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# Losing ground : locational formulations in argumentation over New Travellers

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# **Losing ground: Locational Formulations in argumentation over New Travellers**

by

**Rebecca Kate Barnes**

A thesis to be submitted to the University of Plymouth in partial  
fulfillment for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

Department of Psychology  
Faculty of Human Sciences

**October 2000**

For my Dad

# **Abstract**

This thesis is an exercise in discursive psychology. The body of discourse analysed concerns the defence of rural space against New Travellers. In contrast to previous sociological and human geographical work in this area, instead of newspaper articles and Parliamentary discourse, participants' talk and texts are the starting point for the investigation. The data corpora have been generated from a variety of sources: Focus group discussions with police officers; interviews with landowners (or their representatives); letters to the editors of local newspapers; and private letters of complaint to a local council. The thesis focuses on the participants' selection of locational formulations, the work this has taken, and how this work partly constitutes interactional business.

The thesis makes a distinctive contribution to several different areas. This includes offering a disciplinary critique of how humanist geographers and environmental psychologists have constructed attachment to place as the norm, whilst problematising high residential mobility. Without taking up a position in this debate, the thesis demonstrates how a discursive approach can offer a different perspective on place discourse – including the way that place identity / attachment might be reconceived and studied.

The first two analytic chapters provide a distinctive contribution to discursive psychology by bringing together, and building on, previous work around the analysis of



place discourse. Chapter five demonstrates participants' use of location as a domain of warrant for making complaints about New Travellers. Chapter six demonstrates how participants used spatial descriptions to construct New Travellers as transgressive or literally 'out-of-place'. The third and final analytic chapter, chapter seven provides a contribution to social psychology by demonstrating citizenship in practice.

The project concludes by considering these contributions and their implications, and outlining several reasons for further work on the discursive psychology of place. The thorny issues raised by a focus on place, such as realism vs relativism are also discussed.

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## Author's Declaration

This is to certify that I am responsible for the work submitted in this thesis. The original work is my own except as specified in the acknowledgements. At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award. This study was financed with the aid of a studentship from the Department of Psychology, University of Plymouth. A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included a post-graduate course on psychological research methods. Relevant conferences were regularly attended at which work was presented. From one such encounter a paper was prepared for publication.

## Publications

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### **Conferences Attended**

- 1994 BPS London Conference, December 19-20
- 1995 Cyberpsychology Conference, Manchester, February 25
- 1995 Understanding the Social World Conference,  
Huddersfield, July 17-19
- 1996 Land, People and Freedom,  
Peterborough, June 18
- 1997 BPS Social Psychology Section Annual Conference,  
Brighton, September 17-19
- 1998 International Conference on Discourse and the Social Order,  
Birmingham, July 16-17
- 1999 BPS London Conference, December 20-21

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Critical Geographical Forum

Social Theory

Radical Psychology Network

Signature 

Date 24 October 2000

# 1

## Introduction

Extract 1 (The *Packet*, 30 June 1994)

**Protesters block 'camp' entrance**

A determined group of United Downs residents has blocked the access to a popular pitching spot - by erecting a seven feet high barricade.

The wall of top soil and hardcore greeted the New Age Travellers returning home to the unofficial camp from the weekend's Glastonbury pop festival.

Anonymous residents had used a mechanical digger to build the bank on Saturday afternoon

to prevent any vehicles entering the lane on to county council-owned land.

The lane's other entrance was blocked two months ago by two trenches dug by council workmen.

A local farmer, who asked not to be named, said this week:

"I think what these men did is admirable, especially as it will help the community return to normal.

The transformation has been incredible," he added.

"Because peace and quiet has returned

and it's hinted to County Hall that people have had enough

and are now willing to take their own steps to solve the traveller problem."

Social theorist Edward Soja (1985) has argued that 'the spatial dimension of our lives has never been of greater practical and political relevance than it is today' (p. 1). In the 1980s and 1990s it could be argued that space was consciously politicised, for example: by the efforts of countryside bodies such as the Country Landowners Association, campaigning against the potential influx of 'urbanites' under a statutory 'Right-to-Roam'; by the mobilisation of local community groups to fight proposals for the reintegration of mentally ill or mentally handicapped groups in their locality (for example see Dear, 1980); and most recently by the escalating media action against asylum seekers (for example see *The Sun*, 9 March, 2000). Being located in the south-west of Britain, I have been party to one much



publicised example. I refer to arguments (and actions, see Extract 1 above) publicly and privately expressed towards the use of rural space by the elective nomadic people of Britain, whom the national press have labelled 'New Age Travellers' (hereafter New Travellers).

This research project is an exercise in discursive psychology (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992). It is a study of how people use place formulations; to define membership and manage contentious issues such as belonging; to construct persons, events and actions as out-of-place. The project also examines how the place-based identity 'citizen' may be displayed (and rejected) in talk and texts about New Travellers. The project takes as its primary analytic concern, the accounts provided by two, one hour focus group discussions with police officers, six interviews with landowners (or their representatives) which lasted between one and one-and-a-half hours, 19 letters to the editors of local newspapers and 13 private letters from local objectors.

At the beginning of the new millennium the New Traveller issue may no longer be considered a unitary or national phenomenon. Who - some might even ask - *were* the New Travellers? Such archaism is one of the inevitable consequences of studying accounts of events and actions. However, it is my aim that an in-depth exploration of the work done in these accounts may be fruitful in having enough scope to make sense of accounts of other spatial conflicts. For example, accounts invoking other 'strangers' such as ethnic minorities, migrants, asylum seekers and groups who are as yet unimagined.

My aim in this chapter is to begin with an account of New Traveller origins, and then reflect on who they were in the context of past media constructions. I then give an account of local reactions in two counties, Devon and Cornwall, and then political reactions on a national level. Finally I discuss the rationale and aims of the research project and provide a brief outline of the chapters to come.

## 1.1 Britain's Newer Travellers

### 1.1.1 New Traveller origins

Most New Travellers claim their nomadic lifestyle originated in the idealistic free festival movement of the 1970s. By 1976, partly influenced by depressed socio-economic factors at the time, some of the people who had been involved in the movement began to travel with their belongings, in convoys of trucks and buses, between the festivals. Slowly, the number of potential other gatherings to attend began to increase as rural community festivals developed into small free festivals, and charitable fee-paying festivals such as 'Glastonbury Fayre' became more popular (Earle, Dearling, Whittle, Glasse & Gubby, 1994). Most activity revolved around the annual 'People's Festival' at Stonehenge, which by 1977 had become the largest regular free festival in Britain (Rosenburger, 1991).

Some took up the whole or part of the festival circuit in the summer as a 'better, cheaper and healthier' way of life (Earle *et al.*, 1994). Most New Travellers found that the festivals were not only good socially, but provided a myriad of opportunities for much needed income. However, New Travellers were not just a summer phenomenon. In the winter, green lanes and common land were used as park-ups to accommodate groups whilst other festival-goers 'wintered-up' in urban squats. On New Traveller sites, accommodation included benders (dome shaped shelters constructed of flexible poles covered with a tarpaulin), tipis and caravans as well as converted vehicles: double-decker buses, old fire-engines, and an assortment of vans, coaches and trucks (Earle *et al.*, 1994).

In 1981, one group drove together in brightly painted vehicles, as the 'Peace Convoy', to Greenham Common, in support of the women's protest there against the installation of cruise missiles in Britain. Over the next few years, the now permanent Peace Convoy began to attract interest from other less idealistic poverty-stricken groups in society. These included unemployed and homeless people, who chose to travel rather than live in a bedsit or on the streets. Extract 2 is taken from the early part of an informal conversation I initiated with two older New Traveller women. Here, P1 is dealing with the range of circumstances that may predispose people to move onto the road.



## Extract 2 (Interview 7 : 3)

P1     Yeah, anyway, I mean I,  
 I think people move on the road for quite a lot of different reasons.  
 I'm talking only about people that I know  
 that have moved onto the road in the last twenty years.  
 There is a story, I mean, it can be,  
 a positive side as well as a negative side,  
 in that, people are feeling dissatisfied with their lives  
 (they have) problems or have had housing problems,  
 or problems with living in a city  
 or problems with bringing up their children in an urban environment,  
 or whichever is the major factor.  
 I think for most people, and particularly the people that (I know) is that,  
 and adventure comes down to it as well,  
 but it's the positive side as well, that draws you.  
 And that I think that, that's there, for most people as well, is not just because  
 I think people that don't have that sense of adventure,  
 would rather not make that step  
 because they would look upon it as total insecurity.  
 So they won't do it unless they've got a bit of a,  
 a bit of a, a spark and spirit of adventure that, that sort of thinks,  
 'well yeah OK well if it's crap in one place ,  
 then you can go somewhere else ((laughs)),  
 try it again, OK, start again'.

Survival was (and still is) by a myriad of ways: seasonal agricultural work; the scrap trade; freelancing professional skills; working as part of the site crews at larger commercial festivals; bartering; busking; begging; having entertainment skills or equipment; craft skills; providing food outlets at gatherings; and income support (Earle *et al.*, 1994).

Up until 1984, the Peace Convoy remained intact yet increasing numbers brought increasing problems. These included a criminal element, hard drugs and alcohol abuse, unfavourable national and local press attention, and large official police presences at many gatherings. Between festivals, other named tribes (for example, the 'Tibet Ukraine Mountain Troupe' who put on entertainment, and the 'Mutants') began to travel in separate convoys, whilst some travelled in even smaller 'family-like' groups, up and down the country.

Unfortunately, in 1984 police and New Traveller relations evolved into violent clashes. Examples include the mass arrest of 200 New Travellers and trashing of vehicles in August on the outskirts of a commercial festival in Yorkshire at Nostell Priory; and in

1985, the eviction of the Rainbow Fields Village peace camp outside Molesworth air base by police and 2,000 Royal Engineers. That same year, several authorities acted to prevent the annual Stonehenge Peoples' Festival from happening. The National Trust and English Heritage obtained a court injunction to prevent 83 named persons from entering the site on the basis of several arguments. The two main ones used were that the festival was a threat to land of archaeological interest and that it affected revenue from tourists. Undeterred, a long convoy of New Travellers had joined up and were heading towards the stones for their annual gathering.

On 1 June 1985, seven miles from Stonehenge, the convoy was manoeuvred off the main road at the Wiltshire-Hampshire border and attacked from both ends in a semi-military police operation. Around 400-500 people were arrested and their badly damaged vehicles impounded in the ensuing struggle. This struggle has become widely known as the 'Battle of the Beanfield'. Journalists who witnessed the aggressive action were stunned, as were others, including myself, who several years later watched Channel 4's 'Critical Eye' film broadcast on 7 November 1991, entitled 'Operation Solstice'.

This film followed the events of that day and later compensation battles at Winchester Crown Court where £12,370 damages were awarded to the New Travellers and then immediately taken away to pay court costs (*The Guardian*, 15 February 1991). ITN reporter Kim Sabido who witnessed events at the Beanfield described it as the worst police violence he had ever seen;

The number of people who have been hit by policemen, who have been clubbed whilst holding babies in their arms in coaches around this field, is yet to be counted...There must surely be an inquiry after what has happened here today.

(Morris, Morris & Goodwin, 1991)

As a regular festival-goer with travelling friends, this moral directive, to question the happenings at the Beanfield, stayed with me for a long while.

In 1986, the Public Order Act restricted the number of vehicles on a site to twelve or less, resulting in smaller units and park-ups (Earle *et al.*, 1994). The Act also gave the police more control over processions, public gatherings and evicting trespassers.



Although many New Travellers appealed against eviction from illegal sites on the grounds that councils had failed in their statutory duty to provide official ones (*Evening Herald*, 8 December 1993), many forced evictions by police and landowners were to come; for example, the eviction of 'Rainbow Village' near Liskeard in Cornwall, after some Travellers had been on the site for three years (*Western Morning News*, 3 September 1992).

In the 1990s, the New Traveller movement began to splinter into newer hybrid groups distinguishable by different agendas. For example, the emergence of the first direct action camp (Harding, 1998) at the M3 construction site in Hampshire at Twyford Down in the summer of 1991, spawned the 'Donga Tribe', whose name comes from the ancient trackways that they were trying to protect. The original two Dongas were erstwhile New Travellers who had a strong spiritual eco-ideology. During the year-long protest at Twyford their tribe grew and different Donga groups (some nomadic and some sedentary, living in roundhouses) are still treading lightly, protecting and enjoying the earth today. At the same time, in a move to escape commercialisation, the underground dance culture was beginning to fuse with New Traveller culture. Groups of New Travellers with sound systems, such as 'Spiral Tribe' and 'Circus Warp', began to put on their own free parties in the westcountry (Malyon, 1998). The most significant of these events was a huge gathering at Hereford and Worcester on Castlemorton Common in 1992.

### 1. 1. 2. *'Sex-mad junkie outlaws make the Hell's Angels look like little Noddy':*

#### *New Travellers and the mass media*

Since the inception of the Peace Convoy, a countless stream of local and national newspaper reports, editorials, features and undercover reports (for examples see *The Daily Mail*, 28 July 1992; *Today*, 18 August 1992); television documentaries (for example by 'Critical Eye', 'World In Action', 'Heart of the Matter' and more recently 'Living with the



Enemy’); and even dramatisations (for example that great British broadcasting institution, ‘The Archers’), have shaped the ‘Do it Yourself’ (DiY) movement (see McKay, 1998) that became collectively known as ‘New Age Travellers’.

In the early 1980s, the public image of New Travellers was first tied to regular reports of summer-time ‘cat-and-mouse’ affairs in the west and south-west of England with police trying to prevent settlements. Looking back on the media image of New Travellers that evolved over the 1980s and into the 1990s, I argue that it was bound to certain features. These included the following: stories of dirty and unruly New Traveller children in articles such as ‘The Convoy Kids’ (The *Daily Mirror*, 2 June 1986); stories of New Travellers causing stress and worry to local property owners as epitomised in the *Today* newspaper’s story (24 May 1986) of farmer Les Atwell, who collapsed on seeing a convoy of New Travellers pull on to his field near Somerton, Somerset; stories of drug-use, noise, disease and squalor on festival sites such as ‘Treworgey Tree Fayre’ near Liskeard in Cornwall (*Western Morning News*, 31 July 1989); stories about New Travellers’ dogs killing farmers’ sheep as documented in reports of the ‘White Goddess’ festival at Davidstow Moor, Cornwall (*Evening Herald*, 27 August 1991); ‘hippy scroungers’ benefits stories like the 1991 May festival at Kerry near Newtown in Powys where the D.S.S came to the festival to prevent an influx of New Travellers into the local town (for comment see *County Times*, 24 August 1991); stories of loud non-stop rave parties that terrorised communities for days at a time, such as at the gathering at Smeatharpe in East Devon (*Evening Herald*, 29 June 1992); and stories about New Travellers disrupting traffic such as the coverage of a 70-vehicle convoy bringing bank holiday motorway traffic to a standstill on the M5 near Bristol on the way to Castlemorton Common in Herefordshire on 22 May 1992. Newspaper and news reports covered both potential and actual incidents, orienting to the normative concerns of the writer and reader over taken-

for-granted assumptions regarding order and the use of space. In Stanley Cohen's (1972) terms the mass media were engaged in creating a 'moral panic'.

### 1. 1. 3 *Local reactions*

New Travellers were also coming up against hostile local reactions at many stopping places (*Western Morning News*, 15 July 1985). 'No Hippies' or 'No Travellers' signs went up in many local pubs, cafes and shops (*Western Morning News*, 17 July 1985). Around the west and south-west of England, inspired by past experience and media reports, lay-bys, gates and entrances to land were blocked by rubbish skips, farm equipment, boulders and felled trees. Moreover ditches were dug, and stone and earth embankments built, to prevent New Traveller vehicle access (for example see Hansard, 1991, p. 292).

On a local level, claiming social security and access to health care became more difficult for New Travellers, as did access to supported education for the growing number of New Traveller children (*The Guardian*, 19 June 1991). Many New Travellers were facing opposition, and everywhere they turned they were under surveillance. For example, local people were being encouraged to note registration numbers of New Travellers' vehicles and report them to the police (*Western Morning News*, 15 June 1992).

Over time, farmers and landowners also developed their own early-warning systems and ways of dealing with encampments. New Travellers became subject to vigilante actions such as night-time intimidation by groups of locals, as one Donga member recounts in Extract 3 below. This extract is taken from a recorded conversation between myself and P1.

#### Extract 3 (Interview 8: 11)

P1      We were on a ridge in Dorset,  
              suddenly a tractor pulls up,  
              with its headlights glaring into the bender,  
              right next to the fire pit,  
              and this bloke jumps out and says,  
              "I'm wild Bill something or other" ((*in westcountry accent*))  
              I can't remember,



“THEY CALL ME WILD MAN” ((in westcountry accent)),  
 you know ((laughing)).  
 “And you’ve got to move now  
 or I’m gonna run over your benders and all your possessions” ((in westcountry accent))  
 I mean it was the middle of the night, and we’re going,  
 “Look, we’re not moving now, we’ve got animals, it’s the middle of the night.  
 We’ve got children.” You know?  
 And he was sort of really full on  
 and then loads of other people turned up sort of glaring their headlights.

Verbal threats aside, these vigilante actions have also included the throwing of bricks and petrol bombs at vehicles (*The Cornishman*, 12 June 1994); and the random firing of gunshots (*Western Morning News*, 14 February 1995).

In Cornwall, planning applications put forward by the social services committee to site a total of seven New Traveller transit camps across each of the county’s six district council areas caused violent opposition. This came in the form of a united pressure group, ‘Cornwall Against Travellers Transit Sites’, protest rallies, and petitions to local MP’s as well as local objectors packing out public meetings and parish council open meetings. All seven applications were voted out (*West Briton and Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 13 July 1994).

Concerns voiced included the following: that the sites would encourage New Travellers to come to the county; that the proposed sites were unsuitable for health or conservation reasons; that the sites would incur loss of revenue for businesses and tourism; concerns about property prices; and from those residents situated close to the proposed sites there were concerns about personal safety, drug availability for local children, noise and dogs (*Western Morning News*, 8 September 1994). Protesters were urged to write and attend meetings to demonstrate the strength of feeling (*West Briton and Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 9 June 1994).

On 27 May 1994, an appeal centred on three test cases, over the definition of nomadic status, made the key ruling that New Travellers were not nomadic and therefore should not be legally classified as gypsies. This ruling meant that local authorities were released from their obligations under the 1968 Caravan Sites Act to provide sites for New

Travellers (the Act was to be repealed anyway under the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill). The local protesters had won their case.

#### 1. 1. 4 *Political reactions*

The media reaction, as set out above in section 1. 1. 2, was consciously reinforced and exploited by 'moral entrepreneurs' (Becker, 1963) to win public support. For example, during Margaret Thatcher's period in office as Prime Minister, on 3 June 1986, the then Home Secretary, Douglas Hurd, described New Travellers in a House of Commons debate as; 'nothing more than a band of medieval brigands who have no respect for the law or for the rights of others' (Hansard, 1986, p. 733). Thatcher herself promised to do anything she could to make life difficult for the hippy convoys.

In 1986, Parliament passed section 39 of the Public Order Act enabling more police control over gatherings and to evict trespassers by limiting sites to twelve vehicles or less resulting in smaller units and park-ups (Halfacree, 1996). In 1992, police launched 'Operation Snapshot', an inter-force intelligence unit (also with DSS co-operation) to gather on-line information on individual New Travellers' names and nicknames, their vehicle registration numbers and acquaintances plus general intelligence-gathering on forthcoming festivals.

The next Prime Minister, John Major, had publicly wished New Travellers out of existence in his main speech at the Conservative Party Conference in the Autumn of 1992, with the famous challenge, 'New Age Travellers? Not in this age';

Extract 4 (Major, 1992, p. 18)

There's another problem we are dealing with -  
the illegal occupation of land by so-called 'new age travellers'.  
You will have seen the pictures on television or in the newspapers;  
if you live in the West Country and Wales you may have seen it on your own doorstep.  
Farmers powerless. Crops ruined and livestock killed  
by people who say they commune with nature,  
but they have no respect for it when it belongs to others.  
New age travellers? Not in this age. Not in any age.  
They say that we don't understand them.  
Well I'm sorry - but if rejecting materialism means destroying the property of others;  
then I don't understand.  
If doing your own thing means exploiting the social security system  
and sponging off others,



then I don't want to understand.

If exploiting the social security system means a selfish and lawless disregard for others, then I won't understand.

Let others speak for new age travellers.

We will speak for their victims.

This hostility was matched by similar rhetoric from other politicians. It was argued that the lifestyle of New Travellers invalidated the citizenship rights afforded to them by full participation in society.

Later, various Government departments (for example, Department of Environment, 1993; Home Office, 1993a) issued statements and news releases on how they proposed to deal with New Travellers. In 1993, the then Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke proposed new public order legislation where police would have powers to break up convoys of six vehicles or more, confiscate sound systems, place five mile exclusion zones around the site of suspected 'trespassory assemblies', and arrest anyone who refused to leave. In December 1993, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Bill was published (see Home Office, 1993b).

The public order clauses in part V of the Bill were concerned with restraining groups, of urban origin, who 'invade' rural spaces (Sibley, 1995a). Although not explicitly mentioned, New Travellers were one of the main targets. Government repealed the obligation of local authorities to provide sites for 'persons of nomadic habitat' and in the same breath criminalised trespass and effectively the travelling life. As a group opposed to capitalist practices and wishing to live in rural areas, New Travellers were seen not to belong (Sibley, 1997).

For this and other specific constraints on freedom, the Bill was hotly contested by activists at street-level, in academia and by human rights groups such as Liberty (1993). However, in 1994, the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (hereafter, CJPOA) received royal assent (see Home Office, 1994). Police evictions were now more effective, often accompanied by social workers, arrest also meant that if there were children on site they would be taken into care and any animals present would be taken away. However, on 31 August 1995 there was a significant ruling at the High Court in London requiring that 'considerations of common humanity' (meaning personal circumstances such as health,

housing needs and welfare) should be assessed before councils could decide to evict (The *Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1995).

Many have described the outcome of sustained Government campaigns against New Travellers as a basic infringement of human rights. Specifically, the CJPOA is thought to violate articles 13 and 20 of the Declaration of Human Rights: the right to freedom and residence within the borders of each State and the rights to peaceful assembly and association (Earle *et al.*, 1994). Similarly police surveillance of New Travellers and their vehicles, because there is a chance that they might break the law, would appear to be in breach of civil liberties.

### 1. 1. 5 Overview

Section 1. 1 has provided an account of Britain's newer Travellers including their origins, mass media coverage, local reactions, and political reactions. The account (especially in the last three sub-sections) should be taken as an illustration of the nature of the arguments that have been produced in the defence of rural space against the actuality of unauthorised, or the potential of authorised, New Traveller settlements. I do not propose *why* this has happened. The thing of interest, in this context, is *how* these descriptions *constitute* persons or actual / potential events as transgressive of socio-spatial order. This research project is an exercise in discursive psychology, '...in which the primary and defining thing about language is how it works as a kind of activity, as discourse' (Edwards, 1997, p. 1). As argued by Derek Edwards (1997): 'When people describe events, they *attend* to accountability. That is to say, they attend to events in terms of what is normal, expectable, and proper' (p. 7, emphasis in original). In other words, the relation between places, actions, norms and descriptions is clearly worth investigating.

Yet the focus of my research project will not be on ideologically powerful parliamentary and authoritative journalistic discourse (see Fowler, 1991; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This has been done elsewhere, for example by Keith Halfacree (1996) and Tim Cresswell (1997) whose work I discuss in chapter two. However, because newspaper reports are familiar to us all, I have included one extract at the beginning of the



chapter and refer to many articles in an effort to make the points I make more accessible and to highlight their generality. In the next section I outline the rationale and aims of the project.

## **1.2 Rationale and aims of the research project**

This is a discourse-based research project. It illustrates a conversation-analytic / discursive-psychological approach (see Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; Potter & Edwards, in press) that has as its analytic focus the content and organisation of both verbal and written accounts. The accounts generated for study here concern the defence of rural space from authorised and unauthorised New Traveller settlements. The aim of the project is to examine some systematic properties of the discourse through which speakers and writers construct themselves and others, as members and strangers, in the process of formulating places, events and experiences. Moreover, the project explores the work done by such formulations, both in warranting their status as factual descriptions and in their action orientation.

This project is not dedicated to 'giving voice' to New Travellers or their adversaries. As argued by Katie MacMillan (1995), 'this is always and inevitably a textual device that retains and reinforces, rather than weakens, the academic author's authority' (p. 547). Regarding New Travellers, I do believe that their experiences have been 'shadowed' (Fine, 1994) in comparison to research on 'traditional' Travellers. Yet I felt that a focus on New Travellers may not only have further warranted and reinforced their 'exotic' status, perhaps even romanticised it, but also diverted attention away from the part played by sedentary reactions.

These reactions are of utmost importance to New Travellers as such arguments have given way to changes in the law, that have effectively criminalised the travelling lifestyle. This has created an obvious imbalance in power relations between sedentary and travelling populations. As I outlined above, New Travellers have been the victims of everyday exclusionary practices, and sometimes potential, if not actual, violence. For example they

have been regularly denied service in pubs, cafés and shops and subjected to unsanctioned attacks on their camps.

Through examining the ways that versions were constructed and arguments deployed, rhetorical analysis was a part of my approach. However, my aim is not to identify both the rhetorical targets and oppositions of the New Traveller debate. The data I have generated focuses on other (settled) peoples' constructions. In this way my main focus is on arguments and descriptions of exclusion. However, when I have come across opposition in the form of discourses of inclusion (deviant cases) I have highlighted them as part of the argumentative context.

Although I have claimed not to be 'giving voice' to these objectors, my aim is not to take sides in this debate by undermining or attacking their accounts, or to ignore 'what really happened' in the events described. Instead, the project is to treat the events as 'live participants' concerns' (Edwards, 1997, p. 16) and to see how they deal with them. I do believe that there are unequal relations between settled and mobile populations, yet to apply this notion analytically would imply that what needed to be criticised was already known (Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 1995). Moreover, 'such analyses make no room for the displayed concerns of the participants themselves' (Schegloff, 1997, p. 174). And as Rosalind Gill (1996) has pointed out, 'discourse analysts have argued that the relation between discourse and power should be an analytical question' (p. 149).

Discourse is a form of action (Potter & Wetherell, 1987), therefore I wished to see how talk and texts about New Travellers were actively constructed and made defensible and also how they functioned within talk and texts. I have chosen to examine letters written by members of the public to local newspaper editors and council officials as well as transcripts of focus groups with police officers and interviews with landowners and their representatives. My reasoning for choosing to examine this discourse relates to a desire to look at these assessments in more everyday forms rather than rely exclusively on the inflamed rhetoric of politicians or journalists.



### 1.3 The upcoming chapters

The chapters that follow develop a discourse-based perspective on language and reality. Chapter two ('Discourse and Sedentarism') is a critique of sedentarist assumptions within environmental-psychological research on the human-environment relationship and, more broadly, within writing on place in the humanities and social sciences. As this is such a huge area I have had to restrict my coverage. I begin by exploring Robbie McVeigh's (1997) notion of sedentarism, a concept which has emerged from the theorisation of the sedentary/nomadic interface (nomadic meaning all those who lead a mobile way of life).

Although McVeigh (1997) has argued that nomadic/sedentary tension is about many things, what I found most interesting was the sense in which nomadism is thought to threaten sedentary identity. For example, McVeigh (1997) argues that 'the affinity of sedentary peoples to particular places and localities contrasts with the more general relationship to land and environment which exists with nomads' (p. 21).

This got me thinking about the concept of 'rootedness' (Tuan, 1980), originally conceived as an important human need (for example see Coles, 1970; Heidegger, 1958; Weil, 1955). Subjectively, to have roots in a place was to have a significant psychological attachment or sense of belonging. Due to increased social mobility, this sense of attachment to a home-place was claimed by existential philosophers and sociologists to be what was lacking in the modern individual (for example see Berger, Berger & Kellner, 1974).

However, not all academics felt that this claim of nostalgia for rootedness was quite so cut and dried as being either attached or non-attached. To illustrate this I discuss the work of Edward Relph (1976) who felt there were more stages of association between being attached or non-attached. I also discuss the work of Marc Fried (1963) who found that the associations and commitments between people and their homes may only become apparent in times of loss and hardship. Fried's (1963) work heralded a subsequent research trend focusing on the negative psychological effects of high residential mobility (Stokols & Shumaker, 1982; Stokols, Shumaker & Martinez, 1983).



Researchers moved away from studying behavioural dimensions to studying the affective processes implicated in the human-environment bonds. These bonds became theorised as an enduring and changeable process related to the construction and maintenance of identity in a changing social and physical environment. For example, Harold Proshansky, Abbe Fabian and Robert Kaminoff's (1983) development of the higher-order construct 'place-identity', and the resultant work of Kalevi Korpela (1989) and Clare Twigger-Ross and David Uzzell (1996).

Drawing on the work of John Shotter (1993a) I argue that by constructing the existence of these bonds as factual and 'out-there', researchers have, perhaps unwittingly, taken up a position and reproduced sedentary identities as the norm, whilst pathologising nomadic identities. Consistent with this discursive regime, talk and texts generated for these studies have been treated as how people 'see' things. However, as John Dixon and Kevin Durrheim (2000) have shown, 'constructions of place are oriented to the performance of a range of social actions' (p. 32). Therefore it is entirely possible that psychological attachments to place may be privileged in 'the constitution of socio-interactional reality' (Schegloff, 1997, p. 167) on occasions where belonging is at issue.

I also critically review the sociological and human geographical research on New Travellers. This work has claimed that New Travellers are treated as out-of-place, that the treatment of New Travellers foregrounds the fact that the meanings of places may be contested and that an ideology of rootedness is implicit in these contests. My critique here mostly concentrates on the way that just *how* it is that persons or places have been constructed is not addressed. Finally, I offer some concluding arguments and list three concerns inherent in peoples' talk and texts regarding New Travellers which map onto the analytic concerns to come in chapters five, six and seven.

Chapter three ('A Discursive Psychology of Place') takes up this challenge to address the making of places. It begins by describing Yi-Fu Tuan's (1980, 1991) notion of the role played by language, specifically narrative, in the making of place and how this notion has been taken up by other researchers such as Daniel Gutting (1996). Patrick Devine-Wright and Evanthia Lyons' (1997) constructionist approach to representing places is also



discussed. The chapter then introduces the basic ideas of another approach - discursive psychology - as worked up over the years by Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter. I argue that this approach lays out a scheme for understanding the operation of place discourse. The chapter develops an argument for taking an analytic approach to place discourse by offering two illustrations; Emanuel Schegloff's (1972) study of the work done in the selection of place formulations and the work of Dixon and colleagues on the significance of spatial constructions for discursive research on racism.

Chapter four ('Research Materials and Procedure') provides a transition from the introductory chapter, the reviewing done in chapter two and the setting out of theoretical principles in chapter three. This chapter justifies the mixture of materials chosen - focus groups, interviews and a corpus of public and private letters - to generate both conversational and textual data. For each method chosen, the chapter deliberates their ethical and practical suitability for inclusion in this discourse-based project. It also outlines and critiques the specific procedures that have generated this material which is to act as the bedrock for the three analytic chapters that follow. Finally chapter four outlines the analytic methods adopted in this research project.

Chapter five ('Membership and Belonging') is the first of three analytic chapters that put into effect the approach developed in earlier chapters. It concentrates on the rhetorical work of fact construction and explores the activities in which these factual versions are embedded. In other words chapter five explores how symbolic boundaries may be constructed around local communities and New Travellers placed outside. The key topic is how location can be used as a domain of warrant in the making of complaints about New Traveller settlements. For the complainant, it would appear that building of one's own territorially-based category membership (or the undermining of another's), can be an important way of building up (or undermining) factuality. This chapter also demonstrates participant's orientations to deviant cases where New Travellers have been ascribed a degree of membership by the working up of various entitlements.

Although there are overlaps with the previous chapter, chapter six ('Spatial Transgressions') is more focused on the action-orientation of spatial descriptions than the



rhetical work of fact construction. For ease of reading, coverage is split into the following three sections picking out analytic themes: New Travellers as transgressing the law; New Travellers as transgressive presences, disrupting the conventional use of public places or personal spaces; and New Travellers as polluting agencies. I focus on the script-invoking use of spatial (and temporal) formulations in how an event or conduct are undermined as strange, deviant, or against the common good. I also demonstrate how attachment to place may be worked up as a resource to justify the exclusion of New Travellers by constructing them as disruptive or threatening.

Chapter seven ('The Practice of Citizenship') takes as its topic participants' self-ascriptions to the category 'citizen' as part of the interactional work that constituted their talk and texts about New Travellers. The chapter begins by exploring the psychology of the citizen focusing on the different models of the citizen that psychologists have promoted. In light of this discussion, an action model is suggested, not unlike Peter Stringer's (1977, 1982) relational model. In this model, the political identity 'citizen' and political institutions are thought to develop simultaneously and integratively, both are about interaction. However, I also draw on Shotter (1993*b*) and Stuart Hall and David Held (1989) to suggest that to display oneself as a 'citizen' is more than just taking up another identity. The language of citizenship may be used to regulate and sustain who does and who does not belong.

The chapter then provides analyses of extracts from the letters, focus groups and interviews to build up a developed research example of citizenship in practice. I explore the discursive production of citizens, populated by discursive figures such as 'the taxpayer' and 'the public'. I also examine one of the things people do when they are being citizens - enacting accountabilities. By ascribing to the identity, 'citizens' simultaneously identified and defined rights and responsibilities, of citizens and local government officials. Here, stake and interest were often found to be at issue. Finally, I demonstrate how the language of citizenship may be used to exclude New Travellers as not belonging.

Chapter eight ('Concluding Arguments') presents a summary of what has been achieved in the research project. In light of these findings the chapter then evaluates the

contributions the project has made to the various sub-texts on which its foundations lie: psychology and citizenship; environmental psychology; New Traveller literature; and discursive psychology. In the latter I offer four considered reasons for advocating a discursive psychology of place, whilst also noting a number of potential pitfalls. One of these potential pitfalls is dealing with the issue of the ontological status of place. I therefore deal with this issue and the related issue of structure versus agency as best I can in the section that follows. I end by discussing some of the most obvious limitations to the project and signpost some areas for future research.

Chapters one to three are foundational chapters and should be read together. Chapter four is more of a linking chapter, dealing with the ethical and practical considerations of method. As well as discussing specific topics and developing, enriching and defending an unfolding thesis, the first three chapters set up the general analytic perspective that is applied in chapters five through seven. Although these analytic chapters build upon each other, they could also stand alone. Chapter five concentrates on how locational formulations are involved in constructing (and undermining factual accounts). Chapter six is concerned with the action orientation of spatial descriptions in constructing New Travellers as out-of-place. Chapter seven deals with how one particular territorially-based identity, that of 'citizen', may be commonly displayed or ascribed to in talk and texts about New Travellers. Chapter eight reflects back on everything before it, highlighting and discussing the projects' present and future contributions to all the different research areas involved, as well as its strengths and weaknesses.



## 2

### Discourse and Sedentarism

Like chapter one, the aim of this second chapter is to continue to lay the foundations for my research project. Chapter two develops this aim by introducing the novel concept of *sedentarism* (McVeigh, 1997), which has been put forward to explain nomadic/sedentary tensions. Rather than arguing in support or against this explanatory concept, I consider it in relation to a discursive critique of two research areas; academic debate on rootedness / attachment to place versus residential mobility; and research on relations between New Travellers and their sedentary counterparts. This lays the groundwork for the rest of the thesis by foregrounding the importance of studying how and why people formulate place.

More specifically, my reasoning for considering McVeigh's concept is that I wish to question propositions in environmental psychology about the psychologically deleterious effects of high residential mobility (cf. Stokols & Shumaker, 1982; Stokols, Shumaker & Martinez, 1983). In addition, I shall also critique how literature from sociology and human geography reproduces the sedentary norm as a standard for people's evaluations of New Travellers.

I aim to do this by firstly discussing two related ideas which have been put forward to explain the domination of the sedentary ideal. The first idea under discussion is sedentarism, a notion that McVeigh (1997) has put forward to explain the normalisation and reproduction of sedentary living and the legitimating of repression associated with non-sedentary populations such as Gypsies and New Travellers. The second idea is the positive valuation of roots and the devaluation of rootlessness in society, what Cresswell (1996) has referred to as an *ideology of rootedness*.

What follows is some initial exploration of these notions of sedentarism and the ideology of rootedness. The former is presented as a story of cultural bias, the latter as implicit in critical analyses of 'modernity'. After suggesting how the positive valuation of rootedness has filtered into the study of place attachment in environmental psychology, I present a reflexive disciplinary critique of some of its texts and practices. In doing this I adopt a critical discursive approach more usually applied to social psychology (Potter, 1997a).

This disciplinary critique looks at how environmental psychologists have treated people's talk and texts about place and belonging as a straightforward route to cognitions such as 'place-identity' (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983). I highlight that this traditional approach fails to address how such discourse may be occasioned, rhetorical and action-oriented (Potter & Edwards, in press). I also explore the possibility that such researchers, perhaps unwittingly, enter the debate and take a position in it. In this case the position adopted positively values attachment to place and pathologises high residential mobility, thus normalising and reproducing the sedentary mode of existence.

Finally, I consider how research on sedentarist reactions to contemporary highly residentially mobile groups such as Gypsies and New Travellers (currently the pursuit of sociologists and human geographers) might benefit from a reconceptualisation of talk and texts as performative. From this discourse-based approach, we can demonstrate how people can use references to place to descriptively construct events as departing from (or following) some normative or expected order (Edwards, 1997). I argue that such an approach has potential for showing how issues such as belonging are managed, and how place constructions may be used to build versions of a normative (sedentary) world. These concerns will be dealt with in my first two analytic chapters, chapters five and six.

## **2.1 Anti-nomadic practices as sedentarism**

Opposition between sedentary people and nomadic people can be traced back as far as the Old Testament story of the trouble between brothers Cain and Abel (Genesis 4, verses 1-



16). Bruce Chatwin (1987) has claimed that the etymology of the brothers' names reveals two diametrically opposed meanings; Cain comes from 'kanah' meaning 'to acquire', 'get', 'own property', 'rule' or 'subjugate'; Abel from the Hebrew 'hebel' meaning 'anything that lives and moves and is transient'. Moreover, some commentators have highlighted the fact that the tension between the brothers stemmed from their lifestyle differences, arguing that Cain, having been granted ownership of the land, accused Abel of trespass, or that he was envious of his brothers freedom (Chatwin, 1987).

McVeigh (1997, p. 9) has argued that anti-New Traveller discourse is 'indistinguishable' from that which has concerned ethnic nomads (for example Gypsies and Irish Travellers), except it has not been racialised. This lack of racialisation allows the possibility that there is some other ideological component that fuels the arguments associated with nomadic people. Drawing on work by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1988), the Dublin Travellers Educational and Development Group (1992) and Jean-Pierre Liegeois (1995), McVeigh refers to this other ideological component as *sedentarism*. McVeigh (1997) defines sedentarism as 'that system of ideas and practices which serves to normalise and reproduce sedentary modes of existence and pathologise and repress nomadic modes of existence' (p. 9).

By describing sedentarism as a 'system of ideas and practices', McVeigh's conceptual approach to ideology associates sedentarism with the bias of a whole culture rather than a few discrete acts. Moreover, McVeigh's concept of a sedentary mode of existence includes having an attachment to particular places and locales - a *sedentary identity* - and as supporting notions of individual property rights: 'The affinity of sedentary peoples to particular places and localities contrasts with the more general relationship to land which exists with nomads' (McVeigh, 1997, p. 21). Although in McVeigh's own work, the mobilisations of sedentarism are left somewhat undeveloped, a fruitful avenue by which to explore this 'sedentary conceit' in action may be found in social theory discourse.

Jim Mac Laughlin (1999) has argued that most philosophies of progress (although not all, see Chatwin (1987) and Ibn Khaldoun (1958) for antithetical examples), such as social



Darwinism, have prioritised sedentary over nomadic lifestyles. 'In doing so they have literally denigrated nomadism both inside and outside Europe, and suggested that nomadism, including transhumance and seasonal migration, were characteristics of 'barbarous', underdeveloped and 'uncivilised' societies' (Mac Laughlin, 1999, p. 129).

However, for the notion of sedentarism to be useful, we need to be able to theorise how it is expressed and practised by participants and how these processes of normalisation and pathologisation are operating. Some researchers have already applied the notion of sedentarism as an analyst's explanation of the treatment of New Travellers. For example, Colin Clark (1997) has shown that sedentarist assumptions underlie many of our social security regulations, penalising New Travellers who do not follow the ascribed role of settled wage labourer. These assumptions may be described as reflecting taken-for-granted spatial norms of British society, such as people having fixed abodes. In this chapter I explore sedentarist assumptions in the notion of rootedness which have filtered into environmental psychological work on place attachment and place identity.

Whereas anti-Gypsy arguments have been theorised as racism the similarities with anti-New Traveller discourse suggest that an explanation in terms of race alone will not suffice. It has been argued that sedentarism can be theorised as the normalisation and reproduction of the sedentary mode of existence and the pathologisation and repression of all those who lead a mobile way of life. In the next section I shall retain the strands of this argument which prioritises sedentary living and explore how they tie in with the ideology of rootedness. This ideology is explored via its association with critiques of 'modernity'. The following sections will reveal how it underlies the fabric of existential/humanist and psychological literature on attachment to place.

## 2.2 The ideology of rootedness

In 1678, Swiss medical student Johannes Hofer used the term, 'nostalgia', to describe a possibly life-threatening disease whose symptoms included persistent thinking of home (McCann, 1941). This anecdote illustrates the historical significance of the notion of

being rooted or having an attachment to a home-place. Moreover, Simone Weil (1955) once wrote in *The Need for Roots*:

To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognised need of the human soul. It is one of the hardest to define. A human being has roots by virtue of his [sic] real, active and natural participation in the life of the community, which preserves in living shape certain particular expectations for the future. This participation is a natural one in the sense that it is automatically brought about by place, conditions of birth, profession and social surroundings. Every human being needs to have multiple roots. It is necessary for him to draw well-nigh the whole of his moral, intellectual and spiritual life by way of the environment of which he forms a part.

(p. 53)

The notion of rootedness is based on the long-held assumption that attachment to a home-place is preferable to detachment from place or high residential mobility. In the sections that follow I introduce the idea that the reproduction of this need for rootedness has resulted in the acceptance of sedentary living as the norm and the pathologisation of residential mobility. In doing so I consider how the lack of rootedness has been lamented in critical analyses of ‘modernity’ and how this inclination has crossed over into phenomenological research on place-attachment in human geography and environmental psychology.

### 2. 2. 1 *The Simmelian stranger and the homeless mind*

The 1990’s have been described as witnessing a ‘Simmel renaissance’ (Johansson, 2000) where the work of philosopher Georg Simmel has been revived by sociologists and social psychologists<sup>1</sup>. I shall consciously assist in maintaining this renaissance by considering the possibilities of Simmel’s (1908) insightful formulation of ‘the stranger’ ‘who comes today and stays tomorrow’ (Simmel, 1908, translated by Levine, 1971, p. 143) to the topic in hand. One way of reading Simmel’s essay on the stranger is as a critical analysis of ‘modernity’ where societal relations are mapped onto space. In other words, Simmel’s essay on the stranger may be said to represent relations between a social type in capitalist society – the cosmopolitan, socially mobile, urban individual – and the (settled) community.



However, we can also take a step back from this interpretation to consider how Simmel himself constructs the stranger. This figure is a member of a bounded community yet a stranger; attached yet detached; near yet far. Simmel's stranger can be perceived positively as having objectivity<sup>2</sup>. Yet the stranger may also be perceived negatively: 'The purely mobile person comes incidentally into contact with every single element but is not bound up organically, through established ties of kinship, locality, or occupation, with any single one' (Simmel, 1908, translated by Levine, 1971, p. 145). This figure migrates through a succession of places without any of them becoming truly 'home'. Instead of seeing space as mirroring social life, arguments invoking the category 'stranger' may therefore be described as having a rhetorical argumentative quality. For example in light of the present discussion, arguments concerning attachment to place may be used to construct either a negative or positive evaluation of 'modernity'.

A similar analysis of 'modernity' that has become more well-known was set out by Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1974) in *The Homeless Mind*. Berger *et al.* (1974) described a crisis in modern consciousness where social mobility had contributed to an increasing feeling of 'homelessness' in the urban individual:

The correlate of the migratory character of his [sic] experience of society and of self has been what might be called a metaphysical loss of 'home'. It goes without saying that this condition is psychologically hard to bear. It has therefore generated nostalgias – nostalgias, that is, for a condition of '*being at home*' in society, with oneself and ultimately in the universe

(p. 77, emphasis added)

Comparisons may be made here with negative perceptions of the Simmelian stranger discussed above.

