Doing boy/girl’ and Global/Local Elements in 10-12 year olds’
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Introduction

Irish society has been undergoing very rapid change involving increasing globalisation, potentially declining localisation and changing gender roles (Tovey and Share, 2003; O’Connor, 1998 and 2000; O’Toole, 2003). There is evidence to suggest that in this context Irish young people are using escapist mood altering drugs (particularly excessive alcohol and cannabis) to a greater extent than their European counterparts (HBSC, 2003; ESPAD, 2004). This study was concerned with looking at texts written by young people aged 10-12 years old in response to an invitation, to ‘tell their life stories’, to write a page ‘describing themselves and the Ireland that they inhabit’ ‘to provide a national data base’ ‘an invaluable archive’, with the option of using the reverse side of the sheet creatively for drawings, poems, songs, or lyrics. This paper is concerned with three issues: firstly with the relationship between the visual content of the drawings and the written texts; secondly with the relevance of a global/local dimension to understanding both; thirdly, with looking at gender variation in both of these and more broadly, at ways of ‘doing boy/girl’ (Haywood and Mac an Ghiall, 2003; Connell, 2005).

For Giddens (1991: 53) ‘Self identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits possessed by the individual. It is the self as reflexively understood in terms of his or her biography’. Renold (2004: 249) noted that: ‘The more complex theorization of the gendering process has shifted from ‘roles’ that males and females ‘learn’ to an understanding of the forming of gender identities as relational, multiple, processual’. Postmodern feminism has argued that it is more useful to see gender as a performance (Butler 1999): the implication being that ‘gender is not a ‘thing’ but a process, and one which is never finished’….’gender is ‘something people ‘do’ or ‘perform’ as opposed to something they have’ (Cameron, 1998:16/17). In this reflexive context, Giddens (1991:217) has suggested that: ‘What gender identity is, and how it is expressed, has become itself a matter of multiple options’. However although Beck
and Beck-Gernsheim (2002: xxiv; 203; 113) saw gender as ‘part of a collective moulding of individual behaviour’ that has been rendered obsolete, it was not consistently referred to as an outdated category, thus implicitly suggesting that it was possible that ‘elements of a gender specific socialisation were still at work’.

Globalisation has been variously defined although frequently linked with the dominance of consumer culture and a focus on global media products and technology -with the suggestion that in such contexts place ‘becomes thoroughly penetrated by disembedding mechanisms’ (Giddens, 1991:146). The most obvious indicators are the global media including the internet and global capitalist consumer goods. However, it has been widely noted that a focus on globalisation obscures the significance of the local; underestimates variation in the meaning and assimilation of global products within particular cultural contexts and fails to recognise that global cultural products may be used to assert local cultural differences (Bennett, 2000; Paulgaard, 2002; Roth, 2002). Both global and local products and life styles may of course be used in narratives about ‘doing boy/girl’. Indeed Devine et al (2004: 110) noted that children’s social environment was becoming increasingly globalised ‘as children all over the world participate more than ever before in a shared culture of music, sport and fashion’.

Over the past 10 years there has been increasing interest in visual images in sociology (whether these are drawings, photos etc: see Prosser 1998). The use of such drawings in combination with other data has been widely encouraged (see Morrow, 1998; Leonard, 2003; Punch, 2002; James et al, 1998). Such visual data has been seen as a way of stepping outside a particular verbal culture and providing insights into young people’s concepts of health (Wetton and McWirther, 1998); family (O’Brien et al, 1996); examinations (Leonard, 2003) and self image (Wakefield and Underwager, 1998). It has been argued that the difficulties posed by such material is not necessarily much greater than that posed by verbal data (Prosser, 1998; Becker, 1998), although the difficulty of combining data generated by different methods has been recognised (Deacon et al, 1998; Bryman, 1992).

This article draws on a random sub-sample (n=341) of texts written in a school context by those in Fifth Class in First Level (typically aged 10-12 years). It attempts
to offer insights into the ways in which global and local processes impact on young people’s ways of doing boy/girl; and the ways in which this can be explored not only through their written texts, but also through the relationship between those texts and creative elements, such as drawings.

**Doing Boy/Girl and Global/Local**
Connell (2005:13) suggested that ‘One of the most important circumstances of young people’s lives is the gender order they live in.’ Thus, boys create their lives individually and collectively through what he calls ‘the configurations of practice associated with the social position of men’ within a particular social and cultural context. Implicit in Connell’s argument is a rejection of biological essentialism whether rooted in a focus on bodily differences or bodily stages of development: ‘The physical changes matter but they do not directly determine the experience of adolescence’ (Connell, 2005: 14). A focus on social practices and sites involved in the construction of masculinity is a key element in this perspective. Thus Connell (2005:15) suggested that sport- particularly organised competitive team sport, was almost as important as sexuality as ‘a site of masculinity formation’- with football in particular being involved in ‘the reproduction of conventional gender identities and definitions’ (Willis, 1990:115). Connell also identified other sites including gendered consumption items, cross gender relationships, fatherhood and gender segregated employment settings (see also Beck, 1992).

