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Dancing With Difference

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“Dancing with Difference”.


By

Michael J Lenney.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award
of Bachelor of Social Science (Youth Work) Honours.
At the Faculty of Community Studies, Education and Social Science.
Edith Cowan University. October 1999.

Declaration.

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature. 

Acknowledgements.

Dr Howard Sercombe has been an inspiration to me during this research process. As a supervisor he has given me unconditional support, advice and criticism. I admire his dedication to his work and to mine. For this I am grateful, and sincerely thank him for his patience and humour. To all cabinetmakers: train your carpenters well and treat them with humility.

This work is dedicated in loving memory to my father James William Lenney. Who died during the completion stages of the thesis. May he rest in peace and find his happiness tending roses in the Garden of Eden.

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Abstract.

This is a symbolic interactionist study into behaviours surrounding social interaction. The study has two components, asking how people with able-bodies interact with a young person with a disability, and how does the young person, who is non-verbal, respond to and interpret such interactions?

Participants were observed and recorded using a digital camera whilst interacting at a social venue. The able-bodied participants were not aware of the camera at the time of filming, and were approached after the filming to participate in the study. Seven participants were later interviewed and asked to explain what they were aware of as they interacted. Lyndon, the young person with a disability, was involved in the planning and implementation of the research from the beginning. Most research undertaken on interactions between able-bodied people and people with disabilities has not been able to move past the way in which people with disabilities are de-humanised during the interaction process (Jahoda, Markova & Cattermale, 1989). Little attention has been given to the possibility that able-bodied people are unsure of how to go about interacting with people with disabilities (Soder, 1990).

The study found that able-bodied people were concerned about being seen to stare at Lyndon (because staring is rude) and thought that asking personal questions about his disability would be impolite. There was a fear of drawing undue attention to him and his disability during the interaction. Participants interacted with Lyndon using a set of projections and abstract assumptions of how they saw him. They constructed these through what they observed in his physical appearance and body language. The themes used to interact with him were; the chosen one, public awareness, pity or tragedy and sexually safe. Lyndon was unable to alter these constructions through dialogue and instead had to accept them or reject them.

Lyndon also projected a set of assumptions onto participants he interacted with, yet during the interactions he was unable to convey to the other what they were. In this context, each encounter is masked by people's inability to understand and interpret not only theirs, but the others intention and motivation behind each interaction.

Chapter One.

Introduction.

You cannot escape looking at people as you go about your every day business. However, you may not admit that you were looking, and in some cases you may try to conceal it. Looking is a complex business. Social researchers are concerned about what it means to observe and react to people who are different to the constructed norm (Seidman, 1997). People with disabilities as a group are often looked at because of their difference (Goffman, 1963), and the looking is often perceived as hostile by the person being observed. There is an emphasis in current literature that people with able-bodies exhibit negative attitudes towards people with disabilities. This leaves unexplored the possibility that people with able-bodies are uncertain of how to interact with people who are seen to be different to them. The uncertainty surrounding an interaction may be due to a fear of breaking socially constructed norms that govern social interactions (Soder, 1990), or to the uncertainty of the reaction from the other (Morris, 1991).

I have been accompanying young people with disabilities in the community for six years. This entails taking them out to a variety of social venues. We have been to nightclubs, concerts, cinemas and to an assortment of eateries. When I first started working with youth in this way I was unprepared for the exposure and attention directed towards the young person and myself. My instant reaction was to block out others and direct my attention towards the young person. They became my primary focus, and all others were superfluous. Whilst this practice meant that I became familiar with the young person's way of coping with the outside world (as opposed to their home environment) I was aware that I was cutting off interactions between them and others. My role, in most cases, was to act as a mediator between the young person and society, and what I was doing was isolating them and wrapping them up in cotton wool. My work needed to incorporate more, it needed to incorporate promoting interaction, yet still maintaining the work practice that sees the young person as the primary constituent.

About three years ago I started accompanying Lyndon on social outings. Lyndon has cerebral palsy. In this context, I observed that while some people seemed curious about Lyndon and often chose to come over and approach me, others chose to walk by. People looked briefly at him as they walked past, and in some cases they looked at both of us. On these occasions when I made eye contact I tried to read their look. I was questioning their look. I wanted to make sense of their reaction, and of mine to theirs. I also observed people staring and when seen to be staring some seemed embarrassed. I am not using the term 'staring' to indicate hostility, but that the person looked at us for an extended period of time with intensity.

I have undertaken this research to understand what happens for people with able-bodies as they observe and interact with a person with a disability, and how the person with a disability observes, interprets and responds to people with able-bodies who interact with him. I am aiming to develop an understanding of how people construct disability and how this construction affects their decision to interact, or not. The study has provided some indication to how social constructs of behaviour direct interaction between two subjects.

The title 'Dancing with difference' reflects the initial research design where nightclubs were to be the venues for filming. When nightclubbing, Lyndon and I love to dance, and like others, we each have our own style. When the nightclubs pulled out of the research I widened the parameters of the design to incorporate social venues. The title remains, but has taken on a new meaning. It is no longer a pun upon nightclubs and dancing, but describes the strength in a person's ability to stand alone in their own right. The title reflects Lyndon's ability to dance with difference.

Significance of the study.

People with disabilities are rarely given a voice in the research process (Davies, in Oliver, 1996). People with disabilities are often treated as passive victims in the research process where researchers interview and observe people with disabilities

with little, or no regard for their daily activities. In this research Lyndon is provided a forum to explain how he understands and interprets the interaction process between himself and others, and what this means for him.

There is currently little research that seeks to understand interactions between people with able-bodies and people with disabilities within a social context. Blaser (1996) believes that societies in the future will include more, and not fewer people with disabilities. Blaser points to the advances in urban life where people are exposed to industrial, health and sporting injuries that can lead to disability. The reality is that disability is constantly being redefined, and more, not less people are being included within the disability label. People who are labeled with a disability find themselves separated and isolated from the mainstream (pp. 40-42). The paradox is that their social needs are better met when they are included into community life (Ward, 1996).

This has meant that independent living options have flourished and community living has provided the launching point for community access for people with disabilities. However, the assumption underpinning deinstitutionalisation is that people with disabilities will be accepted by people with able-bodies as they are integrated into the community (Wolfensberger, 1992). The success of deinstitutionalisation rests on the premise that people who are perceived to be different to the constructed norm are openly accepted. This is the crux of the integration debate, and the question that arises from this debate is whether people with able-bodies are in fact accepting of people with disabilities in a way that incorporates them into the rhythms of life (Nirje, 1976).

It is therefore necessary to understand why people with able-bodies have such difficulty in coming to terms with disability. It is important to undertake this research so that an understanding of the interaction process can be made. The research is significant both for people with able-bodies, and people with disabilities, in identifying what barriers may be affecting the interaction process between the two groups.

Who is Lyndon?

The study focuses on the interactions that occur between Lyndon and people with able-bodies. Lyndon has asked that his name be used so that he can own his story. I asked him to participate in the study due to his striking physical image, and our ability to communicate with each other. I have known Lyndon for three years.

Lyndon is twenty-two years of age. He has cerebral palsy and is non-verbal. He has control over his head, eye movement and is able to operate a computer via his right knee using a single action jellybean switch. Lyndon uses his head and facial expressions to communicate. Although he is non-verbal he is able to make deep guttural sounds, and he uses these in several different ways. He uses them when he is angry; when he wants attention; or when he is communicating emotions. The volume and tone change depending on the situation.

Lyndon has been tutored since he was eighteen. Bill has been a constant companion for Lyndon and has tutored him in the use of the English language and has worked on developing Lyndon's writing skills. This has included long lessons in the use of grammar and sentence construction. Prior to being Lyndon's tutor Bill was employed as his high school teacher. Bill has consented to assist me when I read back to Lyndon his analysis. This is to ensure that I have not mis-quoted him.

Lyndon uses a Toshiba laptop. He has been using computers for about nine years. The software he uses is 'Bankstreet writer'. Lyndon is capable of operating the program using the single action switch. The program allows him to scroll down and across the screen. When the program is opened the cursor automatically starts moving and Lyndon stops it using the switch. The cursor scrolls through the alphabet which appears on the screen in a grid format. The grid is divided up into five rows and six columns. The cursor moves down each row and when the desired row is reached he stops the cursor. The cursor then moves across the row in columns. Lyndon stops the cursor on the letter he wants and this is then placed at the bottom of

the page. Lyndon repeats this process until several letters have been picked. By this time the software has thrown up several choices of frequently used words for Lyndon to choose from. If the word Lyndon wants is there he can stop the cursor on it and it is then placed into a sentence box that allows Lyndon to construct sentences from the words he has chosen.

The process is extremely time consuming. It takes Lyndon about forty-five minutes to construct a sentence of about ten to twelve words, taking into consideration errors that may occur. The difficulty for Lyndon is that sometimes he fails to stop the cursor, and has to wait until it finishes scrolling through the page before it starts over. This is frustrating. The software allows Lyndon, with help, to place words into a voice box. He can place up to a hundred words into different categories which he can activate using the switch. Essentially this program allows Lyndon to have a voice. The downside is that the hardware is not portable and is in need of updating. Occupational therapists have in the past ignored Lyndon's computer needs and have removed the brackets from his wheelchair that hold the switch in place. Lyndon is waiting for his system to be updated. When it is, his system will work off infrared technology. However, funding needs to be secured before he is able to purchase the necessary bits of hardware and software. Lyndon has not used his computer for over two years and is afraid that he has lost a high percentage of his computer skills.

Lyndon uses an electric wheelchair when at home and operates it via a head switch. When outside he uses a manual wheelchair that is contoured to his body. Lyndon is able to indicate 'no' and 'yes' by using his head and facial expressions. Due to being institutionalised his exposure to experiences is different to mine, and there is often some work needed in explaining some concepts to him, and some work in explaining some of his concepts to me.

Lyndon also uses a communication book that is made up of several hundred words. The book contains words that describe his feelings and needs. He has memorised the exact location of each word and can quickly direct you to where it is in the book. The communication book allows him to ask questions and to engage in conversation. We have found that this is extremely time consuming, so we have devised a process

of elimination when we converse, and in most cases I take cues from his body language. The process of elimination can only work if the person communicating with Lyndon knows about him, his family, likes and dislikes. The person also needs to be able to interpret Lyndon's head movement and facial expressions when he is indicating yes and no. This may take some time and I have, on occasions, needed to verify that I have got it right.

The elimination process we use works through guesswork. Lyndon indicates he has something to say. He does this by either moving his body violently and at the same time opening and closing his mouth. This usually indicates that what he has to say is very important and is urgent. The other way he indicates that he has something to say is by looking at me intensely. I then ask him "do you have something to say to me, or ask of me". I then repeat the 'say' and 'ask' bits slowly so that he can indicate yes or no to them. Depending on what it is he wants to communicate I then move to the next line of questioning. For example, Lyndon indicates that has something to say, I then ask him whether it is personal, about the hostel, or about you going out. I repeat these options slowly and Lyndon indicates yes to one of them, or no. If he indicates no I then verbalise more options, for example; staff, family, or friends. This process continues until I have put into words what it is Lyndon wants to say.

The other way we communicate is by me watching Lyndon's eye and head movements. When Lyndon wants the radio on he will look at his music system. When he wants to talk about church, God, or people he knows in heaven then he looks up. This is where I can go off at a tangent. On one occasion Lyndon was looking up and I asked him if he had something to say about heaven, or god. He said no. I then went on to ask whether it was about the church, or about going to church. He said no. I was then not sure of what he wanted to say. I went through flying, holidays, and people overseas. He continued to say no. I then started to look about and saw some posters on the wall, and asked him whether it had anything to do with them. He said no. I then started to repeat some of the options I had already used. He continued to look at my head. I asked him if there was anything wrong with it, and proceeded to run my hands over it self-consciously. He laughed. He kept looking at my head, and used his eyes to look up. Finally I asked if he wanted a haircut. I had hit the nail on the head. This

episode took one hour, and it highlights the persistence required from both of us when communicating.

Chapter Two.

What has been reported of the interaction process between people with disabilities and the people with able-bodies?

The desire to stare.

People with disabilities present an image that is different to the perceived norm, defined in terms of being “able-bodied” (Oliver, 1996). People with able-bodies see disabilities as undesirable, and people who have a disability as different to them. In the context of disability; when a person encounters another who exhibits difference there is often a desire to stare. The desire to stare is often linked to the difference in their physical image. ‘One of the greatest trials of the physically handicapped is that in public places they will be openly stared at, thereby having their privacy invaded, while at the same time, the invasion exposes their [perceived] undesirable attributes’ (Goffman, 1963: 86). In this context people with disabilities tend to see staring as an invasion of their privacy. In general staring is seen as a negative action that implies hostility (Goffman, 1963).

Jahoda, Markova and Cattermale’s (1989), people with disabilities reported a resounding awareness of being stared at, and in the process, dehumanised. ‘They have identified with the stigma attached to their disability and do so on a daily basis’ (p. 153). What these authors go on to suggest is that people with disabilities are “aware of [a] global construct of disability [that is] distinct from their ... [own, yet is] imposed upon them by social prejudice” (p. 154). This review suggests that interactions between people with disabilities and people with able-bodies take place using codes that are socially constructed, and which are couched in negativity (Zola, 1991).

What Goffman and Jahoda et al. fail to do is define what staring means. A definition offered for staring reads; ‘to look or gaze fixedly, often with hostility or rudeness’ (Collins English Dictionary & Thesaurus, 1993: 1128). This definition implies that staring in most cases is to be interpreted as hostile by those being stared at, and that staring is rude. What then is rude? The definition for rude is ‘insulting or uncivil: discourteous, impolite... obscene, rough or harsh in ...behaviour’ (p. 1010). This definition only seems to reinforce the hostile aspect of staring, that as a behaviour, is to be frowned upon. From this it appears it is impolite to look fixedly upon another person.

Langer, Friske, Taylor & Chanowitz, (1976), have found that when a person with an able body encounters a person with a disability the person with an able body is taken by surprise, and the desire to stare violates social conventions that say staring is rude (p. 452). These authors state there is conflict between the 'desire to stare' and the 'desire not to stare' (p. 453). This conflict results in discomfort. To avoid discomfort a person with an able body would rather avoid a person with a disability than engage in a conversation with them.

Langer et al's. research goes some way to suggesting that negative reactions to difference are not based on prejudicial attitudes alone. In the case of people with disabilities there is evidence to suggest that their physical and mental difference may cause others to avoid them because they do not know how to react to this difference (Soder, 1990), or how to negotiate the communication barrier if one exists. When avoiding people with disabilities individuals may seek other distractions to avoid an interaction. People with able-bodies do this to lessen the feeling of avoidance directed at people with disabilities (Goffman, 1963: 138).

According to the literature, what has become apparent is that people with able-bodies may not have the necessary social skills for interacting with people with disabilities. There seems to be a desire to stare, and avoid someone who is perceived to be extremely different to themselves, and this difference is perpetuated in the stereotyping and myths surrounding people with disabilities (See Gilson, Bricout & Baskind, 1998; Kleinig, 1980; Langer, Fiske, Taylor & Chanowitz, 1976).

Dealing with difference.

