A Place to *Be*

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ABSTRACT

This research builds on constructs of "space" and "place" by exploring how "sense of place" in schools contributes to a sense of belonging and the possible implications for learning. "Learning" is an evolving process of connectedness with environment and subject matter. Subjective relationships between people and spaces include the ways in which people use, experience, construct meanings in and are influenced by the spaces in their lives. A constructivist and phenomenological research design allows investigation of the subjective spatial experiences of thirty-eight Grade 12 students constituting the research sample.

This study demonstrates that students create physical, mental, and ideational "spaces of security" from the subjective meanings they construct in school spaces fulfilling their needs for safety and belonging and facilitating the formation of a diversity of collective and individual identities. Increased understandings of student experiences in schools and the possible pedagogical implications contribute to educational research.

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DEDICATION

To Nom and Pom for your endless love and support.

CHAPTER ONE - THE STUDY

While trying to improve the quality of education with new curriculums, technologies, and strategies, educators and policymakers must not forget the structures and spaces where our children go to school.
(Anne Taylor as cited in Meek, A. (1995). *Designing places for learning* p. 68.)

Chapter One introduces the concepts of "space" and "place" informing this study and outlines the purpose, rationale, and significance of the research. A presentation of research themes and a general outline concludes the chapter.

Introduction

The spaces of daily life through which human beings actively experience the world are fundamentally important to human existence. Godkin describes the vital importance of the meaningfulness of space: "The places in a person's world are more than entities which provide the physical stage for life's drama. Some are profound centers of meanings and symbols of experience. As such, they lie at the core of human existence" (Godkin as cited in Buttimer & Seamon, 1980, p. 73). Humans often take-for-granted, however, their interactions with and in space. The encapsulation of human experiences, engagements, and movements in the spatial dimensions of everyday life often goes unnoticed. Valentine describes the elusive nature of the daily spaces of life: "...the 'everyday' by its very nature is difficult to grasp. Its very 'normality', its very 'taken-for-grantedness', 'all-around-us-ness', makes it elusive to pin down, to take stock of..." (Valentine as cited in Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 48).

Human interactions and experiences of spaces escape attention in educational analysis and have rarely been the focus of research. Few theorists have investigated the subjective nature of the spatial dimension in the school setting. Subjective relationships

between people and spaces include the ways in which people use, experience, construct meaning in, and are influenced by the spaces in their lives. Space as a cultural construction, furthermore, has not been investigated in the school setting, a culturally constructed space designed for learning. "Learning" is viewed as a process of connectedness with environment (context) and subject matter (content). The ways in which students encounter, interpret, and engage in the everyday spaces of schools have not been the focus of much investigation. There is limited research in relation to how students conceptualize school spaces and how these meanings contribute to learning. There is little known, therefore, about how students experience "the hollows" within their schools (Sommer, 1969, p. vii). Educational research has not investigated the kinds of attachments students develop within public institutions and the possible implications of these attachments for effective teaching and learning. This study addresses student engagement in these "learning" spaces.

This research uses the narratives of thirty-eight Grade 12 students to investigate how conceptualizations and uses of space create a sense of belonging in schools. This study considers, further, the ways in which the meanings constructed by students in school spaces may contribute to the learning process, opening up many possibilities for future research. Within a constructivist approach "place" refers to those mental, physical, and ideational spaces which are meaningful to individuals and to which they attach a sense of belonging. The term "space," in contrast, applies to the physical dimensions and attributes of school spaces. An emphasis on "place" as a cultural construction facilitates this examination of what feelings of ownership students have as part of a sense of *belonging in schools. An investigation of students' subjective experiences of and in*

school spaces, moreover, allows the addition of the concerns and needs of students to objective dimensions of school space (Ley, 1983, p. 132).

Purpose

My goal is to understand how the meanings students construct in school spaces influence their sense of belonging and how this sense of connectedness may ultimately contribute to learning. Relationships between students and the school spaces in which they move and interact influence learning both positively and negatively. I intend to understand and not forget, therefore, the "spaces" in schools as Taylor alludes to above (Taylor as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 68). Unlike Taylor I do not focus on the impact of the *objective*, "structural" elements of spaces on learning, but focus on the impact of the *subjective* nature of school spaces on belonging and learning. An understanding of school spaces from the participants' subjective perspective can contribute to knowledge of factors affecting students and their success.

This research explores individual and collective identity in conjunction with sense of spatial meaning and belonging. In this study "identity" is a definition of self and the self in relation to society linked to sense of belonging or connectedness to school space. In order to allow participants to share their stories about their experiences of and in "learning" spaces, this study presents a multiplicity of student voices. My ultimate purpose is to achieve a better understanding of how the collaborative construction of space in schools by teachers and students affects teaching and learning. Possible applications of this research will address means to facilitate students' spatial interactions and relationships so as to enhance sense of belonging in schools and individual and collective identity development.

Rationale

Relph in *Place and Placelessness* describes the human need for meaningful spaces: "To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know your place" (Relph, 1976a, p. 1). The ways in which school spaces become meaningful to students is significant. What "places" students know in school spaces contributes to collective and individual identity formation and sense of belonging in schools. The idea of a "sense of place" or of space as culturally meaningful and its importance for human beings is central to this investigation. This study applies the notions of sense of belonging and how students identify with spaces to the micro-scale of the school and to their everyday lives. My objective is to understand the role of spatial meaning construction for sense of belonging and the potential importance for teaching and learning of "sense of place"' in school space. This study, further, expands on and bridges understandings of "space," "place," and "learning."

Significance of the Study

There is ample research in cultural geography on the dual constructs of "space" as a physical location, and "place" as space endowed with meaning. In the domain of education much research has examined factors that affect teaching and learning. Applications of the constructs of "space" and "place" to the context of the school and specifically the implications for teaching and learning of sense of belonging based on spatial meaning construction are absent from the literature. This research is significant as it unites two domains of inquiry previously disconnected, namely, geographical constructs of "space" and "place" and the educational implications for "learning." The connection of these two domains allows consideration of how "sense of place" in school

space may contribute to effective teaching and learning and opens many avenues of future research. The constructivist, meaning-making view of space adopted in this study, furthermore, departs from more formalistic focuses on the attributes of space. This research begins to bridge, therefore, our understandings of "space," "place," and "learning," while branching off into areas as yet unexplored. New research areas should investigate environmental influences on learning in terms of the significance of subjective spatial experiences and the meaning of school space.

Research Questions and Themes

The research questions guiding this study are threefold:

1. How do students experience and construct meanings in relation to the physical spaces of schools?
2. How do students experience and express collective and individual autonomies in school spaces?
3. How do students form collective and individual identities in relation to school spaces?

These three research questions capture the main themes explored in this study in relation to how students construct meanings in school spaces. The main research themes include: territoriality and ownership, student agency (power and autonomy), and identity and sense of belonging. This study demonstrates that students create physical, intellectual, cultural, and ideational "spaces of security" from the subjective meanings they construct in school spaces. These "spaces of security" facilitate learning as they fulfill the fundamental security and belonging needs of students and facilitate the formation of a diversity of collective and individual identities in school spaces. Application of this research involves ways to assist in the formation of a diversity of relationships between students and school spaces thereby allowing for the development of multiple senses of

place in schools.

Chapter Outline

This study has six chapters. Following an introduction in Chapter One, a literature review in Chapter Two defines key terms and surveys the constructs and themes central to this research. Chapter Three outlines the methodology and research design of the study including a description of the research site and participants. Chapters Four and Five present results in relation to the central research themes mentioned above. Chapter Six, finally, outlines the implications of the research findings, discusses possible applications, and suggests avenues of further research.

CHAPTER TWO - LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter outlines the literature informing this investigation. The first section addresses the geographical perspective of the study including definition and differentiation of the dual constructs of "space" and "place." Subsequent sections explore significant dimensions of both constructs. This study builds on our understandings of "space" and "place" through their application to the school setting. Theoretical underpinnings suggest both "space" and "place" are important for human existence.

A Geographical Perspective

The constructs of space and place lie at the heart of geography (Massey, 1994, p. 249). Geography is, in effect, all about the spatial dimensions of the earth and human beings in relation to the earth's spaces. Massey argues space and place are fundamental geographical concepts:

> Space and place are two of the central organizing terms of geography. They are concepts to which we seem endlessly to return, and with good reason...they are crucial organizing frames for the...way in which we understand the world and make our way about it. (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 245)

Seamon describes how geography looks specifically at human beings in relation to the earth's spaces: "Geography studies the earth as dwelling space of man...and seeks to understand how people live in relation to everyday places, spaces and environments" (Buttimer & Seamon, 1980, 148). Phenomenological geography examines the spatial interactions of individuals and "asks the significance of people's inescapable immersion in a geographical world" (ibid.). Relph in *The Phenomenological Foundations of Geography*, uses the term "geographical lifeworld" to refer to the "world of spaces,

landscapes, and places which we all must encounter in our daily lives" (Relph, 1976b, p. 10). The "geographical lifeworld" represents the spaces through which the world is actively experienced.

Ley, similarly, uses the term "lifeworld" to refer to the "web" of familiarity and predictability of people, process, and place individuals experience in everyday life (Ley, 1983, p. 138). The students' webs of familiarity and predictability in the everyday spaces of the school, is the "lifeworld" under examination in this study. Immersion in the spaces of everyday life in the school is the focus of this phenomenological geographical study in which student subjective experience in school space is examined. A phenomenological approach for this study as embraced by theorists in cultural geography allows the phenomena of student experiences of and in school spaces firmly embedded in everyday spatial interactions to be researched (cf. Seamon 1979; Seamon & Mugerauer, 2000; Relph 1976a, 1976b).

Investigations of space and of place are fundamental to understanding human interaction with the earth's spaces. A geographical perspective is equally useful for this study of student interaction with and in school spaces. A geographical perspective, furthermore, facilitates thinking in terms of relations and of the interrelatedness and connectedness of the earth. Thinking geographically about the relationships between students and spaces contributes to our understandings of the interrelatedness of students in school spaces. This knowledge has great potential implications for effective teaching and learning as it explores student experiences in school spaces and how positive spatial experiences can be enhanced.

Space

The dimensions of "space" informing this investigation are multiple. This section explores conceptualizations of "space" as dynamic, looking at both cultural and ecological elements of "space" and types of existential spaces. Discussion of power, further, is crucial to our understandings of "space" as process. A synthesis of these spatial dimensions, finally, presents a framework from which to view diverse aspects of "space."

i. Space as Process

The dual constructs of "space" and "place" are closely associated and interrelated. Both refer to processes and multiple social constructions. Constructs of "space" and "place" should not, however, be used interchangeably. The term "space" refers exclusively to the physical dimensions of space in the human-made environment (the school). "Space" refers, thus, to the attributes of the *objective* dimensions of school spaces.

Various theorists support the dynamic and relational nature of space. The phenomenologically-inspired approach of Crang and Thrift in *Thinking Space*, for example, defines space "as process and in process" (Crang & Thrift, 1999, p. 3). Space is dynamic and evolving. Massey similarly views space as a process of interlocked and interrelated relationships: "...because relations are active practices, material and embedded, practices which have to be carried out...space is always in process of becoming. It is always being made" (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, 283). Watson, furthermore, rejects "space" viewed as a neutral or passive phenomena (Watson, 1972, p. 1). Agnew underlines further the dynamic nature of space stating it is not a backdrop or

container of social processes (Agnew as cited in Duncan & Ley, 1993, p. 252). Sitton (1980) argues "sociopetal" spaces function to separate individuals whereas "sociofugal" spaces lead to increased interactions. The view of space as dynamic and in a constant state of *becoming* involves the notion of time. Space has a past, present, and future.

Time and space exist together as illustrated in the conceptualization of space as "process and in process" (Crang & Thrift, 1999, p. 3). Space as process emerges *through* time. Individuals construct spatial meanings, furthermore, *in* time. Meanings of different spaces moreover change at different times. Students' subjective experience(s) of space(s) *in process* and the meanings constructed in these spaces at certain times is central to this study. An upcoming section on the qualities and characteristics of "place" addresses the role of time in the development of "sense of place" in school space.

Space as social is a further consideration in this study. Valentine in *Social Geographies: Space and Society* combines the dynamic and the social elements of space in her conceptualization of the spatial: "(Space is)...a process of social construction in which people give and are given meaning(s)" (Valentine, 2001, p. 122). Ley (1983) identifies spaces as social constructions that contribute to identity formation. Social spaces are "those places that the resident experiences as a group member and where interaction contributes to a sense of personal and collective identity" (Ley, 1983, p. 130). Massey in *Space, Place, and Gender*, argues that the spatial and the social share a reciprocal relationship and thus "the social is inexorably also spatial"(Massey, 1994, p. 168). Massey, furthermore, describes spaces as social constructions at a variety of levels:

> 'The spatial'...can be seen as constructed out of the multiplicity of social relations across all spatial scales, from the global reach of finance and telecommunications, through the geography of the tentacles of national

> political power, to the social relations within the town, the settlement, the household and the work place. (Massey, 1994, p. 4)

Conceptualization of the spatial as constructed out of diverse social relations in school spaces between students and students, students and administrators, and students and teachers, is central to the meanings of school spaces to students.

Space is multiple and reflects multiple realities. Relph describes the multiplicity of spaces: "...there are as many spaces as there are spatial experiences" (Relph, 1976b, p. 11). Conceptualization of space as multiple is crucial to representation in a survey of the spatial experiences of a culturally diverse student body. Harvey furthermore emphasizes the diversity subjective spatial experiences entail as they are affected by factors such as age, gender, and cultural influence (Harvey, 1989, p. 203).

This concept of the spatial recognizes power involved in social relations. Factors such as age, gender, and culture affect an individual's autonomy. Power frames spatial interactions in school spaces. The "institutional" power of teacher and administrative control and discipline, as well as the power exerted in social relations between students and student groups shape students' subjective experiences of school spaces. Space is "powered" based on its appropriation and use. "Power" represents the ability to affect the spatial interactions and experiences of others. Consideration of "power" in school spaces is important. A separate section of this chapter presents further discussion of power.

Spaces contain multiple voices. Massey describes the interrelational and multiple nature of space in *Human Geography Today*. The spatial and the multiple for Massey are co-constitutive and require each other for existence:

> Space (is) the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity; space (is) the sphere in which distinct narratives coexist; space (is) the sphere of the possibility of the existence of more than one voice. Without space, multiplicity would be impossible. Moreover, the converse is also the case: without multiplicity there can be no space. If space is the product of interrelations...then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. The very fact of interrelation entails the notion of multiplicity. Multiplicity and space are co-constitutive. (Massey, Allen & Sarre, 1999, pp. 279-280)

This study emphasizes the multiple and the socially constructed nature of space Massey describes above. In conjunction with space viewed as dynamic, this investigation allows a unique consideration of school spaces and their possible effects on "learning" as a process of connectedness.

School space has long been viewed simply as the built spaces housing learning. Bingler rejects the view of school space as backdrop or "container" to the educational process: "...conventional wisdom...(suggests that)...educational facilities simply provide the containers in which learning occurs...the form of the containers has little to contribute to...education" (Bingler as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 23). The view of school space as a passive backdrop to activity and as a "container" for learning is rejected in this investigation. An emphasis on the dynamic qualities of space as process and in process, as social and multiple, enables a new conceptualization of school space. The possible implications for teaching and for learning are significant as one can consider how students' spatial relationships and experiences contribute to the learning process.

In summary, school "space" is a process of social construction reflecting multiple realities, actively formed from the interaction between individuals and their environments. Student narratives represent a culturally diverse set of experiences. Examination and representation of students' subjective experiences of space allows for

the existence of a spectrum of student voices. The unequal nature of relationships, moreover, contributes to the powered nature of space. The next section examines the influences on students in school spaces from a variety of dimensions including cultural and ecological perspectives.

ii. Cultural and Ecological Dimensions of Space

Edward T. Hall used the term "proxemics" to describe the ways in which humans "structure and use space at varying levels of spatial organization" (Watson, 1970, p. 16). Hall in his *The Hidden Dimension* describes how culture modifies use of space and therefore how use of space is "a specialized elaboration of culture" (Hall, 1966, p. 1). His work focuses on the implications and results of cross-cultural interactions at interpersonal levels. Hall's model includes three levels of space: the infracultural, the precultural, and the microcultural (Watson, 1970, p. 34, p. 36, p. 39). The microcultural level for Hall is "the structuring of space as modified by culture" and is of specific interest in this study (ibid., p. 39). Hall identifies three types of spaces at the microcultural level: "fixed featured" such as walls and hallways are materially fixed in an environment, "semi-fixed featured" are movable in an environment, and "informal spaces" are the dynamic and "personal spaces" around an individual (ibid., 1970, pp. 34-39).

This research considers these three components of the microcultural level of spatial structuring. The ways in which students structure and maintain their social and individual spaces are of interest as engagement and interaction in space contribute to the meanings they construct. Proxemics addresses the nonverbal techniques employed to structure space. This may include, for example, the ways in which students create

distance and closeness in interpersonal interactions (Watson, 1970, p. 17). This study explores the constructs of personal space, territoriality, and the private and public in relation to students subjective experiences of school space in particular. Sommer's definition of "personal space" informs this research: "...the emotional charged zone around each person that helps to regulate the spacing of individuals ...(and)...the processes by which people mark out and personalize the spaces they inhabit" (Sommer, 1969, p. viii). The cultural dimension is paired with an ecological perspective.

Bronfenbrenner's work (1979) *The Ecology of Human Development, Experiments by Nature and Design* analyses the ecological dimensions of space. Bronfenbrenner argues that the interactions between people and their environment (surroundings) are significant for development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. xii). "Development" for Bronfenbrenner results from "the interaction between individual organisms and the environment" and can be defined as "the person's evolving conception of the ecological environment" (ibid., p. 16). The term "learning" replaces "development" in this study. "Learning" is an evolving process of connectedness with context (environment) and content (subject matter). The school contains a diversity of contexts and contents to which connectedness or "learning" occurs based on individual and collective experiences.

Bronfenbrenner's conceptualization of the ecological environment influencing development is layered. The ecological environment may be conceived "as a set of nested structures each inside the next, like a set of Russian dolls" (ibid., p. 3). He differentiates between four layers of the ecological environment: the "microsystem" is the innermost setting of development (the classroom, spaces in the school), the "mesosystem" includes the interactions between different settings in the child's world

(the classroom and the home), the "exosystem" incorporates the settings or environments in which the developing individual is not present (parents' place of work), and finally the "macrosystem" encompasses the overarching ideological belief system encompassing all other systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, pp. 22-26).

Bronfenbrenner suggests that the settings at all levels are similar within cultures but are greatly different between cultures. The manner in which students conceptualize the "microsystem" is of most importance to this investigation. It is anticipated nevertheless that interactions between different settings of development ("mesosystem") will be significant for the manner in which students engage in school spaces.

The theme of interconnectedness underlies Bronfenbrenner's work. He emphasizes the importance of relationships for an individual's development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 11). Bronfenbrenner gives importance to the "interpersonal relations in which the person engages" in the "microsystem" and the nature of these connections in an ecological environment (ibid., p. 11, p. 7). Missing from Bronfenbrenner's work is consideration of the effects of non-personal relationships on development ("learning"). Building onto the idea of the significance of relationships to learning, this study examines the relationships between students and school spaces and the possible contributions of spatial relationships to connectedness to school space. The relationships between participants and school spaces is important for this study because the way in which students experience school spaces affects the meanings and attachments they develop in and to these spaces. Spatial meanings develop through spatial relationships and interactions.

Bronfenbrenner, finally, views the developing individual as dynamically engaged

in a reciprocal relationship with the environment. He underlines the dynamism of an individual in space: "...the developing individual is not passive...but a growing dynamic entity that progressively moves into and restructures the milieu in which it resides" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 21). Bronfenbrenner describes how the environments actually *experienced* by individuals are the most significant for development: "...the aspects of the environment most powerful in shaping the course of psychological growth are overwhelmingly those that have *meaning* (emphasis mine) to the person in a given situation" (ibid., p. 22). Spatial meaning is thus significant for student experiences in school.

Bronfenbrenner's argument that *meaningfulness* contributes to and even facilitates development is fundamental for this research. The significance of meaning (in this case the meaning of school spaces) is a fundamental question central to this study. An understanding of the manner in which students make meaning in school spaces will shed light on ways to enhance and facilitate spatial meaning-making in school spaces. Meaning-making differs not only between participants, but in different types of spaces.

iii. Types Of Spaces

This study emphasizes certain "species" or types of spaces. The "school" as both *a* space as well as *in* space is a social construction endowed with cultural meanings. The school may be considered for the purpose of this study, a "microspace" endowed with inscribed, constructed, and understood roles, norms, expectations and intentions (Ley, 1983, p. 139). Relph's classification of different spaces in *Place and Placelessness*, considers the school architectural or planning space as it represents a built space designed for learning (Relph, 1976a, p. 22). Relph argues architectural space has functional or

instrumental value. Dardel suggests constructed or built spaces are the main spaces consciously encountered in the lived world: "...(they are) human-made, communicate human intentions and meanings, and surround us at all scales and in many forms" (Dardel as cited in Relph, 1976b, p. 15).

Tuan in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* emphasizes how built space can affect those within and can reinforce norms and roles (Tuan, 1977, p. 102). Tuan describes spatial influence on behaviour: "Manmade space can refine human feeling and perception...the built environment may evoke certain behaviours, clarify certain roles and relations" (ibid.). He suggests further that space has social and educational value: "...architectural space articulates social order; it teaches..." (ibid., p. 116). This investigation considers the influence of the school as a built space emphasizing certain roles, norms, and behaviours in relation to students' experiences of school spaces.

Ley (1983) and Relph (1976a, 1976b) conceptualize space in terms of daily experience. Ley describes existential spaces as the *lived* spaces people define by the typical encounters that are likely to occur there (Ley, 1983, p. 142; emphasis mine). Typical encounters and interrelatedness of experiences in spaces characterize existential space (ibid., pp. 144-145). Relph defines existential space: "...the inner structure of space as it appears through experiences of the world as part of a particular culture" (Relph, 1976a, p. 12). Lived or existential space, then, has collective as well as individual meanings. Ley conceives of existential space as "conceived of in terms of values ascribed to it and meaning(s) it holds for social groups" (ibid.). This research explores both collective and individual meanings of lived spaces in schools.

Based on Ley's categorization, existential spaces or "regions" investigated in this study at the collective and individual levels include "regions of security and regions of stress," "regions of stimulation and regions of ennui," and "regions of status and regions of stigma" (Ley, 1983, pp. 145-165). Students describe areas they associate with calm and comfort or fear and discomfort. Students associate other areas with interest or boredom. The socially significant spaces students attach with feelings of status or importance in contrast to stigma or unimportance demonstrate the powered nature of space. The emotional attributions students make in relation to spaces are significant. These meanings are immediate and intuitive rather than reflective or analytic. The emotive dimension must be considered if we are to fully understand the process of meaning-making in school space.

The work of Lefebvre (1974) and Harvey (1989), finally, plays an important role in this study. Lefebvre in *The Production of Space* (1974, p. 26) emphasizes the social nature of space: "(Social) space is a (social) product". Lefebvre's conceptual spatial triad describes the social production of space. "Representations of Space" or *conceived* space, "Spatial Practices" or *perceived* space, and "Representational Space" or *lived* space are three spatial domains central to this research (Lefebvre, 1974, p. 33, p. 38, p. 39; emphasis mine). Space may be visualized, therefore, in terms of imagination or conception, perception and experience.