Amongst young men in Ireland, there is evidence to suggest that the role of breadwinner is an important definer of masculinity (O’Connor et al, 2002; Ni Laoire, 2005). However, Haywood et al (2005) suggested that there was no necessary relationship between boys and men’s constructions of masculinity. Thus for example, although relationships with women in adulthood are crucial in the construction of adult masculinity, young boys see relationships with girls as a sign of femininity. Ging (2005:47/48) suggested that Irish adolescent boys use the mass media as ‘a potent source of references for constructing a repertoire of acceptable codes and signifiers of masculinity’: with the media effectively functioning as ‘a manual of masculinity’. She also found that stereotypical representations of masculinity were
most evident in 15-17 year olds’ depiction of films and of computer games: violence, fighting, action and sex being key ingredients in those depicted as male (romance, dancing, singing, designing things and creating families being key ingredients in those depicted as female). Boys’ educational experiences have been shown to be typically narrower and less focussed than girls’ on personal development (Baker et al, 2004). Although the young men she studied were critical of the pressures on boys to ‘suppress emotion and act hard’, they got a good deal of pleasure from what she called ‘the performance of tough blokeish masculinity’ (Ging, 2005:41). Jagger also (2002) found that only a very small minority in her study had ‘new man’ concepts of masculinity stressing emotional sensitivity and caring; with Cleary (2005:157) noting that hegemonic masculinity was seen as necessitating the absence of emotional expression and the denial of vulnerability. However, ‘Real life expressions of aggressiveness and toughness’ in school were not associated with status or popularity amongst most boys and girls (see also Lodge, 2005). Furthermore, the particular kinds of interests and activities which could demonstrate boyness could also be used by girls: ‘Fascination with cartoons, computer games and board games that contained a high content of violence, aggression and toughness… carried with it a ‘benign boyness’ that was inclusive of girls and other boys’ (Haywood et al, 2005: 205).

Beck (1992) suggested that young women were likely to have expectations as regards gender equality- both as regards sharing domestic work and as regards their occupational lives-with men being likely to simply practice a ‘rhetoric of equality’. However, whether societies purported to endorse gender equality or complementarity a positive valuation of womanhood did not exist nor a positive male role vis a vis women (Bjerrum Nielsen, 2004). Jagger (2002: 50/51) suggested that amongst the majority of the women she studied ‘physical attractiveness and nurturing remain the key pivots’. For Connolly (2004: 305) ‘the sense that subjectivity is both scripted by and constitutive of ideology finds many echoes in Irish culture’. Thus Irish women’s constructions of the self have been located within an overall context of gender roles that stress service, self -sacrifice and subordination (O’Dowd, 1987; O’Connor, 1998). Gray’s work (2004) suggested that this was changing: ‘the category ‘Irish
women’ …. produced a martyred relationship to the self which they identify with their mothers and refuse for themselves’. However, despite women’s rapidly increasing levels of participation in paid employment in Ireland, cultural value is still seen as attaching to women’s activities in the domestic arena. Thus roughly three fifths of both men and women agreed that: ‘Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay’ (Fahey et al, 2005). The accounts of young people aged 18-30 years (O’Connor, et al, 2002) suggest that these trends reflect a recognition that women’s authority is most likely to exist in the domestic area; with gendered patterns of housework and child care being seen as reflecting women’s greater competence and responsibility.