One way in which people deal with difference is to construct parameters for the difference so that they can make sense of it. This social construction of difference, where people are often grouped together, can lead to the development of negative stereotypes. According to Sullivan, stereotypes refer to 'inadequate and often inappropriate mental pictures of groups of people that are not based on observation, experience, analysis or validation. Stereotypes include prejudiced attitudes; they

foster intolerance, fear, hatred, aversion and revulsion towards an alleged class of people. [Stereotyping people tends to] ignore individual differences' (Cited in Muus, 1996: 97). The negative stereotypes attached to people with disabilities relate to deficiencies: for example, dependency on others, an incompleteness, and a biological inferiority to people with able-bodies (Zola, 1991). Prejudice and stereotyping influence the interaction process between people with able-bodies and themselves (Roper, 1990: 245-246).

Whilst prejudice and stereotypes do affect the interaction process, Soder, using Langer et al's. (1976) research suggests that difficulties are not all about prejudice. People with able-bodies are unsure of how to go about interacting with people with disabilities because they are concerned about breaking social norms that govern the interaction (1990). People with able-bodies avoid an interaction with people with disabilities because they feel uncomfortable in the process. They are unsure about the person's social experience, what they can say, and are unsure of how to negotiate the communication barrier when one exists.

If this is the case how can the interaction process between people with disabilities and people with able-bodies be improved? If 'public awareness [of disability] correlates with favorable attitudes' (Lippman, 1972: 7), then interaction between people with able-bodies and people with disabilities will be enhanced with constant contact. This approach underpins the policy of placing people with disabilities into the community setting. The success of integration hinges on community acceptance (Brown & Smith, 1989) and community acceptance hinges on positive individual interactions taking place between people with able-bodies and people with disabilities (Wolfensberger, 1992).

Yet there is strong evidence to suggest that community acceptance has not developed as human service professionals had hoped it would. People with disabilities who interact with people with able-bodies are aware of the barriers between them. The negative terms associated with disability seem to undermine the interaction process. People with able-bodies are often patronising in their remarks, or are unsure about what to say and often remark about how brave, or wonderful the person with a

disability is. People with disabilities want to be accepted as themselves and not through pity. Yet, at the risk of being assertive or aggressive, people with disabilities seem to accept these remarks used by people with able-bodies during the interaction process (Morris, 1989).

Woodill (1994) offers another insight as to why people with disabilities have difficulty with communicating with people with able-bodies. When interactions occur 'the voice of a person with a disability may be marginalised by the reactions of others' (p. 207). What Woodill is saying is that people with disabilities are at the mercy of the other's construction of what it means to have a disability. Popular culture influences people's reactions to people with disabilities. This often reinforces negative stereotypes, and takes away the voice of the person with a disability. In this context people with disabilities are often victimised and their self-definition is related to their disability.

Human service agencies have attempted to negate the negative barriers to interaction through employing people to befriend people with disabilities (Lutfiyya, 1991). However, in most cases, it is the naturally occurring interactions that produce long lasting relationships (Wolfensberger, 1992). It is apparent that for natural interactions to occur, the barriers preventing such interactions need to be dismantled. Roper (1990) found that an interaction was less likely to occur where a person has difficulty in communicating (p. 246). The negative perceptions people with able-bodies have of people with disabilities are easily reinforced over positive perceptions, and are resistant to change (pp. 245-246). What this means is that negative perceptions will persist no matter what the person with a disability learns to do. Their disability will always, to some, be seen in a negative sense.

It appears that people deal with difference through constructing a belief system based upon their cultural and life experiences. In general people tend to draw upon their belief system when interacting with others who are perceived to be different from them. This belief system then acts as a foundation when interacting with others. They may avoid the other or engage with them based upon their assumptions of what

the other is like. This concept is supported by the sociology of acceptance (Taylor & Bogdan, 1989).

Sociology of acceptance.

What then determines whether a person with an able body will interact with a person with a disability? It appears that people with able-bodies have constructed a set of images and behaviours they associate with disability, and draw upon these as they interact with people with disabilities (See Humphrey, 1999; Coras, 1994; Ivring, 1994; Corbett, 1991 & Taylor & Bogdan, 1989). Taylor and Bogdan introduced the 'sociology of acceptance' (1989, p. 21) where interactions were 'not based on the denial of the disability or difference, but rather on the absence of impugning the disabled person's moral character because of the disability' (p. 27). Taylor and Bogdan found that some relationships formed between the people with disabilities and people with able-bodies are based on the acceptance of difference. They found that there was a connection between a person's spiritual belief and their motivation for connecting to someone who has suffered, or who has been wounded. The two other categories which motivated a connection between people with able-bodies and people with disabilities were based on a person's humanitarian concern, and identifying with mutual likes and dislikes (pp. 30-32).

Conclusion to chapter.

In general researchers and authors (See Langer, Friske, Taylor & Chanowitz, 1976; Morris, 1991; Gilson, Bricout & Baskind, 1998, Sacks, 1973, 1989, Horwood, 1987) have highlighted the negative aspects of public responses to disability. Often there is the view that people with disabilities are socially inept and unable to participate as full members of the community (Ward, 1996). Slee and Cook, when discussing why young people with disabilities are disadvantaged in society suggest that 'society ... continues to have difficulty with difference' (1993: 35). If the concept of difference is negative then an interaction is less likely to occur (Humphrey, 1999). If there is apprehension about the social codes of behaviour surrounding an interaction then again an interaction is less likely to occur (Soder, 1990). However, if a person has a strong spiritual belief, and believes in creating a more just society, then an interaction is more likely to occur. And if the person recognises a mutual like, or dislike, then again this may act as a motivation to interact with a person with a disability (Taylor, Bogdan, 1989). What is absent from these theories is whether people with disabilities want to interact with people with able-bodies based on the same motivations.

Chapter Three.

Theoretical framework.

There are several theories that could be used to explain what is happening as people interact. For example, 'The construct of The other' (de Beauvoir, 1949; Said, 1978) explains how difference is constructed by those groups who seek to maintain their position, in this case, the way people with able-bodies have constructed disability. The second framework is 'symbolic interactionism' (Bulmer, 1969) which seeks to explain the use of symbols in the process of communication between individuals and the way this shapes a person's identity.

I am using symbolic interactionism to explore how symbols are used by people with able-bodies to define normative behaviour. In general the theory of symbolic interactionism suggests that actors come to internalise the meaning of symbols commonly used by their dominant culture. This ensures the actor will be able to engage in an interaction and communicate with others of the same culture (Hewitt & Hewitt, 1986). In this way symbolic identification eliminates the need to continually explain the meaning of each symbol during an interaction. However, misunderstandings can, and do happen. This is likely to occur when talking to a person who comes from a different culture; to a person who uses a different language; or to a person who has internalised different meanings for the symbols being used, and who is different to you and others of your culture, or sub-culture.

When a person, or group of people use symbols in a different way, or when they identify and create new symbols, there is a possibility that they will set themselves apart from others on the basis of their symbolic identification. This provides an environment where the dominant symbolic idealised reality is questioned. People who construct different meanings of symbols, other than those certified by the majority, run the risk of separation based on their difference. There is a view that what is required of subjects is conformity as this provides stability. What is perceived to be the norm is not subject to change, but is upheld as a benchmark for subjects to assimilate to. Ultimately rebellion from assimilation occurs when groups of people set about organising themselves politically for representation in society. These groups often represent minorities who have been segregated from the dominant group, and

who, in their separation, become viewed as different from the norm. Their difference is often not embraced, but stigmatised (Brown & Smith, 1989).

My work practice has lead me to believe that people with disabilities, in some cases, have different meanings for the symbols people with able-bodies use. Often these meanings are subjective and may have more to do with an ensuing power relationship, than with the actual symbol. I have worked in several environments where a person's clothing was controlled because those in positions of power defined black clothing as unacceptable. Black clothing to these people represented something deviant about the person wearing it and they did not want this association attached to the young person who wanted to wear nothing but black clothing. This example highlights the power symbols have when a person attaches meaning to them, and in this case those who have the power to make decisions for and about others are able to enforce their rules of conformity.

This is consistent with the dominant theory underpinning service delivery in the human service industry. Wolfensberger's theory of Social Role Valourisation seeks to elevate the devalued by getting them to accept the normative symbols used by the valued persons in society, and to elevate the symbols the devalued use to a valued position on the continuum (Wolfensberger, 1992).

Symbolic Interactionism.

Symbolic interactionism is the primary theoretical framework for this study. Groups of people differentiate themselves from others using symbols pertinent to them and that exclude others from their group (Becker, 1963). A relationship then develops that is determined by the symbols each group uses.

The fundamental premise for understanding symbolic interactionism is that we look to symbols as a base for expressing ourselves to others. This permits us to communicate with those around us. Communication is therefore dependent upon a shared social understanding of the symbols we use (Firth, 1973). A symbol is anything that stands for, or conjures up a meaning for the individual. Symbols can be gestures, emotions, abstract or concrete concepts (Brown, 1979: 113). For example, symbolic gestures such as eye contact, the use of body language, a statement, or having a purpose to converse are methods often used to initiate an interaction (Goffman, 1963: 91). While the symbolic meaning behind each of these is often a shared meaning, misunderstandings can happen.

As interactions happen 'clearance signs' are exchanged either by eye contact, or through the use of body language, or by replying to the statement, or responding to a purpose. In western cultures interactions are concluded when eye contact is broken, or when either person uses a closing statement, or a purpose to move away (Goffman, 1963: 92). The use of eye contact and glances between people is referred to as the 'most direct and purest reciprocity' symbol that exists anywhere (p. 93). In most interactions the use of eye contact in social situations gives others the formal right to respond to its use.

One of the fundamental concepts underpinning symbolic interactionism is the concept of 'self'. Symbolic interactionists see the concept of self as defined by the result of the individual's relationship with others, and developed through the process of social interaction (Mead, cited in Anthias & Kelly, 1995: 365-367). According to Mead it is the reaction to objects as reflected by others that allows an individual to develop a concept of self'. In this way Brown (1979) explains that Cooley saw the individual as

a reflection of those around them. The individual's self image is developed through interaction and reflection. The term used by Cooley to describe this process is the 'looking glass self'. The concept of the looking glass self suggests that we are influenced by others as we receive messages and communications about ourselves from others, and these influence our self image (p. 116).

Sullivan, influenced by Mead, states that 'life is about successful, comfortable interpersonal relationships, [and that] every human being has as many personalities as he has interpersonal relations' (Cited in Muus, 1996: 221). Individuals therefore learn to behave in particular ways to create a stable environment for themselves that is dependent on how they relate to others, and on their socialisation process where they learnt to modify their behaviour to elicit certain reactions from those around them (Muus, 1996). For Sullivan, the individual differs in their interactions with others depending on who the person is and how they see you. The self has a social origin and is shaped by people who are important to you, or who you hold in esteem' (p. 87). It is the relationships we have with others that influence how we develop and what we are, or become (p. 86).

From these accounts it is clear to see that the interaction process can be complex and is governed by a concept of a self-image and one of a social image that operates as a loop. You are not only influenced by how others perceive you, but you also react to that perception, which influences those who perceive you, which in turn influences you (Sullivan cited in Muus, 1996: 88). When an interaction takes place, individuals are using gestures and words to convey meaning. Depending on the person you are interacting with, the individual will differ in the way they act, and in the way they see themselves. Sullivan writes that 'interpersonal relationships provide the most significant key to understanding human behaviour' (p. 87).

Meltzer, Petras and Reynolds (1975) criticised the concept of self as offered by Mead and Cooley. In some instances individuals do not act as themselves, but act how others would have them act, or act in accordance to the social conventions pertaining to the environment they find themselves in. An example of what Meltzer et al. meant is when a person dances in the street to buskers. It is usually considered that the

street is not a place for dancing unless cordoned off for a party. Therefore the individual who chooses not to dance, but who wants to dance, tries to hide their self-image to protect their social image, as they respond to, and react to the interaction process by displaying the appropriate behaviour they perceive the other actors want them to display, or that they perceive to be the correct response for the environment they find themselves in (Robinson, 1989).

Therefore a person's self image exists at the same time as their social image. What this suggests is that in any interaction an individual can mask their self-image through deception by sending false messages to others in the interaction process to bolster their social image. This can be a conscious act and involves the use of body language and verbal communication. This is based on the notion that social acceptance is necessary for survival. There is a need by individuals to be liked. Yet if the individual continues to send false messages then their self-image may suffer because they are acting untruthfully and are in conflict with themselves, but their social image will remain intact until they are discovered. It can also be the other way round, where a person acts from their self-image supporting their notion of self, but may violate a social convention and as a consequence their social image suffers. This is evident from the dancing scenario discussed earlier where you dance to the busker's song and are labelled as being different by some of those not dancing.

It is evident that there are social codes governing any interaction process. These are dependent on the environment you find yourself in; on the level of acquaintance you have with other individuals in that environment, and are also dependent on the relationship between individuals. Becker (1963) writes that 'social rules define situations and the kinds of behaviour appropriate to them' (p. 1). Actions within an environment can be right, wrong or mis-interpreted. Those who mis-interpret the actions of others often label them as being different or 'outsiders' (p. 1). The person being judged or labeled as being different or an outsider may have a different interpretation of the action in that environment. It would appear from this that groups can use symbols to maintain hegemony for that group and by which they can judge others. It also works in the opposite direction, in that an individual may judge the

group based on their interpretation of the symbols being used, and so label the group as being outsiders.

How then does symbolic interactionism relate to people with disabilities? According to Mead (cited in Anthias & Kelly, 1995: 366) an individual can lose a body part without suffering a self-image change. However, if the self is developed through the interaction with others, as Mead contests, then when one loses a limb one's self image may be redefined in response to the reactions of others to one's apparent disability. One's social image will change because disability is defined in negative terms by the majority of people (Kleinig, 1980). Gething takes this further and suggests that people with cerebral palsy are often deprived of being touched or approached due to their appearance. 'If others show repugnance [toward the person with cerebral palsy] it is likely that the person with cerebral palsy will internalise this disgust towards themselves [and as a consequence adopt a negative self image]' (1997: 84).

As this literature indicates, the symbolic meaning attached to disability encompasses dependency, inability and a notion of being different. In this way Meltzer's et al's. criticism of the 'self' concept, as suggested by Mead, is useful in that it goes some way to define the conflict people are believed to experience when they have become disabled and interact with people who knew them before their disability, and who now treat them differently due to their disability status. As a result they can internalise the negative responses they receive which affects their self-image (Seymour, 1998). In most instances people with the disabilities see themselves as being no different to others. This supports the subjective view of symbolic interactionism. However, this comes into conflict where the social meaning of symbols dominates, and people with disabilities are socially seen as being different based on the premise that disability relates to dependency and inability (Oliver, 1996, Morris, 1991).

Placing this into context for this study there may be symbols that prevent or enhance interaction between the two subjects. For example, the symbolic meaning surrounding disability may prevent people from interacting with Lyndon. Lyndon's social image could be one of dependency and difference depending on how others have internalised for them the meaning of disability. If a person chooses to interact

with Lyndon their self image may be enhanced as they feel good about themselves for taking the time to interact with someone with a disability, yet their social image may suffer when they are witnessed interacting with a young person in a wheelchair by their friends, which in turn will effect their self image in relation to how their friends see them and the young person with a disability. On the other hand Lyndon may experience a bolster to his self-image when others interact with him, which in turn may affect the way others see him, thereby affecting his social image in relationship to those around him. What seems to be evident from these scenarios is that symbolic interactionism as a theory is capable of being used to analyse the interaction process and make sense of how each person perceives their self and social image.

