if they kind of know a bit like the expectations and things like that, and, if the language gets better'.

At the same time that the institution presents a strong rhetoric of celebration of diversity through the multicultural perspective, it demands from the refugee children conformity towards institutional expectations - which are very much traversed by the hegemonic culture. In Frieda's rhetoric, nothing was mentioned in relation to the contributions the refugee children could make through their perspectives of the world. The interplay between the multicultural and assimilationist ethos indicates that the celebration of difference is understood in a superficial way, in a way that does not threaten the desirable status quo.

Childhood innocence and the impossibility of acknowledging conflict

Childhood innocence constitutes another institutional discourse that prevents the recognition of the complex ways that refugee children are positioned in the school's context. As already explored in the first chapter, the French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1963) presented the modern concept of childhood innocence as navigated through oppositions such as nature/civilisation and childhood/adulthood. According to his perspective, childhood and nature are seen as intimately related in a positive way. On the other hand, adulthood and civilisation are also seen as closely linked, although in a negative manner. In our contemporary time, Holland (1992) exposes similar dichotomies. However, her perspective has a rather less comfortable

way of regarding the matter of childhood. She observes how adults construct concepts of childhood to reinforce contrasted notions of adulthood through a dynamic of power imbalance:

> The dichotomy child/adult is linked to other dichotomies which dominate our thought: nature/culture, primitiveness/civilization, emotion/reason. In each pair the dominant term seeks to understand and control the subordinate, keeping it separate but using it for its own enrichment. (1992: 14)

The dichotomies Holland refers to are representative of the modern project of rationality where culture, civilization and reason – attributes conferred on the adult world - are understood as positive. The notion of innocence seems, at first glance, to subvert the ethics of such polarisation awarding, at this time, childhood with the positive connotation. Nevertheless, it throws a veil over the adult's desire for a controlled child and, in the school's case, a controlled institution. The concept of innocence disallows the possibility of any contestation or conflict. In this way, the primary school being a privileged site of the construction and reproduction of concepts of childhood, the notion of innocence gives rise to the myth of an all-happy childhood, an all-happy institution, an all-happy nation.

The theme of one of the assemblies at the school was Martin Luther King 's life history. Grace, who is leading the session, states that when Martin Luther King was young there was a lot of hate in America[20] and that he helped to introduce love. When he was older, being no longer a child, he said 'I had a dream'. She continues with the narrative, saying that at that time black children were not allowed to play with white children and that he helped to bring love among children.

According to Grace's account, when Martin Luther King was a boy his parents taught him to treat everybody with respect, in her words, 'like we do today'. Following her description: 'He and his friends did it; but some people didn't. Some white children didn't mind about the colour and were playing with black children. Although they were not allowed to drink from the same cup as them.'

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[20] I am using the word America to denominate the United States of America, because that was the term used by Grace to refer to this country.

She then states that in his school he could not play with white children in the same way the children at Green Park Primary and Nursery School do, and that as time went by this situation in the United States of America changed. According to her, this change helped to bring people together. She finishes her account affirming: 'This makes Green Park, Great Britain and America so special'.

Pollard reminds us of the importance of school assemblies as a social space to reaffirm the institution's ethos:

> School assemblies highlight an institutional bias not only because they provide an occasion for transmitting and maintaining the values and perceptions of the head teacher and senior staff, but also because, being regular activities involving large numbers of children, the social stability or control which the institutional bias provide is often called for to maintain the order. (Pollard 1985: 125)

The school's narrative of Martin Luther King's life history presents several elisions that hide any account of the political struggle of black people against racism in the USA, at the same time failing to acknowledge that white people were/are the oppressors of the black community. The colour of the children who did not want to play with Martin Luther King is not mentioned. In this way, an important ethnic matter that could raise the children's awareness of the way they deal with their black peers and the forms of racism that operate nowadays at the social level is left aside. Instead, the account introduces past and present times as divided by an idealised interrupting line that establishes both periods as symmetrically opposed.

The history is recalled in order to be crystallised in the past, dismissing the fact that this past is continued through the new – and also not so new - ways racism is being expressed. The allusion to the past constructs the mythical notion of an all-happy childhood, an all-happy school, an all-happy nation: 'This makes Green Park, Great Britain and America so special'. The notion of childhood innocence is employed by the school in this context to promote a rather utopian notion of society.

Since the school's composition is clearly demarcated along the dichotomy white-teachers versus non-white-pupils, the assembly's account constitutes an attempt

to dismiss the fact that the encounter between both sides is traversed by the colonial burden. In this respect, Gandhi observes that

> we might conclude that the postcolonial dream of discontinuity is ultimately vulnerable to the infectious residue of its own unconsidered and unresolved past. Its convalescence is unnecessarily prolonged on account of its refusal to remember and recognise its continuity with the pernicious malaise of colonisation. (1998: 7)

Although the institution seeks the promotion of the idea of a non-conflictive setting, at least regarding the issue of racism, the children make it clear that they are aware that this notion does not correspond to the reality of social relations. Recalling the beginning of Martin Luther King's life history when he said 'I have a dream', Grace asks some children what their dreams are. Malaika responds 'Make everyone friends'. An overview at the primary schools' ethnographies confirm a rather different reality, namely that racism constitutes one of the frameworks through which young children conceptualize the world and their social relations (Connolly 1998a, Epstein 1993, Troyna and Hatcher 1992).

Some volunteers at the Moulton Refugee Association utilised the discourse of child innocence in a similar manner to the school, seeking the promotion of a pleasant environment. In this context, the notion of innocence was strictly associated to happiness and a culture of play. This conception of childhood can also become problematic, forbidding interaction, when it does not allow the possibility of the emergence of multiple possibilities of being in the world and of being a child.

The universalising and totalising notion of childhood, characterised by a single adjective – happiness - specifies who the children are and how they should be in the world. The 'real' childhood and therefore the 'real' child is happy, innocent, and unaware of the problems and pains of the adult world. Such a child is an adult myth. In seeking to define childhood with only one concept, adults are imprisoning children in the ambit of their own desire, the desire for the childhood that the adults in the playroom wanted to have, and children they wanted to have around them.

At some point Korlu - one of the volunteers in the playroom - was narrating how wonderful childhood was. She described/characterised this phase as a time full of happiness with children being completely separated from the worries of adult world. She observed how cheerful her childhood in Africa was, being surrounded by the extended family composed of cousins who were regarded as siblings, with everybody receiving unconditional love from her mother. She portrayed her house as a very lively place full of children playing around. The other adults joined her in the conception of blissful childhood.

The dynamic in the playroom at the Moulton Refugee Association was configured strictly by self-enjoyment on the part of the adults. Korlu and Rajesh – the other volunteer – were always engaging in games with the children who were also very much taking pleasure in the interactions. At some point, two Kurdish siblings – around three and six years old – who had recently arrived from Turkey started attending the playroom. During the beginning of their engagement in the activities they expressed a fairly significant amount of anguish, acting in an aggressive way, spitting on me and trying to beat me up. Korlu and Rajesh completely ignored their presence. They never engaged with these children who, making explicit the traumas of the process of exile, failed to conform to the dominant conception of childhood.

Adults give different responses to the children they regard as being in contradiction with idealized conceptions of childhood. In Brazil, for example, they see the street children as pre-mature adults; therefore, not as children. In the playroom, the volunteers' response indicated a disregard of the existence of the children who made their condition as refugees explicit.

It seems that the institutionalization of childhood evokes, fairly often, the concept of childhood innocence. Returning to the realm of the primary school, Wright sees this institution as a privileged site of the generalization of this notion, relating it to another issue; racism:

> An aspect of the 'primary ideology' is a form of pedagogic folklore which, *inter alia*, views childhood as an age of innocence. Regarding issues of 'race' and ethnicity, the popular belief still exists among teachers that young children are 'colour-blind'. Moreover, primary teachers assume that young children,

whilst capable of unacceptable behaviour, remain free from the malign influences of individual racism. (1992: 31-32)

The concept of colour-blind child, another principle of the discourse of childhood innocence, is employed by the school as a way of deracializing social relations at several levels. When I ask Robert about the children's impressions in relation to the refugee children, he answers that, besides the fact that the majority of the children at school also derive from diverse ethnic origins, they absolutely ignore any sign of differentiation:

> L: The children in general, how do you think they perceive the refugee children?

> R: Well, to be honest, I don't think a lot of them perceive them to be anything different from their normal friends. They, you know, a lot of them are not even aware, I don't think. But they are refugee children. Hem, I'm pretty sure, you know, if you ask individual children, they, they probably wouldn't be able to tell you.

In a similar way to Grace's account of Martin Luther King's history, here the idea of a difference-blind child is utilised to promote the notion of a difference-blind institution. What follows from the extract cited above is a generalization of the children's attitude to the institution's:

> R: So I mean, I don't think hem, I mean, I'm pretty sure that doesn't cause any problems at all. Hem, you know, they, they are very well accepted, everybody is, and everybody is valued.

If, for Robert, the children at school do not even perceive any difference between themselves and the refugee children, for Grace such awareness does exist, although it does not intervene in the dynamic of peer relations. When I ask her if they realise the refugee children come from different backgrounds she responds:

> G: I think they do. I think they are aware of that, that the refugee children are from a different culture and have got a different religion. But, it doesn't affect the way they play together.

The issue of childhood innocence seems to be evoked mainly when it is related to issues of racism that are connected to the dynamic of the school and to

broader society. In this way, it displaces the interplays of differentiation that take place among the various subjects in the institution. The concept of childhood innocence is also evoked when adults cannot cope with the idea that there are several ways of being a child. It offers the myth/promise of a perfect past that could be accessed as a refuge for the pains of being in the world. It also eradicates the acknowledgement that there are other worlds less privileged and far more dangerous that the ones that constitute the Island.

Conclusion

I understand the difficulties of the school in dealing with refugee children's issues to be a result of the teachers' internal difficulties in getting in touch with experiences that can cause extreme discomfort. This denial transforms the refugee children's experience into an invisible marginalizing and, at times, a certain muting or silencing. The urge of institutional and social conformity through disciplinarian and assimilationist practices, and the denial of conflict through discourses of multicultural and childhood innocence, deny the complexity of the dynamic which the presence of refugee children evokes in the school.

There is clearly a failure to adopt a form of anti-racist perspective which might also take account of other sources of social differentiation, such as ethnicity, religion, gender and so on (Gilroy 1992, Rattansi 2003). In adopting an anti-racist strategy it is important not to be limited to rational matters, but also to deal with the children's diverse experiences, perceptions and life histories (Cotton et al. 2003, Epstein 1993, Rustin 2000) The school is guided by other coexisting discursive structures, especially discipline, multiculturalism, assimilationism and the myth of the child's innocence. The institution fails, however, to recognize and tackle the various discriminatory ways that refugee children are addressed.

5. Living Daily Life under Diasporic Conditions

The diasporic condition, which the refugee children are immersed in, relates to a journey that is not casual nor temporary in any way since it has as a principle the construction of a life elsewhere. A subtle understanding of this type of migration has to take into account not only the identification of the person who travels, but the diverse circumstances that determine this dislocation. The acknowledgement of these circumstances is a basic premise of this type of migration; it makes explicit the fact that it is not related to a choice, but to an imposition. Life in diaspora is actualized in the border region - an arbitrary dividing line that is social, cultural and psychic. This is the space where conceptions of others - of outsiders - are constructed in relation to a common 'us'. The interplay of the concepts of border and diaspora points to the notion of location, since new subject positions and identities will to emerge from this dislocation, from this disruption (Brah 1996).

There is not, in this way, an easy response to the study of the construction of new positionalities in the diaspora. Any temptation to move towards a rigid set of generalizations has to be put aside. The concept of a simple amalgamation of two cultures must also be dismissed. The concept of in-betweeness - being part of two cultures at the same time - must be reconsidered in the light of the emergence of several possibilities of dealing with diasporic transition.

The last two chapters drew attention to the way that refugee children have been socially positioned by the school's practices and discourses, and how these children responded to such subjectification through their resources of identity. The school was a privileged site of analyses since it offered a location where deep participant observation work could be carried out and because of its central importance in the construction and reproduction of notions of childhood and its impact on the constitution of the children's subjectivity.

To promote a more complex understanding of the influence of the process of migration on the constitution of the subjectivity and social experiences of refugee children in the host country, I found it necessary to broaden my questions and include the dynamics of other sites and institutions, such as the house and the family. These constituted other important backgrounds for understanding the children's general

impressions of life in the new country in comparison to the experiences of, and meanings given to, what was left behind.

Cari and Abi

Places to learn, places of integration

Cari is an eight-year-old child who came from the Kurdistan region colonized by Turkey. She came with her older brother, Abi, who is eleven years old, and her mother, to join her father who was already living in Moulton. Cari always looks very "girly", often wearing pink clothes featuring pictures of dolls. She has long, sleek dark brown hair and very white skin, and eyes the same colour as her hair. She is very shy, always approaching people in a reluctant way. Her voice is commonly very low, crossed with a whispering tone. Abi is a bit over-weight, has white skin, dark brown eyes and black hair. In contrast to Cari, he is very outgoing, always making jokes and dancing in a funny way. Both are extremely polite, always saying 'thank you' to people around. In fact, it seems that the first expressions they learnt were socializing ones. During my first contact with them, the only expressions in English I heard them pronounce were 'hello' and 'thank you'.

Cari and Abi's insertion into the new country seemed to be fairly unproblematic. One of the reasons for this appears to be a very supportive family network already established in the city. Their uncle, Roghat, is a volunteer at MRA and works at the Saturday Club[1], where I first got in touch with Cari and Abi. Roghat is a very polite, quite formal and nice man. He is in his mid-twenties and has a great sense of humour. He very often helps their nuclear family - as well as other Kurdish families - with practical matters, such as sorting out problems in their house, searching for a school for the children, helping them with homework exercises and so on.

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[1] A recreational space promoted by the Moulton Refugee Association and the City Council.

Roghat fled persecution from Turkey, where he had been politically engaged since his teens with the Kurdistan Worker's party - PKK – which was founded in the year 1973 and which has as its main objective the independence of Kurdistan from Turkey (Wikipedia 2005). The family's political activity in support of the emancipation of the Kurds was precisely the reason for the migration of Cari and Abi. Roghat tells me - with a voice that strikes me as not being bitter and full of revolt, only very serious - that since he was fifteen years old, when he started his militancy in PKK, he was arrested and tortured by the Turkish police several times. Other members of his family suffered the same persecution, and one of his brothers was murdered. At the present moment, besides Cari and Abi's nuclear family, another five aunts and uncles, including Roghat, are in exile in European countries.