There is indirect support from girls’ subject choices at University level for the idea that women’s constructions of themselves remain relational: the areas where women constitute the majority being in the broadly person oriented ‘caring’ areas, such as Education, Medical Science and Social Science; while the area where men constitute a clear majority is Technology (Clancy, 2001). Lodge and Flynn (2001: 190) noted that in their study of young students (typically aged 10-13 years) many tended to define themselves ‘in ways which reflected traditional gendered expectations of behaviour, attitudes and characteristics’. However, a small number of young people, mostly girls, operated as ‘boundary crossers’ although this tended to reinforce the higher status of male activities. In Roche’s (2005) work the young women juxtaposed the parameters of their own lives with those of their mothers although Lynch and Lodge (2002:130) suggested that ‘To overtly challenge sexism is to …become unfeminine’. There has also been a suggestion (Lodge, 2004: 177) that exposure to global influences, such as the television programme Buffy, the Vampire Slayer, provided girls with ‘an opportunity to explore different aspects of their gender identity, and push out the boundaries of what it means to be female’- since Buffy presented them with an image of femininity which was both powerful and which could be combined with a more traditional romantic discourse. Thus implicit in this work is the idea that although global elements may sometimes be used to reinforce stereotypical ways of doing girl, they may also be used to expand such boundaries.
Although a key focus of this article is on young people’s experience of and references to global/local phenomena they need to be set in a wider context with Ireland being identified for the past three years as the most globalised country by the AT Kearney Globalisation Index (O’Toole, 2003). Giddens (1991:64) defined globalisation as ‘the intensification of world wide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice-versa’. Young people are avid consumers of what Watson (2004:132) called ‘transnational culture in all of its most obvious manifestations: music, fashion, television and cuisine’. It has been suggested that such transnational cultural components should be described as Americanisation since much of the media based cultural products in fact comes from there. However since the crucial element of globalisation is a focus on artefacts and experiences that are a product of time/space compression, this is the concept used in this study.

Ireland is a small society of just over four million people. Its size alone is conducive to the existence of a very strong local orientation. Traditionally this has been reflected in and reinforced by locality based sporting organisations and competitions (particularly involving Gaelic football), and by the institutional Roman Catholic parish system of worship and community based activities. Both of these seem likely to be under pressure- the former by the increasingly commuter based nature of family life (Corcoran, 2003) and the latter by the rapidly declining commitment of young people to institutionalised church activities. Furthermore, the linking of nationalist symbols such as the Irish flag with the activities of the IRA in the North of Ireland over the past thirty years has created a substantial degree of anxiety surrounding the use of such symbols by children in Ireland.

**Methodology**
Stanley (2000: 40) noted that auto/biography is concerned with ‘practices, that is the myriad of everyday and frequently competing social practices concerned with the articulation of (often competing, sometimes discontinuous) notions of ‘selves’ and ‘lives’’. The accounts produced by the young people in this study are organisationally driven in the sense that they were invited to do them within a school setting and so
can be seen as similar to solicited diaries (Bell, 1998) or externally required texts (Stanley, 2000). In this article, the focus is on a randomly selected sub-set (n= 341) from the total sample of 3,464 texts written by those aged 10-12 years. The latter were part of a wider universe of 4,100 texts that were randomly selected from a total universe of 33,828 texts returned by half of the 3,658 schools in Ireland. The majority (85 per cent) of the 4,100 texts were produced by children in Fifth Grade in First Level (i.e. typically aged 10-12 years). Texts written by girls accounted for roughly half of all these texts-a pattern that was replicated in the sub-sample (n=341) where just over half were by girls (56 per cent and 54 per cent respectively)

All of these texts were written in response to an invitation, as part of the millennium celebrations, to ‘tell their life stories’, to write a page ‘describing themselves and the Ireland that they inhabit’ ‘to provide a national data base’ ‘an invaluable archive’ which would explain to a ‘time traveller’ in 2999 what ‘they could have expected to see, hear, enjoy and avoid’ (Write Now, 1999). The guidelines sent to teachers suggested that topics include locality and community, family and friends, home, hopes and ambitions for the new millennium, pastimes and hobbies, role models and influences including fun, fashion, music, sport, technology and games (Write Now, 1999). The young people were told that a random selection of texts would be bound into a Millennium Book that would be presented to the President of Ireland. The remainder of the texts were returned to the schools (the sample of 4,100 texts having been drawn before they were returned). The influence of the school setting or perceived reader on the texts cannot be ascertained; nor can one know to what extent the texts reflect normative ideas about young people’s lives. The directions to schools however specifically indicated that quality, appropriateness etc. were irrelevant.

The rationale for the focus on global/local and ways of doing boy/girl must be located in the wider cultural context in which the young people in this study, born between 1987 and 1989, have grown up. During their lives the economy moved from being the ‘sick man of Europe’ in the 1980s to the ‘Celtic Tiger’ in the 1990s; with massive outward emigration in the 1980s giving way to inward migration in the 1990s. As a society Ireland had remained patriarchal in the sense that divorce was not allowed up
to 1997; married women’s participation in paid employment was very considerably below the EU average up to the late 1990s (despite the removal of the Marriage Bar in 1973: O’Connor, 2000 and 1998). Married women’s participation in paid employment is now marginally above the average for the twenty five countries in the EU, with roughly half of all married women being in paid employment (CSO, 2004). Gender role attitudes supportive of wives and mothers participation in paid employment have also increased substantially over the period (Whelan and Fahey, 2004; Fahey et al, 2005). Such changes have occurred in a context where increasingly, girls have higher levels of educational participation, and superior educational achievements, to boys. However, these patterns sit uneasily with the ideological assumptions underpinning the ongoing ‘patriarchal dividend’ (Connell, 1995 and 1987) accruing in, for example, the economic system, the state and the institutional church (O’Connor, 1998). The consequent ‘melange of modernities and traditions ….which animate contemporary Ireland’ has been described as a ‘collision culture’ (Keohane and Kuhling, 2004: 7). It is one where global and local meet in a context of considerable ambiguity and anxiety concerning gender roles.