This research intends to explain how people make sense of the interactions they initiate, and in some cases, how they make sense of their decision not to interact. Secondly, to come to an understanding to whether people are aware of their self and social image during an interaction, and to how others perceive their interaction. Thridly, to substantiate the consistency of themes underpinning an interaction. The aim of this research is to add to the existing knowledge on social interactions, and to open up for discussion whether there can be social constructs of behaviours that prevent an interaction taking place.

Chapter four.

Methodology.

Introduction.

The research question requires that I understand the dynamics of the interaction process. The core parameters set for this research refer to what behaviour's people exhibit when interacting with others who are seen to be different to them; and how do people manage these encounters. Following on from this, how do people verbalise their interactions to an observer? And how do they explain their actions in a wider interpretative philosophical framework? These parameters are then transposed onto Lyndon. How does a person with a disability react to and make sense of the interactions he is a part of? And how does he verbalise and explain his actions in wider philosophical framework?

For this reason the methodology utilises three procedures. Firstly, to record the interaction between participants to enable analysis of their body behaviour and body language, as well as their speech. Secondly, to interview participants in order to discover what they thought they were doing in the encounter with Lyndon. The interviews were also used to ask participants to reflect upon their interpretative and philosophical frames for making sense of their encounter with Lyndon. Thirdly, to interview Lyndon to uncover how he has interpreted the actions of the other. During these interviews with him I sought to understand how he interprets their actions, and whether his interpretation is consistent with those interacting with him. Lyndon was also asked how he makes sense of his own interaction process.

I used a digital camera for this study because it was non-intrusive upon the interaction. The argument for using a camera for this study rests on the premise that I may have caused people to be overly self-conscious if I sought informed consent prior to filming (Holman, 1993). If people had been told that I was filming them whilst they interacted with Lyndon, they may have tried to act for the camera, and behaved as they thought they ought to behave. For this research to add anything valuable to the social sciences it needed to capture people's unguarded reactions and body language exhibited towards Lyndon. Logistically, although there was a third person with us whilst in the field, I felt it would be impractical to take field notes during an

observation. Having the encounter on tape meant that I could continually watch the encounter and code the behaviours. Having the encounter on film also allowed me to observe how others in a group of people reacted to a member of their group interacting with Lyndon.

This type of study falls within the parameters of participant observation. I took Lyndon to different social venues over a three-day period, and recorded the interactions that happened between him and people with able-bodies. I used a triangulation process where participants were recorded using a digital video recorder, and mini-tape player, and the data analysed by participants, Lyndon and myself. Participants were self-selecting for this study. I did not coerce participants to interact with Lyndon.

The first step was to film the participants interacting. The digital camera uses a digital tape and is capable of producing good quality images in low light. It is small and lightweight, and has a play back facility enabling me to verify that an interaction had occurred. Filming the participants rather than relying on my observation enabled me to replay the interaction and code behaviours such as body language and body movement. I was able to watch each participant singly and then in some cases as part of a group. This aspect gave me an insight into whether participants were aware of each other's reactions to Lyndon during an interaction. The camera's playback facility had greater importance when interviewing subjects. If the camera had had no such facility I would have been limited to interviewing subjects in a place where a video player and monitor were accessible. In short the camera became a portable television and at the interviews I was able to use the playback screen to show participants their recorded interaction with Lyndon.

The interviews were taped with a mini tape recorder using an external microphone. The interviews were then transferred on to a mini-disc and recorded into the computer. This process, whilst involved, enabled me to replay sections of the interview without the danger of the tape malfunctioning. I used the computer software to code the interviews as I listened to participants. Having a portable recording system meant that I was able to meet participants where they were

comfortable. I found that being adaptable meant that interviewing participants was not restricted and I was able to complete the interviews within ten days of the filming.

The analysis of the data took several months to complete. Transcribing the video data was time consuming because of the overwhelming amount of material. Eye movements, hand gestures and body movements all had to be coded and evaluated. I used symbolic interactionism to interpret these, and where applicable the literature review added an extra dimension to the interpretation where a specific body movement was consistent with what other researchers had found. This process was also applicable when transcribing the interviews (see appendix one for interview questions, p 102). Words and phrases were the key to understanding the interaction. All words have symbolic meaning and the way in which participants described their interaction meant that common words and phrases were repeated. As Taylor and Bodgan's (1989) research found that there were sociological themes underpinning the interactions. Once transcripts of the interviews were complete I sent out copies to the participants for verification.

The design of this study closely follows a research project undertaken by Mary Sissons (1971) who was interested in the interaction process that took place between people of different classes. Sissons used a hidden camera to record the interaction process between two subjects, and attached a hidden microphone to an actor to record the conversation that took place. She states that 'if the experiment was to succeed in observing natural phenomena it was very important that people taking part in the experiment did not at the time realise that they were in an experiment, or that they were being filmed' (p. 122).

Sissons indicates that other researchers, namely Feldman (1968), and Exline (1969), used this type of research design. However, for this study instead of employing an actor to act disabled, a young person with cerebral palsy consented to be a part of the study. The camera, while not obvious, was not hidden, and there was no hidden microphone. However, it was important that potential participants were unaware of the purpose of the study until after the interaction had occurred so that their natural reaction to the person with a disability was recorded. If participants had been

informed of the filming prior to the interaction they may have acted for the camera giving a false picture to the interaction.

Lyndon's data analysis was achieved by using the process of elimination. I asked Lyndon a series of questions relating to each interaction (these were the same questions posed to the other participants, but switching the terminology from people with disabilities to people with able-bodies). Once an answer had been formulated it was read back to Lyndon for his approval. Where he disapproved of a word another was found that conveyed his meaning. This process ensured that it was Lyndon's thoughts and feelings that were being used. This process was time consuming because Lyndon knew what he wanted to say and had to wait for me to get to the core of his thoughts using my words. When Lyndon's responses were read back to him I asked Bill (Lyndon's tutor) to be present. This was to validate that Lyndon's responses were his and not mine. I required a third person to be present when forming Lyndon's analysis so that I was sure that I was accurately transcribing Lyndon's feelings and thoughts on each interaction. Each paragraph was read out aloud to Lyndon, and Bill was able to verify each statement as Lyndon indicated to him that he was happy with what had been written.

I talked to Lyndon several times after the initial set of interviews to ask some of the questions again so that I could verify his answers. Bill was present during these times. On these occasions I had the feeling that Lyndon was humouring me. I say this because it signifies his ability to communicate accurately and that often his ability to communicate is undermined by the perception that he has not understood what is being asked of him. Yet I had to be sure that his analysis was his analysis and that I was not putting words into his mouth.

Instruments and Equipment.

For this study a DX 100 digital camera was mounted onto a tripod attached to the back of the Lyndon's wheelchair using cable ties. The data was then re-recorded onto a standard VHS tape. I used a TEAC MCR –10 mini-tape player with an external microphone to record the interviews.

Procedure.

Once a social venue had been identified the procedure for data collection was as follows:

1. The young person and I positioned ourselves at a convenient spot that did not restrict other patrons. The location of the wheelchair needed to be such that the camera was able to pick up what Lyndon saw. Lyndon and I attempted to act naturally according to the environment we found ourselves in. The camera was mounted prior to going into the venue and I started recording once Lyndon was positioned. I allowed the camera to roll for 15 minutes at a time and noted the interactions that took place. I then viewed what had been recorded in order to make sure the interactions I had noted were on film. I did not record any verbal interaction that took place.
2. After I had recorded an interaction I noted my initial response to the interaction. I then proceeded to identify myself to the potential participant and asked them to participate in the study. I disclosed the aims of the study and asked them if they would permit me to interview them at a later date.
3. I then spoke with Lyndon and noted any significant reactions he had had. This took place after the interaction, and acted as a preliminary interview to gauge Lyndon's initial reaction.
4. I then contacted those who had agreed to participate to arrange a convenient time for an interview.
5. I then re-recorded the data from the digital tape on to a VHS tape. I sectioned off each participant into vignettes with a five second blank between each vignette. This allowed me to cue up the tape before each interview. This process guaranteed confidentiality for each participant as no one would see other

participants on the tape. Interviews were arranged so that I had time to cue the tape before each one.

6. At the interviews I went through the consent form with each participant and after they had signed the form I proceeded to ask whether they would be comfortable with watching themselves on video. Some participants were comfortable with watching themselves and some were not. Depending on whether the video was watched I then proceeded to interview the participant. I noted the reactions to my questions and my feelings to the interview.
7. After the interview I recorded the data onto mini-disc and via mini-disc into the computer. I used the software Cool Edit 96 to record the data onto CD. Transcripts were then made of the interview, and of the video footage.
8. This process was repeated when collecting data from Lyndon.
9. I followed the procedures outlined above and interviewed two of the subjects and Lyndon. The data collected from these interviews was then presented to and discussed with my supervisor to confirm the process was sound and the data being collected was pertinent to the study.
10. I then proceeded to repeat the process and interviewed the five remaining participants.
11. Once transcripts were finalised copies were sent to participants for verification.

Data analysis.

There were three sets of data for analysis. Firstly, there was my text of the video footage. I looked for behaviours, body language and facial expressions that could be coded and which provided some substance to interpret the interaction that took place between the participants and Lyndon.

The second set of data to be analysed was that of the recorded interviews that took place between myself and the participants. From these a text was produced indicating what was happening for the subject prior to the interaction, during, and after each interaction. I looked for words used by the participant that described their feelings, and cognitive processes prior to, and after interacting with Lyndon. I was also looking for words and phrases that indicated how the participant viewed people with disabilities.

The third set of data to be analysed was that of the interviews that took place between Lyndon and myself. I looked for words that described for him the feelings he had during the interaction process, and what he witnessed within himself whilst engaged in the research process. Lyndon was asked to watch some footage of himself and describe what he saw.

These texts were then condensed and provided an analysis of what happened when the two subject groups interacted with each other. This analysis was used to evaluate the assumptions made from the literature review about how able bodied people interact with people with disabilities, and to what extent the symbolic construction of disability impacts upon the interaction process.

Upon completion of the analysis participants were given the opportunity to read and comment upon the analysis of their interviews and video image. Negotiations took place where participants felt I had mis-quoted them, or felt that my interpretation did not correspond to theirs. The results of these negotiations were then incorporated into the thesis.

Limitations.

The study uses a small sample group. Therefore the knowledge generated by this study is limited. This does not undermine the findings from the study, but limits the application of the findings outside of the research. Where the findings are consistent with other studies, the epistemological value of the research is improved. However, there is a lack of research in this area that needs to be addressed. There is a need for studies like this to be conducted in various environments using various sample sizes in order to understand what happens in the interaction process between people with able-bodies and people with disabilities.

The study is limited in that it uses one form of disability. Therefore the findings cannot be generalised to all disabilities. Future research could address this by replicating the study using different disabilities with a view of adding to the findings of this research.

My concern over the interview process was a limitation for this study. When I review the interview data there is a sense of hastiness on my part, and the interview data is not as rich as it could have been. The problem is not necessarily to do with my ability, as I am an adequate counsellor, but with me being comfortable with the licence to question participants in a way that may cause them to reflect on how they have constructed their belief system. I was not prepared to dig deeper than I did for fear of being perceived as 'not a nice person'. I did not want to come across as a person sitting in judgement. I was uncomfortable with the protocol relating to interviewing where I am given the licence to intrude upon another's self-concept. This study has caused me to reflect on how I can improve upon the interview process. One suggestion is to explain to participants the depth of analysis I will need to go in order to gain an understanding of their experience and how this has been used to construct their belief system. To do this in a non-threatening manner is a skill I intend to master. This would aid me in becoming more comfortable with the role of a social enquirer.

Reflection on Methodology.

Hindsight allows a person to reflect on decisions they have made with the intention of learning from prior experiences. This study was prepared with the intention of giving Lyndon a voice. I believe this has been achieved, but if I were to do the study again I would want to video and capture Lyndon's body language during each interaction. For this study Lyndon's interview data allowed him to tell me how he felt about each participant. The video data is complimented by the interview data. However, without the interview data meaning could not be made of each interaction. What I did not capture was Lyndon's uniqueness when communicating with others.

Ethical issues.

There were several ethical issues that needed to be addressing with regards to wanting to record unprompted interactions as they happened. These rested on the premise that 'the [researchers] paramount responsibility is to those being studied. The [researcher] must do everything within their power to protect the participant's physical, social and psychological welfare. And to honor their dignity and privacy' (Nanada, 1984: 455).

Firstly, there was the issue of the lack of informed consent from potential participants, prior to being filmed. In this instance there was a requirement that I take sufficient steps to protect participants from psychological and emotional harm. The steps I took were as follows:

1. Subjects were not deceived or coerced in the research process.
2. The video footage is not to be made public, nor is it to be made available to other researchers.
3. Subjects were asked for their consent and participation in the study prior to analysis of the recorded material.
4. Subjects are not identified.
5. Those subjects who were filmed, and who were not part of the study, were not included in the data analysis.

There were two other ethical issues to consider when undertaking this type of research. These issues related to the invasion of a person's privacy, and that of confidentiality with regards to the use of the text.

'Where observations of individuals who do not give their informed consent is concerned, for example, the behaviour of people on the bus, it is important to respect people's privacy and well being. Observations should take place only in those

situations where people would normally expect to be in [the public eye] and not where they [would] expect to be unobserved. (Wadeley, 1993: 8). 'The location of observation is a factor in determining the degree of privacy that people can reasonably expect...looking is part of living in a social world' (Reece & Siegal, 1986: 88-90).

Kimmel (1988) addresses the issue of privacy and confidentiality in the context of social research. Privacy refers to people, and to what extent they wish to engage in society. Confidentiality refers to the use of information on people once it has been obtained. The four types of privacy explained by Kimmel are solitude, intimacy, anonymity and reserve. For this study anonymity was the key issue. This is where an individual expects freedom from identification and surveillance in public settings (pp. 86-87). For this study I did not seek to identify people, unless they asked to be identified, and I have guaranteed not to allow the data to be used against those participating in the study.

The issue of confidentiality was another matter. Kimmel feels that of the two issues this is the most important (p. 90). A breach of confidentiality may cause subjects a great deal of psychological harm (Reynolds, 1982). Usually confidentiality becomes an issue where a subject has revealed personal or sensitive information to the researcher. In this example, the researcher has an obligation to ensure confidentiality is guaranteed with regards to how the information is used. For this study I would be asking subjects to reveal information about themselves that could be deemed sensitive. The following procedures were employed to protect subjects:

1. The videotape will be locked away in a safe for a period of two years and destroyed thereafter.

2. People who demonstrated an objection to the study upon approach had any record of their behaviour wiped, and I gave the guarantee that their involvement was excluded from the analysis.
3. Subjects who did not give their consent to participation were not included in the study.
4. Subjects would remain anonymous.
5. The location of the venues used would also remain anonymous.

I trialed the study using the camera (without tape), and asked subjects for consent in the study to gauge the public's reaction to the camera and to the notion of being filmed without their consent. This gave me an indication as to whether there was going to be any negative reaction to the use of the camera, and whether subjects were going to be willing to participate in the study. The trial lasted one day and I asked ten people to hypothetically participate in the study. There were no negative reactions to the use of the camera, and out of the ten people asked nine showed interest in participating in the study. The result of the trial was positive allowing the research to continue without changing its original design.