Moreover, if we move away from realist rhetoric where spatial relations are seen as symbolic of social relations, it is possible that the origins of Berger *et al.*'s (1974) claims may also lie in rhetorical and social activity. As Shotter (1993a) has argued, we are variously rooted, but these roots lie 'in the different local situations in which we live and act' (p. 42). These, and other similar claims about the modern condition, are talking about contested concepts such as 'society' and 'self', as if they exist, which they clearly do not. Therefore, any talk of 'homelessness' must have a 'persuasive, formative, that is,



rhetorical nature' (Shotter, 1993a, p. 42). Berger *et al.* (1974) may be seen as explicitly formulating the nature of our being as a practical concern.

I feel that even to begin to understand sedentarist practices within talk and texts about New Travellers, it would be wise to look in my own backyard as it were, at sedentarist assumptions within environmental psychology. First though, I deal with the existential roots of the concept of attachment to a home-place. These have filtered into the phenomenological approaches of human geographers and the more empirical approaches favoured by psychologists, to ground the importance of person-place relations.

### 2.3 The existential roots of the concept of attachment to a home-place

Existential-phenomenologist Martin Heidegger (1958) famously argued that, to be, is to be 'in-the-world', and the process of searching for the meaning of '*being-at-home*', or a sense of place-belongingness, was ongoing, thus highlighting the importance of place attachment. It has been argued that Heidegger's ideas on the significance of place in human experience were triggered by what he saw as an increasing condition of rootlessness and alienation in city life (Cresswell, 1996).

There is also evidence that positive evaluations of attachment to a home-place have a darker and repressive side. For example, George Mosse (1966) has argued that in the 1930's, Heidegger's ideas on the importance of the home-place helped to create an idealised German mythology that later played a part in Adolf Hitler's persecution of Jewish and Gypsy populations<sup>3</sup>. The Germans were symbolised as deeply rooted trees in the lush green forest yet the Jews and Gypsies were symbolised by desert snakes, winding around these roots and seeking to destroy them. This mythology emphasised the dangers posed by urban Jews and Gypsies, to the deep roots of the German character, it is also synonymous with attachment and detachment. As argued by Cresswell (1996), 'the murder of six million Jews and half a million Gypsies was, to some extent, based on an ideology of rootedness' (p. 84).

Heidegger's work has been enormously significant in the development of theoretical concepts attempting to explain our sense of belonging and identification with places, within phenomenological geographical research and beyond. For example, existential-phenomenologist and geographer, Relph's (1976) innovative book, *Place and Placelessness*, provides an example of theoretical concepts developed from Heidegger's thesis.

### 2.3.1 *Degrees of attachment / detachment*

Like Heidegger, Relph's (1976) arguments were critical of 'modernity'. His arguments were specifically orchestrated to challenge the apparent ignorance by planners and architects of the importance of our attachments to place. Relph deplored the eradication of distinctive places and the making of standardised landscapes, arguing that this reflected an insensitivity to the significance of place. Again, like Heidegger, Relph pathologised detachment from place, using the protests of uprooted and expropriated people as evidence for the 'profound psychological links' between people and places. However, he thought that the distinction between being either rooted or rootless was too sweeping.

Relph (1976) conceived of our identity with places as *insideness*, he defined this as the degree to which people belong to and identify with a place (cf. Rowles, 1983). Relph made sense of the variability in peoples' place experiences by distinguishing several levels of involvement (which could take either physical or social form). For example at the 'deeper' level, naturalising belonging, *existential insideness* was defined as 'the unselfconscious and authentic experience of place as central to existence' (Relph, 1976, p. 141). Conversely, Relph argued for those who experience *existential outsideness*, as being self-consciously and reflectively uninvolved, essentially alienated from people and places. This was supposed to be the basis for the condition of *placelessness*: 'The person who has no place with which he identifies is in effect homeless, without roots' (Relph, 1976, p. 55).

However, the categories that make up the inside-outside division which Relph (1976) imposes to provide his essence of place, are assumed as pre-existing or disembedded forms, reproduced by peoples' personal constructions. Yet if we step back to interrogate



this, we might see that the categories inside and outside are produced themselves by Relph, they are analysts' categories. What might be more interesting is the whether people make these categories relevant in everyday talk.

Relph's (1976) approach may also be criticised in terms of its individualistic bias. Insideness was thought to be primarily an individual experience, a Piagetian process of balancing assimilation and accommodation, resulting in cognitive constructions that could then be shared through social interaction. An alternative explanation could be that some constructions of place experience come to be formulated as shared knowledge through consensus or agreement. Relph's theory cannot explain shows of shared knowledge about place experiences adequately as he fails to consider peoples' discursive practices at the interpersonal level.

Moreover, as Shotter (1993a) has argued, Relph's (1976) claims, like those of Berger *et al.* (1974), simply serve to mystify this condition of homelessness, overlooking the fact that we are variously rooted in our different interactional contexts. For example, variability in place experience could be an indication that we may use talk about our own or others' rootedness (or lack of it) as a flexible resource for doing ideological work, such as managing legitimacy or place-belonging. By prioritising attachment to place over placelessness, Relph himself may be seen as reproducing a sedentary norm.

Phenomenological notions of self-in-place have been enormously significant in elevating the importance of place in understanding the self, and the development of theoretical concepts both within and beyond the perspective. Indeed from this very climate the concept of attachment to a home-place has filtered into the sub-discipline of environmental psychology to become recognised as a topic worthy of study.

## 2.4 The psychology of place attachment

During recent years, research on psychological attachment to geographic space has become the object of empirical attention in environmental psychology (see Altman & Low, 1992). The general aim has been to understand the affective processes as well as the



feelings involved (Altman & Ginat, 1992). Work on the former has focused on how people establish affective bonds with specific places that can become a part of their self-concept. Whereas work on the latter has mostly focused on the relationship between attachment and residential mobility, examining the experience and expression of affective bonds towards significant places, often in the case of forced detachment or place transformation.

The study of place attachment has now been set in a wider framework where the concept is seen as a set of related phenomena, possibly linked to other factors, rather than a unidimensional phenomenon (Bonaiuto, Aiello, Perugini, Bonnes & Ercolani, 1999). However, in this section my discussion focuses on the relationship between place attachment and residential mobility<sup>4</sup>. Through reviewing several key studies, I aim to examine how this relationship was constructed and operationalised by researchers, and debate whether negative evaluations of rootlessness / residential mobility may have been reproduced by their research practices.

#### 2. 4. 1 *Loss of attachment to a home-place*

An early indication that psychologists had recognised place attachment as a viable research topic was Fried's two-stage study (1963; Fried & Gleicher, 1961) exploring the psychological implications of forced relocation from a slum residential area in the West End of Boston. Fried's main finding was that a very strong positive pre-relocation orientation to place was associated with a severe post-relocation grief response. Erik Erikson's (1956) discussion of spatial components in relation to the concept of ego identity was the point of departure for Fried's (1963) subsequent claim that alongside group identity;

*a sense of spatial identity* is fundamental to human functioning. It represents a phenomenal or ideational integration of important experiences concerning environmental arrangements and contacts in relation to the individual's conception of his [sic] own body in space

(p. 156, emphasis in original)

Fried concluded that these 'cognitive' constructions provided a meaningful sense of continuity for the self. Post-relocation, the enduring grief was explained as a disruption in (the individual's) sense of continuity, with the implication that both sociality and spatiality were important in the maintenance of the self.

However, Fried's (1963) approach may also be criticised for its individualistic bias. By focusing on personal constructions gleaned by structured interview and a 'depth of grief index', Fried neglected the shared, transformative and contested practices held in the flux of dialogue, through which the meanings of the West End and its community were constructed and destroyed.

Fried's (1963) empirically-based claims might be seen as the first to incorporate attachment to place as part of the human psyche. However, an alternative explanation has been offered by Vittoria Giuliani and Roberta Feldman (1993), who argued that Fried's findings could be reinterpreted as revealing such strong orientations to place as dysfunctional. A parallel may be drawn here with John Bowlby's (1958) work on human attachment and loss, where failure of separation (due to over-attachment) was said to indicate insecure attachment.

Fried's (1963) emphasis on the severe grief caused by loss of attachment may be seen as a precursor to a subsequent research trend towards studying the negative psychological consequences of residential mobility. One of the more negative case scenarios that could have come out of such an agenda-led association has been borne out by researchers such as Robert Coles (1970), whose research has perhaps unwittingly contributed to pathologising mobility.

#### 2. 4. 2 *Place attachment and residential mobility*

In 1970, Coles wrote: 'It is utterly part of our nature to want roots, to need roots, to struggle for roots, for a sense of belonging, for some place that is recognised as *mine*, as *yours*, as *ours* (p. 120, emphasis in original). Coles' study of the 'uprooted' children of seasonal migrant workers found that frequent changes in physical environment (i.e. their



mobile lifestyle) contributed to a sense of rootlessness which was argued to be reflected in negative and fragmented self-concepts.

I argue that Coles' (1970) study is a product of an ideology of rootedness. More specifically it is an example of how the positive valuation of sedentary living has been instantiated in academic debate. Daniel Stokols and colleagues have picked up on the slant of this bias. Place attachment research, they argue, has been too focused on the negative psychological effects of mobility (Stokols & Shumaker, 1982; Stokols, Shumaker & Martinez, 1983). For example, Stokols *et al.* (1983) claimed that many peoples' close friendships and family ties have become adaptive in transcending the spatial boundaries of their immediate neighbourhood.

To test their claim, Stokols *et al.* (1983) ran a longitudinal survey of working people to measure both personal mobility rates and emotional and physical well-being. By adopting a contextual perspective so as to go beyond the immediate circumstances surrounding a move, the survey questions also addressed the spatial and temporal context of environmental experience. Frequent relocation was directly associated with illness-related symptoms and with having a lower sense of community. However, the findings were not at all clear cut<sup>5</sup>.

I feel that the point made by Stokols and colleagues, that place attachment researchers are too focused on the negative psychological effects of mobility, is a very important one, and their scholarly scepticism an approach I aim to reproduce in this thesis. Yet however well-meaning the rationale for Stokols *et al.*'s (1983) experiment, by its being done within the same standard approach as the previous studies it criticises, it ends up reproducing this negative assessment of residential mobility. This standard approach assumes that some hidden order underlies all our actions, ignoring the fact that most activity is done in discourse itself which is situated and action-oriented (Potter & Edwards, in press).

The next section introduces a shift in place attachment research, heralded by Proshansky and his colleagues. These researchers may be credited with developing a higher order construct, 'place-identity', in order to look at affective processes.

### 2. 4. 3 *Place-identity and attachments as transpatial*

Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983) (also see Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky & Fabian, 1987; Proshansky & Kaminoff, 1982; Proshansky, Nelson-Shulman & Kaminoff, 1979) introduced and developed the construct of 'place-identity' with regard to the person/environment relationship. The argument put forward by Proshansky and his colleagues (1983) was based on the assumption that the feelings of attachment to place widely described by both geographical and psychological literature reflected the fact that the self was somehow involved in the physical environment;

What emerges as place-identity is a complex cognitive structure which is characterised by a host of attitudes, values, thoughts, meanings and behaviour tendencies that *go well beyond just emotional attachments and belonging to particular places*

(p. 62, emphasis added)

As well as moving the emphasis off attachment and on to the higher order construct of place-identity, Proshansky *et al.*, (1983) rejected the idea of a fixed home-place bond in favour of a changeable *transpatial* bond;

place-identity is influenced by a wide range of person/physical setting experiences and relationships based on a variety of physical contexts that from the moment of birth until death define people's day-to-day existence.

(p. 62)

One may imagine that the transpatial nature of this theory somewhat overcomes the previous notion of attachment to a fixed home-place as fundamental to psychological health (cf. Feldman, 1990). However, like Fried (1963), Proshansky *et al.* (1983) also claimed that the self can be threatened by unwanted disruptions to emotionally significant places. Therefore the co-dependence between attachment and psychological health remains intact.

More specifically, Proshansky *et al.*'s (1983) recognition function of place-identity implies that continual environmental change in childhood would result in a fragmented environmental past, repressing the development of a meaningful place-identity. Some kind of emotional attachment to place would therefore seem to be an integral part of the



creation of place-identity. Moreover, if place-identity is a sub-structure of social identity, it would follow that lack of a meaningful place-identity would inflict some kind of dysfunctionality on the self. This implicitly normalises a sedentary lifestyle (in childhood) over residential mobility.

The above quote also emphasises the changing nature of place-identity, 'from the moment of birth until death'. Proshansky *et al.* (1983) stress that as researchers, it is crucial to explore the variability of place-identities as well as their stability over time. Yet the authors do not offer a way in which we might make sense of this variability. Drawing on extensive empirical studies of identity work by discursive psychologists (for example see Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995), I suggest that variability both between and within peoples' accounts might indicate that we produce place-identities flexibly as a resource and as part of various discursive practices.

For example, most people describe a strong emotional attachment to a particular place, when that relationship is disrupted, as an accounting device. It is therefore more tempting to see such expressions of feelings about attachment to places as situated and action-oriented. This position is empirically supported by John Dixon and Kevin Durrheim (2000) who have illustrated what a reworking of the different functions of Proshansky *et al.*'s (1983) place-identity model might look like by relocating it in the 'flux of human dialogue' (Billig, 1987). It is also supported by suggestions from Proshansky *et al.* (1983) themselves regarding both the important role of others in the shaping of place-identity and the everydayness of how it is derived. The discursive approach should therefore be seen as a viable countercontext to Proshansky *et al.*'s (1983) model which theorises such expressions as the manifestation of a cluster of pre-formed cognitions produced in moments of reflection.

#### 2. 4. 4 *Attachment as a prerequisite for environmental self-regulation*

As a contribution to Proshansky *et al.*'s (1983) model, Korpela (1989) proposed a model with place-identity as the product of environmental self-regulation. This latter model insists on some degree of emotional attachment to place as the *essential basis* for place-

identity. Moreover, the model also offers basic principles describing the role of self and identity in the process of building place-identity. Korpela (1989) chose to explore his arguments by the thematic analysis of childrens' essays about their favourite places. Drawing on Theodore Sarbin's (1983) notion that the self as an abstraction emerges in the rendering of place experiences to produce a coherent story, Korpela proposed that discourse concerning the meaning of these favourite places revealed this 'environmental self-regulation' in action.

Korpela (1989) argued that written descriptions of a feeling of belongingness in relation to a favourite place signified the pleasure and pain principle in operation (Epstein, 1983). For example, Extract 1 below, has been taken from one of Korpela's participants' essays which was entitled 'My room':

Extract 1 (cited in Korpela, 1989, p. 248)

**My Room**

The most important place in my life at the moment is my own dear room.  
I have named my room Mystery City, and I have lived there for ten years.  
In childhood all of my home was important,  
but in adolescence my own place became more meaningful.

However, an alternative reading where discourse is seen as performative is worth considering. Although this is not the place to develop an analysis, a few observations may suggest that constructions of place-in-time are being used as a discursive resource in the writer's identity work (cf. Taylor & Wetherell, 1999).

A similar approach to Korpela (1989) has been taken by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) who designed a study to focus on how and why places become emotionally significant to the self-concept. In this instance, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell looked to Glynis Breakwell's (1986, 1992, 1993) identity process model as a framework to adequately explain person / environment relations. The authors hypothesised that when interviewed, 'attached' participants would talk about their local environment in ways which would uphold the principles of this model, whereas those 'non-attached' would not.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) chose a residential area that was undergoing social, environmental and economic transformation, as a site for their study. This context



upholds a common approach to place attachment research that follows from Relph's (1976) claim that our experience of place attachment is largely unconscious, only brought to the fore when threatened. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) interviewed supposedly attached and non-attached participants<sup>6</sup> asking semi-structured questions constructed from the principles of the identity process model. Interview transcripts were content analysed according to four themes directly derived from Breakwell's guiding principles<sup>7</sup>. All participants were said to have expressed the significance of their residential environment to their self-concepts. The authors concluded that overall, the results provided evidence for the use of the residential environment in the maintenance and development of identity processes.

However, the existence of participants who did not express an attachment to any place or settlement, although predicted by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell, is a serious caveat against promoting a general theory that emotional attachment to a home-place functions as a strategy to maintain the self. Moreover there are some factors in this study that may have precluded alternative explanations of these results, for example, the issue of variability.

Firstly, the approach to sampling and analytic techniques did not allow the authors to explore variability. For example, variability may have been expressed by those who scored around the mean of the place attachment scale, yet these participants were not included in the interviews. Furthermore, throughout the study, the categories 'attached' and 'non-attached' were both assumed to be of a homogenous and enduring nature. This may have masked contradiction, facilitating a project with a very fixed agenda which appeared to have been driven by a desire to highlight differences between 'attached' and 'non-attached' residents.

Interpreting their findings, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) noted that distinctiveness was expressed in outsider / insider distinctions that operated at both individual (for example length of residency) and group levels (for example city versus country, North London versus South London, local versus non-local). An example may be seen in Extract 2 below:

Extract 2 (RN, cited in Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 212)

I just like the hustle and bustle of London,  
I like to go to the country and stay  
but I like to get back to London, more to do

However, the authors failed to focus on how, in adopting a rhetorical position, these territorially-based categories are constructed for the occasion. The choice of terms 'London' and 'the country' are opposed, and operate as alternative descriptions that indexically display identities, both for the places described and, through that, for the producer of the description (RN). These categories do not reflect distinctions that are already there, they are used to make distinctions in the world in a way that is relevant to the accountability of actions.

Twigger-Ross and Uzzell's (1996) use of the identity process model as a framework for analysis meant that the expressions of continuity were divided into place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity<sup>8</sup>. In opposition to previous work (see Coles, 1970; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983), it should be noted that these concepts indicate that bonds to particular places can endure even with frequent relocation, and that bonds can be developed to generic types of place characteristics (also see Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Feldman, 1990). However, besides the fact that attachment is still prioritised over detachment, there is still an assumption that these psychological bonds have to be developed first, which implies time spent in a fixed location.

Further treatment of participants' talk as a route to cognitions led Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) to suggest that place can support self-esteem and self-efficacy. In terms of self-efficacy, both 'attached' and 'non-attached' gave examples of situations that threatened the manageability of their daily lives. The following extract was used as an example of an aspect of environmental manageability that affected an 'attached' resident's day-to-day living:



Extract 3 (RN, originally cited in Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 217)

[The increased number of black residents] will be [a big issue]  
towards the end of this and next year,  
I mean you go down there in the mornings,  
I'm not prejudiced but, you drive down there in the mornings  
and that's all you see at the bus stop,  
they've got to live somewhere I suppose

This extract was interpreted as upholding the principle of self-efficacy. Alternatively, I argue that it illustrates constructionist work done by both the researchers and the participant. Firstly, the researchers presented Extract 3 as an example of racial tension and an issue of environmental manageability. Secondly, through description of a place, the participant can be heard to be constructing a version of his or her world as part of an argument which problematises the predicted increase in black residents.

If we move both the analytic and explanatory focus on to this particular description of place we can begin to suggest that it is doing ideological work such as managing legitimacy of residence. Yet at the same time, the extract is rhetorically oriented towards countering the potential of being read as racist. As Edwards and Potter (1992) might argue, the participant is attending to his or her stake or interest, hence the classic disclaimer (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975), 'I'm not prejudiced but...'.

Hidden behind this disclaimer is a potentially racist claim but in the form of a practical argument which makes it 'safely sayable' (Potter & Edwards, in press, p. 4), 'you drive down there in the mornings and that's all you see at the bus stop'. In a move towards accountability, this is combined with a half-hearted attempt at a more liberal argument, 'they've got to live somewhere I suppose' (see Billig *et al.*, 1988). Although this is only the beginnings of an analysis, it should give some indication of how different analytic themes could be anticipated by considering discursive practices and the important role of place constructions.

In light of these discursive readings of Korpela (1989) and Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), the claim that some kind of emotional attachment to place is a necessary basis for maintaining one's self-concept begins to appear less secure. I have aimed to show how place discourse that has previously been viewed as 'revealing' inner dynamics of

environmental self-regulation or as a medium for expressing identity processes may be recast as a resource for discursive action.

Along these lines, I am inclined to argue that a respecification of these contrived place descriptions (Korpela's essays and Twigger-Ross and Uzzell's interviews) would allow us to see this role for attachment as something discursively instantiated in both academic debate, the research process and everyday talk. In the words of Dixon and Durrheim (2000), 'language becomes the force that binds people to places' (p. 32). The focus of study thus becomes the way that attachment and non-attachment are managed interactionally in the research setting.

#### 2.4.5 Overview

In this review of the psychological literature on place attachment I have argued that researchers have perhaps unwittingly privileged attachment to place over residential mobility. By commenting on this academic debate, my aim has not been to take a position and diminish 'the legitimacy and value of peoples' struggles to create their own places and memories' (Pratt, 1992, p. 243). Instead, as previously highlighted by Stokols and Shumaker (1982) and Stokols *et al.* (1983) I have felt the need to question propositions about the psychologically deleterious effects of high residential mobility. However, instead of addressing this question from within the same paradigm I have located my argument within a discursive approach as a disciplinary critique (see Potter 1997a).

I would now like to discuss the potential that this critique of environmental psychology has for the perhaps more social psychological study of New Travellers. In the 1980s and 1990s the activities of New Travellers attracted a large amount of controversy (see chapter one). This controversy brought several issues to the fore, such as their supposed disruption of rural places, prompting discourse concerning whose place it was and who belonged there. If the affective bonds between persons and their environments are created and maintained through language and related to the construction and maintenance of identity, then it follows that place discourse may be used to effectively create 'insiders' and 'outsiders'.



As psychological research on relations between New Travellers and their sedentary counterparts was non-existent at the time of writing, I felt it necessary to review what literature does exist. For this purpose I cast aside traditional disciplinary boundaries to review relevant research by sociologists and human geographers on relations between New Travellers and their sedentary counterparts. Here I discuss the key findings and limitations of this work whilst bearing in mind how a focus on constructions of place might help an understanding of how sedentary living is normalised and reproduced and nomadism pathologised in everyday talk about New Travellers.

## 2.5 Sociological research on New Travellers

### 2.5.1 *The contested nature of place definitions*

In 1988, Chris Rojek discussed some of the arguments between the 'hippies' and the 'authorities' over the annual summer solstice access to Stonehenge. He suggested that these arguments constituted a struggle over the use-value of public leisure space. Rojek argued that the 'hippies' described Stonehenge as a living spiritual and leisure resource only coming to life when used. Whereas to the 'authorities', it was a 'museum without walls' (Malraux, 1954), to be preserved in a 'normal' leisure environment (i.e. to be viewed and appreciated from a distance, for a short period of time and in an orderly fashion).

However, concluding comments about the practical upshot of this contest over place-meanings - a dramatic police eviction - defined the 'convoy' as 'not entitled to special treatment or exemption simply because its members wish to contract out of their responsibilities as citizens' (Douglas Hurd, cited in *The Times*, 4 June 1986). Rojek (1988) claimed that the arguments of the 'authorities' here clarified the image of what a 'normal' adult or citizen is and what 'normal', 'healthy' leisure in society looks like:

A normal adult is propertied and either in regular paid employment or voluntarily supported by someone who is in regular paid employment (a spouse or parent). 'Normal' and 'healthy' leisure obeys the law and is financed by the individuals' 'voluntary' participation in the formal economy

(p. 27)

This definition of normality is territorially-based. If a person is propertied, they usually have a fixed abode. If a person is in regular paid employment it is most likely that they have a fixed work-place and so on. The normal adult or citizen may therefore be described as having a sedentary identity (McVeigh, 1997). However, the matter of *how* people develop different understandings in relation to space were not addressed. For example, how an action can be made out as normal in one particular place, and abnormal in another.

I suggest that a discourse-based approach could help here as it allows an understanding of how notions of particular identities and sorts of places can be produced in specific and discursively occasioned ways. Such an approach can also explain how people can descriptively construct events as following or as departing from, some normative or expected order (see Edwards, 1997). In other words, place-related discourse may be seen as having distinctive implications in terms of what identity 'does' in so far as it can organise social relations and achieve exclusion.

I flesh-out these ideas more fully in chapters six and seven where I analyse how abnormality may be worked up in discourse about New Traveller actions; and how the identity of 'citizen' may be invoked to warrant complaint and exclusionary action. One sociologist who has investigated links between space and identity, in the context of New Travellers, is Kevin Hetherington. It is to this work that I now turn my attention.

### 2. 5. 2 *The relationship between space and identity*

Hetherington's (1992, 1993, 1996*a, b*, 1998, 2000) publications are all based upon his doctoral research which focused on two empirical case studies, one of which was on a number of interviews with New Travellers (see Hetherington, 1993). All of his work is based around exploring 'big' ideas that might explain the relationship between space and identity. For example, in his analysis of New Traveller interview material, Hetherington (1996*a*) takes a macro approach to explaining how places such as Stonehenge may 'become sites of social centrality for the reproduction of marginal or outsider identities'



(p. 34). The author claims that New Traveller identities are formed through a desire for a coherent identity derived from a wished-for sense of belonging.

The phenomenological tone of this claim indicates a psychological interest in the interview talk (which is assumed to be representative of New Travellers as a homogenous group). Furthermore, having initially taken discourse as a route to understanding his informants' experiences, Hetherington's authorial voice then gives it a 'glosses-and-quotes' treatment (Edwards, 1997, p. 280) to provide evidence for his highly abstract theoretical commentary. For the reader, any means of assessing this interpretation is therefore lost.

Echoing Rojek, Hetherington's (1998) other central claim is that;

the anxieties that the new Travellers bring and the legislation that has been brought down on them in recent years have all been based upon a contested spatiality that informs our understanding of nature and the countryside

(p. 338)

Hetherington summarised the annual events over access to Stonehenge as a conflict between heritage as enclosure and festival as opening. However, by Hetherington's own admission, the majority of his writings are theoretical in tone rather than empirical. This approach leaves the arguments that supposedly constitute this contested spatiality relatively unexplored, as is the interactional context which might help explicate how and why these contests over space are organised and worked up in talk. However, it should be noted that this emphasis on the process of construction is something that Hetherington (2000) claims to have followed up in a recent reinterpretation of his interview material.

### 2.5.3 *Overview*

What was important about Rojek's (1988) and Hetherington's (1998), work on the reaction of settled society to the New Travellers was that it highlighted the flexible nature of references to place. For example, for the New Travellers, the use-value of Stonehenge was as a living leisure resource, belonging to all of the people, that by rights should not be denied to them (Rojek, 1988). On the other hand, the dominant argument put forward by

the 'authorities' was that Stonehenge was an 'incomparable archaeological area' (taken from a letter to *The Times*, 22 July, 1978, cited in Rojek, 1988, p. 23) and the monuments within it should be protected. This foregrounds how place categories may be constructed for the occasion, used to build a version of the world in a way that is relevant to the accountability of actions.

Rojek's (1988) work also hinted at how 'the idea of the 'normal' [sedentary] person, the citizen, who behaves in normal ways in both work and leisure' (p. 27) was being invoked in talk and texts about New Travellers. This link between space and identity was also a theme highlighted in Hetherington's (1993) doctoral work and also a participants' concern in my own material that I take up for analysis in chapter seven. In the next section I review human geographical work on reactions to New Travellers which also picks up on the contested nature of place descriptions and the role of the sedentary norm.

## 2. 6 Human geographical work on New Travellers

The most significant contributors from the field of human geography to an understanding of the spatial conflict between New Travellers and the settled population are Tim Cresswell, David Sibley and Keith Halfacree. The work of these authors uses the example of New Travellers to address the issue of how social space is produced. New Travellers are a good example here because their activities challenge taken-for-granted notions about the relation between space and behaviour. In other words, the rationale behind this research has been to study the social and cultural significance of place as a socially constructed category which serves to normalise and reproduce the existing 'order-of-things' (Cresswell, 1999).

### 2. 6. 1 *New Travellers as out-of-place*

Cresswell (1996, 1997) has made an insightful contribution to understanding the reactions to New Travellers. His work has focused on the role of space and place in media constructions of New Traveller transgressions. Cresswell (1996) theorised these



constructions as part of a moral panic (Cohen, 1972). Cresswell (1996) claimed that although the original arguments concerning New Travellers were based around contests over the proper use and meaning of Stonehenge, the media focus then shifted to a critique of the New Traveller lifestyle where high residential mobility was being defined as deviant. Cresswell (1996) argued that this critique was 'rooted in the positive valuation of roots in a place-bound, property-owning society' (p. 85). In other words, the sedentary norm was being applied as a standard for action and understanding.

In an examination of the role of language in telling us 'what and who belong where' (Cresswell, 1997, p. 334), Cresswell analysed press and government use of metaphors of displacement. It was found that the use of descriptive terms like 'dirt', 'disease' and 'smell' symbolised a certain type of geographical recognition; 'metaphors of dirt are associated with place; something is where it shouldn't be' (Cresswell, 1996, p. 81). Yet although I consider this to be significant work, as cautioned by Potter (1996a), the distinction between metaphorical and literal discourse is not an easy one and without access to participants' own distinctions, we have to rely upon the analyst. Moreover, there is an implicit assumption in this kind of work that non-metaphorical discourse is somehow less likely to be part of peoples' social practices (Potter, 1996a). Another contributor to focus on the issue of who-and-what-belongs-where has been David Sibley. In the following section I discuss the key themes in his work.

### 2. 6. 2 *New Travellers as outsiders in space and society*

Sibley (1981, 1986, 1988, 1992, 1995a, b, 1997) has offered a sustained contribution to understanding societal reactions to Gypsies and New Travellers which has spanned the last twenty years. Concluding his descriptive analysis of Parliamentary discourse surrounding the Caravan Sites Act 1968, Sibley (1981) argued that the debate was informed by a 'real Gypsy' myth. It was claimed that this myth stereotypically characterises Gypsies as an essentially nomadic rural people. However, Sibley (1986) suggests that since the majority of Gypsies do not live the romantic image of brightly painted bow-topped horse-drawn wagons, they are seen not as 'real' Gypsies but as deviants whose presence is constructed



as transgressing the legitimate use of urban spaces. Hence the 'real Gypsy' myth may serve to exclude them from urban 'civil' society. However, although Sibley claims to deal with the state's response to outsiders, the actual processes involved in their creation remained unclear.

In response to the passing of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJPOA) in 1994, Sibley (1995*a, b*) has put forward a similar argument that, amongst other 'deviants', New Travellers are portrayed as not belonging in the countryside. Drawing on social anthropologist Mary Douglas' (1966) ideas on purification, Sibley (1995*a*) has conceptualised the fearful reactions to the presence of Gypsies and New Travellers in rural communities as representing a 'boundary crisis' (Erikson, 1966). Sibley (1988) suggests that the 'bounding' of both the self and social groups (the separation from stereotypical representations of who or what belongs or does not belong) emerges as a social and cultural process. During such an episode, Sibley (1988) asserts that both social and physical boundaries may be erected and/or maintained to preserve social and spatial homogeneity. In this way, Sibley (1995*b*) argues that 'who is felt to belong and not to belong contributes in an important way to the shaping of social space' (p. 3).

However, as argued by Ghazi Falah and David Newman (1995) regarding how to approach spatial analysis: 'Boundary studies need to be placed within the context of how groups perceive their space and give meaning to territory' (p. 690). Therefore it might be instructive to empirically study the relation between language and boundary processes from a perspective which can examine not only these patterns of meaning but also how they are created. By doing this we can study the role of place discourse in the construction of belonging and how such identity work can achieve exclusion.

### 2. 6. 3 *New Travellers and the 'rural idyll'*

Taking up this empirical challenge, Halfacree (1996) has examined the place of New Travellers within social representations of the 'rural idyll' in Parliamentary debates surrounding the 1994 CJPOA. As a result of his analysis Halfacree (1996) isolated two key strands of argument: Firstly that New Travellers were distinguished from Gypsies and



consequently vilified; and secondly that New Travellers were described as not belonging within the 'imaginative geography' of the rural idyll. Halfacree concluded that New Travellers were represented as large, noisy and deviant invading groups who were out-of-place in the English countryside.

Yet there are two difficulties associated with a social representations approach (Moscovici, 1984) which are manifest in the Halfacree's (1996) findings. Firstly, if one considers that social representations theory emphasises the importance of interaction for the generation and transmission of representations, why are the 'rural idyll' and Sibley's (1981) 'real Gypsy' myth treated as underlying representations rather than interactionally-determined constructions?

Secondly, although Halfacree (1996) claims to have found consensual representations of New Travellers vis-à-vis Gypsies, the author also presents accounts that exhibit variation. Whilst acknowledging that this is good research practice, for a theory that stresses the point that social representations are taken to be shared across a social group, why are the implications of this internal diversity not addressed? Halfacree supports a Lefebvrian notion that social representations of space, such as the rural idyll, 'tend to be exclusive and selective in their character'.

A study by Sally Kendall (1997) has shown that this selective character of social representations of space may be simply be an occasioned discursive resource. Drawing on material from a 1991 'Save the Children' survey of the New Traveller community in Leeds, Kendall (1997) claimed that bounded notions of place have been used by dominant society to spatially and culturally exclude marginal groups like New Travellers. Yet following New Traveller occupations, it was found that the leisure status of land valued by sections of sedentary society (such as green spaces or recreation grounds) could be downgraded by members of the local community as a result of their inability to use the land for its 'legitimate', intended purposes. Kendall (1997) therefore concluded that instead of characterising space as a static and rigid concept with fixed boundaries, it may be more useful to emphasise its fluidity.



#### 2. 6. 4 *Overview*

Having briefly reviewed human geographical research on reactions to the presence of New Travellers in the countryside (Cresswell, 1996, 1997; Halfacree, 1996; Sibley, 1995*b*, 1997) it appears that they all share similar strengths and weaknesses. For example, one strength lies in their consideration of how the presence of New Travellers in a community can provide a 'natural' opportunity to explore the nexus between place and identity. Like the sociological work reviewed in the previous section, these studies have also highlighted the contested nature of space facilitating a move away from the earlier 'static, idealised sense of place stationed in the past with a seamless coherence of character and comforting bounded enclosure' (Kendall, 1997, p. 74).

Although the studies acknowledge that abstract entities, such as symbolic boundaries and representations of place, are being created and maintained, a significant weakness is that the evidence for such claims is lacking and/or the actual processes involved are unclear. I argue that a focus on the discourse itself as a performative domain of social action might shed light on this creative process. In which case it might be useful to look at how these spatialities are being (re)constructed from moment to moment in an interactional context.

From my readings of this research I have drawn the following conclusions. Firstly, that the relationship between language and boundary construction and maintenance may be a fruitful avenue of research in a move to understand the shaping of social spaces as well as the social relations that define them. Secondly, that it may be useful to explore how descriptions of New Travellers' spatial practices as 'abnormal' might be implicitly reproducing 'geographic norms of property and rootedness' (Cresswell, 1996, p. 80). Thirdly, that constructions of New Travellers as deviant could be explored by attention to the action-orientation of spatial descriptions both in metaphorical and non-metaphorical discourse. The first of these points maps on to my analytic work in chapter five, and the second and third points are dealt with in my analyses in chapter six. In the final section of this literature review I reflect on the issues and questions it has revealed which call for further investigation and present the specific questions which this project has been



designed to address. My initial steps in addressing these questions take the form of a more focused review of literature that has already addressed the role of language in the making of place and the main theoretical principles of discursive psychology, both of which are laid out in the next chapter.

## 2.7 Conclusions

In this chapter I have explored the way in which social theorists and environmental psychologists have reproduced a sedentary norm by constructing high residential mobility as a problem. In my disciplinary critique I have attempted to show how the talk and texts generated by empirical studies on attachment to place may be seen as produced in specific and discursively occasioned ways rather than being treated as a straightforward route to the operation of principles of self-regulation.

I also explored existing research on relations between New Travellers and their sedentary counterparts within the disciplines of sociology and human geography. Although researchers highlighted the contested nature of space and the role of the 'normal' sedentary identity in constructing mobility as deviant, this sedentary norm was treated by the analysts as pre-existing and unproblematic.

By suggesting an alternative conception of discourse as a 'performative domain of social action' (Edwards, 1997, p. 272), I have argued that the references to place may be seen as a flexible resource for ideological work. This provides a rationale for the rest of the thesis by enabling me argue that there is a need for work on how references to place may be employed as part of discursive practices such as managing belonging, designating the out-of-place or invoking 'normal' or 'deviant' identities.

Although place attachment is not the primary focus for this project (but see where participants have made it relevant in chapter six, section 6. 2), in the same way that Michael Billig (1985) has argued that common-sense can be contradictory, it should be noted that the term imparts conflicting conceptions of a positive and negative nature. For example, although I cited Weil's (1955) argument that 'to be rooted is the most important

and least recognised need of the human soul' (p. 53), attachment to place can also be considered a melancholic experience (Relph, 1976). Therefore I argue that attachment to place, could be respecified as a rhetorical and argumentative matter. For example, a sense of belonging is often mentioned as an indicator of attachment. Yet experiential referencing is also considered to be a rhetorically powerful descriptive device (Edwards, 1991), often serving an interactional function such as arguing, persuading, blaming or identity making.

If we follow Billig's thesis and consider attachment as rhetorical and argumentative, we should then also heed Billig's warning that common-sense has a history as a form of ideology which can confirm existing social relationships including arrangements of power. Perhaps the way McVeigh's (1997) sedentarist 'system of ideas and practices' operates is not unlike the workings of Billig's (1995) notion of 'banal nationalism'. If this is indeed the case, sedentarism may appear as natural expressions going relatively unnoticed in academic discourse, political discourse and practices, media discourse and everyday interactions.

However, it should be noted that as an analyst, my aim is not to mandate sedentarism as the relevant context for my analyses of talk and texts about New Travellers. Yet consideration of this concept has brought out three concerns inherent in peoples' talk and texts regarding New Travellers which map onto the analytic concerns to come in chapters five, six and seven. I have listed these concerns below:

1. I can attend to questions such as whether people use references to place to manage issues like belonging and legitimacy.
2. I can also explore how they construct particular definitions of places in order to designate New Travellers as out-of-place; how people use spatial descriptions to construct the presence and actions of New Travellers as transgressive; and whether people actively work up affinities with particular places.



3. I can also examine how the notion of the 'normal' (settled) person or citizen may be invoked in talk and texts to manage issues like rights and responsibilities, inclusion and exclusion.

In chapter three, I flesh-out how a discourse-based approach may be seen as a way of attending to these questions, by explaining how descriptions and accounts construct versions of the world and at the same time are themselves constructed (Potter, 1996a). I also discuss how place is a relatively unfamiliar topic as far as discursive critique is concerned. The topicalising of place discourse is not simply a matter of intellectual imperialism - lifting a ready-made set of arguments and placing them triumphantly over a new topic. I argue that the analysis of place discourse has specific implications which enables the scope of a discursive approach to be developed.

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## Notes

1. Simmel's work is usually associated with sociology, for recent coverage see Hetherington (2000). Furthermore, due to his attempts to bridge the gap between the individual and the social, Simmel has been recently described as 'the psychologist of social life' (Johansson, 2000, p. 19).
2. This objectivity is said to result from not being bound by roots to persons that make up the settled group.
3. Although Heidegger's intentions here are uncertain (Cresswell, 1996).
4. Although recent work may also be found whose approach focuses on the supposedly broader relationship between sense of place and residential mobility (see Hay, 1998).
5. The results were said to be mediated by psychological factors such as levels of environmental exploratory tendency, desirability of the area and predictability of the move. A proportion of the respondents were also said to have higher levels of satisfaction on other dimensions of well-being.
6. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) constructed their participant sample from residents who had fulfilled the criteria of attached or non-attached, in a questionnaire on place attachment from a previous study. The sample consisted of those whose scores fell at the extreme ends of a place attachment scale.
7. These themes are: distinctiveness; continuity; self-esteem; and self-efficacy.
8. In Twigger-Ross and Uzzell's study, both place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity were related to distinct forms of attachment. The former referred to the environment as a marker for past action and experience, whereas the latter notion related to various characteristics of places which are generic and transferable rather than specific places themselves.

### 3

## A Discursive Psychology of Place

In chapter two, I explored academic debate on attachment to place versus residential mobility. I argued that claims made by social theorists and environmental psychologists alike have arisen through their rhetorical orientation to constructing the need for rootedness as factual and 'out-there'. By taking this position in the debate these theorists and researchers have ended up reproducing sedentarised identities as the norm and pathologising nomadic identities.

I also examined sociological and human geographical research on relations between New Travellers and their sedentary counterparts. Here, I argued that this work acknowledges an ideology of rootedness implicit in contests over the meaning of places such as Stonehenge, the countryside through examination of events and people labelled out-of-place. Although recognised as a contested concept, the sedentary norm was conceived as an established norm, a template for understanding. In other words by talking about the sedentary norm or the concepts that represent it, it is unconsciously assumed that the reader knows perfectly well what 'it' is, even though as a political object 'it' does not really exist.

Consistent with following this discursive regime of 'realist' rhetoric (Shotter, 1993a) the majority of these social science researchers have treated their discursive materials (for example essays, interviews, surveys, media discourse and Parliamentary speeches) as how people 'see' things. Even when the meanings of places were argued to be historically and socially constructed (Cresswell, 1996) the task of describing the ways that places were socially constructed was not addressed. These approaches have obscured the possibility



that place discourse may be a discursively occasioned, action-oriented and jointly constructed resource through which a world of particular specific scenes is accomplished. Moreover they have obscured the possibility that the sedentary norm comes to make sense only as it is developed through argumentation.

Whilst I do not wish to enter the debate on attachment to place versus residential mobility myself, or propose why New Travellers have inspired such a hostile reaction from their sedentary counterparts, I *do* wish to explore the nature of the rhetorical and discursive processes involved in place discourse and the social practices these may be part of. In this chapter then, I begin by reviewing past research by Tuan (1980, 1991), Sarbin (1983), Gutting (1996) and Devine-Wright and Lyons (1997), which has addressed the role of language in the making of place. In light of the limitations of this work I then propose a discursive psychology of place, mostly drawing on the line of thinking commonly referred to as *discourse analysis* (Potter, 1996b, 1997a, b; Potter, Edwards & Wetherell, 1993; Potter & Wetherell, 1987, 1995a; Potter, Wetherell, Gill & Edwards, 1990). The chapter starts to lay out a scheme for understanding the operation of place discourse. Here I argue for the importance of topicalising place especially in studies of conflict as illustrated by the work of Dixon and his colleagues. In developing method I urge for a reconsideration of valuable past conversation-analytic work such as Schegloff's (1972) *Formulating place* and consideration of other related areas such as Mieke Bal's (1985) notes on space and place in narrative analysis. The purpose served by this chapter is to act as a framework and introduction to the analytic and discussion chapters.

### 3.1 The role of language in the making of place

#### 3.1.1 Humanist geography and the making of place

Like Relph (1976), humanist geographer, Tuan (1974, 1980, 1991) has also provided attachment research with important theoretical concepts developed from Heidegger's idea of place-belonging. Like both Heidegger and Relph, Tuan's arguments were a response to contemporary anxiety about the quality of lived environments. However unlike the

former, Tuan distinguished between the phenomena of, 'rootedness' and 'sense of place': 'Rootedness implies being at home in an unself-conscious way. Sense of place, on the other hand, implies a certain distance between self and place that allows the self to appreciate a place' (1980, p. 4). These notions are similar to the deep and shallower levels of Relph's (1976) concept of insideness.

As did Heidegger and Relph, Tuan (1980) suggested that we are nostalgic for rootedness, which the latter decreed as an 'irretrievable Eden' (p. 4). However, Tuan (1980) argued that developing a sense of place was 'within the realm of the possible' (p. 4):

There are deliberative acts of creating and maintaining place for which speech, gesture and the making of things are the common means. Words have great power in creating place

(Tuan, 1980, p. 6)

In support of this argument, Tuan cited real-world examples of the role of creative human practices such as storytelling, songs and rituals. Tuan (1980) also underlined the capacity of built objects to create places: 'A built object organises space, transforming it into a new place' (p. 6). In focusing on the role of language in the making of place, Tuan's work brings to mind post-structuralist work on realism in formal literary texts (Barthes, 1974; Foucault, 1977). Yet unlike post-structuralist approaches, the voluntarism inherent in the humanist position draws attention away from the social and political contexts in which it is produced, towards the creative acts of making and building.