The method of analysis in the overall study was both quantitative and qualitative. Gender was a focus of interest in both. Initially, a quantitative analysis was undertaken focusing on the absence/presence of a number of themes including descriptions of self, local embeddedness, family and friends. An initial thematic qualitative analysis was undertaken of a random selection of 600 sheets each by two of the other researchers and themes and sub-themes were identified and quotations transcribed to illustrate these, drawing initially on the categories used in the quantitative analysis. However, the qualitative data was also used inductively to identify themes, which were framed in interaction with the theoretical literature in the context of a changing social and cultural context. A focus on global elements was one of those that emerged through this process in the context of an increasing recognition of the globalisation of Irish society. In order to further explore global/local content, an additional random sub-sample of the 10-12 year olds texts (n=341) was drawn and a more in-depth analysis of such content undertaken.
Given the stress in Watson’s (2004) concept of globalisation on ‘transnational culture in all of its most obvious manifestations’ four types of global elements were identified: firstly, those referring to global entertainment or consumer culture, including references to international soccer, pop stars, chart song lyrics or designer labels; secondly to global technology, including TV programmes, the internet, mobile phones, computers and computer games. In addition since, as recognised by Albrow (2004: 139), a ‘locality can exhibit the traces of world events’, individuals may vary in their awareness of global phenomena, this being assessed on the basis of their reference to global political concerns, including world peace, war, global warming. Finally, and reflecting Rygaard’s (2003) work, references to international travel, dreams or hopes as regards travelling or working abroad were defined as global. Those aspects of their life style that were not seen as global included those related to references to family, friends, school, local area, locally played sports etc.

In looking at those elements that have been loosely called local, we were particularly concerned with those that indicated a sense of place- broadly defined to include an awareness of some kind of spatial entity (ranging in size from their room, to their home, village/town, region or nation) as well as explicitly geographically related elements of their life style (such as playing football for a local club). Four types of such local elements were identified. Firstly those referring directly to the significance and meaning of their local area including references to its history, geographical structure, perceived beauty, tourist potential, local amenities and local heroes; secondly, references to their own room, house or wider geographical area which suggested its meaning or significance (including an identification with or pride in ‘my community’); thirdly, references to the wider area of the state, including references to Ireland, pride in being Irish, to the national flag, references to national political leaders or other national role models; fourthly references to aspects of their current or aspirational life style which suggested a local or national identification and/or activities linked to a specific geographical location. References to activities with family or friends as such were typically not included. Equally references to spatial
aspect of school were not included since as the texts were written there, it was impossible to assess the emotional significance of this area.

The young people were given the option of using the reverse side of the sheet creatively for drawing, poems, songs, lyrics etc. Across the total 10-12 year old sample, by far the most common use of the back page was drawing: with just over half of both the overall 10-12 year old sample and the sub-sample (n=341) doing a drawing on the back page (See Table 1). These together with that minority (5%) who used the back page for lists/facts were combined into a category of drawings and related texts –with little gender difference (in contrast to Punch’s 2002 work). INSERT TABLE 1.

The most common global elements in these drawings were from the world of global entertainment or consumer culture (such as drawings of international soccer players; or pop stars); of characters from films or TV programmes (such as from ET, South Park or the Simpsons); dream teams (featuring the names of international soccer players and their positions); or technological aspects of their own life styles (such as mobile phones, computers, ghetto blasters etc). The most unambiguous local indicators were local or national symbols such as Guinness, coins and maps of Ireland, flags and shamrocks, as well as drawings of specific identified places in Ireland, such as Bray Head. Where houses featured in the drawings and where they were labelled as ‘My House’, or had the same number as the young person’s address in the written text, they were seen as referring to their own house and were included as local. Drawings of setting suns, trees in a field etc were not defined as local since these were seen as having no specific spatial referent.

Just one in five of the back pages were mainly devoted to songs/poems. It was impossible in most cases to classify these as global/local. Girls were more likely than the boys to use the back page in this way (27 per cent versus 13 per cent) arguably reflecting girls’ greater linguistic facility and/or their greater interest in pop culture (O’Connor, 2005a; Lynch and Lodge, 2002). Just under a quarter (23 per cent) of the
back sheets were blank—with boys being more likely than the girls to leave such blank pages (30 per cent versus 18 per cent respectively, n=341). This may reflect the boys’ well established less compliant attitudes in a school context. This was the only area where the sub-sample deviated somewhat from the main sample—see Table 1). However this seems unlikely to have any consequences for the paper.