Roghat is quite protective and supportive in relation to his nephew and niece. When the children go to Moulton Refugee Association he often goes to the playroom to check how they are doing and to mediate the communication between them and the adults who do not speak Turkish[2]. He frequently translates words from Turkish to English to introduce the children to the new language. He was also the person who assumed the role of interpreter during the interview with the children.

When I carried out the interview, the centrality of another institution, the school, in the children's lives was quite clear. Cari, and Abi's accounts and perception of life at school are very particular to their status as new arrivals, being conceptualised basically in terms of acquisition of language skills. Both say they find the school a nice place, enjoying the teaching, lessons and friends. To the question, what they most like to do at school, both answer in terms of aspiration. The present functions as a transitional phase to a promised integrated future:

L: What do you most like to do at school?

C: I would like to learn English.

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[2] As a way of annihilating the Kurdish identity, it is forbidden to speak or teach the Kurd language in Turkey, even in the Kurdish region. Therefore, fearing that their children will suffer persecution, many parents do not teach Kurdish to their children, as in Cari and Abi's case. Speaking Kurdish was one of the reasons for the Turkish police to arrest and torture Roghat.

A: I would like to learn English first, then I would like to be successful, in the school.

L: And what is to be successful at school?

A: I don't know.

Guided by the notion of childhood as a playing phase, I ask them where they must like to spend time: at school, at the Community Centre – Saturday Club - or at the Moulton Refugee Association. We must remember that the second and third institutions constitute leisure spaces. To my surprise, both respond that they prefer to stay at school:

L: Why do you prefer to stay at school instead of in the Community Centre and Moulton Refugee Association?

C: Because we would like to learn English and the school is the best place to learn English.

A: Same thing.

L: What do you think about the Community Centre, where you go Saturdays and the Moulton Refugee Association? What do you think about those places?

C: I think they are very nice places.

A: Same thing.

L: And what do think are the differences between the adults in Community Centre and Moulton Refugee Association and the adults at school, like teachers?

A: I don't know.

C: The difference between two different adults is that the adults in the school they try to teach us something, they do something useful which we learn, but the adults in the Moulton Refugee Association, there aren't many adults teaching us, so there aren't many adults doing something nice for us.

L: So do you think that this is the most important thing that adults do to children, is to teach?

C: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Since the first day I got in touch with Cari and Abi in the Community Centre, Roghat, who works as a play carer there, was teaching them new words while they were playing. Roghat was also stimulating an English-born cousin to teach them English. The picture was that of a family engaged in helping the integration of new arrivals in a society where some of the relatives already have social and cultural capital. For Cari and Abi, playing does not constitute an activity *per se*; it represents, at this initial moment, the possibility of integration through the widening of the new language.

Later in the interview the issue of playing comes up again and both say they prefer to live in England rather than in Turkey, because here there are more places for children to play. The apparent contradiction regarding the issue of sites and their purpose is resolved when we understand that in order for them to fully engage with what these sites have to offer – peer relations, and the opportunity to be successful, in Abi's words – language is a basic acquisition.

When playing with Cari in Moulton Refugee Association, my strategy of engaging with her is through mimicry – we must remember, Cari did not speak any English when she arrived. To begin with, this seems to be an appropriate, if not the only possible strategy of communication. Playing is the rule and the possibility of communication when there is not a common language. The toys are signifiers of our daily lives; they reproduce objects of our environment, opening spaces for the players to tell stories.

The construction of these narratives is possible due to the materiality of the body that utilises mimicries to share expressions when there are not words in common[3]. Mimicry is a form of communication that the children and teachers employ in the school context as well. When I ask Cari and Abi who helped them when they had difficulties at school, Abi evokes the mimicry, while for Cari, this communication was not enough in the school's context:

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[3] Here I would suggest that my body also functioned as a signifier of childhood. I believe that the fact that I am quite small, fairly young-looking, and that I am very spontaneous and use my body a lot as a way of communication helped me in the interaction with children.

C: The reason anybody in the school couldn't help me was because anybody could speak Turkish. Who could help me? Because anybody could speak Turkish. What do you mean, who could help?

A: Sometimes I use the body movement to explain something, sometimes my teachers. I say as many English words as I can and then they try to find out the other words, so they try to understand what I am trying to say, they work hard to understand.

Perhaps mimicry functioned as a way of communication for Cari in the playroom context, rather than in the school, because in the case of the former, a relaxed atmosphere was offered, mediated by a non-evaluative space. A toy Cari habitually likes to play with is a supermarket till. She usually plays the role of the vendor and I play the buyer. I approach the till with small objects that I find around, I hand them to her, she computes the amount of money and I make a surprised expression complaining that it is too expensive. We both laugh a lot. When she gets bored of playing with this toy she usually chooses some books to read. She looks at the pictures and points to them making expressions of surprise, laughter, incomprehension and so on. I mimic her expressions, confirming her impressions; in this way I try to build up a sense of commonality. Nevertheless, this kind of communication is a fairly limited one, preventing a deeper and more creative exchange. At some point, Roghat tells me that both children are much more expressive and funny, that they cannot fully express their selves due to the linguistic barrier.

Returning to the matter of the children's valorisation of the academic sphere, it is worth remembering that Roghat was present at the interview assuming the position of interpreter. Roghat is the person who works as a social mediator for these children, introducing them to life in their new country, engaging them in the activities of the various sites. Roghat also represents a role-model to be followed of a well-integrated refugee. His position as a mediator is also actualized through his link with the Kurdish community in Moulton. As already observed, he assists many families with practical matters of daily life as well as problems regarding the acquisition of refugee status.

He seems to function as a counterpoint to the model of non-integration actualized, until the present moment, by Cari and Abi's father – Roghat's brother.

When the children arrived in England with their mother, their father had already been living in this country for two years, having been granted refugee status. At the present time he barely speaks English and does not have a professional occupation or a university degree.

The prospect of life in the diaspora for Cari and Abi reconfigures generational hierarchies based on the academic knowledge. When speaking about the differences between adults and children, Cari says the adults have more knowledge than the children because the latter have not yet finished school. A discussion is initiated between both siblings in relation to the adult's knowledge/authority as traversed by the process of migration. Abi disagrees with his sister, affirming that in Turkey there are many adults that have never been to a school. Cari then brings up their parents' academic condition, using it as a clear example of an undesirable future:

> C: Perhaps our mother and father didn't go to proper school, but this doesn't mean to say that every adult in our country didn't go to school.
>
> A: I think my sister is wrong. I think so many adults; you could find only one person out of thousands could get proper education in the country.

Roghat's academic trajectory, determined also by the process of migration, exemplifies the possibility of a more successful life. When he arrived in England, being nineteen years old, he had never attended a university. Now he is doing a degree in law at a very reputable institution. Cari and Abi aim to mirror their occupational future in relation to their uncle's route. Cari says that when she grows older she wants to be a lawyer. On the other hand, Abi seems to ponder the possibilities of identification with the life/opportunities in Turkey and in England. He says that when he grows older he wants to play football all the time – Roghat was a professional footballer in Turkey – although he does not want to be a professional footballer. He wants to be a veterinarian.

Roghat's presence during the interview process seems to remind the children of the centrality of the issue of language and academic knowledge in the promotion of a successful future. Although Cari and Abi point out that one of the differences between the life in Turkey and in England is that here there are more playing spaces,

the importance attributed to the enjoyment of these sites is, at the moment, subsumed by an academic aspiration mediated by the family's history of migration and integration.

The issue of language also permeates peer relations. Both children say they would prefer to make friends with English children, in order to learn the language. The choice of the friend's ethnicity not only points to a utilitarian purpose - the learning of the language - it also refers to a non-delimitation of life in relation to the culture of origin. Although Abi has some Kurdish friends at school, his best friend is a Zimbabwean boy. I also see the desire for expansion of the Kurdish community through their enjoyment in learning new languages. Both children say that one of the advantages of living in England rather than in Turkey is that here they have the opportunity to 'learn different languages and different things'. At this point, they do not specify the language they are referring to. They seem to be driven by a desire of expanding what they have been offered in terms of the knowledge of the world and everyday life rather than by an assimilationist and colonised attitude[4].

I now want to indicate a counterpoint between Cari and Abi's attitude and that of Mariana towards the new language. In the third chapter we saw how Mariana made a compromise with the hegemonic culture. Inhabiting a world divided by hierarchies of colour, Mariana compromised with the white world by letting her self be assimilated into a set of expectations of desirable behaviour, including the acceptance of an English name. In Cari and Abi's case, their willingness in learning the language is related to the possibility of interaction and discovery of a new world. As pointed out earlier, the process of negotiation between the refugee children and the diasporic reality is not a straightforward one. The possibilities of interaction are multiplied by their several subject positions and life experiences.

If the choice of a friend's ethnicity is guided by a desire to interact with the new country and expand the limits of the Kurdish community, patterns of interaction that are characteristic of the community in Kurdistan seem to act to guide the choice

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[4] Once more, I see Roghat's negotiation with the new world as an example that the children find desirable to follow. Roghat met his long-term girlfriend, who is from another European country, on an

of gender. Cari says she does not like to play with boys When I ask her why, her response is pragmatic: 'I don't want to play with them'. Roghat reacts to her answer by laughing.

Finding Cari's answer funny, Roghat seems to point to the fact that in the present context, this response seems to be out of place. Regarding the perception of gender issues, Roghat once told me that while in Kurdistan, he was a stricter follower of the rules of the Koran – the Muslim sacred book. According to him, this religious guide promotes a fairly unequal relationship among the genders, positioning women in a very subordinated and dependent position in relation to men. He tells me how in his country[5] these rules are followed, establishing a clear distinction between gender spaces and roles. He regards the awareness and contact with the broader gender condition in the diaspora as a reason for him to reconsider women's position in Kurdistan, resulting in his distancing from the Muslim religion.

I have to point out that Roghat is one of the few men I know who is clearly a feminist[6]. Very often, when we talk about refugee issues, he makes not only the racial discrimination visible, but the gender issues as well. Roghat's laugh signals a contrast of realities made possible through the migration movement. It is a result of a reinvention of the self, of the reworking of new concepts and possibilities of being in the world. It does not mean, however, a process of assimilation that implies becoming equal to the hegemonic notion of English man. As I argued, Roghat is a feminist, and that is a fairly peculiar position in Western society as a whole.

On the other hand, Abi says he does not mind playing with boys or girls. It seems that being in the privileged position - the male one - it is easier for him to make the choice of being around girls. In relation to the formation of male subjectivity, Roghat tells me that in Kurdistan, men learn that by following the Koran's rules they will acquire a certain amount of women when they die and reach heaven. The fact that

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English course. His attitude seems to suggest that interacting with other languages and people can open the possibility of establishing significant relationships.

[5] Roghat refers to Kurdistan as a country. This shows his strong resistance to the Turkish colonization.

[6] although I do not consider that only a minority of men is feminist, as this can be applied to women as well

less strict barriers among the genders is possible in England[7], associated to the notion, current in both countries, that women are the privileged object of desire, makes it desirable to Abi to be close to girls.

Asked about difficulties experienced at school the children refer solely to the language issue. They observe, as well, the teacher's effort and keenness in understanding them. The fact that they are new arrivals, neither understanding the language nor the cultural codes, makes it difficult for them to comprehend the basis of social interactions. During the interview process both of them said that they did not face any problems regarding peer relations at school, although, some months later, Roghat told me that Abi had been suffering bullying at school. It is possible that Abi's lack of conceptual tools in the new language prevented him from understanding forms of communication that were expressed through harassment. Once more, this fact attests the importance of language-acquisition in learning about negotiations, even the painful ones.

The house also represents a space for improving language skills. Arriving home after school, Cari says she looks at some books she brings from Moulton Refugee Association and that sometimes she has homework, which is done with Roghat's help. Abi also says he does his homework. They are the only children who refer to the house as a place to do academic activity. Cari and Abi appropriate all their spaces - school, house, Community Centre, Moulton Refugee Association – as locations of knowledge and integration.

When I ask the children about their impression of "their home", I verify with Roghat if this word in Turkish has the double connotation it has in English - meaning the physical space as well as a more subjective impression of belonging to a locality. Roghat responds positively. When answering, the children swap the word home for house. We must notice, however, that in the case of house/home the value attributed to the physical location – house - is very often related to a sense of belongingness[8]. It

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[7] This is not to say that the spaces in England are not gendered. But what I conclude from Roghat's description is that here some of these delimitations are more easily transposable.

[8] From my own experience of having lived in several houses throughout my four years in England, my impression of, and attachment to, these houses has been very much related to a feeling of rootedness; to how comfortable I felt in the new country. This notion is shared among other foreign friends of mine.

works as a metaphor for the subjective relationship with the locale/community one inhabits. In Treacher's words: 'Embedded in a cosy homily are truths about home as a place, a psychic necessity and a metaphor.' (Treacher 2000: 105). Cari says their house is 'nice and beautiful' while Abi confirms her impression. I deduce that the disparity in the economic conditions of Kurdistan and England contributes to this positive perception, since Roghat once told me that Kurdistan is a fairly unprivileged area. When I ask what they do not like about their 'home', again, the physical space is evoked. Both say that the bathroom door is broken and that the people responsible for fixing it do not honour their obligations and do not attend to the family's demand for repairs.

The house they live in is a council property. Right at the beginning of the family's settlement, Roghat helped his brother to paint the building. The presence of Roghat helping to decorate the house/home seems to symbolize the act of facilitating the integration of Cari and Abi's family. It signals a family network that operates to mediate the transposition of two realities actualized by the diasporic dynamic.

Cari and Abi's response to the diasporic process reiterates the assertions of the new sociology of childhood, which sees children as agents of their own reality and not merely as immature people to be passively assimilated by their environment:

> A child's personality, interests and activities are neither attributes of an isolated individual nor imposed by the environment, but are firmly located in the interactions between a child and the network or system of social relationships to which each child belongs. (Hill and Tisdall 1997: 4)

The children's attitudes and perceptions towards the two main sites of their daily lives have been followed by an active appropriation of the new reality. Their effort in engaging with life in a new country does not mean acting solely under the rules of the family's expectations. They are acting as agents of a history of migration that started prior to their geographic dislocation through the settlement of their father and uncle. And this history, which was written while they were back in Kurdistan, can be understood, at the present time, as a series of possible choices.