In fact narrative appears to be a popular analytic handle for investigating place discourse. For example, Sarbin (1983) proposed an 'action framework' as an alternative to Proshansky *et al.*'s (1983) mentalistic framework for how we impart emotion and personality to places. Although sharing the position taken by Proshansky *et al.* (1983), that personal constructions work up place-identities, Sarbin argued for narrative as an organising principle that might structure their formation and maintenance. Sarbin suggested that place-identity was determined not simply by the recording of experiences, but by their 'rendering' into an ongoing story. Similarly, later work by Tuan (1991) has called for the inclusion of a 'narrative-descriptive' position (along with linguistic and



socio-political approaches) so as to provide a broad overview of how language creates place.

However, Tuan (1991) himself admits that his paper lacks any explicit formulation of the mechanisms involved. This leaves the fine-grained detail of how places are constructed as 'out there' (or undermined), unattended. Other questions are not even broached, such as how to account for contested nature of place or the role of place-constructions in managing issues of legitimacy. Moreover, there are questions concerning how Tuan (1991) is able to make a crude distinction (involving 'power') between 'private ways of place-making' and 'public ways of place-making' (p. 686).

Still on the narrative theme, Gutting's (1996) analysis of a biographical in-depth interview on residential mobility with a Turkish couple, resident in Germany, proposed three dominant narratives as having guided the couple's actions. Gutting's study was based upon a theoretical framework conceptualising residential mobility, or non-mobility, as constituted through narrative. The notion of narrative here is ontological, referred to as, 'new narrativity', where stories are used not only to enable understanding of the world, but in turn, these stories are then thought to shape action.

Yet these ontological narratives may be criticised for their tendency to reification, that is they are treated as objects (Potter *et al.*, 1990). The theoretical framework that utilises the notion of these narratives as taking on the status of causal agents, makes isolating the narratives the focus for analysis, therefore excluding the interactional particulars. Although the individual is thought to selectively incorporate what is experienced, it is acknowledged that the stories making sense of that experience are said to be formed in the process of interaction, in relational settings. As Gutting (1996) argues: 'Place' and 'space' thereby become fundamental for the constitution and construction of these stories and have necessarily to be taken seriously' (p. 483). Although on first sight this appears to be a step towards dissolving crude distinctions between the social and the spatial, a note of caution is necessary. Gutting treats place and space here as extra-discursive 'structural factors', paying little attention to how these may have their effect.



Other problems also abound with this type of research approach. Firstly, there may be many inter-connected 'story-lines', therefore one practical drawback of the approach is the procedural task of finding the most salient one, especially considering some are supposedly resident in different levels of consciousness. This places authority with the researcher to raise levels of consciousness in participants and inductively arrive at the 'presiding fictions' (Williams, 1991). Moreover, although these stories are said to be formed in interactional settings, the part played by the researcher in the interview process is not included in the reported analysis. Instead, quotes from the interview are used to support the researcher's interpretation. Therefore, this biographical approach may be criticised for its 'type 2' treatment of discourse, in attempting to reveal a window on the deeper, psychological truth (Edwards, 1997).

The examples of work on person / place relations by Tuan (1980, 1991), Sarbin (1983) and Gutting (1996) presented here should be seen positively in that they all recognise the fact that it is through language that both places and our connections to them are given meaning. However, whilst these researchers have all taken steps towards making language the focus of explanation and analysis, their narrative techniques are not developed in a substantive way. For example in Gutting's (1996) approach, language appears to be more of an epiphenomenon, playing second fiddle to make sense of experiences 'under the skull'. Moreover none of these studies explains the fine-grained detail of how language creates place or can account for variability across versions of the places created. Nor do they acknowledge that versions of places may be contested. Yet this latter point has been addressed in environmental psychology in a study by Devine-Wright and Lyons (1997).

### 3. 1. 2 *Social representations of place in environmental psychology*

Although I have already discussed Halfacree's (1996) work on social representations of the 'rural idyll', I now wish to consider this example of work on the social representations of place. Devine-Wright and Lyons (1997) criticised Proshansky *et al.* (1983) for neglecting the social dimension of place-identity, most notably the *social construction* that



may be the identity of a place. Following Stokols (1981), Stokols & Shumaker (1981) and Moscovici (1984), Devine-Wright and Lyons (1997) argued: 'The environment can provide a set of symbols that both individuals and groups of people can identify with as well as representing an expression of identities' (p. 34). The particular aim of Devine-Wright and Lyons' study was to highlight contestation of meaning in peoples' social representations of place (cf. Canter, 1977).

The study employed a questionnaire to extract representations of four Irish historical places from two groups of participants who were defined as 'traditional' and 'nontraditional' regarding their involvement in traditional Irish activities. Correspondence analysis was used to interpret the discursive input, which did indeed capture different constructions of places by different groups, implying a more fluid conceptualisation of place.

However, there are problems inherent in Devine-Wright and Lyons' (1997) social representations approach. For example, the two participant groups were not naturally-occurring phenomena, but were defined by the authors (from exploratory analysis of socio-demographic data) purely for the purpose of the investigation. As argued by Potter and Wetherell (1987), 'this *presupposes* the correctness of the notion that representations delimit groups' (p. 143, emphasis in original).

Related to this point, Devine-Wright and Lyons' (1997) group-making was not independent of participants' representations and therefore cannot be used as a clear base for their conclusions. Furthermore, to operationalise consensus, the representations themselves were measured by averaging responses on 5-point Likert-type scales. Although the use of correspondence analysis enabled a composite picture of each place and each group, this kind of procedure does not facilitate attention to diversity within groups. Therefore there are significant practical difficulties both in the 'proper' application and with the explanatory power of this approach to studying place discourse.

My own take on person / place relations is bound to a constructivist approach which I have already begun to propose in chapter two. Like the work of Devine-Wright and Lyons (1997) this approach can account for contested versions of place. Yet unlike previous

work it can also account for variability between and within versions. It also offers a method that allows the analyst to ‘enter arguments about the meanings that are actually constructed, and what they are actually used to do’ (Potter, 1997a, p. 60). This approach is known as discursive psychology and in the sections that follow I introduce the background and main themes that define it. I then move on to expand on how it has been appropriated as an approach to place discourse and whether this indicates the possibility of a systematic study of the discursive psychology of place.

### 3.2 Discursive Psychology

The aim of discursive psychology is to ‘investigate relations between psychology and language within a study of situated discourse’ (Edwards, 1997, p. 10). I am using the term ‘discursive psychology’ to refer to an approach partly constituted by theory and methods from discourse analysis, rhetoric and conversation analysis. The main assumptions of the approach take discourse to be action-oriented and reality-constructing. Discourse here includes talk and texts, studied as social practices. Discourse is taken to be central to social life. Discourse characterises interaction and is therefore a part of most social activity. As Potter and Edwards (in press) have recently argued, ‘even where activity is ‘non-verbal’ (embodiment, physical actions and their settings, etc.), its sense is often best understood through participants’ discourse’ (p. 2).

#### 3.2.1 *The development of discursive psychology*

Potter and Wetherell’s (1987) *Discourse and Social Psychology* was the overture that began the ‘all-singing-all-dancing’ development and application of theory and methods from the broader perspective of discourse analysis to psychology. The end of the 1980s heralded the cross-fertilisation of a parallel development, Billig’s (1996, [1987]) rhetorical approach to social psychology laid out in his seminal book, *Arguing and Thinking*. The particular approach that emerged has become known as *discursive psychology* (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992a; Potter, 1996c; Potter *et al.*, 1993) or *discursive social*



*psychology* (Potter, 1998; Potter & Edwards, in press). An associated concern has been the application of ideas from conversation analysis (Sacks, 1989, 1992) to social psychological and cognitive issues (Antaki, 1994; Edwards, 1991, 1995*a, b*, 1997, 1999; Edwards & Potter, 1993; Frith & Kitzinger, 1998; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995; Wooffitt, 1992).

It is usual in situations such as this to begin with an authoritative and lengthy monologue on the intellectual climate that facilitated the emergence of discursive psychology. It is also usual to discuss the quite separate strands of work ranging from analytic techniques to empirical and theoretical research which have shared the descriptive term discourse analysis. However, this has been done repeatedly elsewhere (for example see Potter, 1996*a*; Potter *et al.*, 1990), perhaps as part of a reflexive stance.

My aim here is not to duplicate this work. I believe that discursive psychology has reached a stage where researchers should no longer feel a need to constantly reassure their readers that theirs is a bona fide position by extensively mapping out its historical pedigree. As the wealth and international flavour of conferences and publications over the years has revealed, the approach has been embraced not only in the UK but also in Australia, Canada, Italy, The Netherlands, New Zealand, Scandinavia and Spain (Potter, 1998). Therefore I shall use this space to focus on the intellectual climate that may be said to be associated with discursive psychology as it is in the present day.

The intellectual climate that might be said to surround discursive psychology in the year 2000 is a critical one. This critical climate has been produced and maintained both by those who support the realist, positivist meta-theory commonplace in most sub-disciplines in psychology but also by those who support related interests such as conversation analysis and post-structuralism. I shall concentrate here on the latter and return to the former in the next sub-section. At the time of writing, it has become commonplace to assert that there are three styles of discourse analysis that affiliate themselves with contemporary social and cognitive psychology: the more conversation-analytic perspective noted previously (for worked examples see Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998); a more Foucaultian perspective

(for example, Hollway, 1984); and a more synthetic approach which combines the two analytic frames (Edley & Wetherell, 1997, 1999; Wetherell, 1998).

These approaches each propound their own distinct methodological principles, a point which has recently provoked a series of exchanges; between Schegloff (1997, 1998) who has expounded his strictly conversation analytic position against Wetherell's (1998) eclectic position; and Billig's (1999*a, b*) critical examination of conversation-analytic rhetoric promoting Schegloff's (1999*a, b*) rejoinders. This critical dialogue has also partly constituted recent empirical work (for example see Speer, in press *a, b*, and Edley, in press).

By acknowledging these critical debates so close to home, I should like to make the point that 'scholarship is located firmly within the domain of argumentative rhetoric' and 'the traditional scholar, amongst many other responsibilities, also has the responsibility not to shirk the possibility of receiving and administering criticism' (Billig, 1988, p. 215). Any form of denying such internal debate in favour of constructing a united front must be doing some rhetorical business. Instead, I argue that such debate should be encouraged as it demands clarity and facilitates potentially productive dialogue with those advocating other positions.

What most discursive psychologists do agree on are the main theoretical features of discourse: it is constructed and constructive, action-oriented, situated and anti-cognitivist. I shall discuss these features in the sub-sections that follow.

### 3.2.2 *Construction and reality*

In opposition to traditional psychological approaches, in particular their realist assumptions, discursive psychology takes a 'constructivist' position on knowledge and reality (Gergen, 1985; Potter, 1996*b*):

Discursive psychology is concerned with how people construct versions of the world in the course of their practical interactions, and the way these versions are established as solid, real and independent of the speaker.

(Potter, 1996*c*, p. 151)



In attempting to describe how this constructivist position sits within mainstream psychology, Potter (1996a) uses the example of 'a clash between two metaphors: the mirror and the construction yard'. For instance, as discussed with regard to Simmel's approach to space in the previous chapter (see sub-section 2. 2. 1), with the mirror metaphor, spatial arrangements are thought to be reflected in language by way of descriptions, representations and accounts (also see critique by Soja, 1985). Because language is seen as reflecting the world, such accounts are treated either as factual or as a distorted view of the facts. This metaphor is a familiar one in psychology although here we should perhaps say language is seen as reflecting 'the world under the skull'. However it should be noted that a number of environmental psychologists have proposed more complex theorisations of the human-environment relationship (Canter, 1977, 1986; Ittelson, Proshansky, Rivlin & Winkel, 1974; Saegert & Winkel, 1990).

Staying with the same example, by using the metaphor of construction we can treat descriptions and accounts as constructing *versions* of spatial arrangements (this emphasis on versions is what distinguishes discursive psychology from other constructionisms). It follows from this metaphor that in constructing these versions we would need to draw on resources such as words, metaphors, idioms and a range of rhetorical devices. Although I have used the example of constructing versions of the world, discursive psychological research also studies how 'versions of inner life, local circumstances, history and broader social groups' are produced as part of social practices (Potter & Edwards, in press, p. 5).

However, as highlighted by Robin Wooffitt (1992), to refer to a description as a 'version' 'does not imply that the producer of the description is somehow deceitful or is deliberately emphasising certain aspects of the event over others' (p. 19). As Potter (1996a) argues, the construction metaphor simply 'emphasises that descriptions are human practices, and that descriptions *could have been otherwise*' (p. 98, emphasis added). To illustrate this 'could-have-been-otherwise' quality I present the following example regarding locational formulation. I have taken my example from *Funnybones*, a popular children's picture book:

On a dark, dark hill  
 there was a dark, dark town.  
 In the dark, dark town  
 there was a dark, dark street.  
 In the dark, dark street  
 there was a dark, dark house.  
 In the dark, dark house  
 there was a dark, dark staircase.  
 Down the dark, dark staircase  
 there was a dark, dark cellar.  
 And in the dark, dark cellar...  
 ...some skeletons lived

(Ahlberg and Alhberg, 1980, p. 1)

On having read this first page of the story, if I then asked my daughter where the skeletons lived, each member of this set could be classed as a 'correct' and 'right' response on some occasion of use (for example depending on the picture we were looking at), while others would not be used appropriately (also see the grown-up example in Schegloff, 1972, p. 81).

Potter's (1996a) point that descriptions could have been otherwise also flags where discursive psychology comes up against most challenges, that is, its common, although not exclusive, association with a relativist meta-theory (see Edwards, Ashmore & Potter, 1995). Yet to stay with the same example, the 'problem' of locational formulation is thought to be a practical one rather than a philosophical one. My use of the term, 'problem', here is meant in the conversation analytic sense in that what speakers say is heard by hearers as a solution, the outcome of the sorts of considerations that enter into speakers' selections of particular formulations (Schegloff, 1972). For example, amongst other things, the 'right' selection is going to be sensitive to the activity being done in the talk or text at that point in its course.

### 3.2.3 *The action-orientation of description*

In selecting a particular formulation of a place, speakers can occasion the sense of a reported event. To illustrate this point I present an extract taken from an interview where two speakers are co-constructing a story concerning a New Traveller 'invasion' of one of their local supermarkets:



- P2 And then they were eating food in the supermarket  
before they got to the checkout.  
P1 Take the sandwiches and eat it all=  
P2 =Take it there and eat behind the aisle.

(Interview 3: 10)

The thing to note is the way the description selects the terrain as relevant to the report; the episode is emphatically described as 'in the supermarket'. Having previously talked about general events in the supermarket café, the speakers qualify this description by selecting two particular locational formulations; 'before they got to the checkout' and 'eat behind the aisle'. These particular formulations provide for a set of inferences about the activities they are describing. For example the speakers have assembled their description of these activities in such a way as to present the New Travellers' conduct as disorderly (cf. other examples of territorially-based categorisation work in Drew [1992]; Edwards [1994, 1997]; and in Widdicombe & Wooffitt [1995]).

The above example highlights one of the important theoretical features in discursive psychology; that accounts and descriptions *do* things such as offering blamings, justifications, invitations and so on: 'The vast range of practical, technical and interpersonal tasks that people perform while doing their jobs, living their relationships, and participating in heterogeneous cultural domains' (Potter & Edwards, in press, p. 3). Lest we take this stress on action too simplistically, Potter (1996a) has offered a useful distinction between 'the *epistemological orientation* and the *action orientation* of descriptions' (p. 121). The former is related to my previous discussion of construction. The construction (or undermining) of versions of places as 'out there', for example, is considered to be an action in itself done by '*ironizing*' and '*reifying*' discourse (Potter, 1996a, p. 107). However, using the same example, the latter relates to how a description of a place may be used to accomplish a certain action.

#### 3.2.4 *Discourse is situated*

Accounts and descriptions are also regarded as being *occasioned* by the *interpretative context*. As well as the standard where's, when's and to whom's, this interpretative

context is meant to indicate that talk and texts are embedded in sequences of interaction (Potter and Edwards, in press). However, talk and texts are not thought of as *determined* by context or sequential position. Rather the latter are both conceptualised as features that participants may or may not invoke and orient to.

Talk and texts are also regarded as situated with regard to their *rhetorical* nature. This follows Billig's (1987, 1991) claim that rhetoric should be seen as a pervasive feature of social action and understanding. This means that accounts and descriptions in talk and texts are often designed to counter a range of (actual or potential) contrasting versions. Moreover, they can also be designed to resist other (actual or potential) attempts at attack. Potter (1996a) has described these features of descriptions as *offensive* and *defensive* rhetoric (p. 107). This focus on rhetoric also emphasises the could-have-been-otherwise quality of descriptions and the idea that accounts and descriptions construct versions of the world.

### 3.2.5 Action versus cognition

Discursive psychology proclaims itself as an anti-cognitivist approach upsetting accepted relations between language, mind and reality:

Whereas the dominant social cognition paradigm gives a story of behaviour produced on the basis of information processing done on perceptual input (e.g. Fisk and Taylor), discursive social psychology's narrative revolves around activities done through discourse as parts of situated practices

(Potter and Edwards, in press, p. 1)

Part of the legacy of *Discourse and Social Psychology* has been a steady flow of discursive studies examining how people talk or write about social psychological issues and categories of mind including the following: Attitudes (Potter & Wetherell, 1988; Potter, 1998); categorisation (Edwards, 1991); causal attribution (Antaki, 1994; Edwards & Potter, 1992b); emotion (Buttny, 1993; Edwards, 1997, 1999; Harré, 1986); identity (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998a; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995); memory (Edwards, Middleton & Potter, 1992; Edwards & Potter, 1992a); prejudice (Edwards, in press; Speer



& Potter, 2000; Wetherell & Potter, 1992); script theory (Edwards, 1994, 1995b); and violence and aggression (Auburn, Lea & Drake, 1999).

As would any challenger to a dominant paradigm, discursive psychologists have had to be mindful of potential criticisms directed at their focus on the world of cognition. Orienting to these criticisms, Potter (1998) has stressed that ‘moving *both* the *analytic* and *explanatory* focus of research from cognitive processes and entities to discursive practices and resources’ (p. 235, emphasis in original) does not exclude the possibilities that some activity is going on ‘under the skull’. Moreover, as Potter *et al.* (1993) have argued, an anti-cognitivist stance does not mean that the driving force behind the energies of discourse analysts has been to ‘replace one psychology of individuals with another’ (p. 384), nor is it to propose a psychology of language (Potter & Edwards, in press).

Although the somewhat preordained nature of this focus on the world of cognition has been the subject of critique, as Edwards (1999) has argued, ‘the overlap has been partial’:

When examining discourse, those categories of mind are blended, if identifiable at all, and they are mixed with a variety of concerns that have not traditionally been considered central to psychology

(Edwards, 1997, p. 1)

For example, descriptions of thoughts, feelings and attitudes are often interwoven between descriptions of actions and events. The non-traditional concerns flagged here have included the following: the study of fact construction (MacMillan & Edwards, 1999; Potter, 1996a; Wooffitt, 1992); the study of interest attribution (Edwards & Potter, 1992a, 1993; Potter *et al.*, 1993); the relation between interaction and institutions (Edwards, 1995b; te Moulder, 1999); the study of accountability (Edwards & Potter, 1993); and the analysis of interpretative repertoires used to sustain social practices (Potter & Reicher, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

The nature of discursive psychology may be seen in the example of Edwards’ (1994, 1995b) respecification of the cognitive domain of script theory. Script theory (Mandler, 1984; Schank & Abelson, 1977) views peoples’ actions as ‘falling into regular patterns, associated with particular kinds of social occasions, places, or settings’ (Edwards, 1997, p.



143). In much of script theory, people are thought to perceive the objective features of events. These features are then thought to be abstracted across instances into cognitive structures known as script schemas. These scripts are thought to 'tell people what to do in familiar situations' (Nelson, 1981, p. 90) and to foreground anomalies which, if regular themselves, can then become the basis for new sub-scripts. Event descriptions are thought to reflect these scripts, 'under the skull'.

Whilst acknowledging the explanatory power of the phenomena cognitive script theory seeks to explain, the goal of discursive psychology has not been to attempt to go beyond talk or texts to look for a regular pattern. Rather than conceptualising script schemas as templates for social action, reflected in event descriptions, *script formulations* are seen as 'interactionally-occasioned and rhetorically oriented constructions of events' (Edwards, 1994, p. 211). Edwards (1994, 1995b) has focused on the fine-grained detail of script talk and how that is related to the actions being performed.

This concern with 'micro' features of interaction does not mean discursive psychology separates these from 'macro' features such as ideology, social structure and social setting. If such features are made relevant by participants themselves then the focus would be on the way they are constructed in talk and how their implications are oriented to. The possibilities for action in scripted up talk are multiple, for example; 'constructing the sense of events, of persons, of their mental states, and of the causal and accountable bases of their actions' (Edwards, 1997, p. 143).

Indeed, as this example reveals, the thrust of discursive psychology has been towards building an approach that is distinct. Discursive psychology may be described as an interdisciplinary approach in that it is also directed at themes and topics that have lain behind other extra-disciplinary and sometimes intra-disciplinary boundaries, sometimes to the detriment to progress in psychology as a whole. For example, although the topic of place has been explored in the sub-discipline of environmental psychology, its relevance for social psychology has been largely ignored (Canter, 1986; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000). In recommending an alternative framework for researching place-identity processes, the



recent discursive work by Dixon and Durrheim has highlighted that there 'may yet be a meeting ground between social and environmental sub-disciplines' (2000, p. 40).

Alternatively, some of the most interesting studies have come about where discursive psychologists have examined the nature and usage of 'folk' psychological notions and common-sense in everyday discourse (Edwards, 1999). Discursive psychologists do not treat these as 'a set of false beliefs, woolly descriptions, and confused practices that need to be amended and replaced' (Edwards, 1997, p. 70). They have simply examined the discursive practices of people in ordinary settings (for example how people talk about relationships) using everyday psychological vocabulary and how they maintain 'the sense of a commonly shared world that exists independently of them' (Edwards, 1997, p. 68). In particular, this approach links discursive psychology to the conversation analytic tradition (see Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998; ten Have, 1999).

As argued by Potter (1996*b*), although certain strands of research have characterised discourse analysis for over a decade, they should not be seen as defining it. An example of discursive psychology being in a state of flux may be seen in the current fate of the once ubiquitous repertoire studies, with their broad focus on resources. These repertoire studies have been increasingly criticised, from a more conversation analytic position, for their diverting of attention away from the practices seen in the dynamics of the local interactional context (Wooffitt, 1992; Potter, 1996*b*). The development of discursive psychology is still in progress. I predict that new areas of study will soon be pushing back potential boundaries to include areas of investigation.

### **3.3 Introducing a discursive psychology of place**

As discussed in chapter two and previously in this chapter (section 3. 1), the term 'place' has occupied a central position within the discipline of geography (although place has also been a central interest in architectural design) where it has been synonymous with humanistic, experiential analysis (Relph, 1976; Sarbin, 1983; Tuan, 1974, 1980, 1991). More recently, cultural geographers have been studying the cultural significance of place.



For example in chapter two, I briefly discussed the work of Cresswell (1996) and Sibley (1995) who have both explored the relationship between place, meaning and power through an examination of reactions to New Travellers. It should be noted that these sub-disciplines have looked at place and places in disparate ways:

Humanistic Geographers have looked at places as both personal and universal centres of meaning and care, 'new' Cultural Geographers have tended to look at places as expressions of power or as landscape

(Cresswell, 1999, p. 226)

Within present-day environmental psychology, the term 'place' has been used as a central psycho-social construct. As exemplified by the work of Proshansky (1978; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983), Korpela (1989) and Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) which I reviewed in chapter two, 'place' has often been used with precise theoretical intentions. Although these intentions have also been disparate (cf. Canter, 1977, 1986; Stokols, 1981), they all aspire to the phenomenological argument that there are psychological links between people and the places which they live in and experience. Furthermore, they have all theorised these links as primarily a perceptual-cognitive process.

Environmental psychologists generally share the primary assumption that human action is situated and place-specific: 'Behaviour that occurs in one place would be out of place elsewhere. This place specificity of behaviour is the fundamental fact of environmental psychology' (Russell & Ward, 1982, p. 652). In this sense, the construct 'place' represents a combination of the spatial and the social. In fact Canter (1986) proposed that the psycho-social nature of place meant that it could act as a 'bridge-construct' linking the sub-disciplines of social psychology and environmental psychology.

The work of Stokols (1981; Stokols & Shumaker, 1981) and the study by Devine-Wright and Lyons (1997) reviewed earlier on in this chapter (section 3. 1. 2) may be seen as an example of linking place with a fairly recent interest in social psychology oriented towards the constructionist perspective of social representations (Moscovici, 1984). Here, 'the sociocultural meanings associated with a setting are viewed as the "glue" that binds groups to particular places' (Stokols, 1981, p. 396). This was how Stokols theorised



attachment to place only he referred to it as 'place-dependence'. Social representations theory emphasises the importance of representation, including discourse, in social life. Therefore, environmental psychologists have brought attention to the possibilities of studying 'place discourse' (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995).

However, due to the theoretical nature of social representations theory whereby construction is thought to be 'a perceptual-cognitive process involving the schematic mechanisms of anchoring and objectification' (Potter & Edwards, in press, p. 13), neither Stokols nor Devine-Wright and Lyons have been able attend to the process by which place discourse is occasioned, action-oriented and constructed. Examples of discursive respecifications of social representations theory may be seen in the work of Litton and Potter (1985) (also see Potter, 1996c; Potter & Edwards, in press; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Rather than reviewing this work, I offer two illustrations of how the study of place discourse has been made more analytically tractable using transcribed interaction and texts, and the tools of conversation analysis and discourse analysis.

### 3.3.1 Schegloff on formulating place

The most well developed analyses of place discourse may be found in veteran conversation-analyst Schegloff's (1972) study, *Formulating Place*. As Potter (1996b) has argued, 'like discourse analysts, conversation analysts have paid much attention to the way that versions are constructed and actions performed' (p. 132). The keystone of Schegloff's (1972) argument is as follows: 'When speakers in a conversation make reference to a place, they use some term or formulation of it. This has taken work' (p. 80). Schegloff works from the could-have-been-otherwise quality of descriptions discussed previously (section 3.2.3) arguing that there are several orders of considerations that are relevant to the selection of a location formulation and its hearing. The considerations in selecting a 'right' formulation are said to be: *Location analysis*, *membership analysis* and *topic or activity analysis*. What follows is a simplified sketch of these dimensions.

Regarding location analysis it is suggested that:

The selection of a location formulation requires of a speaker (and will exhibit for a hearer) an analysis of his [sic] own location and the location of his co-conversationalist(s), and of the objects whose location is being formulated (if that object is not one of the co-conversationalists)

(Schegloff, 1972, p. 83)

Schegloff (1972) gives the example of a call made to a city police department to report a gas leak in the home, where although there are questions asked about location, the name of the city is not formulated. This leads to the police hearing that the caller is co-present in the city.

The second order of consideration, membership analysis, has to do with membership categorisations and the selection and hearing of locational formulations. Here, Schegloff (1972) gives an example of when shoppers, mistaken as shop assistants, are asked for assistance, they may reply with “I don’t work here” rather than simply “I don’t know”. A similar example could be when pedestrians, mistaken as residents of a city, are asked for directions to a particular road and may reply “I’m a stranger here myself”:

Members who are asked for directions or information may see that the inquiry was directed to them because the inquirer identified them in a particular way and saw their membership in some category as ground for seeking the information from them

(Schegloff, 1972, p. 88)

These examples reveal some of the ways in which the relationship between members’ categorisations of one another and selection or hearing of location formulation manifests itself in discourse.

An important issue highlighted here is *recognisability*: Schegloff (1972) argues that, on the whole, in using place names and in asking for them we claim their recognisability. Recognition here involves ‘analysability’: The ability to categorise, to bring knowledge to bear, to analyse. What is interesting is that in selecting place names, recognition can be expected of the *members* of territorially-based categories, whereas those who do not share adequate recognisability of detail are ‘*strangers*’:



Persons in a place, or in proximity to it, may be expected to be able to recognise place names in it or near it, and they may offer current or former proximity, or territorially based category membership, as evidence, warrant, or account for their recognition

(Schegloff, 1972, p. 92)

We can perhaps begin to see here the grounds for Sarbin's (1983) argument that questions of 'who am I?' are inseparable from questions of 'where am I?' Clearly then, the thread that we have followed through diverse research traditions, linking the importance of belonging for the production of self, has been valuable in illuminating an important topic - a nexus which in social psychology has been described as a neglected area of research (Canter, 1986; Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Schegloff's (1972) argument is that locatedness can be investigated by 'showing that, and how, *participants* analyse context and use the product of their analysis in producing their interaction' (p. 115, emphasis in original).

The third order of consideration involved in the selection and hearing of a place formulation is an orientation to topic or activity being built up or talked to. Schegloff (1972) argues that several 'sorts of formulations' may be focused on here, one of which is related to members. These latter sorts of formulations may include forms such as 'at home' or 'at our premises' etc. These terms are said to 'have the special character not only of "belonging to" the member in relation to whom they are formulated' (Schegloff, 1972, p. 97) but 'as places where one belongs, whose presence there is not accountable' (*ibid.*, p. 98). The fact that these terms are selected by reference to such forms (these might include relational term such as 'in the garden' or 'outside our premises' that are transformations of these formulations) has taken work. This work is oriented to or partly constitutive of some activity. Therefore, by using the refined tool of conversation analysis, Schegloff shows how belonging can be accomplished (built up or talked to), but also hints at how it could be undermined.

The undermining of belonging has been the sub-text of a series of papers by discourse analyst Dixon and his colleagues (Dixon, Foster, Durrheim & Wilbraham, 1994; Dixon,

Reicher & Foster, 1997; Durrheim & Dixon, 1998) produced to highlight the significance of spatial constructions for discursive research on racism.

### 3.3.2 *Dixon on discourse, race and space*

The discursive work by Dixon and colleagues here has been based on the analyses of a corpus of letters submitted by residents of a small coastal town in the Cape Province area of South Africa to the editors of local newspapers. These letters were protesting against the development of Imizamo Yethu, a black 'squatter' community within the locale. Employing the methodological framework developed by Wetherell and Potter (1992), Dixon *et al.* (1994) identified an ecological repertoire that they suggested was being variably deployed to warrant residents' 'ethically and practically appropriate' arguments against the presence of the camp. The following extract was presented as one example that was said to draw upon this common interpretative repertoire:

Did anyone carry out an environmental impact study prior to all this development or are we just plodding along? Squatter camps now even being extended into Penzance Forest Station: Surely this cannot be true. Is there no more control in the so-called 'New South Africa'?

(The *Argus*, 3 October 1992, cited in Dixon *et al.*, 1994, p. 17)

Interpretative repertoires are thought to be accessible resources that can be selectively drawn upon and reworked in a range of different settings to accomplish action (Potter, 1996b; Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

However, in Schegloff's (1972) terms, although this repertoire analysis succeeded in showing that residents analysed their context and used this in the production of their texts, it failed to show the particulars of *how* this work was being done (a similar critique on the general use of repertoire analysis may be found in Wooffitt [1992]). In other words the generality of this notion of an ecological repertoire obscures the fine-grained detail where these particular justifications for exclusion are being achieved. Furthermore, an emphasis on use of the one repertoire has submerged the possibility of analysing other resources such as place formulations, category membership and occasioned social identities by which action may have been accomplished (for example one letter includes the sentence,



‘As residents of the Penzance estate, we have been affected by the squatter settlement, about 500m away, more than other persons living in Hout Bay...’). This is not so much a criticism of the authors’ analytic skills, rather a criticism that has been levelled at their chosen approach - repertoire analysis itself.

Dixon *et al.* (1997) take a step towards a more fine-grained programme of critical discourse analysis in their second study (which included some of the same material) where they noticed that the letters often complained that a squatter camp was out of place in Hout Bay. How the residents accomplished the ‘foreign’ status of Imizamo Yethu to legitimise the removal of the camp was therefore made a focus for analysis. Rather than seeing this foreign status as reflected in language by these descriptions, and treating them as facts or a distorted view of the facts, Dixon *et al.* (1997) suggested that the ‘foreign’ was being constructed in the face of the ‘established’ and that this entailed the following steps:

- 1) The application of an exclusive system for classifying place
- 2) The identification of an event, group or physical structure that transgresses this system of classification

(Dixon *et al.*, 1997, p. 329)

More specifically, four interrelated rhetorical strategies were identified in the letters as legitimating the removal of the squatters as a ‘reasonable practice’ thus avoiding any ideological dilemma (Billig *et al.*, 1988). These strategies were: The argument that Imizamo Yethu was a source of visual pollution, marring the aesthetic beauty of Hout Bay; appeals to the historical tradition of place where an idyllic past was set against a despoiled present; the naturalisation of Hout Bay’s aesthetic beauty; and impersonal appeals to the common good of Hout Bay as a tourist site.

By studying how spatial figures and arguments may be used in texts to make racial exclusion appear practical and legitimate, this study reflects a scholarly and innovative analysis. Yet despite this fact, there are some tensions within the analysis which, since they have become highly visible in recent debates, cannot be ignored. For example, Dixon

*et al.* (1997) support their interpretation of the uses of the first rhetorical strategy (visual pollution) by arguing:

It is important to realise that this story of Hout Bay is not an ad hoc invention exploited cunningly by disgruntled letter writers. Hout Bay has long been famed for its natural beauty. The town has been the subject of innumerable calendar spreads and holiday brochures, travelogues and picture postcards [we are directed to a figure which presents a postcard underneath which the text, “Scenic’ Hout Bay”, is typed]. The first governor of the Cape, legend has it, surveyed the town from the surrounding mountains and dubbed it his ‘little wooded Bay’ (the literal meaning of ‘Hout Bay’)

(p. 332)

This is a reflexive issue and concerns the authors use of ironising discourse to undermine the literal meaning of the letters and then the above example of reifying discourse (these anecdotes are treated as facts representing the ‘real’ Hout Bay) is used to present and legitimate their interpretation (see Potter, 1996a).

Moreover other interpretations Dixon *et al.* employ appear to rely on ideological or structural phenomena beyond the limits of the text. For example, in terms of the landscape of the settlement itself they argue that ‘the ecology of Imizamo Yethu embodies its ‘alien’ status in Hout Bay’ (Dixon *et al.*, p. 337). Although the authors go on here to qualify that they are not suggesting that the landscape ‘conveys a fixed order of meanings’ they do concede (in a spirit of explanatory adequacy) that ‘Hout Bay’s racially divided geography structures the context of interpretation’ (Dixon *et al.*, 1997, p. 337). Both of these points tie in with the central aim of Schegloff’s (1997) recent debate article, *Whose text? Whose context?*, which was an aptly titled plea to ‘convert interpretation into warranted analysis’ (p. 186). Schegloff (1997) claimed that ‘talk-in-interaction has an internally grounded reality of its own that we can aspire to get at analytically’ (p. 171) which may be prerequisite to critical discourse analysis. This can have a bearing within the study of texts as social practices too (Wooffitt, 1992).

I argue the tensions isolated within Dixon and his colleagues’ approach to analysis create space for the possibilities of a more detailed conversation-analysis aligned approach to the study of place discourse as addressed by differing degrees in Drew (1978), Edwards (1994, 1997), Macnaghten (1993), Taylor & Wetherell (1999) and Widdicombe and



Wooffitt (1995). In fact Dixon and Durrheim (2000) implicitly orient to this possibility themselves (albeit as a footnote) where they suggest that 'self-locations' (for example, 'As one of the oldest residents in this valley...') 'can be read as attempts to qualify the speaker as an insider - someone able and entitled to determine who or what belongs here' (p. 39).

### 3.4 Conclusions

To date, discursive psychology offers an extensively researched theory of language as action rather than cognition. It researches the social life - 'the business that people conduct with each other, displayed in their everyday practices' (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 1) - that these accounts and descriptions sustain, how they are built and fitted to the context of their use, and the resources they might use (Potter, 1998). My argument is not that discursive research has been blind to the role of place discourse in constructing versions of events, of selves or others and of the world, or in accomplishing actions. The significance of this thesis relates both to existing research on place discourse and to existing theory and methodology from discourse analysis, rhetoric and conversation analysis.

This research includes the following studies: Dixon's (under review) argument that boundary processes are becoming integral to research on the relationship between society and space; Dixon and colleagues' (Dixon *et al.*, 1994; Dixon *et al.*, 1997; Durrheim & Dixon, 1998) work on the ideological constructions of space and place; Paul Drew (1978) on the production of descriptions of scenes to achieve accusations in cross-examination; Phil Macnaghten (1993) on how the category of 'nature' was constructed in a public inquiry concerning a planning inquiry for a tip to be sited on the outskirts of a city; Schegloff (1972) on 'location formulations' as conversational practices; and Stephanie Taylor and Margaret Wetherell (1999) on the use of time and place constructions as a discursive resource in speakers' identity work.

Likewise, many of the social categories that have been investigated by discursive researchers, such as Jonathan Potter and Steve Reicher's (1987) study of the use of the

category 'community' and the notion of 'community relations' in accounts of the 1980 St. Paul's riot in Bristol and Billig's (1995) study of 'nationhood', are bound-up with notions of place. Categorisation has been reinterpreted as a social practice in the 'range of topics, devices and resources that participants can use in the performance of communicative acts' (Edwards, 1991, p. 516). Place, therefore, may be considered as a category for talking and part of peoples' practices (Edwards, 1991).

This geographical dimension in discursive work may also be recovered in the use of spatial metaphors in theorising about constructionism where challenging of fixed identities and categories has become *de rigeur*. It is not surprising therefore that these metaphors draw upon the rhetoric of mobility and detachment from place. Examples include, in cultural psychology, Jerome Bruner's (1990) concept of the 'distributed self', and the critical discourse analysts' notion of 'positioning' (Davies & Harré, 1990).

The existing research on place discourse has identified that the study of place categories in situated discourse is an exciting and distinctive area. Developing high quality analyses in this area will be welcomed for providing further empirical study '...both on how discourse works, in detail and in context, and also on the functionally oriented design of verbal categories' (Edwards, 1999, p. 288). Moreover, whilst being careful to avoid the implicit assumption that non-place discourse is less likely to be a part of peoples' practices, the analytic and discussion chapters of this thesis entertain the possibilities of a discursive psychology of place, where references to place are flexibly specifiable and action-performative, on and for the occasions when they are used. In chapter four, I introduce *why* and detail *how* I generated the range of materials used in this study. Without any further delay it is to these issues that I will now turn.



## 4

### **Research Materials and Procedure**

In the previous chapter I outlined the key theoretical principles of discursive psychology and proposed how a discursive psychology of place would enable me to explore the occasioned, rhetorical and action-oriented nature of place discourse. The primary concern of this research project is to examine accounts concerning New Travellers. Therefore, the aim of this transitional chapter is to discuss the ethical, theoretical and practical considerations involved in the generation of my research materials. In writing this chapter I have adopted a reflexive style throughout to highlight this conscious process of deliberation.

The materials on which this research project is based comprise a mixture of talk and texts derived from different settings. The materials were: Two transcripts of talk-in-interaction from two, one hour long focus group discussions held with 11 police officers altogether (five attended the first group and six attended the second group) in February, 1996, and myself as moderator; six transcripts of talk-in-interaction from six face-to-face semi-structured interviews held with seven landowners or their representatives (in one case the interview involved myself and two respondents) between November 1998 and January 1999; a corpus of 19 letters sent to the editors of local newspapers in June 1994; and a corpus of 13 private letters of complaint sent to local council officials (dates unknown). To differing degrees I have therefore examined the arguments of 50 people.

The first section justifies the mixture of materials chosen - focus groups, interviews and a corpus of public and private letters - to generate both conversational and textual data. I deal with each choice of material in a separate section and deliberate their ethical

and practical suitability for inclusion in this discourse-based project. I also outline and critique the specific procedures which have generated this material, which is to act as the bedrock for the three analytic chapters that follow. Finally because discursive psychology has adopted an 'anti-methodological' stance (it makes no claims to having a specific analytic method), I discuss how its broad theoretical framework enabled me to focus attention on the constructive and functional dimensions of my material (Potter & Wetherell, 1997).

The aim of this study is to examine talk and texts about New Travellers by approaching the concept of 'discourse' intrinsically; 'not as a secondary route to things 'beyond' the text like events, attitudes or cognitive processes' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 160). I decided that taking a discourse analytic approach would enable me to examine discourse about New Travellers and make analytic claims as to whether resources, such as place and identity constructions, might play an active part in reproducing an ideological context that legitimates exclusionary practices. Potter (1997*b*) has argued that ideological critique is one of the central themes in discourse and rhetoric work. For example, it is capable of demonstrating how issues of legitimacy are accomplished. From a discursive approach, 'social structure becomes part of interaction as it is worked up, invoked and reworked' (Potter, 1997*a*, p. 147).

#### 4.1 Mixing materials

As stated by Potter (1996*b*) 'discourse analysts sometimes collect a wide range of materials' (p. 134). This can be done not necessarily to boost sample size or generalisability in the traditional sense, but to facilitate an analysis of competing descriptions of the same phenomena, in this case New Travellers. Even in the year 2000, in discursive work, the process of transcription and preliminary coding is *still* labour-intensive, and a small number of interviews can yield a large amount of talk and hopefully some interesting phenomena (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). A number of classic studies such as Dorothy Smith's (1978) *'K' is Mentally Ill*, have even been based on a single text



(Potter & Wetherell, 1987). I aimed to make my own sample size large enough to make some general points about place constructions (which are omnipresent in most talk and texts) but was also governed by what was available.

Concerning generalisability, the focus is on the details in content and organisation of the discourse rather than the persons behind it (Potter, 1998*b*). Along these lines it is not important that due to the nature of the corpus of public and private letters, I was largely unaware whether the correspondents were male or female or what age they were, unless these points were oriented to in the texts themselves. My point is that in this type of conversation-analytic / discursive work, it is usual to only focus on points of context that participants make relevant themselves (cf. Schegloff, 1997).

My interest in place discourse came out of preliminary analyses of the first set of materials. In the words of Potter and Edwards (in press) I wanted to start with the materials rather than a prior hypothesis and ‘allow such phenomena into the analysis’ (p. 9). The materials used in this project were generated / collected at different stages of my research. Initially, my study advanced by incorporating the findings from preliminary analyses of the focus group data into the next stage of my research. In other words, as an intermediate stage, I looked over the data generated for common themes before making a decision about my interview schedule. An example of this cyclical method may be seen in the approach taken by Wendy Hollway (1989):

Throughout the process of data collection and analysis, I was evolving the theoretical framework which fed back to inform both my analysis of data and the way in which I generated discussion with my participants.

(p. 4)

Obviously, I had no part in constructing the content or organisation of the letters, they may be considered as naturalistic materials (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1995*b*) and as such, not part of this cyclical strategy.

This kind of strategy bears some resemblance to the idea of triangulation, although not a true one. The strategy of triangulation was originally conceived as a tool to aid the

traditional researcher in the search for consistency and finding the 'truth' of a problem (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). However, the authors argue from their own experience that;

the close study of documents and accounts from different sources and settings *compounds* rather than reduces the variability between participants' claims and descriptions

(Potter & Wetherell, p. 64, emphasis in original).

Discourse analysts find more analytic leverage in variation than consistency therefore it would appear that my use of different materials, some contrived and some naturalistic was a propitious choice.

Although I felt persuaded that this approach should yield greater analytic leverage, I was also aware that I risked finding inconsistent, contradictory or unexpected results. I prepared myself for this possibility in that I may have to develop new explanatory hunches. However, I felt that my own data triangulation was complementary from a substantive analytic point of view as well as being suitable for answering the research questions. The variety of materials in my study both ensured that the data generated was not some peculiarity of one set of materials, whilst offering differing degrees of detail. In the sections that follow, I justify my choice of materials and procedures with an appropriate rationale in each case.

## 4.2 The focus group discussions

The aim of this section is to consider my use of focus group discussions as a method for asking questions and generating qualitative data. Firstly, I discuss why I chose this specific method. Secondly, I present a detailed description of the procedure followed and discuss my questioning route and steps towards analysis.

### 4.2.1 *What are focus group discussions?*

Focus group discussions are like group discussions. A moderator guides the discussion while a small group discusses the pre-determined set of topics that the interviewer raises. What the participants say during their discussions are the essential data. Focus group



discussions are considered to be a qualitative research method and although they are 'not like a casual conversation between friends' (Myers & Macnaghten, 1999, p. 87), because the moderator has a degree of control, and the group may orient their talk through that person, they can be analysed as talk:

On the other hand, participants in focus group discussions raise and shift topics, agree and disagree, select speakers and interrupt them, laugh and fall silent, in ways that they would in ordinary conversation.