Harvey (1989) adapted Lefebvre's spatial triad to create a spatial grid which links attributes of meaning and power to control. An upcoming section contains further discussion of Harvey's spatial grid. The powered nature of space illustrated in Harvey's grid is significant to this research.

iv. Space and Power

Power fills the spaces of our daily lives. Pred in *Space and Time in Geography* describes the all-encompassing nature of power:

> Power and power relations are everywhere...everyday;...are in actions enacted and actions forbidden, in thoughts thought and thoughts unthought; in knowledge known and knowledge unknown...power and power relations are sometimes blatant, sometimes wispy, always many-sided, overlapping and entangled. (Pred, 1981, p. 47)

It is essential to examine the literature on the powered nature of space in order to establish a framework for this study. The recognition of space as powered is important to this research.

The creation, possession, and control of space involves power. Space, similarly, is central to the possession, operation, and realization of power (Massey, Allen & Sarre, 1999, p. 171). Spaces are social constructions out of social relations that are themselves powered. Massey describes how relations are generally not equal and are, therefore, powered: "...relations are power relations of a variety of sorts...they may well be in some sense unequal (and/or) oppressive" (ibid., p. 289). Space as a product of unequal relations is consequently powered: "As a result of the fact that it (space) is conceptualized as created out of social relations, space is by its very nature full of power and symbolism, a complex web of relations of domination and subordination, of solidarity and cooperation" (Massey, 1994, p. 261).

Valentine, like Massey, outlines the powered nature of space and suggests that as a socially constructed experience, space is "contested, resisted, and (re)negotiated" and plays an active role in the constitution and reproduction of social ideas (Valentine, 2001, p. 3). Allen, similarly, describes the importance of space to understanding power and

power relations: "...space in one way or another is implicated in relationships of power; it is significant to their realization or actualization" (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 194).

Pred's work on power provides useful definitions for this study as he focuses on "the production or establishment, reproduction and transformation of power at the level of concrete everyday life - where individuals are socialized and society is constantly reproduced and transformed" (Pred, 1981, p. 31). The term "power" refers to both students and their peer social groups as well as to teachers and administrators and students in this study.

In student interactions, "power" describes "a social relation within which some individual or groups have the capacity to bring about intended and foreseen effects on others" (ibid., p. 34). "Power" refers to the ability of students to control use of school spaces (ibid.). In interactions between students and teachers or administrators, "power" is a type of "instrument of inducing or preventing specific behaviours...the ability to utilize force; with coercion, with inequality, with domination" (Pred, 1981, p. 32). Sitton (1980) highlights the powered nature of space in his discussion of the oppositional "war" of spatial control in schools. Students, thus, negotiate spatial meanings in school spaces.

Pred offers one theory regarding the source of conflict over space. He views conflict as arising out of the limited nature of space and time. All intentions require some minimum time and some minimum space for Pred so that "the whole operation of life is competition for spaces and times" (Pred, 1981, p. 31). Harvey provides another perspective on conflict. He describes how all spatial and temporal interactions are powered: "Power relations are always implicated in spatial and temporal

practices...command over space is a fundamental and all-pervasive source of social power in and over everyday life" (Harvey, 1989, pp. 225-226). The powered nature of space and the desire to control space are potential motivations for conflict and negotiated meanings of school space(s).

Massey also discusses the relationship between power and space. She argues: "...a form of 'power' rests in an institution, but space makes a difference to and interrupts the operation of that institution's power and influence" (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 171). Power and control exerted by other students, teachers, and administrators in school spaces influences the manner in which students experience those spaces. The influence of power and control on the construction of meanings in space may indirectly influence learning.

Valentine states institutions are powered simply because they are human-made cultural constructions "designed to achieve particular ends" (Valentine, 2001, p. 142). She emphasizes the role of control in an institution: "...(the institution) seeks to 'place' the body geographically, temporally and to discipline it" (ibid.). Valentine describes the school specifically as "space where children are acculturated into adult norms and expectations" and where they are "expected to learn to conform to authority" (ibid., p. 144). Valentine's work in schools describes the existence of dual worlds. The social world of the child is informal and uncontrolled, and the institutional world of the adult is formal and controlled (Valentine, 2001, p. 142).

This study investigates the manner in which students conceive of these "worlds" and if and how they are spatially significant. Valentine's "social world" refers to "student space" and the "institutional world" to "teacher space" in this research. Conflict

between student spaces or "worlds" and teacher spaces or "worlds" occurs in school spaces. Students associate different school spaces with certain roles and behaviours that may contrast with the roles and behaviours teachers attach to the same spaces. This investigation addresses resulting negotiation, collaboration, and consensus.

The power relations existing between students and other students and between students and teachers or administrators in school space is an additional dimension addressed in this study. Student power emerges in relation to constructs of collective and individual territoriality. Altman in *The Environment and Social Behavior: Privacy, Personal Space, Territory, Crowding,* defines territoriality: "...the personalizing, ownership, and defence of geographic areas" (Altman, 1975, p. 144). Consideration of territoriality is a means of revealing if and how students employ power in school spaces.

Territoriality or ownership is acknowledged as largely symbolic in the context of school space which is essentially "public" and accessible to hundreds of people each day. The type of territoriality adopted in this study is what Altman calls "public territories" (Altman, 1975, p. 144). These territories are "temporary, accessible to many people...and have little long-term boundary-control power" (ibid.). Goffman identifies "fixed" territories (large-scale, owned), "situational" territories (temporary occupancy, not owned) and "egocentric" territories (small-scale, owned) (Lemert & Branaman, 1997, p. 46). Goffman's "situational" territories correspond with Altman's definition of "public territories." Goffman's construct of "egocentric territories" is important in this study also as they "move around with the claimant, he being in the centre" (ibid.). These "egocentric territories" include bags, wallets, and purses (ibid.). The processes by which students claim, maintain, and defend territories reflect student power. Demonstrations of

power include examples of student agency in terms of student negotiation in face of authority or creation of their own "space."

Departing from a Marxist perspective of space as embraced by Harvey (1989), Foucault (1972), and Giddens (1984), conceptualization of power and control in this study is agential rather than oppositional. Examination of negotiation, collaboration, and consensus occurs in relation to power and control in school spaces. The interpretation and negotiation of power in school space by students as active agents is central to research.

Harvey's Marxist perspective of power emphasizes how power and control inflict the body in space. He states that a body must either adhere to authority or "carve out particular spaces of resistance and freedom" (Harvey, 1989, p. 213). Foucault, similarly, describes space as "a site or container of power" (Foucault in Harvey, 1989, p. 213). Foucault in *Power/Knowledge*, compares a prison to a school as a space of social control (Foucault, 1972, p. 38). Foucault describes the surveillance in schools as a disciplinary regime illustrating constant and controlled practice of power (ibid., p. 58). Giddens, too, studies the school as "a 'container' generating disciplinary power" (Giddens, 1984, p. 135). The closed, bounded nature of schools for Giddens facilitates discipline as it "makes possible a strict coordination of the serial encounter in which inmates are involved" (ibid.).

The agency inspired perspective of power and control in this study, in contrast to Harvey, Foucault, and Giddens, focuses on an internally inspired construct of student agency as a form of empowerment rather than on student action as a form of opposition. Spaces are not "containers" of power, but are spaces of negotiation in which power is

revealed through spatial engagements and interactions. The interpretations and negotiations of conflicting spatial meanings by students are significant to how they experience school space.

Gupta and Ferguson pose three questions: "Who has the power to make places of spaces? Who contests this? What is at stake?" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1992, p. 11). Power, in summary, is involved in the process of meaning-making in school spaces. Student agency in the creation of physical, intellectual, cultural, and ideational spaces is fundamental to meaning-making in school spaces. Students actively create and (re)negotiate, further, meanings of space and place. These processes, along with collaboration and consensus, are significant. Lefebvre's spatial triad along with Harvey's grid of spatial practices are particularly useful to this study in looking at spatial conflict, as they illustrate how individuals experience spaces and link the attribute of meaning to power and control (Lefebvre, 1974; Harvey, 1989).

v. A Synthesis for Interpretation

Table 2.1 modified for this study represents an adaptation by Harvey (1989) of Lefebvre's spatial triad (1974). Lefebrve's triadic model as described previously allows a conceptualization of space involving three dimensions: conception, perception, and experience. Harvey conceives of three dimensions of space: the imaginary, the representational, and the material. He forms a grid along four axes of spatiality: Access and Exclusion, Appropriation and Use, Domination and Control, and Social Production (Harvey, 1989, pp. 221-222). These categorizations correspond with three key approaches to understanding spatial meaning-making. "Access and Exclusion" and "Appropriation and Use" address the Instrumental perspective, "Domination and

Control" address the Territorial Perspective, and "Social Production," finally, addresses the Sentimental and Emotional perspective. Spatial and temporal practices are closely related in Harvey's conceptualization of the production and reproduction of social relations (ibid., p. 218).

Harvey uses the grid to explore the experience(s) of space in the history of modernist and postmodernist theory. The grid links spatial meaning to power and control. Space for Harvey is always powered: "Spatial and temporal practices are never neutral in social affairs ...they always express some social content and often struggle" (p. 239). Who or what defining conceptions of space at any given time (re)creates certain social power structures (ibid.).

Harvey's work on the powered nature of spaces highlights the implications for social relations and social structures and contributes significantly to conceptualizations of space and power. There is a critical need, however, to understand the manner in which power manifests itself in schools, how the powered nature of learning spaces affects social structures in schools, and, finally, what the possible implications meaning-making in powered school spaces has for learning. The application of ideas about space and power to the micro-scale of the school is absent from Harvey's work.

Harvey's spatial grid incorporates the foundational work on space of Lefebvre and the ideas of spatial meaning, spatial use, and power. The applicability of Harvey's conceptualization of space to diverse settings and the correspondence of Harvey's conceptualizations of space with the constructs employed in this research makes the grid a reliable anchor for this study.

Building on Harvey's work in terms of how meanings of space connect to notions

of power and control, this research has a unique focus and should contribute significantly to knowledge about spatial meaning. The application of spatial constructs of meaning, use, and control to the micro-scale of the school and the connection of students' subjective spatial experiences to contexts of learning is also unique.

Table 2.1 A Grid of Spatial Practices

	Accessibility and Exclusion	**Appropriation and Use of Space**	**Domination and Control of Space**	**Production of Space**
Explanation of Spatial Dimension	- proximity (access) or distance (closure)	- spatial occupation and use/function	- manifestations of power in space	- representations of new uses/structures
Material Spatial Practices (Experience)	- flows (goods, people, information) communications; agglomerations *** movement in school space; nodes of people/ activity in school space**	- spatial occupation and uses; 'turf'/territory designations ***spatial use in school space; student territoriality in school space**	- private property; administrative divisions of space; zoning for control; surveillance *** private spaces; regulated control spaces; exclusion/ access; discipline; supervision**	- production of infrastructures; formal/informal territorial infrastructures *** formal and informal territoriality of social groupings in school space**
Representations of Space (Perception)	- measures of distance; map-making *** perception of distance; core/ periphery; private/public in school space**	-personal space; mental maps; spatial hierarchies ***students' personal space(s); student identity (individual/ collective); student mental maps; 'languages' of school spaces**	forbidden spaces; territories/'turfs'; spatial hierarchies ***formal/informal exclusion; student identity (individual/ collective); 'powered' spaces; organization of power groups**	- systems of mapping, visual representations; 'discourses'; semiotics ***'languages' and meanings of school spaces**
Spaces of Representation (Imagination)	- attraction / repulsion; distance/ desire; access/ denial ***spaces of fear/ comfort; stress/ security; ennui/ stimulation; status/ stigma; sociopetal/ sociofugal spaces**	- familiarity; open places; iconography and graffiti; ***sense of familiarity/ predictability; routine; identity; "marking" of territory; boundary establishment**	unfamiliarity; spaces of fear/repression; symbolic barriers; construction of 'tradition'; ***physical/symbolic barriers in school spaces; repression; administrative/ student domination; rules**	- utopian plans; imaginary landscapes; mythologies of space and place; poetics of space; spaces of desire *** imagination; idealistic images of school spaces; sense of place**

Sources: Harvey (1989) pp. 218-222

Notes:

* The four spatial dimensions are interrelated and dialectic.
* The grid does not represent a 'universal spatial language', but is only meaningful in the context of social practices and social relations (Harvey, 1989, pp. 222/3)
* The purpose of adapting Harvey's grid of spatial practices to this study of student experience of and in learning spaces is to facilitate discussion with 'a point of entry' into the dimensions of the spatial experiences of learning spaces (ibid., p. 222)

Place

The concept of "place" is distinct from "space." This section addresses the nature of "place" as process and explores its social and ritual or habitual dimensions. It discusses "place" in relation to collective and individual identity formation and concludes with a summary of the concepts of "space" and "place."

i. Place as Process

Downs and Stea pose two significant questions about place: "What spaces are also places? What makes a place a place?" (Downs & Stea, 1977, p. 108). Constructs of space and place, although overlapping and interlinked, are not used interchangeably in this study. The centrality of place as a centre of meaning and value resulting from processes of interaction and encounter with space underlies definitions of place. The meanings associated with "place" are important for place-making.

Relph argues places are significant for human existence (Relph, 1976a, p. 1). Places in his view: "claim our affections and obligations" (Relph, 1976b, p. 22). Seamon and Mugerauer in their *Dwelling, Place, and Environment* consider place as: "set apart in time and space because they have distinctive meanings for us" (Seamon & Mugerauer, 2000, p. 27). Tuan views place as a "calm center of established values" (Tuan, 1977, p. 72). "Place" refers to those spaces to which students construct and attach meaning. A focus on place as culturally meaningful will be an emphasis in this study because it is inquiry into the meanings students construct in school spaces and the potential effects of these diverse "senses of place" on learning that anchors this research.

Place, like space, is an active process of social construction reflecting multiple realities (Ley, 1983, p. 133). Massey's description of place underlines its fundamentally

dynamic, social, and multiple nature. "Place" for Massey is a "meeting place" or a "point of intersection...constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (Massey, 1994, p. 154). Place represents "a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understandings" (ibid., p. 5). The social nature of place is based on relations in process and is thus complex and multiple.

Massey, furthermore, underlines the multiplicity of place: "The identities of places are always unfixed, contested, and multiple" (Massey, 1994, p. 5). Ley, similarly, describes the multiplicity of place: "...any place has a multiple reality for the plurality of groups that encounter it" (Ley, 1983, p. 135). "Place," for Ley, is multiple in nature at any given time: "At one time it may provide a multiple reality to a plurality of social groups with different purposes" (Ley, 1983, p. 165). "Place", most importantly, as process, social, and multiple is meaningful to individuals.

Place as meaningful involves a sense of belonging. This sense of connectedness to spaces as individuals and as groups is valuable. Seamon and Mugerauer define place as "a foci of meaning" as well as "an origin...where one knows others and is known to others" (Seamon & Mugerauer, 2000, p. 27). Places for Seamon and Mugerauer are constructions in space based on spatial interactions and engagements over time: "(Places) are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are necessarily time-deepened and memory-qualified" (ibid., p. 26). This dynamism reveals the role of time in the construct of place. The meanings ascribed to place are socially and temporally determined because the meanings of places change not only with the people constructing them but also with

time(s) in which they are created.

Time is considered a necessary element in the process of meaning-making in space and the development of "sense of place." Meanings are made *over* time. Time is significant, moreover, to the creation of a sense of belonging or connectedness with space in addition to individual and collective identity. Ley identifies the temporal nature of place, as he states space becomes something more meaningful *through time* (Ley, 1983, p. 133; emphasis mine). Tuan, similarly, describes attachment to place as a function of familiarity over time: "Humble events can in time build up a strong sentiment for place" (Tuan, 1977, p. 143).

Memory is an additional element of place as suggested by Seamon and Mugerauer above. Massey, too, associates place with memory as she describes places as "sites of nostalgia"(Massey, 1994, p. 5). Memories associated with certain spaces are part of the process of meaning-making and identity creation.

Relph suggests the need for place is a human need (Relph, 1976b, p. 23). One needs to "feel at home" (ibid.). He describes places as central to human existence in the world "as they are sources of security and identity for individuals and for groups" (ibid.). Sense of place is a significant need for humans of all ages. The understandings gained from an investigation into the processes students employ to construct affective ties to school spaces have important implications for curriculum theory and development, effective teaching, and student success. The fundamental human needs for sense of security and belonging can be achieved in multiple ways in students' diverse constructions of senses of "place" in school spaces.

ii. Social and Ritualized or Habitual Dimensions of Place

A variety of theories address the ways in which spaces become meaningful to individuals. Theories about the development of "sense of place" based on social interactions and ritualistic and habitual activities are significant. Space is social in nature as it is shaped both socially and culturally. The structural and functional meanings of space are diverse in relation to individuals and to time. Soja (1985) describes social interactions in daily life and specifically the social interactions in specific spaces, as a means of making both actions and spaces meaningful (Soja as cited in Gregory & Urry, 1985, p. 92). Processes of social interaction in space thus facilitate meaning-making in those spaces.

Yamamoto's work *Culture Spaces in Everyday Life: An Anthropology of Common Sense Knowledge* explores the social dimensions of space. He describes the processes through which individuals create meaning in accordance with time in spaces that shape behaviour (Yamamoto, 1979). Yamamoto argues people are bound spatially and temporally and the combination of space and time creates specific meanings in certain spaces. These space-time combinations or "culture space(s)" represent "physio-temporal space which functions as a frame within which a certain activity is carried out by persons" (ibid., p. 38). Meaning is essentially given to a space when an individual occupies it and does something in it at a given time (ibid., p. 23).

Certain locations come to elicit certain behaviours at specific times in "culture spaces" (Yamamoto, 1979, p. 3). Space becomes place in a process by which spaces at certain times represent certain activities, roles, and behaviours. The result of these space-time associations or "culture spaces" is "shared expectations of who is doing what,

where, when, and how" (ibid., p. 38). Yamamoto suggests the sense of place that develops out of specific "culture space" depends on a combination of factors including the physical space involved, the time, the activity, and the participants (ibid., p. 3).

"Culture spaces" become meaningful to individuals therefore, as they come to suggest norms of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, domination and subordination, and use and appropriation. The meaning of a classroom, for example, changes with the time of day, the occupants of the space, and the activity in progress. Goffman (1959), further, describes the connection between space, meaning, and behaviour using a theatrical metaphor of "front stage" and "back stage" behaviour. The meaning of space to individuals may thus shape behaviour.

The construct of "culture space" describes how space develops into a sense of place for individuals. It is used further, to discover and describe what "culture spaces" students identify in school spaces. Understanding the meanings students ascribe to "culture spaces" and how they defend and negotiate these meanings is central to this research (Yamamoto, 1979, p. 44).

Ley, like Yamamoto, states that individuals form a sense of place through the "typical encounters" that are likely to occur in space: "Space is irrevocably humanized, both a mirror and moulder of human purpose" (Ley, 1983, p. 141). Ley's work on existential, or lived, spaces in particular describes how spaces become places as they become socially meaningful based on typical experience or encounter. Spaces take on, for example, collectively produced and shared meanings. Ley's categorization of various "regions" introduced previously (for example, "regions of security and regions of stress") serves as an example of spaces holding social meanings (Ley, 1983, p. 145).

This study investigates these "regions" or terrains to which students attach meanings individually and collectively.

Examination of the ritualized and habitual dimensions of space illustrates in addition, the ways in which space becomes meaningful to individuals. Ritualized activity is a powerful means of creating meanings in spaces. Meanings emerge from often "taken-for-granted" interactions. The ritualized nature of use of school space is a potentially important way in which space becomes place. The habitual and routinized nature of spatial interactions can lead to place-making in school space.

Ley suggests that people create meanings in space and that space becomes meaningful through routinized use or "everyday spatial behaviour" (Ley, 1983, p. 97). He suggests: "Repeated interaction with persons, places and objects that are well known, have meaning to people over and above their objective features" (ibid., p. 102). Tuan suggests, similarly, repeated interactions or habitual encounters can create meaning in space: "Humble events can in time build up a strong sentiment for place" (Tuan, 1977, p. 143). Routine, therefore, has a role to play in spatial meaning-making.

Ley describes how often "taken-for-granted and apparently inconsequential" daily activities can in cumulative form define spaces and give meaning to them (Ley, 1983, p. 99). Ley identifies the social element of meaning-making in space suggesting that "social worlds" emerge from patterns and routines in the spaces of our daily lives: "...familiar people, familiar place, familiar activities, together create a subculture as roles and tastes are learned, rehearsed and consolidated" (ibid., p. 101). Sense of place emerging out of routinized behaviours and out of predictability and familiarity of spaces, people, and process in the context of school space is central to this research.

Seamon's work *A Geography of the Lifeworld* is a valuable study into the manner in which ritualized activity leads to "place-making" or meaning-making in space. He suggests that people are immersed in the spaces of their "geographical world" (Seamon, 1979). The "geographical world" for Seamon, comprises the spaces and environments in which a person lives, works, and plays (ibid., p. 15). Seamon's work centres on the "everyday environmental experience" which he defines as "the sum total of a person's first-hand involvements in the geographical world in which he or she typically lives" (ibid., p. 16).

Seamon is particularly interested in the routine activities that occur without being the object of conscious attention in the spaces of everyday life. He uses the term "body ballet" to refer to "a set of integrated gestures and movements which sustain a particular task or aim" (Seamon, 1979, p. 54). The unconscious act of showering or washing the dishes are examples of "body ballet." "Space-time routines" refer to "a set of habitual bodily behaviours which extend through a considerable portion of time" (ibid., p. 55). Going to work, grocery shopping, or walking the dog are examples. The idea of "place ballet" finally, refers to "an interaction of many 'time-space routines' and 'body ballets' rooted in space" (Seamon, 1979, p. 56). "Place ballets"occur in numerous settings such as streets, malls, or homes.

Seamon explains "place ballet" "fosters a strong, even profound sense of place" as the familiarity that emerges out of routine unites people in space and time:

> People come together in time and space as each individual involved in his or her own time-space routine(s) and body ballet(s);...people recognize each other ...spaces of activity take on a sense of place that each person does his or her small part in creating and sustaining...in 'place ballet' space becomes place through interpersonal, spatio-temporal sharing.

> Human parts create a larger place-whole. (Seamon, 1979, p. 56, p. 57, p. 59)

Seamon's ideas on the role of routine and habitual behaviour in the creation of place from space are valuable for this research. An exploration of the significance of routine and habitual activity for meaning-making is necessary. The manner in which students habitually engage and interact in different learning spaces contributes to the meanings they construct in those spaces.

Application of Seamon's work to the school environment involves identification of the six essential qualities of "place ballet": attraction, diversity, comfort, distinctiveness, invitation, and attachment (Seamon, 1979, pp. 145-151). Examination of the data will indicate which, if any, qualities of "place ballet" the students experience in school spaces. Spatial meaning is an emergent property of ritualized and habitual behaviour.

Eyles' (1985) conceptualization of different categories of spatial significance in *Senses of Place* suggests place is meaningful for different reasons. He identifies four main "senses" of place: social, apathetic-acquiescent, instrumental and nostalgic (Eyles, 1985, pp. 122-126). Chapter Five contains discussion of these "senses" of place in relation to this study. The manner in which spatial meaning developing out of ritualized or habitual activity facilitates individual and collective identity formation is a further consideration in this study.

iii. Collective and Individual Identity Formation

Constructs of sense of place, identity, and senses of belonging and ownership in school spaces are interrelated. Various theorists connect sense of place to identity

development. Massey's work illustrates the links between creation of sense of place and identity formation: "We make spaces and places from the geopolitical to the intimate, in the living of our lives. And all identities/entities, likewise, are co-constituted with the making of these time-spaces" (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 246). Student identity formation is related to sense of place creation in the school context.