On the other hand, a Spanish friend of mine in Brazil, who does not have the need to feel rooted in any particular place of the world, says that she does not feel attached to any house and that the perfect place for her to live would be in a hotel bedroom!

A safe place, a safe childhood

As already observed, Cari and Abi's family has a history of political resistance in Kurdistan that has resulted in the murder of one of their uncles, Roghat's imprisonment and torture, and the exile of three uncles and two aunts throughout Europe. The children do not establish a direct link between their exile and the Kurdish situation back home. When I ask them why they came to England, both respond that their father was ill and they wanted to join him. Although the motive for the family's diaspora is not made explicit for or by them, and although a clear explanation of the family's involvement with the Kurdish struggle is not allowed to them at this point in their lives, they do bring up accounts of harassment against children [9]:

> L: What do you think about the life here in England? About living here in England?
>
> A: The treatment of the school are much better than the ones in Turkey.
>
> L: What do you mean about treatment?
>
> A: For example, the teachers they have something in their hands in Turkey. If any students make any mistake, they are bitten up by teachers. But that doesn't happen in this country.
>
> C: Teachers in Turkey carry something very heavy and something hard in their hands all the time, even in the class, and if anybody makes mistake they just beat them up, sometimes they heat with that hard object in their hand.
>
> L: Let me ask you something, now for you Roghat. Do they do that particularly with Kurdish children? Do you think I can make this question to them? Is it particularly with Kurdish children or is it with every child?
>
> Roghat: I, ah, I wouldn't say it's with every child, although it's very common practice throughout, throughout Turkey whether or not you live, you know, in Kurdish area, whether or not you live in Turkey. It's common practice, but it is more common in Kurdish places.
>
> L: Are they aware of that?
>
> Roghat: Who is aware of that?

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[9] This parental strategy of dismissing the real causes for migration seems to constitute a common practice. Candappa and Igbinigie (2003) observed the same pattern among some parents of other refugee children.

L: Both, Cari and Abi, Are they aware of this issue? Can I ask the difference between Kurdish and Turkish?

Roghat: (Interrupts me) I don't think they would be aware of that thing, I don't think so.

Roghat's interruption when I signal an interest in asking the children about the issue of Turkish versus Kurdish points to a generational interdiction in relation to the awareness of a political matter. The effects of this prohibition can be attested by the way the children and Roghat relate to the place where they come from, positioning themselves in different ways: Roghat always refers to Kurdistan, while the children refer to Turkey[10]. Another outcome of the political distancing is the fact that the children do not speak Kurdish, only Turkish. In Turkey, speaking and teaching the Kurdish language is not allowed; nevertheless, the majority of the Kurdish adults know this language.

If the reason for Cari and Abi's family to flee the country was ethnic persecution, for them, the benefits of migration are understood in the light of a generational issue. Their experience as children goes beyond the Kurdish/Turkish issue. The teachers they refer to are from their community. It is not about the Turkish State imposing upon Kurdish children; rather, it is Kurdish adults imposing upon their own children. A parallel could be traced here in relation to the issue of gender. Roghat once told me that in Kurdistan women are like properties of men. If they transgress any of the male expectations they can be beaten up – just like the children in the school. Therefore, alongside the ethnic issue, matters of generation and gender affect the treatment of individuals; both groups – children and women - suffer harassment. I assume the same could be applied to sexual orientation. Thus, a persecution based solely on the ethnic issue – the Turkish/Kurdish dichotomy - seems to be an adult male heterosexual matter.

A: Children have rights in this country but children in Turkey don't have rights. Even if on the paper they say children have rights, but nobody practice, nobody listen to the children. They don't have any freedom.

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[10] After I wrote this chapter I handled it to Roghat to read and he observed that Cari has been learning a lot about the Kurdish question and that now she has a new name, a Kurdish one. She is following the same path as her uncle, who also changed his Muslim name to a Kurdish one. In this way, life in the diaspora allows the affirmation of an identity that had to be subsumed prior to the migration.

L: Why do think that here children have rights and not in Turkey?

A: There isn't any freedom in Turkey so you are not free and you don't have right to do everything you like and you are always brought up in a fear, always in a fear. You always think that you could be taken away, anytime. You are always brought up in a fear, in your life.

L: Been taken away by whom?

A: In fact anybody, because we are brought up in a way that we've got fear in our house, we almost get scared of anybody. Anybody which passes us we could think that 'Oh this person could take us away'.

When I as ask the children if they think their parents like to live in England, the issue of fear is once more used to conceptualize life back home:

C: The life in Turkey is horrible, is terrible. For example, in this country nobody touches you, nobody, nobody says anything to you. You are free to do everything; you go everywhere. But that is not the same thing in Turkey. Has got something in Turkey, never mind the children are scared of going out. Even the adults are scared of going out. They are not free to go out, they are not free.

If, at the beginning of their account, the children referred to the constraints over children departing from their own community strictly as a generational matter, the extracts above make clear a connection between their lack of freedom and the Kurdish issue. Both Abi and Cari discuss fear in a very broad way. At this point, they do not offer any examples that could localize the source of this feeling. It is a fear that blurs the limits of the house and the public space, making no space completely safe. And this non-delimitation between private and public can be attested by the arrest and torture suffered by some of their family members.

Although the children do not make it explicit, they are aware of their family's situation. They know it is not expected of them to fully take part in their political situation. We must remember that when I asked them about the differences between children and adults, Abi responded that children are cleverer adults. Departing from the experience of migration as a privileged point of reference, I ask Abi if he thinks children are cleverer than adults because they learn a new language easily. He disagrees and formulates a response based on their particular life history:

A: Because children have fresh brain and they never face that big problems and big difficulties in their lives, so is very fresh brain, because is very fresh brain, can pick up information very quickly.

The references the children make to fear as constitutive of childhood back home point to the multiple powers determining their lives. When Abi speaks about the fear of being taken away from home, Cari establishes a link between such a fear and the way the Turkish national State positions children in general:

C: There is a mafia in Turkey. For example they always show on TVs, in everywhere. They are always talking about mafia. They, they always scared children, they keep telling the children, you have to be very careful because there are mafia. An they, they just smash children away and then they cut them and they, and they do this, they do that. So children are very much scared. Whenever they live the school they have to go home as soon as possible and then when they are at home they don't want to go out because they are made to be scared all the time. And also would like to say one more stuff about children right. There isn't any children right in Turkey. Children can't speak, children can't do. They are not free to say anything; they don't have any right to say anything.

A: I would like to answer you a question. Could you say the question again?

L: Who says there is a mafia in there?

A: Television all the time, television talk about it.

L: So is the State?

Roghat: Yes. The TV by the State.

A: That's what government try to do.

C: There was a horrific news on TV and they showed and they were trying to say that, they were trying to explain one news through a role, through act. And there was a boy who is, that boy had some friends and the friends of that boy called him but those friends were mafia, the members of mafia. So they made him drink some alcohol and then he fainted, he knocked unconscious and then those mafia they came and they just cut his organs and then they put that guy into a bath tap, in the bathroom, in the bath and then they put that guy in a very horrific place and they put ice on him so when he, he got up, when he became conscious again he didn't realised that his organs were removed. Because he, he felt so cold, he didn't realise that.

Roghat: So basically she is trying to, she is trying to say that there was horrific news. And there are, there are news like that all the time on the TV.

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A: But that news was real, because that child that the TV was talking about was real, and the child still in coma in Turkey, in hospital.

Roghat: I never watch Turkey TV, because I know they are always nonsense. I haven't watched Turkish TV for six years. But I know these things have happened.

L: Is there this issue of mafia, of organs of children?

Roghat: Yeah, yeah.

L: Is it a big issue in there?

Roghat: Yeah. But as I said I can't say anything because I haven't watched for six years. I refuse to watch it, because is nonsense. It's the government controlling everything.

L: Like, they impose fear on people?

Roghat: Yeah.

Roghat's link between the State's control over children in general and the Kurdish issue is a very insightful one. Although he recognises that there is a problem of a Mafia stealing organs in Turkey, he points to the way the State appropriates fears in order to promote a paternalistic propaganda for itself. If the children are immersed in a discourse of the State that spreads fear with the intention of controlling its population - this being one of the reasons given for preferring life in England rather than in Turkey - I wonder what will be their response to propaganda about paedophilia.

It must be pointed out that this discourse in England of the highly protected child seems to affect white women, mostly middle-class, and their children. Asian and black women in general are very receptive towards communication with their children as are the children themselves.

In this way such fear has a specific basis, being mainly a white fear, and one that promotes the notion of the white child as highly desirable, and therefore, valued. My supposition is that in the future, when Cari and Abi will be mastering the language, they will be more aware of the major issues, and if they are going to operate through the discourse of paedophilia they will possible act and be positioned as

"mainstream English children". On the other hand, there is the possibility that they and their family will be able to localize, and therefore relativize, the fear imposed over children by the new country.

The responses of Cari and Abi show how the situation of refugee children is a complex one, determined by multiple powers. Their diasporic process is not only made sense of through their family political history. There are several institutions and discourses that determine what it means to be a child, and all refugee children are in the process of negotiation and of reinventing themselves through the various references available to them, in Cari and Abi's case: Kurdistan, Turkey, England, boy, girl, Muslim, foreigner, and whatever results from the numerous possibilities of intersection between these references when in the diaspora.

Armand

Places of Loneliness?

As demonstrated in chapter three, racist discourses and practices appropriate Armand's blackness and maleness as a way of transforming him into "the other". In this way, besides the opportunity of taking part in diverse activities - he says he likes all the subjects at school - Armand's experience of life at school is characterized, by the experience of being othered by the teachers and his peers.

When asked about his impressions of school he responds 'I think is good. But sometime I hate.' As demonstrated earlier, what follows is his account, through a visceral sensation of how he experiences the social relations in the institution: 'Some time when I get hungry.' In relation to the temporal experience of life in the institution, he links the increase of social tension to his improvement of language:

> L: What do you think has changed since you arrived?
>
> A: When I was arrived yeah, I didn't fight a lot, now when I'm a bit old yeah, I know how to fight people. And I know some teachers name.

L: Why do you need to fight people? (He interrupts me in the middle of the phrase).

A: And you know, you know, when I was new I didn't know how to speak English. But now I know. Now I know lots of children names.

Armand's second answer can be understood as a defensive mechanism, activated in order to avoid speaking about his social difficulties. Nevertheless, a closer look into the context reveals a connection between his first and second answers. He establishes an equation between past and present based on the acquisition of knowledge and his strategy of action:

	PAST	PRESENT
First Answer	Didn't fight a lot	Knows how to fight and knows some teachers names
Second Answer	Didn't speak English	Knows lots of children's names

We can see from the above table that past time is made sense of through non-actions, first in terms of peer relations and then in terms of language (didn't fight a lot + didn't speak English). The present time is regarded as a moment where the acquisition of language is linked to the recognition of the social environment and how to deal with it (knows teachers' and children's names + knows how to fight). The acquisition of language symbolizes, therefore, not only the gaining of social capital and establishment of peer relations; it also means, at times, a consciousness of the unequal system into which the child is inserted. We might remember Abis' unawareness of discriminatory behaviour of some of his peers at school.

There is a common expectation in England that school is the privileged place in which to establish peer relations, since it is the site where children spend the greatest amount of time throughout the day and because it offers several spaces where children can interact: group activities during lectures, playtimes, lunch break and after-school activities[11].

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[11] In Brazil, by contrast, there is only one break of half an hour throughout the day and lunch is always made at home. Therefore, if the child studies during the morning time, she/he arrives at school about 7.00am and leaves the institution at 12.00pm. This means that the child has the whole afternoon available to play with neighbourhood friends and do homework. Because many children do not study in

L: Where do you most like to stay, at home or at school?

A: At school (fast and categorically).

L: Why?

A: Because is more better.

L: Is more better. Why?

A: Because, (small pause), we take fun and... hem... play with friends, lots of friends. More friends when you play at home.

Armand's intention in constructing the phrase 'More friends (than) when you play at home' and his failure - through a slip of the tongue – to express this meaning, indicates his denial of the impossibility of being successful in establishing a broad social network at school.

I would now like to use a psychoanalytical perspective to examine Armand's slip of the tongue, since such an approach helps us in our understanding of the fact that social interactions do not occur solely in the exterior world of the child; they are also subjective processes, operating through the interplay of social codes and practices and the individual's psychic dynamic. Freud begins his book *The Ego and the Id and Other Wworks* (1973b) by claiming that the division between what is conscious and what is unconscious is a fundamental statement in psychoanalysis. According to him, the unconscious is the site of ideas which have gone through a process of repression. This mechanism consists of a kind of resistance that prevents undesirable, painful ideas - the result of past experiences - to enter into our knowledge. According to Freud, everything that is repressed is unconscious. At another point (Freud 1973a) he observes that the experiences that are repressed and banished to the unconscious go through a process of substitutive formation, which results in their correlated ideational representations becoming related to other experiences.

Nevertheless, throughout our daily lives, repressed ideas can emerge into our consciousness through, for example, a psychic device such as the slip of the tongue.

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the same area where they live, the friends they have at home are at times different from those at school. In this way, sometimes friends from the building or the street - whom we call street friends - are as close or closer than the ones from school.

Freud observes that this mechanism should not be interpreted as a banality; it is related to significant ideas that we "intended" to keep repressed:

> I almost invariably discover a disturbing influence in addition which comes from something *outside* the intended utterance; and the disturbing element is either a single thought that has remained unconscious, which manifests itself in the slip of the tongue and which can often be brought to consciousness only by means of searching analysis, or it is a more general psychical motive force which is directed against the entire utterance. (1966: 61)

The psychoanalytical reading of the slip of the tongue as a manifestation of an unconscious idea that should have been kept repressed helps us to conclude that, in Armand's case, the elision of the conjunction *than* points to the opposite of the idea he wanted to construct: an unsuccessful project of satisfactory socialization in the school's setting, a setting that constitutes the privileged space of socialization.

For Armand, the possibility of peer relations is predominantly determined by the age factor. There is a hierarchy among the children based on generation, which is very much reinforced by the school's structure. It is not only the year they attend at school that establishes this delimitation. Lunchtimes and playtimes are also divided by age. Being in the "low" part of this hierarchy, it constitutes a privilege for the younger children to play with the older ones. On the other hand, for the older ones, playing with smaller children represents a loss of social capital, mainly regarding the boys. Many times I saw younger boys trying to engage with older ones, misleading them about their age, trying to convince the others that they are older. The response of the older boys was, invariably, to laugh at them.