To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used and identifying information, local or school referents are not used in the case of individual quotations. Although the specific permission of the young people involved was not sought, this material came from an initiative aimed at providing an account of their lives for future generations: a reference to the use of such data for research purposes being included in the material sent to schools. The excerpts are verbatim quotations, with spelling, grammatical and other mistakes/capitalisation as in the original texts.

**Trends Emerging in the Data**

The majority (89 per cent) of the 10-12 year olds’ written texts included global elements and by far the most common references were those related to global entertainment and consumer culture. Boys and girls were roughly equally likely to include such references (91 per cent of the boys as compared with 87 per cent of the girls). The majority (63 per cent) also included local elements in their written texts (a similar proportion of those in the total sample of 10-12 year olds referred to the local area in their texts: O’Connor, 2005a). Boys in the sub-sample were somewhat more likely than the girls to do this (68 per cent versus 57 per cent respectively) –a trend that was not replicated across the wider sample of 10-12 year olds. Only just under two fifths (36 per cent) of all the back pages involved drawings and related texts which could be classified as global or local in the terms outlined- and there was no gender variation in these trends.

The general absence of gender differentiated patterns was striking in what has up to now, been a highly gender differentiated society (O’Connor, 1998; 2002). However, there were differences in the content of boys and girls’ drawings and related texts.
Thus for example, the most commonly occurring drawing amongst the boys involved football at some level (including drawings of international soccer stars, dream teams, drawings of themselves playing for international teams, unidentified people shooting goals into nets etc). Other more occasional images featured technological artefacts or TV images, (unidentified) houses, local beauty spots/historical buildings and occasionally national symbols such as flags or the shamrock. There was greater variety in the girls’ drawings. They included images drawn from TV or pop culture, occasional ones involving football and technology as well as drawings of (identified) houses, globes, and far more drawings related to nature, animals, images of their families and friends.

A four fold typology was used to explore the relationship between the written text and the drawings and related texts. In the first type, drawings illustrated element(s) of the written text; secondly drawings included elements that were not referred to in the written text; thirdly, drawings related more loosely to the content of the written text; fourthly, drawings which had no relationship to the content of the written text. These are illustrated below.

1. Drawing illustrating global/local element(s) in the written text

In this type the drawings on the back illustrated global/local elements from the written text- either focussing on individual elements or a collage of material artefacts from their life style. Thus for example, Ciara Bentley having given her name, age and school; having referred to her best friend and her favourite school subjects, went on to focus on global entertainment, identifying her favourite pop bands (*Steps, the Venga boys, the Spice Girls* etc) and her favourite TV programmes (*including Friends, The Simpsons and South Park* ). She also refers to role models ‘these days’ being the Spice Girls:

‘most children want to be Pop stars... Who am I to complain? I want to be a pop star myself! Well either that or an astronaut’ (*Ciara Bentley, Fifth Class*)

There is some suggestion of moving outside typical gender roles in her reference to her own alternative career (viz astronaut- ‘to be the first person to walk on Mars’)- with Rygaard (2003) suggesting that global influences could be reflected in desires for
such exotic jobs. One of her favourite TV programmes (*The Simpsons*) was suggestive of boundary crossing, while her commentary focusing on the kinds of animals that are close to extinction etc. was also not typically female (O’Connor, 2005a). The written text ends with her name and no address. The back page reflected elements of the global content of the written text: both of them featuring ways of ‘doing girl’ drawn largely from the global entertainment industry.

Martin O’Toole’s text was in some ways similar in so far as the back page also featured a drawing of the global element referred to in the written text. He opened by referring to his name; age, his place of birth and the (different) county he now lives in. The local elements in the text included pride in Ireland which he described as ‘a very wealthy county’ ‘a very advanced county’. He also referred to the fact that ‘Mary McAleese is our president’; that he himself played soccer for a local team and to the fact that the (*fascinating*) Book of Kells was in Trinity College Dublin. The global elements included references to supporting Manchester United and to their forthcoming match against Bayern Munich in the Champions League; to computers and to war. The written text also included social commentary about how houses are built; how electricity affects our lifestyle; about the political division between the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland etc. There were also references to the sports he himself liked (soccer, gaelic, hurling, basketball and golf); and to his own and his brother’s pets. The back page simply showed a figure scoring a goal that the goalie fails to stop- with the caption ‘Goal’ ‘Man Utd 2-1 Bayern Munich’. Overall then, the written text was quite varied in content, with both global and local elements. The back page drew on a global element relating to football to reflect and reinforce a stereotypical way of ‘doing boy’.