Harvey states the meanings which develop in space to form place are "meanings which represent the group and the space to the group" (Harvey, 1989, p. 215). Through experience of space and the construction of place that emerges out of familiarity one identifies with place (ibid.). Harvey argues furthermore space shapes identity, action, and meanings: "...organization, use, production of space can define relationships between people, activities, things, concepts" (ibid., p. 216). This study looks at the diverse meanings of school spaces in terms of sense of place and corresponding feelings of belonging, ownership, and individual and collective identity formation.

Relph uses the term "insideness" to refer to "a sense of belonging to a place and identifying with it" (ibid., p. 44). Relph argues furthermore, an essential factor in identifying with a place is the degree of "insideness" one feels in that place (Relph as cited in Seamon, 1979, p. 89). Relph defines "insideness" as "the degree to which a person belongs to and associates himself (herself) with a place" (ibid.). Students' sense of "insideness" may depend in part on students' sense of belonging and connectedness. Seamon suggests identity with place develops through occupancy: "...attachment to place arises out of being in and living in a place" (Seamon, 1979, p. 142).

In light of Relph's and Seamon's views this study examines whether students are in school spaces long enough to develop meaningful attachments or identifications with

place. To what degree students are able to associate with or develop an attachment for place in the school setting is an important consideration. Understanding the factors fostering association and attachment are also central to this research.

A sense of identity with and in place is formed both individually and collectively (Relph, 1976a, p. 44). Much work has been done on collective identity development in schools in terms of development of "sense of community." Understanding identity formation at the individual level is significant to this research in addition to examining collective identity formation in school spaces. Relph describes how humans experience public spaces uniquely through diverse "lenses of attitude, circumstance, intention, and experience" (ibid., p. 37). Students' experiences in school spaces are numerous and individual identity formation reflects this multiplicity.

At the individual level of identity formation, Ley suggests the strongest sense of individual identity are made in intimate spaces: "...our secure spaces are the places of mastery and display, fiefdoms of personal expressiveness...(they are) peepholes into (our) social personality and way of life" (Ley, 1983, p. 162). Student formation of individual identity may be limited in school space given the public and temporary nature of student presence in school spaces. The processes through which individual's define identity in relation to school space remains central to this research nevertheless.

The formation and recognition of collective identity in school space, in contrast, may be frequent. Collective identity develops in various ways. Crumpacker suggests collective identity and sense of belonging develop through shared sensory experiences and familiarity (Crumpacker as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 35). Crumpacker describes, for example, how routines in space can lead to identity formation: "...redundancy of

information connects people through their shared knowledge...facilitates feeling of safety, security and stability at school" (ibid.). The "shared" or common experiences of students contribute to their collective identity formation.

Valentine similarly describes "social sameness" as a means through which shared experiences foster collective identity formation in space (Valentine as cited in Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 53). She suggests as members of society, positioned in relation to others, a sense of "social sameness" results from imposed roles and norms in spaces (ibid., p. 51). Identifying "sameness" is a means of expressing common or shared identity or sense of community (ibid., pp. 54-55). Massey suggests, however, identity may also be defined in "difference" in an "us" and "them" mentality (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 156). The role of "sameness" and "difference" for identity formation are considerations in this investigation.

Participants may identify through "sameness" as students in this study. They struggle with common stresses associated with teachers, classes, and homework, as well as with the same routines, rules and regulations. This "sameness" connects students in a culturally diverse arena in this study. Students may also identify collectively through difference based on variations in age, culture, gender, and socio-economic status. Student identities are as multiple as the senses of place from which they emerge. This research explores the contributions, thus, of familiarity, "sameness," and "difference" to students' formation and recognition of collective and individual identities.

Space versus Place

Theorists differentiate the constructs of "space" and "place" in various ways. Ley, for example, equates the transition from "conceptions of space to perceptions of

place" to a transition from the objective (space) to the subjective (place) (Ley, 1983, p. 132). Ley and Samuels suggest "space" is the "arena of freedom without accountability, commitment, (or) meaning" (Ley & Samuels, 1978, p. 226). "Place," in contrast, implies human association and encounter, is associated with different experiences, and involves a sense of belonging and creation of identity (ibid.). Territoriality (or ownership) reflects "place" over "space" (ibid.). Tuan, finally, associates "space" with freedom and "place" with security (Tuan, 1977, p. 3). Place "tells a story" as a centre of meaning, of value, of nurture and support (ibid., p. 29).

Both "space" and "place" are processes reflecting multiple realities as class, ethnicity, gender and other factors shape individual and collective meaning and identity formation. "Space" and "place" are dynamic constructs:

> ...space and place are in a constant process of *being made*...through materially embedded practices, or through the social production of lived space, or as a result of a particular version of interrelational performance. (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, pp. 245-246; emphasis mine)

Both "space" and "place," finally, are powered. "Space" viewed as a process of social construction renders it a source of power. Meaning and power, furthermore, are intrinsically linked. "Place" embodies power as it embodies a diversity of meanings. Students negotiate the meanings of "space" and "place" in school spaces.

This study, in conclusion, clearly differentiates between "place" as a centre of cultural meanings and "space" as the physical location within the human-created environment of the school. Both constructs are active processes *in process*, resulting from the interactions between individuals and their environments. This study explores the relationships between space and place in terms of the relationship between learning

and the creation of collective and individual meanings and identity. The manner in which the positive attributes of place facilitate identity development and a sense of connectedness and ownership in the school setting and the possible influence this has on and for learning are central to this research.

CHAPTER THREE - METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design including a description of both participants and setting. A section on the researcher stance identifies perspectives guiding the investigation. Discussion of data collection and data analysis follow. Considerations of research design, challenges and limitations of research, and finally how this study contributes to educational research concludes the chapter.

Research Design

This research is firmly grounded in the domain of qualitative inquiry. The flexibility and adaptability of qualitative research are appropriate for this study of the subjective experiences of participants. Denzin and Lincoln in *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry* describe how individuals conduct research through specific "paradigmatic lenses" of inquiry:

> All research is interpretive, guided by a set of beliefs and feeling about the world and how it should be understood and studied...each interpretive paradigm makes particular demands on the research, including the questions that are asked and the interpretations that are brought to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 26)

The paradigm guiding this research design is constructivist. A constructivist approach is appropriate for this study because it acknowledges realities are multiple and complex, and meanings are constructed and interpretive. A constructivist approach, moreover, adopts interpretive, naturalistic methods of inquiry such as participant observation (ibid., p. 26). The criteria of effective constructivist research including "trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, and confirmability" provide the critical underpinnings of this study (ibid., p. 27).

Constructivist research design, furthermore, embraces the flexibility of methodological, theoretical, and interdisciplinary triangulation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 53). Triangulation allows a variety of methods, theories and disciplines to contribute to research. Framing research questions and interpreting findings in multiple ways facilitates the capture of emergent themes. An "openness" facilitated by multiplicity underpins this research design as well as data collection and analysis.

This research employs phenomenological and hermeneutic strategies of inquiry. Phenomenology for Seamon and Mugerauer allows description of the relationship between the person and the world and the revelation of "large wholes of meaning - the human relationship with places, environment, earth" (Seamon & Mugerauer, 2000, pp. 2-3). Phenomenological inquiry seeks to answer the following fundamental question: "What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomenon for these people?" (Patton, 1990, p. 69). This research aims to describe and understand the "essence" of student experiences of school spaces specifically.

The phenomenological focus in this study allows an understanding of what students experience in school spaces, the ways in which students experience school spaces, and how they interpret these experiences. Research centres, moreover, on the relationships between students and school spaces. The relationships and meanings students construct form the "essence" or phenomena under investigation. As a researcher guided by phenomenological inquiry, these methods allow me to understand how the student participants experience school space(s).

The subjectivity of knowledge is paramount in this study. Johnston, in his *Philosophy and Human Geography An Introduction to Contemporary Approaches*,

recognizes the subjectivity of both the researcher and the researched in qualitative phenomenological research and suggests the goal of the researcher is to "examine *subjectivity* as *objectively* as possible" in order to "present the view of the world *as perceived by subjects* not as structured *a priori* by observers" (Johnston, 1983, p. 55, p. 71; emphasis mine). Relph suggests a phenomenological researcher aims to describe phenomena by "suspending biases...accepting ambiguities and complexities, " and seeking "consistencies and structures in the meanings of the phenomena" (Relph, 1976b, pp. 5-6). In light of Relph, my role as researcher is to suspend my preconceived ideas about student spatial interactions, and to accept ambiguities in the data while seeking commonalities.

Hermeneutics as a strategy of inquiry supports phenomenological research and ensures the credibility of this study. Patton suggests hermeneutic inquiry recognizes that the researcher "constructs reality" on the basis of the interpretations of the data collected, preconceived notions, and relationship with participants (Patton, 1990, p. 85). Recognition for Patton of the researcher's perspective is fundamental to hermeneutics: "One can only interpret the meaning of something from some perspective, a certain standpoint, a *praxis* or a situational context, where one is reporting on one's own findings or reporting the perspectives of people being studied" (ibid.). The investigator *subjectively* conducts research, therefore, from a specific standpoint and context.

The inclusion of my voice in this research in addition to knowledge of my perspective as the researcher allows a more accurate and honest presentation of the research context. An understanding of the relationship between the researcher and research space(s) is as important as the relationship between the researcher and

participants. A hermeneutic approach identifying my research position enables the consideration of these factors during research collection and analysis, thereby allowing a better understanding of participants' perspectives.

Researcher Stance

My reasons for investigating the subjective experiences of students in and of learning spaces are numerous. My research topic is interdisciplinary and stems from interests in geography, cultural anthropology, and education. First, my undergraduate work in geography left me intrigued by the relationships that exist between people and their environments and between individuals and the spaces in which they live.

My interest in cultural anthropology, second, led me to the construct of "culture" in schools in the sense of "a system of shared meanings" (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, p. 1). This study is about the "culture" of students. The manner in which student "culture" is spatially constructed and construed and how student "culture" contributes to the construction of meanings in school spaces anchors this investigation (ibid., p. 3). Constructivist and phenomenological approaches embraced in this study make a fixed view of school "culture" problematic. In contemporary school settings it is essential to acknowledge the multiple constructions of "shared" spatial meanings and identities. There are a diversity of "systems" of meanings constructed in school spaces. The "shared meanings" constituting student cultures, therefore, are highly complex.

Third, as an educator in the public school system, I am very interested in how effective teaching and learning can be fostered in schools. Understandings of student experiences, encounters, and engagements within the spaces in which they spend countless hours has the potential to assist teachers in facilitating positive experiences for

students. The ways in which teachers, similarly, experience and interact with and in space can contribute to educational research into the possible significance of school spaces to teaching as well as learning.

This research broadens and strengthens phenomenologically based understandings of school "culture" as an emergent property of interactions with others and with spatial structures in which students move. This inquiry into the multiple realities of culturally diverse schools unites aspects of geography, cultural anthropology, and education. The manner in which individual and collective relationships in schools between students and school spaces affect sense of belonging, first, and then perhaps learning and teaching is central to this investigation.

Recognition of my perspective is crucial in a hermeneutic study. My voice plays a significant role, therefore, in this study. I agree with Eyles who states in *Senses of Place* that identification of the research perspective is important: "The validity and verification of any case study is contingent on exposing the role and nature of its investigator" (Eyles, 1985, p. 6). For use in the educational domain, the credibility of a study depends in part on the integrity and honesty of the investigator. Inclusion of my perspective recognizes my role as an interpreting subject in this research and acknowledges preconceived assumptions and limitations.

Participants

The thirty-eight participants in this study are nineteen male and nineteen female Grade 12 students at Cordova Secondary School (**school name has been changed*). I selected Grade 12 students based on their increased level of maturity and ability to articulate their ideas. Given that this study investigates what meanings students construct

in and with school spaces, I wanted to conduct research with those individuals who had most likely been at the school for the longest time and for whom school space was most familiar. Individuals who are not my students and have never been my students form the research sample in order to avoid biases and ethical problems.

Students' names came from class lists for English 12, Literature 12, and Communications 12 as all Grade 12 students are required to take at least one of these courses. With permission of teachers, I made initial contact with potential participants by going into classes and talking for about fifteen minutes about the study. The research participants selected were those who met the criteria mentioned above and who were willing to commit to the study. Selection of participants from English 12, Literature 12, and Communications 12, allowed the inclusion of all types of students in the study including high and low achievers, both motivated and unmotivated students, as well as those involved and uninvolved in school activities. The research sample represents a diverse group of students including eight English Second Language students.

All participants and their parent or guardian signed a letter of consent allowing them to participate in the study. Assurance of complete anonymity and confidentiality as well as the choice to withdraw from the study at any time was outlined in the letter of consent. In order to maintain this level of anonymity all names that appear have been changed including the name of the school.

Setting

This research was conducted at a large secondary school in urban British Columbia from late January to early April 2002. Selection of Cordova Secondary School as the site for this research was based on it being a familiar setting in which I have been

teaching for five years. The research site is accessible and my investigation has the full support of staff and administration. Use of Cordova Secondary School for this study also allows for research to take place in conjunction with my teaching. The research design acknowledges the possibility that my personal involvement may act as a bias.

Cordova Secondary School was the first school constructed in the school district in 1948. In the 2001-2002 school year, a staff of more than 90 people worked with a student body totalling 926 students of which 157 constitute the Grade 12 class (totals as of April 2002).

The 2001 British Columbia Public School Accreditation Report identifies Cordova Secondary School as a "greater needs" school. The Ministry of Education considers two of the four elementary feeder schools as inner city schools providing both with support funding (British Columbia Public School Accreditation Report, 2001, p. 13). The school has a higher level of identified students than the provincial average as well as a high rate of transient students.

In terms of the socio-economic make-up of Cordova Secondary School, 21.7% of the student body come from families with an annual Family Income of less than $30,000 (ibid.). According to the British Columbia Public School Accreditation Report, the families represented at Cordova Secondary School have a higher percentage of one-parent families than the provincial average (16.1% compared to the provincial level of 14%) (ibid., p. 13).

Cordova Secondary School is very culturally diverse. Aboriginal students represented 9.5% of the student body in 2001, with English Second Language and International Students representing 12.3% (ibid., p. 17). The proportion of students for

which English is not their home language was 23.2% in 2001 as compared to the provincial average of 17.1% (ibid., p. 13). Cordova Secondary School had the largest English Second Language program in the school district in 2001 servicing students from Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam, Kosovo, Mexico, El Salvador, Columbia, Nicaragua, India, Hong Kong, Japan, Costa Rica, Paraguay, and Iran (British Columbia Public School Accreditation Report, 2001, p. 18).

The school offers a variety of programs including French Immersion, Advanced Placement, Accelerated Programs, a Technology Partnership Program, and an International Student Program. Cordova Secondary School is considered a "full-service" school as it has a full range of low and high incident Special Education services, learning assistance, and counselling services (ibid., p. 18). A strong Fine Arts Program including Drama, Music and Visual Art, as well as the largest Career Preparation Program in the district can be found at Cordova Secondary School (ibid., p. 19). In terms of extracurricular activities, students may participate in many athletic programs including soccer, skiing, volleyball, basketball, rugby, hockey, golf, dance, track and field, basketball, and badminton.

Two unique characteristics of Cordova Secondary School at the time of this research should be noted. First, research for this study was conducted at a time of escalating job action on the part of teachers across British Columbia. Teachers were not conducting any form of extracurricular activities for students during the time of research or in the two months preceding research commencement. It should also be noted that I was not sponsoring student activities nor assisting students outside of class time. This occurrence must be noted as participants mention it as having a significant effect on how

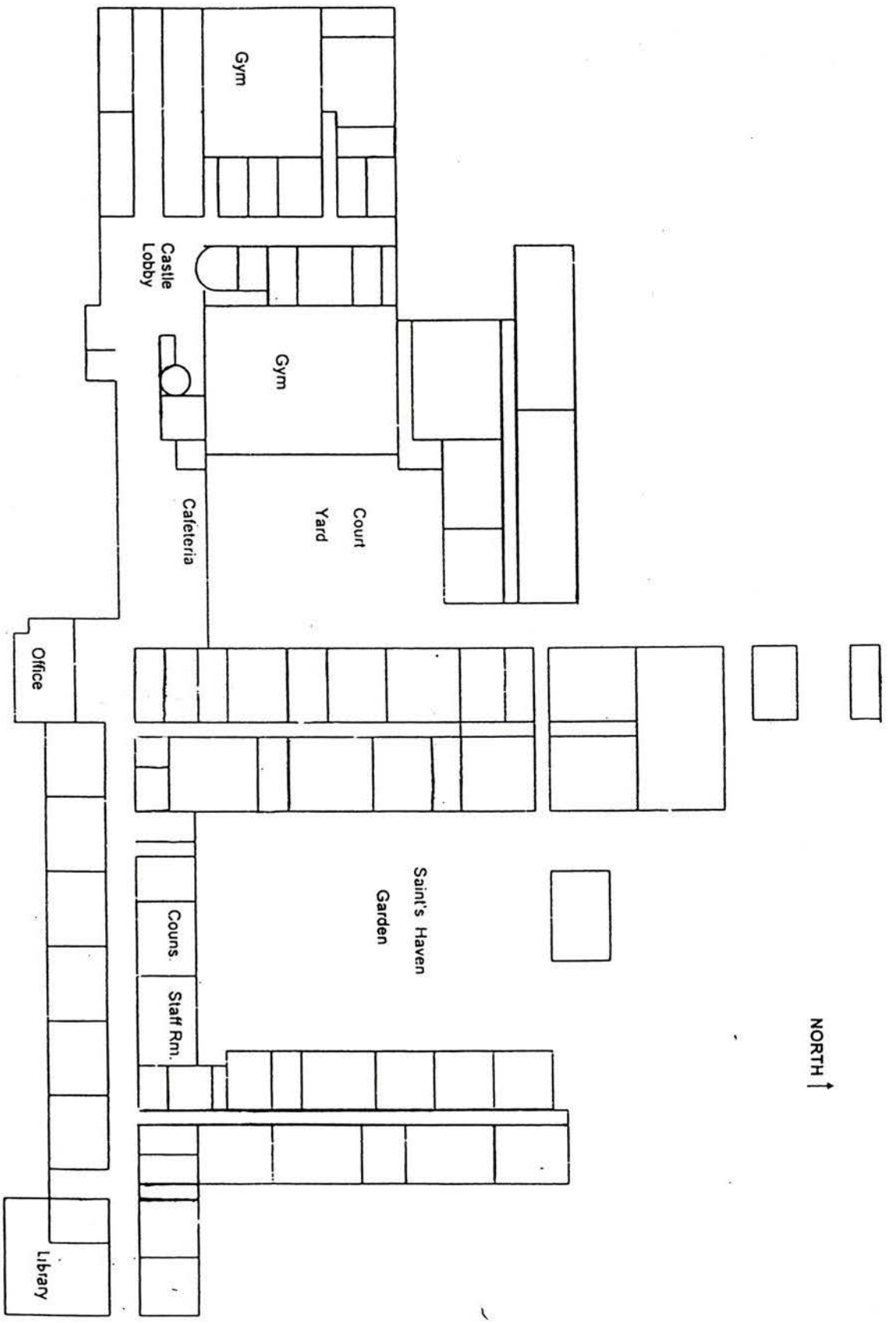
they experienced the spaces within Cordova Secondary School during the time of this research.

Secondly, due to frequent pulling of fire alarms in 1998 during June exams, Cordova Secondary School has a strict policy regarding student presence in the hallways, cafeteria, and library during class-time. Although the policy has relaxed since 1998, school regulations continue to prohibit students from being in the hallway, cafeteria, or library without permission during class-time. All students with "spares" must therefore be either off-campus during these blocks or in a "custodial" class in which they do silent work. This unique feature is important to this study as it impacts how students experience power and control in school space.

i. Spatial Structure

A description of the physical layout of Cordova Secondary School provides a point of reference for this chapter. Figure 3.1 provides a basic outline map. The school is largely oriented from east to west. Two major hallways depart from the main building in a northward direction. Cordova Secondary School's main entrance is at approximately the centre of the school. The administrative offices are located here. Close to the main office is the student cafeteria and outside courtyard. Departing from the office in an east to west direction is the main hall joining the gymnasium at the west-end to the library at the east-end of the school. Counselling offices, the staff room, and various classrooms are located off the main hallway. Behind the staff room and between the two northward-oriented hallways there is a garden called the "Saint's Haven" with paths, benches, and flowers. The term "Saints" refers to the halo that serves as the schools' symbol. Students

Figure 3.1 School Map



at Cordova Secondary School collectively refer to themselves as the "Saints." There are four stairwells leading up to the second floor located throughout the school at the west-end, centre, and east end of the school. The second floor is located only above the main building.

The use of classroom space divides the school into different subject-based zones. The science wing, for example, leads to metal, woodworking, mechanics, and music rooms. Fine arts and physical education facilities are located at the west-end of the school. The home economics wing, similarly, has the majority of classes for career preparation, textiles, and cooking. The upstairs hallway, finally, is the languages wing in which most English, French, Italian, and Japanese courses are taught. Behind the school there are three portable classrooms. One portable is used for various school subjects. Another portable is reserved for the Behaviour Disorder Program. The technology program appropriates the third portable.

All students have access to lockers throughout the year. Blue student lockers fill the school. Grade 8 and 9 students use small lockers in the main hallway. Grade 10 and 11 students generally occupy large lockers in the science and home economics hallways. Grade 12 students, finally, have lockers located in the second-floor hallway. Senior students, furthermore, have access to parking space during the school year. Parking for student vehicles is provided at the west-end of the school while the east-end is reserved for teacher parking. The "smoke pit" is located off school property at the west-end of the school near the student parking lot.

There are various large "open" areas in the school. One of these spaces is at the far west-end of the school directly in front of the gymnasiums and fine arts wing. This

space opens into a high ceiling. Students call this location the "Castle Lobby" due to the nature of the wall paintings. The painted walls of the adjacent stairwell resemble the walls of a castle. Painted images include a view of the countryside from a castle window, vine-covered stones, and a fire-breathing dragon. A small set of stairs leads up to the upper bleachers in the gym and to the wrestling room off the Castle Lobby. Below these stairs the "Saints' Shop" sells chocolate and pop at lunch break. The space is bright due to elevated windowed ceilings and a row of doors leading outside. Benches are attached along two walls. The floor is open with the exception of a pop machine and several garbage cans.

The cafeteria, located centrally in the school by the main entrance, is a second large space. Tables are available for student use each morning up until the end of lunch break at which point they are removed. The cafeteria serves food before school, at morning recess, and at lunch. Candy and pop machines are also available. The cafeteria backs onto a courtyard containing picnic benches. It is very close to the school office and main entrance.

A third spacious area is located upstairs at the east-end of the school over-looking the library. The floor is open with the exception of several garbage cans. There are no tables and only one small bench that seats two. Two stairwells lead to this area. The limited amount of movable objects or "semi-fixed" featured space in this area is typical throughout Cordova Secondary School (Hall, 1966). Hallways, stairwells, entrances, and exits are free of objects except for garbage cans and movable tables in the cafeteria.

The school day runs from a warning bell at 8:20 A.M. to dismissal for the day at 2:35 P.M. Bells segment the day into four seventy-five minute class periods allowing for

a ten minute morning recess, a thirty-five minute lunch break, and five minutes walk-time between classes. Students have eight classes throughout the entire year based on a linear scheduling system. The eight blocks rotate so that students have each class once every two days.