In Armand's case, since the establishment of peer relations constituted a difficult task, he had to "go down" the generational hierarchy and engage with younger children. When giving the reason why he likes to play with younger children – who are about five years old, while he is nine – he says that they like him because he is funny, while he likes them because they usually do not fight with him.

Armand's lack of friends at school is not the only indication of his loneliness[12] in the institution. The moment of dislocation/transition from school to the house works as a reminder of his peculiar form of migration:

> A: Because in school yeah, there is lots of teachers yeah, at home time lots of parents come yeah, I feel like I'm just on my own. I don't want to go somewhere like that. When parents, there are lots of them yeah. I like to go on the bum yard, where is my class. I like to go there, is good too, but, because there no lots parents.

We must remember that Armand is the only refugee child in this research project who migrated alone, without any member of his nuclear family. During the time I was carrying out the interview with him, his aunt was living in London due to an occupational necessity. She was returning to Moulton just for weekends. During the week, his aunt's partner, who lives with them, would, at times, pick him up at school[13]. This transitional space/time between school and the house must be understood as a border space. Here, this notion is not understood solely as a spatial/material delimitation, but as a social, cultural and psychic process (Brah 1996). This is the space/time where familial links are made visible and the child is positioned as one who requires looking after. During this moment, the family's configuration/dynamic is arranged in relation to the child. This is the intermediate space where the private is made public. And sometimes, Armand appears to be a lonely child.

It is not only Armand who sees this border space as problematic. In relation to some other refugee children, the school regards it as a moment of potential anguish. At one point I witnessed a discussion between a former EMAG coordinator – Patricia – and Frieda. When discussing Kirpal's emotional issues, Patricia told Frieda that the fact that sometimes his mother, Ajeet, is late when picking him up should be brought to her attention. Frieda argued that Ajeet had been under a lot of stress due to the immigration process – the family still does not have refugee status. Patricia completely dismissed Ajeet's condition, arguing that what matters is Kirpal's well-

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[12] By loneliness in this context I do not mean complete isolation. Instead, I refer to Armand's failure in establishing a closer and more stable relationship with his peers.

[13] By the time Armand moved to Dalton, another neighbourhood, his aunt had moved back to Moulton so he was living with her again.

being. Conceição – Mariana's mother – also had her attention brought to this matter. Again, the family's structure is made visible during these occasions. The fact that Conceição has, at times, an appointment with her immigration solicitor at the end of the school day, resulting in a delay in picking Mariana up, signals to the fact that the household must be experiencing some problems.

The transitional space between the school and the house represents a daily reminder of the cause of Armand's migration: the loss of his parents. The house, the privileged location where the family's generational hierarchy is established through the stipulation of tasks, also signals to his particular experience:

> A: Because yesterday yeah, my auntie (small pause), today, auntie is home no, yesterday I was in my own, I, I, I made my own dinner. I can cook (categorically).
>
> L: So you take care of your self?
>
> A: Yeah.

Besides the fact that cooking is generally understood to be an adult and female task[14], positioning Armand as a child who looks after himself is significant; he currently lives in England, a place where the ideology of child protection is extremely strict with its own children. Boyden (2000) points out how, in European societies, children are seen as dependents and how the practices of child protection work towards the exclusion of children from the adult world. According to this perspective, children have to mature before acting on behalf of themselves. Therefore, the politics of the new country understands Armand's migration movement and his family's reconfiguration at times positions him as an adult.

In a research carried out in a school in London comparing the activities performed by refugee children and children born in England but whose parents were refugees, between the age of eleven and fourteen, Candappa and Igbinigie (2003) observed that the refugee children were twice as likely to look after their siblings and undertake cooking, and five times more likely to work as interpreter for their parents

outside the house than children born in England. This result seems to be a consequence of the dynamics imposed by the process of forced migration, such as the loss of a kinship network and exploitative conditions of employment often imposed on refugees, like working during unsociable hours. These conditions leave the older children with household responsibilities, although this actually has some advantages, since unfamiliarity with the new language obliges the children to acquire language skills faster at school.

What follows in Armand's account of his life at home seems to confirm the loneliness of his existence. He tells me that when he arrives at home he watches cartoons, and when asked if he plays with children at home he responds with a sad expression that sometimes he does. He says that at other times he goes to the play centre on his own. One of the Saturday activities at the Community Center takes place at the play centre he refers to. When I was walking together with Cari, Abi and Roghat towards this location, I saw Armand wandering on the street with a cheerless expression. I insisted that he join us but he refused. About half an hour later he arrived, saying he did not want to play with the kids, only with me. The fact that he did not want to join children that he had just got to know is indicative of the expectation of an unsuccessful socialization, regardless of the site. I persuaded him to play football together with me, Abi and Roghat. The match was extremely joyful and at the end he and Abi said they had made new friends. Before this event I had tried to convince Armand to join the Saturday Club without success. I thought that since he got along so well with Abi, he would start taking part in the activities, which did not happen.

In terms of peer relations, the house context functions as an extension of the school's setting. If on one hand, Armand does not have many friends at home because they would be the same ones he made at school, he does have one peer relation that is clearly determined by the intersection of gender and age:

A: At home yeah, hha (bothered), I like to play with my friend. I really like to play with my friend. My friend yeah, at home, yah, I got lots of friends. We

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[14] In some countries in Africa it is common for girls of about thirteen years old to learn how to cook under the mother's supervision. This activity does not seem to have the function of looking after oneself; but of a rite of passage based on age and gender.

got lot of children from this school. I like to play with my friends, but some time, my friend yeah, some time my friend don't like to play with me. You know Shakala yeah, you know her yeah, she's a bit tall. Eh, eh, eh, at home time yeah, she is my best f (stops), my best friend. But at school time she not.

L: She doesn't play with you?

A: Hum, hum.

L: Why?

A: Because she got lots of friends. She girl yeah, and I'm a boy yeah. When we got lots of boys, lots of girls, we play with boys in it? That's why he play with girls and I play with boys.

L: So you mean that girls and boys they play separately?

A: Yeah, yeah.

L: Why?

A: But some time I play, I, I, I never play like with girls, only girls, I never play with girls. I play like with, but when I play with only girls yeah, I play like with, young girls.

L: Why?

A: Because (pause), em… I don't know.

Throughout the interview Armand makes a clear distinction between boys and girls in terms of strength and ways of playing. It is apparent from the punctuation cited above that he establishes social boundaries based on gender. Boys and girls should not play together. The fact that his best friend at home is a girl is an unsatisfactory reality for him. His feeling of inadequacy is revealed by his lapse when referring to this girl: 'That's why *he* play with girls and I play with boys'. Although the peer relations configured at home do not fit Armand's ideal – that of boys and girls playing separately – he seems to try to engage with what is possible.

Borders that cannot be crossed or spoken

The interview with Armand was divided into two days. Besides the fact that it was the longest interview, each time I asked a question related to Congo he interrupted the process. In general terms, the interview I carried out with him was the

same as I carried out with the other children. It was composed of open questions that started with broader ones, like what they most like to do at school, and progressed to more specific and delicate ones, like the reasons for migration and life in the country of origin.

It is interesting that Armand spoke about painful issues like his social relations at school, many times traversed by racism, in a fairly open way. Nevertheless, when I asked him about the situation in the Congo, he avoided any direct answer.

L: Tell me something; do you have friends from your country?

A: I got lots of friends.

L: And from Congo as well?

A: (Pause). Eh, eh, (pause), I'm tired.

L: Are you tired now?

A: I wanna go to the class.

We can observe that when I made a reference to the Congo Armand responded in a defensive way, avoiding making any specific answer. When I pursued the matter, he interrupted the process. When we restarted the interview, I began from where it was interrupted, asking him if he has friends from the Congo. He said he did not want to answer that question. Throughout the rest of the process, the same pattern of response would occur when any reference was made to the Congo in addition to life in England:

L: What do you think about living here in England?

A: Good. I don't know. I think is good, good. I don't want to talk about it.

L: And how did you come to England? Was it by airplane, by boat...

A: Airplane.

L: How was the trip? Did you find it nice?

A: No.

L: Why not?

A: Because it was dammed hot.

L: Dammed hot?

A: Do you know what dammed hot is?

L: Really, really hot?

A: Yeah.

L: And with whom did you come here?

A: I don't know. I forgot.

At this point, since Armand was presenting so much resistance to unlocking his memories of home, I thought he did not want to take part in the rest of the interview. I made explicit that if he wanted, we could interrupt and put an end to the process, that he had no obligation to carry on if he did not wish to. He answered that he wanted to continue; though there were some issues he did not want to talk about.

L: Where do you prefer to live, in England, or in your country?

A: I don't want to talk about it. I don't know. I don't know.

L: Do you wanna talk a little bit about the differences between England and your country?

A: I don't know. I don't wanna talk about it, because I forgot.

L: Is it difficult for you to talk about it Armand? Do you get sad?

A: Do you, do you know what? I don't know really lots of things about Congo.

L: Why not?

A: Because I forgot. I was little, full.

L: And do you think people from your family, you auntie, cousins, do they like to live here in England?

A: They do. I don't know. I think, they do. I don't know.

L: Do you know why did you come to England?

A: I don't know. Yeah I do answer that. Because my mum, my mum and dad was dead.

At first, I interpreted Armand's initial resistance to speaking about the life in the Congo as avoidance of talking about his parents' death. As we can see from the extract above, he does not mention anything about the situation back home. Nevertheless, when I asked him about the reason for his migration, to my surprise, he spoke about his parents' death in a very straightforward way. There was something else going on back home that could not be spoken about, something more forbidden, probably because even more painful than his parents' death.

Armand's life history in the Congo was presented to me in the form of a gap, as a period that must be skipped. The only way to obtain information would be through his aunt who has been living in England for several years. My attempt to carry out an interview with her was unsuccessful. On the occasions she made an appointment with me, she ended up not attending. The last time I spoke briefly with her I asked her if there was another reasons for Armand migration besides his parents' death, for I was aware that that there was an war in the Congo. With a very emotional tone of voice she responded that even she did not like to speak about this issue. What happened back home cannot be spoken of. That appears to be a family agreement, to avoid the memories of the tragedies of war.

Silence.

Goma, the city where Armand comes from, is a very unstable place where several armed groups fight for supremacy. The conflict dates back to the year 1994, to the events in Rwanda, its neighbouring country, to the civil war within Mobutu's Zaire and, after his defeat, within the new Democratic Republic of Congo. During the last war, several African countries got involved taking different sides. At the present moment, although there is a cease-fire supervised by the United Nations, the situation remains very delicate. For example, the rebels in control refused assistance from the central government regarding the people displaced by the volcano disaster. There are speculations that armed groups will take advantage of the unstable situation, possibly

to restart the hostilities. It is also speculated that those people dispersed from the volcano disaster are susceptible to armed gangs (Wisner 2002).

All the pains and memories of violence that these circumstances probably bring must be forgotten. Armand appropriates the conception of the immature child to legitimise his unwillingness in bringing to light the traumas of the past: 'I forgot. I was little, full'. Armand has not forgotten the events in the Congo because of his age. He forgot because traumatic experiences are sources of terrible pain.

If being a small child is seen by Armand as a reason for him to have forgotten life in the Congo, the menace of a return is seen as a passage to maturity. When speaking about the issue of maturity, he says that young children 'don't know what to' do, but when he will be 'more than eleven years old', he will 'know what to do'. The Home Office has granted Armand leave to remain in England until he is eleven years old. He seems to understand the menace of going back to the Congo as a step to adulthood. While in England it is possible for him to keep saying 'I don't know' – he repeated this expression eight times in both extracts above –, he can be a child because he is in a safe place. Going back to the Congo, he will have to 'know what to do'. Life in the midst of a war is Armand's counterpoint to the notion of childhood.

Mariana

Playing with the words that cannot be spoken

Mariana's family history – the causes for her exile - has been written and lived through much pain and silence. Because Conceição's husband joined the FLEC (Front of Liberation of Cabinda's Enclave), a political group that struggles for the city of Cabinda's autonomy from Angola, he was sent to jail twice, and very probably murdered during the second imprisonment. Although there is no evidence of his body, Conceição's neighbour, who was in jail with him, told her about his death. Conceição was also sent to jail for a period of time and, when released, managed, together with her daughters, to run away from the country.

Mariana's father's disappearance was surrounded by a silent agreement. He was a salesman, very often travelling for weeks due to his occupation. The occasions the girls asked Conceição about him, she would respond he was away due to work commitments. Although the police have been to their house and arrested him in there, Conceição maintained her cover story. While in Angola, she did not say anything about the family's political activities and arrests, fearing that the children might say something about the subject to people outside the household. The girls did not insist on finding out the truth.

The migration to England was also permeated by silence. Conceição did not tell the girls about the trip until it was the time to leave the country. If the girls' involvement in the migratory process was a fairly passive one, simply following their mother, Conceição's participation was also quite submissive. She did not have any idea where they were being taken. Her only concern was to run away from the country. They took a boat to another African country and then an aeroplane to England.

'To have a better life': that was the only explanation Conceição offered to the girls to justify the diasporic activity. If the suppression of the truth about their father's disappearance when they were in Angola was motivated by reasons of security, when in England it was caused by a desire to forget the painful past. To have a better life means avoiding speaking about the father's death. The horrors of the past must be left behind. Now is the time to look forward, to write a completely different history. The geographical dislocation is lived as a radical rupture of the family's history.

Although they have crossed the geographical border, the process of claiming asylum and the uncertainty of being granted refugee status resulting in a constant menace of deportation, results in an insecure reality on the subjective level. But this insecurity functions in accordance to age boundaries. At some point, during the process of claiming refuge status, it was understood that Conceição should tell her

older children about everything that happened in Angola – the death, imprisonment and torture[15].

According to Conceição, the first refusal letter they received from the Home Office was written in a very harsh way, basically stating that the reasons they provided to claim asylum were untruthful and that they should return to their country. I met Mariana and her sisters - Carla and Geisa - by chance in the city centre a short while after they received this letter. Carla and Geisa started crying, saying that if England did not want them in the first place, it should have let them know before. They felt as if they were misled; England invited them to come and now wanted to send them away.

While the girls were crying, Mariana was singing, playing alone as if she was not paying any attention to what was taking place. Mariana occupies the position the family has reserved for her: the alienated child. If the older girls must be unaware of almost everything, Mariana must be alienated from everything. It is clear that she is acting in accordance with the notion of childhood innocence, which understands that this phase is traversed and lived through ignorance in relation to painful matters. The result of this discourse is the prevention of children appropriating many issues related to their life history, and a refusal to allow them to talk about these subjects:

> L: Ah, tell me something. Before you came to England, how did you imagined, how did you think this new country would be like?
>
> M: Hum, beau-uutiful. It isn't like Angola, where everything was ugly. (She looks at Conceição and laughs).
>
> L: (I look at Conceição) I think she is asking Conceição 'Can I speak about this subject?' Is that it Mari?
>
> M: Yes.