(Myers & Macnaghten, 1999, p. 87)

Yet the absence of the focus group method from the majority of psychological textbooks on qualitative researching is notable. One reason for this absence may be that until very recently, focus groups were the stuff of business and marketing. Since the 1980's however, focus group discussions have become increasingly popular among social science researchers (Fontana & Frey, 1994). In psychology, the merits of focus group discussions are beginning to be discussed in the fields of health (Harrison & Barlow, 1995), education (Vaughn, Schumm, & Sinagub, 1996) and feminist action research (Wilkinson, 1998b).

#### 4. 2. 2 *Why use focus group discussions?*

My study was dedicated to exploring the hostile argumentative milieu surrounding New Travellers. My decision to run focus group discussions with police officers was motivated by their involvement with New Travellers regarding contests over space. This has been well documented by local and national press coverage, yet to my knowledge their engagement with New Travellers has not been researched. My specific research question was to examine the discursive features of how police personnel constructed their opinions and experiences of policing New Travellers.

My reasons for choosing the focus group method were both practical and theoretical. Firstly, the participants were a busy, temporary population. Focus group interviewing requires far less time than face-to-face interviews with the same number of participants.

Secondly, as argued by Greg Myers & Phil Macnaghten (1999) 'the great strength of focus groups as a technique is in the liveliness, complexity and unpredictability of the talk' (p. 87). The focus group method is also distinctive for its generation of interactive group data (Wilkinson, 1998a). These interactions occur on two levels, between participants themselves and between the participants and moderator. As Sue Wilkinson (1998a) points out:

Interactive data result in enhanced disclosure, improved access to participants' own language and concepts, better understanding of participants' own agendas, the production of more elaborated accounts, and the opportunity to observe the co-construction of meaning in action.

(p. 329)

The issue of disclosure was particularly relevant to my situation. Due to my background research I knew that the reputation of the police had been publicly challenged in the past with regard to tactics employed whilst policing New Travellers (for example, press coverage of the 1985 'Operation Solstice'). I imagined therefore that in face-to-face interviews, rhetorical boundaries may have been drawn (Potter, 1996) and the content of talk guarded. Furthermore, I felt that if this situation arose, challenging my interviewees would have been ethically beyond my role as a researcher (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Instead, I hoped that the common space created for specialised group discussion would potentially aid a relaxed atmosphere and allow participants to ask their own questions of each other and either confirm or undermine each others' versions.

Being unfamiliar with 'police culture' (Fielding, 1986), I was unaware of any possible topics that may be oriented to within it. I therefore decided that the focus group method would be advantageous because interaction occurs between participants in their own words. This would allow me to observe a cultural vernacular in use, to listen, 'think on my feet' and explore instances of knowledge, formulated, 'shared and negotiated by the group' (Berg, 1995, p. 78). Similarly, a method which involves listening to multiple participants with a shared 'culture', makes it more likely that they will introduce their own agendas (Wilkinson, 1998a). Wilkinson (1998b) also argues that agreement and



disagreement between co-participants often results in more developed and finely detailed accounts.

As far as co-construction of meaning is concerned, the multiple comments, stories and descriptions generated by focus groups affords attention to all the important features of the discourse analytic approach. As discussions are usually audio-taped (and often video-taped too), the focus group method allows the analysis of the following: Discourse practices and resources; construction and description; the substantive content of participants' own meanings; rhetoric; stake and accountability and cognition in action (Potter & Wetherell, 1995a).

However, when used within a traditional essentialist framework, focus group method has an important limitation. Although the moderator aims to be neutral and to try to capture all the participant views, she or he may alter the pace of discussions, change the direction of comments, and interrupt or stop conversations. Put another way, Claudia Puchta and Jonathan Potter (1999) argue that moderators have to; 'manage a dilemma between the requirement that the talk should be highly focused on predefined topics and issues, and at the same time spontaneous and conversational' (p. 314).

By using focus group method within a social constructionist framework, I felt that this tension may be assuaged. Typically, social constructionists view talk and text as social practice, thereby placing language as the focus of the investigation. Therefore a discursive analysis would focus on this very process of construction and negotiation. This approach has been applied in the analyses of small group discussions (for example, Edley & Wetherell, 1997, 1999). Furthermore, some researchers are beginning to employ such analyses to focus group material (for example, Agar & McDonald, 1995; Myers, 1998).

#### 4.2.3 Planning

After choosing to use the focus group method, my first task was to do some planning. I wanted to run at least two, one hour groups of 6-8 participants. My only proviso was that participants had been professionally involved in policing New Travellers so they could speak from experience. My next step was to develop a recruitment plan. I began by

developing an overview of the topic to present to potential participants, deciding on a date and time and constructing sign-up sheets. I also began to think about ethical issues such as informed consent, steps that I could take towards accommodating anonymity, the promise of confidentiality and offering the right to withdraw.

#### *4.2.4 Participants*

Although I knew that most local officers would have had some experience with New Travellers, it would have been difficult to get a census sample. I decided that it would be more practical to recruit from a smaller sample. This smaller sample took the form of local police officers who were studying for a Social and Organisational Studies degree at the university. After clearance from the course co-ordinator, the group members self-selected via requests made by the researcher following their psychology lectures.

To aid the process of question development, I provided space on the sign-up sheet for the participants to give me some idea of their experiences. I ended up with enough participants for two 'natural' groups (from each class I recruited in), one of 6 and one of 8. I thought that two small groups would be easier to moderate and provide more opportunities for individuals to talk.

Due to my recruitment strategy these groups were not random, but made up from two stages of the course. Therefore the participants had ongoing relationships. This meant that I could capitalise on existing communication relationships. The participants varied in seniority between police constables and sergeants and came from several different geographical divisions and from variety of policing backgrounds, for example; traffic, crime and intelligence. It could be argued that I should have recruited more participants and run more groups. However, I thought there was more to gain by recruiting different participants and planning different questions to build on what I had learned. As the first line of exploration the two groups yielded enough ideas to go on to the next more focused stage of my design.



#### 4.2.5 *Developing questions*

The next stage in planning my focus groups was to develop clear questions. As my research question was fairly exploratory, it meant that the discussions did not need to be particularly focused. However I still developed a questioning route with opening, introductory, transition, key and ending questions to guide the discussion and capture the intent of my question.

I felt that to generate quality data I would need to have at least a little insider knowledge. I therefore sought the advice of Devon and Cornwall Constabulary's public relations officer concerning possible Traveller offences, police operations and hierarchical structure. I brainstormed a list of potential open-ended questions and identified what I felt were the most critical ones, beginning with the key questions, whilst bearing in mind the time-frame and number of participants.

#### 4.2.6 *Moderating*

I felt quite decided about moderating my own focus groups. As an experienced chair person I am practised at keeping an eye on group dynamics and techniques to encourage and elaborate responses and discussion. However, I did some background reading on local incidents involving police and New Travellers so that I could be ready to prompt or ask relevant follow-up questions if the occasion arose. I also asked my supervisor (who was known to the group) if she would assist me. I hoped that this would help even the balance of power in the group a little. At the end of the discussion, her presence also gave me someone with whom to have a debriefing session.

My final task was to construct my initial 'welcome and ethical protocol' speech and props. However in retrospect I failed to include three important points. Firstly, a warning about over-disclosure with regard to the fact that there were ongoing relationships amongst the participants (protection from harm). Secondly, every member could have signed a *group* agreement for maintaining confidentiality (like the individual one I have included in appendix D, p. 219) as informed consent was only verbal and not audio-taped.

#### 4.2.7 *Review work*

I could not pilot my questions and recruitment plans on selected representatives of my target population due to low numbers. Instead, as they were familiar with the context, I asked my research supervisors to look over and suggest modifications for the entire focus group plan including the selection process, the recruitment strategy, the invitation protocol, the introduction to the focus groups and the phrasing and sequencing of questions. I then ran the first focus group. If it had not worked I would have considered it my pilot group. Luckily for me I felt it was successful and was happy to include it in the later analysis. At the end of both groups I also left time to ask the participants for comments about the discussion, or to raise other topics. We were then able to discuss these issues (see appendix B, p. 214, for the final questioning route).

#### 4.2.8 *Conducting the focus groups*

The two, one hour groups were held consecutively in the social laboratory of the psychology department one lunch time in February 1996. As this was a normal college day for the participants it also meant that they were not in uniform. The space provided was quiet, convenient, comfortable and perhaps more importantly, away from their normal work environment. Participants were arranged around a table so that they could all see each other. Unfortunately, 3 people did not attend and numbers for the first group dropped to 5 and the second to 6.

Prior to recording, I welcomed the group, reiterated why the participants were invited and relayed the ethical protocol. Members were made aware that the session would be recorded, advised of their right to withdraw and assured of confidentiality. The participants used name cards to adopt their own pseudonyms for the duration of the discussion.

The session began with a brief opening question to each participant in turn asking name, rank and location. With hindsight, I would not have asked participants to reveal their rank as, despite my emphasis on free and open sharing of opinions, it may have served to emphasise any hierarchical structure in the group. Some participants may have



felt it too risky to disclose certain points or disagree with superiors. For example, police officers often talk of internal pressures in forces, 'brought to bear on those who fail to conform' (Frewin & Tuffin, 1998, p. 181), which may potentially come from all levels within the hierarchy.

As an introductory exercise, participants were asked to think back to previous experiences and to individually record the reason for police involvement with New Travellers, the kinds of policing used and the date and size of operation in a table provided. About 10 minutes was allowed for the members to complete this task, before I turned on the tape-recorder and asked each participant in turn, to share their experiences with the rest of the group. To encourage further elaboration I asked follow-up questions. If an important point came up I threw it open to the rest of the group before moving on.

I decided to include this reflective activity in the introductory category to allow participants time to consider their personal experiences. I hoped that having to write down these initial thoughts would produce a greater number of unique responses, elaborate their accounts, stimulate narratives and secure their participation. I also hoped that hearing others' ideas would then stimulate further thinking by participants. With hindsight, although I got the participants to write down their ideas, the serial interviewing style of the introductory exercise may have inhibited responses, with participants deferring to others' ideas or producing socially desirable responses. See Extracts 1 and 2, below, for an example;

Extract 1 (Focus Group 1: 2)

**P2** I've got several.  
All the same sort of things really...

Extract 2 (Focus Group 2: 7)

**P6** Right at the end, can't (think)  
[laughs] what more to add?...

Yet with a few follow-up questions, all the participants had at least one unique story to tell.

Moreover, if anything was said that I did not understand, I probed the participants for an explanation. For example see Extract 3 below;

Extract 3 (Focus Group 1: 1)

- P1** ...it was an inter, inter-pikey sort of argument  
where one family decided to take out the other with a shotgun  
**I** Right, what do you mean by 'pikey'?  
**P1** Oh, sorry, gypsy, traveller-type.

Asking participants to keep those experiences in mind, I then used the rest of my questions to encourage group discussion. These questions covered several themes; police tactics, the 1994 Criminal Justice and Public Order Act and the relationship with the press. From my background work, I believed that these themes all contained contentious issues. My initial questions on these themes tended to lead to a series of other questions which probed and followed up the participants' own agendas rather than following a strict pre-determined route. Thus although my research question was exploratory, the focus group was not an entirely free-ranging discussion.

Due to the participants having limited time, I had to bring the discussions to a close after one hour had elapsed. I therefore left 10 minutes to ask closing questions. These questions proved to be very valuable as they inevitably led to further discussion of the participants own agendas. For example see Extracts 4 and 5;

Extract 4 (Focus Group 1: 20)

- I** Ok, and is there anything  
that we've missed do you think?  
That I haven't asked you about?  
**P5** Individual attitudes maybe towards them...

Extract 5 (Focus Group 2: 22)

- I** Yeah. Ok um do you think there are any other issues  
that I haven't covered so far  
to do with the policing of travellers,  
that hasn't come out from talking about it?  
**P2** I think the, the area that was um  
touched upon was the ramifications of our policing.  
Which is um the resources that have to be put into this...



Finally I thanked the group members for their participation. After running my focus groups I had a short debriefing session with my assistant, isolating the most important discursive features and any unanticipated findings.

#### 4.2.9 Transcription

At this point I needed to create verbatim transcripts of both focus groups so as to make the discussions accessible to discourse research. As argued by Parker; 'the study of discourse is usually confined to speech and writing, and it always eventually focuses on the *writing*' (1999, p. 1, emphasis in original). This is because recorded interaction is normally transcribed and then analysed.

Using word processing software and a transcription machine, I transcribed the first focus group discussion myself. I included some 'interpretative context' (Gill, 1996), including 'messy' things like repair work and changes of gear (Potter, 1996b) plus overlaps, pauses, hesitation and emphasis, to facilitate my own analytic reading and allow the reader to evaluate its adequacy. To save time, I employed an experienced typist to produce the second transcript using the same conventions (see appendix A, p. 212, for a list of transcription conventions used).

These transcripts included my questions, comments and back channel responses as well as the participants' answers. Each extract has been headed with identificatory characteristics, for example; whether it was taken from the first or second focus group discussion, and the page number of the transcript from which the extract was taken. I refer to myself, the interviewer, as 'I', and the focus group participants as 'P1', 'P2', 'P3' and so on, to protect anonymity and to help myself focus *off* persons and *on* to the text. To ensure continuity, I then checked both transcripts against the original recordings and made any alterations that were necessary (such as anonymising references that might betray the participants' or others' identities).

### 4.3 The interviews

The aim of this section is to consider the use of interviewing as my second method for asking questions and generating qualitative data. Firstly I discuss why I chose to use this particular method for this phase of my research. And secondly, I discuss the production of the interview schedule and present a detailed description of how I conducted the interviews.

#### 4.3.1 *The interview in discourse analysis*

Interviewing, sometimes referred to as open-ended interviewing, has been extensively used by discourse analysts (e.g. Billig, 1992; Wetherell & Potter, 1992; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995) as a method for generating qualitative data. Here, unlike the more conventional structured interview, questionnaire or survey, the interview is seen as a conversational encounter (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995). To this end, open-ended questions are rudimentary. These questions are not regarded as 'neutral invitations to speak' (Baker, 1997, p. 131), instead they are considered as actively shaping participants' talk. The ordering of questions is deemed arbitrary and the researcher may use probes and follow-up questions to pursue detailed content information (Smith, 1995).

Unlike traditional social psychological approaches to interview data, interview responses are treated as accounts as opposed to reflections of events and processes 'under the skull'. The goal is not to measure the consistency of these accounts, but may be the identification of regular patterns in language use (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Variability between or within participants is not thought to be indicative of bias. Rather it is claimed to be an important indicator of the action-orientation of participants' accounts (Potter & Wetherell, 1995).



#### 4.3.2 *Why use interviews?*

The aim of this phase of the research was to examine the discursive features of landowners' accounts of Traveller settlements on their land. My decision to conduct interviews with landowners was motivated by their involvement with New Travellers regarding contests over space. Again, this has been well documented by local and national press coverage (for example, in 1986, the dramatic case of Les Atwell, the Somerset farmer with angina who collapsed on seeing the convoy arrive in one of his fields). Yet to my knowledge the association between landowners and New Travellers has not been researched. My specific research question was to examine the role of place discourse in accounts of spatial conflict.

My reasons for choosing the interview method were both practical and theoretical. The first practical reason for choosing this method was that face-to-face interviewing allowed me to interact with a specific sample of geographically diverse and busy people whom it would have been very difficult to bring together as a group, but to still converse with them about the same issues. Secondly, the lack of homogeneity in the sample dictated flexibility in the interview schedule. I needed to be able to ask different questions of different participants or follow up their specific responses along unanticipated lines that may be exceptionally relevant to them and their context. Equally, I felt that the interview approach would also allow me to follow any narratives provided by participants (Mason, 1996). And thirdly, in this second phase of the study, my research question was more specific which necessitated the generation of more, in-depth data. Such criteria would have been difficult to meet using the focus group method.

The use of interviewing as a method also matched my ontological and epistemological position; that peoples' accounts are meaningful properties of the social reality under investigation, and that a legitimate way to generate this data is to interact with people (Mason, 1996). I believed that the naturalistic technique promoted by the method would allow the participants diversity in their accounting practices and for me to actively explore and engage their interpretative resources (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). In this sense, I anticipated the interview to be an active site, and occasion for meaning-

making, and the data generated, as jointly constructed (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997).

Finally, I chose to use this method as the conversational data and narratives that can be generated afford attention to all the important features of the discourse analytic approach.

#### 4.3.3 *Planning*

I wanted to try to reach as many potential participants as possible who had experienced Traveller settlements on their land. However, due to practical considerations, I decided to limit my search to within the boundaries of Devon and Cornwall. My first step was to develop a recruitment plan. I was aware that a debate was raging over Government access proposals to the open countryside (DETR, 1998). The major countryside bodies such as the National Farmers Union (NFU) and the Country Landowners Association (CLA) were advocating a voluntary approach to access. Opposing this were campaigns such as 'The Land Is Ours' and the Ramblers Association's 'Freedom to Roam'. At that time, I knew that potential informants would be aware to differing degrees of these issues. I therefore located the discussion of participants' experiences of New Traveller settlements within this wider issue of access to the open countryside.

I began by developing a standard recruitment letter (see appendix E, p. 220), copies of which I sent to the Public-Relations and Regional Representatives of the NFU and the CLA. My letters contained the following proviso;

I wish to interview farmers/landowners/individuals who have experienced New Traveller settlements on their land and have either been happy to let them stay or have exercised their right to exclude them from their land.

I asked if the request could be printed in a newsletter or if there was any other means of contacting potential participants. I decided that I would travel to interview participants in their home environments to even the balance of power relations and facilitate a relaxed interaction. I also began to consider how I could adequately inform all participants about all the aspects of my research.



#### 4.3.4 *Participants*

As a result of my letter, the NFU passed on the names, addresses and telephone numbers of two potential participants. I followed these contacts up with letters and gained my first three participants - a farmer and a couple who were landowners. Post interview, one of these suggested another landowner to whom I wrote and had a positive reply. This participant however was unable to make any suggestions for possible contacts. After the limited success of this snowballing technique and follow-up calls to previous targets, I decided to cast my net a little wider.

I canvassed Devon county and all the Cornwall district councils to track down names and addresses of Gypsy and Traveller liaison and coast and countryside officers who had dealt with New Traveller settlements. As representatives of the land-owning councils, I saw these persons as potential participants. I should note that a large number of my calls here were treated with suspicion. However, after a period of letter writing I arranged two successful interviews. I also contacted a National Park and arranged an interview with one of the rangers. All the interviews were set up through a personal telephone call to arrange a day and a time for mutual convenience.

I was unconcerned about the lack of homogeneity within my sample. My research question was focused on accounts of contests over space which was the one thing that all the participants had at their disposal. Furthermore, the analytic comparisons I would be making were to be conceptual rather than empirical (Mason, 1996). My aim was simply to capitalise on variation.

#### 4.3.5 *Developing the question schedule*

The next stage was to produce the interview schedule (see appendix C, p. 216). As my research question was quite specific, I decided to tackle it more than once in the interview in the course of several different general topics. This way I hoped to be able to isolate some of the more general features of interpretations of contested spatialities (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Consequently, I began to think about the range of themes I wanted my interview to cover. These ideas were informed by background reading on the access

debate and academic literature on the sociology of the environment (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998). As argued by Billig; 'knowledge of the subject area can lead to insights which fall outside the range of methodological expertise' (1988, p. 213).

From this wider reading I chose four topics to cover in my interview; Government proposals, the countryside, access provisions and New Traveller incursions. This topic sequence was adopted in the interview schedule as I felt I could achieve a logical flow of interaction, funnelling down from one topic to the next. In addition, I felt that although participants had already agreed to talk about their own actions, potentially sensitive questions about exclusionary practices would be better placed later in the interview once a rapport had been established.

The first topic concerning Government proposals fuelled my introductory questions along with a personal question about how long they had been a farmer / landowner / representative. My next step was to construct a number of questions in each of the remaining topic areas. Again, the content of these questions was informed by my background reading. I decided to allocate twice as many questions to the topic of New Traveller incursions as I wished to achieve more depth on this issue.

In particular, I included the question, 'have you ever exercised the right to exclude people from your land?' as a 'generative narrative question' (Riemann & Schütze, 1987), as it referred to the main topic of study and was intended to stimulate the participant's main narrative. This decision was motivated by the data generated from phase one of my study. The focus groups had facilitated a significant amount of narratives/episodic work in participants' accounts. During the analysis, I had found that this discursive form made the processes of constructing realities very accessible, particularly the spatial aspects. I therefore wished to stimulate similar forms in this second phase of my research.

In writing my questions I had to manage the dilemma of trying to keep them as neutral as possible, to allow for diversity in response, but without being too vague and masking the area of interest. I anticipated that my participants might have different levels of knowledge concerning the access debate so I also constructed more explicit prompts for questions where I thought there might be some difficulty. For example in question 2;



What types of land do you think people should have access to?

Prompt: Those listed above? Developed, agricultural, grazing, forest, woodland, riverside, canal side, cliff, foreshore?

Here I have included a prompt in case the participant has difficulty with the main question itself. I also included some prompts to deal with potentially difficult cases where the participant might be hesitant. For example in question 14;

Could you tell me about this/these incidents?

Prompt: Who was involved? What happened? Why were they excluded?

The structure of the interview concluded with a set of ending questions. These contained one question from each of the previous areas and were intended to prompt the participant to pick up on any more points raised by the interview.

The construction of my schedule necessitated several drafts. Again, due to the nature of my sample, it was not practical to run pilot interviews. Instead, the draft question schedules were checked over by my director of studies. I also found myself making decisions about how to phrase and order the questions and whether they were appropriate within the specific situational dynamics of each interview itself.

#### 4.3.6 *Conducting the interviews*

I conducted six face-to-face interviews with seven landowners or representatives (two of these were a couple), in Devon and Cornwall who had had experiences with New Travellers. All of the interviews bar one, were conducted at the participants place of residence. The exception (at the participant's request) was conducted in a quiet room in the University library. Before the interview began, participants were invited to read the informed consent form that I had prepared. These contained information concerning the right to withdraw, the recording of data, the promise of confidentiality, steps towards protecting anonymity, and ownership of data (see appendix D, p. 219).

I then offered to field any questions concerning the nature of my research before two copies of the form were signed by both parties. The participants retained one of the copies for their own reference and for information of how I could be contacted post-interview if

they had any concerns. I retained the other for my own records. Each interview was tape-recorded and lasted from 45 minutes to an hour and a half. When every question had been answered I thanked each individual for their participation and asked if they knew of any other farmers/landowners/representatives who may be willing to participate in my research. At this juncture I also gave the participants an opportunity to present any further questions they might have.

As a co-participant, I found that the situational dynamics differed with each encounter. With some of the participants, even though we were complete strangers, an easy rapport was established after the opening questions. From those experiences I would be tempted to offer my support to James Holstein and Jaber Gubrium's (1997) argument that in our 'interview society' (Silverman, 1993) interviews are moving towards becoming a 'realistic' form of interaction for participants. Yet in some cases where there was not so much consonance I did find that the question and answer format became quite formal at times (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1995*b*). I even orient towards this in the transcript, for example;

My next question was how do you feel about charging for access if you were able to?

(Interview 4: 3)

Alternatively, during the course of interview 2, after monitoring the situation, I felt comfortable enough to move away from the schedule part way through the countryside questions and follow up participants' own agenda. The participant was a Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer and the areas covered were therefore extremely pertinent to my research question. This movement therefore felt acceptable and the data generated proved very useful in the analysis.

Reflecting on my question construction, I found question 5 in particular was problematic in several interviews. For example see Extract 6, below;

Extract 6 (Interview 3: 2)

I       How do you see yourself in relation to the countryside?

P       Well, well when you say me, in business d'you mean or what?



Many participants expressed difficulties with this question which stilted the flow of the interaction a little. As can be seen in Extract 7, I even began to orient towards this dilemma myself;

Extract 7 (Interview 4: 1)

I           And it's a strange question maybe,  
but how do you feel in relation to the countryside?

I tried to overcome this by monitoring the initial response, and if difficulty was noted, either repeating or rewording the question.

On a more positive note, I observed that the range of topics covered, although included in the schedule primarily as context for examining the general features of contested spatialities, also allowed the participants to air other related themes. As with the focus group interviews, if anything was said that I did not understand, I asked for clarification. The semi-structuring also allowed me some flexibility to tailor questions raised from the different positions offered, and using probes and follow-up questions, let myself be led towards different perspectives by participants.

As mentioned in section 4. 1, although against some standards set for social research this may be deemed a small sample, it must be considered in context. First and foremost, I was practically governed by what was available. Secondly, as argued by Potter and Wetherell (1987); 'if one is interested in discursive forms, ten interviews might provide as much valid information as several hundred responses to a structured opinion poll' (p. 161). Perhaps more significantly, I had decided that my attention should not be confined exclusively to one source. The data generated from the interviews were therefore part of a larger whole. Moreover, some of the important patterns that were emerging from the interview data were recognisable from the first phase of the study. Therefore I felt able to move on to the next stage of my research.

#### 4. 3. 7 *Transcription*

As my aim was to produce descriptions of recurrent patterns of social interactions and language use, I needed to produce verbatim transcripts of each interview. As argued by

Sacks (1984), the advantage of working with tapes and transcripts is that they can be studied more than once and others can access them and potentially offer alternative explanations. Therefore a good quality transcript offers discourse analytic research a degree of reliability (see Peräkylä, 1997).

Unfortunately, due to low volume and lack of clarity in the recording, this process was not an easy one. I employed an experienced audio-typist to generate the initial transcripts using word processing software. These first stage documents were completed on average in about 4 hours per transcript. Once again, my part as the interviewer was also included in transcript as part of the social interaction, setting the functional context for responses. As recommended by Daniel O'Connell and Sabine Kowal (1995), the level of analysis dictated the level of transcription. My analytic approach was to be mostly concerned with content but needed adequate interactional detail in the transcript to show how that content was occasioned (Potter, 1996*b*). The symbols 'I' for interviewer and 'P' for participant were used as a step towards protecting anonymity. To the same aim, I edited any obvious features such as names and place names that might betray the participants' or others' identities.

The second stage was to correct the draft printouts against the original tapes, editing the transcripts by adding relatively gross features such as words uttered with added emphasis, indications of inaudibility/doubts about accuracy, omissions, clarificatory information and repairs and reformulations. The notation used was simplified from conventions developed by Gail Jefferson (see Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

## 4.4 The corpus of letters

### 4.4.1 *Texts in discourse analysis*

The aim of this section is to consider my use of written texts as a source for generating qualitative data. Smith has argued that such texts are important for social life as a textual reality (1974, 1990). As mentioned previously, interviews have traditionally been the most common source of data for discourse analysts. However, more recently, records and



documents of natural interaction have been the focus of investigation (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1995*b*). In discussing the disadvantages of interview talk, Potter (1997*a*) has argued:

It is contrived; it is subject to powerful expectations about social science research fielded by participants; and there are particular difficulties in extrapolating from interview talk to activities in other settings.

(p. 150)

In mainstream psychology, texts have been considered important data sources as they represent a feature of the social fabric, which has been produced unobtrusively (Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Secrest, 1966). As we can see from the above quote, this view is one shared by discourse analysts. However, this shared view should be understood with caution. The assumption would not be that such forms of discourse are more 'authentic', but that they may be 'less affected by the formulations and assumptions of the researcher' (Potter, 1997*a*, p. 150) and offer more variation in accounting practices.

Discourse analysts focus on both talk and texts without presupposing a distinction between them, 'both talk and texts are oriented to action' (Potter, 1997*a*). A study by Potter and Edwards (1990) offers a good example of the study of textual descriptions which may have real-life consequences. Using archival material (both written and spoken) as textual data, the authors examined textual attribution (for analysis of a written account see Smith, 1978). The analytic goals were twofold. Firstly the authors were interested in how discourse was organised to warrant a factual case. Secondly, Potter and Edwards (1990) examined how reifying or ironising discourse was organised to construct motives and causal relations in an ongoing public argument. For the authors, both spoken and written description was seen as a social activity.

As mentioned in chapter one, I could have chosen to use newspaper reports or records of Parliamentary debates as textual data. However, the focus of my investigation was not on what Teun van Dijk (1993) calls 'elite discourses' of the press or the state. Instead I chose to use the voices of ordinary individuals in letters sent to local newspapers and private letters of complaint.

#### 4.4.2 *Why use texts?*

One important feature that these types of letters and news reports or Parliamentary speeches have in common is an anonymous audience. As argued by Edwards and Potter (1992), such an audience results in a need for these forms of discourse to be explicit, for example, with its complaints. However as Alison Young (1990) has pointed out, these forms of discourse are also distinctive:

Those institutions or figures which occupy a legitimated political space are deemed to produce acceptable truths which do not require criticism or scepticism, while individuals or groups which hold a less secure position seem necessarily to be seen as voicing merely a subjective view.

(p. 52)

It should be noted however that those in the 'less secure position' therefore have to work harder at their factual accounting and warrents to speak. More importantly perhaps, their ideological work goes more unnoticed. These points led the preliminary coding stage of my analysis.

I chose to use texts for this final stage of my research, hoping that the content and organisation of these documents would confirm or widen my developing thesis. After examining how issues of legitimacy were managed interactionally, I was concerned to see whether my preliminary codings could be generalised to other forms of discourse and other situations. If so, this move from talk to textual material would enable a 'bigger picture' of how the discursive features of contested spatialities were organised in the context of Traveller incursions. On a more practical note, these documents also came ready transcribed, saving much time and labour.

#### 4.4.3 *Textual materials*

One corpus was in the form of public letters to the editors of local newspapers whilst the other corpus was in the form of private letters of complaint to a local official agency. The work of Dixon *et al.* (1994, 1997) is a good example of successful research literature linking discourse analysts to the use of letters. The authors analysed letters of protest sent to local newspapers concerning the development of a black 'squatter' camp. An example



of a discursive approach to private letters may be seen in Tom Phillips' (1999) analysis of an inherited collection of love letters.

I put together the corpus of public letters myself from an archive held by the 'Friends, Families and Travellers' support group. This was a case study of 19 letters that were printed in local newspapers (*The Western Morning News*, *The West Briton* and *The Cornishman*) focusing on one particular month, June 1994, selected from the archive. These letters were the medium for a dialogue about New Travellers and the provision of Traveller sites in Cornwall. A proposal had been put forward that the council provide transit sites for New Travellers. The majority of the settled community opposed this proposal. However my sample also included some discourses of inclusion.

The corpus of private letters was sent to me by one of my interview participants following our research encounter. The corpus consisted of 13 personal letters. The participant had taken steps towards anonymity by removing names, addresses, telephone numbers and dates from the letters before making copies of them for me. It is usual to obtain all participants full permission before using private letters in a research project (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). However, in this case I had to manage my own ethical dilemma.

I had obtained an unanticipated sample of naturalistic documents which were eminently suitable as a source for my study. Yet I was unable to get informed consent from the authors who would be unaware that they were participating in my study and unaware of their right to withdraw. I would be making public what was previously private. However, Robert Emerson and Sheldon Messinger (1977) have claimed that letters of complaint have a crucial role in the process of transforming initially privately experienced personal troubles into more openly acknowledged interpersonal difficulties. For example, it is likely that these letters would have been read by more than one recipient in one department, and some of them were copied by the authors and duplicates sent to several other independent agents.

Therefore after much deliberation I decided that I would use the letters but at least aim to guarantee anonymity to the authors. To do this I followed the example of steps

taken by Sue Wise (1987, p. 52) who omitted 'publicly known information' and included 'misinformation' to help protect anonymity in research transcripts. The researcher's objective was to guarantee that a participant could not be identifiable to their next door neighbours. Moreover, Wise felt that anyone who was still able to identify them must already be 'in their confidence'. I therefore removed any remaining names and changed place names.

Other forums where opposition was voiced are referred to in the letters themselves such as, 'a lot of telephone calls and conversations' (letter to DCC:4:13), and the header '**Packed St. Erth Meeting Voices Opposition**' (letter to Ed:3). The monologic nature of letters may make them seem uncomplimentary to my previous sources. However, letters may be seen as compatible as they are shaped by interactional contingencies such as the response of the recipient and the extent to which affiliation is made apparent (Emerson & Messinger, 1977, p.128). To this extent the letters may be seen as part of a dialogue oriented to possible rhetorical counters, and the contents regarded as utterances (cf. Bakhtin, 1986). As argued by Phillips (1999); 'this will allow the analysis to embrace the wider context of their relating as may be inferred from the writing (p. 33).

The drawbacks with the corpus of private letters were firstly that the data source was incomplete in that it did not contain replies, for example letter 11 begins, 'I write with reference to a letter which I received from...'. Secondly that letters 1, 2, and 11 each appear to be one of a sequence, yet have been dealt with separately for the purpose of the analysis. For example see the extract below;

Extract 8 (Letter 2: 26)

You will be under no illusions as to how sick and tired I am of having to write to you

I should also point out that the content of either corpus of letters may have been subject to a series of selections and editings. I was simply working with the versions that were made publicly available or provided.



## 4.5 Procedure for analysis

### 4.5.1 *Coding by themes*

In some qualitative approaches, for example, grounded theory, coding is defined as, 'the process of analysing data' (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). However, in discourse analysis the coding stage is simply a practical move reflecting the management of data in preparation for the analysis proper. Themes used in coding may either be related to the research question, come from 'prior interests, knowledge and concerns' (Potter, 1997a) or from the analysis of participants' concerns. The latter approach has been referred to as a 'cyclical process' where the analyst moves between the stages of analysis and coding (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Whichever approach is taken, it should be noted that these themes are not binding, they may be changed repeatedly, spilt into sub-themes or dropped altogether as the analysis proceeds.

After the first stage of the data generating process (transcripts of the two focus group discussions) I did some initial coding by themes. My first theme was related to my overall research interest and consisted of coding all the occasions of talk about New Travellers and copying them into an on-line topic file. This was done by selecting all instances of the term 'Travellers', its synonyms and indirect references (for example, 'these people', 'they' and so on).

At this initial coding stage, my aim was to be generous with what I included rather than exclusive (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Ideas for themes can come from going through the motions of the research process itself, for example; moderating the focus group discussions; listening to the tapes, the process of transcription; and the iterative process of reading and rereading the data. Whilst reading, the aim was to familiarise myself with the detail of content and organisation, rather than reading for the gist or treating the texts, 'as a pathway to underlying cognitions' (Potter, 1997a, p.158). Anthropologists have offered a useful description of this type of reading as 'rendering the familiar strange' (Gill, 1996, p. 143).

During this process I noted that participants were recounting many of their experiences as narratives. But more importantly, through selecting and reading these

narratives, I also noted the prevalence of participants' concerns with location, which I decided to code as a sub-theme. As a way into this material I decided to consult established knowledge on narrative analysis. As recommended by Potter (1997a): 'One of the most notable features of discourse analytic work is that the best way into some materials...may be to consider *other* materials or *other* sorts of findings' (p. 152, emphasis in original).

Prompted by this advice, I began a search and came across some interesting material by Mieke Bal (1985) on narrative analysis. In this material, spatial aspects were considered to be; 'primarily interesting because of the way in which they are ordered and specified in the story' (Bal, 1985, p. 45). Bal then goes on to demonstrate instances of different devices or procedures used in spatial descriptions. This information proved to be very useful for my subsequent analysis.

I then looked to the discursive literature and found empirical studies of 'locational formulation' (Drew, 1978; Schegloff, 1972) as interpretative resources for achieving practical interactional tasks. The upcoming analysis was therefore guided by a continuing literature search, as a result of preliminary coding of the focus group material, which, in turn, directed the content of the interview schedule and the way that the transcripts were coded. In other words, this location theme forced me to think about the focus of my research and take it in a more specific direction. Subsequently, I decided to conduct a series of face-to-face interviews concerning farmers / landowners / representatives who had excluded New Travellers from their land.

Once I had generated transcripts from these interviews I began by doing some more coding. My first step was to select more occasions of talk about New Travellers and add it to the existing topic file. Next, guided by my interest in locational formulations and participants' orientations, I created separate topic files for two related discursive features for analysis; the space-related identity work in accounts of transformation of valued



places; and how New Travellers were presented contrastively against implied place-related norms. I then went back to the focus group transcripts to look for any instances of these features. My literature searching continued guided by these discursive features. In looking at descriptions of New Traveller sites I found research by Dixon and colleagues very helpful (Dixon *et al.*, 1994; Dixon *et al.*, 1997). The paper by Dixon and Durrheim (2000) on the reworking of place-identity was also invaluable here.

In the final stage I examined the corpus of letters identifying more instances of the same themes, but also noting two new features. Firstly, situated enactments of citizenship rights for the purpose of exclusion, and secondly how locatedness was used as a convention of warrant to achieve voice. I created new topic files for these instances then went back to the interview and focus group transcripts to look for and select instances there. More instances were identified of the latter theme, but apart from one instance in the focus group transcripts, the citizenship feature seemed to be peculiar to the letters. My final task was to conduct a further search of the literature to help interpret the two new features. In the discursive literature I found Kenneth Gergen's (1989) work on warranting voice very informative. In my search for work on citizenship I found work by Hall and Held (1989) and Shotter (1993*b*) helped me to develop my readings.

#### 4.5.2 *Analytic focus*

These topic files were representative of what I consider to be three overlapping levels at which a discursive analysis may be applied. Firstly, I would be examining how place-related identities were worked up to warrant the veracity of descriptions. Secondly, I was interested in the action-orientation of descriptions. For example I examined how descriptions of the transformation of valued places were put together and how they might perform actions. Thirdly, I had identified a theme where speakers or writers were making

relevant the identity of 'citizen'. These themes map onto the three analytic chapters to follow.

#### 4. 5. 3 Analysis

The analysis proper is concerned with function. My next task was to search the material as a whole for differences between the content or form of accounts (patterns of variability and deviant cases) and to identify any further patterns of consistency (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). As one might imagine, deviant cases are instances which appear to 'deviate' from a previously formulated pattern (ten Have, 1999). I allowed the identification of deviant cases to come from both my own and the participants' expectations (cf. ten Have, 1999). An example of this may be seen in chapter five, where two different participants orient to an occasion when New Travellers were constructed as being (almost) a part of the 'local community'. On a general level, when participants orient to such cases, they may be used to either undermine the original analysis or support and enrich it by confirming the existence of a normative pattern. As such they can play a part in validating an analysis as noted below.

I had to form hypotheses about the functions for which a stretch of discourse may have been designed and check them against the original context so that I could be reminded of how that instance was occasioned. Like Sue Widdicombe (1993), I tried to regard discursive features as solutions to a discursive problem. I could then attempt to identify the problem and how what was said or written constituted a solution. This is not an easy process but over the years that I have been practicing discourse analysis, I feel I have developed an 'analytic mentality' (Potter, 1997a) which allows me to read for the detail not for the gist, whilst avoiding cognitive reduction or trading on ethnographic particulars (Potter, 1997a).



#### 4.5.4 Reliability and Validity

Being located in a work environment where the majority of my colleagues are involved in the more traditional experimental paradigm, I have often found myself defending the discursive approach. In these arguments, more often than not, it is objectivity that is at stake, such as whether a reading is just intuitive or politically motivated. However, it cannot be stressed enough that discursive psychology is empirically based. 'It takes the analysis of materials to be central to making claims and developing theory' (Potter & Edwards, in press, p. 6). Moreover, discursive research *does* involve efforts to enhance objectivity by attending to reliability and validity which are built into the basic research design. These are discussed below.

Firstly, the reader has the opportunity to check the analytic claims being made about them for him or her self. With the focus group discussions and interviews, I have provided the conditions for this kind of check by; tape-recording all talk-in-interaction; and transcribing all of that talk-in-interaction (including my own part in it) to a certain degree of detail (see previous sections on transcription). Regarding the corpus of letters there can be no questions concerning the accuracy or inclusiveness of the texts as I had no influence on their content or organisation. Where sampling was concerned, I had no part in selecting the private letters as they were given to me as a set (although see points made in this chapter, section 4.4 on their incompleteness). Yet my sample of private letters were taken from a particular month and year, simply because in my collection of archive material, this set was available.

Secondly, concerning both the talk-in-interaction and written data; I have reflexively written up how I did my interpretative work (see this chapter, section 4.5); presented extracts of 'raw data' in the analytic chapters; included a key to transcription symbols; attended to the local interactional context in which those extracts were occasioned as much as possible; and made my analytic claims demonstrable by writing them up as fully as possible in the upcoming analytic chapters. The ability of the material to bear the analytic claims placed upon it is therefore partly available for evaluation by the reader in a 'confirmability trail' set up by the researcher (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

Thirdly, as argued by Potter and Wetherell (1987) 'there are several analytic techniques which can be used to validate the findings of this kind of research' (p. 169). One of these is attention to deviant cases, 'where things go differently' (Peräkylä, 1977, p.210), the importance of which has been discussed in the preceding section. As also noted previously, an example where I have done this may be found in chapter five, section 5. 3. Another technique is to check 'that participants' themselves orient to claimed phenomena' (Potter, 1997b, p. 148). In this study rather than imposing my own analytic categories, the focus of my analyses was driven by what the participants were making relevant.

There is also the conversation-analytic tool of 'proof-procedure' (provided by the organisational feature of 'turn-taking') which may be used to check the reliability of analytic readings (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Although not all of my materials are conversational, as discussed previously (see this chapter, section 4. 4), the distinction between talk and texts does not preclude analysis. I extend my discussion of this issue in chapter eight, section 8. 4. Finally, my analyses are also coherent with other discourse studies in the same area (for an example, see Schegloff, 1972). In my opinion, the best outcome that can be hoped for is that my analytic claims exhibit *apparent validity* (Kirk & Miller, 1986), that is, 'once you have read them, you are convinced that they are transparently true' (Peräkylä, 1997, p. 208).

#### 4. 6 Summary

This chapter has discussed my rationales and procedures regarding the generation of three different sets of data; the focus group discussions, the interviews and the corpus of letters. I also discussed the development of my analysis from practical coding to a focus on three themes which map on to the analytic chapters that follow. After generating these materials, I felt I had enough data for a cogent analysis. However, I wish to stress the point that I do not feel that I have fully saturated my inquiry. Instead I defer to Potter and Wetherell (1987) who have argued that:



Generally, there is no 'natural' boundary-line to be drawn in these cases, or no point at which sampling can be said to be complete. It is simply a case of giving a clear and detailed description of the nature of the material one is analysing and its origins.

(p. 162)

The upcoming three chapters constitute my analysis of themes identified from the materials generated for this research project. The first of these, chapter five, begins the analysis proper. Drawing upon extracts from all three sets of materials, I demonstrate how the theoretical principles of a discursive psychology of place can be analytically useful. The aim of the chapter is to explore how participants used locational formulations in orienting to issues of membership and belonging.

## Membership and Belonging

In chapter four, I introduced and justified the choice of materials and the procedures used in this research project. This chapter is the first of three analytic chapters that focus on the themes identified from coding the data. My readings in the sections that follow develop how issues of belonging and legitimacy are managed in arguments for the defense of rural space against New Traveller settlements. As I discussed in chapter two, talk and texts about belonging have been seen as reflecting an existential need (Heidegger, 1958; Relph, 1976) or, by environmental psychologists, as a straightforward expressions of; place cognitions or attachments (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983); or identity processes such as place-distinctiveness (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1997). I argued that such an approach fails to address the situated and action-oriented nature of discourse (Potter & Edwards, in press).

In chapters two and three, I talked about the work of Dixon and colleagues (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Dixon, Reicher & Foster, 1997), which has hinted at, and subsequently developed the idea that talk about place-belonging can be used as a rhetorical warrant 'through which particular social practices and relations are legitimated' (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 33). Dixon and Durrheim (2000) noted that one way in which this might be done is by claiming 'territorial entitlements' (p. 33). The authors go on to suggest: 'Mapping the parameters of this kind of 'warranting voice' (Gergen, 1989) might be a productive avenue of inquiry for a future discursive psychology of place identity' (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 39). Prompted by participants' orientations in the data generated for this project, chapter five takes up this challenge.



My analysis is coherent with Schegloff's (1972) work on formulating place, as discussed in chapter three, specifically the notion of how persons in a place may offer 'current or former proximity, or territorially based category membership' (p. 92) as a warrant for various activities. In the first place, it will concentrate on the ways in which complaints can be given authority by the selection of 'locational formulations' or identifications (Schegloff, 1972, p. 76) and/or building up 'territorially based category memberships' (*ibid.*, p. 92) which furnish particular knowledge entitlements. In the second place, it will concentrate on the way in which such formulations can be undermined. By focusing on both 'reifying' discourse (building up versions) and 'ironizing' discourse (undermining versions), this chapter may therefore be described as taking a 'double analytic focus' (Potter, 1996a, p. 107).