Not all the spaces of Cordova Secondary School are known or familiar to students. The recognition that each student's knowledge of the building is different is important in this research as it illustrates the diversity of meanings students associate with school spaces. Eckert (1989, p. 45) summarizes the nature of school space as known and unknown: "For each person, there are parts of the school that remain mysteries, parts that are taboo, parts that are simply insignificant, and parts that are imbued with magic, terror, delight, purpose, boredom." This research investigates a spectrum of students' spatial meanings and their possible significance for learning.

Data Collection

Research methods are varied as methodological triangulation generates more understanding and enables investigation of research questions from different perspectives. Research is open-ended, fostered by carefully worded questions, dialogue, and discussion. Consistent with the constructivist paradigm and phenomenological approach, this research involved interviews (single and paired) and observations (formal and informal).

As sole researcher I interviewed all students and transcribed all interviews from cassette. With the exception of two individuals, interviews took place in a private office in the counselling area. Privacy was important in the research design in order to reduce distractions and make students feel more comfortable. To assure the further comfort of

participants, they were given the option of single or paired interviews. Sixteen participants were interviewed singly and twenty-two in pairs. It is anticipated that students interviewed in pairs may have shared similar responses due to the presence of a peer. Student comfort in interviews is significant, however, warranting possible effects on the data.

Interviews were "semi-structured" in the sense that while all participants addressed the same three major themes, the questions were open-ended and I encouraged participants to talk openly and share anecdotes. Consistency of interview subject matter coverage was maintained. The three major areas addressed in interviews (see Appendix A) were students' *instrumental perspectives* on school space (the appropriation and use of space and access and restriction of space), their *territorial perspectives* (domination and control of space), and their *sentimental and emotional perspectives* (Yamamoto, 1979, p. 10).

The interviews allowed an initial investigation of how students experience, perceive, and conceive of these domains. Interviews lasted 30-40 minutes on average. Interview data are reported in this study as verbatim commentary. An ellipsis indicates where a break in on-going narrative occurs. Omissions indicate repetition and off-topic commentary. Consistent with a "constant comparative" method, interview transcription occurred as quickly as possible following the interview so that emergent themes could be captured and explored.

The "constant comparative" method embraced in this study is a feature of "grounded theory" methodology (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 158). Denzin and Lincoln describe "grounded theory" methodology as "a general methodology for developing

theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed...(theory) develops through the continuous interplay between analysis and data collection" (ibid.). They describe, furthermore, how grounded theory methodology includes "an explicit mandate to strive toward *verification* of its resulting hypothesis...*throughout the course* of the research project" (ibid., p. 161). The idea of "data-theory" interplay, of constant comparisons, and asking of generative, concept-related questions *throughout* the research anchors this research design (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 179, p. 161; emphasis mine).

Grounded theory methodology allows the openness appropriate for this study. The fluidity and flexibility of constant comparative methods and grounded-theory development is necessary for research embracing multiplicity. Grounded theory methodology seeks patterns of actions and interactions, and in developing theory, explores "each new situation to see *if* they [*theories*] fit, *how* they might fit, and how they *might not* fit" (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 170, emphasis mine). The flexibility of a constant-comparative methodology and grounded theory development allows for the recognition of a multiplicity of student voices.

Observations in addition to interviews form an integral part of data collection for this investigation. To reiterate, a variety of approaches as supported by methodological triangulation are essential for research flexibility and diversity. Data collection involved both formal and informal observations as a form of verification of data obtained in interviews as well as exploration of emergent themes from the data. Students expressed what they *perceived* and *conceived* in relation to school spaces in interviews. Both perception and conception are involved in students' interpretation of spaces in schools and their construction of meanings. Participants expressed their perceptions and

conceptions of their spatial uses, encounters, and experiences. Formal and informal observation of students made it possible to see how they actually *experienced* school spaces. The observations allowed, therefore, a verification of interview data by connecting perception and conception to actual experience.

Formal observations of students occurred in participants' classes. I conducted a series of observations of students in a variety of classes over a two-week period following the completion of interviews. These classes included Chemistry 12, Math 12, Geology 12, Literature 12, Comparative Civilisation 12, Foods 12, Acting 12, and Family Management 12. Formal observations were conducted after the completion of the interview stage of research allowing the identification and exploration in observations of themes and emerging theories from the interview data. A lapse of time reduced students' awareness of my presence as researcher during formal observations. Thus, the purpose of the formal observations was not only to verify and experience what students had expressed in interviews, but to explore emergent themes. Refer to Appendix B for excerpts from observation fieldnotes.

The functions of my observation fieldnotes are twofold. First, fieldnotes serve to describe official "learning" spaces as well as spaces outside classrooms. Second, fieldnotes contain my reflections on how the spaces and how students' spatial interactions connect to study themes. My fieldnotes are anecdotal accounts written during observations and during periods of reflection. Thematic analysis of fieldnotes occurred throughout the observation process. During formal observations I attempted to be as unobtrusive as possible so as to minimize any effect my presence may have on students' behaviour and use of space. My physical location in the classroom and the times

observations occurred varied in order to gain different perspectives. By moving within and between classes at different times, school spaces were "surveyed."

Informal observations occurred essentially out of class time - mainly before school, between classes, at break, at lunch, and after school. Observations occurred, furthermore, in the spaces participants said they spend most of their time with friends. In order to survey different perspectives, I moved continuously throughout school spaces, interacting with students as little as possible so as to remain "invisible." My fieldnotes contain descriptions and reflections. The informal observations officially began in late-January and continued into May on days I was teaching as well as on those days when I, too, was a "student."

Data Analysis

Adoption of the grounded-theory methodology and constant-comparative method of analysis means data analysis occurred concurrently with the process of research and data collection. Colour-coding was used to identify emerging themes throughout the process of data generation. Development of theories was possible based on the identification of themes from the data. The theories developed are thus traceable to the data that gave rise to them. The major themes addressed in the results chapters are those that emerged from the majority of student responses.

An inductive approach to data analysis and interpretation is appropriate for qualitative research. Bogdan and Biklen in *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* suggest inquiry develops from the concrete to the abstract: "...the abstractions are built as the particulars that have been gathered are grouped together" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 6). Through constant comparative

analysis my interpretations and theories have developed from "the bottom up" out of the data. The particulars of student experiences in school spaces revealed in interviews and verified in observations connect to form theories and understandings.

Considerations in Research Design

It is vital for the researcher to explore pre-conceived assumptions in order to be open to research data and to be consistent with the hermeneutic tradition. A preliminary assumption in this study is the taken-for-granted nature of student spatial use. That students construct meanings in space, furthermore, and that these meanings are valuable to them and to their learning is an important assumption of this research. McKinney in *A Place to Learn: Teachers, Students, and Classroom Spaces*, explains: "I was not there to explore whether or not classroom space was important, but rather, *how* it was important" (McKinney, 2000, p. 11; emphasis mine). She assumes the *value* of space in her study of place-making in the classroom.

This research, similarly, does not seek to prove the value of sense of place in school space, but *how* place-making contributes to sense of belonging and how it may be valuable *to learning*. Despite the presumed neutrality and "taken-for-granted" nature of space, furthermore, I recognize my assumption that students at the Grade 12 level are able to express the meanings they attach to spaces. Participant expression of individual and collective sense(s) of place is assumed.

In conducting research at a school with which I am familiar, I acknowledge possible detrimental effects my familiarity may have on the research. Conducting the study with students I do not teach and have never taught was important. My assumption in interviews was that my position as a teacher at the school would not affect the

interview process as participants were students that I did not know and that did not know me. Such a relationship allowed for confidentiality thereby facilitating greater comfort and openness of students during the interview process.

McKinney discusses how she struggled with the notion of being an "outsider" in the research site and ways to become more of an "insider" in her research (McKinney, 2000, p. 13). After five years as a teacher at Cordova Secondary School, I feel like an "insider." These feelings are based on my role as a teacher in the school, not as a student. In order to achieve some "insider" status, my introduction to the students emphasized my role as a graduate *student* at the University of Victoria.

Connection with students on an informal level where they accepted me more as an "insider" and as a "student" and felt more comfortable in my presence was facilitated by my youthful appearance. My dress was casual on my research days at Cordova Secondary School in order to maintain a "student" image when I was both conducting interviews and observing. I encouraged participants, furthermore, to call me by my first name during interviews so that they would again consider me more as an equal and consequently as an "insider" rather than an "outsider." Participants were relaxed interacting with me during the interviews and therefore more accepting of my "student" status.

This research design acknowledges my position as both an "insider" and "outsider." Being considered by participants as a "student" does not negate my role as a teacher at the research site. Shaping the research are my preconceived notions of school space from the perspective of a teacher. The teacher "lens" shapes my interpretations and understandings.

While my position as teacher at Cordova Secondary School did not negatively influence the interview process, it seemed detrimental to the observation phase of research. It was incredibly difficult to "disappear" in classes and in the hallways. Current students and ex-students repeatedly came up to talk to me and inquire into my "unusual" activities.

Bogdan and Biklen emphasize the need to meld into the research site: "Make sure you don't carry yourself like a detective and spook your subjects" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 90). In this regard, attempts at "invisibility" were not completely successful. A student called to me and asked if I was a "secret agent" on one occasion as I walked down the hallway. She had noticed me "all over" the school "secretly" taking notes!

The "observer effect" may have negatively affected my observations due to the attention my own students and ex-students drew to my presence in and outside of classes. In order to address the impact of the "observer effect" on the research, my fieldnote reflections highlight those instances when recognition of my presence affected students and their spatial engagements. The issue of researcher impact on research participants and setting illustrates the subjectivity of research (ibid., p. 125).

Challenges and Limitations of Research

All research is interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 26). Recognition of the challenges and possible limitations facing research is the aim of this section. First, in order to conduct a "survey" of students - a total of thirty-eight formed the sample. All Grade 12 students meeting the research criteria did not participate in the study. One limitation may be, therefore, how the data from other students in Grade 12 would have affected study findings. Interviews and formal observations, furthermore, occurred over

a limited period of time. How further observations or interviews would have influenced results is an additional consideration.

Second, the interests that led me to this study also serve to limit the research. Ley suggests in *A Social Geography of the City* that a "set of relevances" shapes what a researcher sees, the questions asked, and the process of investigation (Ley, 1983, p. 134). An educational background in geography shapes how I view the world, the questions I ask, and the interpretation and analysis of research data in this study. The readings and knowledge gained through literature review, moreover, both inform the research and give me preconceived notions about the themes and constructs under investigation.

Third, my positions as researcher and teacher exclude me from the "student" world at Cordova Secondary School. The spaces under investigation in this study are familiar to me in my role as a teacher. The experience of *student* construction of meanings in school spaces is therefore impossible for me to experience personally because I am not and will never be a student at Cordova Secondary School. This limitation faces all researchers conducting phenomenological inquiry. The challenging task in this study is the capture of the phenomena of the subjective *student* experience of school space. The goal of this research is an accurate portrayal of the participants' perspectives through an objective study of the *subjective* states of participants. An "accurate" portrayal of students' subjective experiences in the form of text is a research challenge and consideration.

Duncan and Ley in *Place/Culture/Representation* discuss the problems of representation in qualitative inquiry, underlining the fact that there is no *mimesis* (Duncan & Ley, 1993, p. 1). There is no perfect portrayal or exact replica of the whole truth in

any qualitative investigation. A hermeneutic approach is an attempt to deal with the issue of representation as it acknowledges the "'collision' between the data and interpreter" (ibid., p. 8). Duncan and Ley identify three components of "re-presentation" including the "text" the researcher produces, the "extra-textual field of reference" referring to the data collected from participants used to produce the "text," and the "inter-textual field of reference" including the elements from other texts used (Duncan & Ley, 1993, p. 9).

This thesis document, the "text", is not *mimesis* of the "extra-textual field of reference" but is my interpretation of the "extra-textual field of reference" (ibid.). It is a selective presentation of this field in which certain elements are emphasized while others are ignored (Duncan & Ley, 1993, p. 9). This "text" is a "re-presentation", "a production of something which did not exist before or outside the text" (ibid.). It is a product of the intersection and interaction of my literature review and educational training ("inter-textual field") and the data collected from participants ("extra-textual field") (ibid.).

A hermeneutic phenomenology within the constructivist paradigm demands recognition of the considerations, challenges, and limitations of research design. This text, "a partial truth, a transformation of the extra-textual world," is consistent with hermeneutic inquiry as described by Duncan and Ley (ibid., p. 9). Each reader, moreover, will interpret the text differently. Multiple interpretations are expected. This work is a "re-presentation" of spatial use and meaning construction in school spaces.

The study is valuable as "re-presentation" of the multiple realities in school space. It is a "re-presentation" of the relationships between students and school spaces and contributes to understandings of the importance of meaning in school space for sense of belonging and learning. This research is, moreover, a springboard from which to conduct

further inquiry. Research in different school settings and with different research foci would expand our understandings of the connections between the subjective meanings students construct in school space and processes of teaching and learning.

Contributions to Educational Research

This investigation of the subjective experiences of students in school spaces represents a positive contribution to educational research as it is well grounded in data, is credible, comprehensive, and trustworthy. These research findings contribute, furthermore, to our understandings of the processes of individual and collective identity formation and development of sense of belonging in schools. The possible effects of positive spatial experiences and sense of place on learning is an important consideration in this investigation and leads into many avenues of future research. The manner in which students and teachers collaboratively construct meanings in school spaces, moreover, is important for future educational study.

Research into how teachers, administrators, and students construct meanings in school spaces is vital to deepen our understanding of schools. Direct applications for spatial use in schools and facilitation of spatial relationships emerge from this study. The results contained in Chapter Four and Five indicate how meanings are constructed, negotiated, and experienced in school spaces.

CHAPTER FOUR - RESULTS: MEANINGFUL SPACES

This chapter presents results of the study according to Instrumental, Territorial, and Sentimental and Emotional Perspectives outlined in Chapter Two. It begins with a framework for the results and identification of the research thesis.

Framework

The identification of central themes explored in the process of data analysis provides a frame of reference for this chapter. Furthermore, acknowledgement of the complexity, ambiguity, and diversity of the data is essential. The data set is open to multiple interpretations as it focuses on the subjective experiences of a culturally rich student population. To reiterate, the research questions guiding this investigation address the multiple ways in which students experience and construct meanings in relation to the physical spaces of schools, how they experience and express collective and individual autonomy, and how they form identities in relation to school spaces. My objective as researcher is to identify both the commonalities and the diversity of student experiences in school spaces.

Student agency, ownership, and identity are the central themes explored in the data analysis. They work together in multiple ways and at individual and collective levels to create "spaces of security" for students. This research shows that students create "spaces of security" from the subjective meanings they construct through spatial interactions. These "spaces" may be physical, cultural, emotional, ideational or intellectual in nature.

"Spaces of security" facilitate learning as they fulfill the fundamental needs for safety and belonging of students. They enhance, moreover, the formation of a diversity

of collective and individual identities in school spaces. The construct of "space of security" can be compared to Tuan's description of "place" as "a pause" amid movement and flows of space (Tuan, 1977, p. 179). "Spaces of security" are "pauses" in which students feel safety, belonging, and connectedness in schools. Individuals create these "spaces" through purposive student acts of agency at collective and individual levels.

The work of Abraham Maslow supports the thesis that "spaces of security" are significant for learning in schools (Crider *et al.*, 1989). Maslow is well-known for his theory of human motivation in which individuals are driven toward the full development of their potential through a process of self-actualization (ibid., p. 499). Maslow believes a hierarchy of needs motivates human behaviour. Maslow categorizes human needs from "lowest" to "highest": physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and the need for self-actualization (ibid.). Maslow classifies the lower level needs as "deficiency motives" as they are stimulated by a lack or a deficit (ibid., p. 500). The hierarchical nature of Maslow's theory of human motivation is significant for this study. Maslow argues higher level needs can not be fulfilled without the satisfaction of lower levels. Students must fulfill their lower-level needs before they can effectively learn in schools.

Hodgkinson describes how schools have embraced Maslow's theory of human motivation toward self-actualization:

> The system of public education has been greatly affected, and many schools, programs, and curricula now claim to be designed to afford growth opportunities for maximizing the growth and self realization potentials of their clientele. (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 118)

"Spaces of security" support an individual's journey toward "self-actualization" by

contributing to the fulfillment of safety and belonging needs in multiple ways.

Physical, emotional, and ideational "spaces of security" formed through the meanings students construct in learning spaces contribute to the satisfaction of Maslow's needs for safety, belonging, and love. Students can not effectively learn without the satisfaction of these basic needs. Hodgkinson explains: "One can not be a philosopher with a toothache" (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 118). Students, similarly, can not learn without a sense of security and connectedness or belonging in schools. This study shows that a sense of security may emerge from students' spatial relationships and interactions in school spaces.

Maslow's "safety needs" include both physical and psychological safety. Creation of collective and individual "spaces of security" enhances psychological safety. Children for Maslow need a sense of safety more than adults (Crider *et al.*, 1989, p. 499). The fulfilment, therefore, of both psychological and physical safety needs is important for children in schools. Once "safety needs" are satisfied, Maslow believes an individual can fulfill needs for belonging and love (ibid.). These needs include "the need to be accepted by and included in groups, and the need for affection from parents, peers, and other loved ones" (ibid.). A sense of belonging for students emerges in part from the attributions they construct in school space. The identity formation and sense of connectedness that emerge from sense of place in school space represents a "space of security" contributing significantly to fulfilling these belonging needs.

Hodgkinson (1978) presents a philosophical perspective on Maslow's psychological theory of motivation. His work *Towards A Philosophy of Administration* presents a value paradigm applicable to this study. Hodgkinson considers what Maslow

calls "needs" as "sources of value" (Hodgkinson, 1978, p. 107). Individuals are motivated to fulfill "needs" as they represent "sources of value": "The idea behind need is that of a discrepancy or undesirable imbalance in a state of affairs. Needs imply tension and disequilibrium and provide a dynamic for rectifying action" (ibid.). This "motive" or "impulse to action" is a source of value as it may result in the rectification of a deficiency or shortfall (ibid.). Hodgkinson's definition of "motive" informs the construct of "agency" in this study.

The term "motive" as an "impulse to action" corresponds with conceptualization of student agency in this research. Hodgkinson (1978) believes an individual may be "fully aware, partially aware, or totally unaware" of their motives for action. Students, similarly, indicate varying degrees of awareness of their agential activity. Hodgkinson describes "motive" as a source of value. Through agency students are empowered to meet their needs and rectify any disequilibrium they may face. Student agency is a source of value in this study as it allows students to actively fulfill their safety and belonging needs in schools.

Crumpacker (as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 76) poses a significant question: "What are the inventions and creations people use to make their school environments work for them?" The answer to this questions lies in an investigation of students' agential activity in school spaces. Students are empowered in a variety of ways both individually and collectively. McKinney (2000, p. 208) argues, for example, that in addition to the collective level, individual place-making in schools is a source of student agency. The individual diffuses the power of others to define spatial meaning through agential acts of individual meaning-making. Individual and collective processes of meaning-making in

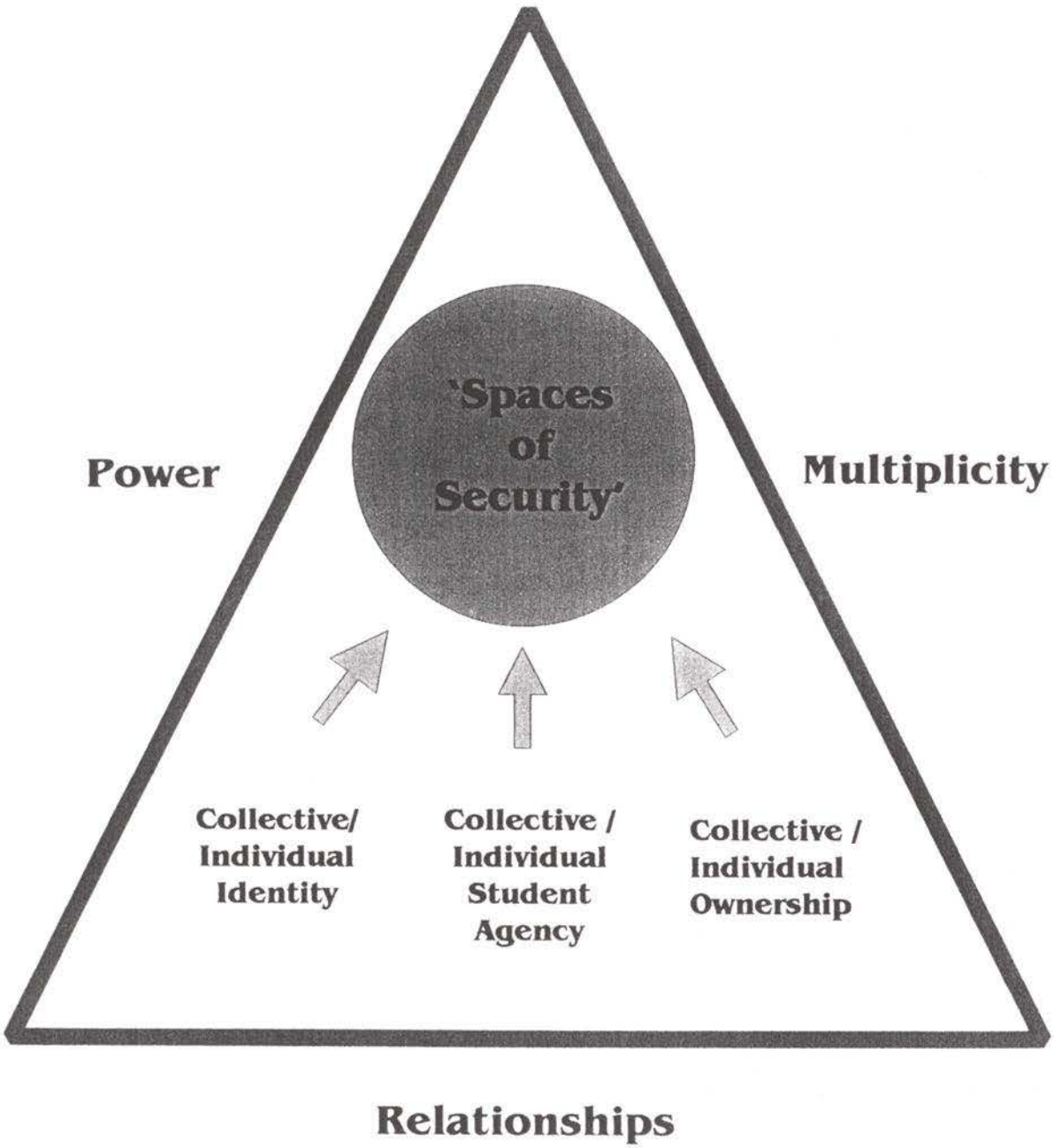
school spaces represent multiple acts of agency. Examination of the ways in which diverse individual and collective examples of agency emerge in school spaces occurs in relation to ownership and identity formation.

The sense of ownership students associate with school spaces is explored through theories regarding territoriality. Students' collective territoriality is analysed from various perspectives including the "student" position, participants' age, social groups, and finally, cultural affiliations. An analysis of students' individual territoriality involves the dynamics of personal space, privacy, and crowding. Students' conceptualizations of their "own" spaces reflect issues of access, exclusion, spatial regulation, and violation.