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[15] According to Conceição, the person who was working as a translator during one of the meetings with her solicitor said that the solicitor told Conceição that since her older children would appear in court to give testimony in the process, they should know about the family's events in Angola. Afterwards, her solicitor said she has never suggested such a thing. It was either the translator's mistake or Conceição's misunderstanding. When Conceição understood what she should do, she told the older girls the details of the cause of their exile. To Mariana, nothing was told; the family's history remained a secret for her.

L: You don't know if you can speak about it?

M: Hum hum.

L: Can she speak about the differences between here and Angola Conceição?

C: She doesn't know. She mustn't have enough perception.

L: What do you think are the differences? What do you think? I think she is able to compare. I think she knows the differences.

M: I don't have anything else to talk about.

At another moment, when she tells me some differences between England and Angola, I ask her once more if she would like to speak about her life back home, to which she responds: 'I don't' want to *falembrar* anymore'. The word *falembrar* constitutes an amalgamation of the Portuguese words *falar* – to speak – and *lembrar* – to remember. She cannot speak about life in Angola, because to speak is to remember, is to revive, through words, a past that must be forgotten.

Mariana understands that it is not only forbidden for her to talk about her exile conditions to me. It is also forbidden to acknowledge that she is aware of what is going on. If the private space is the location of interdiction, the school is appropriated as the site where her history can be dealt with through the peer relations. As already observed, Freud (1973a) argues that experiences that are repressed, being displaced to the unconscious, go through a process of substitutive formation and can return to the conscious, although they are dissociated from their original ideational representation. Mariana replaces the experiences of several significant people and institutions associated with her diasporic process with those of her peers at school:

L: In relation to the boys, you said there are some of them who are always beating up people, that you don't enjoy playing with them. And in relation to the girls, is there any girl you don't like to play with?

H: Yes. Her name is Sheila. Hum... She likes, she very much likes to take everything away from school with her like someone who says 'Come here, it is everything in here, it is everything in here'. They give everything to everybody and after receive from everyone.

L: Sorry Mari? Sorry, I haven't understood. What does she like to do?

H: She likes to tak (stops). Eh, she likes to take everything that is in her house to the school and, and hands to everybody like someone who says 'Come world, come world.' Afterwards when, when she finishes, when she finishes to give to the children, 'Give me that, I don't want it is from my sister'. And it is hers.

Sheila is one of the few white girls in Mariana's class. She presents herself as a very passive and unprotected child and became, in Mariana's eyes, the representation of England, encompassing its hegemonic population and politics towards refugees. On some occasions I witnessed Mariana acting in quite a harsh manner towards Sheila and at other times competing with her for my attention or over the performance of some intellectual task. Sheila's apparent passivity seems to have contributed to her becoming the repository of Mariana's anger in relation to her refugee condition. The objects Mariana says Sheila gives to the kids and afterwards takes back are pencils, crayons and rubbers. These articles are very much valued by most of the girls of Mariana's age, generating feelings of envy. The pencils, crayons and rubbers given by Sheila represent the opportunity of a better life offered by England to the refugees, and Sheila's attitude of taking the objects back represents the threat of deportation, of cruelly withdrawing the quality of life the family has achieved.

The issue of life quality has different meanings for the refugee families according to the life opportunities in their home country. As we shall see, in the case of Deniz, who was very wealthy in Turkey, the asylum seekers' economic and social condition in England is seen in terms of loss. For Mariana and her family, it represents better conditions in almost every aspect. Because of the dangerous political situation in their city – surrounded by a high number of arrests, imprisonment, torture and murder – the girls did not attend school for four years. Besides that, their economic situation was far worse in Angola than in England. This fact can be represented by food, the most basic article of consumption. Conceição says that in Angola, food in their house was far scarcer than in England. Mariana also points to an improvement in their economic life when she observes that one of the differences between England and Angola is that 'in Angola, we didn't have anything. We didn't have shops to sell clothes... And here we have everything we need and there wasn't in there'.

Mariana's acknowledgement that the matter of her father's absence cannot be spoken of directly also engenders, as a consequence, the metaphorization of such issues through her peer relations. When speaking about children at school, she always refers to the girls by the word 'girls' but the boys she denominates by the word 'men'. I see this "adultification" of boys as a matter of assimilating the social construction of maleness on the grounds of authority, which is linked to her personal experience of violence – of police - and the need of protection – of the father. When speaking about with whom she prefers to play, she states:

M: I prefer to play with the girls.

L: Instead of playing with the boys?

M: With the girls. Because I don't very much like to play with men, because the men are always making a lot of music[16]. Always in there, running in vain. But I like some of them who don't stay in there doing I don't know what. Stay in there beating up the colleagues I don't like.

L: Ah, because the boys beat up people when they are playing?

M: They beat up. Um hum.

L: Which boys like to beat up?

M: The bad ones, the big ones. When they look in the face they become evil. They are always running, running to catch me. Because there is a colleague who thinks he's the top one.

The assumption, based on gender and generation and very current among children, that sees older boys as aggressive - as the ones to be scared of - is appropriated by Mariana and exaggerated. Her description of the expressions boys/men have when she plays with them is associated with a threat: 'When they look in the face they become evil'.

Mariana's description of a banal interaction among children seems to be her unconscious strategy of giving voice to the terrors experienced back home. Evil boys trying to catch her equals the evil men who caught her parents and who tried to kill her and her sisters. When Conceição was taken to jail, some people set fire to their

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[16] By 'a lot of music' I understand that Mariana means a lot of noise.

house while the girls were inside. While running away, one of her sisters had her neck cut by a piece of wire. She still has a scar, which is the material inscription of a story based on terror. England represents the possibility of a safe life for the girls. Mariana says that in England the shops sell alarms. When I ask her why they need an alarm she responds: 'Because in case a criminal comes and burns the house, we are not going to know where it is. It must have an alarm to make "uinnon" (making the sound of an alarm) for everybody to call the police'.

The scene represents girls, specifically, running away from some people, very probably men, without the presence/support of the father figure, the mythic representation of hero/protection for a child.

L: And there are only girls in this group?

M: Um hum, and a man.

L: Ah, there is a boy also?

M: Who defends us.

L: And why he defends you?

M: Because he has to stay in front of us. Because...he has to defend us Because we go to a man who wants to beat us up.

Conceição: A young man.

M: A young man, and wants to beat us up. What are we going to do? Only running?

The man who is in the group of girls is Mariana's father, who should have been there, protecting them, facing the danger, and avoiding the need to run away. The girls are running away from the house, running away from the country, going anywhere, and when they reach somewhere it is still not over. Being sent back is a constant reality due to the threat of deportation[17].

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[17] When I carried out the interview with Mariana, she and her sisters had been granted refugee status, which guarantees permanent leave to remain. Nevertheless, because of a strategic mistake by Conceição's solicitor (she split the case into two processes to be judged separately - one process related

Deniz

Between religion ad ethnicity: the ultra fluidity of positionality

The issue of identity becomes ever more complex when the reason for diasporic movement is multiplied by conflictive subject positions. During the interview I carried out with Deniz's mother, Aasem, and in informal conversations with the family, it became quite clear that for them the issue of identity is very fluid. Any attempt at rigid categorisation leads to a feeling of failure. When I first met Aasem she told me that Brazilian and Turkish women are the most beautiful women in the world[18]. On another occasion, when giving me some suggestions about my future personal life, in a joking tone she advised me to marry a beautiful Turkish footballer. At the same time, when watched Turkish television in their house – they have a cable channel - she and her husband would point out when a singer was Kurdish and would cheerfully congratulate me when I would guess that a person was Kurdish through physical characteristics.

One of the reasons I attribute to such fluidity in terms of identity is the fact that the family do not come from the part of Kurdistan that is colonized by Turkey - like Cari and Abi's family - but from Istanbul, the biggest city in the country. Another factor contributes to a more complex notion of identity: their religion. Unlike the vast majority of Kurds - around 80% - as well Turkish nationals - around 80% - they are Alevi.

According to Izady (2005) Alevism is a non-Islamic religion, and part of the Cult of Angels. Like other sectors of the Cult, the fundamental theology of Alevism is strongly contradictory to the Koran's rules. During the Ottoman Empire, Alevism was a disfavoured religion, since the ruling sultans wore the mantle of the Prophet Muhammad and supported the principles of orthodox Sunni Islam while, according to an account given by Roghat, the Alevis followed Ali, Prophet Muhammad's nephew. In 1514 under the Otoman Empire and the ruling of sultan Selim, many massacres and

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to the girls and the other one to Conceição), Conceição was refused refugee status and must appeal against the decision. She still faces the danger of deportation.

[18] We must remember that Roghat does not denominate himself by Turkish, but by Kurdish.

state-sponsored pogroms were directed against Alevis immediately after the annexation of eastern Anatolia from Persia. The Turkish Republican period established from 1922 continued conferring a low status on the Alevi population, and anti-Alevi policies turned the Alevi Kurds – who were discriminated on a religious as well as on an ethnic basis - into one of the most radical contesting groups (Izadi 2005)[19].

In this way, whereas the other Kurds I got in touch with refer solely to ethnic persecution as a motif for their exile, for Aasem, religion is another aspect of persecution. She tells me that her husband's family has been involved in politics, being the target of retaliation from the police and resulting in the exile of some family members throughout Europe. She shows me a file with newspaper photos and reports of members of her husband's family who have suffered violence: the arrest of some people, a cousin of her husband who was shot in the head, another person who had his hand broken. She tells me that at one point, the police went to their house searching for her husband and, not finding him, beat her up.

Aasem and Deniz seem to value their Kurd and Alevi identities in different ways. We must remember that in Turkey, Kurdish parents do not raise their children to be aware of this identity for fear of retaliation by the Turkish State and population. If ethnicity must be hidden from children, in Deniz's case, the matter of religion seems to have been part of her daily life. When speaking about an aunt of hers who was arrested in the street – they saw this episode happening on the Turkish cable channel – Deniz and Aasem make explicit the fact that being Kurdish is not dissociated from being Alevi:

K: My auntie, yeah? That is my uncle's, yeah, wife; and she lost her sister.

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[19] According to a website Alevism Net (2005) which gives a detailed account of Alevism, the basic principles of this religion are:
- no dogmas, no prophecies, no 'holy' books, no conversions, no feelings of superiority...
- the 'divine nature' of mankind instead of a 'God' outside mankind...
- pantheistic, mystic (example, an inner form of Islam), oneness of religions, Mother Nature...
- humanistic: the human being as the centre, decentness, self-determination, equality of sexes...
- cultural and progressive: science, music, dance, literature...
- social: fellow man, Unity in Diversity...
- progressive supporters: social-democratic, liberal, progressive, separation of Religion and State...

L: And you just saw in the TV?

D: Yeah. And the police was picking her.

L: And she is Kurdish?

D: Yeah.

Aasem: And she is Kurdish, Alevi.

Kurdish, Alevi: in contrast to Roghat, Aasem brings up a new adjective that will determine a more complex interplay of subject positions. The discrimination suffered back home is ethnic plus religious. And religious discrimination has its origin, not only among the Turkish people, but among the Kurdish as well, since the vast majority of this ethnicity, around 80%, is Muslim:

> Deniz translating Aasem's words: Do you know, we are Kurdish Alevi, and there are loads of people like that and when we are doing some job, in Turkey, we can't do it. Where we go to school, they just say us loads kind of things.

> L: The other Muslims?

> Aasem: Not Muslims, Kurdish people.

> L: Kurdish?

> Aasem: Kurdish Alevi, exactly.

> L: So, what you mean is, Kurdish Alevi, have problems with other Kurdish as well?

> D: Um hum.

> Deniz translating Aasem's words: Is not the problem we are Kurdish. Is problem is we are **Alevi**. So that's what the problem is.

> L: So tell me something, because I thought the biggest problem in Turkey was Turkish State against Kurdish people.

> Deniz translating Aasem's words: They doesn't want we, we to be Kurdish. They doesn't even want us to be Alevi. So we got person called Hased Alli[20]. So he's eh, person that whoever controlling **Alevi** people. So, we believe that man.

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[20] Prophet Mohammed's nephew.

While for Aasem the source of the persecution was a combination of ethnic and religious identity, for Deniz religion constitutes the primary source of differentiation. Although she assumed the role of interpreter throughout the interview, at times, she would respond to my questions directly, expressing her own points of view:

D: Do you know why the police, eh, street police kicking her (Deniz's aunt) for? 'Because you are Alevi, You are stupid, you are mad, we hate you'. That's why. They want us wearing scarf[21].

L: They want you to wear a scarf? Deniz, so why did you come here?

Deniz translating Aasem's words: We had some problems about...

Aasem: Politic.

D: (Deniz intervenes without translating, expressing her thoughts) For we are Alevi, so then...

Aasem: Kurdish.

At another moment when speaking about her best friend, Deniz makes clear a conflict between her Turkish and Kurdish identities:

L: Oh Deniz tell me something, with whom do you like to play at school?

D: Semra.

L: Semra, the Kurdish girl. Is she Kurdish?

D: No, she is Turkish.

Aasem: She is Kurdish. She is not Kurdish? (Speaking with an extremely surprised tone of voice)

D: Yes, she is Kurdish.

Deniz's identity is constituted through an interplay of her life history in Turkey and the diasporic reality. While Deniz did not learn Kurdish in Turkey – this would be a clear and dangerous sign of her Kurdish identity – the absence of such a clear sign of Muslim identity - the scarf – is taken by her to be a reference to the

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[21] A strong Muslim religious symbol.

persecution suffered back home: 'Do you know why the police, eh, street police kicking her for? 'Because you are Alevi, You are stupid, you are mad, we hate you'. That's why. They want us wearing scarf.'

Deniz lives in Green Park, and studies in Green Park Primary and Nursery School. The neighbourhood, as well as the school, is mainly populated with Muslims from Asian heritage. It is common to see women and some girls wearing scarves in both environments. The fact that Deniz's religious identity is a minority among both Turkish and Kurdish people is reproduced in England. Once more she is surrounded by Muslim people. Instead of strongly affirming her religious identity, she ends up adopting a very secular pose, effected by learning the codes of the new country; a country that is to all intents and purposes secular:

L: Once you told me something like this school is a kind of Muslim school.