The interview was designed to ask participants about their response to Lyndon prior to, and after the interaction, and to ascertain what they were aware of as they watched or interacted with Lyndon. The same questions were used for interviewing Lyndon. The aim of the interview was for participants to freely disclose their feelings and identify any barriers or questions they were aware of as they interacted with the Lyndon. The questions underwent a trial run using people who interacted with Lyndon when he was out with me. The responses were gaged and the questions changed accordingly. This process lasted for two weeks.

Reflection upon ethical issues.

As a participant Lyndon has given the right to access the findings of this study. However, one of the principle findings from this study is that people may be interacting with him as part of an agenda that does not actually include him. I was not to know that this may be one of the findings of the study, and so did not have take measures to deal with this issue beforehand. The decision that I then had to make was whether I read the analysis section to him: in particular whether I read those parts that related to participants interacting with him as part of an agenda. I believe that it would be hurtful and destructive to Lyndon's sense of confidence in himself if I had done so, and it may cause him to question whether people are actually attracted to him. Therefore, I have decided not to read this section to Lyndon. This has implications for the ethics on doing research that uses human subjects when the outcome of the research may cause participants unintentional harm.

Oliver (1996) states that people with disabilities are excluded from the research process, and have been objects to be used by others. In this study Lyndon was given a voice. The study was designed around him, and I had intended to give him access to the findings as they are about the interactions he was part of. However, I am unprepared and fearful of what the consequences may be if I did approach Lyndon about the way participants interacted with him.

I am aware that Lyndon does not have ready access to counselling services and my skills in this area are under developed. I would hope that at some stage Lyndon and I would be able to work through the notion that some women who interact with him, and whom he finds attractive, may be interacting with him not because they find him attractive, but because they have their own agenda for doing so. I would first ask myself why I would want to enter into such a process with Lyndon, and perhaps

shatter the illusion behind some of his interactions. I am not suggesting that every interaction is illusory, as there are women who find Lyndon sexually attractive. I believe I would enter into such a process based on wanting to explain to Lyndon that people interact with others based on an agenda, and that Lyndon's agenda is for him to have his self-concept reinforced. My decision not to enter into this process is based on my fears to his reaction, and my concern for Lyndon. In the context of this study I know I am anticipating his reaction, but I am unprepared to confirm this for myself. I do not want to cause Lyndon harm.

The paradox is that when human subjects are included in the research process, researchers are unable to foresee what may come out of the study, and may unintentionally cause emotional or psychological harm to the very subjects they are studying. The steps to prevent this from happening needed to have been included in the consent forms participants signed. The consent forms I used for this study did not indicate that participants would be given access to the findings of the study. However, the forms did not at the same time, state that participants would not be able to access the findings of the study. In light of this I feel it is the researchers duty to withhold any material that in their opinion may cause undue harm to participants.

I am taking the precautions outlined above with regards to Lyndon and the other participants in the study. Participants were not sent a copy of the findings, and were only sent the interpretation I had placed upon their disclosure and the video data. The interpretation I have placed upon their statements and image is owned by myself. How I have chosen to interpret the data is a matter of discussion. If I had discussed the findings with them participants may have doubted their intentions when interacting with Lyndon, and this may cause them concern. It is not my intention in this research process to cause harm to any of the participants.

Chapter Five.

What was observed.

What was disclosed.

Description of Video data.

There were seven participants in the study. Four of these were filmed at a Sunday session in a popular hotel, two were filmed at cafés, and the last was filmed whilst Lyndon and I ate an ice cream.

Susan, a woman in her 50's was filmed at a cafe and sat opposite Lyndon. She positioned herself so that she was side on to Lyndon, yet he would have been in her peripheral vision. The footage shows her looking straight ahead and at times she turns to her right, but not towards Lyndon. Her body looks to be rigid and it appears she is avoiding looking directly at us. However, during the filming Susan glances (twice) at Lyndon. Susan waits for opportune moments, or distractions to take a look. The glances do not last for more than two seconds on each occasion. Susan looks directly at Lyndon and I interpret the look upon her face as inquisitive. Her facial expressions do not show disgust, repulsion, or signs of negativity. Her mouth moves upwards almost to a smile, but not quite and she raises her eyebrows on each occasion. On each occasion Susan is seen to strain her head beyond a comfort zone. As she looks she firstly moves her head to a comfortable position, it looks as if she cannot see what she wants to see, so then moves her head just a fraction more. It is seen as a double movement.

For the first glance, Susan waits for the waiter to finish wiping down her table and as he leaves she follows him turning her head towards us. On returning to her original position she quickly glances towards Lyndon. The second opportunity for her to look in our direction comes when a person enters from where Lyndon is sitting. As the person enters Susan's peripheral vision she looks at him and then at Lyndon. At no time during the filming does Susan approach Lyndon although from the looks on her face she is interested in him.

Clare was filmed whilst Lyndon and I were enjoying an ice cream. She is in her late twenties. We were seated outside the shop filming those who walked by. On the video Clare enters the frame from the top left-hand side. She is walking straight ahead, but notices Lyndon and instantly changes her direction and makes directly for him. She is smiling and wearing sunglasses. She momentarily breaks eye contact with Lyndon to avoid colliding with a passerby. Clare comes right up to Lyndon and says "hello beautiful" she clasps his arm and shoulder. She maintains eye contact albeit through her sunglasses, and keeps smiling. She speaks with Lyndon for about forty seconds. Her body language is open, her body is square to Lyndon, her arms are by her side, or when talking used to convey meaning and direction to Lyndon. As she moves out of camera shot she gives Lyndon a kiss on the cheek.

Clare continues to talk to Lyndon for about twenty minutes. During this time I am included in the conversation. On reviewing the interaction there are no external signs that suggest Clare is uncomfortable when talking to Lyndon. She maintains the open body posture and keeps a constant smile. I do not get the feeling that her body postures or facial expressions are false. It seems that there is an instant attraction, and as she approaches Lyndon there is an engaging look on her face. Clare does not remove her sunglasses during the interaction, nor does she sit where she can maintain eye contact with Lyndon. Clare sits to the right side of the wheelchair where she can speak with him and observe others as they walk past. At the end of the interaction Clare holds Lyndon's hand and says "goodbye". There is a smile on her face. She turns and walks away.

Paul, Mark, Philip and Sandra are in their early twenties. They were filmed at a popular hotel. Paul is seated in front of Lyndon and is seated square on. His position does not change throughout the time we are filming. His first look at Lyndon lasts for four seconds. His eyes narrow and his eyebrows come together as if frowning. The

facial expression denotes one of questioning, or inquiry. It is as if he is troubled or wondering why Lyndon is there. In a two-minute period there are several more short glances that last for one or two seconds. During the last two glances Paul looks and shifts slightly. It appears as if he is uncomfortable with either with his position or with looking at Lyndon. There is an intensity about Paul's glances. This look replaces the jovial personality that is present when he is conversing with his friends. Sandra enters the frame and talks to Paul. As she leaves, he uses her exit to steal another look at Lyndon. This second look lasts for two seconds. There is another quick look shortly after this. He looks again he seems puzzled by something. It is as if he trying to come to terms with something he is reflecting upon.

Before the interaction stops there are another two quick glances at Lyndon from Paul. Each of the last four looks have been whilst he has been engaged in conversation with the others. With the last two looks he has been laughing at something said, but as he glances towards Lyndon the laughing stops and a solemn look replaces the laughter and smiles. This is a repeat of the previous look where his eyes and eyebrows narrow and his mouth becomes subdued. There seems to be uneasiness about Paul with regards to looking at Lyndon. I interpret his behaviour to mean that it is inappropriate to carry on his jovial mood when looking at Lyndon. During the interaction he coincides a high percentage of his glances, at Lyndon, to connect with others who are walking past us. There are occasions when Paul does not want to look at Lyndon. This happens as he scans the pub. Paul avoids looking in our direction by speeding up his movement as Lyndon comes into his field of vision.

Mark is looking to where Lyndon is positioned. He is looking at Sandra interacting with Lyndon. To begin with there is a look of vagueness on his face. As Sandra leaves he smiles. Then, as Mark glances towards Lyndon, his expression changes to one of confusion, as if trying to make sense of the interaction between Sandra and

Lyndon, or Lyndon and myself, or to what Lyndon is doing there. Mark gives three quick glances towards Lyndon. The first is timed as Sandra leaves the group. The next two are when his field of vision crosses to where Lyndon is. Mark is directly in front of us. Mark is laughing with the others, but on each occasion he looks at Lyndon his expression changes to a solemn one. Mark's glances are quick and last for no more than a moment each time. He looks and then quickly looks away. The change in his expression is as fast.

On those occasions when Mark is scanning the pub and his vision crosses where Lyndon is positioned he looks down and across, and continues to move his head away from Lyndon's position. I interpret this behaviour as meaning that he does not want to look in our direction. This happens three times. I get the impression from the video that Mark does not want to be seen to be looking. He does not look at Lyndon intensely, nor does he look for long periods of time. I interpret the expression on Mark's face as being inquisitive. He does not make eye contact with Lyndon throughout the time we are filming. Yet it appears that he is finding it difficult not to look, he either looks down, to the side or above us.

He does not allow himself to look for long. The only time this changes is when he looks at us whilst Lyndon is being given a drink. His eyes are now fixed upon Lyndon: I interpret the look as being intense. His mouth is slightly open and he is motionless. At the point where he decides to stop looking his face becomes softer, his eyes widen and he moves as if he has been in the same position for too long and wants to stretch his muscles. The impression I get is that time stood still for a fraction of a second and this caused Mark to reflect on his life.

Philip looks directly at Lyndon. There is eye contact. He looks at Lyndon in a questioning manner. While Sandra talks to Lyndon, Philip continues to talk to the

others. Philip gives Lyndon two quick glances using others as they walk by as a means to do so. The questioning look remains; it can also be interpreted as reflective. Philip's mouth turns up slightly as do his eyebrows. It is not until Philip drops his ear towards Paul that he now looks directly at Lyndon for an extended period of time (32 seconds). Initially there is a look on Paul's face that I interpret as being bewilderment. His mouth remains open, his eyes narrow, and his eyebrows are raised. These change as Philip begins to look confused. His eyebrows now narrow and his eyes look glazed as if he is looking through Lyndon. Then Philip moves slightly as if startled. His eyes focus, and a look of concern crosses his face. It is the way in which Philip's eyes go from unfocused to focused that changes the expression.

There are times when scanning the pub that Philip's field of vision crosses where we are. He does not look down, nor does he speed up, instead Philip momentarily looks at Lyndon. Each time he looks his body becomes heavy and motionless. His shoulders drop and his face sags. When I give Lyndon a drink this body language returns and is accompanied with what I interpret as being a look of bewilderment, and a notion of deep reflection and thought. With this heaviness there is a feeling of sadness and perhaps pity. I interpret Philip's body language in this way because when not looking at Lyndon he becomes very animated. His arms are flung everywhere and he continually moves his upper torso about. He laughs, smiles, and looks extremely jovial. At times I get the impression that Philip wants to come over and say something, but he doesn't. I suggest this due to him constantly glancing at Lyndon. I sense there is interest in us and I sense that Philip is unsure of how to go about coming over and saying something to Lyndon.

Sandra appears as soon as we start filming. She approaches me first and quickly looks at Lyndon. There is eye contact, and she scans him, looking him up and down. I interpret this behaviour as Sandra giving Lyndon a quick assessment. Sandra

appears to me to be over-friendly. She engages with me, asking what I am doing here with Lyndon, and then she asks several questions about Lyndon. In particular she is interested in his level of communication. As she talks to me she is looking at Lyndon quickly. It is as if she is confirming what I am telling her about Lyndon for herself. Sandra continues to talk to me and explains that she was a psychology student and has been working with people with disabilities for several years. Throughout the interaction she is smiling and making eye contact with me. I explain it is Lyndon's first time at this venue. Sandra then turns to Lyndon: I interpret the look as being inquisitive and attentive. She looks as if she wants to present a good image. She does this by brushing her hair to one side and giving an animated smile her mouth is wide open showing her teeth. Her eyes are sparkling. There is a lot of nodding and frowning of her eyebrows as if agreeing with what I am saying.

As she turns she interacts with Lyndon. She over exaggerates her movements and is very animated. Sandra does not stop smiling all the time she is communicating with Lyndon. She is seen to be making eye contact and only breaks this when scanning his face. She raises her eyebrows as Lyndon responds to her questions. The video shows that Sandra is concentrating on what Lyndon is doing. She continually looks at his face and responds to what she sees by moving her mouth and nodding. Her eyes still seem to have a sparkle about them. Each time Sandra asks Lyndon a question she moves in close to him. This appears to be very invasive, but Lyndon appears not to mind. Sandra's body language is open. She stands square on to Lyndon. At this stage in the video there appears to be no external signs that she wishes to leave or break the interaction.

Sandra again brushes her hair to one side so that her face is fully visible. It is not until Lyndon reacts boisterously (three minutes into the interaction) that Sandra seems to become uncomfortable. She looks startled. Her eyes have widened considerably and

her eyebrows are extremely raised, and her mouth opens. This is in response to Lyndon's movements becoming stronger. As he spasms his arms come up and his body moves forward. Sandra looks at me and moves away and looks unsure of what to do. Her smile is less animated and her eyes narrow as do her eyebrows. Her jaw slackens and she breaks eye contact with Lyndon. Her body moves side on and her arms come up to meet each other. It is now that she begins to look as if she wants to break the interaction. She has moved back a few feet. It looks as if she does not know how to break the interaction. It looks as if she is deliberating what to say or do next. It is as if she is saying to herself that she has done what she came to do. She turns to me smiles and comments about going to find some friends. She does not look at Lyndon as she turns and leaves. Sandra has her back to Lyndon and hesitates before moving off. She looks in both directions and does not move. I interpret that in a way that suggest she is uncertain about which way to go.

Larry was filmed at a cafe and is in his early forties. The video shows Larry walking towards Lyndon. He stops and looks around him. He then stops looking around and returns his gaze towards Lyndon. He uses eye contact. His eyes are now focused on Lyndon and his head is tilted slightly backward. His eyebrows are slightly narrowed, but he is not frowning. He has become motionless for a second. I interpret the look on Larry's face during the hesitation as one of questioning, I am guessing by saying the question is either one of what Lyndon is doing there, or to whether if he should interact with Lyndon. Then his face changes and relaxes, he smiles, his eyes widen and his eyebrows rise. You can see the emergence of laughter lines around his eyes as he looks at Lyndon.

Larry then comes in close to Lyndon as if to whisper in his ear. He has made the decision to interact. He is very visual in his actions towards Lyndon. His mouth over-extends as if he was talking to someone who can lip read. His arms are

everywhere and he is laughing a lot. His body is constantly moving as he talks to Lyndon. He then stands to Lyndon's left and is just out of camera shot. During the interaction the video shows Larry making direct eye contact with Lyndon. He seems surprised to see Lyndon responding. On three occasions Larry looks away from Lyndon and does not wait for Lyndon's responses to his questions. The interaction ends when Larry grabs hold of Lyndon's arm and gets in close to say something. Larry then releases Lyndon's arm turns and leaves. He is smiling as he leaves. He walks away in a determined fashion. I interpret this to mean he knows where he is going.