Like Martin O’Toole’s text, John Quinn’s involved football; unlike it, it was entirely local. It focussed entirely on one day that he saw as highly significant -his first day ‘togging out’ when he was 10 years old, in the hope of being chosen to play on a local soccer team. The group involved thirty others, only one of whom he knew- his cousin
Joe. ‘To his surprise’ he was chosen to play midfield and scored the winning goal in that match:

‘And my most glorious moment was when I scored the winning goal for my team. It was tough but at last we got to the semi-final against our old rivals’ [They were subsequently beaten] ‘As the final whistle blew we walked off the pitch disappointed. That was the last game of the season but I was already looking forward to the next season’

This text has resonances with the kinds of masculine narratives described by adolescents that revolved around ‘fateful’ or ‘critical moments’ (Thomson et al, 2002) where a remembered moment of triumph was immediately followed by a memory of defeat: the implication being that confirmation of a gendered identity in that context was a source of contentment- even if the ultimate outcome involved defeat (O’Connor, 2005b). The written text ends with his name and address. The drawing on the back page features a goalie protecting a goal while another figure lines up to shoot the ball into the net. The goalie’s jersey has a local teams name on it and hence the drawing was classified as local (as was the written text).

In the case of both Ciara Bentley and Martin O’Toole, global elements are used on the back page to illustrate global content in the written text. In Ciara Bentley’s case they implicitly suggest new ways of ‘doing girl’ whereas in Martin O’Toole’s they reflect and reinforce stereotypical ways of ‘doing boy’. John Quinn’s back page, which featured local elements was very similar to Martin O’Toole’s which featured global elements. This implicitly suggested that in terms of ‘doing boy’, the global/local status of the drawings was unimportant.

2. Drawing including some global/local element(s) not referred to in written text

In this type, the drawings and related texts added to the information provided by the written text by including global/local elements not referred to in that text. Thus for example, Amy Delaney’s text focused on friends and family: referring to the meaning of these relationships to her: she ‘looks up to them’; tells them her secrets; loves them; they help each other out- lend money to each other ‘but we always pay back each other’. The parental relationship exemplifies these qualities to a heightened and asymmetrical degree- with them taking care of her; taking her on holidays; giving her
money if she needs it, buying her ‘clothes, tracksuits runners’. She specifically refers to her siblings: ‘I help my brother Tim and my sister Jane we all help each other’. The web of kindness extends beyond family and friends to include a local dimension: ‘All our neighbours are very nice to us’. She repeats twice that she ‘loves’ living in the (named) local area: ‘There are no fights or arguments’. There are ‘loads of kids’ to play with near her house and the school is only five minutes away from it. There is one reference to a global element: ‘I want to live in Lanzarote for the air 2000 but there is no chance’. The text ends with her signature and her address. Thus although the main focus was on family, the tenor of the text was more local than global. The back page featured a drawing of her (named) brother and sister with Nike symbols on their runners and on her brothers’ top. There was no reference in the written text to brand names or labels. However the drawing indicates the extent to which global merchandising had become part of the idiom of her perception of her siblings (see Pole, 2005 for a discussion of labels as cultural signifiers).

Kieran Keogh’s drawing included elements that were not in the written text. The latter text began by giving his name, age, place of residence and address of the school he attends, and (later) his family composition, their occupations, his friends’ names and what they do together (i.e. on Fridays they go to the cinema and on Saturday them go to Supermacs or ‘hang around the town’). The latter element does suggest a local element, which is made explicit in his references to his town as ‘a very historic town because it has a castle that looks like a round tower’. There is a further local element in his reference to supporting his county in hurling (his own hobbies including hurling, soccer and gaelic football). The global elements include a reference to global technology (playing with his computer and watching TV); to the global entertainment industry (his favourite bands being Five, Steps, Robbie Williams and Offspring and Manchester United being his favourite soccer team) – with global and local elements reflected in his dream ‘to play soccer for Manchester United and the Republic of Ireland’. There are also global political elements-including a hope for world peace and an end to world starvation. The written text concludes by re-stating his name, age,
class and the name of his school. There is no reference to a school crest, school activities or any aspect of school life. The back page consisted of a careful drawing of his school crest featuring the local castle in the centre, with the name of the school on the top and its location in Irish underneath. It suggested a creative recognition of the visual relationship between the two local elements (the school and the castle) and/or the symbolic importance of the school itself.

In both of these cases the drawing on the back page added to our understanding. In Amy Delaney’s case it suggested that labels have become very much a part of these young people’s perceptions of each other-something that is not reflected in their written texts; while Kieran Keogh’s indicated the way in which symbols can be re-interpreted.