D: Um hum.

L: What do you think is a Muslim school?

D: Do you know why I don't like sitting in assembly? Is because they are talking about Muslim people.

L: In which way?

D: Every way. They say is Gurunana.

L: What is Gurunana?[22]

D: Things about Sikhs. So they got right to say things like that, but we are living in England so I don't want that kind of things.

L: So you don't like them to speak about Muslims. You like them to speak about (she interrupts me).

D: English.

L: Why?

D: I don't like that. All kind of religions that people are going to tell you, that he did that, he did that. There are some books yeah, but I don't want Turkish in English books. So I want to read only in English books. So you have this

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[22]Deniz is referring to Gurdwara, the Sikh's temple.

Urdu and English. I saw that book about Turkish and English, so I don't want that.

Deniz is referring to the issue of religious education, an issue that has previously been pointed out by Aasem when discussing religious matters in Turkey:

Deniz translating Aasem's words: Do you know Mosque?

L: Yeah.

Deniz translating Aasem's words: In Turkey, is like a classroom and they just tell you about **Allah**. And they say you need to pray Allah, you need to do that.

In Green Park the school is transformed in a sort of Temple and in Turkey the Temple is transformed into a school. But it is not only religion and schooling that must be separated in Deniz's eyes. The ethnic issue, symbolized by language teaching, must be kept apart. Her urgent desire is to learn the new language:

L: And what do you think about the school?

D: Is good.

L: And what else?

D: (Pause) I don't know. When I come to this school, yeah, I can't speak no English. Zero, I come here with zero. I was only know the numbers and swearing. So, when I come to this school they gave me Turkish, Kurdish and English books. So is about Turkish, Kurdish and English. My mum say that 'They are trying to make you learn Kurdish' (laughs). Is got colours on it. So my mum said that 'Ask me a question then I'm answer you', and she said 'what's the white means' she said 'pish'.

L: So you were learning Kurdish in an English school?

D: (Laughs) That's funny yeah? You know Miss Beuer (Frieda)? She, she helped me to, she just helped me to speak English.

L: And about the Turkish, Kurdish, English books, at the beginning, do you think they were helpful?

D: Yeah, it was helpful. But I don't want stories like that.

L: You don't want stories in Turkish?

D: If they gonna give you yeah, Turkish, Kurdish and English books yeah, they gonna teach you how to speak English yeah? That would be good, so it help you to speak English. So in that kind of stories they just tell what the story is about. I don't know, I had to read over, it's hard.

It is important to remember that Green Park Primary and Nursery School has a very strong multicultural orientation, where "cultural difference" must be celebrated. For Deniz, any references to where she comes from must be utilised, in the school's context, in a pragmatic way, as a means of learning the new language. I do not understand Deniz's willingness to learn English as merely a assimilationist compromise. Learning English is not about forgetting where she comes from or "swapping" identities. It is about establishing relations and about building up a life in the new country:

L: And what else do you think about the school?

D: (Pause) I don't know. I can't say to an English person a Turkish word.

As we observed in the third chapter, for Deniz, learning English is not only empowering while she remains in England. She also foresees the possibility of going back to Turkey through the advantages of acquiring the English language:

D: So when I go in university in England, if I go Turkey yeah, I can be the head teacher of a school. I can speak English, so I've been in a school in England, so I can be head teacher in school.

L: So what you mean is that the fact that you've been in England gives you a kind of power? Is something like that?

D: In Turkey yeah, no head teachers can speak English. **No** head teachers. I went to school in Turkey and I asked my head teacher that if he can speak English or not he said to me 'No, I can't speak English'. I think, if I go to school in England, if I go back to Turkey yeah, I wanna be school teacher or something, I can be head teacher.

Deniz's occupational aspirations, when faced with the possibility of returning to Turkey, are traversed by a very strong sense of empowerment. We must remember that a head teacher is a position that is extremely respected among children. And the acquisition of the English language is, in her point of view, a passport for such an

ambition. While in England, she sees her parents' difficulties as based solely on the language issue:

> L: Do you think that your family likes to live in England?
>
> D: No.
>
> L: Why not?
>
> D: (Pause). I don't know, because they can't speak this language. Like if somebody else asking question, they can't answer it. My dad just, he's trying to learn English. He think he's gonna learn English he's going to do his job, the furniture, when he gets British[23].

We can see from the extracts above that, for Deniz, learning the English language does not necessarily signify an assimilationist dynamic. For her, learning English does not equal becoming English or being absorbed by the hegemonic culture. Rather, it points to the prospect of building up a life elsewhere.

My assumption that an assimilationist perspective is not satisfactory in understanding Deniz's identity negotiation in the new country seems to be attested by the way she refers to her house. When in Turkey, her family was fairly wealthy. Aasem tells me how comfortable their house was, being very large, equipped with a dishwasher and a computer for each child. Now they live in a much smaller house, with none of the facilities she referred to. Aasem says that everything they have is second-hand; in her words, everything is 'shit'. When they first arrived in the house, it looked very messy and dirty; Aasem says she nearly fainted. Her husband then persuaded her to stay in the premises, telling her that they could improve the space and that it was close to Deniz's school. For Aasem such a change in the standard of living still constitutes a source of deep bitterness.

Deniz also speaks about a decline in quality of life in relation to her house, referring to the comfort she knew back home: 'We was got loads and loads of money, so computers and everything. We got **nice** house, so we **lose** all of that'. When they

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[23] By 'getting British' Deniz means acquiring British citizenship. five years after being granted permanent leave to remain, a person with a refugee status can apply for British nationality. 'Getting British' in this context does not mean becoming British. It means a legal procedure that can enhance the quality of life in the diaspora.

were in Turkey, her father had a high-quality furniture factory and a three-storey workshop. They show me the catalogue of the showroom, which looks very impressive. Deniz speaks about their loss in terms of goods, pointing out a bed in the catalogue, and saying that while in Turkey she had a nice bed and now she has none. When I ask her if there is anything nice in their house she refers to her origins: 'Nothing, nothing is nice. Only our channel, Turkish channel'. The positive aspect of her house is a reference to home; in this way the Turkish identity has a privileged space in the private sphere.

When speaking about the differences between England and Turkey, Deniz recalls another element from home that is transposed to her daily life in the diaspora:

L: What are the differences between England and your country?

D: (Pause) I didn't think that.

L: Do you think there are some things that are different between here and there? What comes into your mind when you think about it? Because I can think which are the differences between Brazil and England. There are some differences.

D: In Turkey yeah, we eat our food. So here, we eat different food. But we make still our food. We go London yeah; we can buy our things, food, Turkish. Because my uncle got big supermarket. So we go there we buy, and he says 'Don't pay it'. He's kind.

At another point, Deniz says she finds the food at school nice and she very much likes the pasta. The times I have been to the refectory I noticed that the dinners they offer are essentially based on Western types of food, such as nuggets and chips. When Deniz explains to me that her mother told her she can eat any kind of food she wants, Aasem intervenes, speaking directly in English: 'I don't say don't eat pig. No. All the food you eat. No good different, 'I'm vegetarian, I'm Muslim'. No, I don't like'.

What Aasem seems to indicate to Deniz is the possibility of openness to experiences in the new country, without any of the demarcations and exclusions that groups of people - like vegetarians or Muslims - promote when building up a sense of

identity/community[24]. Deniz transposes such openness to her peer relations, saying she likes to play with any child regardless of ethnic and colour background. Following her statement, Aasem supports her position. Such openness does not mean that cultural references are put aside completely; besides eating any kind of food she wants, Deniz eats Turkish/Kurdish food at home. Being open to the world does not mean forgetting where one comes from:

L: There is the food that is different, and what else, apart from the food?

D: (Pause) Peoples.

L: Yeah. How are they different?

D: England yeah, they only need to speak English children in this school, but there is loads kinds of different people. But in Turkey yeah, only Turkish children in there, in school. There not to much peoples coming and staying in our country, because is bad country. And is that different.

While Turkey is a bad country because Deniz's family could not affirm their identities as Kurdish and Alevi, the geographical dislocation results in a more liberal perspective. And for Deniz, the fact that all the children at school speak the official language does not make them all the same. People exercise different identitarian positions/practices despite the imposition of a single language.

L: Would you like to tell me about how was your life in Turkey?

D: (Pause). I can't remember. I can remember my house, I can remember my cousins and… that's it. I got friends. I can, remember what was my friends faces like. I forgot the old one. We are talking on the phone.

L: Do you talk to them? Do you still in touch with them?

D: Yeah, they sound did not change.

Deniz moved to England when she was only eight years old. Although her past experience is characterised by a short period of time, she still evokes images of specific and significant people and spaces. Even though she has been in the diaspora

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[24] It also points to the liberalism that seems to characterize Alevism. I record the response given to me by one Alevi man, who was also Kurdish and Turkish, and who I met in a chip shop. Asking if he believed in God, he replied: 'No, I am free'.

for three years, she keeps in touch with her social network back home. 'They [their] sound didn't change': Deniz's evocation of an immutable sound does not mean that her friends have not changed, but that her perception of them is still closely associated to her lived experiences back home. This points to a reaffirmation of what she left behind in contrast to the changes that dealing with a whole new world demands of a person. And although she actively takes part in these changes, her appropriation of the new reality is partial. Generational boundaries stipulate the knowable and unknowable.

Being a child in exile

Similarly to the other refugee children, Deniz has a silent agreement with her family about acknowledging the reasons for their exile and the problems faced in the new country. Once more, the conception of childhood as an innocent/alienated phase can be evoked to dismiss the child's involvement with those difficulties that a life in exile generates. One of Deniz's strategies of non-involvement is making a clear distinction between children's and adult's worlds. She delimits her problems to the school's context, highlighting her position as a pupil:

> L: Deniz, I remember that in your house when your mum was talking about the problems that your family was facing in Turkey, and she was showing me the newspapers and all that very difficult stories, I remember that I asked you which were your problems, and you said 'I don't have problems because I am a child'.[25]

> D: Yeah, I don't have any problems. I **had** problems, when I come to this school[26] first time because I was not speaking English. But, hem. Do you know last year yeah, before that last year, I can't speak any English. So, in last year yeah, I can speak English, cause when somebody else was making me angry yeah, I just go like that 'What are you trying to do? What are you trying to do?' Like when I'm in outside they, they think that I can't do anything.

> L: When you say that you don't have problems is it because you think, for example, that maybe your family, they face bigger problems and that what happened in Turkey, what your mum told me is more serious than your problems? Is that, or you really think you don't have problems?

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[25] After making this affirmation during the interview carried out in her house, Deniz said that her father and her mother are the ones who have problems.

[26] The second interview I carried out with Deniz was executed at school, since if it had been held at her house, Aasem was likely to strongly intervene.

D: (Pause) I don't know if we got problems or not. They don't tell me. Cause if they gonna tell me yeah, I wont be talking to that people who were making us like that. Some people made us like this, like we come to England. There was some people, so I don't know who they are, I talk to everybody, my dad's friend, and things like that.

L: So what you mean is that…

D: That somebody made us like that.

L: Somebody in Turkey made your family come to England, and your family, they don't tell you anything about it?

D: But, I think was our secretary. She looks like angel, but when you turn around yeah, she does something.

L: And about the life in here, I mean, does your parents talk to you about it, or not?

D: No.

L: Like, how they find the life in here, how they organise the life?

D: No. But, when my mum got so stressed with somebody else yeah, she gets tired and she goes like that (makes the movement like fainting), shes got back problem. You know, the peoples that are giving us money[27], is not that much money, she can't go in the bus. So we, we, we get some money yeah and we could it have every two weeks or something we could have, we put fifty pounds yeah, and we buy a car. Our car is going to be 'pru, pru, pru, pru, pru'. (Laughs)

Deniz is aware of the family's problems. Her denial of this consciousness is probably due to the fact that she knows that it is not her responsibility to search for solutions. In contrast to the other refugee children who took part in this research, Deniz seems to be fairly detached from the problems her family faces. This seems to be a result of the fact that she did not directly face the effects of the political situation that surrounded her.

When I ask Deniz what the differences between adults and children are, she recalls the issue of knowledge and experience: 'They learn everything, they saw everything. But when you are a child yeah, you don't know'. 'They saw everything'; In the same way as the other children, Deniz stresses the division between what adults

have experienced and children have not. And what her family has lived through must be told while she is asleep:

L: Why did you come to England?

D: I don't know. I was eight when I come here.

L: And your parents, did they never talk about it with you?

D: No. They don't.

L: But that day I was doing the interview with your mum you were listening. Did she tell you those stories before that day to you?

D: (Silence).

L: Did they ever mention that to you, what was going on in there, why they moved?

D: Hum, hum.

L: They don't speak about it with you?

D: They don't speak about that.

L: And your brother, do they talk about it with your brother?

D: Yeah, they do.

L: Why do you think they talk to your brother… (She interrupts me).

D: When I sleep yeah, when I was coming to school, when I was sleep early yeah, they talk to my brother about me and England.

L: And how do you know if you were sleeping?

D: Because my mum told me. She say that 'I'm telling your brother what to do'.

L: And why do think they talk about these issues with your brother and not with you?

D: (Pause) He's older than me (with a tone indicating that the reason is an obvious one).

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[27] The money she is referring to is the financial support provided monthly by the government to families of asylum seekers, since they are not allowed to work.

The division between the adult's world and the child's world traverses Deniz's life in various temporal/diasporic configurations: her past in Turkey, her present in England and her possible future back in Turkey. Her family has not been granted refugee status. Since they arrived in England, three years ago, the Home Office has extended their permission to stay for six months at a time, forcing them to live in daily uncertainty about their future. This condition is the cause of much stress, mainly for Aasem. During the interview she tells me about her anguish:

> Deniz translating Aasem's words: They can tell us tomorrow to go. So they just never told us to do anything. We was in house every time, watching television, that's it. And we got sometimes, we got friends. (Aasem intervenes).
>
> Deniz translating Aasem's words: Do you know where we go, every week? GP, doctor. We going every week.
>
> Aasem: And every day, one tablet drink, anti-depression tablet. I'm sorry (Starts crying).

Aasem sees her family's future as divided by the prospect of either gaining permanent leave to remain or of facing deportation. In the first case, the future is perceived as the possibility of building up a happy life. According to her, her husband can start a business, Deniz will carry on going to school, her son will go to college, and they will buy a house. The alternative, the process of deportation, is regarded with horror: 'So when we go back to Turkey yeah, and some people will dead. That's what will happen'. On the other hand, the only time Deniz spoke about going back home, her tale was permeated by a rather optimistic vision. When speaking about her professional aspirations, she says that if she can stay in England she wants to become a traffic warden. Going back to Turkey, being fluent in the English language, she can become the head teacher of a school.