Description of Interviews.

The first interview was with Susan and she asked not to see herself on video. The interview lasted approximately nine minutes, and was conducted at a place of her choosing. Susan asked that the interview be conducted at the cafe where she was filmed. Susan appeared to be relaxed during the interview. Susan said she was aware of Lyndon sitting by her and that she was watching him. "He has such a handsome face". It was Lyndon's attractiveness that had caught Susan's attention. Susan noticed that Lyndon seemed to be taking in his environment and that she felt it was a "tragedy for Lyndon to be locked up inside the body he had, and that it would be tragic if he could not communicate whilst being trapped in a body like that". At this point in the interview Susan asks several questions about Lyndon. "Can he communicate?" "Where does he live?" Susan explained that "I do not go up to people in wheelchairs to say hello, I do not do that kind of thing". Susan referred to herself as being a "reserved person" when it comes to interacting with others. When asked whether she felt like staring at, or watching Lyndon, Susan was quick to dismiss the notion of staring "I did not stare, I looked at him the same as I would look at anybody else". Susan's tone changes and she adopts a tone that is serious as if she making sure that I understood that she did not stare at Lyndon. Her arms became

more rigid and she straightens in her chair. I repeat the question and emphasize looking rather than staring. Susan relaxes and repeats that she looked at Lyndon as she would look at anyone else.

On the day of filming, after I had approached Susan to ask her to participate in the study, I left Lyndon and ventured into the cafe. On returning I saw Susan talking with Lyndon, but she left before I reached them. In the interview I asked Susan what had prompted her to engage in conversation with Lyndon, she replied that after speaking to me and looking at him she felt it would have been “cruel to ignore him”. Susan was unaware of others around her as she talked with Lyndon. She continued to say, “I am in a world of my own when I am out. I do my own thing”. When asked about her perception of Lyndon, Susan replied that “he seemed quite pleased that I had spoken to him”. During the interaction she was aware of the feeling of compassion sweeping over her.

Clare was interviewed at a cafe near to where she had been filmed with Lyndon. This was a place of her choosing. Clare when asked what prompted her to interact with Lyndon said, “love”. “I had a feeling of love, not in myself directed towards Lyndon, but that Lyndon to me embodies love, soul and spirit”. It appeared to Clare that, when she looked at Lyndon, he seemed so thrilled to be out in the world and is giving out love regardless of what is going on around him. Clare sees Lyndon as a special person. As she watched Lyndon, Clare thought about herself and her fears of meeting people in social situations, and how to her Lyndon “seems to adopt a meditative state”. She also wonders what Lyndon sees when he is out, and that for her he is highly intelligent in ways that people with able-bodies would not be able to comprehend.

When asked what stopped her from asking Lyndon about what he sees, Clare replied, "I wish I could communicate with him better. You want to talk to him, but you feel foolish because you do not know that you will be able to understand him". The inability to understand Lyndon made Clare feel uncomfortable when talking to him. Clare noticed when Lyndon seemed to be thinking about something and commented on how she would "love to get inside his head and run around in it". She feels it would be interesting to do and would allow her to understand how Lyndon processes information, and it would enable her to see what Lyndon sees. When asked whether she was aware of others around her when talking with Lyndon, Clare answered that she was less aware of others when talking with Lyndon. Clare went on to explain that she is normally very paranoid about what others think of her when she is out, but this paranoia disappears when talking with Lyndon. She said she was more aware of others when she was sitting with Lyndon and watching their reactions as they walked past. It made her feel good to be with Lyndon.

Clare mentioned she felt more comfortable with Lyndon than with other males. "He is more real than others". When asked if there was anything about Lyndon that caused her concern, other than the communication barrier, Clare replied that she felt uncomfortable with his wrist restraint. She felt it gave Lyndon a negative social image - "one of being contained and controlled". She felt she could not ask Lyndon about his wrist restraint for fear of upsetting him. When interacting with people in wheelchairs, Clare explains that she never knows what level they are at. "You do not know whether it is just physical or mental". Clare continued by saying that she does not want to be seen as somebody pitying them. "You are worried about the pity aspect. I want to sympathise not pity". Clare questioned Lyndon's ability to have a relationship. "You question what you take for granted, it is a pity or a shame because there goes a good person, but you would not know what he would be like if he got to run around as a male".

When she talks to people in wheelchairs Clare does not want to “embarrass that person or herself”. Yet if the person in the wheelchair had verbal communication and initiated an interaction Clare said she would feel comfortable in talking to them knowing that they wanted to talk to her. Yet “I do not want to communicate to them as if they were a baby. It seems that no one can help but treat these people like children”. With regards to Lyndon “he is my age why should I want to talk to him like a child? Yet I catch myself doing that to him”. Clare believes that to improve the interactions between people with disabilities and people with able-bodies there needs to be “more of them in the community with their carers”. “Isn’t that so much like human beings, we have to become familiar with something before we are comfortable with it. It is our own beliefs that stop people from talking to a person in a wheelchair. If you have never done so, it will take you a longer time to do so”.

Paul, Mark and Philip asked to be interviewed at their residence. Paul is extremely closed during the interview process. I get the impression that Paul wants to conclude the interview quickly. He starts by saying that he really wasn’t interested in Lyndon and that he didn’t really notice a lot. However, when asked about Lyndon Paul replies that “he did not look like, or act like everyone else. I felt sorry for him when watching him being given a drink”. Paul stops and seems to reflect on what he saw. He recalls the drinking episode and queries Lyndons dependency on others. There is an underlying notion of pity towards Lyndon. “I would not like to be like that. I feel sorry for him”. I asked Paul if there was at any moment during the time Lyndon was there that he had wanted to come over and say something. Paul explains that he was not there to talk to people. Yet he was interested in why Lyndon was there, but then he says, “ I wasn’t paying much attention to Lyndon”.

When asked about his view on people with disabilities, Paul replies that he does not think about it much. When asked about his perception of Lyndon, Paul remarks that “

I would not be able to imagine what he would be thinking. I cannot imagine him thinking anything". Paul mentions that Lyndon's spasms made him stand out. I then explain to Paul that Lyndon is twenty-two and has the cognitive ability of his peers. There is a note of surprise in his voice as he acknowledges what I have said. His face becomes more animated and he appears to be more interested in what Lyndon can and cannot do.

Like Paul, Mark appears to be evasive during the interview process. Mark would not be drawn on his feelings or thoughts towards Lyndon whilst watching him. All he said was "I knew he was there". When asked whether he wanted to approach Lyndon Mark replies "I did not feel comfortable in going up to Lyndon. I didn't know whether Lyndon would feel comfortable with me going up to him. I wouldn't go up to any other person and say hello". Mark didn't notice anything else about Lyndon. Mark did see Lyndon as being helpless and dependent on others. This was clear as he watched me give Lyndon a drink. Again Mark makes a statement with regards to approaching or watching Lyndon. "I did not want to put him in a position where he felt he was the subject of a human gallery. I would not want that to happen to me. I would not want people staring at me".

The interview was short due to Mark saying very little when asked the questions. He would not be drawn in depth on his feeling or thoughts of Lyndon or people with disabilities. Yet when asked if Lyndon was able to initiate an interaction would he have come over, Mark states that "if Lyndon was to make eye contact and smile, to initiate contact, I guess I probably would talk to him, go up to him".

Philip started the interview by saying, "I wondered why Lyndon was there". He believed there might have been something happening that was involving Lyndon, or people in wheelchairs. Philip comments on the expression of concern on his face

when I was assisting Lyndon with a drink. “ I was concerned when I watched you giving Lyndon a drink. I didn’t know whether it was alcohol”. Philip asks whether it was okay for Lyndon to have alcohol. “ I didn’t know they could drink alcohol”. Philip, whilst watching Lyndon on the night of filming, can remember that he had asked himself several questions pertaining to Lyndon. “Why was Lyndon there”? And “what was taking place”?

When asked if he had wanted to approach Lyndon Philip replies “ I didn’t really want to ... like I explained to you, you look then look away, then you look at them again and you think you are being rude by staring”. Philip showed concern over not being seen to be staring. During the interview he contradicts himself “then again you do want to talk to them and ask them questions”. Philip wanted to come over, but did not want to pry into Lyndon’s life when talking to him. He explained that if I had come over and asked him he would have talked to Lyndon. “ I would not initiate it off my own back. What stopped me approaching him was that I did not want to be rude”. Then Philip remarks that “ if I had seen him talking with others I would have come over and said hello”. Philip was amazed that Lyndon had been drinking alcohol and was unsure whether this was okay with his illness.

For Philip to initiate a conversation he requires a “starting point” or “purpose” or a “motivation”. He was impressed that Sandra had come up to speak to Lyndon. He was looking at Sandra and monitoring her as she talked with Lyndon. “She seemed to be not confused by the situation and not frightened at all”. Philip, during the interview, expressed concern over the possibility of setting Lyndon off unexpectedly if he had approached him. When asked about his views on people with disabilities in general Philip responded by saying “ they are the same as us and are more than welcome to come along to places like this. People need to accept people with

disabilities and I think people do have a problem with it and not to be scared by them. People seem to have problems with disabilities”.

I next interviewed Sandra who did not want to view the video. She asked to be interviewed at a local café near to her mother’s house. When asked what prompted her to interact with Lyndon Sandra replies “the fact that he had a disability made me want to come up and say something”. Sandra is a disability worker and believes that a lot of people think they cannot go up and talk to others with a disability. She would not have come up if Lyndon had not had a disability. Yet she says, “he is exactly the same as me, but with a disability”. If Sandra had met with a negative response she believes she would not have talked with him again and this goes for anyone who responds to her in a negative way. Sandra, when interacting with Lyndon, was looking for eye, facial and hand gestures, or any kind of recognition to what she was saying. Sandra did not notice Lyndon’s wrist restraint and comments that she “really doesn’t think about why they have restraints on”.

Sandra was aware of people around her as she interacted with Lyndon “I could see them watching me. I want people to think if a woman can do it (interact with Lyndon, or people with disabilities in general) then I can as well”. Sandra states “I like to present to the public that very normal people like me are happy to spend time with people like this”. This was the underlying reason Sandra talked to us. It was so that other people in Lyndon’s vicinity would see Sandra interacting with Lyndon and see that he was safe to interact with. “If I came up, maybe others around would also come up”. Sandra perceives herself as a beautiful, friendly woman. Sandra believes that there is perception that people who work in the disability field are often seen as being loving and caring people. She states that she likes to present a good image to the public when out with people with disabilities. She believes that when people with disabilities are dressed fashionably it helps the interaction process. “It is sad that we

have to do that, but being well dressed or well presented helps towards a more positive image of people. If I can create a positive image it reflects on me”.

Sandra thought Lyndon looked cool, and had courage and guts for being out at the pub. She explains that she has often thought about what she would do in a similar situation “ I would probably become a hermit. Being in a wheelchair poses problems in regards to access”. Sandra believes that people with disabilities have as much right to be out in public as she does. She believes they should be able to have as much fun as everybody else.

I interviewed Larry at his residence. He started the interview by saying “I haven’t had much to do with people who have a disability like Lyndon’s. I didn’t know what to expect when I spoke to him”. This is how Larry begins his interview; Larry was nervous about speaking to Lyndon and did not know whether Lyndon would be able to understand him. He made the decision to engage with Lyndon because he seemed to be having fun and this made Larry feel a little more at ease about talking to him.

Larry explains that “what made me go up and speak to Lyndon was the perception of him singing. He was definitely enjoying himself. He seemed full of joy inside. He looked like he was expressing the joy through his body”. Larry explains that he had seen an interview in England about the life of a person with cerebral palsy. He felt that this person had endured a life of negativity and was amazed at how the person had overcome this. For him the interview “exposed the myth around people who are supposedly disabled ... they are really more abled then most”. Larry believes that people with able-bodies do not have it together and are often the ones with the handicap. For him people with disabilities have a strength that people with able-bodies do not have and that people with able-bodies rely on appearance. “It is the heart inside you that matters”. Larry perceived Lyndon to be in his own world and

that many people would misunderstand him. Larry was not aware of other people around him as he interacted with Lyndon. He said that he used to be caught up in what others thought of him, but he has since become freer and has learnt to challenge the system.

Larry believes the “abled haven’t got their lives together”. He believed Lyndon was communicating in his own way and that people are blinded, and perhaps are unable to pick it up. When interacting with Lyndon, Larry said he felt that there was a freedom, purity and innocence “like a child” about Lyndon. For Larry, Lyndon is able to escape the system, and seems to be unconcerned about his appearance. If he had met with a negative response from Lyndon he would have stayed and tried to talk with him and make him understand that he was a friend “that I like you and love you”. Larry explained this in terms of it being God’s love and that he wanted to say, “I hope you know what you can be”. Larry was concerned that Lyndon, like the man in the interview he had seen, may have been surrounded by people who were negative towards him and who put him down. Larry was very vocal in asserting, “my heart goes out to those who are down trodden. People judge you on your appearance. Yet the disabled teach the abled patience and acceptability”. Larry is constantly “put to shame” at the level of ability people with disabilities have. He believes that the people with disabilities have abilities that the abled have never had to learn.

Lyndon's response.

I have written this section as if Lyndon is talking to the reader. "I was very nervous on the first night of filming. I did not know how to behave. I felt that having the camera mounted on the wheelchair was great, but it made me nervous. I did not know how people were going to react to the camera and to being filmed. On the first night we did not get anyone to participate in the study and this worried me. I thought I had been doing something wrong. Lenney tried to calm me down, but I could see that he was nervous too. He said he was and that we could be nervous together. We both took deep breaths and Lenney suggested that I try and forget that the camera was there".

"On the second attempt of filming we were at a cafe. I noticed Susan sitting in front of me and I tried to catch her attention, but could not because she continually looked away. I would have liked Susan to have come over and to say hello before she did. I was pleased when she did come over and tried to say as much. I smiled at her. She was a friendly person. I got a good feeling from Susan, though she did not stay talking to me for long. The next person to speak to me was Clare. I liked Clare talking to me because she was beautiful looking. I liked being kissed by Clare. When Clare kissed me she asked if she could. I like to be asked before people cuddle, kiss or touch me. I saw Clare, we made eye contact, then she came over. She continued to make eye contact with me. I like it when people do this. Making eye contact with me is the only way I can get people's attention. When I make eye contact with people, I try and smile, it is my way of saying hello. Clare saw me smile and came over straight away. I think Clare is more friendly than Susan because she is more beautiful".

"When I was at the pub I saw the three boys sitting in front of me. I would have like for them to have come over and to have talked to me. Although I would have

preferred them to be three girls. But I am also wary of people who have been drinking. When you have been drinking, and you talk to me I am frightened because I do not know what you might do. I see them swaying and I can smell the alcohol when they are close to me. I cannot defend myself, and have to rely on other people to protect me if anybody gets too close whom I am unsure about. I am afraid of people taking advantage of me. The boys did not come over and I was unsure how to ask Lenney to go and get them. It is hard trying to get people to understand me. It is not always a good idea to use my communication book as it takes a long time to get out what I want to say”.