When I talk of membership here I am referring to what Schegloff (1972) refers to as 'membership in a "same community"' (p. 93). Previous research has argued that communities are socially 'imagined' in the minds of members and may be thought of as relational sources of both inclusion and exclusion, with spatial, social and symbolic boundaries (Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1986; Jones, 1999; Said, 1978). For example, as argued by Richard Jenkins (1996):

At the boundary, in encounters between insiders and outsiders, when insiders come to see themselves as collectively belonging - in the internal-external dialectic of collective identification - there is a constant interplay of similarity and difference. As symbolic constructions, each is imagined.

(p. 118)

However, discursive research has offered a different take on community where membership is relocated to the practical realm of talk and texts. For example, Potter and Reicher (1986) found that the category 'community' and the notion of 'community relations' could be flexibly deployed to encompass local residents with a specific organisation or set of relationships. This leads me to suggest that before the issue of belonging can be managed, people must first qualify themselves as insiders. It is only then that they are able to designate others as outsiders. Therefore, as well as looking at the rhetorical work of fact construction, I also intend to explore the activities in which these

factual versions are embedded; how boundaries can be constructed around local communities and Travellers placed outside.

Each section will take the form of close textual readings of certain extracts from the transcripts. As proposed in chapter three, in my analysis I have taken a conversation-analytic / discursive approach (see Edwards, 1991, 1995*b*, 1997, 1999). This has enabled me to focus on the detail of how factual descriptions can be worked up *and* how they are 'made persuasive' (Simons, 1990). Although the series of extracts illustrate patterns, they will also highlight different qualities of particular constructions in the form of deviant cases. In these deviant cases, the participants 'treat the case as one involving a departure from the expected course of events' (Peräkylä, 1997, p. 210).

Some of the extracts presented are noticeably shorter than others. The former have been chosen for their brevity in illustrating and developing themes, whilst the longer ones have been presented in cases where stories are produced in 'long turns' (Edwards, 1997, p. 289). Transcription conventions may be found in the appendix. I should also note that my aim was to produce readings of how writers or participants managed the facticity of their descriptions rather than criticizing the 'facts' they produced. As stated by Gill (1996) 'showing how a text is constructed is not the same as attacking or undermining it' (p. 149). Furthermore, I do not present these readings as either 'true' or 'definitive' (although see chapter four, section 4. 5. 4 on reliability and validity). Instead I see them as a product of the traditional skills of scholarship and therefore 'potentially controversial' (Billig, 1988).

### 5.1 Location as a domain of warrant

My way into this part of the analysis was also influenced by Kenneth Gergen's (1989) rhetorical notion of how categories of mind may be used as a 'domain of warrant' (p. 74). Gergen (1989) argued that references to mental events, for example, constructions of the form, 'I know this is true' are often employed as resources to 'achieve voice' (p. 74). Furthermore, that distinctions may be drawn that develop certain constructions of mental



vocabulary and undermine others as a means of sustaining various forms of warrant (Gergen, 1989), for example, 'I remember what he said, you're just imagining it's wrong'.

Similarly, during the process of my analysis, I came to see references to place as one of the chief means through which the right to determine 'who or what belongs here' was achieved. In other words, that *location* was being employed as a domain of warrant in the making of complaints about New Traveller settlements. Moreover, that participants made further locational distinctions, that undermined others as a means of sustaining these entitlements.

Gergen (1989) reminds us of 'the vast importance in social life of hegemony in world construction' (p. 73). Therefore, the generation of a rhetorical locational warrant is not only seen as a resource for the work of fact construction, it may also be analysed for its ideological significance in particular stories about everyday life. For example, Dixon and Durrheim (2000) have argued that belonging (or 'self-locating') may be worked up as an ideological position to determine who or what is in place and/or out-of-place.

In this first section I shall be arguing that rhetorical warrants may be achieved on the grounds of locational formulations. My aim here is to show how locational formulations can be constructed as factual or 'reified' (Potter, 1996a, p. 107), and that they can also be a vehicle for accomplishing actions. I then move on to look at how such formulations may be elaborated in contests over warrant. My aim here is to show how locational formulations may be undermined as motivated in some way or 'ironized' (Potter, 1996a, p. 107), again, as part of peoples' practices.

### 5.1.1 *The employment of locational formulations*

Examples of how a sense of membership or belonging is built up may be seen in the following extracts from letters of complaint to council officials about New Traveller settlements. Location names have been changed to help protect the writers' anonymity.

## Extract 1 (Letter to DCC: 2: 5)

I write as a concerned resident of the above address  
of the amount of Gypsy / Traveller activity presently going on  
in the Digton Park and Ride Car Park  
and on the closed part of the road called New Bridge Lane beside Tesco's

## Extract 2 (Letter to DCC: 13: 10)

Local farmers, whose land borders the camp site,  
are very concerned, as I am,  
that nothing appears to have been done to move the travellers.

## Extract 3 (Letter to DCC: 8: 7)

My house is directly below the picnic site,  
and the intrusion by the travellers has been very serious.

## Extract 4 (Letter to DCC: 4: 11)

- I wish to draw your attention to the problem we have
- 1> regarding the travellers' encampment in the road  
outside our premises on the Greengage Industrial Estate  
[one line omitted]  
We relocated to Greengage from Market Street,  
in the centre of Westport, in February this year.
  - 2> The reason for our move was to have a prestigious building  
with which to expand our business  
and extend our service to a larger area  
thus increasing our staff and therefore providing additional employment  
[several paragraphs omitted]
  - 3> Surely as they are parked on a highway  
they are obstructing traffic,
  - 4> especially outside our entrance where  
very large lorries have to negotiate turning into our premises.

## Extract 5 (Letter to DCC: 6: 11)

- The mess around them is growing.
- 1> This gives a very bad impression to any tourist or visitor coming to Hayton  
as Beechwick Level is on the direct route from the A3 (White Cross) to Hayton.
  - 2> I thought we wanted to attract tourists, not deter them.
  - 3> The people who live in the village of Hayton  
and work in Westport or Highmore etc.  
have to pass them every day  
and we are getting more and more angry  
at the lack of action being taken to have them removed.



## Extract 6 (Letter to DCC: 1: 1)

As our local councillor  
 you may be already aware of an unpleasant local 'eyesore'  
 at the end of Crighton Close (formerly New Bridge Lane)

In Extracts 1 and 2, the territorially-based categories, 'resident' and 'local' are selected as membership identifications. This choice of descriptive terms constitute territorially based memberships whilst also being used as locational warrants to qualify the writer as an insider or to speak for insiders ('I write as a concerned resident', 'local farmers...are very concerned'). However, the selection of these formulations may also be thought of as doing ideological work, to qualify themselves as insiders and therefore legitimate calls for the New Travellers exclusion.

Drawing on the notion of relationality, Gillian Rose (1995) has argued that the construction of boundaries help to determine identity by defining something in opposition to what it is not. In relation to membership, the inference is made available that 'the travellers' left outside of that boundary may be identified as strangers. In David Sibley's (1988) terms this could be described as 'the separation of members from strangers' (p. 411). Therefore, it may be argued that the writers are constituting 'a bounded homogenous community' (Sibley, 1988, p. 411) of residents or locals in the context of a specific practice, that is, negotiating the identity of the New Travellers as out-of-place.

In Extract 1, by what Schegloff (1972) would call a 'show of knowledge' (p. 93) (reference to home address, place names, the local knowledge that New Bridge Lane is a 'no through road' and the positional formulation 'beside Tescos'), as well as locating the 'problem', the writer is demonstrating 'competent membership' (*ibid.*, p. 93), therefore entitlement to speak and be 'concerned' is worked up: 'It is by reference to the adequate recognizability of detail, including place names, that one is in this sense a member, and those who do not share such recognition are "strangers"' (Schegloff, 1972, p. 93).

In Extracts 2, 3 and 4 (arrow 1), both entitlement to be 'concerned' and a sense of belonging is built up by the selection of the sort of formulation Schegloff (1972) might call 'relation to members' - 'such place is for a member, where he (sic) belongs' (p. 97).

For example, 'local farmers, *whose land* borders the camp site', '*my house* is directly below the picnic site', 'the travellers' encampment in the road outside *our premises*' (emphasis added). In opposition to this, in every case the presence of the New Travellers is constructed as a cause for concern.

In Extract 3 where the writer's house is 'directly below the picnic site', the complaint is of an 'intrusion' therefore implying that a boundary has been transgressed. In addition, the fact that the New Traveller site is referred to as a fixed geographical marker (a 'picnic site') is also significant in that it also positions the camp as out-of-place. A picnic site is usually thought of as a place for tourists or families to visit for a number of hours, not as a place to live (as the letter later establishes). The aforementioned locational warranting and the extrematized evaluation of the 'intrusion' as being 'very serious' both work to strengthen the complaint (Pomerantz, 1986).

In extract 4, a particular image is extensively worked up as solid and factual. Comprehensive details are given to produce the image and create the identity of a superior place - a 'prestigious building', in a superior named location, 'the Greengage Industrial Estate', serviced by 'very large lorries'. There is also a profusion of terms that are formulated by reference to this workplace ('premises', 'building', 'business', 'service', 'staff', 'employment', 'entrance' and 'premises') which help to constitute this image.

At arrow 2, rhetorical work such as, '*expand* our business', '*extend* our service to a *larger area*', '*increasing* our staff' and 'providing *additional* employment' (emphasis added) also maximizes (Potter, 1996a) and defends a particular construction of valuable space that is for the common good. These locational formulations all seem to orient to the activity being accomplished here (that is, a warrant for superiority of voice to argue who is in place and who is out-of-place).

Likewise, the description at arrow 3 provides more defensive rhetoric. This is illustrated by the writer drawing on the 'obvious truth' of the road as a public space, regulated by law. Notably this is a variation on the non-typical description of the New Travellers 'encampment in the road' given at arrow 1. The latter has been replaced by a formulation, that converts it into a more regular indictment 'surely as they are parked on



the highway they are obstructing traffic'. With arrow 4 we hear this in the form of an extrematisation (italicized), 'especially outside our entrance where *very large* lorries have to negotiate turning into our premises', a rhetorical formulation which strengthens the persuasiveness of the account and the plea for action (Pomerantz, 1986).

In Extract 5 the selection of formulations are again oriented to the activity being accomplished. For example, at arrow 3, the category 'people' is fleshed out by locating them as members of a single collection, 'the people who live in the village of Hayton and work in Westport or Highmore etc.' However, these 'people' are also related to a single point of reference, the New Travellers, 'they have to pass them every day.'

Yet the New Travellers are being located in what Schegloff (1972) might term a 'transitional place' (p. 101). Schegloff argues that transitional places are valued for being on the way to other places. Indeed between arrows 1 and 2 the writer orients to this value by stressing that the presence of the New Travellers is against the common good, 'this gives a very bad impression to any tourist or visitor coming from Hayton as Beechwick Level is on the direct route from the A3 (White Cross) to Hayton', using the term 'very' to extremetize the situation (Pomerantz, 1986). Dixon *et al.* (1997) have also noted such appeals to the role of a place as a tourist site, as 'economic pragmatism', in their 'Hout Bay' material. At the same time, the show of knowledge employed in this defence and the alignment, 'we' indicates that the writer is presenting him or herself as a member of that single collective rather than a stranger.

There were also occasions in the material where membership was under threat. Extract 6 might be interpreted as a subtle example, where reference to detail, including place names, may be used as the basis for an inference about the competence of membership of the recipient. The councillor is ascribed the territorially based category 'local' and the normative inference of knowledge about places. However, as does the general tone of the rest of the letter, the phrasing 'you *may* be already aware' (emphasis added) perhaps infers a degree of indecision about his or her competence as a member, indeed, as a councillor.

This section has explored how different sorts of locational formulations may be employed as warrants to achieve voice in the making of complaints about Traveller settlements. Specifically, territorially-based categories where entitlement may or may not be worked up by a show of knowledge or locational formulations of the sort in relation to members (for example, '*my house*') may be employed. The examples also showed that the selection of place formulations were also oriented to the activities being accomplished by the writing. For example, particular constructions of place were being defended which positioned the New Travellers as out-of-place (such as the workplace example in Extract 4). Finally, my last example hinted at how membership can be undermined or ironized. This idea of undermining is developed in the next set of extracts where I examine how counter-moves may be made and how further locational distinctions may be drawn as a means of sustaining particular warrants.

## 5.2 Contests over locational warrants

A note in Dixon and Durrheim's (2000) paper cites an extract from a letter sent to a local South African newspaper objecting to a black 'squatter' camp. I have analysed this extract as a good example of how others' descriptions may be denigrated by claims to territorial entitlement.

Extract 7 (Cited in Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 39)

To say that this settlement forms part of Hout Bay and has been part of it for a considerable time is arrant nonsense.  
As a resident of almost 20 years,  
I know what I am talking about.

In Extract 7 the text is organized to ironize a particular description argued in a previous claim as 'arrant nonsense'. It presents this version as incorrect. At the same time this undermining is achieved through locational warranting. Territorially-based category membership is built up for the writer. This membership implies particular 'knowledge entitlements' (Potter, 1996). Entitlement is strengthened here using a temporal formulation, 'as a resident of almost 20 years' to furnish a sense of concurrent privileged



experience. The implication of this construction is spelled out by a direct invocation of mind, 'I know what I am talking about'.

Therefore it may be argued that both locational and temporal formulations are being used as conventions of warrant to produce this claim to superiority of voice. This process allows the writer to simultaneously establish him or herself as a member of the 'Hout Bay' community and designate the 'settlement' as not belonging. Extracts 8, 9 and 10 show a similar process at work in my own materials. As argued by Jim Mac Laughlin (1999, p. 145) these extracts show that local battles may be waged between 'forces of tolerance' on one hand and the more organized 'forces of intolerance', on the other.

Extract 8 (Letter to Ed., *The West Briton*, 21 July 1994)

I would say to all these "do-gooders" that  
until you have lived near these people  
you cannot begin to understand  
the misery and destruction they cause.

Extract 9 (Focus Group 1: 12)

- P2     There was something on the news last night, wasn't there?  
          If you saw Westcountry television.  
          There was something at Liskeard
- 1>     And there were two people there  
          from the local community discussing it.
- 2>     One person wanted them moved,  
          he lived at Reckleigh behind this site.
- 3>     And the other person who wanted them to stay,  
          lived some distance away.
- 4>     I mean at first they were both described as local residents,  
          but it was clear,  
          the person who didn't mind them being there,  
          or thought some solution should be found,  
          didn't live directly near them.
- 5>     I think that sort of is,  
          the main area of contentions is;  
          'I don't mind them going there but not near me'.

Extract 10 (Interview 2: 9)

- P       I was down at Hillside the other day  
          and there was one of the people that live in houses
- 1>     (there are three houses there),  
          two of them are supportive,  
          and one of them is very anti.  
          So who has the most effect?  
          I have got letters, faxes, phone calls

- where the one who is anti is actually making quite a case,  
which is fair enough.  
You know, he's obviously concerned about things  
and these have to be taken into consideration.  
And because it is close to his land and house, it is valid.  
But you have also got two who are supportive of the people.  
Like, you know, they have got to have somewhere to stay,  
and have got to know them as friends as well as,  
so there is always both sides of the story.  
What, where I really have to sort the wheat from the chaff is,  
and to do that, what I have done is produced a form,  
which says, 'What is the specific nature of your complaint?
- 2> Do you own land close to  
or adjacent to where the travellers are?
- 3> Because what happens is..  
I mean I have the phone calls saying..  
This was West Torr Flat,
- 4> about a mile long stretch of road, with woodland either side,  
loads of laybys and a big picnic area at one end.  
And there was 30 travellers in the picnic area.  
And the phone calls were saying,
- 5> "Oh, well we like to take our dog up there once a month  
and we cannot go in there now".  
You know, and you say,  
"OK then, well, can I send you a form,  
because I have got to go to Court if we go for an eviction,  
and I need to justify it".
- 5> So you send the form out saying, can you state that.  
Quite a lot you don't get back.  
Or 'just because they are there' is another one.
- 6> So you have got to sort that out  
from the people who perhaps, back onto it and say  
well, they are going to the loo in the garden  
or putting their rubbish over the fence.  
Because some groups do do it, it does happen.  
So you have got to sort of see  
what you are actually dealing with.

Extract 8 shows the writer orienting to a counter position, that of the "do-gooders", around which the use of sceptical quotation marks might serve to question their motivations (Young, 1990). In fact the writer goes on to ironize this position of tolerance by claiming that the justification for voice rests on current or former proximity to 'these people'.

Extract 9 has been taken from a focus group held with police officers. Arrow 5 shows the participant orienting to contests over voice and how this is linked to the fate of New Traveller encampments, 'I think that sort of is, the main area of contentions is; 'I don't mind them going there but not near me'. This ventriloquizing (Wooffitt, 1992) adopts the



myth that New Travellers present a threat to the 'British backyard'. Its elaboration here illustrates the participant orienting to this general pattern.

The stage is set at arrow 1, the actors are initially worked up as both having potential warrant to speak authoritatively, they are both categorized as 'from the local community'. What follows is an extended elaboration in the form of contrastive descriptions of the spatial positioning of the two actors. We notice at arrow 2 that more detailed description is given for the first person, 'One person wanted them moved, he lived at Reckleigh behind this site'. This description includes a place name 'Reckleigh' and the location formulated by using the site as a point of reference 'behind this site'.

However at arrow 3 we hear, 'And the other person lived some distance away'. In comparison, the information in this description is much more vague. This lack of detail helps in the business of undermining the latter as a warrant for voice (Edwards & Potter, 1992a). At arrow 4 the literal descriptiveness of the statement, 'I mean at first they were both described as local residents' is being undermined. The warrant for the person who 'didn't live directly near them' is being contested.

Extract 10 is taken from an interview between myself and a council gypsy and traveller liaison officer. The participant was talking about complaints made against New Travellers in the area. The descriptive fragment at arrow 1, 'there are three houses there, two of them are very supportive, and one of them is very anti' is important as it gives a sense of membership in a same community, where competing constructions are offered.

Here we have a complex extended extract where I will be selectively focusing on this idea that distinctions may be drawn in the process of sustaining a particular form of warrant. At arrow 2 we hear the wording of the question on a form produced by the participant; 'Do you own land close to, or adjacent to where the travellers are?' This shifts a commonplace positional formulation, to an institutionally legitimated cause for complaint. This implies that in the context of complaint-making, legitimacy ('sorting the wheat from the chaff') is grounded in a particular locational formulation.

From arrow 3 onwards, the participant gives a generalised example of an illegitimate complaint. At arrow 3 the participant uses quantification, 'a mile long stretch of road,

with woodland either side', and an extrematised description (Pomerantz, 1986), 'loads of laybys', 'a big picnic area' to maximise the area in question as an ideal stopping-place. However, the participant also quantifies that 'there were 30 travellers in the picnic area'. The ambiguous nature of this latter formulation, as to whether this is supposed to be read as a lot or not many for 'a big picnic area', is then juxtaposed with a generalised example of direct speech embedded at arrow 4, "“Oh, well we just like to take our dog up there once a month and we cannot go in there now”".

This dramatic change in narrative level (Bal, 1985) indicates an example of Wooffitt's (1992) 'active voicing' of non-specific actors whose complaints are made untenable by the minimised calendrical formulation, 'once a month'. Because of the comparison set up between the maximised area and the minimal usage, the argument voiced is presented in a way which makes it seem trivial, the upshot of which is extrematised at arrow 5, 'So you send the form out saying, can you state that. Quite a lot you don't get back'.

This illegitimacy is contrasted at arrow 6 by a hypothetical example, 'people who perhaps back onto' the New Travellers' site. The participant presents this as a general version claimed (the people perhaps 'say') and includes reference to boundary transgression 'going to the loo in the garden or putting their rubbish over the fence'. In comparison to the innocuous nature of the previous example, this hypothetical illustration may be seen as the use of suitable points to argue for legitimacy. Wooffitt (1992) has argued that such formulations;

permit the participant to distil regularly occurring features of events and bring them together in a form which may not strictly represent the occasions of their occurrence in 'real life'.

(p. 84)

This extract is particularly useful as the participant reflexively invokes the 'ideological dilemma' (Billig *et al.*, 1988), flagged by the line, 'both sides of the story', between tolerance and intolerance that I have found to be at work in my materials. Here, the relevance of stake has been foregrounded. For example, Extracts 11 and 12, below, suggest a simultaneous affirmation and contradiction of this kind of intolerance.



## Extract 11 (Focus Group 1: 5)

P2 It's 'not in my backyard' syndrome isn't it.  
Then you haven't got the problem have you,  
and the associated problems they create.

## Extract 12 (Focus Group 2: 12)

P2 I don't think I'd want people camping on my front lawn,  
but it is very much the NIMBY sort of er concept.

The extracts above also orient to a pattern of stake in arguments about New Travellers, which in Extract 11, is formulated as 'out-there', 'It's 'not in my backyard syndrome, isn't it'.

In this section we have heard how membership can be contested from within a same community as a vehicle to ironize others claims to voice. In considering this fact constructing work as an ideological practice it might also be proposed that locational warranting is used to manage legitimacy and belonging. The next section of this chapter concludes my exploration of how membership may worked up and elaborated as part of discursive practices by looking at participants' orientations to a deviation within the patterning which undermines the binary opposition between members and strangers.

### 5.3 Deviant cases

The following extracts, one taken from a police focus group and one from an interview, provide additional support for my claims as they demonstrate participants' orientations to 'deviant cases' (ten Have, 1999), the rare nature of which is oriented to by the participant in Extract 13 (arrows 1, 'on occasion'). However, Extract 14 characterises the tolerance of New Traveller encampments as an instance from a pattern, making it seem more ordinary (see arrow 1, 'for instance'). As argued by Potter and Wetherell (1987), these exceptions are relevant to any assessment of the above as a coherent set of analytic claims.

These examples illustrate how participants used membership categorization as a resource to constitute a more integrated community. Here, I argue that talk-in-interaction can produce *degrees* of community membership. Although these participants still employ

situated description, here we see a concern with presenting New Traveller actions as normal and unproblematic.

Extract 13 (Focus Group 2: 18)

- P2 1> But you see on occasions you've had um  
not exactly a symbiotic relationship but that,  
2> the Rainbow Village down at er Liskeard.  
3> It was right in the middle of the town centre  
on a disused site.  
And it was almost like the Stockholm syndrome I think.  
When they actually came to be moved off after  
4> (.) ooh many years.  
5> Um quite a few local residents  
although they didn't like them being there,  
came to their defence.  
6> Which was quite strange in a way.  
I /Right/  
P2 The land had been sold, people wanted to come and develop it.  
7> It didn't hurt anybody,  
it was out of sight, which was more to the point.  
8> I suppose it didn't affect too many people=  
I =/Right/Yeah/=  
P2 9> =And the kids went to local schools even (.)  
10> So er um truly the er traditional traveller sort of attitude.

Extract 14 (Interview 6: 11)

- P 1> So I mean for instance we have got traveller encampments  
or what people call traveller encampments in this area which live beside the local  
community with no problems whatsoever.  
I 2> Are they kind of recognised sites?  
P No.  
I Or is it just the fact that they have been there a while?  
P 3> Yes, they are tolerated, they are tolerated ( )  
The encampments that you have got that are still there,  
that are quite long standing are,  
I mean to be quite frank,  
what I am saying is Keith's Lane is largely very successful  
because it's entirely dominated by women ( )  
and that's how they are successful.  
4> No problems there.  
No problems with dogs,  
Everybody smiles and everybody says hello.  
I The community is happy?  
P The community is very happy, yes.  
5> The kids go to the local school and things like that, excellent.  
There are no problems at all.  
You are going to have problems with somebody,  
there is always someone complaining about it,  
because they just don't like it.  
They don't like that it exists you know.



The special features of Extracts 13 and 14 which make them stand apart from the previous patterning, is that these New Travellers are given something approaching resident status by the working up of various entitlements. For example in Extract 13 at arrows 2 and 3 we hear the participant giving the settlement a proper name and geographical and relational references, 'Rainbow Village down at er Liskeard. Right in the middle of the town centre'. This naming and referencing enhances the distinctiveness nature of the village from the 'disused site' upon which it was constructed. People seldom challenge names, as argued by Tuan (1991); 'naming is the creative power to call something into being' (p. 688).

More importantly for our current argument concerning the action-orientation of situated descriptions, the site is therefore given legitimacy as a place of residence. At arrow 4 there is a temporal formulation, but this time in the form of an extrematisation (Pomerantz, 1986), maximising the value of the length of time that the settlement had been there ('(.) Ooh, many years'), adding to the legitimating process.

However, if we go back to arrow 3, it should also be noted that the village is constructed as separate to Liskeard even though it was 'right in the middle of the town centre'. It is also interesting at arrow 5, that the New Travellers are distinguished from the 'local residents', it was, 'a symbiotic relationship' (arrow 1). Similarly, in Extract 14 at arrow 1, 'the travellers 'live beside the local community', and at arrow 3, 'they are tolerated'.

Going back to Extract 13, the construction of the eviction as a challenged occasion in which 'local residents' became involved (see arrow 5) is being recalled as (and compared to) a historical event, continuing the process of reifying and maintaining the place as legitimate, 'the land had been sold, people wanted to come and develop it'. At arrows 7, 8 and 9 there is a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) seemingly of generalisations, rather than an individual instance, for why some of the local populace would live with the site; 'It didn't hurt anybody, it was out of sight, which was more to the point, I suppose it didn't affect too many people'.

At arrow 9, the statement 'the kids went to local schools even' serves to normalise the travellers (although the insertion of 'even' provides a cue to read this as an unusual case). This is mirrored and given a positive assessment in Extract 14 at arrow 5, 'the kids go to the local school and things like that, excellent'. In the same extract, at arrow 4, three examples are given which specify the sorts of problems that can routinely occur between New Travellers and the settled communities; 'No problems with dogs, everybody smiles and everybody says hello'.

This three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) emphasises the contrast between the success of 'sites that are entirely dominated by women' relative to other New Traveller sites. It should also be mentioned that in Extract 13 at arrow 10, that the reference to a 'traditional traveller sort of attitude' is one that has been noted by Sibley (1981, 1986, 1997) as the 'rural gypsy myth', a romanticised form of acceptance for traditional Travellers (usually gypsies) even a sense of them belonging in the countryside. This myth was also drawn upon in other collected materials.

This section has explored two deviant cases where New Travellers were described as living in symbiosis or beside the locals and tolerated. These examples hint that distinctions between members and strangers, belonging and not belonging, may be done more subtlety than implied by Schegloff's (1972) original characterization. My final section of this chapter offers a considered summary of my analytic claims so far.

#### 5.4 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that, and how, participants' selections of certain place formulations have taken work. I claimed that this work was oriented to or partly constitutive of some activity. In one sense this work was *epistemologically oriented*, it contained elements 'which work to establish it as factual' (Potter, 1996a, p. 176). For example, participants were concerned with building up territorially-based category



memberships, offering current proximity to a site or a 'show of knowledge' (Schegloff, 1972) as warrant for their concerns.

Where participants evaluated the legitimacy of claims made by others, we also heard how formulations of proximity could be 'reified' or 'ironized' (Potter, 1996a, p. 107), in order to build up or discount a particular form of warrant. Here participants oriented to the relevance of stake, describing a pattern with respect to arguments about New Travellers, several participants formulated this stake as 'out-there' (Potter, 1996a), referring to it as the 'not in my backyard' syndrome. This part of the analysis demonstrated how references to place do not simply describe some material reality, but are a practical and rhetorical accomplishment.

In another sense, the work done by participants in these extracts was also *action oriented*, it contained 'elements oriented to some action or range of actions' (Potter, 1996a, p. 176). In other words, the descriptions offered were being built up as factual because of their role in activities. For example, the claiming of territorial entitlements can qualify the participant as 'someone able and entitled to determine who or what belongs where' (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 39).

Certain sorts of formulations, such as those Schegloff (1972) has termed 'relation to members' (p. 97) (for example, '*my* house', '*our* premises'), may also be said to be selected for topic. Such formulations allow the inference that the participants' presence there is not accountable, they belong in or around that place, but the New Travellers do not. Belonging, it seems, is more than creating a sense of place in the world (Tuan, 1980), it 'is also an ideological location from which the 'in place' and the 'out-of-place' can be diagnosed' (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 39).

To provide additional support for my analytic claims, I also presented two deviant cases where New Travellers had been living successfully alongside an established community. Here we heard the participants' orientation to the same considerations of membership and belonging. In these cases the participants themselves treated the examples as involving a departure from the expected course of events. We heard communities constituted with a degree of integration although still displaying boundary

consciousness (cf. Sibley, 1988 on weakly classified spaces, associated with spatial mixing and a tolerance of difference). Examples which hint that the practice of boundary formation is more complex and fluid than the rigid classification of members versus strangers.

I move on now to my second analytic chapter, chapter six, which will be exploring the theme of spatial transgressions as a further example of the action orientation of place formulations. In this chapter I move away from participants' work around fact construction and belonging, to consider an overlapping theme where I demonstrate how New Travellers and their actions may be constructed as out-of-place.



## 6

### Spatial Transgressions

In chapter five, I demonstrated that, and how, participants' selections of certain place formulations had taken work. I claimed that in one sense this work was *epistemologically oriented*, in another sense, the work done by participants in these extracts was also *action oriented*. In other words, some of the descriptions offered were being built up as factual because of their role in designating New Travellers as out-of-place. I concluded that constructions of place-belonging might be 'an ideological location from which the 'in place' and the 'out-of-place' can be diagnosed' (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000, p. 39).

In chapter six, I draw upon extracts from the same set of materials but in this case, my analysis focuses on how situated spatial descriptions were part of peoples' practices talk or written complaints about New Travellers. This chapter takes an analytic look at the elements in these descriptions and what kind of interactional business they may be doing. My chief concern is with how participants construct the presence of New Travellers or their actions as transgressive: Deviant; menacing; and polluting.

In chapter two, I reviewed work by human geographers that has focused on notions of New Travellers as deviant, out-of-place in the countryside or transgressing the legitimate use of rural space (Cresswell, 1996; Halfacree, 1996; Sibley, 1995b). However, I argued that the question of *how* descriptions can make out a person's conduct as transgressive or out-of-place was not adequately addressed. In chapter three I reviewed a discursive study by Dixon *et al.* (1997) that explored the rhetorical strategies used by objectors to a black 'squatter' camp in South Africa to construct its inhabitants as out-of-place in a way that appears practical and legitimate. Here, I develop the scope of this kind of innovative

analysis (also see Dixon & Durrheim, 2000; Durrheim & Dixon, 1998), by applying it to arguments about New Travellers.

To avoid undue analytical repetition I have included extracts that exhibit a variety of ways in which participants/writers have presented the presence or activities of New Travellers as transgressive. This selectivity on my part should therefore allow for the development of a detailed interpretation. Although there may be overlaps, my analysis is divided into the following sections which pick out analytical themes: How New Travellers are constructed as transgressing the law; how New Travellers are constructed as transgressive by disrupting the conventional use of public places and personal spaces of attachment; and the constitution of New Travellers as polluting agencies.

## **6.1 'So even by being there they have broken perhaps four or five bylaws':**

### **New Travellers as transgressing the law**

This section examines how participants constructed New Travellers as a deviant group with regard to the law. I shall be arguing that constructions of space may constitute material and cultural conditions which regulate the legitimacy of actions in that space. Place definitions may be normatively imposed yet, as Cresswell (1999) recently wrote: 'The order which is constructed by and through place is not inevitable and is often transgressed' (p. 233).

Extract 1 is taken from an interview with an administrator from a national park. Previous to this point in the interview, the participant had been listing all the bylaws for the area covered by the national park. Extract 2 has been taken from a focus group discussion with police officers. The extract comes in at the end of a long turn by P3, following a request by the interviewer for him to recount his experience of policing New Travellers. In analysing these extracts my aim is to show how descriptions can present some actions as transgressive and provide warrant for the regulation of New Traveller activities.



## Extract 1 (Interview 5: 7)

- I So have you ever exercised your right to exclude?
- P 1> So what has happened occasionally is  
we have had a whole group of Travellers turning up  
camping on the land.  
They have taken their vehicles on the moorland,  
2> so even by being there they have broken perhaps four or five bylaws:  
3> being parked on the land,  
because they should,  
to enable them to repair their vehicles;  
and they are certainly going to camp there;  
they may be interfering with water;  
they normally light fires;  
and they have dogs running round all over the place, so,  
4> and they are probably damaging the land.  
So they have already break, potentially,  
have the potential to break five or six bylaws.  
5> So we have to go and see them and have a word with them  
and they normally tell us to clear off and  
then we have to come back with the Police and enforce it.

## Extract 2 (Focus Group 1: 4)

- P3 1> Like I say, most of the time, the ones I've been involved in,  
is involved in actually eviction  
or prevention of a settlement taking place.  
And there we used, all the law which is at our disposal,  
especially, road traffic law.  
2> Because mainly, New Age Travellers,  
are travelling in vehicles in convoy.
- I And is that against=
- P3 3> =No, but their vehicles normally are, that's labelling really,  
but a lot of them are not insured, not taxed, not roadworthy.  
4> And we can, when they are on the road,  
we have a lot more powers at our disposal.  
5> We can seize the vehicles, we can have them tested.  
6> And as they are a transient population,  
we can also arrest them, and put them before a court immediately,  
for anything.

In Extracts 1 and 2, the moorland and the road are constructed as managed or ordered spaces. The moorland has 'bylaws' that can be enforced, and the road has 'road traffic law' which is at the 'disposal' of the Police, for example, in Extract 2, at arrow 3, 'we can seize the vehicles, we can have them tested'. In both extracts we hear a list of activities which reveal this order, and that exceptions are to be understood as transgressive or out-of-place.

For example, in Extract 1, between arrows 3 and 4, an ordered space is being violated where the use of 'intention-promoting verbs' (Marlin, 1984) allow the added inference of agency: 'being parked on the land'; 'going to camp there'; 'interfering with water'; 'they normally light fires'; having 'dogs running round all over the place'; and 'damaging the land'. In Extract 2, at arrow 3, the disorderly state of New Travellers' vehicles are comprehensively described in a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) as 'not insured, not taxed, not roadworthy'. Here, participants construct cultural conditions which regulate the legitimate order on the road as being flouted.

The event description in Extract 1, at arrow 1, is given as an instance of an episodic pattern ('so what has happened occasionally is') and in Extract 2, at arrow 1, as generalised patterns themselves ('most of the time, the ones I've been involved with'), of ritualistic confrontations between rangers and/or police and New Travellers. The use of scripting devices can be seen in the listing of transgressive actions, and the use of the adverbs such as 'mainly' and 'normally' which emphasise a regular action pattern. I argue that the functional basis for script formulations here may be that they warrant the removal of New Travellers from the moorland or the road, while simultaneously contrasting these actions with an implied norm for everybody else.

In both extracts then, exclusion is warranted. In Extract 1 at arrow 5 the participant constructs a script of what happens next, 'so we have to go and see them and have a word with them and they normally tell us to clear off and then we come back with the Police and enforce it'. The structures that are being mobilised in relation to New Travellers in Extract 1 at arrow 2 ('so even by being there they have broken perhaps four or five bylaws') and Extract 2 at arrow 6 ('as they are a transient population, we can also arrest them, and put them before a court immediately, for anything') may be described as sedentarist (McVeigh, 1997).

These structures construct and reproduce sedentary living as the legitimate norm whilst allowing the inference that those who lead a mobile way of life are deviant, which warrants their exclusion. In particular, the description of New Travellers as a 'transient population' is a perfect example of sedentarist practices. This spatial metaphor has been



used by the Department of Employment to describe New Travellers, revealing the underlying assumption that sedentarism is the norm and that other ways of living are therefore problematic for the system (Clark, 1997).

In Extract 2, at arrow 6, the participant's final words position him as within the role that is recognisably allocated to people within this social structure (Davis & Harré, 1990), 'we can also arrest them, and put them before a court immediately, for anything', this same point was also echoed by a fellow participant. I therefore argue that this extract illustrates how in the process of boundary regulation, the social production of space can have material effects.

In my analysis of Extracts 1 and 2 we have heard how certain 'out-there' constructions of space may work to display the acceptance of sedentary living as the norm. This discursive practice partly constitutes the position of New Travellers as deviants, beyond society and the rights that accompany its members. As argued by James Davis (1986), 'without deviance, there is no self-consciousness of conformity and vice versa'.

Extract 3 has been taken from near the beginning of a long turn taken by another participant (P3) where I have asked him to describe his involvement in the policing of New Travellers. In this extract we hear that the status of the road as an ordered space is not fixed but can be renegotiated as a space of disorder. As Kendall (1997) has written, a dominant space can become a marginal one, 'where the dominant society is unable to...control the physical and cultural use of space, at certain times and/or in certain places' (p. 70).

#### Extract 3 (Focus Group 2: 3)

- P3      And I, I must say my first involvement there was,  
 1> um a very, very large convoy of them,  
       which basically blocked the road between Dorchester and Yeovil.  
 2> It was (.) in the media  
       (.) um, they had MP's there, the lot.  
       And er eventually (.) they um (.) moved to Swanage.  
       And Swanage is an area where you,  
       there's only really one road in, and one road out.  
 3> And they completely blocked the whole place.

Here New Travellers are constructed as a source of disorder. In the reporting of a dramatic scene by the use of an 'extreme-case' formulations (Pomerantz, 1986) combined with extra volume at arrows 1 and 3 ('a very, very large convoy of them', 'they completely blocked the whole place'), the participant uses extreme points to describe the size of the convoy and the extent of the chaos in order to maximise the construction of disorder. At arrow 3, the description allows for the inference that the disorder was purposeful, by the use of 'intention-promoting verbs' (Marlin, 1984). At arrow 2, the participant warrants the scope of the chaos is by adding the colourful presence of independent witnesses, 'it was (.) in the media (.) um they had MP's there, the lot', who provide corroboration (Potter, 1996a; Smith, 1978).

This section has examined the process of boundary regulation where the presupposition of sedentary living is oriented to. Here New Travellers are exposed as an agentic source of disorder, transgressing the law, and therefore beyond the 'boundary of society' (Sibley, 1992). The law formally defines the New Travellers as out-of-place therefore their removal is seen as part of a moral process. It should also be noted that, in analysing these extracts, spaces have been seen as more than inert backdrops to interaction. Instead, these spaces have been mobilised as part of interactions, constituting the social relations within them.

In the former analysis, boundary lines were portrayed explicitly, however, in the following section, the boundaries are less tangible. In the next section I examine the process of how boundary lines across both public and private place definitions were maintained.

## 6.2 'So the public are kind of retreating, right?':

### New Travellers as transgressive presences

In the next two extracts, one taken from a letter to a council official and one from an interview transcript, places are constructed as leisure spaces (where people go to walk, ride horses or cycle), that are threatened by the presence of New Travellers. Extract 4 is



from a private letter of complaint to the local council about the state of a piece of land that had previously been occupied by New Travellers. Extract 5 is taken from an interview with a coast and countryside officer from a local council. The participant had previously been talking about having a problem with New Travellers on an environmentally sensitive area.

Extract 4 (Letter to DCC : 1: 30)

- 1> Firm and prompt action is required to ensure that this 'Travellers' Safe Haven', created by the local planning approval for the use of the area around the Digton Hospital developments, is not allowed to be used by travellers in the future.
- 2> Local families cannot enjoy the walking and cycling route through this road when the travellers are in situation.
- 3> Parents would be very worried about their children's safety if they were to roam unsupervised.

Extract 5 (Interview 6: 14)

- I Well you didn't want people on there then.
- P Oh, yes. I mean yes, I mean obviously there is an access policy, there is a policy to encourage public enjoyment of an environmentally sensitive area. If something is to be enjoyed by everybody, it cannot become the preserve of one particular group. So I can give you an example like Bushmens Common, (two intervening lines omitted) I've had problems up there with travellers, travelling on something called the Old South Road, which is actually a historic road (six intervening lines omitted) a stone road right?
- 1> People used to use it for public access. Sort of place where, you know, people go out and ride their horses, and take their dogs for a walk. It is quite nice, yes? Because you have got heath land on either side. It is a ridge, it has extensive views of the countryside.
- 2> So it is the kind of place where the public would go. We started to get a few travellers up there, just a few small numbers, and one of the problems with travellers is the dogs. So if you have got a point on a road where you have got a group of vehicles, then you have got all the (people) then you have got the dogs, the trouble is they are not happy there so they have got to walk all along the road.
- 3> People will go one end and walk so far, and then they will go to the other end and walk so far,

- and then walk back.
- 4> So you know a small number of people,  
a small number of vehicles,  
a small number of dogs,
  - 5> you already significantly modify the behaviour  
of people who actually use it for recreation right?  
So of course with travellers, as you get one set of vehicles,  
you get more vehicles.
  - 6> So the public are kind of retreating right?  
And they are getting bigger.  
Basically you know we have to do something about it.

If we look at Extract 4 first, at arrow 1, the space is described as a 'Travellers' Safe Haven'. This description might be designed to work as an 'intentional mis-identification' (Sacks, 1967) as the use of 'marks of doubt' (Young, 1990, p. 45) around the description hints at critique rather than a representation of an 'out-there' world. At arrow 2, this previous description of space is defensively countered by reconstructing the area as a leisure space for 'local families'.

More specifically we have the rhetorical establishment of a normative base, '*the* walking and cycling route' (emphasis added) against which the New Traveller presence stands out as anomalous. This may be described as a scripted fragment where the phrasing makes out the actions described as routine, reifying this locational formulation as what Schegloff (1972) might term a 'course of action place'. The site is given a 'mark of identification' (Schegloff, 1972, p. 101), selected in this case to constitute an incontestable space for typical family activities. The New Travellers are constituted as transgressive in that their presence has corrupted this family space, inhibiting the presence of family groups, who 'cannot enjoy' this place and therefore exclude themselves.

This idea of family spaces and transgressive presences has also been explored by Durrheim and Dixon (1998). The authors looked at the employment of the rhetoric of transgression and exclusion as applied to South Africa's beaches. The beaches were defended as family spaces threatened by the inappropriate conduct of black beach-goers, constructions which were used to warrant the exclusion of the latter.

The membership formulation work here is also relevant, as the territorially-based category, 'local', is chosen. Again there is the sense of an implicit contrast between the presence of New Travellers and these 'local families' who are assumed to have



background knowledge about the 'sort of place' this is and therefore entitlement to speak. This warrant is then transposed from 'local families' to the sub-category 'parents'. Their concern is extrematised at arrow 3, they are not just worried but '*very* worried about their children's safety *if* they were to roam unsupervised' (emphasis added).

The hypothetical use of '*would*' here, may be described as a 'scripting device' (Edwards, 1995, p. 344) as it allows for the inference of a common worry rather than an isolated one. The presence of New Travellers is therefore not only threatening to the 'normal use' of the place in question but, as argued by Gill Valentine (1996), also orients to 'popular concern about young children's vulnerability to stranger-dangers in public space' (p. 205) (cf. Cahill, 1990). It may be argued then that a third description of space is produced, reconstructing the area as an adult space where children require supervision. All of these constructions are used to maintain a spatial homogeneity that requires the exclusion of those who disrupt or transgress this order.

In contrast to the brief fragment in Extract 4, Extract 5 contains several 'scripts-in-the-making' (Edwards, 1994, p. 216) which perform warranting work for evicting New Travellers from the 'Old South Road'. For example, between arrows 1 and 2 the 'public access' activities that the road used to be used for are script-formulated as the 'sort of place where, you know, people go out and ride their horses, and take their dog for a walk'. The use of what Edwards (1995b) has called a 'characteristic activity generalizer' (p. 330) ('the sort of place'), the deployment of the continuous present tense ('people go out', 'take their dog') and three-part listing (Jefferson, 1990) may act as scripting devices here, detailing these activities as the kind of thing people might be generally expected to do in this place.

The participant then constructs a visual image of the space emphasising the aesthetic beauty of the location, 'It is quite nice, yes? You have got heath land on either side. It is a ridge, it has extensive views of the countryside'. At arrow 2, this sort of construction is mobilised for its appeal to the masses, 'so its the kind of place where the public would go' which may warrant the eviction of a disruptive minority group. The earlier construction of the road as a 'historic road' also adds to this defensive process.



Between arrows 2 and 6 we are informed of a increasing New Traveller presence which is classified as people, vehicles and dogs (arrow 4). The three-part listing of these particulars also serves to emphasise their generality which fits in with the kind of 'instance from a pattern' example being given. Once again, the New Traveller presence is constructed as transgressive. In contrast to the orderly activities that 'people' use the area for, the New Travellers (people, vehicles and dogs) have brought disruption.