Acknowledgement of identity formation at the individual and collective levels is evident from analysis of student agency and their sense of ownership in school spaces. "Identity" in this study is explored in two ways: "identity of" and "identity with." "Identity of" refers to the identification of components or elements of spaces. In contrast, the conceptualization of "identity with" reflects a sense of belonging or connection with space. "Identity with," therefore, corresponds more closely to a sense of place in which affective ties exist between an individual and school space. The reciprocal nature of place is demonstrated as people identify with specific places and places, similarly, identify people. Students in this study, for example, associate themselves with places in the school and suggest these places identify them.

Figure 4.1 illustrates the relational, multiple, and powered nature of school space serving as a constant backdrop to meaning-making and the creation of "spaces of security." Chapter Two addresses space as a social construction based on multiple

Figure 4.1 "Spaces of Security"



relationships. Students' relationships matter in the fulfilment of safety and belonging needs in schools. Relationships between students, students and teachers, and students and school spaces explored in this research are a constant backdrop to students' spatial interactions and experiences. The fundamental multiplicity and diversity of school spaces emerge from students' spatial attributions.

The multiple nature of space is a constant in this investigation. A diversity of students experience spaces in multiple ways. Acknowledgement of the wide variety of subjective meanings, forms of student agency, identities, and senses of ownership and connectedness is crucial to understanding the complexities of school spaces. There are numerous examples of student cultures contained in the data set. Commonalities in student responses occur within this arena of multiplicity.

Power, finally, is a constant factor in demonstrations of student agency, ownership, and identity. Space as a social construction in this study is associated with power. Power is implicated in the relations and multiplicity of school spaces. Spatial interactions are affected by power and so, therefore, is meaning-making in space: "In any setting, power over who controls space and who does not greatly influences the place-making process" (McKinney, 2000, p. 208). Demonstrations of student agency and ownership and identity are continually influenced by power.

Table 2.1 provides a synthesis of the three main spatial dimensions analysed in this chapter: Instrumental, Territorial, and Sentimental and Emotional. Students' experience, perception, and conception or imagination illuminate these spatial dimensions. Meaning-making is a process of active interpretation involving both conception and perception. Students' construction of meaning goes beyond the

identification of the physical attributes of space.

These major perspectives and emergent themes frame presentation of results in Chapters Four and Five. Central to the process of data analysis in this study are the potential pedagogical implications of the findings. The ways in which attributes of place enhance student experiences in school space are fundamental to this investigation as are possible effects on both teaching and learning.

The Instrumental Perspective

The instrumental or functional perspective of spatial use and meaning construction includes student views on accessibility and exclusion and appropriation and use of space. This includes consideration of "public" and "private" areas in school.

i. Accessibility and Exclusion

The ways in which students experience, perceive, and conceive of accessibility and exclusion in school spaces is central to the instrumental perspective of students' spatial interactions. Students appropriate many different areas throughout a typical day. Student use of space is equally diverse and changes, moreover, at different times. Two principle ways in which students acknowledge access and exclusion in school space emerge from the data. "Public" and "private" terrains, and "student space" and "teacher space" identify accessibility and exclusion at school.

The unanimous view of school space among participants is that it is accessible or "public." Students had difficulty identifying locations from which they are excluded. When asked to name private or reserved areas in the sense of "closed" to students, this participant responded: "I've never felt restricted from any areas." Another student stated, similarly, "I go where I want." One participant described the school as "all

public": "...basically I see everything as open." The concept of "public" space in schools is ambiguous as various factors change the meanings of spaces as accessible or restricted for students.

Students describe how "public" or accessible space may become "private" space given factors of occupancy and time. In terms of occupancy, first, students consider an empty classroom as "public" space for student use unless the teacher is present in which case it is "private." Students view an open classroom without a teacher present as "public" in contrast to a classroom with locked and closed doors or with a teacher present which is "private." This student identified areas used by teachers or administration as "private": "Ah, staffroom...office, you don't go near those unless you have to...Classrooms are public, I think...except if a class is locked. If not then you walk in and look around." Conceptualizations of public and private spaces are complex, as conceptualization of spaces may change from "public" to "private" or vice versa given different circumstances.

The blurring of the meanings of space as "private" or "public" is also a function of time. A classroom during class or at breaks has different meanings for students than it does during scheduled class time. Classrooms are "private" spaces during class time unless students have an assigned block in the space. Time, thus, affects the meanings of spaces to students and their classification as "public" or "private."

Students identify "private" in three principle ways: as a sense of student exclusion or restriction from school spaces, in reference to individual private space or "privacy," and as "off limits" or restricted for teachers and open to students. Student definition of "private" as a sense of restriction from school space emerges from the data. Spatial

exclusion, first, is based on factors such as culture, gender, activity, or time. This participant suggested the room adjoining the International student office is "private" and off-limits for Canadian students: "...that room kind of outside the library, we...yah, usually a lot of International students go in there so, we, you know, everyone kind of knows to stay off." This is an example of cultural exclusion. The sense of "private" overlaps with different culturally-based territories in school spaces discussed later in this chapter. Gender-based exclusion identified by the majority of students includes washrooms or change rooms of the opposite sex.

Several participants identify activity-based restrictions. They consider the gyms as off-limits or "private" to those not in physical education class, or the photography and drama rooms for students not in these courses. These particular spaces in the school are generally not "multi-use" areas but are associated with specific topics. This may explain the meanings students hold in these locations. Classrooms are considered spaces on a lesser degree that exclude students who do not have class there.

Aproximately half of the participants considered lockers "private" spaces in schools. Many students that shared lockers by choice describe them as "private" or restricted space to the general school population but "public" to friends. Students identify administrative and counselling offices and designated "staff" spaces such as the staff lunchroom and staff washrooms, finally, as spaces from which they are excluded.

The majority of students also viewed "private" space as achievable through individual agential action. Choosing to work alone contributes to conceptualization of "private" spaces in school:

> "Oh I guess sometimes when I go to the library I kind of feel that wherever I sit that *there* [italics mine] it is kind of my private space - whether it is at one of the tables or the sofa chairs. If it is just me by myself and I'm in there doing whatever then it is my private space. Just for that time, you know?...if I'm working on an art project I can go into the art room by myself a lot of times and there won't be any other students or teachers so then it's very private."

The student narrative above illustrates the construct of "private" is achievable. "Private" for students refers to purposive distancing from others. This interpretation of "private" corresponds with Altman's definition of privacy in *Privacy: Personal Space, Territoriality, Crowding* as introduced in Chapter Two: "Selective control of access to the self or to one's group" (Altman, 1975, p. 18). Students seek greater or lesser distance from others throughout a school day.

Students achieve "private" space from teachers and from other students in the predominantly "public" spaces of schools by regulating and altering their interactions with others. Privacy is thus obtainable: "When I want it, yah, I just go somewhere like to the library and just read or something like that." Students construct "private" spaces through agential action. A section on individual territoriality later in this chapter discusses the significance of "privacy" for students in school spaces.

Students express the division between "public" and "private" spaces in schools most clearly as a differentiation between student and teacher spaces. This divide corresponds, finally, with the conceptualization of "private" as "off-limits" to teachers emerging from the data. Students predominantly associate accessibility and exclusion in space or the idea of "public" and "private" with "student space" and "teacher space." "Student space" is "private" in the sense that there are no teachers directly controlling the

situation or student activity.

Students associate teachers and "teacher spaces" with control, authority, and restriction. The identification of school spaces as accessible or restricted revolves around a division between teachers and students. Identification of "student space" in schools is simply based on where students are and teachers are not. One student explained how students collectively construct spatial meanings through a distinctly two-sided mentality: "It's just their side and our side." The view among student participants, therefore, of the school as essentially "public" corresponds with the school being predominantly "student space." In "student space" students have a collective sense of autonomy and consider it "private" for students only.

Participants associate "student spaces" with areas in which they have more freedom. In "student spaces" they feel more comfortable and relaxed. Participants feel empowered in "student spaces" as they consider it "their" terrain to use as they wish. Student territoriality represents a perspective of spatial meanings discussed later in this chapter. In a paired interview participants described areas consisting of "student spaces": "Cafeteria...It's totally different. What we say in class is like the complete opposite to what we say - like our language in the cafeteria." The idea of the cafeteria as unique is identified further by this student: "Yah, the cafeteria *totally* [italics mine] I've never seen a teacher sit down in the cafeteria in my life."

The majority of students express a desire for "student spaces" in which teachers do not interfere or control their activities. They clearly label and identify "student space" which they feel teachers should respect and should leave to students: "Yes, we are not going to come to school all day and be in 'teacher space' *all day* [italics mine] in school."

Students need their own "student space."

Participant identification of the physical location of "student space" in the school is extensive. The areas in which students "hang out" are "student spaces" whether it be outside their lockers, in the stairwells, or in other school locations. The cafeteria is the most dominant "student space" identified by participants that use it as well as those that appropriate other spaces. A student noted this dominance of the cafeteria: "Everything kind of revolves around the cafeteria." Students acknowledge collectively, that teachers, not welcome in "student spaces" during school break times, have their own designated, albeit limited, "teacher spaces."

Student identification of "teacher spaces" is minimal. Students consider the staffroom and staff washrooms as "teacher spaces": "The staffroom would be private space and I guess the teachers' washroom. I'm scared of that." These areas are "private" in the sense of off-limits to students whereas participants view "student spaces" as accessible. Students identify classrooms during class time as "teacher space." The same location before or after class or without a teacher present, however, may be "student space." The differentiation of "student space" from "teacher space" is based on where students are present and teachers are absent.

It is surprising classrooms are not considered "teacher space" by students. Participants view classrooms as "student spaces" except during official class time when a teacher is present. This may be due to the fact multiple teachers use some classrooms and the space is thus not "owned" by any one teacher. It illustrates nonetheless, how factors of time and occupancy blur students' subjective meanings of school spaces. Participants, furthermore, differentiate less between "student" and "teacher" space when

they have a positive relationship with a teacher: "...some teachers like Billings (**a pseudonym)* that kind of get along with all the students - he can basically go to the cafeteria and people will let him have a seat and stuff." Some teachers are welcomed, therefore, into student spaces depending on the teacher's image, reputation, and relationship with students.

ii. Appropriation and Use of Space

Students occupy and use "student spaces" in their free time that have limited teacher control. School spaces are appropriated and used, further, that are valuable to students due to their accessibility and convenience. The main stages for encounters in school spaces are those physically close to students' lockers and classes. Appropriated spaces are amenable to use if, for example, they have places to sit, or if they are large enough for students to gather.

Spaces in Cordova Secondary School both unite and divide students as they may facilitate or inhibit interaction. "Sociopetal" spaces "unite" as they promote encounters in schools by drawing students together in space (Sitton, 1980). "Sociofugal" spaces, in contrast, "divide" as they inhibit interactions, keeping students apart (ibid.). The "sociopetal" spaces in Cordova Secondary School are those areas in which students have the most physical space to encounter one another and where there are limited obstacles to interaction.

The cafeteria is the largest "stage" for student encounters due to its size and central location. This "sociopetal" space, however, is made less appealing to students once tables are withdrawn. The Castle Lobby and the area above the library on the second floor are also highly "sociopetal" due to their size and location. "Sociofugal"

areas such as the hallways are meant to keep students apart by limiting gathering space and being free of seating or tables. At Cordova Secondary School, however, students lingering at their lockers make hallways additional stages for student encounters.

The use of school spaces corresponds with Goffman's construct of "back stage" and "front stage" behaviours (Goffman, 1959). In "front stage" space teachers or administrators "observe" and "evaluate" student "performance" whereas in "back stage" space students may perform without the pressure of "observation." Student "performance" is out of view and unevaluated when "back stage" with friends and out of view of authority figures.

Participants consider "student spaces" as "back stage" in terms of behaviour. Students define "back stage" space, corresponding with "student space", as where they are "completely with friends." "Front stage" space, in contrast, corresponds with "teacher space." Students contrast "student space" where they can be relaxed or casual with "teacher space" in which, under the control of the teacher and subject to discipline, they are expected to be quieter, more reserved, alert, and respectful. The majority of participants consider "front stage" or "teacher space" as uncomfortable and feel most comfortable and relaxed "back stage" in "student space."

Norms of "appropriate" behaviour differ in school spaces. Students do not necessarily demonstrate, for example, the behaviours expected of them in "teacher space" when they are "back stage" in "student space." This participant explained how students feel "free" to act in ways potentially contrary to social norms in "student space": "We sit down, we talk, start fooling around, throw stuff - we're *loud* [italics mine]." At lunch in the cafeteria, for example, students stand around, sit, eat, and laugh, as well as throw

things, fight, wrestle, yell, or swear. Students demonstrate "back stage" behaviours in "student space," therefore, that teachers or administrators consider inappropriate in "teacher space."

The instrumental perspective is significant for this study of meaning-making in school spaces. A sense of place emerges for students as they use spaces and they become meaningful. Functionality of space therefore has a role to play in the meaning-making process. Instrumental use of space contributes to sense of place in schools as meaning-making occurs when students associate spaces with particular activities. Areas develop functional meanings and significance based on their use. Students come to associate certain spaces in the hallway or cafeteria for example, with their lunch spot or social gathering place.

Analysis of the instrumental perspective demonstrates student agency to appropriate and use school spaces. "Student spaces" are "spaces of security" for participants as they represent areas in which they can meet friends, relax, and feel comfortable. Students know they have physical spaces to occupy and use in their school day where they are welcome. Acknowledgement of "student space" reinforces, further, "student" identity. Student agency in terms of identification of "student space" is thus purposive action valuable to participants. The instrumental perspective illustrates the ways in which students establish individual and collective securities through the uses and occupancy of school spaces.

Territorial Perspective

The territorial perspective of spatial meaning construction reflects student responses to questions about domination and control in school space. An introduction

revisits forms of territoriality introduced in Chapter Two. The section on collective territoriality divides results in terms of dual processes of claiming and defending space. A presentation of results on the dimensions of individual territoriality concludes this section.

i. Introduction

Creating a sense of place depends, for Martusewicz, on a process of boundary-making as part of a process of meaning-making in space:

> Think of teachers and students and classrooms. I remember that uneasy feeling of arriving at my new classroom each year as an elementary student. The teacher had worked to make it welcoming, but it was not yet a homeplace for me or the others. We had not yet claimed it, marked it as ours, put our stuff on the walls, or heard our names repeated within the space. But within days or perhaps just hours, that room and those people would become a familiar and usually...safe place, and we claimed it...as distinctly ours. (Martusewicz, 2001, p. 33)

The experience of ownership in the secondary school is a focus in this study. Students develop a sense of possessiveness and territoriality at collective and individual levels. Participants' subjective experiences reveal that school spaces are indeed claimed in a variety of ways, and the result of the sense of ownership that accompanies a sense of place in schools is a feeling of safety and belonging.

A sense of territoriality represents a significant part of meaning-making in schools. Students express both individual and collective feelings of ownership in this study. Altman's definition of territoriality is appropriate for this research: "[*Territoriality is*] the personalizing, ownership, and defence of geographic areas" (Altman, 1975, p. 5). Through appropriation and use, students "claim" and "defend" school spaces collectively and individually. The spaces in which participants express a sense of "ownership" reflect

feelings of preference and comfort.

Territoriality in school spaces is symbolically important for students as it contributes to a sense of belonging, turning school spaces into meaningful places. Students acknowledge spatial territoriality at the collective and individual levels. Claimed spaces develop status and power as associated with who occupies them. Some locations are more desirable than others and may be the focus of competition. Sense of ownership and territoriality reflect the power of space and of students' spatial relationships.

Collective territoriality corresponds in this study with Altman's "public territories" as they are temporary, have limited long-term boundary significance, and are accessible to many people (Altman, 1975, p. 144). Goffman's reference to "situational" territories reflecting the "temporary tenancy" of spaces also informs this study (Goffman as cited in Lemert & Branaman, 1997, p. 46). In schools students occupy for limited periods of time "spaces" such as desks, chairs or lockers that they do not really "own." Student claims to specific desks in the classroom or chairs in the cafeteria are an example of what Goffman terms the "the stall" preserve. "The stall" is a preserve Goffman describes as "the well-bounded space to which individuals can lay temporary claim, possession being on an all-or-none basis" (ibid., p. 47). Students demonstrate preferences for certain spots in the cafeteria and desks in classrooms.

The types of territoriality or "ownership" addressed in this study are largely symbolic for students. Individuals do not "own" the desks to which they repeatedly return during class time, nor do they "own" the lockers they personalize and use throughout the school year. Students do not really "own", moreover, the spaces in which

they collectively dwell throughout the school day. Individuals do possess, however, material cultural objects they bring in from outside the school.

Items belonging to students such as clothing, purses, wallets, and backpacks are territories Goffman (1959, p. 47) refers to as "egocentric preserves" as they move with the students through school spaces and tend to be claimed long term (ibid.). The "egocentric preserve" is understood here as the "space" moving with participants and often owned by them. Types of Goffman's "egocentric preserves" include the "the Sheath" preserve or an individual's skin and clothes on the skin as well as the "Possessional Territory" representing personal objects that "can be identified with the self and arrayed around the body such as hats, gloves, and jewellery (ibid., p. 50). Goffman's "egocentric preserve" includes, moreover, "personal space" discussed in a later section on individual territoriality and "use space."

The frustration all students express in crowded hallways is an example of invasion of a preserve Goffman terms "use space" (Goffman as cited in Lemert & Branaman, 1997, p. 49). "Use space" for Goffman is "the territory immediately around or in front of an individual, his claim to which is respected because of apparent instrumental needs" (ibid.). "Use space" refers here to an extension of the personal territory a student requires for some temporary purpose. The space in front of or around an individual as he walks down the hallway is an example of "use space." Groups of people that block students' attempts to walk down the hallways is an example of an invasion of this type of "egocentric" territory.

Student responses reveal the strong significance of territorial encroachments or spatial invasions. The most common forms of spatial "invasion" students describe

correspond with Altman's (1975) "intrusions and violations." These breaches of personal territory are much like trespassing in the sense of physical presence in claimed space as well as "indirect violation of an area" through, for example, excessive noise (Altman, 1975, p. 144). Students claim and defend spaces in schools in face of spatial "invasion" in diverse ways.

Student agency in the development of spatial ownership and territoriality is central to their creation of a sense of security and belonging in schools. Collective territoriality contributes further to collective identity formation. Spatial distributions and sense of ownership preserve group identity and reflect power in schools. In addition to the appropriation and use of spaces, thus, students' domination and control of space contributes to meaning-making in school spaces.

ii. Collective Territoriality

Participants describe significant collective territoriality in school space. A sense of ownership develops for students based on various factors such as age, interest, and relationship. This student clearly identified territories in the school: "Oh yah!! We have the Grade 8s or Grade 9s or whatever they are now, they hang out right by the vending machines so you've got to duck your head down and plow through them." The other student present at the same interview agreed and expanded on this recognition of territories in school space:

> "Yah, that's annoying...and then you've got the kinda 'smart' people over in Smith's hallway over above the library and you got that group kinda on top of the stairs and then those Grade 11s and 12s that are just too cool for everyone in the cafeteria."

These students identified further the exclusionary techniques of groups occupying certain

territories. When asked if groups defended their space one student stated: "I would say that group on the stairs because they are always, like boyfriend-girlfriend, boyfriend-girlfriend, and they are always kissing and stuff." The other student agreed and identified methods of territorial exclusion: "Yah, and in Smith's hallways they usually have like a circle and you can't get inside the circle." Students claim and defend territories in different ways.

a. Claiming Spaces

The ways in which terrain is claimed illustrates student domination and control of space. Claiming of spaces is individual and collective occurring at a variety of scales, from hallways and rooms to specific tables, desks, lockers, and backpacks. A later section in this chapter addresses student sense of individual territoriality. The ways in which participants claim spaces at the collective level can be divided into factors relating to use and to characteristics of social groups.

Students claim school terrain through frequent or repetitive use of space. This student identified how habitual use and the duration of spatial use each day or over time serve to "claim" a location: "Yah, there are territories...the cafeteria is claimed...well they are *always* [italics mine] there. They go there regularly and you just know that *that* [italics mine] spot is taken. I mean you walk by and every single time that group is there." Habitual and routinized appropriation and use contributes, therefore, to the development of a sense of ownership in school space.

Characteristics of social groups also influence the development of collective territoriality. The sense of ownership of specific grade or culture-based groups emerges from the data set. When asked if people claim certain spaces in schools as their own one

participant noted clear collective territoriality:

> "Yah, I'd say so...mostly just the main strip of hallway and down toward the old benches towards the Castle Lobby...A lot of the oriental students are in the Castle Lobby during lunch, and the hallway is Grade 9s and 8s and that whole kind of bench just past the cafeteria and vending machines that is Grade 8s and 9s pretty much. Grade 10s sit up against the wall in a big group pretty much all together talking. Grade 11s and 12s mostly sit in the cafeteria."

Additional questioning about possible territories within the cafeteria revealed the claimed nature of this area: "Yah, the tables...every graduating class sort of sits at the front tables." Age is clearly a factor in territoriality for students. Culture is an additional important influence in sense of ownership and territorial claims in school spaces.

Cultural variations and separations are clearly defined in the territoriality of school spaces. The identification of territoriality among cultural minority groups in the school emerges from the data irrespective of age. Most participants differentiate "Canadian" students, in contrast, by age and grade segregation. Students identify, for example, spaces "claimed" by Spanish students, Vietnamese, and Korean students at lunch. These cultural divisions in school territoriality may create a sense of inclusion or belonging among culture groups. A sense of alienation or exclusion from the school as a whole may result, however, for some students. The spatiality of students in Cordova Secondary School illustrates the cultural diversity and multiplicity of student cultures and social affiliations that co-exist.

Social groups demonstrate power as they occupy and "claim" space in schools. Students associate "claimed" spaces or territories, further, with a sense of "status" or "stigma" based on the social group occupying the space. At Cordova Secondary School participants consider the cafeteria a central space of power and associate it with status

and "popularity." Students of different social groups frequently identify the power and status of the cafeteria crowd. One student described this perceived autonomy: "...there's those stupid preppies in the cafeteria...I mean, they just *sit* [italics mine] there. They don't *allow* [italics mine] you in...they just tell you to leave...I don't know...I wouldn't want to eat there anyway." This student clearly identified the cafeteria as claimed space from which she is excluded. Another student explained why she avoids the cafeteria:

> "The cafeteria is just too crowded for us...my friends, like, we came to the school from another school and we all just stick together. In the cafeteria there are just too many people that we don't like...it's hard to explain, but it's like they are not the kind of people we like to hang around. It's mostly the 'trendy' or 'popular' groups, you know? If I sat at their table they probably would...even though it's not just the 'popular' or 'trendy' people down there, it's just that they kind of have the *power* [italics mine] in the cafeteria."

Participant responses demonstrate the perceptions of power and status associated with the cafeteria and the groups of students claiming this space as their territory. The students describe, further, the unique power structure within the cafeteria.

The cafeteria is doubly "powered" as *within* the cafeteria there are positions of power and prestige. The space of most "power" and "status" in the whole school appears to be at the top table in the cafeteria. Students "just know" and accept the unwritten rule that the table most central and closest to the main hallway is for Grade 12 students. A student considering the cafeteria his territory explained the powered nature within the space: "In the cafeteria every grade has certain tables...you move up every year. Different grades sit in different areas and Grade 12s sit at the very front where the entrance is." When asked further about how his group would react to intrusions into this space the student responded: "We'd make them move...we'd be like 'hey you'...or we'd

pretty much sit around them and they'd move themselves."

A participant that does not belong to the cafeteria group identified, similarly, how students in different grades claim territories within the cafeteria:

> "They just go there and hang out there. Like since Grade 8 I've noticed that Grade 12s hang out at those two tables up at the front of the cafeteria...at the top...that is just the way it works. I don't know why, it is just the way it is. Grade 8s are way back and then Grade 9s are up one table and then Grade 10s up, up, up... The Grade 8s are just like 'oh, that is where the Grade 12s sit' and like now we are in Grade 12 we can sit *everywhere* [italics mine]."