3. **Drawings based more loosely on content of the written text**

In this type the drawings added to our understanding of the nuances in the main text and undermined the global/local distinction as defined. Thus for example, Sean Deighan’s written text began by referring to his first name, his looks, his place of residence, his school, his favourite sport (rugby and tennis) and his pet fish. However it mainly revolved around providing a social commentary about Ireland: its ‘grate bands’- U2, B*Witched, Westlife and Boyzone- identifying his own favourite band as U2; its four types of beer (‘the most favourite of all wood be Guinness’ and its ‘two main sports that comes from Ireland....Herly and Gaelic Football’). Implicit in his text is a strong identification with and pride in Ireland, fuelled both by its global and local achievements. On the back page there is a tricolour flag- and it seems plausible to see this as the Irish flag. Thus in this case the distinction between global and local seems unhelpful in so far as both are used to express what is essentially local pride.

The relationship between the drawing and the written text was even more subtle in Julia Brann’s case. She gave her name and age, loved singing and dancing and wrote that her dream was to become a singer. She identified her favourite song as being by Britney Spears and said that she wanted to meet the band Five. Other global elements
included references to watching TV; to her favourite films; and her hope that: ‘by the year 2099. Cars will be safer. people will probably be living in space ... world hunger will die out and wars will stop’. She referred to a wide range of other leisure activities including speech and drama, hip hop, choir, playing the recorder and the keyboard. Her written text briefly referred to her family and to her best friend. The only local element was her reference to various games that were played at home (including volleyball, football, handball, basketball, skipping). There was evidence in her text of her awareness of challenges to gender stereotyping. Thus Julia says that: ‘I think my life is fair, my friend Kerrie doesn’t. Because girls can’t play international football she says she will change it one day’. One could suggest that this was part of a more general questioning of authority since she describes the teachers as ‘Sometimes Mean’. The back page consists of a drawing of a girl with ear rings, carefully made up with eye shadow, mascara and lipstick, in a dress with thin straps with a big heart drawn on the front. It seems possible to see this as a stereotypically female depiction of women as sexy and caring within a socio-cultural context where the definition of womanhood continues to involve a servicing and nurturant role for women (O’Connor, 1998; Jagger, 2002; Skeggs 1997). Thus, her text included just one local element as well as a range of references to global entertainment, technology and global political awareness. There was no reference to fashion or kindness or compassion in the written text although her drawing suggested an endorsement of a stereotypical kind of womanhood—which can be seen as implied by her rejection of her friend Kerrie’s challenging of gender stereotypes.

In this type the drawings added to our understanding of the nuances in the main text and undermined the global/local distinction as defined. In the case of Sean Deignan the distinction between global and local seemed unhelpful since both kinds of elements were the basis for local pride; while in Julia Brann’s case the drawing of the woman seemed to be endorsing a stereotypical image of womanhood, although it was not classified as local- thus underlining the limitations of the global/local distinction as defined.
4. Drawings unrelated to written text

This type included drawings that had no obvious relationship with the written text. The content of these drawings were gendered, in the sense that particular kinds of drawings were more likely to be done by girls than boys. Thus for example, drawings related in a general way to nature (such as drawings of a sunrise; a kite over the sea etc), animals (including but not restricted to their own pets) as well as drawings of specific friends and family were more likely to be done by girls than boys. The salience of attachment figures in their drawings is compatible with girls greater relational connectedness- a pattern that is only beginning to be visible at 10-12 years as regards references to named friends, best friends and pets, but which is very strong indeed by 14-17 years (O’Connor et al, 2003).

Mary Smith’s text focussed on what she called her life now. The only local elements were the description of her place of residence- a three bedroomed flat on the top floor in the city where she lived with her mother, father, sister and dog. She refers to the names and ages of her family and friends: ‘I really love my family and my friends’; her school, its furniture and her after school activities including playing in a pipe band three days a week. She is critical of the amount of homework the teacher gives her and of the man who leads the pipe band: ‘Its my favourite hobby only Joe Connelly really annoys and gives out to you’. She concludes with the hope that the reader will understand her writing. The text includes no global elements; with the only local ones relating to her city centre place of residence. The back page made no reference to any elements on the front. It was a drawing of a flower under the caption ‘Nature is the Future’. Other than suggesting the value attached to nature, it is impossible to interpret this.