Deniz's negotiations of life in diaspora, and her projections of a future either in England or in Turkey, are very much guided by her individual achievements. At any moment she referred to how her economic position back home could help a possible future in Turkey. Being detached from the family's most evident problems, Deniz searches in her self for the strength to deal with the various adversities caused by geographical, cultural and social dislocation. Her determination in learning the

new language, her confidence when fighting the bullies at school, and the choices she has made in relation to her occupational future are all evidence that children actively deal with what is handed to them. The concept of an innocent child is, in her case, not synonymous with passivity, but with delimiting the fields of struggle. And Deniz crosses such spaces in an admirable way.

Kirpal

Crossing geographical and psychic borders: living the fantastic

Kirpal, a nine-years-old Sikh boy who has been in England for two years, fled the Taliban violence in Afghanistan together with his parents and younger brother. At times, when casually talking to him at school, he brings up fantastic accounts that he claims have happened to him, or simple facts that do not correspond to his reality: having spent a weekend in Bombay with his father for instance, or having a computer. If these fantasies constitute pleasurable accounts, the interview revealed descriptions traversed by rather violent details. When I ask him what the differences between England and Afghanistan are, he evokes a scene that has never taken place, since his mother, Ajeet, told me that while in their country, Kirpal was not allowed to get in touch with any children outside the household:

> K: Because, the, eh the, Afghani, eh, the children were hitting me, that's why. One child come to my house with **that** big stone, **smash** my nose and there all blood. You, know, eh, eh, you know the, my, you know my this (shows a part of the body) it was all open and the doctor eh, eh (pause), the doctor sawed it with the, eh, with the nail (excited tone of voice). He sawed it all.

At another moment, the same image of laceration is evoked when Kirpal says that once he fell off a horse and had to go to the hospital to be sewed up. Both descriptions depict exposure to an aggressive situation that can be seen as life-threatening. Although both episodes did not happen exactly in the way Kirpal described, they are directly related to the experiences he and his family experienced back home, as well as during the trip to England. Unlike some other refugee children, his awareness of his family's situation back home, as well as in England, is accepted.

Maybe this fact contributes directly to his notion that there is no difference between children and adults. He is the only child in the research project who affirmed that there are no differences between these groups of people. In his words, 'They are all the same'. When I ask him if he thinks his family likes to live in England, he gives me a detailed account of their life based on their persecution while in Afghanistan:

L: Do you think your family likes living in England?

K: Eh (small pause), yeah.

L: Why?

K: Because here they like to go, because here they like to go eh, shopping, like, you know, in Afghanistan we can't get out. You know the Taliban? Like, eh, move and put other, you know that thing, eh, they got big, big massive guns. And, eh, one day, one d (stops), one man shoot eh every single family one in house to all, all of the family to get the dad the babies which are like me, like that. One day they come to my house and they beat up my dad with a big fat stick and **hitting** my dad. Because they want money to **fight** with eh, America and eh, eh. But I don't like, I don't like this, the eh, like that. If we didn't give them money, they come to our house and **hit** us. You know, our money, money, we have to give them. My dad got eh, eh, clothe shop in Afghanistan, yeah, they want eh, they want, in twenty five days, they want two million, eh two million, eh for pay, two million.

L: And did you father sell anything?

K: Yeah, all the things, our house, then we come here. We hide, eh come here.

Ajeet confirms Kirpal's account of their life back home and the reason for exile. She points out that besides requiring money, the Taliban tried to force her husband to join the Army. She observes that Kirpal and his younger brother witnessed the occasions when members of the Taliban got into their house and beat her husband up, once pushing her. Both children responded by screaming a lot. The threat was not solely aimed at Kirpal's father; Ajeet was obliged to follow strict rules, not being allowed to go out of the house on her own, but only in the company of a group of people. Religion is another factor recalled as a reason for the diasporic movement. She says that since they were Sikhs in a predominantly Muslim country, they felt isolated. In order to travel to England they sold everything they had.

The fear that traversed people's lives outside the house also affected Kirpal's emotional condition. When speaking about the differences between life in Afghanistan and in England, Ajeet points out that besides the fact that in the latter place they have more facilities like medication, school and places for the children to play, they also have more freedom in many ways. She reports how the children used to get scared when the ice-cream man drove around the area, hiding themselves behind anything. Even to buy ice cream the children had to go in the company of a group. According to Ajeet, when they arrived in England, the children re-enacted the fears they had suffered in Afghanistan, getting scared when they heard the noise of ambulances, fire engines or ice-cream vans. The parents then helped them in identifying the source of the sound. Religious intolerance was another source of fear for Kirpal. His mother states that because of the pressure the family suffered to become Muslim, Kirpal used to get very scared, often wetting himself at nighttime.

Both children - Kirpal and his brother - witnessed the harassment suffered by their parents while in their house, but during the trip to England they were positioned differently in terms of maturity. In order to make the passage to England, they and their family needed the service of smugglers. These are people who charge for the service of helping asylum seekers to make the journey to a determined country and to enter illegally into its territory. During the trip, another family who were also fleeing the Taliban's violence joined Kirpal's family. Ajeet says that the smugglers dispensed medicine to induce the small children to sleep, stopping them making any noise or needing to go to the toilet. While Kirpal's brother, who was about two years old, took the medicine, it was understood that he, who was six, did not need it. In this way, it was assumed that he was able to actively take part in the journey. When I ask Ajeet if at the time of the journey Kirpal was six years old, she responds in the affirmative, indicating that at that age, he could be aware of the situation and cooperate with them: 'Yeah, Kirpal was all right, so he understood, to stay quiet'. This account makes it clear that the concept of maturity and its relation to certain ages is arbitrary, is socially constructed, and is not simply dictated by a biological universalism.

Being awake during the journey, Kirpal was engaged in a series of events that are usually told to children in a fictitious way. At this point, what should be an invented story to be told to kids, or a result of a child's imagination, is turned into

reality. The way Kirpal tells the story is mixed with events that are a result of his own creation. Fantasy and reality are intermingled, not only as a result of a creative child's mind, but because the unusual circumstances of Kirpal's reality allow the addition of fantastic events, of narratives typical of children's books. His reality offers the scenery for the emergence of his imagination:

> K: And, and, do you know, one day, when we come, eh in half way in. Eh, there is England, there is Afghanistan, we in the middle, about to get in, in England. And we in the jungle, really, the, and, one time, the, the tiger (makes the tiger sound), like that. We scared all of us scared. It was three tigers soon us, we down there and eh, down there. Like we here and, pretend, there is a chair and there is the tigers, big tigers. And we, they run and, they run behind us. Like, if we do anything they gonna eat us. We went one house, one, like cottage yeah, inside and closed the door and we see the tiger **take** a walk, eh, take a walk scratching the doors like that. I said, 'Thank God'. Eh like, if we didn't, if we didn't eh, run the, then we gonna loose, then we gonna lost our life with the tigers.

> L: How, how was the trip, I mean, how did you come to England? By boat... (He interrupts me)

> K: Very, very hot. You have to walk yeah? You have to walk about ten miles. You have to walk, walk. If someone dies, you know like Christian people put them in a eh, the box and like, eh they made it all, they, I, I, I, I, my leg kicked like that and all, the one box come up and he got very down and all skeleton come out, yeah. One, eh, one lady, one, one lady, old lady died and they, they, they just put in there and leave it.

> L: So when you were coming here, there was a group of people, not only your family, there was other people with you?

> Kirpal responds positively with his head.

> L: So you walked, a lot, and what happened?

> K: After we went go, go, we went in a truck, that's it, then we come here.

I verify with Ajeet the events that characterized the trip. Although her description is more realistic, I suggest that Kirpal's account is very coherent, being intrinsically related to his experience. The same narrative structure of running away from a life-threatening situation, hiding away and death is common to both accounts:

> L: How did you come to England? How was the trip?

A: In a truck, the people who helped us and got us out were all Greek and they used to cover their faces and we didn't know who they were. And that was the people who helped us. And they used to put us in the truck. And where the petrol is, they made these hidden places, under the truck. We had to slide inside the truck and that's how, we came out with the children. And sometimes they were putting in one of those luggage boxes and just putting in the boxes, which are used for big things like fridges. They used to put us in there so we were not seen.

L: Did you have to cross a forest?

A: Yes. There was a couple and they were coming with us and hiding and everything and mum was really poly and they had children with them and because she was poly and had sugar diabet[es] she couldn't travel and hide so the husband had to give her, couldn't carry the children and the poorly wife, so he just gave her something to die. Then she died and I saw it all. And he just buried her and came out. Because he wanted to get out, and he was a Muslim family and he wanted to get out as well. So, he just buried her and got out of the country with the children. The masked people made the graves on the way, and if somebody has died or couldn't travel or anything, they used to buried that person.

Nevertheless, there is still a real threat that this fantastic/terror story will become real again. Kirpal's family is still waiting for a decision from the Home Office in relation to their status. The government's response has, until now, been similar to the one given to Deniz's relatives: a renewal of permission to stay every six months without any precise definition of their future:

L: Do you think there is anything about the life in here that Kirpal is not seeing in a very positive way? Is there anything in here that is bothering him?

A: The only fear he gets is that we might be sent home. Because we do talk about that, and that is the fear we get, that we will be sent back. And we don't want that, and that is the fear Kirpal sometimes get.[28]

L: You still don't have your status?

A: Every six months or one year they renew the visa. And that is the only fear for our family, in case we are going to be sent back. Cause we still are refugees. It still not stable there. One minute is all right, then next minute, is not. So we don't fell confident going back. That is the fear we carry as family. We don't feel confident because is a Muslim country and we don't feel confident going back there.

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[28] I understand Ajeet's focusing solely on the issue of migration, excluding the bullying suffered at school, as consequence of the fact that the interview was conducted in the school with interpretation being performed by one of the teachers who has been helping her with practical matters.

It seems that this uncertainty and menace leaves an open space for Kirpal to continue telling fantastic stories. Living the actual moment in the diaspora guarantees a rather better life for Kirpal and his family. As already observed by Ajeet, their quality of life has improved, since at the present moment the children go to school and the family has access to medicine and freedom in many ways. The positive side of his actual experiences is also signified in the positive and fantastic account explored at the beginning of this section: catching an aeroplane to spend a weekend with his father in Bombay. Nevertheless, his uncertainty in relation to the future, and the possibility of deportation associated with the horrors lived back home and during the journey to England, give Kirpal the means for telling negative and fantastic stories, like falling off a horse and having his body cut and sewed up.

This uncertainty in relation to the future seems to also have some influence in relation to Kirpal's occupational aspirations. In the same way as Deniz and Armand, he aspires to be a police officer. When I ask him the reason for this choice he simply responds 'That's what I want to be'. This professional, who is in charge of the surveillance of national borders, has the power of direct intervention in the lives of asylum seekers – at the port of entry as well as in the case of deportation. I understand that one of the possible interpretations of his choice is the desire to control his and his family's lives, as a search for security. It points to the possibility of not submitting to this kind of power, since he would be the one who would exercise it.

Conclusion

The children have different accounts to give in relation to the diasporic condition. Cari's and Abi's narrative is very much crosscut by the desire to insert themselves in the country where they have just arrived, and by an urgency to learn the new language. The acquisition of the a language points to the prospect of important reconfigurations: the establishment of peer relations and the prospect of a successful academic trajectory, exemplified by their uncle's life in the diaspora. Such a prospect challenges generational hierarchies since, as Abi observed, a great number of Kurdish people in Turkey, including their parents, never pursued further education.

Learning the new language also signifies a widening of the Kurdish community. Although Abi has Kurdish friends at school, his best friend is a Zimbabwean boy. Both children observe that one of the advantageous differences between Turkey and England is that in the latter they can 'learn different languages and different things'. Nevertheless, the expansion of the community does not mean a denial of their origin. Since she moved to England, Cari has been learning Kurdish. There is a generational paradox in relation to the constitution of Kurdish identity. While in Kurdistan, children do not learn any matter related to Kurdishness - including the language - since their parents fear their persecution. It seems that acknowledging the Kurdish issue while in Kurdistan signifies a passage to adulthood. On the other hand, reaching the diaspora, the children can "learn" and affirm where they come from.

Although the children have the opportunity to "learn" about their Kurdish identity, the matter of the Kurdish struggle has to remain secret. At this point, the notion of childhood innocence is appropriated by the family and utilized to forbid any knowledge of the painful situation their extended family has been going through. However, even if children do not have precise information in relation to facts, they know that there is a fear that permeates the Kurdish community as a whole. On the other hand, they also relate to fears that are generationally oriented; fear promoted by the mass media in relation to the "organs mafia" and fear imposed by the Kurdish community over their own children in the form of body punishment.

For Armand, learning a new language has meant the acknowledgement of the discrimination that surrounds him. The new language has also been appropriated as an instrument of conflict. The difficulties he faces in relation to peer relations seem to constitute a major source of pain when he refers to the life in the diaspora. Referring to the hierarchy of age, he observes that he has to "go down" the age scale to be able to interact with children.

Going home from school is also described with a lot of pain. This transitional space from the public to the private spheres constitutes the moment where the loss of his parents - and the impossibility of the presence of his main carer due to occupational impositions – is made explicit. When Armand refers to his ability to take

care of himself and cook, he seems to point to an ability not expected of children, and therefore to a kind of "maturity". Nevertheless, a condition of complete adulthood seems to be linked to the prospect of being sent back home. The terrors of war - those Armand cannot speak about - reveal the immanence of an extreme search for survival.

Silence, in relation to terrors, is also constitutive of Mariana's life in the diaspora. There is a silent agreement that unites her nuclear family in relation to the death of her father and the horrifying conditions imposed by a region at war. The geographic dislocation represented the prospect of leaving the past behind. Nevertheless, this past is still present, being revealed in the act of playing. In this way, if the house is the space where verbal manifestations of the family's history are forbidden, the school is the site where Mariana's past can be brought to light. The notion of childhood as an innocent phase is also employed by her family, since her older sisters became formally aware of their parents' political persecution – imprisonments, torture, murder – when Mariana did not.