“I liked it when Sandra came up and spoke to me. She is a beautiful girl. I was frustrated that I could not talk with her and Lenney had to intervene and tell Sandra about me and the way I communicate. It is hard to get people who can interpret what I am saying. Lenney uses an elimination process which at times is good and at other times he goes in the opposite direction. It once took him an hour to work out that I wanted to get my hair cut. I wanted to tell Sandra about myself but was unable to do so. I like to tell people what I do. I particularly liked Sandra because she had blonde hair and a good figure. I like girls with blonde hair, and good figures, who are friendly, and who have nice smiles. I like looking at beautiful women and I use tactics to look at them like moving my head to one side. When beautiful women come up to speak to me I feel more special. This is because they have taken the time to speak to me and because they are beautiful”.

“ I liked talking with Larry. He was very friendly. He stopped and wanted to talk to me. He was talking about being out and I wanted to tell him where we had been and what I was doing with the camera on my wheelchair. I got a good feeling about him. I was trying to tell him that I was about to have my lunch and that I was here with friends of mine. This was because he was asking questions about whom I was here

with and what was I doing here sitting by the tables. The carer I was with at this time was trying to understand what I wanted to say, but he does not know me as well as Lenney does. Lenney was getting me something to eat”.

“In general I like people saying hello to me as it makes me feel good about myself. I like people who are friendly. I see myself as a good looking male. When people come up and talk to me it makes me feel good about myself. I am reassured that people want to talk to me. I see myself as being different to other people because I am not able to walk. I am, at times, concerned about my image. I am concerned that people may look at me and think I cannot do anything or understand what is happening around me. I like to tell people what I am thinking and what I like to do. In some cases I feel people are responding to the disability rather than to me. People have nothing to fear by talking to me so long as I have my wrist restraint on. When wearing my wrist restraint I feel more comfortable to be out in public. I do not care what people think of my restraint as I do not like going out without it. My restraint helps me contain my arms as they are prone to flare out when I spasm. I am a strong person and I could hurt somebody if I hit them. I am especially wary of small children around me when I am not wearing my restraint”.

“I feel okay about people not being able to understand me when they talk to me. I feel okay about not having an advocate with me to interpret what I am saying to others. I prefer to talk to females than males. I find females friendlier than males. I prefer meeting people in venues like pubs and nightclubs because there is a higher percentage of people my own age. In general I find young people are friendlier in nightclubs. I am sometimes aware of the negative looks I get. This can upset me and I can feel angry. I wonder why they are looking at me in a nasty way. I do not wish them harm. I pray for them and ask God to make them better people. If they continue to look at me, and stare, I wish they would look away. But it makes a

difference if they are smiling, and staring, as opposed to not smiling and staring. And it is okay for beautiful women to stare at me. I do not like it when people pretend to like me and talk to me out of niceness. I wonder why they do it. I would prefer they did not talk to me”.

“When I look at myself on video I see a good looking young man. I do see my wheelchair, but I am not affected by it. I am pleased to have one, as my legs do not work. My legs are unable to support my weight. As a result of taking part in this research I have started to try and find ways to get people to come over and say hello. I am also more aware of people around me. Up until this point I have been wearing blinkers and had not noticed others around me unless they were right in front of me. Some people tend to ignore me, even when I am very loud, and vocal. I get upset when people I would like to talk to do not come over. I have to rely on people who understand me, to ask for me, and to get others to come over. I believe I am a very special person”.

Chapter Six. Analysis.

This is a symbolic interactionist study, using Goffman (1963; 1967), Soder (1990), Taylor and Bogdan's (1989) theories as a basis to explain, how people communicate and interact with others where there are significant barriers to both processes.

Interaction-process analysis (Bell, 1993) refers to the 'different methods of observing individuals and groups in different contexts' (p. 112). The theory is generally used to observe and explain the behavior of individuals in groups. I have used the tools offered by the theory to look at certain behaviours of individuals whilst engaged with a person with a disability. In this context, the behaviours I observed were those which were directed at Lyndon. I looked for eye contact, and the extent of the look in relation to time and frequency. I looked for the evasion of eye contact, and the behaviours that accompanied the evasion. In conjunction with the length of the look, and the number of times a person looks, I sought to understand and interpret the facial expressions accompanying the look.

The analysis of the interviews looked for how people explained and spoke about what they were doing when they encountered Lyndon. I looked for discourse that fitted current analysis on how people deal with encountering a person with a disability. From the participants disclosure I sought to understand the way that participants understood their encounter and the interpretative philosophical frameworks they were using. In essence this means how did participants see their interaction with each other, and how did participants explain what they saw in the other, that in this case, prompted at interaction.

I also observed and analysed the way that participants used their body to convey meaning. I attempted to understand what meaning a person's body language conveyed to a receiver, and how the receiver dealt with the information.

Themes for interaction.

Taylor and Bogdan (1989) identified three themes that might explain why some people seem to accept people with disabilities into their lives. The three themes were religious, humanitarian and feelings of friendship (pp. 30-32). I identify with the humanitarian theme discussed by Taylor and Bodgan, and this acts as the foundation for my work practice, and for my interactions with people with disabilities. In the same way, this study has identified several themes that people identified with when interacting with Lyndon (See Table One, p.83). The four themes that have been identified within this study are 'the chosen one', 'public awareness', 'pity or tragedy' and 'sexually safe'. The chosen one theme is consistent with the findings of Taylor and Bodgan (1989) where they describe people who interact based on their construct of faith. This is usually defined in Christian terms, but can be generalised to incorporate all faiths and refers more to a person's spiritual faith, rather than a particular tradition. The interaction is typically based on the recognition of another's suffering.

In this study Larry confirms his firm religious belief by stating, "it is God's love", and he wants to embrace Lyndon as one of God's children. In this way Larry may see Lyndon as part of God's family and therefore as a brother to him. Perhaps then, the notion of one family underpins Larry's interaction. The suffering refers to Larry's perception that people who are negative towards Lyndon may wound him emotionally, and or psychologically. Larry makes this assumption based on the television special he had seen. In this context, the television special may have provided Larry a construct for the interaction. In Larry's eyes, people who are negative constantly surround people with disabilities.

However, Larry has no way of knowing whether this is the case for Lyndon. Larry has never met Lyndon before, and does not know anything about Lyndon's past, nor

does he know anything about the people Lyndon associates with. Yet he bases his interaction on the construct of negativity which, when coupled with his faith, provides Larry with a forum to tell Lyndon he can be anything he wants to be. I feel Larry's interaction is sparked more from a desire to spread the word than it is about saying hello to Lyndon. Larry openly states that if Lyndon had given a negative response to the interaction that he would have persisted in telling him about God's love. This suggests that Larry wanted to uplift Lyndon in an aim to bolster Lyndon's self esteem.

Larry has a romantic view of what life is like for Lyndon. There is the projection that Lyndon appears to be unconcerned about his body image and that he has strengths and abilities that people with able-bodies do not have. Perhaps this is Larry's way of dealing with disability, in a hope that if he were to be a person with a disability, he would reap the rewards. Or in the words of scripture, 'Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth' (Mark 5: 5).

Clare's motivation to interact is based on her spiritual beliefs, where she personifies Lyndon as embodying love, spirit and soul. There is an energy that Clare identifies with when she suggests that Lyndon seems to be meditating. She confirms for herself that Lyndon is grounded in awareness of his surroundings. Again there is a romantic view of what life could be like for Lyndon. The notion that Lyndon has developed a higher intelligence due to his immobility confirms for Clare there are pay-offs for a person with a disability. The sympathy Clare has for Lyndon is defined in terms of his disability. Her spiritual projection suggests that Lyndon is a wholesome male who is unable to develop his overt maleness. In this context Clare may see a link between chastity and spirituality, where one's abstinence may mean they can develop a higher level of spirituality.

Lyndon's faith underpins his interactions also. He operates from a religious framework that suggests people ought to be friendly towards him. This is clear from his analysis of the interactions he has with people, and from the way he deals with people who he perceives as being unfriendly. This is where he prays for the person, rather than getting upset over the person snubbing him, or looking at him in a way he perceives as being hostile. This implies that for Lyndon there is an expectation that people should approach him on the basis that he cannot approach them. If he is able to communicate to people the concept that he is one of God's children, and as such, a member of the extended family, then there is the underlying assumption that people will interact with him based on this. For Lyndon the let down comes when this does not occur.

When people act in a negative manner towards Lyndon he may become angry, but he does not wish harm upon them. Instead he prays for them in hope that they will be transformed and accept him. This action was discussed with him when he asked how he could deal with negative attitudes directed towards him by others. The interesting point to note is that Lyndon's definition of negative attitude encompasses people who do not interact with him, people who look at him without smiling, and people who disregard him in public. Lyndon has no way of knowing for sure whether he is reading their body language correctly.

There was another theme operating as a motivation to interact with Lyndon and that was the 'sexually safe' theme. Clare, in her interview, implies that Lyndon is more "real" than other males, and yet she infers that he may be like other males if he were able-bodied. Symbolically, this suggests that Clare sees all males as sexual predators, and she is able to interact with Lyndon in a manner that she would like to be able to do with other males. Lyndon is safe to interact with because he is unable to make sexual advances towards her. Clare is taking advantage of Lyndon's

inability to respond to her sexually. Clare assumes that because Lyndon is in a wheelchair and has an extreme physical disability he is unable to make sexual advances towards her, or is not in touch with his sexuality. This assumption is unfounded on the basis that Lyndon is very sure about his sexuality, and is particular about the women he chooses to be physical with. He likes young women touching him and kissing him.

Lyndon's behaviour during the interaction with Clare is based on an attraction he has for her. Although he was unable to initiate the interaction, he was extremely open to Clare touching him. The interaction between the two happened with each having their own agenda. Clare was being consistent with her faith and romanticised about Lyndon and what she saw in him, and looked upon him as being sexually safe. Lyndon was happy to be with an attractive woman who was being friendly towards him. Therefore Lyndon saw Clare as a good person.

Sandra interacts with Lyndon using a "public awareness" theme. She is interacting with Lyndon to show others that he is safe to interact with. Sandra wants to be seen with Lyndon. The underlying premise is to get others to interact with him by showing that she can. This may be in response to some people believing that cerebral palsy is contagious. This theory is well known by disability workers. In this context, and for this encounter, Sandra has taken it upon herself to eliminate the contagious fears others may have with regards to cerebral palsy. This is consistent with her work practice where image plays an important part in promoting positive interactions.

Lyndon was overwhelmed with Sandra. This is evident from the video footage where his arms flare up as he tries to communicate with her. The energy that Lyndon needs to control his arms is enormous, but when communicating, his energy is diverted and his arms then take on a life of their own. Yet it is Lyndon's arms that cause Sandra to reassess her interaction and to break it. The paradox is that Lyndon wants to continue

the interaction, and tries to do so, yet this caused his arms to spasm. Sandra is here to be seen interacting, but when Lyndon's arms spasm she steps back and looks unsure of what to do. Her interaction is not about Lyndon per se, it is about disability and safety. Yet Lyndon's attempt to communicate causes Sandra to break communication giving the opposite message than the one she is trying to convey to others. Sandra was not afraid to approach Lyndon and was sure about her motive to interact with him.

In this context Sandra does not see Lyndon but sees his disability. This is reiterated in her interview when she says that Lyndon is the same as her, but with a disability. In other words he is not the same. Though not stated, this implies that Sandra may also be operating from a pity or tragedy theme. Underpinning her interaction was the need to be seen with somebody who is less fortunate than others. As a consequence, Sandra feels she can improve the status of people with disabilities in society by being seen with them. In this case, the interaction did not support the notion that being seen with attractive people improves the social status of people with disabilities (Wolfensberger, 1992). After Sandra's interaction, no other person approached Lyndon.

In the interviews Philip notices Sandra interacting with Lyndon and remarks upon Sandra's comfort with him, rather than interpreting the interaction as meaning it was safe to interact with Lyndon. Philip either missed the cue; missed the meaning of the cue; or saw the cue and its meaning and chose not to respond. I would say that Philip missed the meaning of the cue. He had no idea what Sandra's intentions were as she interacted with Lyndon. This may be the case for most people as they watch people interact, as Sandra was, with people with disabilities. Sandra's intention was not visible to Philip, it was invisible, and this meant the intention and its meaning was lost.

The paradox is that if Philip had come over in reaction to Sandra's cue, would Lyndon have wanted to share Sandra? Lyndon said that he would have liked Philip to have come over, but did not say whether this was when Sandra was there or not. This has implications for Sandra in that she is promoting interactions that the person with a disability may not want. In Lyndon's case, he may have been upset if another woman had approached him, who was less attractive than Sandra, giving Sandra the sense that she had achieved her goal and then left leaving Lyndon with somebody he would rather not talk to. This then causes a problem for Lyndon because he is unable to break off the interaction as he is non-verbal and in a wheelchair. Sandra's intention may then have had the reverse effect for Lyndon, in that, he would have been saddled with someone he did not want to interact with. However, the opposite is also possible, and another attractive woman may have approached Lyndon based on what she had observed between him and Sandra.

The last category for this study is the pity or tragedy syndrome. Susan interacted with Lyndon after she had been asked to participate in the study. Susan's underlying reason for interacting with Lyndon was that it would have been "cruel to ignore him". There is a sense of pity, she felt sorry for him, and as such saw it as an obligation to say something to him.

When people project assumptions onto others, they are either projecting their fear of becoming a person with a disability, or projecting a set of behaviours that have more to do with the myths that are perpetuated by popular culture (Woodill, 1994). In this case participants were projecting a set of assumptions and behaviours onto Lyndon that were based on their belief system, and this directs how they interpret their world. These participants, when interacting with Lyndon, were acting out of an obligation consistent with their beliefs. This is where an individual accepts and adopts the

symbolic messages and constructs offered by religions, ideologies and society on how to behave (Goffman, 1967).

Body language and communication.

In the context of this study, disability to some meant dependency, inability and a poorer quality of life. However, to others it also meant capability. Disability for all participants evoked feelings and emotions that embodied pity and tragedy. Yet for those who interacted with Lyndon it also meant having higher perception skills, the ability to accept, and to have higher tolerance levels with a dis-association with his physical image. These feelings and emotions were in response to Lyndon's image, and his inability to communicate.

In this context the difference between those who chose to interact with Lyndon and those who did not, lies in the interpretation participants placed on Lyndon's facial expressions and on his body movements. Those participants who interacted with Lyndon placed onto him a set of abstract assumptions based on their interpretation of his body language. However, their interpretations of his body language and the meaning they attached to it, were lost on Lyndon. What Lyndon wanted to do was to engage in conversation based on being liked, and not based on a construct of a person they felt obligated to converse with.

For those who interacted with Lyndon, his inability to verbally communicate was a significant barrier to the interaction. This was reflected in the participant's responses to their inability to understand what Lyndon was communicating to them during the interaction, and Lyndon's frustration in his ability to communicate to them.

But on reviewing the data, there is evidence to suggest that those who interacted with Lyndon did, to some degree, attempt to understand and verbalise for themselves his

body language. They were perceptive to the point where they constructed meaning to his body movements and facial expressions. Participants who interacted with him did so because they read cognitive ability into his movements. They noticed that he seemed “pleased” to be talking to them, or that he was “thinking about something”, or that he seemed to be “singing”, and that he was “watching and taking in his environment”.