The cafeteria as a whole represents territory for social groups as do smaller spaces within it. A sense of "turf" in school, finally, is a much stronger sense of territoriality where boundaries are clearer and rules for admittance or exclusion more clearly defined. There is a strong connection for students between the cafeteria and "turf" in the school. The cafeteria is clearly a highly powered space with a multitude of meanings.

Grade 12 students occupy a certain "status" position in the cafeteria at the front table. This sense of superiority as Grade 12 students is evident in the claiming of spaces. When asked if he would consider the front table the territory of his social group one participant answered: "Yah. We actually talk about that...as Grade 12 students now it's just like this is *our* [emphasis mine] table so don't...like we have *our* [italics mine] tables right there at the front of the cafeteria and you *don't* [italics mine] sit there." In response to further questioning about how they would react to territorial invasion the student declared: "We'd just kind of push them off...if it is a Grade 8 then with Grade 12s they kind of get intimidated and get up and so we get our table back." The time participants have spent at Cordova Secondary School contributes to a sense of increased importance and power to claim spaces. One student emphasized his perception of power when asked

how he dealt with crowding in the hallways: "I pretty much just push them out of my way...you can't stop in my hallway, I'm in Grade 12, it's mine now!" Students suggest being in Grade 12 gives them autonomy in the school.

Student responses are multiple and diverse reflecting a spectrum of student cultures at Cordova Secondary School. The thread uniting a seemingly disconnected data set is student recognition of "student spaces." Senses of ownership and territoriality over collective student territories exclude "teacher spaces" and teachers. No social groups "claimed" areas previously identified as "teacher spaces." The sense of ownership that develops in "student spaces" reinforces the separation between worlds of students and teachers in schools. The narratives reveal, further, perceptions of the spatiality of teacher control and power in school spaces. Students acknowledge teacher authority, but limit it to specific "teacher" spaces and times.

b. Defending Space

Students defend claimed territories in various ways. Defence of space illustrates the power students have to influence other student action and experience in space. Students have the power to control how areas are appropriated and used. The social group claiming the cafeteria, for example, has the power to determine who appropriates certain positions in the cafeteria. Once collective groups claim spaces they frequently defend them in a diversity of ways.

The most common forms of defence of space emerging from the data are methods of social exclusion. This involves ignoring others or responding negatively to attempts at social interaction. One student identified an area in the upper hallway as the space of her social group: "Yup, it's our little space [*indicating*] no one else's." She indicated the

ways, moreover, in which they defend "their" space:

> "If people were to sit with us, like if it were some of our other friends it would be fine, like the more the merrier, but if they sat with us and we didn't know them, we would be kind of like, 'why are you sitting with us?' Yah, we'd probably be kind of snobby...depending on who they were. If they just sat down beside us, then we can be kind of touchy, you know? We get very easily annoyed by other people, so, we'd probably be kind of annoyed by that. Especially if they were loud."

Defence of space here involves methods of intimidation and negative response to interaction: "We'd probably make a lot of really loud jokes or just comments to each other loud enough so that they could hear, you know? I'm really immature that way." Methods of intimidation are also non-verbal.

The "look" or prolonged stare appears to be the most common, non-violent means by which students make others feel uncomfortable in "claimed" territory. Making the spatial intruder uncomfortable is a means of defending space. Students also identify vandalism or graffiti as a way to defend school spaces. Students defend areas, finally, through violent acts including acts of intimidation such as harassment, verbal threats, pushing, and throwing objects.

The students who did not identify their own group territory did not identify defence of space and suggested they would occupy different locations if necessary. Not all students or student groups are attached therefore to specific spaces in the school. These students are also less exclusionary suggesting they will "hang out" with anyone. The data indicates, further, identification of territoriality, lastly, does not necessarily correspond with a strong sense of "defence" of space and is not always exclusionary.

The role of time in the sense of ownership identified at collective and individual levels is two-fold. The meanings of spaces, first, change in time and so do, therefore, the

senses of ownership attached to spaces at specific times. The section in the next chapter on "Culture Space" describes the significance and identification of time-spaces and their meanings for students. At lunch, for example, some students describe a sense of ownership in the cafeteria whereas before school and during spares they transfer this sense of "ownership" to the Castle Lobby. At lunch the Castle Lobby becomes the "territory" of International Students while "Canadian" students claim the cafeteria. Participants occupy and use school terrains, thus, differently throughout the school day. Meanings of spaces change with function and time.

Over time, secondly, the accumulation of sense of territoriality students construct in school space results in a strong sense of "ownership" to the school as a whole. By the time students reach Grade 12, and especially those students who have attended Cordova Secondary School since Grade 8, they feel the school is "theirs" and that they are not just students, but *Cordova Secondary School* students. Sense of place is time-deepened for students in this study.

iii. Individual Territoriality

As "nonowners for short periods" it is probable that student sense of individual territoriality is less prevalent than collective social territoriality (Sommer, 1969, p. 10). Students do not physically "own" school spaces and their occupation of areas is temporary each school day. Student narratives reveal while senses of individual territoriality are less developed than collective levels in school spaces, students do identify varying degrees of individual ownership. Multiple senses of individual territoriality exist and students claim and defend personal terrains in the same way as collective spaces. Participants defend, similarly, individual territories when infringed

upon.

Identified individual territories include school lockers, certain desks, seats, and even pillows in the drama room. Lockers represent the most prevalent "individual" territory. Students expressing a strong sense of territoriality personalize their lockers. Personalization of lockers by students is a means of claiming space. Participants claiming lockers as individual territory personalized them more frequently when the locker area corresponded with students' social area or comfort zone. Other participants, in contrast, do not associate their lockers with individual territory and do not personalize them. Students consider personal items such as backpacks, purses, and clothing "individual" territories. They describe, finally, areas of individual security as "their" space. This sense of ownership for the spaces in which they feel the most comfortable corresponds strongly with social spaces in which students feel a sense of belonging.

The commonality connecting the diverse attributions of individual territoriality is student emphasis on being alone. The space individual students select for "alone" time depends on their preferences and the subjective meanings spaces hold for them. Participants identify using the library, art room, or far corner of any classroom for solitude. Students do not need to be physically "alone" in school space, however, to create individual territory. The act of doing an individual activity creates individual space. One participant, for example, described using a computer in the library as a means to be "alone."

The description of individual territoriality is limited in the data as compared to identification of collective territoriality. Students have symbolic senses of ownership as they are only temporary users of school space and do not permanently lay claim to areas.

Individual territoriality is, nevertheless, an important component of a sense of belonging and meaning-making in schools. Students' ability to create individual space within the populated walls of the school is significant. They actively create their "own" spaces, fulfilling their needs for individual spaces and individual identity formation. Students demonstrate agency allowing them to meet their individual spatial needs in schools. Constructs of personal space, proxemics, and crowding, represent important dimensions of individual ownership and spatial use.

a. Personal Space

All students identify either collective or individual ownership in school spaces. The construct of "personal space" is both the "portable territory" surrounding an individual, as well as the processes employed by individuals to secure the "invisible boundaries" surrounding them (Sommer, 1969, p. 26). Most students identify, further, some sense of personal space in school as well as invasions of that space.

The spatial invasions students identify at the personal level are influenced both by space and people. Altman (1975, p. 66) identifies three categories of factors affected by or affecting personal space. Altman's "situational factors" include settings in which spatial layout or levels of formality can affect personal space (Altman, 1975, p. 66). Students identify classrooms as sites of more frequent invasion into personal space. Students express a stronger sense of personal space in the formal classroom setting and less at break time with friends in "student spaces." Students feel, moreover, other students copying their work is an invasion of personal space, as is the asking of personal questions and discussion of private issues in some classes. Hallways, further, are frequently identified by students as spaces in which they feel a sense of invasion of

"personal space." One student emphasized the encroachments of personal space in school corridors: "When you're getting pushed down the hallway, it's like, um can I walk on my own please? That's when I don't like it...That when you notice that the school is very overpopulated."

People, secondly, influence how students define individual distance/personal space and whether or not they feel their space has been invaded. Student perceptions of personal space invasion depend largely on the identity of the "invader" and his/her relationship to the student. "Individual factors" such as age, gender, and culture also influence a student's sense of individual space (Altman, 1975, p. 66). In this study more girls than boys identified a sense of personal space.

Altman's third category called "interpersonal factors," finally, contains the most prevalent factors affecting personal space in this study. These factors reflect how the positive or negative feelings an individual has towards someone can affect their sense of personal space (ibid.). Altman illustrates that personal space becomes less important when people are familiar or when there is a sense of attraction or cohesion (Altman, 1975, p. 80). All students in this study demonstrate that they have much less sense of invasion of personal space amongst friends. Teachers in general are more likely to invade students' senses of personal space than another student or friend. Participants feel, moreover, some teachers with whom they feel the most comfortable and with whom they have a positive relationship are less likely to invade their personal space than those teachers with whom they have conflict.

b. Proxemics

Proxemics is a nonverbal form of communication and refers to the "study of the

ways in which humans structure and use space" (Watson, 1970, p. 16). The proxemic behaviours students employ to structure the spaces around them are significant for this study. Watson (1970, p. 33) describes the nonverbal mechanisms students use to regulate the spacing between themselves and others including body position, eye contact, touching, and volume of voice. Students in this study express having a more open body position, more eye contact and touching with friends than with strangers or teachers.

Hall (1966) describes the ways in which individuals use "semi-fixed feature" or "informal space" to structure their surroundings. Manipulation of "semi-fixed feature" space involves use of movable parts of the environment to regulate personal spaces. The use of "informal space" refers to the mechanisms mentioned above that individuals use in order to regulate and adjust their individual "spaces" and the spacing between themselves and others.

Students employ a variety of proxemic behaviours to assure the maintenance of personal spaces. These behaviours emerge as a result of perceived spatial invasions. The majority of students state they would move if they felt their space was being invaded. Others describe how they would adjust their bodily position to create more space or tell the individual or individuals invading their space to move away. Students with the strongest sense of personal space suggest that they would push or yell in some circumstances in order to re-establish a comfortable level of individual territory. The situations in which students suggest pushing or yelling are those situations students define as crowded.

c. Crowding

Altman defines "crowding" as when a desired level of privacy falls short of an

achieved level or as "a breakdown in privacy regulation" (Altman, 1975, p. 8). Individuals, for Altman, react to a sense of crowding by trying to increase their personal space distance through nonverbal and verbal behaviours (ibid.). Verbal behaviours involve what individuals say and how they use pitch, tone, and volume (ibid.). Non-verbal behaviours include proxemics as discussed previously.

Students often said they feel crowded in school spaces at certain times. The majority of students identify the hallways at the transitional time between classes as when they most feel a sense of crowding. Participants' attempts to get to specific destinations in the school are frustrated by crowded hallways. Crowding in the hallway and the sense of spatial invasion corresponds with Goffman's (1959) "use space." The students feel others invade the space they need directly in front of them in the hallway thereby limiting their movement. Participants also describe a sense of "crowding" in the classroom setting when teachers check work or other students copy.

When asked about a sense of "crowding" one student described his frustrations in the hallways: "Yah, sometimes when I'm under a lot of pressure like if I have two tests...and you try to walk as fast as you can in the halls or you are trying to move and you can't and then you get frustrated." The same student associated "crowded" in the classroom with difficult work: "Sometimes...it is just so frustrating when you don't get it and you're just like 'move! I need my space!'...I need three desks sometimes. It feels like you need all your stuff around." "Crowding" is thus defined in multiple ways by students and includes feelings of stress and frustration.

It is interesting to note that depending on the individual and the space, areas may or may not be viewed as "crowded." Students that do not use the cafeteria, for example,

refer to it as "crowded" and undesirable. Participants that use the cafeteria with their friends, in contrast, do not consider it crowded. Student narratives reveal the diversity of spatial meanings.

While the majority of students express discomfort with "crowding" in certain spaces, they are generally accepting. All students recognize the sense of "crowding" they feel is temporary, associated with certain spaces at specific times. Students demonstrate agency by avoiding the spaces in which they feel crowded. It is important to consider the possible effects on learning of increasing numbers of students in classrooms. Participants find "crowding" negative and thus it should be avoided in "learning spaces." A lack of "privacy" is also evident in student perceptions of school space.

d. Privacy

The role of "choice" and student agency in the achievement of "privacy" is important in this study. Altman (1975, p. 6) argues privacy is a dynamic process of regulating access to self-boundary. "Privacy" involves, therefore, an element of control. Students illustrate the freedom they have to choose to pursue interaction with others and the ability to regulate their personal boundaries in spacing with others. "Privacy" in school spaces emerges as achievable and multiple. Achievement of "privacy" is directly linked to student agency in schools. Participants struggle for it and act purposively to create private space. The ways students create private space and achieve "privacy" is multiple as are its uses and importance.

The meaning of "privacy" for participants can be understood in terms of function. This research reflects Altman's four main functions of privacy: "personal autonomy, emotional release, self-evaluation, and limited and protected communication" (ibid., p.

19). In the schooling context, these four functions of privacy are pertinent to the multiple meanings of private spaces and their significance for students. "Personal autonomy" refers to an individual's "self worth, self-independence, and self identity" (ibid.) This study reveals student perceptions of privacy in relation to individual identity formation and maintenance.

"Emotional release", secondly, refers to the ability to be "back stage" and to relax from certain roles (ibid.). Student desire for and defence of "student space" in schools reflects this function of privacy. The association, furthermore, of "student space" as "private" in the sense of "off-limits" to teachers illustrates this function of privacy. Students need to have areas in which they can relax. They need be aware, further, that such "space" exists to balance the times in which they are "front stage" in "teacher space" and must conform to certain roles.

Student desire for private space represents time they need to reflect and think. Altman's "self-evaluation" function of privacy as "integrating experiences and plans for future action" is applicable to this research (Altman, 1975, p. 19). Student reference, finally, to the privacy of communication or "shared confidences" with counsellors or a trusted teacher corresponds with Altman's fourth function of privacy as "limited and protected communication" (ibid). "Privacy" is clearly significant for students in its multiple functions.

Students identify a lack of "privacy" in school spaces. One student feels she does not have "a single drop" of privacy. The existence of so many other people and rules directing behaviour limits privacy. Participants suggest privacy is even less for those students that are "bad" as they must submit to searches of their private spaces. Students

remain accepting of this perceived lack of "privacy" nonetheless. The majority of students expressing a lack of "privacy" in school space described simultaneously, however, that some level of "privacy" is achievable through student agential choice or action.

Students explain how they can go somewhere in school space for "privacy." Others can create "privacy" or increase their individual space while wearing a walkman. Students describe, finally, a means to achieve "privacy" as withdrawal into their own thoughts or simply being quiet. Private space is thus achievable by students through various forms of withdrawal. Space becomes a place of solace for students through the mechanisms they employ to achieve privacy.

The significance of students' attitudes toward privacy and perception of it as a choice and as achievable in school space illustrates how the creation of "privacy" functions to provide individual security for students. The existence of individual securities such as the possibility of "privacy" is an ideational "space of security" as it contributes to students' comfort levels in school and neutralizes senses of crowding and discomfort. This "space of security" supports students and may indirectly support learning.

The senses of ownership students construct in school spaces are significant for processes of meaning-making in schools. Participant responses indicate clearly that students experience ownership on multiple levels. Students identify a hierarchy of ownerships in school spaces as individuals, as students, as "Grads", as members of diverse social groups, and as students at Cordova Secondary School collectively. These multiple forms of ownership in school spaces represent physical and ideational "spaces of

security" for students, facilitating the fulfillment of needs for safety and belonging. Ownership represents the connectedness students feel to school spaces, to the process and people they contain, and are a significant part of sense of place in schools. Relationships to school terrain contribute, further, to creation of emotional "spaces of security."

Sentimental and Emotional Perspective

This perspective addresses students' feelings in relation to lived school spaces. A discussion on existential spaces identifies the multiple emotional attachments students describe. A section on spatial memories, lastly, highlights results on the role of memory in spatial meaning construction.

i. Existential Spaces

The existential spaces in which students *live* their school experiences illustrate the emotive attributes of sense of place in school space. The typical encounters and experiences that occur in school spaces come to define existential space for students. Lived or existential space, further, has collective as well as individual meanings. The emotional attributions students make in relation to localities are significant for understanding how meaning-making in schools may influence learning. Existential spaces contribute to students' construction of "spaces of security."

Emotional attributions, further, contribute to the formation of identity in school spaces and the sense of connectedness that emerges through shared spatial meanings. Student responses reveal the numerous ways in which students attach emotional attributions to spaces in schools. The meanings of spaces to students are diverse and dynamic including positive spaces of comfort, stimulation, and play, and negative spaces of stress, fear, and boredom.

a. Spaces of Comfort

Students identify "comfort" zones in schools in a variety of ways. Some participants consider the actual physical comfort of areas that have couches and soft chairs. They emphasize the furnishings typically found at home as a source of comfort in school space. Others consider the comfort that comes from the feeling of an area as illustrated by this student's description of the cafeteria: "It's a meeting place. It's like a family room kinda thing." The "comfort zones" students identify in Cordova Secondary School correspond with the areas they identify as "student spaces." The school represents a place, therefore, of both recreation and work for students.

In areas of recreation, students value features of home. These "comfort zones" balance the unease, stress even fear students associate with spaces of work and evaluation in schools. Through comfort zones students dissipate the negative influence of associations of school with work and evaluation. They find a sort of sanctuary in spaces in which they feel "at home." Subjective spatial meanings help resolve some of the students' spatial concerns.

The elements, therefore, students associate with "student space" such as fewer rules and supervision, and more freedom and student autonomy, contribute to a sense of comfort for students. The "student spaces" participants most associate with comfort are the familiar spaces they appropriate and use individually and collectively. Spaces in which participants are socially included are significant for comfort as indicated by one student's response when asked to identify her "comfort zone" in school: "Ah, since Grade 8 the cafeteria because most of my friends are there." The importance of friends for a sense of comfort is clear. When asked why she associated the cafeteria with

comfort this student replied: "I don't know if there is really anything to like, it is just that everyone is there." The combination of social identity in space results in the cafeteria being a comfort zone for this participant.

"Comfort zones" in classes are associated with familiarity of the teacher. A student emphasized the important role played by the teacher: "...it is because of the teacher, I have three of his classes and so that is why I feel more comfortable and familiar...I am, you know, an English Second Language speaker and with him I learn lots of things." Feelings of "comfort" in classes correspond, thus, with a positive relationship between student and teacher.

The strengths or skills of an individual, finally, influence how students feel about school spaces. This student identified a space of comfort as one in which he was skilled or interested in the subject: "I'd say I'm most comfortable in the weight room. Yah, it has music and it is something I like to do. I'm good at it." Comfort is linked therefore to interest and skill.

Movement in school space provides a source of comfort for some students. One student describes his route through school space: "Basically everywhere...we circle through the science hallway and down through the cafeteria and outside through the drama hallway. We do that a couple of times and when we get bored we turn around and go the other way." A sense of "comfort" through movement may be due to students feeling comfortable in the entire school or, conversely, feeling uncomfortable in any one spot.

Spaces of "comfort" for students are meaningful as they represent sources of stability. "Comfort zones" corresponding with student areas represent "spaces of

security" for participants when they face the discomfort of other school terrain. The comfort students feel in these locations help them neutralize the negative emotions they feel in spaces of stress and fear.

b. Spaces of Stress and Fear

Spaces of stress and fear were originally considered different existential spaces in this research. Students, however, overwhelmingly referred to stress and fear interchangeably as they described spaces in which they feel the most uncomfortable in schools. The sense of fear participants express is symbolic. It represents apprehension and uncertainty. Stress, similarly refers to mental pressure and anxiety. Spaces of stress and fear refer to any negative or uncomfortable spaces for students in schools. The association of school as a place of work and evaluation is largely the source of fear. Participants identify fear, further, in social contexts in school space.

The diverse expressions of stress and fear can be categorized into interrelated dimensions of subject, time, and space. Students associate challenging academic school subjects in which they struggle and feel frustrated with spaces of stress. One participant explained how classroom spaces come to be associated with "negative" space when they have been the location of subjects they find frustrating, difficult, or boring:

> "I always consider the gym an uncomfortable spot for me just because I can't play sports and I always feel like, like an idiot if I lost the basketball or if I kicked the basketball, like the soccer ball one time bounced off me and went right into my own net."

Another student emphasized the link between school subjects and emotions of fear and unease: "I guess for me I've always felt uncomfortable with the hallway in the science wing because I am so dumb at science. I've failed it, like, I don't even know how many

times...That's why those spots are not on our route around the school!" These participants "fear" the spaces they associate with their weaknesses or lack of skills. The student above indicated further, he avoids these spaces of anxiety.

Areas associated with "work" in general such as classrooms and the library are thus considered stressful. Unfamiliar spaces are further sources of "fear." This student explained her fear of unfamiliar terrain: "I don't like going down by and past the cafeteria because I don't know where I'm going and I'm very much outside of my comfort zone. I feel very outside of my comfort zone. Unwanted, it's just kind of unwanted territory. You want to back right up."

Time of the year and time spent in school space contributes furthermore to identification of spaces as locations of stress and fear. Participants expressed, for example, more feelings of stress and fear in school spaces as Grade 12 students and near examination times than in other years and other times of the school year. Space as process and in process in time, moreover, affects the meanings of school terrain. Familiarity of space over time reduces feelings of fear. One student described the dynamic nature of spatial meanings as the cafeteria, a location she once feared, is now comfortable:

> "I never used to sit in the cafeteria - I used to always sit in the Castle Lobby on the floor with my friends. We used to be too scared to go into the cafeteria. We didn't know anyone, and then, we kind of started communicating more with people and then...one day we went in there and sat down. At first it was intimidating because you see the group of people, you don't know them and so who am I really going to talk to? I'll look like a loser sitting in there, but yah, now the cafeteria is just fine for us."

With time, thus, unfamiliar spaces become familiar to students and are no longer feared. Meanings of spaces are dynamic. Students explain how all school spaces are fearful

upon first arrival at the school. This data suggests new students face tremendous amounts of uncertainty and fear in unfamiliar areas. Discomfort and anxiety diminishes, however, as familiarity increases.

Students describe portables as spaces of stress and fear. This participant senses their temporary nature and associates them with negative feelings of exclusion:

> "...oh yah, portable, I really *really* [italics mine] hate portables. They're cold...uncomfortable... I just hate them. It can be any class too. Any class I've had in there I haven't liked. Like I had English in there once and English is one of my favourite subjects and I like the teacher and everything but I hated being in there."

Students also consider spatial territories of other social groups stressful. This participant associates certain areas, for example, with spaces in which she may be ridiculed: "I used to be scared when I walked by the cafeteria area because everyone, like the guys stand on the wall and sometimes they trip you and stuff like that." Locations of social conflict also contribute to a sense of anxiety or stress. Disciplinary spaces, finally, are zones of fear for students whether it be the classroom of a strict teacher or the administrative offices.

The emotive attributions of negative spaces such as spaces of stress and fear are countered in schools by the positive spaces of comfort. These "spaces of security" for students are necessary to meet their safety and belonging needs in schools. "Spaces of security" are created through agential student activity in order to combat and negate spaces of stress and fear. Through individual and collective senses of ownership and identity formation students create physical, ideational, and emotional "spaces of security."