It was striking that drawings of houses by boys seldom identified them as their own. It is impossible to know to what extent this reflects girls’ identification with the house as ‘female space’ –although such an explanation would seem to be compatible with Irish women’s continued acceptance of disproportionate responsibility for that space.
Summary and Conclusions

This study was concerned with looking at written texts and drawings done by young people aged 10-12 years old in a small fast changing society in response to an invitation, to ‘tell their life stories’, to write a page ‘describing themselves and the Ireland that they inhabit’ ‘to provide a national data base’ ‘an invaluable archive’ for posterity. The young people were given the option of using the back page for drawings, poems, songs, lyrics or anything else that they wished to include. Just under two fifths of them used it for drawings or related texts which could be classified as global/local and this article is particularly concerned with looking at the relationship between the content of these and the written texts; the relevance of the global/local dimension to both; and the use of these elements in doing boy/girl drawing on a sub-sample (n=341) written by the 10-12 year olds.

At first glance one might say that global elements permeated these young people’s accounts since almost 90 per cent of them included one or more of the global elements in their written texts-and there was little gender difference in this. However, more than three fifths also included one or more of the local elements in their written texts-with boys being somewhat more likely to do this than girls – a pattern that was not replicated in the overall sample of 10-12 year olds. It was very unusual for these back pages to include both local and global elements –whereas this was common in the written texts. It is impossible to choose between the written texts and the back page as the more valid indicator-thus illustrating the difficulties involved in triangulation (Deacon et al, 1998; Bryman, 1992). However, by looking at the drawings in relation to the written texts we can get further insights.

There was a suggestion that despite the highly globalised and rapidly changing nature of the society, Ireland is still very far away from a situation where: ‘What gender identity is, and how it is expressed, has become itself a matter of multiple options’
(Giddens, 1991:81). Thus, in the boys’ texts, ways of doing boy continued to be reflected in a narrow range of themes, with sports in general and football in particular featuring prominently in their drawings, whether these were at global or local level. Football seemed to be one of the few symbols of ‘doing boy’ which was unproblematically male- although this may change with the increasing proportion of young women in Ireland playing football. There was greater variety in the girls’ drawings. However, in so far as they included global elements, they were likely to reflect pop culture and to be associated with non-stereotypical ways of doing girl (i.e. boundary crossing). Thus in the case of girls, globalisation arguably provided support for non-stereotypical gender roles.

Those drawings that included elements that were not referred to in the written text (second type), and those that were more loosely connected to the content of the main text (third type) highlighted the contribution that drawings can make to our understanding of young people and their lives. Thus Amy Delaney’s drawing suggested that global merchandising symbols had become part of the idiom of her perception of her siblings. This was not unique- with such symbols featuring elsewhere on clothes. In other cases (such as in the case of Kevin Keogh) considerable ingenuity was used in utilising local symbols. Particularly in the case of girls, drawings in type four (which were unrelated to the written text) suggested a focus on nature and/or on a family relationships. Furthermore, although boys and girls both drew houses, boys were less likely than the girls to identify them as their own house- implicitly suggesting that boys did not see this as a male space.

Overall then it seems possible to conclude that, as suggested by Ging (2005) globalisation supports hegemonic ways of ‘doing boy’. However in a context where boundary crossing is eroding gender differences, global elements can be used to extend the repertoire of ways of doing girl. The study also suggested how drawings could provide insights into the way in which global idioms become part of young people’s perception of each other and their world. The actual content of these drawings was also suggestive as regards identifying ways of doing boy/girl. Indeed
the fact that typically, unlike the written texts, they did not include both global and local elements, might suggest that they provide less ambiguous indicators of global/local orientation and ways of doing boy/girl than that provided by the written text. One could suggest that precisely because this kind of medium capitalises on children’s skills (whereas the written text is likely to be more constrained by an adult world) it is a peculiarly revealing medium for understanding children—particularly when such drawings are juxtaposed with their written texts. Finally, the fact that global and local elements were used to reflect ways of ‘doing boy’ undermines the significance of a distinction between global and local in the eyes of young people living in a local context characterised by the assimilation of global products.

Thus although this study has focussed on young people within one small rapidly changing society, it seems plausible to suggest that the patterns emerging are unlikely to be peculiar to such contexts. However, further work is such societies is necessary to explore the extent this.

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Table 1: Content of Back Page by Gender in Total Sample and Sub-sample in 10-12 year olds (n=341)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Drawing/Collages &amp; Related Texts</th>
<th>Poems/Songs</th>
<th>Blank</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A/Total Sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>100% (1551)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>99% (1872)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total N</strong></td>
<td>1902</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>919</td>
<td>3423</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B/Sub-Sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>57% (91)</td>
<td>13% (21)</td>
<td>30% (47)</td>
<td>100% (159)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>56% (102)</td>
<td>27% (48)</td>
<td>18% (32)</td>
<td>101% (182)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total N</strong></td>
<td>51% (193)</td>
<td>20% (69)</td>
<td>23% (79)</td>
<td>99% (341)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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