These participants interpreted Lyndon’s body language and acted upon that interpretation. There was an association between Lyndon’s body language and their decision to interact. For Clare and Larry there was a definite decision to interact based on what they saw. For Sandra the association had more to do with interacting with someone who had a disability and establishing interaction parameters for others around her. This changes as Sandra interacts with Lyndon and is seen to be intently looking for signs of non-verbal communication.

Clare and Larry’s interpretation of Lyndon’s body language during the interaction lessens as they rely more on the carer to interpret Lyndon’s responses. During the interaction, participants did not seek to establish a process of communication with Lyndon. This is evident from the data where participants were unsure about asking Lyndon direct questions about what they were seeing. An example of this is Clare’s reluctance to ask Lyndon about his wrist restraint. It seems that participants were unsure about how far they could go asking about his disability, or life. This had more to do with a feeling of uncertainty about Lyndon’s response to such an invasion upon his privacy, than with his ability to answer them.

It is evident that during the interaction there were two concepts working against each other in a loop. Participants did not want to invade Lyndon’s privacy, so they did not ask him personal questions, but I believe this decision was affected by their inability

to interpret his response. Therefore Lyndon's ability to communicate was not the underlying barrier to the interaction. The underlying barrier to the interaction centered on the participant's uncertainty about how Lyndon would respond to being asked personal questions, and their ability to place meaning to his answers.

The question that needs to be asked is whether it is permissible to ask people with disabilities personal questions about their disability, and or about any accessories they may be using as a result of their disability? In most encounters you would only ask a personal question where the other is well known to you. There is a level of intimacy between you and the other that allows you to engage in personal questioning. This is not the case in your every day encounters. In general people are not open to being asked about their personal life upon meeting someone for the first time.

Therefore, how do you go about breaking down the barriers that exist between individuals meeting for the first time? de Beauvoir (1949) suggests that when people are constructed as the 'other' they need to engage with the person who has constructed them as such and enter into dialogue to deconstruct the 'other' category. This permits each party to discuss their perceptions of the other. In the same way people with disabilities have been socially constructed as the 'other' by people with able-bodies. On the basis of this, it is permissible to engage with a person with disability to discover for yourself whether your construct of disability is correct. However, do people with disabilities want to constantly engage in this type of encounter, and be forever answering questions put to them by people with able-bodies? In this study Soder's (1990) concept that people with able-bodies are unsure about how to go about interacting with a person with disability is supported. Participants were unsure how to interact with a person who uses non-verbal communication when interacting.

In contrast those participants who chose not to interact with Lyndon made little connection between his body language and sociability. They may have been unsure about their ability to interpret his body language correctly, or may not have attempted to place meaning on Lyndon's body movements. This is evident from their interviews where they say that if Lyndon had indicated for them to come over they would have done so. And yet Lyndon did try to initiate an interaction but was unsuccessful in getting his message across. What this suggests is that people missed the meaning behind his cues for interaction.

Philip mentions that, for him to initiate a conversation, he requires a "starting point, purpose, or motivation". Having a reason to interact with somebody is good social practice. However, Philip felt that he wanted to interact with Lyndon but did not know how to go about it, without him appearing to be rude. There was an overriding uncertainty of being seen to be rude which kept him seated. For Susan and Mark there is an overriding sense of appearing to be rude and invasive if they had come over to interact with Lyndon.

There are two ways to interpret Mark and Philip's reluctance to interact. Firstly, as has been suggested, both participants may have missed Lyndon's cue to initiate an interaction, and or mis-interpreted his cues. There is the possibility that they saw the cues, and placed meaning to the cues, but chose not to interact. There are several reasons offered by Harrison (1974) as to why people miss interaction cues that are non-verbal. The person may have not experienced such a cue before. In this case both participants have had no prior experience of people with disabilities. If this were the case then Lyndon's cues would have had little or no significance for Mark and Philip.

The second reason for missing a cue may be due to the weakness of the cue, or may be because the person receiving the cue has a wavering attention span. Fourthly, Lyndon's cues may have been strong, but were competing with other cues being received at the same time. In this context, it seems that Mark's and Philip's choice not to interact with Lyndon is based on them missing the meaning behind the cues. They saw the cues, but the cue's meaning was lost on them. I say this due to the participants suggesting they would have interacted with Lyndon if he had indicated that he had wanted them to. Lyndon sent the cues out. He smiled and made eye contact. He moved his body and head to indicate to them to come over. Mark and Philip are seen to watch Lyndon intently. However, the cues were lost on both participants.

My second interpretation behind why Mark and Philip chose not to interact with Lyndon is based on their uncertainty of how they would be received. Both Mark and Philip were unsure about how they would be welcomed based on their interpretation of Lyndon. What this suggests is that they read something other than friendliness in Lyndon's body language. There was a definite sense of Lyndon being unapproachable and this was either based on prior experiences with people with disabilities, or on the uncertainty of being impolite when asking personal questions. When interviewed Philip, Mark and Paul all indicated they had not had prior experiences with people with disabilities. Therefore it would seem that for Philip and Mark the decision not to interact may have been based on their uncertainty of how to go about interacting, or there was fear about how Lyndon would respond. This supports Soder's (1990) suggestion that people may be uncertain about interacting with people with disabilities on the basis of not wanting to break social codes of behaviour that govern what is polite and what is impolite.

I want to talk to you.

For Lyndon, image plays an important part of any interaction. He has an idea of what for him is beautiful and friendly. The frustration in not being able to communicate means that on the whole the interactions are one way and involve the inclusion of a carer. Lyndon has to rely on others to communicate for him. This means that he can get sidelined if the carer is not aware of the dynamics operating within the interaction. In three out of the four interactions that took place I became the mediator. Where there is a reliance on verbal communication in the interaction, Lyndon's voice is lost. This is regardless of whether there was a positive or negative perception of disability (see Woodill, 1994). In most cases he was able to respond with a yes or no answer, yet his ability to communicate to participants through his body was lost.

Therefore Lyndon is unable to interact with people on an equal footing. This is not suggesting that Lyndon is incapable of communicating, but as is evident, people draw upon the stereotypes, labels and myths defining disability when interacting. This is coinciding with an interaction based upon a projection of the other as constructed from a personal belief system. Woodill (1994) clearly states based on Coleman and DePaulo's research (1991) that 'if an encounter between a person with a disability and a non-disabled people results in the other person reading the "disabled body" by interpreting signs in a stereotypical way ... then the result will likely be that the voice of the person with a disability will not be understood [or heard]. What will likely be heard, instead, will be the voice of the dominant other [that is] the person who often speaks for a person with a disability' (pp. 207-208).

In this case I was the dominant other. Participants spoke to Lyndon through me. In situations like this, I ask Lyndon what it is he wants to convey to the person he is interacting with. I will ask him if it is alright for me to briefly outline for the person Lyndon's disability, his capabilities, likes and dislikes. From there I interpret, as best

I can, what Lyndon wants to say. I use the elimination process discussed earlier. This does mean that the words are mine and not Lyndon's. However, to date Lyndon has not objected to the use of my words, and if he did I would find another way of communicating his meaning to others. In some instances I have been unprepared for the interactions that occur. During the data collection period for this study I did act as Lyndon's voice, but only when asked to by Lyndon.

The projection Lyndon is placing on beautiful women is friendliness. If the woman is beautiful she will be friendly. If the woman is not friendly, Lyndon becomes upset. For Lyndon, there is an expectation that people will interact with him based on the premise that he is a 'special person' due to his disability. "People should come over and say hello, or be friendly to me because I have a disability". This implies that Lyndon feels there is an obligation for people to interact with him based on him having a disability. When they do not approach him he becomes angry or upset. When people do talk to Lyndon it bolsters his self-image. It makes him feel good about himself and approachable. When people take time to talk with him it makes him feel worthwhile. This in turn, for Lyndon, bolsters his social image where he is seen by others to be sociable, and a competent communicator. Yet others do not see his sociability in the same way as is seen by Lyndon. Lyndon's self-esteem lessens when he does not interact with people he likes.

Clare and Larry did not indicate whether the interaction enhanced or diminished their self or social image. For these participants there was no pay-off for them in terms of being seen by others when talking to Lyndon. Sandra's interaction differs to the others due to her intention to be seen. The notion of self for Lyndon needs to be reinforced by people with able-bodies approaching and talking to him. Lyndon's self and social image is enhanced by female interactions. This supports Gething's (1997) suggestion that people with cerebral palsy may internalise the avoidance they

experience, and need to be touched or approached to assure them they are accepted. However, the problem arises that you cannot force people to touch or approach people with cerebral palsy if there exists a fear to do so. However, you can make it easier though.

Are you looking at me?

Is staring rude? Participants who did not interact with Lyndon and who associated disability with deficiency continued to watch him and used, in most cases, covert techniques to do so. These included timing a look with a distraction. Often it coincided with a person walking past or whilst scanning the environment, and resting on Lyndon for a few brief seconds before moving on. It was clear they wanted to look but did not want to be seen looking.

Although these participants looked often they can also be seen to actively avoid looking. Participants did this by looking down and across when Lyndon came into their field of vision. Perhaps they had seen enough to satisfy their interest, or because Lyndon was positioned right in front of them they felt uncomfortable with continually watching him, assuming it would be considered rude, and that Lyndon would not like to be looked at for extended periods of time. This last suggestion is supported by their remarks during the interviews in which they said, “they did not want to be rude and stare”, and did not want to treat Lyndon as a “goldfish in a bowl”.

For these participants, there seem to be an underlying assumption that looking is staring, and is rude. Their desire to look was explicit, but when asked about looking they played down their interest in Lyndon. In most accounts these participants inferred they were not paying attention to Lyndon. However, this was not supported by their comments during the interview, or from the video footage. The video footage shows them looking and during the interviews participants gave detailed accounts about Lyndon and his behaviour. For example, “He looked handsome”, “his spasms made him stand out”, “he looked helpless as you gave him a drink”. There

may be a reason for this contradiction in the data that relates to the notion of wanting to look, but not being seen to look.

Goffman observed that people would actively avoid eye contact or looking where looking is considered as being rude (1963). In the environment where these interactions occurred there were other activities to draw the participants' attention away from Lyndon. Participants did not want to make Lyndon feel uncomfortable by continually looking at him. Yet this is in contrast to Lyndon wanting people to look at him and come over to talk. The only way Lyndon can initiate an interaction is through eye contact. If eye contact is avoided there is little chance of an interaction-taking place. Lyndon wanted them to look at him long enough so that he could make eye contact and smile at them in an attempt to initiate an interaction. Lyndon did not feel that these people would have treated him in a negative way if they had talked to him.

Were participants staring at Lyndon? They were if staring is defined as 'looking fixedly at a person with intensity'. Is this an adequate definition of what a stare is? There appears to be no research to support that staring is defined by the way one looks at another, or from the motivation to look. There does not seem to be any agreement on how long a stare is, or that length of time is, in fact, a determinant of staring. It could be suggested that the person's intention behind the look may define it as a stare. In the context of this study, participants stared, yet the stare was not interpreted as hostile as is implied by the use of the word, and its association with othering.

I believe that participants looked at Lyndon because they were curious about a person who appeared to be different to them. Therefore staring may equate to inquiry, and perhaps uncertainty. Participants who looked, or stared, at Lyndon were trying to make sense of the situation, and in doing so, formed many questions that went

unanswered. This is evident from their interviews where there were questions of concern and enlightenment. The aspect of concern relates to Lyndon being given an alcoholic drink. The enlightenment had to do with being told about Lyndon's level of communication and of his living arrangements.

There appears to be social convention that implies that staring is rude. In this study participants implied not staring was the preferred social conduct. Goffman offers a purpose behind rules of social conduct 'a rule of conduct may be defined as a guide for action' (1967: 48). Goffman suggests there are two ways that a rule of conduct impacts upon the individual. Firstly, there is a sense of obligation. This is where the individual conducts themselves adhering to codes of behaviour they have identified with. Secondly, there is an expectation placed upon the individual to conduct themselves in the appropriate manner. This is usually projected upon the individual by others (p. 49).

If there is an expectation on behalf of people with disabilities that people with able-bodies do not stare at them, and an obligation that people with able-bodies do not stare, then this serves to keep the two groups apart. It seems that by staring a person is forming and answering questions about whom they are looking at. If these questions were to be asked, then perhaps the barriers that are perpetuated may be deconstructed for those who are seeking answers. It seems that by projecting only hostility onto someone who is staring, the individual being stared at perpetuates a negative loop that keeps them separated. This only serves to keep the myths of another's difference circulating.

Disability and image.

Participants did not want to stare or look for long periods of time because they felt it would be disconcerting for Lyndon. Here the connection is made between the

participant not wanting to stare, and their desire not to be stared at, if they were in Lyndon's position.

What does this mean? I would suggest it means that participants do not want to be like Lyndon, and are fearful of having a disability. Disability for participants means you are different to other people. Having a disability means you are more visible. You stand out. In this context, the notion of being different to others is unacceptable. This is made clear from Philip's comments upon seeing Lyndon out and wondering whether there was a special event for people in wheelchairs. This implies that people in wheelchairs are only out when there is an event organised for them. There appears to be an expectation that people in wheelchairs do not casually go out as others do. What a disability does for participants in this study is stop you from enjoying those activities that require you to have an able-body. Disability is defined in terms of what you are unable to do, as opposed to what you can accomplish (Annison, 1996).

Symbolically Lyndon's image had an impact upon participants. Disability, to some, appears to be something of an uncertainty based on what an individual perceives what it is like to be a person with a disability. This was verbalised by participants in the comments that echoed the underlying emphasis of "not wanting to be like that", or through their assumptions of what life is like for Lyndon. As participants watched Lyndon being assisted with a drink they made a symbolic association between disability and inability. The action reinforced their perception of what life is like to have a disability. The action reinforced their negative association with disability in that to have a disability is to be dependent on others. In this case the perception of difference was linked to seeing the negative aspects of Lyndon's disability. In this study it was linked to Lyndon being seen as different to them.

What was evident from the data was that people saw and acknowledged a difference between themselves and Lyndon based on a lifestyle determinant. The evidence suggests that social and personal stereotyping, labeling and difference are connected to the symbolic representation of disability and how it affects a person's ability to perform enjoyable physical and mental activities. The verbalisation of this difference

is couched in terms that insist it is a shame that the person with a disability is dependent on others.

A global picture.

Table One. Categories for interaction.

	Clare	Susan	Larry	Mark	Sandra	Paul	Phillip
Interaction	X	Xq	X		X		
No Interaction		X		X		X	X
Negative Perception	X	X		X	X	X	X
Positive Perception	X		X		X		
The chosen one	X		X				
Public awareness					X		
Pity		X					
Sexually safe	X						
Unsure of Codes of Behaviour	X	X		X		X	X

The table above presents some interesting insights to the global picture of interactions that took place within this study. An interaction was more likely to occur where a participant had a mixture of positive and negative perceptions of what life is like for a person with a disability. This was in conjunction with participants being motivated to interact from their belief system. Participants were motivated by their desire to interact with Lyndon as they constructed him. An interaction was less likely to occur where participants had a solely negative perception of what life is like for a person

with a disability. When these participants were interviewed there was no indication that a belief system was present that prevented an interaction taking place. Other than not wanting to interact, or that these participants were unable to read the intent behind Lyndon's body cues.