The 'problem' is cast that the New Travellers, 'significantly modify the behaviour of people who actually use it for recreation' (arrow 5). The comparison is explicitly given at arrow 6, 'so the public are kind of retreating right? And they are getting bigger. Basically you know we have to do something about it', constituting the situation as a something against the common good. The notion of the public as victimised was a common theme in this set of materials. This idea will be explored in chapter seven where I examine how it is deployed as part of the practice of citizenship.

We can begin to see in these extracts an action-oriented variability in how places are constructed (for example, 'Travellers Safe Haven' or 'walking and cycling route', 'historic road' or 'sort of place where...people go out and take their dogs for a walk'), and how background knowledge concerning what happens at a place can be constructed as a scripted generality. The next series of extracts focuses on how events can be described as routine as a means of pathologising rather than normalising them and how these can 'make inferentially available particular dispositional states of the actors; their moral character, personality, or state of mind' (Edwards, 1997, p. 149).

My analysis uses this feature of event descriptions to make sense of accounts of transformations of place. Edwards (1997) might describe these as script-formulating and dispositional-warranting accounts. Extract 6 is taken from one of the focus group discussions with police. Prior to this stretch of talk, another participant (P5) has just brought up the issue of individual attitudes towards New Travellers, assessing the latter as looking dirty and smelling dirty which is the cue for P1's second assessment and subsequent spatial description. Extract 7 is taken from an interview with two landowners



who are in the process of describing the aftermath of an impromptu New Traveller festival not far from their home.

Extract 6 (Focus Group 1: 20)

- P5** I mean I'm not particularly scrubby clean myself,  
but when I look at somebody who is (.)  
You know, I don't like people who smell,  
you know, it's a ghastly pong that some of them have got.
- P1** The ones down at River Quay, down in Torbridge.  
They were there for three years I think.  
(six intervening lines omitted)
- 1> And every Thursday they used to come into Torbridge,  
walk round Somerfields, stink the place out.  
They hadn't washed for years.  
(three intervening lines omitted)  
But those three years,  
you couldn't go down River Quay.
- 2> There's no way that you could go down there with your kids  
and sit down there and have a picnic,
- 3> 'cos there was horrible blimmin' rabid-ridden dogs  
running round that could bite the kids.
- 4> You were just too afraid to go down there.
- 5> You'd have some drunken oik,  
who's high on drugs,  
who's going to start abusing you
- 6> for using the public facilities.  
Whereas now they don't.

Extract 7 (Interview 3: 10)

- P1** 1> And then they moved into Asda,  
they moved into Tesco, you would be=
- I** =I'm really surprised I didn't hear about it=
- 2> =You would be eating your meal in Asda  
and they'd come up and say  
'You aren't going to eat that are you? That's DISGUSTING'.  
So you would get up  
and they would sit down and eat your food.
- P2** 3> And then they were eating food in the supermarket  
before they got to the checkout.
- P1** Take the sandwiches and eat it all=
- P2** =Take it there and eat behind the aisle.
- I** In Jamestown?
- P2** At Asd-, at Tescos.
- I** Right, the one in the other direction.
- P2** Which you passed.
- 4> And then they took all the cutlery.
- 5> And then they took their kids in the car wash and cleaned them ((laughs))
- I** No::
- P2** I'll tell you we learnt so much ((laughing)).
- I** And how did you find out all of this?

- Through the meeting, or  
**P2** Yes. Oh I mean the whole area was just nothing else.  
 6> Everyone had had an experience of it.  
 It was quite an education  
 but one we don't wish to happen again.

Occasioned by a colleague's description of New Travellers as dirty and malodorous, Extract 6 contains two script formulations which construct New Travellers as people who are out-of-place and, in a deeper sense, associated with immorality and disorder. At arrow 1 we find the scripted generality, 'and every Thursday they used to come into Torbridge, walk round Somerfields, stink the place out'. Here, the adverbial phrase 'every Thursday' is used as a scripting device to support the previous unwarranted description of odour into a recognisable-as-standard. As argued by Cresswell (1994) odour 'has its "proper place" - it has been constructed as a private phenomenon' (p. 46), therefore in a supermarket which people expect to be clean as they go there to buy food, a 'stink' is out-of-place.

Between arrows 2 and 6, a named place, 'River Quay', is constructed as a family space with 'public facilities'. This is accomplished by what might be interpreted as a script-invoking 'expectation failure' (Edwards, 1994, p. 228), 'there's no way you could go down there with your kids and sit down there and have a picnic' (see arrow 2). At arrows 3 and 5, we are strategically presented with a script-in-the-making built up by the presentation of details in the form of threatening animals and people corrupting a family space, 'there was horrible blimmin' rabid-ridden dogs running round that could bite the kids' and 'you'd have some drunken oik, who's high on drugs, who's going to start abusing you'.

The persuasive alliterated description of the dogs as 'rabid-ridden' and 'running round' in a public (family leisure) space may be interpreted as the use of a disease metaphor to indicate displacement (Cresswell, 1997). Maintaining a trend in press and government descriptions, there were several other instances in the data where the New Travellers or their animals were described as diseased. The implication here is of out-of-place animals 'taking over an ordered (healthy) environment' Cresswell (1997, p. 337) and threatening the health and welfare of young children ('that could bite the kids'). However, the participants work this up as literal rather than metaphorical.



Similarly, the socially deviant image of drunkenness, drug-use and abusive behaviour in a public space is made out as transgressive of 'normality'. Therefore the 'drunken oiks' themselves are also cast as out-of-place. It should also be noted that accounts like this, of the sort of behaviour New Travellers routinely get up to, make certain inferences available about their moral character.

In contrast to Extract 6, instead of building scripts, Extract 7 employs taken-for-granted background knowledge about the relationship between space and behaviour through implication. The script-invoking citation of place names at arrow 1 - the supermarkets, 'Asda' and 'Tesco's' - is followed by the introduction into the story of supermarket 'sub-places' such as shopping aisles, cafés and a car wash. These place terms are being used as a sort-of-place, orienting to the conventional character of what you do in those places, whilst detailing transgressions. As mentioned by Edwards (1997), this action-oriented use of place terms has been shown to be a widespread discourse phenomenon.

In this instance, the way in which the participants co-build their generalised description of these transgressive actions implies that the New Travellers' activities, although mostly everyday in themselves (eating, washing), are inappropriate in those places. When compared to the opening picture of rudely interrupted, ordinary behaviour made relevant at arrow 2, 'you would be eating your meal in Asda and they'd come up and say', these breaches furnish certain negative inferences about the disposition of the New Travellers - that they are uncivilised.

Furthermore, P1 actually formulates a version of the words used on those occasions. It should be noted that the participant flags the utterance as collective, 'and *they*'d come up and say' (emphasis added), derived from the numerous experiences referred to at arrow 6. This allows the inferences of consensus and independence. In addition, as illustrated in my transcription, the utterance, 'You aren't going to eat that are you? That's DISGUSTING' is heard as reported speech.

Developed from Erving Goffman's (1979, 1981) notion of 'footing', Robin Wooffitt (1992) was first to identify this particular discourse phenomenon in accounts of reporting



paranormal experiences which he refers to as 'active voices' (p. 161). In this context, this ventriloquising works to produce a general and extreme attack, highlighting its uncivil nature. In addition, the extensive referencing of the non-specific second-person (plural or singular) addressees ('you'), of the participants' activities in both extracts, serves as a rhetorical device to allow the inference that these experiences were widespread. Like the previous extract, regularity of behaviour is achieved by the iterative use of 'would'.

Extracts 6 and 7 have revealed that script formulations may be used to pathologise as well as normalise actions or events. The extracts featured explicit and implicit script invocations against which the actions at issue stood out as transgressive. As Potter (1996a) argues, 'normal' has a shifting referent, abnormality has to be constructed in discourse. I now move on to a slightly different pattern.

Extract 8 is a letter in its entirety, taken from the letters section of a local paper in response to the council proposals for New Traveller sites in the county. Extract 9 is taken from an interview with a landowner. At this point in the interview, the participant is responding to a question I asked about whether he had come across a New Traveller tribe called the 'Dongas' (see chapter one, section 1. 1. 1). In both extracts, we hear the articulation of a link between person and environment. The phenomena described, regarding experiences with New Travellers, may be interpreted as actual or potential threats to one's sense of, or attachment to, place (Altman & Low, 1992; Tuan, 1980). Place attachments and rhetoric commonplaces are used as discursive resources to interpret a potential New Traveller presence as the cause of negative psychological and physical well-being, and thereby warranting action.

Extract 8 (Letter to Ed., *The Cornishman*, 23 June 1994)

- Sir - I understand that there are plans to build a permanent site for travelling people
- 1> in the land next to my parent's property in Conker Road, St. Erth.  
I would like to bring to the attention of the people responsible for these plans
  - 2> the situation of my father who owns the adjoining property.
  - 3> He suffered a series of heart attacks some years ago  
and was also told to retire from work at the age of 53 by his doctor.
  - 4> He was also told to find somewhere quiet and stress free to live.
  - 5> St. Erth Hayle was his choice  
as for many years we have had our holidays there  
and he decided it was the right place.
  - 6> Over 18 years they have made the house and garden just as they want it



and had felt secure that if anything should happen to either my mum or my dad the other would be secure.

- 7> Since learning of this site next door he has become extremely distressed and as his daughter I am very concerned for his health. These sites are not uncommon in London where he used to live and we experienced the problems that they can bring and this is an extreme worry. I feel that I have to tell someone involved how badly it is affecting everyone's life, both my sister and my parents have been in tears on the phone to me in the last couple of weeks. They will not be able to move as just the mention of the site has devalued their houses.
- 8> They feel that they have nothing in common with these people and yet are being forced to live with them. I also feel that this will not do Hayle's tourist trade any favours.

Extract 9 (Interview 4: 6)

- P 1> I went to cut one of our Christmas Trees down to put in the house
- 2> and it gave me the worst feeling that I have ever had going into my own wood and the feeling that I had done something wrong
- 3> and I had to creep in there with my chainsaw in my hand pick out a tree and pull the chainsaw and then whip the tree right off because it happened to be within a 150 yards of where their camp was
- 4> because I knew that, you know, that within a few minutes a whole load of them would be down on me *en mass* and that is quite frightening.
- 5> And it was a very weird feeling, they are quite a primeval group that lot.

In Extract 8, arrows 4 and 5 implicitly construct St. Erth as a space propitious to good health and retirement, embodying the values of being 'quiet and stress free'. Through constructing congruence with place and self, the space is also rhetorically defended as one of attachment or identification, forged by periodic contact; 'for many years we have had our holidays there and he decided it was the right place'. Also at arrow 6, 'Over 18 years they have made the house and garden just as they want it'.

Humanist geographers may describe these as expressions of a 'sense of place' (Tuan, 1980) or 'insideness' (Relph, 1976). Environmental psychologists might describe arrows 5 and 6 as reflecting the principles of 'place-referent continuity' and 'distinctiveness' both part of the processes of becoming attached to and identifying with a place (Twigger-Ross

& Uzzell, 1996). Alternatively, I argue that this attachment discourse may be seen as a resource for discursive action.

The geography of the setting is mapped out by relational formulations; at arrow 1, 'the land next to my parent's property in Conker Road, St. Erth'; then at arrow 2, 'my father who owns the adjoining property'; and later at arrow 7, 'this site next door'. As discussed previously, such formulations form the basis of the defensive behaviour and have the special character of being for the member, where they 'belong'.

The imagery invoked by these three different formulations varies regarding the sense of proximity of the site to the house. The most intimate formulation is at arrow 7, 'this site next door'. This may also work as a rhetorical device, which points ahead in time, what (Bal, 1985) would term a 'chronological deviation or anachrony' (p. 53). We can refer to this particular anachrony as an 'anticipation' as it lies in the future, bringing the site into being. Although its realisation is uncertain, I argue that the anticipation suggests a sense of fatalism that makes the argument against the site more persuasive. The same kind of anachrony also features at arrow 8, 'they feel that they have nothing in common with these people yet are being forced to live with them'.

We can therefore see how the disruption of attachment by the proposal of a New Travellers site has been worked up. The proposed plans are constructed as the cause of extreme negative mental well-being and economic loss, transforming the previous extensively worked up 'right place' into one disagreeable to good health and retirement. As a result, the emotions described in this extract are treated as sensible and rationally based. By constructing this transformation of place and its effect on the father, the daughter is able to present the planned sites as personally transgressive and make a plea for their being aborted.

In Extract 9, we have a scripted description where a potentially damnable act (the cutting down of a tree in a wood) is 'minimised' (Potter, 1996a) and the experience is reflexively treated as bizarre by the participant who characterises it as a product of the unusual circumstance of the New Traveller presence. At arrow 1, conduct is made out as orderly, the tree is 'one of *our* Christmas Trees' from '*my own* wood' and it is 'to put *in*



*the house*'. My emphasis here is to show how attachment is worked up - the tree and the places are formulated in relation to the participant - his presence in the wood is not accountable (Schegloff, 1972). This orientation to a normative order helps to construct the 'very weird feeling' (arrow 5).

At arrow 2, the participant is building a contrast between the activity and the extrematised (Pomerantz, 1986), sense it incurs, 'it was the *worst* feeling I have *ever* had walking into my own wood'. This might again be interpreted as a disruption of a normal practice of environmental usage. Using a particular style of reference, in the detailed description of the scenario at arrow 3, the participant orients to the extremity of the extreme case formulation by qualifying it (Edwards, 2000) to almost comic effect, 'I had to *creep* in there with my chainsaw in my hand, pick out a tree and pull the chainsaw and then *whip* the tree right off'. The general dramatic style preserves the extreme description and therefore the feelings of fear as bizarre and illegitimate.

It should also be noted that at arrow 4, we have a further qualification; 'I knew that, you know, that within a few minutes a whole load of them would be down on me *en mass* and that is quite frightening'. In this instance I suggest the certainty and the imminence which this line imparts serves to increase the dramatic tension and treat the emotional description as appropriate. Indeed, during the interview it prompted me to ask if the participant's fears had indeed been realised but I was told that they had not.

I have therefore demonstrated that the definition of a particular type of place may be defended as a part of 'who-we-are'. Against a defensive construction of place, change stands out as anomalous. Moreover, that disruptions to physical settings can be made relevant as disruptions to the self. A powerful warrant is therefore produced, by combining the domains of mind and location, in pursuit of spatial integrity and the rejection of difference.

To summarise this section, the New Traveller menace has been produced as a transgressive presence against a range of place definitions including public and private places. A common rhetorical strategy was to use construct the conventional use of a place as scripted or to use script-invoking place names against which the presence of New

Travellers was presented as threatening. New Traveller actions were also scripted in attempts to pathologise them. Finally, places were defended as spaces of attachment, transformed by the presence of New Travellers - a disruptive presence, which was also constructed as disruptive to individual identities.

This section has demonstrated how New Travellers may be constructed as out-of-place or not belonging. The final section in this chapter examines the factual construction of New Travellers as polluting agencies. This section is split into three sub-sections according to the following analytic themes: environmental damage; noise; and dirt.

### 6.3 New Travellers as polluting agencies

#### 6.3.1 *'They cut down all the trees': Environmental damage*

In the following extracts, I explore the organisation of descriptions of New Travellers as damaging the local environment and how these descriptions might be action-oriented. The objects of destruction attended to ranged from the natural environment to private property and public amenities.

Extract 10 (Focus Group 1: 21)

- P1 1> They totally wrecked everything locally,  
they cut down all the trees.  
2> In fact the Council started providing them with logs  
because they were cutting down all the local trees.  
And no-one did a bloody thing about it.

Extract 11 (Letter to Ed., *Western Morning News*, 28 June 1994)

- 1> Cornwall County Council spent something approaching £100,000 restoring derelict land, tree planting, preserving engine houses and creating picnic areas for the benefit of the public.
- 2> They promoted the site as part of their Mineral Tramways project, but then squatters occupied the site.  
(three lines omitted)
- 3> Fences were torn down and posts burnt, farming equipment sabotaged, the landscaping trashed, the engine house became a garage and filth and rubbish was spread over a large area..



Extract 10 continues on from Extract 6, where P1 was involved in producing a second assessment of New Traveller activities. By concentrating on the destruction of trees, the participant selects a 'safe' position from which to mount a defence of what is indirectly formulated as an ecological space. This position may be interpreted as 'safe' because it evades the 'dilemma of stake' (Edwards & Potter, 1992a) by appropriating environmentalist ethics, 'one of the moral creeds of the late 20th century' (Dixon *et al.*, 1994). Against this view, the New Travellers' actions are heard as transgressive because an ecological space has been violated, they are against the common good.

The use of 'extreme-case' formulations (Pomerantz, 1986), 'they *totally* wrecked *everything* locally', 'they cut down *all* the trees', at arrow 1, strengthens this criticism making it more persuasive. The possible countering of this claim is negotiated by a qualifier (Edwards, 2000), '*In fact* the Council started providing them with logs because they were cutting down all the local trees'. This part of the event description could also be said to be an example of 'consensus warranting' (Potter, 1996) where the concern for the environment is constructed as shared by the intervention of an independent agency. It should be noted here that the New Travellers actions are descriptively worked up and built into a script formulation. As opposed to a one-off episode, the iterative aspect of this construction ('they *were cutting* down all the local trees') enables it to be heard as a more than a one-off episode therefore warranting the concern.

Extract 11, is from a letter to a local newspaper criticising the county's policy on New Travellers. We hear an unfolding narrative, the sense of which is provided at arrow 2 by the phrase, 'but then' (Edwards, 1997). Drawing it's resources from ecological discourse, the place identity of the site is initially produced as a public space with historical value, an investment for the future (defensive rhetoric). A 'space to which all citizens are granted some legal rights of access' (Light & Smith, 1998). The county council's intentions are established as for the common good.

At arrow 2, a significant element of detail is added, 'but then squatters occupied the site', and the implication of culpability. The descriptive category 'squatter', that is provided for the New Travellers differentiates them as some other class of person distinct

from the category, 'the public'. At arrow 3, we hear the writer's charges, all constructed using 'intention-promoting' verbs (Marlin, 1984); 'fences *were torn down*, farming equipment *sabotaged*, the landscaping *trashed*...filth and rubbish *was spread*' all imply intentionality. The listing strategy, by which the damage is worked up, as well as formulating a complaint worth making, also allows the wider implication of a general negative dispositional state to be attributed to the culprits (Jefferson, 1990). The descriptions of New Travellers as desecrating the local environment constituted their actions as against the common good.

### 6.3.2 'They would start up with this music, "Boom, Boom"': Noise pollution

The lengthy Extract 12 is co-constructed between the two other participants and myself, it comes a little way into their description of how a New Traveller festival ended up being situated not far from their house, in the field of one of P1's farming tenants. There are of course other possibilities here for analysis, but my focus is on the role of locational formulations in constructing a place of attachment and its disruption.

#### Extract 12 (Interview 3: 7)

P1 1> Well the noise that started there=

P2 =it was (terrible)=

P1 2> =They would start up with this music, 'Boom, Boom'=

P2 =But their hours of business with the music  
was nine at night until nine the next morning.

In the daytime they all went to sleep  
when they were drunk or stoned or something.

But the people who you might want to speak to called N

3> who live on the woodlands at the side of the field,

4> I mean they were made ill.

5> The participants were that far from their house ((P2 gestures))  
and these people had come with generators, participants, catering,  
the word went round,  
this is where we can have our rave.

It was a rave really.

But Mr and Mrs N who live at ( )

6> I mean they were made to be very ill,  
you know they really were.

I So they just own the house, they are not farming?

P2 7> They live on the edge of the woodland,  
in an isolated cottage,  
their idea of heaven,  
they love it.

P1 They had their grandchildren to stay with them.



- P2 8> Oh dreadful.  
 P1 9> Mrs N had the grandchildren  
       they had walked them across the field to get them away.  
 10> And the noise level,  
       well it was here all night every night and all day.  
 11> And you can imagine the filth that there was,  
       there were no toilets.  
 P2     They didn't observe the country code.  
 P1     Any code whatsoever  
 P212> They didn't even dig a trench.  
 P1     It was disgusting.  
 P2     It was everywhere.

At arrow 3 we hear that the N's, 'live on the woodlands at the side of the field', this relational formulation varies from the later one at arrow 7, 'they live on the edge of the woodland, in an isolated cottage'. The first formulation may be interpreted as being employed to flag the proximity of the residence to the New Travellers. In the latter formulation, a particular commonplace is drawn on as a resource (the countryside as a rural idyll). By using this resource to construct an idyllic rural space of attachment, 'their idea of heaven, they love it', as well as manufacturing a version of place, the participant can also extend the presence of New Travellers as threatening this attachment.

Spatial transgressions are described with reference to noise (see arrows 1, 2, 5, & 10) and bodily pollution (see arrows 11 & 12). As argued by Bal (1985), both sight and hearing may result in the presentation of a space in stories. The vocalisation, 'Boom. Boom' points to the proximity of the listener as well as furnishing a 'witness identity'. This proximity is later directly referenced with a gesture at arrow 5.

The New Traveller activities are constructed as abnormal, for example by the selection of temporal formulations;

=They would start up with this music, 'Boom. Boom'=  
 =But their *hours of business* with the music  
 was *nine at night* until *nine in the morning*.  
 In the *daytime* they all went to sleep  
 when they were drunk or stoned or something

(Extract 12, arrow 2, emphasis added)

Dorothy Smith (1978) might interpret this as a 'compound contrast structure' as it consists of two sets of behaviours 'which do not routinely occur in our culture' (p. 44); the night-

time hours of business and the going to sleep in the daytime. These temporal formulations are very basic yet effective.

I argue that both location and temporal formulations are particularly successful in constructing what is normal and routine and what is not. The extrematised consequences of this disruption by the New Traveller's actions, at arrows 6 and 9, indicate that this space was no longer a rural idyll, Mr and Mrs N 'were made to be very ill' 'you know they really were'. The presence of the grandchildren is evaluated as, 'Oh: dreadful!', whom Mrs N had to walk 'across the field to get them away'.

### 6.3.3 *'The danger of pollution is very serious indeed': Dirt as out-of-place*

I have selected the following series of extracts to show how danger of pollution is constructed as arising from the incursion of the activities of other individual bodies into nature. The following four extracts have all been taken from private letters of complaint to a local council. While writers focus their attention on New Traveller sites they construct a space of danger and pollution. Such spaces may be what David Armstrong (1993) imagines as the boundary line where; 'seemingly within the line itself, in a space without volume, lurks threat and danger which cannot be ordered, only contained' (p. 394).

In this section I continue to explore the construction of transgression, focusing on the discursive resources that were used to constitute New Traveller sites. The common feature I will be examining is how the writers construct the sites as danger to health and safety in an attempt to warrant a cleansing or civilising process. In other words the writers are actively oriented to mobilising the public health authorities to protect the common safety of the community.

#### Extract 13 (Letter to DCC: 8: 10)

Apart from the general noise and the constant visits of their dogs to my garden, I was appalled to find them using the woods immediately behind my house as a public lavatory. I am particularly alarmed by this as my water supply is a surface spring which rises in that part of the hill, so the danger of pollution is very serious indeed.



(I should point out that Mr X has arranged for someone from the Environmental Department to take samples from the supply).

Extract 14 (Letter to DCC : 6: 5)

In addition there is a considerable danger to public health.  
There are six caravans parked with an average of four persons per van.  
Considering they have occupied the site for at least 10 days  
one must assume that at least 200 human defaecations are to be found in the environs  
together with household rubbish and plastic goods resulting from their employment  
activities.

Extract 15 (Letter to DCC: 1: 7)

Despite making representations to a variety of County and City Departments  
the authorities seem unable or unwilling  
to take any effective measures to reduce this nuisance,  
and, as a result a very unhealthy piece of the rural environment now remains.  
If you can spare the time I would recommend a brief visit to the site.  
In my view this area is now a very serious health hazard  
to any young people that may be tempted to play amongst the rubbish.  
A local trench holds four months of the travellers' dumped rubbish,  
to say nothing of the scattered debris around the surrounding area  
from their dubious business activities  
-including three gas cylinders-  
I assume they are empty?  
I wonder where the travellers emptied their toilet waste?

Extract 16 (Letter to DCC: 4: 23)

We would like to stress that there are no toilet or water facilities  
where the travellers have parked  
and they are using our land around the electricity sub-station as a toilet.  
Surely this cannot be healthy for adults  
let alone any children who might be in the group

What is interesting here is that the New Traveller 'problem' is constituted as one of 'public health'. Potter (1996a) might describe this as 'ontological gerrymandering'. Public health arguments are being prioritised whilst other potential arguments such as the provision of permanent sites are avoided. In fact, the extracts here might be said to exhibit 'nested gerrymandering' as after initially selecting and formulating public health arguments, the individuals have then selected the particular notion of dirt.

As a way into my spatial analysis I would like to draw the reader's attention to three related points about space made by Bal (1985): Firstly, that space itself may become the object of description; secondly, that sight is the sense that is especially involved in its

perception; and thirdly, that the image of a space is determined by the way in which it is *seen*. In these extracts space is an 'explicit object of presentation' (Bal, 1985, p. 98). For example, through a precise choice of words (for example, 'toilet waste', 'household rubbish', 'builders' rubble', 'plastic goods', 'gas canisters', 'broken glass' and so on), appeals to the dangers of dirt build up a visual image of place contamination.

These spatial descriptions are reified and made persuasive through use of certain rhetorical devices and procedures. For example in Extracts 14 and 15, the writers provide graphic, vivid descriptions of the sort that only someone who had actually been to the site could report. Quantification was found to be a common resource ('there are six caravans', 'an average of four persons per van', 'at least 200 human defaecations', 'three gas cylinders'). As argued by Drew (1990), this kind of descriptive work, 'furnishes the "guarantee" of an eyewitness report' (p. 70).

The 'other' has been surveyed by an 'eye-spy'. The accounts are constructed empirically and impersonally, offered as data for a report. The 'contamination' of the uncivilised other is seeping into the civilised home. The sites are being treated as objects of hygienic surveillance, reminiscent of what Armstrong (1993) has referred to as the 'new' public health', 'the incursion of the activities of...other bodies into nature' (p. 404).

Such persuasive work, in particular, the use of extreme-case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986) and maximised descriptive categorisations (Potter, 1996a) might also be interpreted as orienting towards the justice of writers'/participants 'complaints. For example, in Extract 14, the quantification 'at least 200 defaecations' very imaginatively maximises an image of place contamination. If we return to the co-narrated Extract 12 from the previous sub-section, the use of the term 'filth' does more than describe.

11> And you can imagine the filth that there was,  
there were no toilets.

P2 They didn't observe the country code.

P1 Any code whatsoever

P2 12> They didn't even dig a trench.

P1 It was disgusting.

P2 It was everywhere.

(Extract 12, arrows 11-12)



If we look at its deployment in this particular passage we can hear it as a forerunner to later evaluations, 'they didn't *even* dig a trench. It was disgusting. It was *everywhere*'. The use of modalising terms here (italicised) help to build a more extreme picture. Similarly in Extract 13, 'the *constant* visits of their dogs to my garden'.

Rhetorical use of 'tropes of defilement' (Dixon *et al.*, 1997) is a common discourse phenomenon that has been analysed in press and government descriptions of Gypsies, Irish Travellers and New Travellers (Cresswell, 1997; Helleiner, 1993; Rojek, 1988). The same phenomenon has also been analysed in a variety of other topics, including talk about the Greenham Common women's peace camp, race talk about residential and beach desegregation in the new South Africa, animals in the city and squatters (for example see Cresswell, 1994; Dixon *et al.*, 1997; Durrheim & Dixon, 1998; Philo, 1995; Vincent-Jones, 1986).

In all of these topics, dirt has been characterised as metaphorical, representing the out-of-place - the transgression of 'assumed, "common-sense" geographical orderings' (Cresswell, 1996, p. 82). As argued by Peter Stallybrass and Allon White (1986); 'As the nomads transgress all settled boundaries of 'home', they simultaneously map out the area which lies beyond cleanliness' (p. 129). The letter-writers orient to this here by doing rhetorical and constructive work, but by building dirt up as *quite literally the case*. For example, in Extract 16, 'they are using our land around the electricity sub-station as a toilet'; and in Extract 13, 'I was appalled to find them using the woods immediately behind my house as a public lavatory'. The relational terms with which the 'befouled' space is mapped out here as behind a private house, make the juxtaposition to a 'public lavatory' all the more transgressive of a geography of normality. The complaint is strengthened by the promise of technical support, 'someone from the Environmental Department to take samples from the supply'.

Also in Extract 13, it should be noted that although generally to a lesser degree than sight, hearing is also involved in the presentation of space (see previous section on noise pollution). In this instance, it serves to help emphasise the proximity of the site to the



writer's house. Noise is a relatively new resource in public health arguments (legitimised by council policies, constructed norms and instruments of measurement).

The referencing of children in Extracts 15 and 16 as especially under threat also builds up these descriptions to resist undermining, (re)producing a dominant belief in mainstream society of vulnerability. For example, in Extract 15, the description of 'any young people that may be tempted to play in the rubbish' as potential victims (re)produces this notion of children as especially vulnerable. As might be expected with such a strong claim, the agent attends to accountability by acknowledging his or her subjectivity ('in my view'). As suggested by Cresswell (1999), images of children are strongly connected with the place-based norms of the family environment. Therefore descriptions in Extract 16, of a home-place with 'no toilet or water facilities' readily invoke displacement. At the same time, the construction that this, 'cannot be healthy' also invites the literal suggestion that the group are therefore unhealthy and a threat to the wider community.

The descriptive work in Extract 15, builds up to an extrematised (Pomerantz, 1986) formulation of the location (italicised), the 'area is now a *very* serious health hazard'. The exact nature of the 'health hazard' is described partly by making inferences available about the amount of 'rubbish' left behind (using a temporal formation) and also by giving a particularised instance of 'scattered debris'. The reserved rhetorical questions then posed serve to highlight the potential dangers. However, an exception to this analytic scheme is oriented to by the participant in Extract 18. This extract is taken from an interview with a Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer, the topic of the interview at the time was council policy and how complaints about unauthorised Gypsy and New Traveller camping were dealt with.

Extract 18 (Interview 2: 12)

- I 1> Is that (rubbish) one of the problems that people complain about?  
P 2> Yes, I mean sometimes it is the only way they can protest.  
3> "You think "those stinking gypsies",  
there you go, we will (confirm) that for you.'  
There are some groups that are chaotic,  
but a lot of groups (.)  
I mean I went on one site at Tiverton=  
it was probably about 40 or 50 black bin bags all piled up  
and they had been there for about four or five weeks



- the gypsies - you know a group of about five or six.  
And I thought, you know,  
are you going to take the bags down the tip for us before you go  
just to leave it tidy?  
And then it, you know, the site will then remain open for next time hopefully.
- 4> When I went back on Monday they had like gone, and it was spotless.  
[four lines omitted for brevity]  
There are travellers that ( ), gypsies who are scrapping cars  
in the ( ), on the corner of the airfield there.
- 5> Yet when they move off it is spotless,  
and they have actually taken some of the rubbish from the area.
- I They have made it better?
- P Yes, they have cleaned it up.  
Also because the skips have gone, the skip service has vanished,  
they were actually stopping a lot of fly tipping  
because they were taking fridges, cars, tyres
- 6> and so they actually are providing a service which ties in with  
Agenda 21, the diversity of people, low impact living.

The interviewee here is applying defensive as opposed to offensive rhetoric to the question of Traveller site refuse. At arrow 2, the act of leaving refuse is recast as a political move rather than dispositional trait. Arrow 3 marks the way that this claim is presented as having some factuality, using the strategy of 'active voicing' (Wooffitt, 1992). The Travellers' speech is actively worked up as symbolic of the type of thing that might be said on such an occasion.

At arrow 4 an unfolding narrative culminates in an extrematised deviant case example of New Travellers leaving a site 'spotless'. This instance is exceeded at arrow 5, with an added shift up a notch to an occasion where the gypsies had actually transformed a marginal place by also removing rubbish that was there before they arrived. Therefore 'the *same* considerations and normative orientations that produce the 'regular' cases' (Peräkylä, 1997, p. 210, emphasis in original) are being made relevant, but this time to construct the image of improving the rural environment (which is not idyll-ised) rather than desecrating it.

#### 6.4 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter my analyses have demonstrated how writers' and participants' spatial descriptions have constructed New Travellers, and their activities, as transgressive or out-

of-place. In the first section I demonstrated how participants constructed *ordered spaces* and dealt with accountability issues around excluding New Travellers. This was done by formulating cultural conditions (such as bylaws and road traffic laws) as ‘out-there’, and which regulate the legitimacy of actions in a particular space, such as on the moorland or on the road. I demonstrated how participants were also doing descriptive work in gerrymandering scripted-up versions of relevant actions and events in ways that established New Travellers as disorderly. These script formulations directed attention away from the potential role of the participants’ own actions and focused attention on the New Travellers themselves, making them responsible for their own exclusion.

The analytic claims made in section two concern how the presence and actions of New Travellers can be constructed as transforming valued places. We heard participants building up script-based place-norms of the type, ‘it’s the *sort of place* where the public go’. Such defensive rhetoric was then used to present the New Traveller presence as against the common good. The ‘out-there-ness’ of these descriptions of place have the capacity to resist being attacked as the product of a particular person’s concerns. We also heard how New Traveller actions in a place could be scripted-up as a means of constructing them as out-of-place. Moreover I demonstrated the script-invoking citation of place names such as ‘Asda’ and ‘Tesco’s’ being made relevant by participants in the context of evaluating New Traveller actions, and how ‘the status of being an expectation failure is *itself* discursively produced (Edwards, 1997, p. 153, emphasis in original).

I also demonstrated how participants were able to construct a powerful warrant for the potential of a New Traveller presence as threatening, and deal with their own accountability in doing so, by making relevant *spaces of attachment*. This was accomplished by building up defensive constructions of place where change stands out as anomalous, and disruptive to the self. I argued that these were good examples of texts and talk-in-interaction where place attachment / belonging may be seen as a discursive resource that can be made relevant to warrant exclusionary practices. I also noted how temporal and locational formulations were working in tandem to establish place attachment.



In the final section of this chapter, my analytic focus was on how participants constructed New Travellers' use of space and how the work done here was partly constitutive of the making of complaints. One rhetorical strategy used to warrant complaint-making was to construct an *ecological space* that was being desecrated by New Traveller land-use. Another strategy isolated from a spatial analysis was to examine how participants made relevant the *noise* associated with a New Traveller festival as transgressing a rural space.

I also argued that participants constructed New Traveller sites as *spaces of danger and pollution*. Here, contrary to the arguments of human geographers such as Cresswell (1997) as reviewed in chapter two, references to dirt were not being treated metaphorically. Instead, I demonstrated how participants worked such references up as literal and hazardous. I argued that the work done here partly dealt with the accountability of the writer whilst also building up the description as warranting a cleansing / civilising process. Finally I presented a deviant case which provides additional support for my analytic claims about New Traveller sites as spaces of pollution. Here a participant orients to the making of complaints about rubbish left behind by New Travellers as normative by presenting examples of *deviant cases*, Gypsies and New Travellers who have left sites 'spotless' or cleaner than they were before their arrival.

The analyses in this chapter have covered a lot of ground. The most significant points that should be taken away for further consideration are that these spatial analyses have built on discursive (Dixon *et al.*, 1997) and human geographical research (Cresswell, 1996; Halfacree, 1996; Sibley, 1992, 1995a, b, 1997) by examining the different rhetorical strategies at work in the construction of the out-of-place (insights from Bal's (1985) notes on the narrative analysis of spatial and temporal elements; Edwards' (1994, 1995, 1997) work on scripts; and a reworking of environmental-psychological conceptions of the functions of place-identity / place attachment (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1997) reviewed in chapter two have been especially relevant here).

It has been demonstrated that references to place are situated (that is, occasioned and rhetorical) and action oriented. I have also problematised the claim by human geographers

(for example, see Cresswell, 1997) that references to dirt in discourse about New Travellers is treated metaphorically (that is, that they are oriented to the activity of constructing New Travellers as out-of-place). In these materials, such references were worked up as literal, therefore I argue that they are both *epistemologically oriented* and *action oriented* (Potter, 1996a).

In chapter seven, my final analytic chapter, I move on to look at the third theme isolated from the coding stage of the project, the practice of citizenship. In other words, why, and how, the issue of citizenship was made relevant by letter-writers and participants in the context of making complaints about New Travellers. I present an analysis of what people do when they are being citizens. For example, how the letter-writers call local government to account over the New Traveller issue; how writers and participants make out New Traveller activities as exceptional to those of the 'ordinary', 'average' citizen; how the reciprocity of rights and responsibilities was invoked to warrant New Traveller exclusion; and finally how different categories of 'more worthy' citizens are introduced to challenge local government plans to provide sites for New Travellers.



# 7

## The Practice of Citizenship

In chapter six, I examined the work done in participants' spatial descriptions and how that work was partly constitutive of constructing New Travellers as transgressive or out-of-place. The topic of analysis for chapter seven is why and how letter-writers and participants oriented to citizenship in the context of their talk and texts about New Travellers. It has recently been argued that citizenship:

Rests upon the construction of an identity, complete with a related package of known rights and obligations, which posits residence in a definable place or (commonly quite sizeable) territory as the basis for the nurturing and preserving of this identity.

(Painter & Philo, 1995, p. 111)

In this final analytic chapter I shall be examining how the grounds for taking such an identity and the right to speak, for oneself and others, about others, are established discursively. In other words how the correspondent or speaker's identity as 'citizen' may be built up as a speaking position. Where appropriate, in tune with the other two analytic chapters, my analyses flag how locational formulations are employed in the service of citizenship work. As argued by Susan Smith (1989), 'locality offers a basis from which to mobilise myriad political identities through which specific needs are articulated and particular entitlements claimed' (p. 153).

In terms of such action-orientation, I shall be examining disputes over New Travellers' rights of settlement. More specifically, how self-positioning as 'citizen' can be used as a warrant for doing attributions of blame (Potter & Edwards, 1990), to position other people, put them in their place, and shut them down. I shall also be exploring how

the language of citizenship is used in apportioning blame, to construct social order in attempts to identify and define responsibilities.

Along these same lines, I shall be discussing the politics of belonging - how the language of citizenship may be drawn upon as a resource not only in the process of categorisation whereby correspondents and speakers constitute themselves and others as citizens, but also in the ideological practice of exclusion or closure. As argued by Eleonore Kofman (1995): 'Citizenship has always laid down the boundaries between those who are included and those who are excluded' (p. 121).

The chapter will be discussing the following three areas: identity construction, action-orientation and ideological work. However as my analyses work around a conception of citizenship that is relatively new to psychology, I begin by reviewing how the concept has been constituted in the past.

## 7.1 The psychology of the citizen

Although the original concept of citizenship dates back to classical antiquity, for the purpose of this chapter I simply offer a brief evaluative sketch of the different images or models of the citizen that psychologists have promoted: trait theory models; social learning and exchange theory models; and justice-based models. Considering the limitations of these models I suggest an alternative 'action model' which emphasises the actual *doing* of citizenship rather than attempting to measure or study the influences on political evaluations and citizenship behaviours.

The thesaurus of the 'PsychLit' database defines the term 'citizenship' as follows: 'Formal status or social quality of being a member of a community, country, or some other political designation'. The term has only been included in the database within the last thirty years indicating that citizenship has only been recently addressed by psychologists. The majority of research work on the topic of citizenship comes under the guise of 'citizenship behaviour', and may be discovered under the broad umbrella of applied psychology in organisational, industrial, social and clinical settings. More recently,



coinciding with its compulsory place on the school curriculum from 2002, there appears to have been a rise in research on citizenship in educational settings (for example see Haste, 1993; Menter & Menter, 1994).

One stream of work on citizenship behaviour in organisational settings has been influenced by a trait theory model of the citizen (for example see Cattell, 1966). This model regards citizenship behaviours as motivated or explained by personality traits, abilities and attributes (for example, altruism and civic participation) which can be measured by personality tests. This theory assumes that the citizen is an 'honest soul' (Trilling, 1974), whose behaviour is uncomplicatedly driven by the combination of traits they possess.

However, such theories may be described as retrospective, reductive and intrapersonal; they focus on snapshots of the past and have biological overtones, essentialising citizenship as an inner aspect of the person. As such, a trait theory model of the citizen is inappropriate to the study of citizenship, due to its asocial approach to behaviours located in interactions, and its inability to explain inconsistency (cf. Mischel, 1968) in the citizenship behaviours (in different situations perhaps) that personality is supposedly channelling. Accordingly, in a review of such studies Dennis Organ (1997) concluded that this image of the citizen was untenable.

The other main stream of citizenship research in psychology has focused on actual participation in the community. Described as 'political participation' and examining citizens' evaluations of or behaviour in the political system, this research has been located within the sub-discipline of political psychology. Studies have suggested two main types of psychological model of the citizen which may act as the basis of such evaluation and a determinant of behaviour; public-choice-based models and fairness-based models (Tyler, Rasinski & Griffin, 1986). The public-choice-based model is influenced by behaviourist theories such as social learning and exchange theory (Bandura, 1972; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959).

In the words of Tyler *et al.* (1986): 'The citizen is assumed to be an egotistic utility maximiser who participates in politics to further his or her private objectives of personal

gain' (p. 971). Furthermore, Tyler *et al.* (1986) have argued that the public choice model has proscribed both choice of research questions and judgement of findings, directing attention to a gain/loss perspective over other alternative judgements. To remedy this, Tyler *et al.* (1986) suggested fairness may play a role in political evaluations and behaviours: 'Citizens act as naive moral philosophers, judging government authorities and their policies against abstract criteria of fairness' (p. 975).

However, both models are primarily 'individually' focused. Such individualism may be criticised for its lack of consideration towards the social dimension of community where such research questions and participation itself are naturally framed. This means that shared understandings of citizenship are not addressed. Moreover, the majority of studies that support these models are correlational, they do not establish cause-and-effect relations, which somewhat undermines the validity of producing an adequate model for determining citizens' political behaviours.

Moreover, research practices have adopted a taken-for-granted synchronic approach of looking at 'events in time' (Levine, 1999). If one considers that the research topic is political participation, this 'context of stability' (Stringer, 1977, p. 28) that pervades its research activity begins to appear somewhat inappropriate. Similarly some political researchers, (for example Lederer, 1986; Sabucedo, 1990) have claimed that the scope of such investigations into political participation is narrow and reactive. One such sympathiser, Martiza Montero (1997), has argued: 'For this reason, I prefer to talk about *political action*, placing the emphasis on the dynamic character of social actors shaping societies and building social institutions' (p. 234, emphasis in original).

In locating political action as constitutive, Montero (1997) aligns herself with Sabucedo (1990) who has suggested that political action both legitimises and is legitimised by the democratic system. Moreover, as well as focusing on political *action*, in calling for the study of democratic processes from a deconstructionist perspective, Montero (1997) suggests that there is a need to reveal hidden assumptions and contradictions in such processes.



I argue that this critique puts forward an alternative image of the citizen, similar to the 'relational model' suggested by Peter Stringer (1977, 1982), but what I shall refer to as an *action model*, where political identities such as that of 'citizen' and political institutions develop simultaneously and integratively. I should point out here that in describing this model of action, I do so in the sense of a 'conceptual scheme' (Edwards & Potter, 1992a) rather than a psychological model that may be used for predictive purposes.

This model does not map neatly onto a single 'domain of analysis' (Sapsford, 1996) as neither individual nor social processes are prioritised, but it acknowledges that both are naturally involved in political topics and that participation is about interaction (Stringer, 1982). The model therefore goes some way to remedying the deficiencies of the other models of the citizen previously discussed. The action model orients research towards different kinds of question and ultimately a different kind of explanation of citizenship behaviour.

As membership is a key concept in citizenship and perhaps the concept that most recommends psychological inquiry, one would think that, as it is with nationality and nationalism (Montero, 1997), social identity would be fundamental to its understanding. Talking of national identities along the lines of an action model, Michael Billig (1995, p. 7) claimed that to look in the body or mind of the individual would be 'the wrong place for the operation of identity'. Instead, Billig (1995) argued that 'an identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life' (p. 8).