The knowledge of the existence of multiple sources of comfort in schools is

essential for students to achieve physical and psychological safety in schools. The safety that comes from the subjective experience of space and the meanings students attach to place provide balance for students. "Spaces of security" may serve as a support system for learning in conjunction with the senses of belonging and sense of place from which they emerge. They allow for and are a prerequisite for effective teaching and learning. The sense of place students develop in schools involves further, the degree of freedom they feel. This sense of freedom is examined in terms of "open" and "closed" space in this study.

c. "Open" and "Closed" Spaces

Students conceptualize the idea of "open" and "closed" spaces in school in multiple ways. "Open" spaces associated with spaciousness and freedom are preferred by participants over "closed" spaces of "crowding" and control. Students' sense of comfort in this investigation is linked to "open" spaces whereas unease corresponds with spaces viewed as "closed."

"Closed" spaces participants identify overlap with spaces of fear and stress associated with certain school subjects. This student described "closed" spaces, for example, as those in which there is pressure to succeed and expectations of students are high: "I feel 'closed in' in the science classes. Like I just don't like academic classes and so in science class where teachers expect you to do all of your work and you feel like the teacher is just always around." "Harder" classes are frequently associated with "closed" spaces as are classes in which the teaching style is regimented or atmosphere strict.

Students associate, further, any spaces that have more procedure, routine, or work, with "closed" space. Negative relationships between students in the same class or

between students and teachers can also render space "closed." Students associate, finally, "closed" spaces with classes in which "personal space" is invaded through the discussion of personal issues.

Students also consider "closed" spaces that are crowded due to people or physical spatial attributes. At times of peak movement students describe areas such as the cafeteria and hallways as crowded and "closed." "Closed" corresponds moreover with spaces that are physically small. Portables are described as closed irrespective of subject. The spaces students view as "open" balance the discomfort they feel in "closed" spaces in schools.

In contrast to "closed" spaces, students like "open" spaces. "Open" classrooms are classes and subjects in which they are skilled and that they enjoy. "Easier" classes are viewed as more "open" than more difficult classes. In "open" spaces further, students describe more movement. Classes in which participants have more freedom to eat, drink, wear hats, or listen to walkmans are considered "open" space as are classroom spaces in which creativity is encouraged. This student explained the sense of freedom she feels through freedom of expression:

> "Journalism class...it's very open. You're allowed to be open, you're allowed to be creative, you're allowed to do *what you want* [italics mine]. Well not really in that sense, but you can write what you want, you can talk about the topics that you want to talk about and you're praised for it because you're being creative."

In "open" classrooms students can speak more openly. Another participant clarified her perceptions of "open" school space in several ways:

> "More concretely the 'open' space would be the Castle Lobby and library for obvious reasons of their structure, high ceilings and generally bright environment. But 'open' for me is also my English class because I speak

my mind there a lot."

A positive relationship, finally between the student and teacher and where the teacher is viewed as "nice" or "friendly" results in a sense of "open" space.

The locations in the school with the most physical space are also viewed as "open" as illustrated in the previous citation. Large windows in spaces, similarly, contribute significantly to views on spaces as "open" as illustrated by the following student response: "Ms. D's room is the best and so is McLeod's because they are so open. They have carpet and lots of huge windows. I hate the other rooms and the science rooms too." Another participant described the impact of windows in particular: "The big windows make it feel so open." Classrooms in which the doors are left ajar throughout the class, finally, are viewed as more "open."

The most significant distinction between "open" and "closed" spaces is again the distinction between "student space" and "teacher space". "Open," like "student space", implies less restriction and more freedom to relax as if one was "back stage." "Open" space correlates further with achievement, enjoyment, and comfort. "Closed" space corresponds with the sense of control and limitation students associate with "teacher space."

d. "Close" and "Far" in School Space

Students were asked to identify the spaces they considered the "heart" of the school. Participants defined these spaces as those areas that are the most "fun", have the most people, and the most activity or action. The "heart" of the school corresponds closely with "student spaces" most appropriated and used at Cordova Secondary School such as the cafeteria and Castle lobby. The meaning of the "heart" or centre of the school

changes, however, at different times of the day.

When asked the location of the "heart" of the school one student asked, "When?" Time affects students' spatial meanings. She explained: "Well at lunch it is the cafeteria of course. Other than that I would say the Castle Lobby or around the Counselling Office." In response to the same question another participant stated: "I would say the heart is around the library and the Castle Lobby. All the time." The "heart" of the school is thus dynamic and changes throughout the day. Students' subjective meanings in school spaces, further, result in a multiplicity of definitions of the "heart." The centre for most participants corresponds with the spaces in which they spend most time and which they identify collectively. "Close" and "far" in school space varies further, based on what students define as the school centre.

The difference between "close" and "far" is based frequently on terms of use and appropriation. "Close" spaces are frequently used and are familiar to students as this participant explained: "I'd say the drama room is close because I spend so much time there. And 'far' the science wing because I don't have classes there this year." The areas students identify as "close" are also those spaces most physically close in distance to students' lockers and classes.

"Close" areas may overlap with a student's favourite class as indicated by this participant's response to a question about what he considered "close" and "far" in the school: "I guess 'close' would be upstairs and 'far' would probably be the science wing. That seems 'far.' Even though it's not, like I mean the art rooms are farther but they just don't seem that far away." The student explained further that a sense of comfort in space contributes to sense of "close":

> "It's close for me probably because I don't mind going down there. I love art. I like walking down there in the way that I guess my destination is a nice place to go to. Whereas in the science hallway I don't want to go there and so it just seems farther."

What students consider individual or collective territory, further, is considered "close." "Close" spaces are thus comfortable, familiar, and socially welcoming for students.

"Far" spaces in schools are the unfamiliar spaces students do not experience on a daily basis. Participants consider these areas physically distant, inconvenient, and uncomfortable. The disliked spaces such as portables and certain classes are considered "far." "Far" spaces in schools are the spaces students associate with exclusion. Identification of what students consider "close" and "far" emphasizes the meanings and attachments students construct in school spaces. The multiplicity of meanings is emphasized, further, by the classification of some spaces as "close" for some students and "far" for others. Students have their own unique comfort zones and meaningful spaces in schools that allow them to balance fear and stress or negative feelings with positive experiences and comfort.

e. Spaces of Boredom and Stimulation

Spaces of disinterest or interest for students can be classified along factors of topic, teacher, and individual preference. The classroom is frequently identified as a space of boredom for students that do not like the particular topic. Students associate the subjects in which they are skilled or enjoy, conversely, with stimulation. Locations, similarly, in which students are highly controlled and denied creativity or agency such as in a strict classroom environment, are considered spaces of boredom for students. Students view the spaces that allow more movement or creativity as stimulating.

The teacher in different areas can influence the associations students make to spaces. The teacher factor can result, therefore, in the student feeling the space is boring or stimulating. Students' interests influence greatly the associations they make and the meanings they construct in spaces. Subjects in which students excel and are interested are spaces of stimulation whereas subjects in which they are not interested or are not skilled are considered boring. Boredom in space, finally, is associated with a lack of action or times where students have nothing to do such as spares. Like spaces of "comfort" balanced by spaces of "fear", the areas students consider boring are balanced by those they find stimulating. Without spaces of stimulation, students would not enjoy their time at school and would not be motivated to come each day.

f. Spaces of Play and Leisure

The locations students predominantly associate with play overlap with spaces of "comfort" and "student space." "Student spaces" such as the hallways near their lockers or the cafeteria, in contrast to "teacher spaces", are the zones with which students associate leisure activity. These social areas in which students meet and identify collectively are spaces of leisure or "back stage" time. This student only associated "easier" classes with areas of "play": "I associate easier classes like drama or art with 'play' because you get to be more artistic. You get to express yourself more there." Participants associated terrains of greater movement, similarly, such as the gymnasium with play. Classrooms, thus, are only considered spaces of "play" when students have greater freedoms to express themselves.

Participants need to know there are areas in school in which they can relax and have "leisure" time. In times of stress or fear, knowledge of the existence of spaces of

play is comforting. The existence of existential spaces of play and leisure represent "spaces of security" for students in schools.

g. Commonalities

The data set reveals that existential meanings in school spaces are incredibly diverse. Commonalities exist nevertheless in terms of what students like and dislike. Students prefer areas that are convenient to them. They like, further, spaces of social inclusion that their friends appropriate and use. Students choose terrain they perceive to be "open" in the sense of less crowded, less controlled, and more free. These locations are physically and intellectually comfortable for students. The mental comfort associated with "back stage" time or being in a space in which one is skilled increases student confidence in "learning space." This student is skilled in computers and enjoys that location: "InfoTech is good space because it is not too hard. I feel like I get it." Student aptitude and preference contributes, therefore, to positive spatial meaning construction.

Spaces students do not like and generally do not choose to appropriate those areas that are perceived as inconvenient or "far." Portable classrooms, for example, are considered "far" and are disliked by students. Participants do not like spaces in which people are unfamiliar and they face social exclusion. Spaces perceived as crowded, loud, and physically "closed", further, are disliked. Students avoid, finally, the spaces they perceive as controlled or observed by teachers as they are disliked and make participants uncomfortable.

The existential spaces students describe as "open", comfortable, and "close" in schools are overwhelmingly what participants consider "student spaces." Students perceive these spaces as low stress, low surveillance, and more "free." A balance is

needed between feelings of stress and calm, fear and comfort, subordination and power. Recognition of both "student space" and the comfort and sense of autonomy participants gain from it are therefore significant. The balance is disrupted when students lose their agential power in "student space" by impositions of control or when they are constrained in their ability to claim and defend "student space." Students' ability to meet their safety and belonging needs in schools is thus jeopardized.

The data indicates that more than the physical space in schools alone factors of topic, teacher, activity, and time influence how students feel about and experience locations. Meanings of different spaces to different individuals are therefore blurred due to the varying influences affecting the individual and the experience of the area. Students' relationships in schools with other students, with teachers, and with spaces, influence their spatial interactions and experiences. The multiplicity of meaning-making in school space can not be over emphasized as it is within diversity that students construct "spaces of security" that facilitate their learning in schools.

ii. Spatial Memories

The memories students have in school spaces contribute to senses of place in schools. Places, for Seamon and Mugerauer (2000) are "time-deepened and memory qualified" (p. 26). Students describe both positive and negative memories in school spaces that contribute to processes of meaning-making. One student describes his accumulation of memories in Cordova Secondary School space: "Oh yah. I've eaten lunch in a different area in school every year so every time I walk by an old area old memories come back to me." Table 4.1 summarizes the sources of both positive and negative memories for students in school spaces.

Memories in school terrain contribute significantly to senses of place and emotive attributions participants construct in schools. Positive or fond memories students identify have long-lasting effects and contribute to individual and collective identity. The majority of participants hold positive memories and no negative memories while some have negative memories and no positive memories. Other students consider themselves "neutral" with neither positive nor negative memories to share.

Table 4.1 Sources of Spatial Memories

Positive Spatial Memories	Negative Spatial Memories
Spaces of favourite courses/topics; where skilled and confident	Spaces of disliked courses/topics; where frustrated and unsuccessful; where conflict with teacher
Spaces associated with specific funny or embarrassing events	Spaces of ridicule, humiliation, or punishment
Spaces of social inclusion; spaces associated with participation in school functions	Spaces of social exclusion
Spaces of comfort	Spaces of discomfort; the unfamiliar
Spaces where made/meet friends	Spaces of social conflict
Spaces associated with boy/girlfriends	Spaces of lost love/romance
Spaces of fun	Spaces of boredom

Memories that are positive serve as emotional "spaces of security" for students. Shared positive and negative memories contribute, furthermore, to collective identities in school spaces. Shared negative memories result in some cases in a sort of "space of security" for students due to the commonality of experience. As sources of "spaces of security" that are developed and built over time, memories contribute to senses of place and contribute significantly to a sense of connectedness to school space.

This investigation illustrates the diversity of students' subjective meanings in school spaces. Construction of meaning occurs in multiple ways. Chapter Five present results on processes of meaning-making and examines, further, student agency and identity formation in terms of how these elements of sense of place contribute to the construction of "spaces of security."

CHAPTER FIVE - RESULTS: MEANING-MAKING, AGENCY, AND IDENTITY

The results in this chapter consider the processes of meaning construction revealed in the data. "Culture space", routine, and "place ballet" as introduced in Chapter Two emerge as significant for spatial meaning construction in school. The section on contributions of student agency for meaning looks at multiple acts of student action. Collective and individual identity in school space, further, emerges in terms of sense of belonging. A final section addresses student identification of school space as meaningful, looking at key "senses of place" and student views on the possible contributions of environment to learning.

Processes of Meaning-Making in School Spaces

The proceeding chapter outlines the diverse nature of subjective spatial meaning stemming from instrumental, territorial, and emotional perspectives. Spatial experiences, encounters, and interactions are sources of meaning as school space becomes place for students based on their collective and individual experiences. The commonality uniting individuals amid multiple senses of place is the sense of belonging or "insideness" that develops from meaning-making. The processes through which meanings are constructed in school spaces are the focus of this chapter. Place-making processes represent a commonality uniting students.

Participants construct senses of place in this study through processes of time-space association, and ritualized and habitual behaviour. Yamamoto's "Culture Space" and Seamon's "Place Ballet" inform the processes of meaning-making discussed. McKinney emphasizes the role of familiarity of space to the place-making process: "Place is made when we pause to give space meaning, intention, and purpose; we 'get to

know it better' and 'endow it with value'" (McKinney, 2000, p. 45). The processes of spatial meaning-making discussed in this chapter are based largely on spatial familiarity. Spaces in schools are so familiar to students they are largely "taken-for-granted." This study shows the "taken-for-granted" meanings of spaces are significant to students. These often unexplored spatial meanings are sources of student identity and bases for feelings of security and belonging.

i. "Culture Space"

Yamamoto's "Culture Spaces" refer to dynamic "physio-temporal" spaces that function as frames guiding behaviour, eliciting certain behaviours at certain times (Yamamoto, 1979, p. 3). "Frames of orientation" refer to the combinations of four factors that lead to certain behaviours in space: physical space, time, activity, and participants (ibid.). The meanings of spaces change therefore based on the combinations of these four factors. Symbols in spaces, further, indicate for students it is "time" to do something and shape behaviours. A school bell, for example, is a symbol that significantly changes the meanings students associate with classroom spaces in schools.

The utility of Yamamoto's work for this study is that it emphasizes how the structural and functional meanings of spaces differ with different people and times: "[*Time indicates*] what to do or what not to do, what kind of relations we should have among each other, what roles we should play" (Yamamoto, 1979, p. 36). The data set reveals what "culture spaces" exist in school spaces and their multiplicity of meaning to students. The construct is useful as a means to outline one process of meaning-making in schools spaces.

The clearest indication of "culture space" in this study is the effect of time on

student behaviour in school spaces. Students' verbal and body languages change significantly in the classroom, for example, from just before the bell or the appearance of the teacher to after the bell or with a teacher present. The school bell and the arrival of the teacher are both symbols reflecting expectations of certain "appropriate" behaviours. A classroom, before and after a bell, represents two different "frames of orientation" and two distinct "culture spaces" for students.

Goffman's (1959) construct of "front stage" behaviour and "back stage" behaviour informs student conceptualizations of spaces at certain times. Spaces for "front stage" behaviour become "back stage" spaces with time and occupancy. Students consider classrooms during class time when a teacher is present and work is to be done as "front stage" space. After class, however, the same space is perceived as "back stage" space in which students may behave differently. All spaces are viewed as more "free" outside designated class time. Even "teacher spaces" in classrooms transform to "student space" after the bell. Spatial meanings and "acceptable" behaviours change dramatically with time.

Participants consider the hallways, further, "student space" outside of class time. During class time, however, the hallways are off-limits to students and students must avoid appropriation and use of corridors. The meanings of the International Student Room, similarly, change dramatically with time. This room is used by a variety of students for independent study during classes. At lunch, however, the same space is occupied exclusively by International Students.

The cafeteria has emerged in this study as a powerful territory claimed by a distinct social group. The powered nature of the cafeteria and its status as the "heart" of

the school is also largely a function of time and occupancy. The cafeteria is only "powered" at lunch and morning break when a certain group uses this space. After school, for example, the space is not viewed as powered. Participants that say they would avoid the cafeteria for fear of social ridicule or intimidation suggest that would use the cafeteria without fear at other times. The meanings of the cafeteria change dramatically in time.

The construct of "culture space" is a process of meaning-making in school space that emerges clearly from student responses. "Culture space" represents, further, a source of security for students as they come to know the meanings of spaces at certain times. Comfort is found from the knowledge that the cafeteria is not always exclusionary space or a space to be feared. Students know certain spaces are "theirs" at certain times in the day and they may look forward to "back stage" time.

Meaning-making in space is a process of increasing familiarity. Students make spatial attributions with time and experience. "Culture Space" as a process of meaning-making may also be considered in relation to habitual behaviour. Ritualization of spatial interaction and use represents a second form of meaning-making in this study. Yamamoto's "Culture Spaces" become part of the "taken-for-granted" meanings and routinized use of school space.

ii. Routinized and Habitual Activity

Spatial routines and habitual or ritualized use of school terrain is a significant process of meaning-making at Cordova Secondary School. Crumpacker suggests repetition contributes to sense of place: "...redundancy of information connects people through their shared knowledge...facilitates feelings of safety, security, and stability at

school" (Crumpacker as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 35). Routine in space is a source of comfort for students as spaces become meaningful with familiarity. The mundane and "taken-for-granted" elements of spatial routines in student "lifeworlds" in school contribute significantly to meaning-making processes.

Spatial ritualization and habitual use of space is significant. This student identified clear spatial routines in school spaces: "Jessie and I will meet upstairs between our lockers and she'll eat lunch or I'll eat lunch and then we'll walk around and we always go back to the lockers. We do that everyday. The same thing everyday." Another participant described similar repetition of spatial use:

> "We totally have a route...we start up top of the stairs by the library and I book it down all the way to the drama wing, go down those stairs, and I walk by the Castle Lobby outside, come in by the music rooms...then we go down by, like the foods wing and then up and take a stop at the Saint's Warehouse. We bug some guys in there and then we come out and then we do it all over again! We probably get in about five or six circuits each lunch hour. But sometimes we stop to harass kids so that slows us down...we always *always* [italics mine] stop to talk to people because we are Grade 12s now and we've got to mix it up a little."

The majority of students reveal further, the repetitive nature of spatial use:

> "For me I always like to be like ten minutes before the bell...and then I always go to my locker and grab my things and I go to class. Lunchtime I get my lunch, walk out to see who is smoking or whatever, come back, eat my lunch - always the same, always, every single day."

Students recognize the exclusion, further, of certain negative spaces from their routines: "The cafeteria. We never, ever, eat down there. The only time we'll go down there is if we absolutely have to find food." Students' spatial routines are driven largely by the bell schedule and the physical locations of their lockers and classes.

Most students identify some sort of "base" in school space around which their

spatial use revolves. Lockers, cars, the smoke pit, and comfort zones were the most frequently described "hubs" for spatial routines. This student identifies the locker as a "base" for spatial use: "I go to my locker before and after every class. And when I'm late for school - everyday - I enter through the science wing where my locker is. I just go there, go to class, go there, go to class, go there...all day long." This participant, similarly incorporates her locker into her daily routine: "I always go my locker to start, get my stuff there and then go straight down the hallway to where my girlfriends' lockers are, and I meet them there and we do that between every class. Everyday." These "hubs" for spatial routines are often considered central "meeting places." When asked about spatial routines one student responded:

> "Yah, we all meet up in the cafeteria in the morning...we all sit down, talk for a bit, bell goes, we go to class and then after each class we meet in the cafeteria. Pretty much every intermission of classes and everyday...We all just go to that spot automatically."

Routines include student interactions as this participant illustrates: "Yah, we definitely have a routine because I mean we always meet up at our lockers between classes throughout the day." Students' habitual use and spatial interaction creates meaning in school terrain.

Participants indicate in this investigation the use of the same spaces and routes becomes largely automatic for them. They talk of "just knowing" where to meet friends or what activities will occur. The "taken-for-granted" nature of spatial use is evident in the surprise some students expressed when they realised they did in fact have a "routine" in school space! Among students that could describe their routines and habitual practices, they had difficulty explaining the rationale behind their spatial use. Beyond

convenience students did not know why they had certain spatial practices.

Routinized spatial use is significant for meaning-making as it enhances and contributes to individual and collective security. Students incorporate "safe" spaces into their routines and avoid regions of stress or fear. Students collectively identify with certain locations and spatial routines. Participants "know without saying" in what spaces they feel a sense of belonging and connectedness. As a whole, the routinized and habitual behaviours students demonstrate in school terrain function together in what Seamon calls a "place ballet."

iii. "Place Ballet"

The unique movements of students through school space are much like a dance. Bells signal the beginning of a new piece of choreography in the school day. Each individual dancer seems unaware of the performance in which they are participating. Seamon's work on "body" and "place" choreography is significant for this study. Students partake in "body ballet" when they complete a series of gestures or actions to complete a task (Seamon, 1979, p. 54). "Body ballet" in school space includes such things as opening lockers, retrieving books from the library, taking notes. Seamon's "space-time routine" is an extension of the "body ballet" over time. Students demonstrate such "bodily behaviours over time" when they navigate school space to go to classes, stopping at their lockers to pick up their lunches, or meeting with friends at lunch.

The dance that emerges from student responses and especially from my observations of students in school spaces is the combination of "body ballet" and "space-time routines" in what Seamon calls a "place ballet" (Seamon, 1979, p. 56). This unique

spatial "ballet" describes the interactions of all students' individual "body ballets" and "space-time routines" (ibid.). Within the walls of Cordova Secondary School students are united in a dynamic "dance" of spatial behaviours.

The idea of "performance" is a powerful metaphor overarching acts of agency and multiple expressions of identity in school space. Beyond the choreography of ritualized spatial interactions and uses, students "perform" purposive acts in school space. Performance involves the claiming and defence of space as associated with students' individual and collective ownership. Students "perform" acts of agency in the purposive goal of securing their needs.

"Place ballet" is a process in which space becomes place as it represents a coming together of individual "time-space routines" and "body ballets" resulting in spatial experiences and interactions. Seamon identifies six essential qualities of "place ballet": attraction, diversity, comfort, distinctiveness, invitation, and attachment (1979, pp. 146-150). All of the qualities of "place ballet" are present in this research data.

Spatial interactions and encounters occur on multiple stages at Cordova Secondary School whether it be hallway spaces, at lockers, or the cafeteria. "Attraction" for Seamon, first, refers to a focus or foci of activity in the space that attracts individuals to a centre. Sociopetal spaces draw students together in school space. The school space in this study, second, is highly diverse and has multiple uses and interests for students. This "diversity" refers for Seamon to a multiplicity of uses or appeals of the space and is evident at Cordova Secondary School (ibid.).

"Comfort", third, refers to bodily and psychological comfort, freedom of movement and activity (Seamon, 1979, p. 147). The data clearly illustrates that students

have "spaces of comfort" in school space in which they feel physical and psychological comfort. Students have, furthermore, freedom of movement and activity during their school day. "Distinctiveness", fourth, refers to the atmosphere, character or sense of place (Seamon, 1979, p. 148). A sense of identity develops out of the unique nature of space as "a distinct entity in the midst of a larger environment" (ibid.). Seamon suggests distinctiveness may relate to physical structure as well as people and activity. Cordova Secondary School is a distinct space designed for "learning." The school is clearly differentiated from other physical "spaces." Within school space, further, certain student spaces are distinct such as the cafeteria or library.