This needs to be qualified with regards to Lyndon's body language. The intent behind Lyndon's cues were, in some cases, acknowledged. This is evident from participants interacting with him. Yet, his intent was not necessarily understood. The reasons behind a participant's motivation to interact were not necessarily the same as those behind Lyndon's intention for the interaction.

Simply, a person sends out cues with intent attached to them. These cues are received but the intent may be mis-read or unacknowledged. However, the receiver may construct a meaning other than the meaning attached to the cue and act accordingly. Therefore, in some cases, the motivation to interact is not necessarily the same as the intention for an interaction.

Chapter Seven.

Conclusion to the study.

What was happening as people with able-bodies interacted with Lyndon? Those participants who interacted with Lyndon did so because there was an agenda underlying their interaction. In this study, the agenda was driven by how the person had constructed their belief system and then acted consistent with the symbolic message dominant within that system. This refers to how the person has come to make sense of their world. They may be drawing from a spiritual agenda; or from the pity/tragedy syndrome; or from seeking attention and recognition from others which in turn establishes safe parameters for others to approach Lyndon; or from the a sexually safe concept where Lyndon is seen to be unable to engage sexually. One or more of these themes were present when a person interacted with Lyndon. What these participants seemed to be doing was acting from the symbolic construct of their faith, or from the symbolism associated with their personal belief system that guides them when deciding “what should I do in this situation”?

When acting from their belief system, participants projected a set of assumptions onto Lyndon. He was what ever they wanted him to be. Lyndon is unable to verbally construct himself, and he is unable to reject the projection of others. In this context Lyndon is unable to verbally communicate his self-identity. He is then placed into the position of accepting the construction others place upon him. This does not differ for those participants who did not interact. Instead of projecting assumptions onto Lyndon so that they had a framework to operate from whilst engaged with him, they projected a set of assumptions that meant they did not interact. Those who did not interact with him felt that Lyndon would not have wanted them to draw attention to his disability, and to his difference.

This is in contrast to what Lyndon wanted. Lyndon wanted to be approached. He enjoys people paying him attention, and he enjoys expressing himself during these

times. Lyndon is at times concerned over his image, but he does not want to hide away. He wants to push himself into situations that cause others to acknowledge him.

In symbolic interactionist terms, participants were imagining themselves as Lyndon and constructed what life is like for him and acted upon that construct (Hewitt & Hewitt, 1986, p. 88). However, this aspect of symbolic interactionism is questionable because it assumes that everyone has the same life experiences, and are able to place themselves in the position of the other. By placing yourself into the position of the other you are expecting them to behave as you would, or you are expecting them to react as you would. Lyndon wanted participants to interact with him, yet some believed he would not want them to.

I have, at times, been frightened of taking Lyndon into some environments because of the difficulty in maneuvering his wheelchair, and because I do not want to create a situation where I may have to approach people to move or make allowances for us. I have in the past, used language that suggests that it is Lyndon who is afraid of entering the environment. I am projecting my fears onto him. I am expecting him to act in a certain way, and to counter this I suggest an alternative activity than the one he wants to do. To date I have not been successful in getting him to accept my projection of the situation. However, due to his non-acceptance, I have been placed into some situations that have caused me to address my fears of social engagement. For this I have Lyndon to thank. In the context of this study, participants have not had the opportunities I have had, so when they watched Lyndon they saw only what his image brought up for themselves.

Participants identified two social conventions that impacted upon them as they watched, or interacted with Lyndon. People were conscious of not wanting to be seen to be staring at Lyndon, who is physically different to them, and people were

uncertain about asking personal questions for fear of upsetting him. These concerns may well be present in any interaction where encounters are with people who are not known. There seems little reason to present these concerns as being pertinent only to the interactions that occurred within this study.

Five out of the seven participants were aware of not wanting to break social conventions that govern an interaction. Participants who did not interact with Lyndon held a prominent view that staring is rude, and they did not want to be seen to be staring. Participants had a strong sense that interacting with Lyndon could be interpreted at some point as them being rude, or impolite. This was based on the premise that their interaction would bring attention to Lyndon's disability and difference, and to themselves. In this context the concept of appearing to be rude and drawing attention to a person's disability prevented an interaction. The implication here is that the person with a disability has to identify with the disability. The disability is seen as the defining aspect of the person in terms of what they can and cannot do. The other then sees drawing attention to their disability as them being rude or impolite.

It appears that when looking it is important not to look for too long unless there is a legitimate reason to do so. There needs to be a distinction made between staring and inquiry, and staring and hostility. There also needs to be a distinction made between interacting and being impolite, and interacting and being polite. Firstly, participants identified staring as being rude because of the social convention that implies it is. This may have more to do with issues of individualism and privacy rather than with simply looking. The hostility that is projected from another onto someone staring may have more to do with their self-consciousness of their image, than with any hostile intention of the person staring (Kleigin, 1980).

The issue of staring for Lyndon is contradictory. He does not like people staring if he feels it is hostile. Yet if they are smiling and staring that is okay, or maybe if they are smiling they are not staring. If the person is female and attractive she can stare regardless of her facial expression. This implies that positive staring for Lyndon (when the person is smiling, or is considered to be attractive) is associated with being liked. This bolsters Lyndon's self image, and if others see another staring at him the action may bolster his social image, or the action may work in reverse and make him feel self-conscious. Therefore, does the agenda behind staring then change the person's reaction to being stared at? There is little evidence available to suggest that it does, or does not. This is because there is little research to suggest the agenda is readable by the person being stared at.

The perception of difference is linked to seeing the negative aspects of people. In this study it was linked to what Lyndon was unable to do for himself because of his disability. This aligns with the literature where the negative aspects of disability override people's perception of what it is like to have disability (Roper, 1990). The pity and tragic nature of disability are still the dominant symbolic expressions used by participants to describe what they saw when watching Lyndon. For Lyndon his difference means that people should approach him. This is based on the premise that he has a disability and is unable to physically approach them. The paradox for Lyndon is that he sees no connection between an invasion of his privacy and avoidance. What this means is that Lyndon has not understood why people have not wanted to interact with him. The research process has helped him understand some of the social dynamics operating when people with able-bodies decide either to interact with him, or not.

When people are constructed as being different to the norm, their negative characteristics are used to highlight that difference. Stereotypes and myths are

perpetuated because people reinforce the negative characteristics (Roper, 1990). If a person's difference is to be understood, then it seems plausible that people need to start communicating with each other in an open fashion, and not to fear people because of their difference. This sounds extremely naive. Staring at someone could land you in hospital, if they interpret the look as hostile, or if they simply do not like being stared at. If this is the case then the person being stared at seems to be defensive of their image. It appears it will take more than open communication before people stop identifying with, and acting to protect, their self-image.

The second convention that participants were unsure about had to do with their uncertainty about asking personal questions. Lyndon's wrist restraint, his level of communication, his living arrangements, his ability to drink alcohol and why he was out, were questions participants thought of as they observed Lyndon. These are personal questions and they support the inquiry concept behind their looks. As they watched Lyndon, they had questions pertinent to his ability to cope with his disability. Lyndon, during his interview, states that he enjoys telling people about himself. In this context Lyndon wants people to ask him questions about how he copes with his disability as he believes by answering such questions he is able to convey to others his capabilities.

Why is it impolite to ask personal questions of a person you are meeting for the first time? Perhaps is it because individuals feel uncomfortable about feeling vulnerable, and to answer honestly about yourself to others may lead to them using the information against you? This seems plausible, and highlights the privacy and confidentiality issues that had to be considered for this study, and to my own uncertainty about interviewing. Seidman (1997) offers some insights on how people can deal with coming to terms with having to protect their self-identity. Avoiding asking, or answering, personal questions is about protecting your self from others.

Seidman eventually came to affirm his difference, and as such dealt with his fear of being seen to be different (p. 12).

Lyndon, like many of us, has a fascination for attractive women, and he uses covert techniques to look at them where possible. Lyndon's self image is bolstered when attractive women talk to him. Lyndon's social image is also enhanced because women are around him and this makes him feel popular. The contradiction in this study was that for most of the female participants who interacted with Lyndon their motivation to do so had more to do with operating from their self-image agenda than from an attraction to Lyndon. This supports the concept that the agenda in some interactions is masked. In this case Lyndon was not aware of the agenda underpinning the interaction.

Symbolically Lyndon associates beauty with friendliness. Lyndon relies on eye contact between himself and others to initiate an interaction. This is where the negative loop of being seen to be staring works against Lyndon, in that it prevents Lyndon's ability to initiate an interaction. In simple terms, participants did not want to be seen staring, and so looked away. This action then prevents eye contact unless Lyndon is able to catch people staring at him. However, those whom he makes eye contact with may not understand his intention and look away. What goes unnoticed in most cases is Lyndon's ability to communicate using non-verbal cues. In all of the non-interactions this was the case, with the exception being that Susan interacted with Lyndon based on the existence of a motive to do so.

Lyndon has a positive self-image that is enhanced with contact. He seems not to have internalised many of the negative reactions to his physical appearance, yet he is concerned what others may think about him. His self has been developed through what appears to be positive interactions with others. However, Lyndon's social image is affected by his disability. Participants saw Lyndon as dependent on others and unable to interact using verbal communication. What this did was instill a notion of pity towards him. Participants felt sorry for Lyndon and this caused them, in most

cases, to reflect upon their own lives. Disability is a negative symbol and the fear associated with it refers to its debilitating affects.

If more interactions were to take place between people with disabilities and people with able-bodies the myths surrounding disability could be addressed. Positive interactions may aid individual's understanding of each other. In this case positive interactions may aid in dismantling the negative perceptions people have of disability, not that these interactions will address the fear of disability, but they may help towards an understanding that disability does not mean inability.

What then drives people to interact with others? The environment we find ourselves in, the people we associate with, the work we do, and the everyday encounters we participate in are all interactions. What do we get from these interactions? It is my observation, based on the data available from this study, that we receive rewards, or a pay off from the interaction. This could be a smile that affirms we are liked, or as in the study, it could have to do with supporting our self-concept.

Larry's Christian self-concept was upheld as he interacted with a person who may not have known about God's love, and that they are apart of an extended family. Larry's determination to talk to Lyndon was founded on telling him that he could become anything he wanted to be, and that one way to do this was to embrace God. Sandra's self concept was confirmed as she interacted with Lyndon. Her reward was that she was seen with someone who was less fortunate than her. Her work practice acted as the foundation for the interaction. This relates to creating a positive image of her and of people with disabilities. Sandra reinforced her self-concept during the interaction, and it was again reinforced by Philip watching her interact. Therefore, Sandra's social image was enhanced by those watching her interact with Lyndon. This encounter goes some way to support the concept that an individual's social image can be enhanced by interacting with people who are perceived to be different to the norm.

Susan's self-concept was confirmed as she interacted with Lyndon after filming had ceased. Susan took pity on Lyndon. She would not have liked herself if she had not said something. She had to interact with Lyndon based on his tragic circumstance. Her reward was that she confirmed to herself that she was a caring person. Clare's self concept was confirmed as she interacted with Lyndon based on her spiritual beliefs. Lyndon was personified as a spiritual entity. The reward was to engage with a male who she saw as embodying love, soul and spirit, and who was unable to exert his sexual prowess. She was able to speak to a male who was sexually safe. The reward for those who did not interact with Lyndon was that they did not confront their negative perceptions of disability. They did not seek to question their negative perceptions of what life is like for a person with a disability.

The data indicates that the behaviour of people in this study is reward driven, the reward being to reinforce the individual's self-concept. It also indicates that each encounter happens as part of an agenda. It may be that each encounter has its own agenda, and the individuals interacting are projecting abstract assumptions onto one another. These assumptions can be accepted or rejected by the individual receiving the projection. In this study Lyndon was unable to reject, or correct the way participants constructed him as the basis of their interaction.

In the same manner, Lyndon was unable to verbally communicate his construction of the other during the interaction. These findings suggest there are other dynamics at work when people with disabilities interact with people with able-bodies other than those based on prejudice. If you are conscious of each encounter you have, and the reactions you have during the encounter, then each interaction tells you more about yourself than it tells you about the other.

Recommendations.

If people interact based on a construction of assumptions that are projected onto others, then there is an argument to suggest that people are not actually seeing others as they interact, but only see others as they construct them. Therefore it is recommended that further studies be undertaken that observe and address the dynamics of interactions that occur between people with able-bodies and people with disabilities. Further studies would need to include more than one form of disability so that generalisations could be made. Studies of this nature may also include observing and interviewing participants with a view of establishing whether the findings from this study can be generalised to interactions that take place between other groups of people and not only between people who have an able body and those who have a disability.

Further work needs to be done on the social meaning of staring. This study argues that staring is not necessarily linked to hostility, but may be linked to inquiry. Staring actually may be a person's way of wanting to initiate an interaction, but they are unsure about the other's reaction to the questions they may want to ask. If there is an argument to suggest that staring may be a symbolic way of wanting to initiate an interaction, then there is an argument to suggest that people who are stared at, in this context people with disabilities, be assertive and ask whether they can help the person staring with any inquiries they may have. This may be particularly helpful in breaking down some of the communication barriers between people with disabilities and people with able-bodies. A study into why people stare, and whether staring is a form of inquiry, is likely to help young people with disabilities deal with their difference in a way that is helpful to them and others.

It appears there is little a person with cerebral palsy, with no verbal communication skills, can do to improve the chances of an interaction if the person they are wanting to interact with is unable to make the connection between their body movements and communication. In light of this problem it has been suggested that a simple light box that flashes 'hello', or 'hi' when activated may help young people like Lyndon to initiate interactions. This type of simplicity is required to aid young people like Lyndon initiate interactions that may help them form a self-identity based on acceptance. The interaction may bolster the young person's self image.

There is a need to assist people with able-bodies interact with people with disabilities. This needs to occur in an environment where people with disabilities feel safe, and do not feel threatened or dehumanised during the encounter. I recently heard of a group of people with disabilities running 'come in and stare' workshops for people with able-bodies. During the workshop people with able-bodies are asked to stare as much as they wish to and to ask any questions they have regarding the life of a person with a disability. I believe this type of workshop needs to be run in primary and high schools, with the intention of dismantling the fear of disability, and to provide a safe forum where questions can be asked without fear of invasion, or recrimination.

At another level, workshops could be developed to address the fundamental barriers that prevent an interaction between people with able-bodies and people with disabilities. For people with disabilities, the workshops would enable them to understand the difficulty people with able-bodies have when interacting with them. This would include how to deal with people staring at them, and how to deal with people wanting to ask personal questions. In the workshops for people with able-bodies they would learn how to engage with people with disabilities so that they are capable of interacting without making the other feel self conscious and vulnerable. In

short I am suggesting expanding upon interpersonal workshops that teach people how to communicate to each other.

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Appendix One.

Interview Questions

The interview questions I used for this study were:

1. When you watched Lyndon what did you see?
2. Were you aware of any responses happening for you as you watched yourself on video?
3. At the time of seeing Lyndon can you describe for me any feelings or emotions you were aware of?
4. During the time you were aware of Lyndon in his wheelchair did you at any time want to approach him.... what stopped you, or what motivated you to approach Lyndon.
5. As you spoke with Lyndon were you aware of others around you? What did you experience?
6. How did you feel as you talked to, or watched Lyndon?
7. Can you describe for me, in general, your feelings about people with disabilities?