Similarly, instead of seeing citizenship as a behaviour, Hall and Held (1989) have claimed that it has no 'essence', conceptualising it as a more fluid notion, an 'imaginary identification' (Donald, 1996), that is constituted through everyday talk and debate rather than being 'out-there' and measurable. In support for both the action model and citizenship as a topic for psychology, Shotter (1993b) has suggested:

That it is talk and debate upon the topics of citizenship and belonging that can generate just that continuous tradition of argumentation required to constitute a 'providential space', that is, a civil society, *our* civil society, as the 'container' from within which we can all draw the mutually intelligible resources we require in making sense of the rest of our lives

(p. 188, emphasis in original)

To Shotter, citizenship is concerned with rhetorically achieving a sense of identity and belonging in relation to others around us, and (re)constituting norms which regulate public life and impinge upon the individual in terms of rights and duties.

However, should we perhaps be aware that citizenship is more than just another identity that we can take up? Like Billig's (1995) description of nationalism, citizenship may be 'a way of thinking or ideological consciousness' (p. 10). In this consciousness, citizenship appears as given. However as Mark Goodwin (1999) has recently argued: 'The act of residence within a definable and bounded space does not necessarily secure citizenship (p. 190).

The implications of this relocating of citizenship from the cognitive to the discursive realm, make its workings available to the discourse analyst for interpretation. As private letters of complaint and public letters to Editors as part of a wider debate on New Travellers, I feel that the extracts discussed might be interpreted as examples of participatory actions on an issue that is immediate to the correspondents, possibly affecting themselves and their daily lives directly. In line with the action model, my analyses focus on the language and practices of citizenship at a local level. For example I examine the building up of 'immaterial spaces' of citizenship (Painter & Philo, 1995) or what we might call a sense of membership in a 'same community' (Schegloff, 1972) in the practical, discursive realm. From within the same realm I also examine the action of regulating and sustaining who does and who does not belong.

The following sections are intended to develop the upshot of this brief critique. Stemming from Shotter's (1993b) notion of the 'citizen' as developed within a discourse, incorporating access to rights and obligations, I aim to show how this identification is occasioned, rhetorical and action-oriented. To do this I have split the analysis into three main sections; the discursive production of 'citizens'; enactments of accountability; and contested citizenships.



## 7.2 The discursive production of ‘citizens’

In this first analytic section I examine the occasioned use of two commonplace discursive figures; ‘the taxpayer’ or ‘ratepayer’ and ‘the public’. I suggest in each case that these figures are selectively drawn upon, to authorise claims, demands and wrongs to be assessed as injustices, by emphasising or building up membership which implies entitlement to voice.

### 7.2.1 *The hard-working taxpayer*

When reading through the corpus of letters I noticed the use of nominal social categories such as ‘the taxpayer’ and ‘the ratepayer’. Kress and Hodge (1979) have pointed out that nominalisation involves the transformation of an action (paying rates or taxes) into an abstract noun or object (the tax/ratepayer). In exploring citizenship, this transformation could be viewed as an instrumental projection from private to public being. My reading of Extracts 1- 3 explores the use of these particular nominal categories.

#### Extract 1 (Letter to DCC: 11: 8)

I notice measures have been taken at both these two sites  
to prevent a reoccurrence of those previous activities  
and judging by the number of large stones  
placed at the Park and Ride site,  
at considerable cost to the ratepayer?

#### Extract 2 (Letter to Ed., *The Packet*, 2 June 1994)

I also questioned the prolonging of this problem as the costs rise with meetings and evictions for which the ratepayers suffer in the long run.  
We, the ratepayers, should be told the costs so far, which is running into thousands of pounds.

#### Extract 3 (Letter to DCC: 2: 14)

It is an absolute disgrace how the hard working tax payer,  
and God knows we pay enough of it,  
are continually subjected to this kind of blatant waste of money through Police time  
not to mention your position and salary.  
As Gypsy and Traveller Liaison officer whose interests do you work for?  
The Tax Payer or to ensure the “Travellers” settle in as comfortably as possible.

## Extract 4 (Letter to DCC: 4: 33)

We have tried to get some help from every conceivable place but to no avail and are fast coming to the conclusion that the rest of the people who pay the rates are not as important as the Travellers.

I suggest that 'the taxpayer' or 'the ratepayer/s' is used as a description of diffuse individuals who are transformed into an anonymous discursive figure/s who can be mobilised against the council. The nominalised format acts as an obstacle to potential criticism whilst the category 'tax/ratepayer' invokes a reciprocal rights and duties discourse, thus warranting the complaints, demands and claims. As noted by Potter and Halliday (1990) when exploring the use of the category 'community leaders' in reports of an 'inner city riot', such a combination of defensive and offensive rhetoric is a robust one.

Moreover in Extracts 2 and 3, the correspondents align themselves with the nominal categories employed, 'We, the ratepayers should be told the costs so far' and 'and God knows *we* pay enough of it'. In Extract 2, the shift from 'I' to 'we' explicitly marks out the correspondents' orientation to the 'citizen-body' (Heater, 1990). In Extract 3, the latter reflexive formulation, rather than being simply a throw away emotive sentence, also makes the correspondent's voice more perceptible, he or she is a testifying victim ('we') of the complaint being made (Bal, 1985).

Extract 3 is also noteworthy for the way that the issue of interest on the part of the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer is invoked by the correspondent in an attempt to undermine his or her actions, 'As Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Officer whose interests do you work for? The Tax Payer or to ensure the "Travellers" settle in as comfortably as possible.' The problematic nature of this inversion of the expected order has been built up by two features. For example, the capitalisation of 'The Tax Payer' in contrast to the type of footing (Goffman, 1979, 1981) best described as 'marks of doubt' (Young, 1990) around 'the "Travellers"' serves to undermine the legitimacy of the latter.

Adding to this contrastive work where the legitimate citizen-body is formulated in opposition to the illegitimate alternative, it is the problematic way by which the alternative is formulated that helps to produce the effect, for example, 'or to *ensure* the "Travellers"



*settle in as comfortably as possible*'. The softened choice of words for this version of New Travellers management works to maximise the accusation of bias.

There is a hint of the same bias in the contrast presented in Extract 4 which I have included as a variation on this theme of nominalisation. Here a 'properly' expanded form is used where, 'the rest of *the people who pay the rates* are not as important as the Travellers'. The function of this description, may be to reveal and highlight the agency in this action, in contrast to New Travellers who do not pay rates. However, inferences aside, this particular use of categorisation also does the sort of 'boundary-work', grouping and separating individuals' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987, p. 132), that I discussed in chapter four.

These extracts make relevant the oft contested economic obligations of citizenship (paying rates and taxes) whilst also gaining access to the rights discourse which becomes available to those who draw upon the language of citizenship. This access may therefore be used to simultaneously warrant the making of the complaints themselves. I also suggest that in all of the extracts above, the correspondents present the actions of the council as against the common good. For example, 'at considerable *cost to* the ratepayer', 'the ratepayers *suffer* in the long run', and the figurative, 'hard working taxpayer...*subjected to* this kind of blatant waste of money'. As well as making a complaint, with such formulations the tax/ratepayer is positioned as victim.

In my analysis of Extract 5, I continue to explore how issues of stake may be drawn on in an attempt to undermine the actions of council officials as biased.

#### Extract 5 (Letter to DCC: 1: 19)

- 1> In my experience contact to an official department is only referred to the County Liaison Officer, who seemed to be overly sympathetic to the travellers cause.
- 2> Action to my knowledge, which only seems to encourage travellers to continue their cost free use and abuse of other people's property.
- 3> I assume they pay no form of council tax?
- 4> But in this case these two families have been allowed to park freely on the public highway for over four months.
- 5> Who will pay to clear up after them?
- 6> Why are they not prosecuted for scattering litter or encouraged to use the public waste disposal facilities?
- 7> They must enjoy considerable laughs at the expense of the apparent incompetence of the local authorities.



At arrows 1 and 2, the correspondent's argument is dependent on the authorisations 'In my experience' and 'to my knowledge'. As argued by Gergen (1989), 'one may justifiably make a claim to voice on the grounds of possessing privileged mental representation or experience' (p. 74). At the same time, the correspondent undermines the actions of the 'County Liaison Officer' by invoking interest albeit with some uncertainty, 'he seemed to be overly sympathetic to the New Travellers cause'.

Arrow 2 constructs a script for 'travellers' to 'continue their cost free use and abuse of other people's property', where 'continue' implies a generalised pattern. The rhetoric of citizenship employed by this claim also provides an associated position for the correspondent as 'citizen' that is exploited thereafter. The rhetorical questions then posed between arrows 3 and 7 ('I assume they pay no form of council tax?', 'Who will pay to clear up after them? Why are they not prosecuted for scattering litter or encouraged to use the public waste disposal facilities?') continue in the same vein - their link to personal responsibilities and welfare rights signal that the rhetoric of citizenship is being employed.

These questions present both New Traveller activities and council reactions as abnormal in relation to 'ordinary' citizens, not only in the activities themselves, but that they 'have been allowed' (arrow 4) to get away with it. This going against established protocol further enables the inference, oriented to at the beginning of the extract, that the council have been 'overly sympathetic'. Similarly, the 'two families' have not only been allowed to 'park' but to 'park freely' on the 'public' highway.

If we look at this a little more closely, we see that instead of the category 'travellers', as was used previously at arrow 1, the category 'families' is used which serves to construct them as more 'normal' and thus makes the council's inattention more poignant as other families would of course not be allowed to get away with this. The extrematised calendrical formulation (Pomerantz, 1986), 'for over four months', maximising both the families' length of stay and the anomalous nature of the situation should also be noted.

I now go on to examine more category work by exploring an example of the occasioned use of the category 'the public' in the corpus of letters.



### 7.2.2 'The public'

The discursive figure of 'the public' was also in attendance in the corpus of letters.

As observed by David Bell (1995):

The notion of the public resonates through citizenship discourse, and is often deployed in these terms; something is either for or against the common good. If something is against the common good (...) then the public is victimised, and the perpetrators excluded from the public

(p. 146)

Although in discursive research we may be more familiar with the 'madding crowd' or 'unruly body' meaning of 'public' (for example see Reicher, 1987), Bell highlights an alternative use of the category 'public'. Extract 6 is exemplary of one of the ways correspondents constituted themselves as a victimised public.

#### Extract 6 (Letter to DCC: 6: 1)

- I write to complain at the continuing situation that applies at the above site.  
The caravans are parked on the highway  
and are obstructing the turning space on this cul-de-sac.
- 1> The gipsies themselves are intimidatory and aggressive,  
so much so that the public are not able to exercise their right to use this particular road.  
[4 lines omitted for brevity]
  - 2> We have well trained officials in environmental health, refuse disposal,  
the Police and legal departments  
but it seems in the final analysis it is the public that pick up the tab  
and suffer delay and inconvenience before matters such as these are resolved.
  - 3> Is there nobody in authority who has the courage and necessary powers  
to end this scourge promptly?

Here, at arrow 1, 'the public', are constructed as victims of 'intimidatory and aggressive' 'gipsies', therefore unable 'to exercise their right to use this particular road'. It is ironic here that a freedom of mobility / rights discourse is flagged against the 'gipsies'. Then at arrow 2, it is 'the public that pick up the tab and suffer delay and inconvenience' at the hands of 'officials'. This gives the impression that these 'officials', despite being 'well trained' are not fulfilling their obligations effectively.

Once again we have the use (similar to that of 'the taxpayer' above) of an anonymised discursive figure, in this example it is 'the public'. Following Bell (1995), I argue that the notion of 'the public' is being used to constitute the sense of the actions of the New Travellers ('parked on the highway', 'obstructing the turning space', 'intimidatory and

aggressive') and the reactions of the council ('delay and inconvenience') as being against the common good. This practice is aided by the construction of the space being violated as a public one. In terms of accountability, the anonymity of the category, 'the public' may be also be successful in this complaint-making as it constitutes a source that is difficult to undermine.

As in the previous section, it is also interesting to note the shift from 'I' at arrow 1, a private citizen, to 'we' at arrow 2 where the agent is heard to perceive and constitute his or herself as a member of the category, 'the public'. This may reflect the private-public dichotomy inherent in the notion of citizenship, as accessibly described by Shotter (1993b) 'belonging-yet-oneself'. At arrow 3, this speaking position which we could call the public-citizen, having provided a warrant for voice, makes a plea for action to exclude 'this scourge' from the public.

### 7.2.3 *Summary*

This first analytic section has taken as its theme the discursive production of 'citizens'. My analyses focused upon two commonplace discursive figures, 'the tax/ratepayer/s' and 'the public'. I presented instances of the former both as a nominalised formulation and as an extended version. This variation appeared to indicate different action-orientations. I noted that both discursive figures, 'the tax/ratepayer/s' and 'the public', were used to authorise claims, demands and wrongs that were to be assessed as injustices. I would also argue that as well as doing this work, these constructions silence a diversity of different positions and interests within them.

Descriptive work including the invocation of interest on the part of officials was instrumental here in constituting victim status for the citizen. It may be argued then that complaints about governance construct normative principles which in turn constitute officials as the knowing / doing arm of the public body. I argue that this analysis supports the action model of the citizen as outlined in section 7.1, that proposed that political identities such as that of 'citizen' and political institutions can be built up simultaneously and integratively.



The style of argumentation adopted, where something is against the common good, has the capacity to divert potential criticism. Thus correspondents were orienting to the dilemmatic nature (Billig *et al.*, 1988) of their complaint making, although the success of this process may also be partly due to the anonymised form of the discursive figures. However, on occasion, correspondents did align themselves with these figures indicating a common feature of membership, the private-public dichotomy, described by Shotter (1993b) as 'belonging yet oneself'.

### 7.3 Enacting accountabilities

In this section I pay special attention to how specific needs are articulated through the mobilisation of a located 'citizen' identity. I also explore the idea of how the twin themes of citizenship and governance impact upon one another. Goodwin (1999) has described these themes as; 'covering the issues of what it means to be a citizen, of what rights and obligations one has as a citizen, and of the ways in which we, as citizens are governed' (p. 189).

These twin themes may be heard together in the letters of complaint where 'citizens' are making complaints about the actions of those who do the governing. The letters are used to mobilise the powers of local government in order to regulate the shape of the community. They are a way of realising individual interests by presenting the complaints as consensual, value-free and self-evidently good for the locality.

#### Extract 7 (Letter to DCC: 1: 37)

I trust that you may be able to 'press the buttons'  
that may get appropriate action  
on behalf of this local community.

#### Extract 8 (Letter to Ed., *The Cornishman*, 16 June 1994)

Councillors, MPs and Editors bear a real responsibility  
for raising the levels of tolerance, justice, clear sightedness  
and social morality in the community.  
For all our sakes, please please do not fail us.

## Extract 9 (Letter to DCC: 2: 5)

You obviously appear to be a busy man  
so perhaps you might find time to explain to me  
and a number of other concerned residents,  
exactly what your tasks and responsibilities are.

Extract 10 (Letter to Ed., *The Packet*, 2 June 1994)

- 1> It certainly needs investigating as one cannot break government guidelines or rules or indeed the law because prejudice should not be allowed to rear up its ugly head on council matters. Is it any wonder that we are no nearer solving the issues with NATs.
- 2> I have no desire to join the travelers. I see them as unfortunate people, not to be despised but to be helped.
- 3> However I cannot see into the future but with the way things are going at the moment with the Tory Party in control,
- 4> I predict the NATs could finish up the majority and us in property the minority.

Extract 7, illustrates how, in calling local officials to account, correspondents had to manage their own accountability. That is, in a demand for ‘appropriate action’ the correspondent shifts his or her footing from what Goffman (1979, 1981) would call ‘animator’ (writer) to ‘principal’ (whose position the letter is meant to represent). However, I think that this activity is also bound up with constructing consensus (see Potter & Edwards, 1990) by alluding to certain interests held in common by the ‘local community’, which acts as a warranting device. The specification of the category ‘community’ as ‘local’, also implies an orientation to locality as the basis from which to mobilise a ‘citizen’ identity through which these demands are articulated.

In Extract 8, implicit self-positioning as ‘citizen’ enables talk about the responsibilities of important figures in the hierarchy of the imagined community, ‘Councillors, MPs and Editors’. Of course this list is not complete, but its three-partedness serves to emphasise the generality of those who have a voice on local issues (see Jefferson, 1990). As a warrant for taking up this position, the correspondent builds authentic membership in terms of belonging to and speaking on behalf of this ‘community’. This membership building is signalled by a shift from the initial argumentative discourse to a directed plea, ‘for all *our* sakes...do not fail *us*’.



This change of level achieves three related things; firstly the use of 'our' and 'us' identifies that there is a specific bounded 'community', secondly that the correspondent is a member of this 'community' and thirdly that the status of the correspondent is also that of an 'animator' (Goffman, 1979, 1981) speaking on behalf of this 'community'. In a study of discourses of community, Potter and Reicher (1987) showed that the category, 'community', could be used to do more than simply specify a local group of people. I argue that membership offers a basis from which to mobilise political identities through which this need is articulated. In a sense then, this extract constitutes the community as a bounded whole orienting to the 'rights' members can enjoy in this 'interface between political arrangements and social structures' (Smith, 1989, p. 148).

Constructions in Extract 9, present an image of overtly acknowledged consensus, 'me and a number of other concerned residents'. The vague quantification here could be said to be used to emphasise the scale of the consensual concern, warranting its facticity (Potter & Edwards, 1990). The territorially-based category 'residents' is also used here as a warrant to take up the located positioning of 'citizen', through which, this demand for the Council Officer to reveal his or her 'tasks and responsibilities' is articulated.

In Extract 10, the call for investigation creates a 'moral setting' (Shotter, 1993b) where characterising the council's actions as biased ('prejudice should not be allowed to rear up its ugly head'), paves the way for a structural critique and makes the speaking position 'citizen' available for the correspondent. The council are accused of violating, 'government guidelines or rules or indeed the law'. The three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) here is used to support the general claim that the council should be made to account for their actions.

What we hear may be described as a call for tolerance, an individual displaying concern about his or her 'imagined community'. The concern displayed takes the form of active involvement 'in regulating and sustaining the shape of that community' (Shotter, 1993b, p. 130). However at arrow 2 the correspondent also has to attend to his or her own accountability and the possibility that this charge of prejudice may be treated as interested in some way.



This dilemma is managed by a stake inoculation (Potter, 1996a) to head off any potential undermining of his or her claims, 'I have no desire to join the travelers. I see them as unfortunate people, not to be despised but to be helped'. We should also note that the interpretative activities made explicit following this explicit inoculation, 'I see them as...', continuing to counter any potential challenge by the flagging of recognisable subjectivity, indicating that an opinion is being presented. This counter-interest builds up credibility by putting some distance between the correspondent and the New Travellers.

At arrow 3, we hear a disclaimer (Hewitt & Stokes, 1975), 'however I cannot see into the future but...', oriented towards accountability which enables the correspondent to ward off any potential undermining of the subsequent prognosis, 'I predict the NATs could finish up the majority and us in property the minority'. What is described here is another inversion of the expected order similar to those seen in Extracts 3 and 4. This time the inversion is achieved through reworking the status of nomadic and sedentary people.

This contrast structure may be said to achieve three things: firstly to further abnormalise the workings of government; secondly, by using the phrase 'us in property', the correspondent aligns him or herself explicitly with the reader (this is a letter to the Editor of a local paper) and further distinguishes him/herself from the 'NAT's'; and thirdly the correspondent makes obvious an identity and status for the agent - 'I' as a member of this 'same community' of citizen-subjects which warrants his or her accusations.

To summarise, in my analyses of the extracts presented I argue that the correspondent takes up the position of 'citizen' indirectly to highlight the accountability of local governance whilst simultaneously defending his or her own accountability concerns. This implies that being a citizen or an official is in part a rhetorical achievement. Extracts 7 - 9 also illustrated how locational formulations (in this case the territorially-based categories 'community' and 'residents') may be used as a basis from which to mobilise this 'citizen' identity through which the demands for action or calls for accountability are claimed.

We may describe this practice as a regulatory one that appropriates an image of the citizen as an active political position consistent with the theory of participatory democracy (see Pateman, 1970). In the next section I move on from examining relations between



ordinary citizens and those who govern to explore relations among citizens, New Travellers and settled communities.

#### 7.4 Contested citizenships

Back in 1955, Gallie argued that citizenship is an ‘essentially contested concept’. This claim would seem to be supported over 40 years later, for example Parliamentary debates in the 1990s over the meaning of ‘active citizenship’ (see Blair, 1995; Portillo, 1992), although this image should not be confused with the action model described in section 7.

1. Previously (see chapter five, section 5. 1. 2), I examined how locational warrants were contested in disputes over ‘true’ community membership in order to ironies others’ claims to voice.

This final section of the analysis also examines contests over membership but here the ‘grounds of inclusion’ (Philo, 1993) as a citizen is at stake: ‘The grounds on which individuals are considered appropriate for inclusion in the category of ‘normal’ person capable of participation in a wider community life (Philo, 1993, p. 194). However, I intend to show that this is not a passive process like for instance checking off items on a list. Instead, following Shotter (1993b) I argue that these extracts illustrate participation by correspondents or speakers in reflexive arguments, reproducing citizenship as a ‘living’ tradition:

A living tradition can be thought of as a historically extended, socially embodied argument, containing what one might call reflexive arguments, that is, arguments about what should be argued about, and why. Thus, to participate in the reproduction of the tradition, one must be able to participate in such arguments.

(p. 193)

If we return to my proposal that inclusion is at stake, my analytic focus will be on how membership, for example particular rights entitlements can be undermined. I shall be arguing that this discursive work serves to manage issues of legitimacy or what is involved in belonging. Moreover, as the ‘argumentative fabric’ (Laclau, 1993) of citizenship is inspected, we shall see that its consensually constituted sense of universal coverage may

be flawed. In the following sub-section I present two examples where Philo's (1993) 'category of 'normal' person capable of participation' (p. 194) is constructed and discuss its implications, that is, how reflexive arguments about inclusion will inevitably construct boundaries between those who are included and those who are excluded.

#### 7.4.1 *'If it was somebody else'*

Extracts 11 and 12 are taken from one of my focus group discussions with police officers. In my analysis I examine the use of what Edwards (1995b) has called 'if-then structures' to make out New Traveller activities as exceptional to those of the 'ordinary citizen'. In both extracts, contrasts are made between the actions of 'ordinary' settled people and New Travellers.

##### Extract 11 (Focus Group 2: 28)

- P3 1> Why should they get away with something  
that the person living next-door to them can't?  
[8 lines omitted for brevity]  
But er, why should they be allowed to drive vehicles on the road,  
which would obviously fail an M.O.T test. And which are lethal,  
you know potentially dangerous to other road users?
- 2> If it was somebody else you would stop them.  
you know, you would have their vehicle in a garage.  
So why shouldn't you apply the same rationale to them?

##### Extract 12 (Focus Group 2: 29)

- P2     Somebody said, yes, arrests were made.  
In fact more arrests than might have been made earlier on.
- 1> For them, if they had been peaceful law-abiding members of society  
then er enquiries would have been made.  
I think at least one of the people involved was a juvenile,  
so they probably wouldn't have been arrested,  
they would have been interviewed, reported and that would have been it.
- 2> So really their destiny is in their own hands and that's the way it blew.

In Extract 11 at arrow 1, the 'ordinary' citizen is described as 'the person living next-door'. This diffuse nominalisation has involved a transformation from the category 'next-door-neighbour' (see Kress & Hodge, 1979). I suggest that this transformation has the rhetorical effect of condensing potentially diverse activities down to an abstract noun. This noun then provides a more effective basis for the 'hypothetical illustration' (Wooffitt,



1992) which forms a part of the contrast structure at arrow 2 ('If it was somebody else you would stop them, you know you would have their vehicle in a garage').

Using this hypothetical example in a conditional *if* clause, the participant is able to present a general activity sequence that, in not referring to specific instances, is difficult to undermine. To be recognisable as non-participatory behaviour, the New Traveller actions presented (not M.O.T'ing their vehicles yet driving them on the roads) were constituted as deviations from the normative principles of citizenship. This activity is also presented as against the common good, 'lethal' and 'potentially dangerous to other road users'. This contrast is framed rhetorically as an injustice, 'Why should they get away with something that the person living next-door to them can't?'

In Extract 12 at arrow 1, we are presented with another broad formulation, the category, 'peaceful law-abiding members of society'. Like the nominalisation in the previous extract, this category is used as part of a contrast structure which this time blurs hypothetical and actual sequences of general activity;

For them, if they had been peaceful law-abiding members of society  
then er enquiries would have been made.  
I think at least one of the people involved was a juvenile,  
so they probably wouldn't have been arrested,  
they would have been interviewed, reported and that would have been it.

(Extract 11, arrow 1)

The '*if-then* structure' (Edwards, 1995*b*) here works in a similar fashion to the conditional *if* clause in extract 11. The only difference being that the respondent invokes a specific 'fact' to help illustrate the action sequence, even though its qualification displays uncertainty ('*I think at least one of the people involved was a juvenile*').

I suggest this subtle management of stake provides an inoculation (Potter, 1996*a*) for the participant against any potential negative counter-arguments. At arrow 2 the respondent finds something else to which he or she attributes the negative outcome of the arrests, the New Travellers themselves, 'So really their destiny is in their own hands and that's the way it blew'.

Extracts 13 and 14 offer further contrast structures placed within a framework of New Traveller nonconformity to public order. Extract 13 animates a different kind of contrast structure where the first part is established at arrow 1 in an 'adjacency pair' (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). Here, New Travellers are constructed as 'not that much removed' from the category 'ordinary caravanners'. This is what Billig (1985) might term a categorisation 'working in the service of tolerance' (p. 98). At arrow 2 the iterative format implies emphatic agreement, the assent transforming the description into a 'fact'.

Extract 13 (Focus Group 1: 19)

- P5 1> They're not that much removed from ordinary caravanners are they?  
 P2 2> They're not really. They're not. No they're not.  
 P5 3> Except that they won't conform with vehicle regs,  
 and they are quite often sympathetic towards the drugs.  
 P2 4> That's what annoys me about it. That's what sort of- They want to be a free spirit.  
 But I've had to be on duty  
 when they've come in to sign on for their unemployment benefit.  
 Actually in the unemployment offices, because they used to kick up so much trouble.  
 I've actually been in on duty to prevent the trouble,  
 knowing that they're going to come in.  
 With a band of social security officers following them around the country  
 to make sure they didn't double claim.  
 5> I think that's what most people find irritating. That they all want to be free spirits.  
 7> But you must provide the welfare for me to be a free spirit,  
 8> and don't expect me to conform with any of the laws of society,  
 such as taxing your car and insuring it and all the rest of it.

Extract 14 (Focus Group 1: 20)

- P3 And I don't think the Travellers can expect to be treated equally  
 as the community that are already *in situ*,  
 if they don't conform to the rules of that community

Yet at arrow 3 the insertion of 'except' alerts the listener to the fact that this consensual likeness is formulated in opposition to a problematic alternative, a 'particularisation expressing prejudice' (Billig, 1985, p. 99). This alternative is presented as a script formulation (Edwards, 1994, 1995b, 1997), for example, 'they *won't* conform', implies something enduring and 'they are *quite often* sympathetic towards the drugs' implies a regular pattern of problematic activity.

P2 follows with a 'second assessment' (Pomerantz, 1984) which again displays agreement with P5, 'That's what annoys *me* about it.', 'They want to be a free spirit'. It



may be noted that this assessment is made more persuasive at arrow 5 by a shift in footing, where P2 exploits the distinction between principal and animator (Goffman, 1979, 1981) and a maximising quantification (Potter, 1996a) 'I think that's what *most people* find irritating. They *all* want to be free spirits'. Following Sacks (1987), I argue that this agreement is sequentially occasioned and between arrows 4 and 5 the speaker orients towards providing experiential grounds as a basis for it (Pomerantz, 1984), 'I've had to be on duty when they've come in to sign on for their unemployment benefit'.

The issue of regularity begun by P5 is then taken up by P2 who produces a further description of New Traveller actions that justifies this characterisation. To do this, a 'three-part list' (Jefferson, 1990) is delivered at arrow 8, 'And don't expect me to conform with any of the laws of society, *such as taxing your car and insuring it and all the rest of it*'. P2 lists two examples plus for the third part 'and all the rest of it', what Gail Jefferson has called a 'generalised list completer'. This list is used here to support the general claim that New Travellers transgress the normal rules of society.

The whole assessment is negative in that again, it is framed as one-sidedness, 'They all want to be free spirits. But you must provide the welfare for *me* to be a free spirit, and don't expect *me* to conform to any of the laws of society'. By 'active voicing' (Wooffitt, 1992) we hear the gist of what 'they' say, P2 has exploited Goffman's (1979, 1981) distinction between principle and animator ventriloquising the New Travellers' words in order to corroborate his or her position.

In extract 14, the territorially-based category against which New Travellers are contrasted are 'the community in situ'. The conditional *if* clause ('if they don't conform to the rules of that community') again acts as a device for scripting an action routine (Edwards, 1995b) where nonconformity results in unequal treatment.

#### 7.4.2 *Negotiating the grounds of exclusion*

This sub-section moves on to examine a slightly different terrain of argument, that is, extracts where correspondents or respondents make relevant the grounds of exclusion. My

analysis of Extract 15 examines how the correspondent mediated the exclusion of New Travellers from welfare rights.

Extract 15 (Letter to Ed., *The Cornishman*, 16 June 1994)

- 1> I don't think I've ever witnessed such a large attendance - estimated at 300, all of whom were unable to get into the main venue, and both annexes.
- 2> The 'message' to those at County Hall, was clear, unanimous and devoid of any political connotations.
- 3> 'We', do not require the CCC (Cornwall County Council) to facilitate 'the needs', provide for, those who have - of their own volition, openly declared a desire to opt out of what 'we' - the majority, know and accept as the norm: civilised society.
- 4> The 'input', of these so- called New Age Travellers into the government coffers that 'we' are obliged to keep filled, is virtually nil.
- 5> The benefits they obtain, nullify the pittance they contribute in return for the use and upkeep of the roads they travel on, the water they obtain 'gratis', the cost of clearing-up the mess and muck they leave behind in their wake.
- 6> Need I say more?

The extract, taken from a letter to the editor of a local newspaper, presents an example of an overt denial of New Travellers' 'needs'. In making such strong claims which deny New Travellers their welfare rights, we hear the correspondent attempting to manage accountability and facticity as well as doing descriptive work to strengthen the case.

Arrow 1 attends to factual authenticity, for example, by expressing the mental state description, '*I don't think* I've ever witnessed such a large attendance', a sense of genuine reflection is permitted. The recalled experience is maximised by the use of the modalising term, 'ever' (Pomerantz, 1986) which makes the description more persuasive. We learn two things from this avowal, firstly that the narrator has knowledge entitlement, having been to the venue before and secondly that the correspondent was a witness to the event. Both these latter points work up the facticity of the account by attending to the credibility of the correspondent's identity.

As another discursive resource, the correspondent presents a significant amount of detail in the description of how the event space was filled. Firstly we are given numbers of those attending, 'estimated at 300', this external quantification may serve to warrant the facticity of the version by building in credence from an independent observer. However,



the description at arrow 1 instructs the reader to treat this as a significant amount of public interest.

Also adding to the success of the maximised quantification is the perceptual re-experience of the space in which the correspondent and others were situated. We hear that not all of these 300, 'were able to get into the main venue, and both annexes'. One possible commonness implication of this working up of numbers attending could be of a high level of general interest in the outcome of the meeting.

At arrow 2, the 'message', saying 'no' to the provision of New Traveller sites, directed to the council is evaluated as a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990), 'clear, unanimous and devoid of any political connotations' which represents the generality of how the 'message' was an overtly acknowledged public consensus, not negotiated, struggled or compromised over. It could also be argued that the list also serves to manage a pattern of stake for such decision-making processes, formulating it as 'out-there' and separate from the correspondent's own stake (Potter, 1996a), the three parts heading off specific potential counter-arguments.

At arrow 3 the correspondent relays the consensual 'message'. The use of 'we' in inverted commas is interesting here, Young (1990) has argued that in newspaper text, quotation marks can be used to present something as recognisably subjective or to create an illusion of objectivity. For 'the needs', 'input' and the phrase, 'so-called New Age Travellers', I would suggest the former, questioning the validity of such claims. However, the function of, 'we' is somewhat confusing in that it implies an 'impartial scepticism' (Young, 1990) with which the agent distances him or herself from a supposedly consensual objective message.

This is the consensual voice of the citizen-public, 'we' - the majority'. 'Civilized society' is constituted as a contract, referred to as 'the norm' from which New Travellers are constructed as having 'of their own volition, openly declared a desire to opt out'. From being members they have chosen to be strangers. This construction is interesting as it maps in the New Travellers, a shift from a private 'desire' to an independent public declaration. The upshot of this is that it relocates New Traveller 'needs' into the personal

realm away from the public realm. This relocating cleverly transforms New Traveller 'needs' into personal difficulties not subject to state intervention on behalf of the collective order (see Smith, 1998).

This argument is supported at arrows 4, 5 and 6 by an extended list:

- 4> The 'input', of these so-called New Age Travellers into the government coffers that 'we' are obliged to keep filled, is virtually nil.
- 5> The benefits they obtain, nullify the pittance they contribute in return for the use and upkeep of the roads they travel on, the water they obtain 'gratis', the cost of clearing-up the mess and muck they leave behind in their wake.
- 6> Need I say more?

(Extract 15, arrows 4-6)

This listing serves to emphasise the generality of reasons, rather than single instances for why the New Travellers 'needs' should not be facilitated and how they are not a part of 'civilised society'. At arrows 4 and 5, New Traveller actions are presented as transgressing 'the norm'. These reflexive arguments about obligations and entitlements allow the identity and the right to speak as 'citizen' for oneself and others, about others. This speaking position, in turn, warrants the participatory act of making oneself heard in the public realm of a letters page of a local newspaper.

Apart from its role in completing the list, 'Need I say more?' also associates a sense of objective rationality with the speaker whilst appealing to the same qualities in the citizen-reader. This rhetorical device works to present the preceding inferences as required by the arguments themselves rather than desired by the correspondent (Billig, 1987). In a way, these rhetorical moves could be said to be designed for the purpose of drawing attention away from the correspondent's stake in the description and accountability for it.

#### 7.4.3 *Challenging governance*

In this final part of the analysis I examine how entitlements for discrete categories of citizens were built up in order to undermine the council's actions by questioning their integrity in prioritising New Travellers needs.



Extract 16 (Letter to Ed., *The West Briton*, 21 June 1994)

How dare Mr Holmes compare sick children and the elderly  
with the New Age Travellers.  
Surely all the money wasted by social services  
on these unsuitable planning applications should be spent on  
preventing the closure of old peoples' homes and education?

Extract 17 (Letter to Ed., *The Cornishman*, 23 June 94)

In the last 18 months  
Cornwall County Council have expended in the region of £100,000  
on the problem of New Age homeless squatters  
and now as reward for the illegal and criminal activities  
perpetrated at United Downs  
propose to construct, at public expense, a municipal ghetto  
whilst at the same time closing old peoples' homes,  
slashing the school repair programmes and improvements etc.

Extract 18 (Letter to Ed., *The Cornishman*, 16 June 1994)

Young couples have to find a deposit for rented accommodation  
or save for a mortgage on poor wages.  
There is no grant money available for them,  
or help from the government,  
yet they are our future.

In all three extracts, discrete categories of citizen are introduced as conduits to help construct challenges to governance. These challenges are accomplished in relation to a backdrop of irregularity. For example, in Extract 16, 'money wasted' on 'unsuitable planning applications' is set against 'preventing the closure of old peoples' homes and education'. In Extract 17 establishing the political identity 'citizen' for the correspondent, precise details are reported about the councils expenditure on the New Traveller 'problem' ('in the last 18 months...in the region of £100,000').

The New Travellers themselves are characterised as 'New Age homeless squatters', perpetrators of 'illegal and criminal activities', the council proposal for a site is constructed as a 'reward' - to build 'at public expense, a municipal ghetto'. For the purpose of comparison, the council's actions towards other citizens 'at the same time' are presented in a three-part list (Jefferson, 1990) where parts (1) and (2) implicate members

of the categories 'the elderly' and 'children' and the third part, 'etc.' acts as a 'generalised list completer'.

- (1) closing old peoples homes,
- (2) slashing the school repair programmes and improvements
- (3) etc.

This listing serves as instances of a general pattern that undermines the councils' actions as inappropriate and to the detriment of the common good. In Extract 18 a challenge to a welfare system that supports the provision of New Traveller sites is accomplished by an analogy with the unrequited financial needs of 'young couples' (articulated as 'grant money' or 'help from the government').

In terms of welfare rights these extracts work up members of the categories, 'sick children', 'the elderly' and 'young couples', as more entitled to help than New Travellers. Although members of the categories 'the elderly' and 'sick children' are immediately recognisable as vulnerable or prioritised, the odd one out here is the category, 'young couples'. Being a member of this category is not usually treated as sufficient to warrant help from the government. In Extract 18, I argue that the needs and entitlements relating to accommodating members of the category 'young people', are built up in opposition to debate over the provision of New Traveller sites, with the inference being that helping the former would be for the common good as 'they are our future'.

#### 7.4.4 *Summary*

My last analytic section has examined how sedentary-citizens contest the grounds for the same treatment or inclusion of New Traveller-citizens, in what Shotter (1993b) might call reflexive arguments over the tradition of citizenship. I found that this was achieved through a series of contrast structures and categorisation work. For example, I explored the use of if-then structures which provided a descriptive basis, in terms of scripted action sequences, for how routine or exceptional police actions were when dealing with New Travellers or 'ordinary' citizens.

Through examining categorisation work in the extracts, I also found that prejudiced themes could be mixed with tolerant themes, for example in Extract 12, a tolerant



categorisation was followed by particularisations expressing prejudice. Rather than ironizing New Travellers' claims themselves, I found that challenges were directed at council actions, thus making the speaking position as 'citizen' available. I argued that this speaking position both warranted voice or the act of letter writing (whether as a private letter of complaint or a letter to the Editor of a local newspaper), and enlivened participation.

## 7.5 Summary and conclusions

Exploring arguments from police officers and other settled people about New Travellers has provided a starting point for identifying some different characteristics of the topic of citizenship revealing its nature, boundaries and content. I found that two main discursive figures ('the taxpayer' and 'the public') were used as rhetorical devices in the production of 'citizens'. I suggested that these devices absorbed differences into a common universal status - the 'obedient' citizen endowed with entitlements - and were used as a form of mobilisation (to which correspondents often aligned themselves) through which complaints, demands and claims were articulated.

However, such discursive figures are also hazardous, for example, 'the taxpayer', can only claim to represent the particular grievances of citizen-workers. This becomes a prickly issue when such a figure is used to suppress any recognition of the entitlements or needs of other individuals and groups (the group in question here are New Travellers but this may also apply to homeless people, unemployed people and so on).

Moreover the locating of these arguments with anonymous discursive figures in the public realm not only attends to issues of accountability but also allows them to be framed in terms of the common good. The good of the local citizen versus the rights of the individual. As Ted Kilian (1998) has argued;

The individual alone is un-represented, hence without political power. In Hannah Arendt's terms, such a person does not have the 'right to have rights' and does not exist in the 'world of appearances', the political space of the public

(p. 118)

However, that common good or public realm may be infused with multiple power relations.

My analyses also flagged the ways in which the identity 'citizen' was made available by the making of complaints about the actions of those who do the governing, for example by invoking interest on the part of officials. This offensive may be another way of deflecting attempts to undermine the credibility of the correspondents themselves. However, I interpreted this finding in terms of linking the themes of citizenship and governance where the tradition of citizenship involves participating in reflexive argumentation about the normative principles that constitute 'civil society'. However, calling those who govern to account also involved correspondents managing their own accountability.

Normative principles were also found to be constituted by the use contrast structures involving New Travellers and 'ordinary' citizens where the grounds for same treatment and inclusion were contested. Category work was also used in apportioning blame and constructing a normative social order in attempts to identify and define council responsibilities. In other words, correspondents may be heard to be actively shaping the community.

The making of complaints via letter writing to local authorities or newspapers may be described as a format for doing citizenship or part of a participatory process. As Hall and Held (1989) have argued;

From the ancient world to the present day, citizenship has entailed discussion of, and a struggle over, the meaning and scope of membership of the community in which one lives

(p. 175)

In some of the extracts, letter-writers formulated territorially-based membership as a resource through which to mobilise their complaints. How this was achieved has been discussed more extensively in chapter five. If membership in a same community implies that an individual lives within the limits of the community, it provokes the exclusion of certain groups of people on the basis of their lack of attachment to place. As noted by



Steve Pile (1995); 'such people include the homeless, the traveller (new age, gypsy, nomad and so on) and the stateless' (p. 201).

Sedentarism may therefore be reflecting a 'politics of closure' (Hall & Held, 1989). The consequences of argumentation in debates concerning minority groups such as New Travellers then may not only be reproducing citizenship as a living tradition but also as an ideological tradition. In light of the work reviewed in chapters two and three, my final chapter returns to discuss the contributions of all three analytic chapters and how they relate to wider issues.

## 8

### Concluding Arguments

In this final chapter I reflect on the thesis as a whole and offer up some concluding arguments. To start with I will present a summary of findings. This section is meant as a synopsis of everything that has gone before. I follow this with an evaluation of what I feel this research project has genuinely contributed to the four corners on which its foundations or sub-texts lie: Social psychology; environmental psychology; New Traveller research; and discursive psychology.

I then grapple with some of the thorny issues that a discourse-based study of place inevitably raises. Here I discuss where I stand regarding the fault-line between relativism and realism, structure and agency. Included here is a discussion of the limitations of my research design and methodology. This thesis will end by considering the possible future topics for a discursive psychology of place. I also signpost possibilities for future work.

#### 8.1 Summary of findings

The original object of this discourse-based study was to explore peoples' talk and texts concerning Britain's newer Travellers. It has ended up as a study of the social psychological themes of 'identity' and 'belonging', and their connection to 'place' - a concern that has not traditionally been considered as central to social psychology. As an analyst, my goal here was not to get 'captured' (Ashmore, 1996) by one side in the contemporary debate about New Travellers, constrained by a specific hypothesis, but to



establish a version 'of what was going on in it *for the participants, in its course*' (Schegloff, 1997, p.174, emphasis in original).

My first step was to generate some initial material for analysis. This material was generated by running focus groups with police officers. In preliminary analyses of the focus group transcripts I became interested in the work that was being done in the selection of place formulations heard in police renderings of events concerning New Travellers. Having identified my phenomena of interest, I generated a wider corpus of interviews with landowners or their representatives who had excluded New Travellers from their land, letters to the editors of local newspapers and private letters of complaint to the local council, which I then searched for further examples to develop my analysis.

Once I started reading relevant literature from sociologists and human geographers regarding sedentarist reactions to New Travellers I became interested in what was going on in the debate *for other analysts*. This literature is reviewed in chapter two. Here, I identified interesting notions, such as 'sedentarism' and the 'ideology of rootedness', that had been brought to bear in sociological and geographical analyses of these debates.

Like any author, in the construction of this story so far, I have focused on coherence and thereby focused *off* the intellectual embarrassment of any incongruity that may have happened along the way. However, in this case, a temporary lapse has been turned around to suit my advantage. In a moment of confusion I attempted to apply the 'exogenous' or analysts notion of sedentarism to a selection of extracts, only to find it no longer in point (Barnes, Auburn & Lea, 1998).

Yet all this was not in vain. My own thinking and discussions with others about the interface between sedentarism and the theoretical and analytic perspective of discourse analysis led me to develop a disciplinary critique addressing practices and texts in social theory and environmental psychology (cf. Potter, 1997a). My critical move here was to argue that in following a 'discursive regime' of realist and empiricist rhetoric (Shotter, 1993b), social theorists and place attachment researchers had failed to theorise that the need for rootedness or attachment to place was being done *by* their own texts and those of their participants. Consequently I argued that although this work was valuable in



highlighting the importance of belonging to processes of self-definition, it has partially sustained the myth of 'homelessness' and pathologised residential mobility.

Returning to my analytic commitment to studying place formulations, in chapter three I provided a critique of humanist and social representations approaches to the role of language in creating place. Narrative is a central concept in humanist approaches that see places and our relations to them as being built through creative human practices. However this approach fails to adequately explain how and why people may wish to do this. Although it also emphasises the role of discourse, the social representations approach does not explain communication as action. The construction of place representations here is seen in social representations theory (Moscovici, 1984) as 'primarily a perceptual-cognitive process' (Potter & Edwards, in press, p. 13).

By laying bare the theoretical features of discursive psychology, I introduced the possibilities of a discursive psychology of place by arguing that its view of construction would make the study of place discourse more analytically tractable. As an example, I presented an early conversation-analytic and more recent discursive studies of how, and why, place may be used as a resource for discursive action. In chapter four, I outlined the analytic principles of discursive psychology, and how these were brought to bear on the selection and generation of materials (focus group transcripts, interview transcripts, public and private letters) and on the procedures by which I conducted my research.