Peer relations also constitute a moment where Mariana can express her feelings towards England's unfair politics in relation to refugees. At the same time that she refers to an improvement of quality of life while in England, she also points out, through the relationship with a particular (white) school colleague, that the country threatens to withdraw all the benefits handled to her family. Nevertheless, besides all her worries and pains, Mariana is complicit with her family's intention of hiding her history from her. She carries on playing, pretending she does not know anything.

The interplay of ethnic, religious and national identity is an important feature of Deniz's diasporic experience. She appropriates the liberalism that seems characteristic of Alevism and her education at home, and takes the option of a rather more secular approach. This secularism is also a result of the fact that the majority of children at school are Muslim, the religion that was imposed over Deniz's faith back in Turkey.

Secularism also seems to represent the possibility of experimentation. Since religions establish rules that demarcate groups of people, Deniz opts to position

herself in relation to the several possibilities that life in a new country can offer her. Nevertheless, these possibilities do not mean denial of her origins. Rather they demonstrate a broadening of her life spectrum.

In a similar way to other children and their families, there is a tacit agreement in relation to her awareness of the reasons for exile. She establishes a clear generational demarcation, considering her problems only in relation to the school context. In this way, she focuses on the struggles where she can actively defend herself.

In contrast to all the other children in the research project, Kirpal is the only child who says there are no differences between children and adults. All the other children make a distinction on the basis of knowledge and experience, with adults occupying a higher position in this hierarchy. I understand his trajectory from Afghanistan to England as the main determinant for this perception. Again, he is the only child in the research project who described, in a great amount of detail, this journey. This trajectory is, very often, fairly traumatic, and the children do not want to report to it. For example, in the case of Cari and Abi, Roghat once told me that the trip was very disturbing. When I asked the children how this experience was, Cari replied ' It was very nice' and Abi responded 'It was nice'.

It is clear the children are very aware of this journey. However, in Kirpal's case, there was an acknowledgement on the part of the smugglers and his parents that he was old enough to be aware of the events on this journey[29]. Taking a full part in this traumatic experience, and still not having been granted refugee status - which would have guaranteed relief and permanent safety - Kirpal keeps making sense of his experience in terms of fantastic. The uncertainty in relation to Kirpal's future, the possibility of experiencing the fantastic/terror again, leaves an open space for him to keep telling/experiencing the traumas of the past. The insecurity in relation to his future geographic condition makes his disporic life a non-definitive heaven.

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[29] Nevertheless, this acknowledgement can also have been driven by practical reasons. The medicine they gave to the children made them sleep. Maybe it would have been impossible or very difficult for Kirpal's parents to carry him and his younger brother.

Conclusion

Diasporic experiences

So Oz finally became home; the imagined world became the actual world, as it does
for us all, because the truth is that once we have left our childhood places and started
out to make up our lives, armed only with what we have and are, we understand that
the real secret of the ruby sleepers is not that 'there's no place like home', but rather
that there is no longer any such place as home: except, of course, for the home we
make, or the homes that are made for us, in Oz, which is anywhere, except the place
from which we began. (Salman Rushdie)

The metaphor of Wizard of Oz teaches us that the search for home is a search
undertaken by fantasy, desire, deception, pain, enjoyment and the act of coming into
terms with the new place/new self. In relation to refugee children the
tornado/ship/airplane/lorry signifies a geographical dislocation that goes beyond the
metaphor. The trajectory of exile imposes over the refugee children a
multidimentional change of reality. And this change becomes ever clearer when there
is a factual impossibility of going back home. The new home, more than an option; is
an imposition.

Through how many ways can the referent home be signified? At this moment
we reached the plan of the uncountable. There are as many as homes as many people
in the world and the inner changes these persons go through their course of life. If
home means location, sense of self, in the same way, there are numerous possibilities
of being a refugee child.

Arriving in the host country the refugee child will be confronted with the need
to negotiate the life back home – experiences, sense of the self – and the diaspora
space – the location where natives and migrants meet. As observed in the first chapter,
the diaspora space is configured by economic, political, cultural and psychic
dimensions (Brah 1998). Throughout the thesis I exhibited how, according to several
institutions and individuals, as well as the children's positionalites and past

experiences, the refugee children are positioned and give meaning to the life in diaspora.

Besides their positionalities, they also transit through the crossroads of discourses of childhood and a history of politics of migration which has been transforming some people into the "different". I argued that the politics of racialization of refugees has been taking them as the unidentifiable other. By unidentifiable other I mean the several possibilities of being racialized according to positionalities like ethnicity, country of origin, language, religion. If the presence of the unidentifiable other needs to be disallowed because it threatens the illusion of white purity, the presence of refugee children is not taken in an unproblematic fashion. While the public discourses and practices position them as children (innocent), solely as refugees (adults) or render them invisible, in the school context the multiplicity of their positionalities become evident, therefore, they are seen in numerous ways according to their identitarian resources.

This location is also determined by the children's response. In this way, an interaction of agency and determinism takes place. Colour, gender, country of origin, language and religion are taken by the school, teachers and children as categories of differentiation. These differentiations are presented to the refugee children in two was, as a reconfiguration of the differentiation suffered back home, or as a new location experienced by the children as a result of the process of forced migration. These locations are intermingled with the way the children evaluate their life in England in relation to their country of origin. In this way, the moments lived back home in contrast to what the host country can offer, plays an essential role in the way the children conceptualise the diasporic condition.

The issue of colour seems to be the most explicit category of differentiation. The skin operates as a constant reminder/source of the differentiation suffered by black refugee children. Nevertheless, this differentiation is also gendered oriented, for the black boy is rapidly seen through the lenses of the stereotype of the violent black male. Black refugee boys – often from African origin – are positioned into the discourse that has been operating as a response to the migration of African-Caribbean people since the 1940's. This notion of disruptiveness is then transformed into a vice

circle, since the black boy challenges this positioning and this response is, again, regarded as a disruption intrinsically characteristic of black males.

On the other hand, for the black refugee girls, it is easier to adopt a more compromising approach. Arriving in England, being confronted with a very clear white supremacy and not being labelled as necessarily disruptive – like in the case of black boys – they adopt a rather more pacifying response that can take the form of solely non confrontation, which implies presenting herself constantly in a very discrete way, or splitting herself between the white world/school and black world/home. Underlying the double consciousness of the second response there is the matter of seductions of the white world and these seductions are mediated by a process of desire/identification with the (very often) white female teacher.

The children who suffer other types of discrimination like religion, language and country of origin, have these positionalities confronted against the white norm by a curriculum which celebrates cultural "differences" instead of challenging the powers which promote these differentiations. The children are in this way othered by a discourse that exoticizes some aspects of their identities. In the playground, a complex power dynamic operates in relation to their presence. In the specific case of the present research, being the majority of the children at school Muslim - a religion which is discriminated by the hegemonic English population - they often affirm their religion through the opposition to refugee children who are neither part of their hegemony religion at school – Muslim – or the broader population – Christian. In this way, the religious persecution suffered by refugee children in their country of origin in actualised in England. Country of origin and language are also differentiated on the basis of an affirmation of Britishness on the part of Asian children. This seems to constitute their strategy of affirmation of an identity that still contested by the hegemonic white British population.

There are several responses to the bullying (or potential bullying) based on religion differentiation. Some children respond affirming their religious identity making clear this constitutes a fundamental part of their identity/history, others – as Frieda once observed – dismiss any sign of their religious identity in order to avoid confrontation and others, following the same logic, opt for a secular posture.

Nevertheless, although racism is an important determinant of the children's lives, it is not the only one. Children also make sense of the life in England in terms of important elements of life quality/opportunity that were absent in their country of origin for several reasons. Safety is one of these elements. Nevertheless, this matter is not a stable one, mainly for the children who have not been granted refugee status or still waiting for a decision of the Home Office. The constant fear of the menace of deportation is a reality for many asylum seeker children. Another aspect is the fact that many suffer serious racial harassment, which threatens the possibility of a more peaceful existence.

The positive aspects of the diaspora in England is often related to their possibility of pursuing an academic carrier, or simply learning the hegemonic English language, which can help in heir professional future, in case they go back home. Some also refer to the broadening of life experience through the meeting with new languages and cultures. Another important aspect is a better provision of basic materials like food and medicine, very often scarce in countries which have been going through war as well as for people who were in an economically underprivileged position back home. On the other hand, for other refugee children, what is granted by the government in terms of material supplies represent a clear fall of life quality, since they occupied a rather privileged economic position in their countries.

Seeking alternatives

In the first chapter we've seen how, withdrawing the article 22 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the central government dismisses the responsibility in providing full rights and assistance to asylum seeker children. In this way, it also dismisses the third auricle of the convention which states that in any action taken by public or private institution concerning a child's life, the child's best interest should be taken into consideration. One of the government's actions that confront this principle in a very open way is the policy of dispersal proposed by the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

Arnot and Pinson (2005) observe that this policy does not take into consideration the social capital and possibilities of integration of the children and their families when a choice – based of language and family nets – of the local to live could be made. Another aspect that the authors observe is that the policy of dispersal does not particularly offer support to LEAs regarding the matter of refugee children.

Associated to this lack of support, there are other matters that have a direct impact on the refugee children's lives. In the fourth chapter I argued that discourses of childhood present in the school context - discipline, assimilationism, multiculturalism, and a belief in childhood innocence - differentiate refugee children in a direct or indirect way. We've also seen the difficulties the teachers face when confronted with the refugee children's realities. Nevertheless, the presence of refugee children is a reality faced by many LEAs throughout England and not taking into consideration the several issues that this presence offers, results in some forms of the children's marginalization or creates obstacles for them in overcoming some of their problems.

As I observed, it was not my intention to establish a rigid set off generalisations, neither on the part of the children's experiences and responses, nor on the part of the school's positionalities. However, it is possible that some or many of the matters observed can be a common feature in other institutions. Therefore, I would like to suggest some proposals that could help some agencies in dealing with the matter of refugee children.

I understand that one of the most important steps in dealing with the refugee children's matters is making sure that there is a space available for them to discuss what they went through. This means that the teachers should be informed of the matters that surround the issue of refugeeness – histories of persecution, loss, trauma, and, where relevant, the historical colonial links with the teachers' country. They should also receive support themselves - in form of training and group discussion, for example – when facing issues that they consider very painful.

Once these issues are acknowledged, it is important for all the children at school to be taught about the refugee question and to have a space open in the classroom where children in general and not only refugees can discuss matters of

change, loss, etc. In this way the experiences of refuge children could be taken as subjects that can be spoken about and not merely marginalised or silenced. This means recognition on the part of the school that the notion of child innocence is a myth. This is not to dismiss the fact that children do need protection and these matters should be dealt in a careful and subtle way, otherwise there is the danger of them being positioned as adults.

Challenging the myth of child innocence is also related to the acknowledgement that the children are active agents, and can be perpetrators of discrimination. This means adopting a clear anti-racist curriculum which must take into account other sources of differentiation as well as based on the children's' own experiences and beliefs. The anti-racist perspective does not concern solely the children. The institution and teachers should be the primary aim. Not only the curriculum, but also the teachers' assumptions should be revised. This means a broader reworking that would encompass other agencies of the LEAs. We must remember Frieda's statement that it was through one of the training courses offered by the LEA of Moulton which circulated the assumption based on a particular kind of research that the 'disruptiveness' of African–Caribbean boys is a result of the family's particular structure.

Challenged also must be the assimilationist and multiculturalist perspectives which take the hegemonic English culture as norm. Acknowledging this is considering the fact that whiteness has been taken as the rule by many professionals who deal with refugee children. And this fact often puts individuals in an uncomfortable position. Frieda, for example, although she acknowledged that assimilationism was made part of the school's structure and that should be challenged, disagreed that the multicultural perspective dismisses structural inequalities present in the broader society. For her, there was certain uneasiness in admitting the hegemony of whiteness. Several times she commented that white people can suffer racism. I replied that whiteness is not taken as a racial category of differentiation, since it is considered as the norm against the ethnicities which are differentiated. What can occur is a conservative attitude by people who suffer racism from white people, generalising their experience in relation to every white person and not considering as acceptable any reference of white people's identities or life styles.

Deconstructing whiteness was than a major issue for Frieda. And this deconstruction was ever more difficult because it indicated that there are multiple forms of expression of racism. This is the final point I would like to suggest. The professionals that are immersed in this field of refugee children must be aware of the many forms in which racial prejudice can be expressed. Racism can only be challenged if it is acknowledged that it is embedded in daily life, also in the most subtle and unintentional way.

When Frieda read some parts of the thesis; she asked me what my concept of racism is. She stated that for her racism was only present when it taken the form of bullying or crime. She observed that she has never though about racism, for example in terms of representation - where through drawings, white people are taken as the norm.

When dealing with refugee children other measures are obviously important. Nevertheless, I limited myself on the observations based on the scope of this thesis. Green Park Primary and Nursery School has already been adopting some valuable measures like offering help to the children's parents regarding practical matters. Nevertheless other issues, which involve practices and believes that compose the structure of the school as well as the broader society must be taken into consideration if England is to become a more hospitable place.

Appendix

Appendix 1

Interview with the Children

1. What do you think about the school?

2. What do you most like at school?

3. What do you think about the teachers, the classroom, the lessons?

4. Who is your best friend at school?

5. Where are your friends from?

6. Is there any child in there you don't like very much?

7. Is there anything at school that you find difficult?

8. When you have some difficulty, who is the person who helps you?

9. What kind of things do you think should be done to help you?

10. When you arrive at home after school, what do you usually do?

11. Do you have friends from your country?

12. With whom do you prefer to play, with the children from your country, or with other children?

13. Where do you most like to stay, at school or at home?

14. What do you think that is nice at your home?

15. What do you think is not nice at home?

16. What do you think about living in England?

17. How did you come to England? By airplane, by boat…

18. How was the trip?

19. Where do you prefer to live, here, in England or in your country?

20. Why did you come to England?

21. Would you like to talk a little bit about your life in your country? How was it in there?

22. What do you think are the differences between children and adults?

23. What would you like to be when you'll grow up?

24. Is there anything else you would like to say?

25. It there anything you want to ask me?

Appendix 2

Interview with the Carers

1. Why did you come to England?

2. How was life in your country?

3. How do you think life in your country has affected your child?

4. How did you get into England?

5. How is your life in England?

5. How is your child coping with life in England?

7. How do you think the school is making some influence in your child's life?

8. What does your child usually do at home?

Appendix 3

Interview with the Teachers

1. Which do you think are the specificities of support the refugee children need in general?

2. And in particular?

3. What are your impressions in relation to each child?

4. How do you think the children in general relate to the refugee children?

5. How do you think the teachers are dealing with the issue of refugee children?

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