In chapters five, six and seven, I applied this analytic programme to extracts from these materials, demonstrating how place formulations can be used as flexible resource to do ideological work. This work has included the following: the building-up and undermining of territorially-based memberships as warrants for the making of complaints; how conventional knowledge of what happens in a place can be used as a normative base against which exceptional actions can be made out as transgressive; and how the territorially-based political identity of 'citizen' can be mobilised as a warrant for blaming. Each analytic chapter had its own distinctive focus yet they were all inter-related, overlapping with and building upon each other. This structuring reflects my endeavours to



develop a detailed reading of the material and it reflects the nature of discourse itself where everyday orientations to these phenomena are blended.

Chapter five took participants' orientations to membership and belonging as its central topic. I demonstrated that participants' arguments for the defence of rural space against New Traveller settlements used location as a domain of warrant for their complaint making. For example, the place-related identity of participants such as their proximity to a settlement and territorially-based category memberships were built up to effect their credibility. I also demonstrated how contrasting claims to having such a warrant could be undermined. Moreover, from the home, it seemed, 'it is still generally legitimate to exclude those with whom one does not wish to mix' (Kofman, 1995, p. 130). Rather than disinterested descriptions of 'what is out there', I argued that a show of knowledge about a place (for example, place names or local geographies) is flexibly specifiable, action-oriented and locally organised (cf. Drew, 1978).

In chapter six, I examined the construction of New Traveller activities in terms of their status as episodic items, instances and scripted generalities that participants oriented to as transgressive. Here I demonstrated that, and how, the structure of conventional knowledge about what happens at a 'sort of place' can be invoked to set up a contrast with, or generalisation from, specific actions. In some of these examples, what stands out are the details that do not conform to expectations about behaviour. Such details, argues Edwards (1994), 'make sense, both in perceptual and discursive terms, both as the script-relevant kinds of things that would be *noticeable*, and also as the kinds of things that would be *interactionally* relevant' where participants are orienting towards evaluating New Traveller activities (p. 227, emphasis in original). Implied in these descriptions is a sense of the proper and the 'out-of-place'.

Rather than arguing that this kind of talk reflects an underlying social representation that New Travellers are out-of-place in the rural idyll (Halfacree, 1996), or, that it reflects a form of environmental 'knowing' where a 'discrepant' setting has been recognised resulting in individuals avoiding certain places (Proshansky *et al.*, 1983), my contribution



here is towards an understanding of the local interactional business that may be done in the selection of certain place formulations for topic as it were.

In chapter three, I disagreed with Dixon and Durrheim (2000), that 'certain discourses of place and identity' (for example, picnic sites as family spaces) 'enter into and shape' peoples' 'lived experience of places' (p. 37). Yet I agreed with Dixon *et al.*'s (1997) previous interpretation of such talk as the strategic exposure of a series of transgressive presences. In chapter six, I focused on what was analytically tractable, demonstrating that script invocations may be interactionally occasioned, a procedure *through* which some activity or some persons can be talked to as belonging in one place and not in another. In other words I indicated how transgressions are done in talk and texts about New Travellers.

I also provided two reworked examples of place attachment; the research topic reviewed in chapter two. In chapter two, I explored work aimed at understanding both the process and the feelings involved in place attachment - how it may be linked to regulation of the self, and how disruption in attachment to emotionally significant places can be the cause of deleterious psychological effects. However, in chapter six, I demonstrate that, and how, place attachment can be used as an interpretative resource. By this I do not mean that expressions of place attachment are used as a resource in some self-conscious reflection on the meaning of home, but that it is interactionally occasioned and built up as a resource that is oriented to specific actions.

The final focus of chapter six was on how descriptions of locations were used, in a variety of ways, to document New Traveller actions and the character of events. My analyses explored how the descriptive categories employed focused attention on a particular range of phenomena: environmental damage; excessive noise; and pollution. I argued that this descriptive work served as defensible grounds for the inferences that these New Traveller actions and events were against the common good and morally reprehensible, thus worthy of complaint and 'urgent action'.

Chapter seven had the practice of citizenship as its focus. In this chapter I demonstrated how location formulations can act as an defensible basis from which to



mobilise the political identity of 'citizen'. In my analysis I illustrated how the particular features of the identity category 'citizen' (such as paying taxes) are displayed with respect to the interactional and inferential concerns generated in the interaction. One way in which bargaining power was achieved was by the employment of anonymised discursive figures such as 'the hard working taxpayer'. By the use of these discursive figures, participants were able to orient to category-bound features of the 'citizen-body' such as rights, entitlements and responsibilities. This orientation to responsibilities was displayed by talk of council actions as being of 'considerable cost to the ratepayer' and local government officials were asked, 'whose interests do you work for?' One common concern was generated, in various ways, by the invocation of interest on the part of the council. Here, using a variety of resources, letter writers attempted to undermine council actions as biased and against the common good, thereby presenting themselves as part of a victimised public.

I also demonstrated how the twin themes of citizenship and governance were entwined in the content and organisation of the letters. I argue that the social category, 'citizen', is a '*situated identity*' (Zimmerman, 1998, p. 90). By this I mean that it is brought into being by participants engaging in activities, such as letter-writing, that display an orientation to, and an alignment of particular identity sets, in this case: citizen-complainant and local government officer; or citizen-complainant and local newspaper editor / local newspaper reader. Working with the former alignment, a letter-writer might exhibit an orientation to the situated identity of the recipient as a local government official, which includes their accountability to the public. At the same time a letter writer might orient to his or her own identity as a citizen-complainant, who, in that capacity, may feel a need to account for the status of the complaint.

I argued that citizenship is an interactionally-occasioned, rhetorically organised and action-oriented practice. This is further demonstrated by the contrastive work done by participants where the grounds of *inclusion* are at stake. Here, the activities of New Travellers are made out as inconsistent with the 'average', 'law-abiding' citizen or the 'ordinary caravanner'. The grounds of *exclusion* were provided by constructions of

consensus and New Travellers choosing to 'opt out' of society. Finally, challenges to governance were made by undermining their prioritising the needs of New Travellers over those of other identity categories hinted at, such as 'old people' and 'children'. Here, I demonstrated how the characteristics these identity categories afford, and what consequences follow, were displayed by the letter-writers themselves (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b).

## 8.2 Contributions to research areas

My work in this research project has implications for four different areas: Social psychology, environmental psychology, New Traveller research and discursive psychology. I will deal with each of these in turn.

### 8.2.1 *Social psychology and citizenship*

Citizenship and belonging are topics that have not traditionally been considered as central to social psychology. Yet as my analyses have demonstrated, 'who' can belong 'where' is a prejudiced topic of argument - part of the 'cultural politics of everyday social life' (Shotter, 1993b, p. 187). How citizenship is understood has a key role to play in determining which individuals or groups are regarded as legitimate members of society. I argue that citizenship should be a substantive focus for social psychological research in a bid to promote a greater understanding of the dynamics of both a sense of belonging and responsibility, and social exclusion.

My own exploration of what citizenship and belonging mean in practice, has served as a meeting point for the sub-disciplines of social, environmental and political psychology. This multi-vocal focus on identity and belonging, space, and citizenship has allowed me to examine what Hall and Held (1989) have outlined as 'citizenship's three leading notions: membership; rights and duties in reciprocity; real participation in practice' (p. 175). My analyses of textual and conversational practices have demonstrated why, and how, the identity of 'citizen' may be derived from participants displaying an



orientation to any or all three of these notions, their relevance depending upon the interactional business being performed.

From the ancient world to the present day, citizenship has entailed a discussion of, and a struggle over, the meaning and scope of membership of the community in which one lives

(Hall & Held, 1989, p. 175)

For example, my analyses have demonstrated that, and how, participants use location formulations to warrant the making of complaints.

I agree with Hall and Held (1989) wholeheartedly when they claim that ‘the issues around membership - who does and who does not belong - is where the *politics* of citizenship begins (p. 175, emphasis in original). If this is where the politics begins it often ends in social exclusion. I have demonstrated how the practice of citizenship is potentially hazardous in the way that it can be hijacked as an invisible cloak from under which private or group concerns may be recast as a public struggle for the common good. In my analyses of how citizenship operates in practice, this kind of voluntarism or ‘for-the-common-good’ was demonstrated as an interpretative resource for doing ideological work. Citizenship is therefore not just mediating New Traveller exclusion in the political system, but also in the everyday practices of social life.

As argued by Hall and Held (1989), ‘rights can be mere paper claims unless they can be practically enacted and realised, through actual participation in the community’ (p. 175). Some might say that letters are indeed ‘paper claims’ yet I argue that they should be seen as enactments of citizenship. Moreover that the letter-writing seen here has been part of a dialogue that is simultaneously and integratively constitutive of the practices of citizenship and governance.

To use ‘real participation in practice’ as an example of participants’ orientations, visualise a typical letters page in a local newspaper. My analyses of public (and private) letters suggests that writing to the editor of a local newspaper (or to a local government official) may be part of the very momentum of citizenship itself. Here then is one thing that people do when they are being citizens - these letters perform a reflexive function. People are arguing about a topic whilst at the same time arguing about how to argue about



it (Billig, 1991). Here a person can form opinions whilst engaging with debate and being an active part of 'the public'. At the same time, the writer is helping to constitute a political space. Following Shotter (1993*b*), we might call this kind of citizenship a 'living ideology', a new tradition of argumentation. However, it should be noted that the arguments printed in 'Letters to the Editor' pages are of course subject to editorial policy.

My analyses also develop the contemporary position on the identity of 'citizen' as having 'no essence' (Hall & Held, 1989), as an 'imaginary identification' (Donald, 1996) and 'citizenship' itself as a produced or 'imaginary topic' (Shotter, 1993*b*). My development offers a discursive point of purchase. I concede that Shotter's use of the term, *imaginary* (cf. Said, 1990) is compatible with discursive psychology's constructivist position on knowledge and reality, and its key assumption that these constructions should be seen as *versions* of inner life, the world and so on. However, this terminology is also ambiguous in that it may easily be confused with the *imagined* (cf. Anderson, 1983; Edley & Wetherell, 1999), which is traditionally a category of mind, 'a picture in our heads' which implies a world of personal constructions 'under the skull' (cf. Speer, in press *b*).

Even more problematic is the discursive take that reference to mental events may be built up as a warrant to do rhetorical business (Gergen, 1989). As Gergen (1989) puts it, 'one may denigrate others' claims to voice by elucidating their infirmities of the inner region' (p. 74). From this angle, like a mother describing her child as having an 'imaginary friend', for an academic to describe something that lay members do as 'imaginary', is to imply that some group categorisations have a monopoly over what is real and what is not (cf. Wetherell & Potter, 1992).

Instead, I have demonstrated that 'citizen' is an identity like any other (e.g. woman, mother, daughter), 'a display of, or ascription to, membership of some feature-rich category' (Antaki & Wetherell, 1998*b*, p. 2). As argued by Schegloff (1997), if participants orient to this identity as one they 'separately and collectively embody' it will be 'appropriate to, the product of, but relative to, the perspective brought to the matter at hand' (p. 166). I have taken to understand citizenship (a person's conduct as a citizen) as 'the formation of opinion and the self-definition of a community within civil society'



(Donald, 1996, p. 172). In this sense I agree with Shotter (1993*b*) that citizenship is not ‘a new ideology in a top-down power play by an elite group’ (p. 202) nor is it already ‘out-there’ in the world, but it can be used to do ideological work. In this example citizenship has been used to hold local government accountable for its actions and in the social exclusion of New Travellers.

### 8. 2. 2 *Environmental psychology*

Compared to the standing of social psychology, environmental psychology is like a poor relation. Yet my foray into its literature has shown it to be a secret storehouse of useful resources. Environmental psychology’s inherent spatial sensitivities have also provided a smooth passage into the halls of human geography.

The studies I have chosen to critique concern the phenomena regarding the person-environment relationship including the constructs of ‘place attachment’ and ‘place-identity’. My critique has been of a disciplinary nature (Potter, 1997*a*) whereby I have argued that the majority of researchers have positively valued attachment to place over residential mobility thus playing a part in the constitution of a sedentary norm. I have also argued that ‘conventional’ treatment of talk and texts detailing the person-environment relationship as a reflection of underlying cognitions has, in using these cognitions to explain behaviour, failed to address the discursive *orientation to action*. In more simple terms, although researchers have attended to the way that attachments to place or place identities are done *in* participant’s discourse, they have not attended to how they are done *by* them (cf. Potter, 1997*a*).

All three of my analytic chapters contribute to an understanding of how, and why, places become important for self-definition. Therefore, I feel that a discursive approach overcomes my critique of environmental psychology by demonstrating ‘the value of treating discourse as *occasioned* (in this material, in talk about New Travellers), as *action-oriented* (to perform actions such as blaming and neutrality), and as both *constructed* (for example from locational formulations) and *constructing* (for example of membership and belonging)’ (adapted using my own examples from Potter & Edwards, in press, p. 19, emphasis in original).



### 8. 2. 3 *New Traveller literature*

As argued in chapter two, existing approaches to the study of New Travellers and their relations with settled society may be found in sociological and geographic writing. My critique here mostly focused on the work of Tim Cresswell, Keith Halfacree, Kevin Hetherington, Chris Rojek and David Sibley. Where I chose to take issue with this work was not concerning the constructed and contested nature of space, an assumption which they are well aware of. Nor was it their ideas concerning the relationship between space and the formation of identity, the relationship between insiders and outsiders, or an ideology of rootedness. All of these are pertinent topics. Where I took issue was with the distinctive existence that 'objects' such as the 'normal adult' or 'marginal' or 'outsider' identities are taken to have.

For example Rojek treats the category 'normal adult' (underpinned by the socio-spatial characteristics of being propertied and in regular paid employment and so on), as an unproblematic description, it is 'out-there' for all to see. Yet Rojek has brought this category to his analysis as an explanatory resource. What is distinctive about my work in relation to what has come before is that I have been able to demonstrate how these 'objects' are both constructed and constructing and how they may be both epistemologically oriented and action oriented. For example in chapter seven, I illustrated that, and how, police may construct specific versions of others' identities such as the 'ordinary' citizen and the 'New Age Traveller' in order to achieve an explanation of their actions (cf. Potter & Wetherell, 1988).

Cresswell (1996) talks about the world consisting of different places such as public places, supermarkets and so on, and that there are '*expectations* about behaviour in these places' (p. 3, emphasis added) that are important in the 'construction, maintenance and reproduction of ideological values' (*ibid.*, p. 4). To most social psychologists, this talk of taken-for-granted knowledge about how the world works might imply some perceptually based model such as script theory (Mandler, 1984; Schank & Abelson, 1977). However in chapter six, I demonstrated how participants' descriptions of events identified the activities of New Travellers as deviating from category-predicated rules and norms. At



the same time, they were also able to display their own or others' actions as following some normative or expected order.

When Sibley (1992) talks about the socio-spatial construction of certain groups like New Travellers as outsiders, he does so with reference to 'the ways in which distinctions are made between the pure and the defiled, the normal and the deviant, the same and the other' (p. 121). However, Sibley (1992) has approached this topic of study using notions of media representations of Gypsies and New Travellers as deviant groups and how 'the way in which space is organised affects the perception of the 'other'' (p. 117). For example, Sibley argues that marginal places, such as waste land where Gypsies or New Travellers might find an opportunity to camp, confirm their outsider status. However, in my material there were examples where New Travellers had camped on 'picnic' or 'historic' sites, who were still identified as deviant.

Sibley (1992) has also argued that 'spatial structures can weaken or strengthen social boundaries' (p. 113). I argue that this type of 'spatial constructionism' is problematic, spaces which Sibley (1992) describes as 'homogenous or uniform' (p. 114) are not inherently prejudiced, nor are they analytically separable from the nature of the discourse that enlivens them. I develop this issue more fully in the next main section. But regarding Sibley's (1988) main ideas laid out here, I propose that my contribution of worked examples provide a more adequate answer to his earlier call for 'the study of purification at the microscale' (p. 419), or how the boundaries between the acceptable and the unacceptable are drawn.

#### 8.2.4 *Discursive psychology*

In this section I reflect on what my research project has contributed to discursive psychology. In chapter two I engaged in an interdisciplinary critique of place attachment research practices and theoretical texts. On one level I could say that by introducing a new topic I had expanded the scope of discursive inquiry. Yet by doing so I could lay myself open to a charge of 'so what?' One could do an 'off-the-shelf' disciplinary or indeed an interdisciplinary critique of many different topics without a better reason than 'just-

because-they-are-there'. However, in the series of chapters that have followed this critique, I have been reaching towards the secondary goal of introducing a discursive psychology of place.

Under this guise, my main contribution to discursive psychology has therefore been to offer a theoretical reworking of place. In particular, the ideas of Tuan (1980, 1991) and the social representations approach to place making exemplified by Stokols (1981), Stokols and Shumaker (1981) and Devine-Wright and Lyons (1997) have furnished a sort of bridge - a bridge that I explored in chapter three - between cognitive representational interpretations of talk about place and a constructivist focus on the content and organisation of place discourse. My analyses in chapters five, six and seven have demonstrated the possibilities of a more fine-grained approach to talk about persons and places. In other words, that, and how, references to place are flexibly worked up and action-oriented, on and for the occasions when they are used.

What is distinctive about my own contribution is that it pulls together and builds upon the work already accomplished by Dixon and colleagues, Drew, Macnaghten, Taylor and Wetherell, Schegloff, and Widdicombe and Wooffitt. As argued by Schegloff (1972), 'When speakers in a conversation [or writers in texts] make reference to a place, they use some term or formulation of it' (p. 80). I advocate the analysis of place formulations as elements in situated discourse for a number of reasons outlined below.

Firstly, place formulations deserve special consideration because they are almost omnipresent in talk and texts. Events and actions happen somewhere and who we are is intimately related to where we are, where we have been or where we are going to. As recently argued by Cresswell (1999):

...place and space are fundamental forms of categorisation. Philosophers (most famously Kant) have insisted that the two most basic dimensions of life are space and time which form the basis for all other forms of categorisation.

(p. 226)



Moreover, Edwards (1997) has claimed that, 'the script-invoking citation of place names is a very common discourse phenomenon' (p. 145), and Potter (1996a) that 'location categorisations can be particularly important' (p. 185).

Secondly, the analysis of how and why people formulate place is worthwhile because the explanations given in environmental-psychological and humanist-geographical literature reviewed here are limited. Place formulations here are seen as reflections of peoples' disinterested, perceptual understandings of themselves and the world. Whereas the discursive work already mentioned, including my own work in this research project, have demonstrated otherwise, as has social constructionist work in human and political geography (in section 8. 3, I discuss how this work compares to my own position).

Thirdly, because the selection of place formulations from a collection of terms is a central resource for invoking common sense knowledge such as taken-for-granted relations between place and actions. For example, Drew (1978) demonstrated how in descriptions of violence and civil disorder, knowledge of religious geography was used as an interpretative resource to characterise the scenes in such a way as to provide the basis for an accusation. More specifically, these references to place were being used to flag peoples' religious orientations and to indicate the pattern of attack and invasion.

Drew's (1978) study and others (also see Drew, 1992; Edwards, 1994, 1995; Schegloff, 1972; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995) have shown that, and how, formulating place has other implications, in the uptake, for how it accomplishes and exhibits the particularities of an interaction such as actions, reactions, dispositions, motives and other psychological characteristics. For example talk about being moved around from place to place as a child may be used as a warrant for dysfunctional behaviours. My own work, and also that of Dixon and his colleagues has also indicated how place descriptions may be used to build communities and designate outgroups without explicit prejudice.

Fourthly, the study of place formulations is important because what we can learn about the work people do when making these references can be of help both in understanding other domains, and conversational and textual practices in general. For example, in a parallel with what Edwards (1999) says in his analysis of emotion discourse,

analysis of place formulations should have some theoretical and analytic purchase for discursive enquiries into ‘...how discourse works, in detail and in context, and also on the functionally oriented design of verbal categories’ (p. 288). In particular, the direct parallels between the general, formal structures of place and temporal formulations also briefly discussed by Schegloff in his 1972 paper (also see treatment by Taylor & Wetherell, 1999).

However, in advocating attention to such a specific domain there are always potential pitfalls. For instance, the distinction between place discourse and non-place discourse is not an easy one. To offer an example, Schegloff (1972) has highlighted the point that ‘place terms can be used to formulate objects other than place’ (p. 81). Likewise, such a distinction carries the suggestion that the latter is less important or less likely to be a part of peoples’ practices. Yet I would argue that the history of discursive research up to this point negates the portent of such a suggestion.

A discursive psychology of place would also have to ensure that the topic of place was not simply being made omnirelevant by the analyst. It would remain that references to place were being made relevant by the participants themselves by being invoked, oriented to, subverted or ignored.

Another potential pitfall is that by taking a constructivist stance to place discourse, I lay myself open to charges such as the denial of the materiality of places, and the limits this materiality lays down on our constructions, and the denial of peoples’ meaningful experiences of place. In a bid to address these issues I discuss them as fully as I can in the section that follows.

### 8.3 Issues requiring clarification

#### 8.3.1 *Relativism and realism*

One of the most relevant questions I have anticipated in putting forward a call for a discursive psychology of place is, ‘What will be the ontological status of place?’ or ‘Can we really reduce space to discourse?’ Before I begin to discuss the issues raised by these



questions I would like to present an illustration of the kind of thing I am talking about. This illustration is taken from a letter to the editor of a local newspaper which may be read as the author reflecting on the material consequences (in terms of farmers' and council reactions) of the repeated visits of New Travellers to Cornwall:

Meanwhile dozens of ancient tracks and pathways are blocked by boulders, earthworks or ditches. An ancient heritage is lost possibly forever.

(Letter to Ed., *The Cornishman*, 23 June 1994)

To divorce it from its context, this is the sort of claim (about the materiality of things like rocks and boulders) that is often invoked in 'common-sense objections' (Collins & Cox, 1976), or 'bottom-line arguments' concerning how far relativism should be allowed to go regarding 'what may be treated as epistemologically constructed or deconstructible' (Edwards *et al.*, 1995, p. 26). To return to my illustration, these material things ('boulders, earthworks and ditches') hint that there is another world, beyond endless Council meetings and residents' objections to the presence of New Travellers, where the material consequences speak for themselves.

Even though this world is described by words, they are so successful that the writer may as well have sent in photos of him or herself, standing and pointing at the objects themselves. Objects such as 'boulders, earthworks and ditches' have an 'obvious' out-there-ness that Edwards *et al.* (1995) have termed a 'Furniture argument', in other words, like tables and chairs, they invoke a 'reality that *cannot* be denied' (p. 26, emphasis in original). Similarly, the appeal to 'an ancient heritage', as 'lost possibly forever' is equally as powerful.

Yet Edwards *et al.* (1995) might argue that this is more of a 'Death argument', in that it invokes a 'reality that *should not* be denied' (p. 26, emphasis in original). In other words, this defensive rhetorical reference to physical objects / description of space invokes common-sense knowledge to protect itself against attack by constructing the undeniable. As Edwards *et al.* (1995) argue: 'Thus positioned, they lend their robustness to some more contentious issue' (p. 27). Physical objects, spaces and places may therefore become discursively visible as elements in versions of the world constructed through talk and



texts. This explains how references to place are usually taken as given entities (Macnaghten, 1993; Cresswell, 1999) and perhaps how they may be used as a flexible resource to do ideological work. I hope that my discussion of the above illustration has shown how relativism is more of a critique of the rhetorical practices of realism than an opposing position (Edwards *et al.*, 1995).

Similarly, advocates of social constructionist actor-network theory such as Bruno Latour (1987) have 'started to question the coherence of the very distinction between the 'social' and the 'non-social'' (Potter, 1996b, p. 128). Actor-network approaches 'do not argue that we need to replace one spatial temporal frame, say the Euclidean, with another, say the relativistic. It is rather in their world no such frame exists' (Bingham & Thrift, 2000, p. 299) and 'things' can be counted as speaking for themselves.

There are of course other 'proper' positions that I should mention. Critical social theorist Edward Soja (1985) claims that social space (the social production of space) should be incorporated into existing modes of thought, that is, 'the physical space of material nature and the mental space of cognition and representation' (p. 92). In his 'transformative materialist interpretation of spatiality' these three spaces are claimed to 'interconnect and overlap' (Soja, 1985, p. 93). This is not unlike environmental psychologist David Canter's (1977) earlier theory that places are constituted by the 'relationships between actions, conceptions and physical attributes' (p. 158).

To return to the questions asked at the beginning of this section, 'What will be the ontological status of place?' or 'Can we really reduce space to discourse?' I can now provide my answers. Although places are graphically visible in space, they are not *analytically* separable from the nature of the discourse that enlivens them. The objectivity of references to places is given by defensive rhetoric and the resources that construct it, and to the degree that they vary, so we find that these references are differently constructed. Relativism can offer scholarly scepticism of realist references to place as well as being open to reflexive analyses of its own rhetorical practices.

The key assumption in discursive psychology, that discourse is central to social life, enables the walls between talk or texts and context to be broken down: 'The barrier



between 'inside' and 'outside' is an artificial one, for there is an easy flow between the two' (Folch-Serra, 1990, p. 261). In a discursive psychology of place, we would need to focus our enquiry on 'how participants analyse context and use the product of their analysis in producing their interaction' (Schegloff, 1972, p. 115). This leads me on to another question raised by exploring the link between the spatial and the social, that is, whether talk and texts are dependent on 'outside' contexts, such as the physical world.

### 8.3.2 *Structure and agency*

Some academics have argued that the emphasis on the role of language in social constructionist approaches (including discursive psychology) has meant that other significant elements of human life have been neglected. These neglected areas include 'the ways in which the possibilities and constraints inherent in the material world always already shape and inform the social constructions we live through and with' (Cromby & Nightingale, 1999, p. 2). Therefore, in amongst the whole discourse and materiality debate, my call for a discursive psychology of place inevitably brings up the issue of structure-agency. Does the material organisation of places play a part in our formulations?

The effect of material structures on peoples' constructions has been explored in human-geographical research. For example, Rob Shields' (1991) notion of 'social spatialization' considers the social construction of the spatial to be constituted by 'discursive and non-discursive elements, practices and processes' (p. 7). Unlike most social constructionist psychological writing on this issue, much of the '*spatial constructionist*' approach in human geography has taken the form of empirical studies. These studies have attended to the differences that varying geographies make to constructing social difference.

For example, in a study of working women in Worcester, Massachusetts, Pratt and Hanson (1994) argued that social divisions between men and women, and within women as a group, were reinforced by spatial arrangements. Similarly, in a study of race and residence in Britain, Smith (1989, 1993) found that the geographical positioning of marginal groups 'actively affects future employment and housing options' (Smith, 1999,

p.17). In these studies the external geographical situation of these constructions is simply part of the method. It is a pre-existing, 'out-there', stable object of consensual identification, '*unproblematically known by the analyst[s]*' (Edwards, 1996, p. 63, emphasis in original).

In discursive psychology, language is seen as the active medium in and through which we construct selves and worlds. Therefore we *wield* agency through language (or sometimes deny its contingency in strategic moves, for example see Widdicombe & Wooffitt (1995) and Wooffitt (1992)). I argue that through our descriptions and accounts, we can strategically establish the 'out-there-ness' of places by employing reifying discourse to portray the absence of our own agency and intentionality. Or equally, we may use ironizing discourse to present others descriptions and accounts of places as interested and therefore agentic.

Similarly, we wield structure in what Potter (1997c) has called, 'stories of social organisation' (p. 146). This may be seen in some of the letters where New Travellers are constructed as choosing to opt out of our 'accepted' sedentary society. Wetherell and Potter's (1992) extensive study *Mapping the Language of Racism* may be seen as a good example of how a social landscape may be created by discursive acts, 'social structure becomes part of interaction as it is worked up, invoked and reworked' (Potter, 1997c, p. 147).

By saying this I am not advocating a voluntarist approach where these formulations are done gratuitously, without any kind of obligation or persuasion. Instead of some free play of meaning, I see the work done in formulating place as rhetorical, perhaps part of our engagement in 'open-palmed playfulness of witcraft' (Billig, 1987) but also action-oriented, in other words, not just inconsequential chat but 'talk-in-interaction' (Schegloff, 1989). As Vivien Burr (1995) has pointed out, Gergen's (1989) idea that we may actively use certain domains of warrant against competing voices also works against charges of voluntarism (see chapter five).

In essence, I advocate ethnomethodologist Harold Garfinkel's position on context as summarised by Heritage (1984):



The situation of action is essentially transformable. It is identifiable as the reflexive product of the organised activities of the participants. As such, it is on-goingly 'discovered', maintained, and altered as a project and product of ordinary actions. *Situational constitution is essentially a 'local' and immanent product of methodic procedure rather than a result of 'pre-existing' agreement on 'matters of fact'*

(p. 132, emphasis added)

What I am proposing then is that references to place should be part of the analysis, available to be studied as *participants' practical concerns*.

Dixon and Durrheim (2000) have argued that 'a discursive approach to place-identity will require forms of analysis beyond the analysis of language, particularly if the workings of power are to be exposed' (p. 42). However, I believe that a conversation-analytic aligned discursive psychology of place would be able to pick up some of the important issues around space, ideology and power in the small details of social life, without having to go beyond talk or texts (cf. Hutchby, 1996).

#### 8.4 Limitations of the research project

Like any approach, the one I have chosen to take in this research project may be open to criticisms. Most of these points have been raised previously in my discussion of method in chapter four or my clarification of theoretical issues in the preceding section. However, I feel it would be constructive to group them together in one section. Therefore I shall briefly sketch out and deal more directly with some of the potential objections below.

Critical discourse analysts might claim that my relativist position denies the external reality of places and physical objects such as the earthworks, big rocks and height restriction barriers that block car parks and lay-bys to New Travellers' vehicles in some areas of Devon and Cornwall. Equally, these analysts may claim that my mix of micro-sociological and discursive analytic methods have failed to pick up the weight of the history of sedentary-nomadic relations. However to avoid undue repetition, I feel I have

covered my own position here adequately, when I discussed the issues of realism-relativism and structure-agency in the previous section.

On the other hand, conversation analysts might argue several points regarding the ability of the material generated for this research project to bear the analytic weight placed upon it. These points all stem from my particular 'micro' approach to analysis (cf. Edwards, 1991, 1995*b*, 1997, 1999; Speer, in press *a, b*; Speer & Potter, 2000). Firstly, it could be argued that the materials generated for this study are not all naturalistic. It is becoming increasingly clear that focus group interviews and one-to-one semi-structured interviews are now thought of as 'got up' by the researcher to simulate natural interaction (Potter, 1997*c*). Indeed these research methods are thought to be 'only genuine interaction for that sort of setting' (Potter & Wetherell, 1995*b*). However, this does not rule out the claims that both interviews and focus groups can be dealt with as interactions, rather than repositories for 'collecting' data (see Greatbatch, 1988; Myers & Macnaghten, 1999; Widdicombe & Wooffitt, 1995; Wilkinson, 1998*b*).

Potter and Wetherell (1995*b*) even extend this line of thought to the following question: 'Perhaps records of actual arguments between married couples might be thought of as more natural or authentic than fan letters or parliamentary proceedings' (p. 217). This may mirror the work of the originator of conversational analysis, Harvey Sacks (1992), who started off his career analysing the latter sort of texts before moving on to concentrate his efforts on the informal (and therefore more authentic?) nature of the former. Yet we should take care here that we are not judging the worth of our materials by analysts' unproblematically accepted notions of context or authenticity (cf. section 8. 3. 2 and Edwards & Potter (1992*b*), Lynch & Bogen (1996), Widdicombe (1993) and Widdicombe & Wooffitt's (1990, 1995) arguments regarding how authenticity is *accomplished* in interaction).

Surely, the naturalness or otherwise of any context should only become relevant for the analyst when it occurs as a participants' concern? I believe that the lack of 'casual talk' (Edwards, 1997, p. 84) in the materials generated for this study, does not detract from its contributions to the four areas set out in section 8. 2. As an analyst I did not choose to



topicalise participants' orientations to setting in the focus group and interview transcripts. Alternatively a number of the letters were more obviously oriented towards situation as they displayed an alignment to the particular identity set of citizen-complainant and local government officer / editor of local newspaper.

Another criticism might be based on my choice to utilise a very basic transcription system for the focus group and interview transcripts. Some might argue that this lack of details such as pause length, overlapping speech, laughter within speech, intonation, speed, volume, in and out-breaths, and elongations could obscure some of the business of interaction. However, apart from the length of time it takes to include this high degree of detail, I feel that the many symbols detract from the readability of the extracts. Moreover, that such endeavours may bring analysts to trip over their own epistemological commitments in their eagerness to provide a definitive reading. As Potter (1996b) has argued, 'a transcript is not a neutral, simple rendition of the words on a tape' (p. 136).

Related to this criticism is my use of letters as well as dialogue. Although letters might be described as naturalistic, they are monologic materials. Therefore, I could not rely on participants' understandings of previous turns of talk to check the adequacy of my claims. Although I was unable to exploit this turn-by-turn proof procedure, as argued by Wooffitt (1992) this is not an intractable problem (also see Potter, 1997c). The purpose of writing letters is to allow the writer to produce accounts and descriptions, recount experiences, or often in this case, formulate complaints. This is done for the benefit of the recipient (s) or in the case of letters to newspaper editors, also for the readers.

Writers rely on culturally available resources (such as the use of certain identity categories) and display 'sensitivity to, and reasoning about, the interactional consequences of the utterances so produced [such as orienting to issues of stake and inoculating against discounting (Potter, 1997c)], although there may be no recipient participating [directly] in the interaction' (Wooffitt, 1992, p. 70). For example, the writers often begin by emphasising or building up category memberships (in this case often territorially-based such as, 'resident') which imply particular entitlements. In other words the writers were orienting to possible uptakes concerning their competence.

Although I have attempted to pick out the most salient points here, I am sure that I have not exhausted all the possibilities for critique. I believe that presenting the points I have has been a useful exercise in that it has allowed me displaying the reflexive and rhetorical quality of criticism. In other words, criticism has the dual nature of being about an external topic whilst simultaneously debating the ways of arguing themselves. I now move on to the final section of the thesis where I identify some pointers to future work in light of the knowledge I have built up from undertaking this research project.

### **8.5 Signposts to future work**

1. I would recommend further consideration of both the possibilities and the disadvantages of a discursive psychology of place. As part of such a project I would like to see detailed analyses of ways in which references to place can be done through discourse to become a part of a range of situated practices. For example, 'doing distinctiveness' could become a subject for study with a possible focus on how the city/country distinction is done in talk and texts. In addition, I believe there is room for further articulation of how attachment or non-attachment to place can be built up to furnish a rationale for inclusionary or exclusionary practices. I would envisage a discursive psychology of place to also include theoretical considerations such as a recovery of how influential social theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin and others have appreciated space (for example see Folch-Serra, 1990; Holloway & Kneale, 2000).
2. Although we often rely on the deployment of visual tropes to describe places, hearing is another sense that may be involved in the presentation of space (Bal, 1985). Drawing on my analysis of how noise was constructed as polluting in chapter six, I recommend an exploration of how considerations of place also put the nature of sound and the aural sensing of the environment on the agenda. This would include theoretical consideration of sound and a viable programme to enable a detailed analysis of the ways in



which sound and space may be related (for an example see Ingham, Purvis & Clarke, 1999).

3. Spatial and temporal dimensions are often entwined in talk and texts. Moreover, the same arguments for studying place in section 8. 2. 4, may also be used to support a similar study of time, if, as an aspect of context, it is demonstrably relevant to the participants being examined (for a study of time as a discursive resource and how it is linked with place constructions see Taylor & Wetherell, 1999). This venture would include attention to the many ways by which time can be formulated (for analytic devices see Bal, 1985; Schegloff, 1972).

4. Citizenship is a real part of peoples' concerns right now. For example, this summer, the disturbing murder of eight-year-old Sarah Payne precipitated much debate on whether to change the law to allow convicted paedophiles to be publicly identified. This debate, addressing the rights of the everyday citizen in relation to the citizen-pervert, has been the most recent example of the diversity of arenas in which citizenship is being claimed and contested today. This concern with citizenship is also reflected in the fact that Parliament has made active citizenship education compulsory from 2002. If we are going to re-invent politics for a new generation, to debate with them about our identities as citizens, this needs to be thought through very carefully.

James Donald (1996) has argued that there are three different questions about citizenship that may be asked:

1. *Who are* citizens (and, by the same token, who are not?)
2. *Who is* the citizen?
3. *What are* citizens? What do people *do* when they are being citizens?

(p. 172)

In chapter seven, guided by participants' orientations to questions one and two cited above, I allowed question three, regarding the practice of citizenship, to be the focus of my analysis. I think that the best way to broach this subject in lessons would be to begin by

asking these questions, 'What are citizens?' and 'What do people do when they are being citizens?' This way, instead of coming down on one side or another, children would learn how to 'enter arguments about the meanings that are actually constructed, and what they are actually used to do' (Potter, 1997a).

Looking back on this research project as a whole, I argue that my interdisciplinary approach has been fruitful in allowing 'new alignments and critical possibilities' (Potter, 1997a, p. 64) for discursive psychology. Crucially, the concluding arguments set out in this chapter have not been constructed to arrive at some final destination. This would mean abandoning the key tenets of discursive psychology such as its alignment with a relativist metatheory and its 'anti-foundationalist position on knowledge' (Potter, 1997a, p. 55). Instead I have now reached a point where the opportunity for further travel, or continuing argumentation regarding talk and texts about New Travellers is possible. Following Potter and Wetherell (1995a), the best reception that I can hope for this thesis is that it will 'sharpen up issues at stake and generate debate' (p. 216).



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## Appendix A - Transcription Symbols

The following transcription symbols, as used in this thesis, are based on those developed by Gail Jefferson for the purposes of conversation analysis (see Atkinson & Heritage, 1984). It should be noted that the list below is an abbreviated one. It does not reflect all the features of talk which conversation analysts find important in interaction. However, as argued in chapter eight (section 8. 4), I feel that along with other considerations of reliability and validity (chapter four, section 4. 5. 4), the basic system I have adopted is sufficient to indicate the business of interaction.

Data extracts are clearly set out in the text and cited as coming from the data corpora used in this project. I specify the data set and the page of the transcript from which it was taken (for example, Interview 1: 29). With the letters, I first specify the type (Letter to Ed. or Letter to DCC). For the former the title of the newspaper and the date published are then given (for example, Letter to Ed., *The Cornishman*, 4 June 1994). For the latter I give the letter number and line number (for example, Letter to DCC: 1: 6). There are also occasions where I have presented extracts as coming either from published sources (such as a newspaper) or from other people's analytic work.

Regarding information not in the public domain, person and place names have been changed to preserve anonymity. The symbols such as 'P1' etc. and 'I', indicate the participant number and the interviewer. Numbered side arrows (for example 1>) are not



transcription features, they have simply been added to draw analytic attention to particular lines of text. The key to other transcription features is presented below.

<u>Underlining</u>	Signals emphasis
WILD MAN	mark speech that is obviously louder than surrounding speech
Oh::	colons mark the prolongation of the sound immediately before, the more colons, the more prolongation
?	a question mark indicates a questioning intonation
!	an exclamation mark indicates a exclaiming intonation
Yes.	a full stop marks a completing intonation (not necessarily a grammatical comma)
then,	a comma marks a continuing intonation (not necessarily a grammatical comma), or may be used in enunciating lists
[ ]	square brackets indicate how many lines of talk/text has been omitted for brevity
-	a dash marks a noticeable and abrupt termination of a word or sound
=	an equals sign marks the immediate 'latching' of successive talk, whether of one or more speakers, with no interval.
(.)	this marks a hearable, short pause
((laughs))	clarificatory comments
(guess)	doubt about a word or a phrase, if no guess plausible, these brackets are left empty

## **Appendix B - Focus Group Schedule**

### **Opening question**

Name, rank and station.

### **Introductory question**

Think back to all the experiences you have had that have involved the policing of New Travellers:

What was;

- a) the reason for police involvement
- b) the kind of policing used
- c) the size of the operation (local, force-wide, inter-force)

### **Transition question**

Do you feel that the size of the operation effected the kind of police tactics used?

### **Key questions**

What is the one issue you consider to be most important from your experience concerning the policing of New Travellers?

How would you feel about the fact that some incidents concerning New Travellers have been described as police harassment?

What do you think about New Travellers' claims that they can regulate themselves?

What would you say to someone who said that in many cases, the policing of New Travellers is a waste of 'manpower' and resources?



**Ending questions**

All things considered – state your final position on the policing of New Travellers.

Is this an adequate summary?

Have we missed anything?

Thank-you very much for your time.

## Appendix C - Interview Schedule

### Opening questions

- 1 Do you own or manage any of the five types of land that the Government wishes to increase access to?

Prompt: Mountain, moor, heath, down and registered common land.

Follow up: Which types?

- 2 What types of land do you think people should have access to?

Prompt: Those listed above, developed, agricultural, grazing, forest, woodland, riverside, canal side, cliff, foreshore etc.

- 3 What other types of land do you own or manage?

- 4 How long have you been a farmer/landowner/representative?

### The countryside

- 5 How do you see yourself in relation to the countryside?

- 6 What other interests do you consider there to be in the countryside?

- 7 Do you see yourself as competing with any of those interests?

- 8 How would you describe the countryside?

### Access provisions

- 9 Are there any rights of way (footpaths) across your land?



9 Are there any rights of way (footpaths) across your land?

Follow up: To what extent are you aware of their use?

10 What do you think of the Country Code?

11 What degree of genuine “altruistic” or de facto access do you allow on your land?

12 How would you feel about charging for access if you were able to?

### **Traveller incursions**

13 Have you ever exercised the right to exclude people from your land?

Follow up: How many times?

14 Could you tell me about this/these incidents?

Prompt: Who was involved, what happened, why were they excluded?

15 Are you aware of any other farmers or landowners in Devon or Cornwall who have excluded New Travellers from their land?

Follow up: What are the main objections?

16 Are there any networks of support for farmers in such incidents?

17 Do you feel the same way about smaller groups and those who travel without vehicles?

Prompt: Those travelling with horses, donkeys, mules or hand carts?

18 Are you aware of any farmers or landowners in Devon or Cornwall who have allowed New Travellers to camp on their land?

19 Are they looked upon unfavourably by the farming community?

20 Do you think a statutory approach to open access would encourage Nomadism?

Follow up: How?

**Ending questions**

21 What do you think about Government restrictions on outdoor activities?

Prompt: Quiet and non-obtrusive

22 Do you believe there is a place for New Travellers and low impact settlers in the countryside?

Follow-up: Could you explain your answer?

23 To what extent do you think that with a voluntary approach to access, some landowners may operate according to their own discretion?

24 How do you think the countryside should be used?

Thank-you very much for your time

*Do you know of any other farmers/landowners/individuals who have had experiences with New Travellers who would be willing to participate in this research?*



# Appendix D - Consent Form

My name is Rebecca Barnes and I am researching the issue of access to the open countryside as part of my PhD in psychology at the University of Plymouth. By responding to my initial letter, you have already agreed to be a participant in an interview at your home to discuss your views on the consequences of legislating to create a 'Right to Roam'. By signing this form you are giving your formal consent to participate in this interview, in the full knowledge that you have the right to refuse to participate, and knowing that you have the right to withdraw your responses from the study at any time (upon request I would be willing to provide you with a copy of your transcript so that you could delete any part you chose to). There are 24 questions on the interview schedule which may take up to one hour to complete. Our discussion will be recorded but will be treated as confidential. Some of the material collected may be used for discussion in my PhD thesis or academic publications arising from it, however every effort will be made to protect the anonymity of your responses. If this intended use changes I will contact you for your further permission.

Signature of Investigator.....

Signature of Participant.....

If you need to contact me about any matter concerning this research

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# Appendix E - Sample Letter

For the attention of \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Rebecca Barnes and I am a postgraduate researcher at the University of Plymouth. I am writing to you in your capacity as \_\_\_\_\_ with reference to current Government discussions on access to open countryside in England and Wales. As part of my own research I am seeking individuals in Devon and Cornwall who would be happy to discuss their views on the consequences of both a voluntary approach to access and any legislation to create a 'Right to Roam'. In particular, I wish to interview individuals who have had to deal with new Traveller settlements and have either been happy to let them stay or have exercised their right to exclude them. I understand from \_\_\_\_\_ that you have had to deal with several such incidents. I would be very grateful if you would be willing to discuss some of your experiences with me in confidence as part of this research.

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Barnes



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