Invitation, fifth, reflects the degree of "insideness" a place portrays: "The stronger the sense of invitation, the stronger the attractiveness of the place ballet and vice versa" (Seamon, 1979, p. 149). The degree of "insideness" among students in school space is significant. They portray, for example, a very strong sense of "student" identity as reflected spatially in identification, appropriation, and use of "student space." "Attachment", finally, refers to "the sense of responsibility and devotion participants feel for place ballet" (Seamon, 1979, p. 150). "Attachment", for Seamon, represents "sparing and preserving, care and concern" and is possible only in "humanly-scaled" locations such as homes, not in larger more public spaces such as airports or shopping malls (ibid.). "Attachment" involves, therefore, private or collective ownership.

Student sense of ownership and attachment in school spaces is symbolic. They do not describe "caring for" school space in Seamon's sense of attachment. The data reveals, nevertheless, that students are attached symbolically to school spaces. The ownership they feel contributes to senses of belonging and connectedness to school

space. Students demonstrate, therefore, symbolic "attachment" in this research.

The six essential qualities of "place ballet" Seamon outlines are evident in Cordova Secondary School. The "dance" students perform is not haphazard. The actions they demonstrate are examples of agency and contribute to meeting their needs for security and belonging in schools spaces. "Place ballet," routinized spatial behaviour, and "culture space" are significant processes through which place-making occurs in school.

Agency

Students act purposively to meet their needs for security and belonging in school spaces. The construct of agency as an internally-inspired source of empowerment is central to this thesis. Students actively construct spatial meanings in schools and secure a variety of "spaces of security" through agential action. Agency is a source of value for students as it represents a means through which they may act to fulfill their needs and desires. The diversity of meanings that students create through spatial experiences and interactions at the individual and collective levels are demonstrations of student agency leading to the construction of numerous "spaces of security."

Student agency or autonomy in schools is often viewed in terms of "opposition." It is exactly this view of student action that this research rejects. Sitton (1980) uses battle language to describe "war over space" in schools. Sitton believes students "work the system" to decrease impositions of power and secure freedom in schools (Sitton, 1980, p. 70). For Sitton, the manner in which students sit in their desks is part of the "war over space" in the classroom. He suggests students are expected to sit straight forward, knees under their desk, shoulders hunched (ibid.). Those students that do not sit this way are

"defiant" and provoke battle: "The student slouches, sticks his legs into the aisle, and adopts the 'limbs akimbo'...the student seems to say 'You can't make me, this place is mine'" (Sitton, 1980, p. 75). This research takes a different view of student action.

This investigation is based on students' spatial use, encounters, and interactions as a sort of "dance." Students construct spatial meanings through performance of actions reflecting their diverse cultures and identities. Student action is viewed as a positive means for students to achieve senses of connectedness to people and process in school space. Agency is a source of empowerment rather than defiance. Territoriality in this study examines how a sense of ownership facilitates a sense of security in schools rather than how territorial designations among students contribute to spatial "wars." Students' purposive movements and actions reflect the multiple ways in which they create place in school space.

i. Multiple Acts of Agency

Demonstrations of student agency discussed in this section are numerous. The multiplicity of student agency reflects the diversity of student cultures surveyed in this investigation. An act of agency at any level is a means to create some sense of security for students in schools. This perspective unites diverse threads and themes in the data. Eckert describes the common need for adolescents to negotiate power in schools:

> Certain commonalities arise from adolescent need for autonomy and the uniformity of the institutions that appear to deny them this autonomy. What is specifically adolescent about adolescent culture is the negotiation of this autonomy not only between adolescents and adults, but among adolescents. (Eckert, 1989, p.21)

Student action, while united in negotiation of autonomy and creation of space for the self, emerges in different forms. Types or forms of student agency may be classified under the

headings of "negotiations" and "self-expression."

Student agential action is often a negotiation of a rule, a "stretching" of what is acceptable. A fundamental expectation of students in schools is that they attend classes and they be punctual. One participant described how students frequently "skip" classes, however, and arrive late to class: "Some people don't go to class, so, it's like we're supposed to study at school but some people just don't care. They just come to school for seeing people, socializing, yah." Skipping class as a form of choice and empowerment is clear in this student's narrative: "For me it is kind of go to class - not always, not always go to class - sometimes skip just to get away from it and take a break ... it's nice to go somewhere to do work that isn't the same thing over and over again." Another student boasted about his record of truancy: "I had to go to the office because I got caught for skipping...thirty-six classes since December!"

Arriving late, further, allows students to secure a sense of personal control and to negotiate school rules: "Yah I casually have a smoke until the bell rings and then I'll casually wander off to class when I'm done." Student choice to miss class or arrive late gives them a sense of self-control and autonomy in face of school rules.

Whereas skipping class may be considered an act of agency, the act of *not* skipping class is also agential. Some students choose to adhere to regulation when faced with pressure to break school rules. Many students, for example, did not skip classes on the "official" "Grad Skip-Out Day." The choice to attend classes demonstrates empowerment in the same way rejection of school rules gives participants a sense of autonomy.

Students ignore school rules in a variety of ways. Students smoke, for example,

right next to the school building rather than off of school grounds as is policy. Students park in the student parking lot disregarding lines established to mark parking slots and stalls reserved for teachers and visitors. The ways in which school rules are negotiated are diverse and range in degree from minor to major infractions of rules. In the hallways, for example, students talk of being "loud" so as to disturb classes in session, leaving trash, or vandalising. In the library students talk of sneaking in food and drink, being noisy, and moving tables and chairs around against the librarian's wishes.

Students at Cordova Secondary School are not permitted to be in the hallways during class time without a hall-pass. One student explained how students break this rule by avoiding teachers in the halls, lying about having a hall-pass, or talking to teachers they encounter:

> "You carry a book with you and you kind of walk fast so when you see a teacher they think you are trying to get to class...or you just say 'hi!'...Yah, if you talk to them it throws them right off...because then they don't think you're trying to avoid them!"

Some students describe eccentric action in the hallways as a means to challenge teacher authority: "I guess I got in trouble the other day. I had a gorilla mask from the drama room and I was trying to, like, harass teachers...well not really, but I ran into a class and then out again and I got in trouble for that." This student is clearly negotiating school norms for appropriate behaviour.

A denial or a lack of recognition of authority and control in school spaces is a source of autonomy for some students. One participant stated, for example, "I don't feel controlled anywhere." Another student declared, similarly, "I do whatever I want." This "whatever" attitude is a source of power for students. This individual explained how

students distance themselves from school life: "A lot of students come to school and are like, whatever, if I want to go I'll go and whenever I want to get up I'll get up." The blasé attitude or sense of indifference some students demonstrate is an agential means for them to create a sense of security in schools.

A second category for classifying the spectrum of examples of students agency is "self-expression." These acts are individual in nature and do not necessarily break any rules or regulations. Acts of "self-expression" result, nonetheless, in the creation of secure "space" for students. This participant described how in classrooms students demonstrate agency by "goofing off" or talking: "We just talk all the time in class." Other students described how the expression of their opinions is a means to create their "own space" in the classroom. This student explained how she creates her "own" space: "I just be myself and I do catch lots of flak. But, you know, with the 'flak' I get a lot of respect. You know, I colour outside of the lines all the time but it is something that I work at. I don't let people walk all over me." Agency in various forms empowers students, contributing to the fulfilment of their personal safety needs.

Student use of verbal language is another means through which they demonstrate agency. "Back stage" language in terms of vulgarity, volume, and tone is frequently carried into the classroom. Students are not permitted to be vulgar at any time in the school, but outside of teacher control and in "student space" they use the language they choose.

Participants demonstrate agency in other, non-verbal ways. Students describe, for example, sleeping in class, keeping to themselves, "pretending" to work, and not participating in class activities. Some students use walkmans to create their own "space"

in a crowded classroom. Participants demonstrate, finally, agency to create secure "space" for themselves through dress and body language. One participant described body language as a means of creating space in class: "If you're at your desk and you put your feet up on the chairs some teachers will get really upset about it and other teachers don't care at all. They take it as though you're not listening, but you're just trying to get comfortable." Students secure individual "spaces of security" and comfort spaces therefore by acting as agents in a diversity of ways in "learning" spaces.

Students act as agents individually and collectively through choice. Acts of student agency are multiple, occurring throughout school terrain at different times. The dimension of time adds to the complexity and multiplicity of agential action in schools as spaces that have diverse meanings at different times influence student action. Students demonstrate a sense of collective autonomy, for example, in "student spaces." Collective action in "student spaces" to claim or defend these areas is different from the agential action students perform to feel secure in "teacher space." Challenges to and negotiations of teacher authority are common.

ii. Student Views on Teachers' Autonomy

The assertions of student autonomy highlighted above reflect the sense of student autonomy in face of administrative or teacher authority. Students appear to continually negotiate teacher-imposed rules and control in school space, challenging teacher authority more frequently with teachers with whom they have personal conflict. One student explained how the conflict he has with a particular teacher motivates his agential action: "I just rebel to piss him off." This student's actions are purposive to meet his need to negotiate the teacher's authority.

The students most vocal about ignoring authority in school space challenge teacher autonomy. This student disregards teacher authority: "I think they try to control but we just shrug it off." One participant refers to "teachers mouthing off" and suggests further that teachers do not control him: "We do what we want...we just look like we're doing it...If he tries to control me I just tell him to screw off!" The majority of students, however, accept teacher authority in schools.

What is significant about students' acceptance of teacher control and power is that the "acceptance" is limited. Students seem to limit teacher control to "teacher space" and claim their own autonomy in "student space." Students resent and challenge teacher authority and power in their "student spaces" where they feel a sense of autonomy. In a paired interview, this participant's response to how students manage to skip class and hang out in the hallways indicates the perceived limitations of teacher power:

> "Most of the time we won't listen to the teachers. Just the principal's. If a teacher tells us to move, say, from the Castle Lobby we'll be like 'yah, whatever' and we'll wait it out. I mean we might leave, but when the teacher leaves we'll come back."

The other student at the interview re-emphasized this view of limited teacher autonomy:

> "It's all teachers. It doesn't matter how powerful the teacher is or how intimidating the teacher is. If the teacher tells us we shouldn't be in the Castle Lobby we'll lift our butts like we're ready to go and when he starts walking away we'll sit back down, hands up behind the head. It's only with the principal or vice-principal that we're out because they give garbage duty and nobody wants to pick up garbage!"

Teacher authority is considered by students to be limited, therefore, to specific "teacher" spaces in the school and to "teacher" time or class time. The act of limiting teacher power and simultaneously recognizing student power in schools is a great source of agency and autonomy for students.

Resistance to teacher autonomy is less prevalent in what students identify as "teacher space." The power of the teacher increases, furthermore, during official class time. During these "teacher" times in "teacher space" demonstrations of student agency are more subtle than those in "student spaces" as described above in the section on "self expression." Students form, thus, "spaces of security" through agential action both in and out of class time.

In interviews students expressed how they felt about teacher power and control in schools. Students accept teacher control as long as they still have "space" for individuality. Teacher control is viewed as negative when "space" for self-expression is denied. Students express discontentment therefore with very strict teachers and learning environments in which what they perceive as "ridiculous" rules limit their ability to act as agents in securing their "own" space. Denying a student the freedom to secure "space" whether emotional, ideational, or physical in a classroom, denies that student a "space of security" necessary to meet their safety needs.

iii. Agency and Student Interactions

Demonstrations of student power at the individual and collective levels are also evident among individual students and social groups. A sense of Grade 12 "superiority" emerges from participant responses. Acts of student autonomy towards other students often reflect this sense of status in the school. One participant simply asked, "whose gonna mess with you in Grade 12?" Senior students exert power over junior students in "student space." When asked what she did while in the area near her locker at lunch this student indicated the ways in which she and her friends interacted with younger students: "We talk and sometimes we cause trouble if we ask kids questions as they walk by and

stuff...And sometimes we're like, 'hey! Would you pick up that garbage for us?' Some of them do, and some of them get really mad at us." Grade 12 students demonstrate the "power" to influence what junior students do and, in the case of the tables in the cafeteria, what spaces they occupy.

Underlying agential actions among students is the powered nature of certain spaces in the school. The cafeteria is powered space, for example, and students associating with this space have autonomy in the school. A student noted this power: "...the 'trendy' group just kind of has the power in the cafeteria." Another participant recalled the same power in the cafeteria: "Some of the guys in the cafeteria are like, 'okay, this is ours' so we get to *sit* [italics mine] more and stuff." These illustrations of power are discussed in Chapter Four in the section on territoriality in school spaces and the processes of claiming and defending space.

Students may bully, intimidate, or threaten other students in order to secure their spatial wants and needs. This student described an example of intimidation to achieve space:

> "Okay take this example from my Science class the other day. A guy walks in to sit in a chair and well, this guy is a 'popular' kid and someone who would not be considered so socially 'welcome' is sitting there so he tried to physically remove him from the chair...it was brutal."

Another student explained how the cafeteria crowd claims its space through the use of intimidation:

> "They look at you...they kind of stare at you as you go by. And I guess what keeps us from going in there is, like, their group is *large* [italics mine]. They have the group that hangs out there, right in the middle practically and our group isn't that big, so, we just walk by, you know? And then they stare which makes us feel uncomfortable, right?"

In response to a question about invasion of territory a student referred to use of violence: "I'd probably lay them a beating." Competition over space results, thus, in demonstrations of agency as students attempt to secure "space" individually and collectively.

iv. Observations of Agency

Observations of participants in and out of classes reinforced the multiplicity of agential student activity in school space. The observations verified, further, the data obtained during interviews. While "front stage" during class time, students demonstrate agency by negotiating rules. They arrive late or without the appropriate supplies, may or may not have completed their homework assignments, and ignore seating plans. Students without books move desks in order to share with others thereby altering pre-determined seating arrangements. During class, students may talk, sleep, or do assignments for other classes. Individuals who secretly eat or bring water and other beverages into class negotiate rules prohibiting food and drink. Students negotiate, further, safety procedures in science classes. Safety goggles are worn on the head instead of over their eyes, and lab coats remain unbuttoned. Body language frequently indicates attempts at physical comfort and relaxation as students appropriate the spaces surrounding them to meet their spatial needs. The multiple demonstrations of agency in classrooms in which students are "front stage" are more subtle than outside of class time when students are "back stage." Purposive student action contributes, nevertheless, to their fulfilment of security needs.

Once students are "back stage" in "student space" the demonstrations of agency are more obvious. "Back stage" students are more willing to negotiate school rules in terms of appropriate language and behaviour. With friends, students discuss whether

they will attend or skip classes: "You goin' to English?" "Grad Skip-Out Day" is an example of collective student agency. On spares, similarly, when students are supposed to be in custodial classes or off-campus, students stay in the Castle Lobby, hiding under stairs if administrators enter the area. Students see rules as negotiable in school spaces.

Collectively and individually participants demonstrate power in student space. The claiming and defence of territories secures students "spaces" they can call their own and in which they feel comfortable. In "student space" and especially in specific student territories to which a sense of ownership is attached, students feel a sense of autonomy and are less likely to respect the autonomy of authority figures. Teachers have less power in "student space" according to participants. During my observations I noticed that students acted differently towards me when I was in "their" space than they had previously in "teacher" space. On one occasion I endured verbal sexual harassment from a student while I was in "student space." A sense of powerlessness in that space left me quite unnerved. The student, on the other hand, seemed empowered.

Demonstrations of students "agency" are multiple and complex, affected by space and time. Agential action reflects students' needs for their own "spaces." Participants need the security of knowing they are not powerless, but have the ability to create their own physical, emotional, and ideational "spaces." Students' ability to create "spaces of security" in schools is reduced in highly regimented learning environments in which movement is restricted and forms of student agency denied. It is essential to consider the possible effects on learning of school environments in which students are prevented from acting to meet their basic safety and belonging needs.

Identities in School Space

Identities are multiple in this study. Identity, further, reflects attributes of space as well as a sense of belonging among students. Relph's (1976, p. 45) differentiation of identity as "identity of" and "identity with" informs this study. Relph explains how both "identity of" and "identity with" place are formed collectively and individually and vary with time:

> ...identity is founded both in the individual person or object and in the culture to which they belong. It is not static and unchangeable, but varies as circumstances and attitudes change; and it is not uniform and undifferentiated, but has several components and forms. (Relph, 1976, p. 45)

The identities students express are multiple at the collective and individual levels in school spaces. Relph describes, furthermore, the related nature of the dual dimensions of identity: "The identity of something refers to a persistent sameness and unity which allows that thing to be differentiated from others. Such inherent identity is inseparable from identity with other things" (ibid.). Students differentiate spaces in Cordova Secondary School in addition to associating themselves and their social groups with certain locations.

Students demonstrate "identity of" different areas through recognition of the physical features of spaces and the observable activities and functions that occur in these regions. "Identity with" space corresponds more closely with a sense of place as it involves construction of meaning. The spatiality of student identity formation is central to this research. Relph describes identification with spaces and a sense of belonging as "insideness": "To be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it...and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is identity with the place" (Relph, 1976, p. 49).

The degree of "insideness" students feel in school spaces is revealed in the research data through the senses of belonging they hold. The ways in which students feel a sense of belonging or connectedness to school spaces are multiple.

i. Senses of Belonging

The construct of "belonging" in this study refers to the degree of connectedness a student feels in various school terrains and to the school as a whole. A sense of "belonging" is grounded by students in a sense of familiarity with school spaces, processes, and people. The predictability that familiarity provides gives students a sense of connectedness to the school. Students talk of everyone simply "knowing" where to go, who to meet, what to do. The role of time, furthermore, is significant in students' senses of belonging as with more time spent in school spaces students develop more and stronger attachments to space and to people.

Senses of belonging expressed by students are predominantly due to social over spatial associations. When asked about belonging at Cordova Secondary School this student emphasized the social dimension: "In this school? Yah, I belong in the school with my friends and stuff but I don't think I should be in school because I'm not a school person." Another student emphasized, similarly, her need for social belonging: "Yah, totally. It is a social feeling, right? You don't want to be alone." Students strongly associate this sense of connectedness to personal relationships.

The attachments students describe in school spaces are to people first and then to spaces as associated with specific activities and people in those spaces. In response to a question about identifying with school space this student declared: "Yah, it has been 'the space' for me and my friends...And it helps because I know that there I'm kind of like

welcome [italics mine] and I'm *wanted* [italics mine]." Students focus on people when they express identity and appear to "take-for-granted" the physical locations or spaces in which these identities form. Identifying with school spaces seems to be part of a larger whole including people and process.

Participant conceptualization of belonging as social in school space includes both peers and teachers. One student expressed a sense of comfort associated with belonging and suggested in addition to friends teachers mattered: "I've always felt like I belong here...friends mostly, but teachers too." Another student, similarly, identified teachers as significant for a sense of connectedness in schools: "And the teachers, too, you develop a relationship with them too. And like there are some teachers of course that you can't stand or you don't like or whatever, but there are always teachers that you do like." This student, finally, emphasized the security accompanying relationships with both peers and teachers:

> "I feel comfortable. I feel comfortable. Like I mean the first time you are in a new school it is kind of uncomfortable because you don't know anyone, but once you get to know everyone - and it has been five years now...you've been growing up together and even the teachers, like you know each other."

The role of people in the sense of connectedness students feel in school space is significant to them.

Some students define a sense of belonging in relation to involvement and participation in school activities. The withdrawal of teacher sponsorship of extra-curricular activities at the time of this investigation may have had a significant effect on students' sense of belonging. When asked about her sense of connectedness to the school this student mentioned the effects of teacher job action: "Yah, I guess I feel I belong...but

no, this year is a different story because there are no sports teams, there are no dances...we don't belong to anything outside of the school day so I don't know." Participation in school-based activities contributes to student identification with school space.

Senses of belonging for students have positive effects. Students express, for example, the positive feelings of being part of the school. A sense of belonging to Cordova Secondary School gives a sense of pride for students as indicated by the following student narrative: "I've been here for two years and I mean I am a part of C.S.S. and I'm proud to be here." Another student expressed a similar positive feeling:

> "For me I mean, I was thinking of going to another school but I just couldn't do it because I've been here for so long and it is not just my friends either, like I mean learning from the same teachers is just like being part of it. It is belonging to the learning environment."

The connectedness students describe represents Relph's sense of "insideness."

A sense of belonging, or "insideness" is a positive influence for students to come to school. One student described motivation derived from a sense of connectedness to school: "Belonging is important because, like, I feel like I fit in and so I want to come and learn and I have a reason for coming here." Identifying with the school in some way helps students want to go to school each day. A sense of belonging is a source of security and comfort for students.

Not all students identify, however, a sense of connectedness to school space. International student participants, for example, described a sense of "outsideness" from the school due to their culture, language, and age. This student does not identify with school for reasons of language and age:

> "Ah, not really for me. Yah, because I don't tend to spend lots of time in school and since I've come to the school I've mostly put my time into study because I have difficulty with my English...I came here too late and I'm probably older than all the students too...I don't really spend a lot of extra time with, you know, Canadian friends or join lots of activities."

Students arriving at Cordova Secondary School in later years such as Grade 10, 11, or 12 instead of Grade 8 describe a similar "disconnection" from school: "I don't really feel like I belong because sometimes when everyone is talking about Grade 8 or 9 I wasn't even close to here." Senses of "insideness" and "outsideness" reflect how connected individuals feel to school spaces.

Some students expressed a sort of fluidity of belongingness in time. They suggest a sense of belonging can be there all, some, or none of the time due to social reasons. Social conflict, for example, can leave a student feeling alienated and like an "outsider." A student may also feel both "insideness" and "outsideness" simultaneously as revealed in this response to a question about belonging:

> "Do I feel like I belong? Both sometimes I guess...probably more like an 'insider' than an 'outsider', but I'm not really 'in' with the school because I just hang out with different people. I hang out in the cafeteria and in the library and so I guess I'm sort of an 'insider' in both those groups. As far as the school goes I guess I do belong here because it is where I go to school and where I've gone since I moved here."

Belonging, furthermore, can be identified with small groups and not to school space as a whole. These variations demonstrate further the multiplicity of students' subjective spatial meanings and spatial relationships.

The potential implications for learning of students' sense of "insideness" or "outsideness" in school space is significant. Relph describes the fundamental difference between being "inside" versus "outside": "From the outside you look upon a place as a

traveller might look upon a town from a distance; from the inside you experience a place are surrounded by it and part of it" (Relph, 1976, p. 49). Students express a sense of comfort and security associated with a sense of belonging in schools, of being "inside." To be outside is to be excluded.

Relph suggests the difference between "insideness" and "outsideness" is "the difference between safety and danger" (Relph, 1976, p. 49). Students that feel a sense of "outsideness" due to lack of a sense of belonging may not have their safety needs fulfilled. The ways in which a sense of "outsideness" or a lack of sense of place negatively impacts students ability to learn must be considered.

ii. Collective Identities

Students identify collectively in school spaces as students, "Grads," Cordova Secondary School students as well as by culture and social group. The ways in which students form and define identities are also multiple. Some students define their identity through "sameness" in this study. Valentine describes how shared experiences foster collective identity formation in space through "social sameness"(Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 53). A collective identification as "students," for example, is based on the shared norms and rules students are expected to follow in schools. Identifying "sameness" is a means of expressing common or shared identity or sense of community (ibid., pp. 54-55). One shared element of "sameness" among students is age.

Eckert in her *Jocks and Burnouts Social Categories and Identity in the High School* explains how "age-group identity" is "based on the differences between their [*students*] own behaviour and that of adults" (Eckert, 1989, p. 17). Eckert recognizes the existence of multiple sub-identities within "student" cultures, but asserts they "all face

norms imposed on them in school based on dominant cultural ideology" (ibid., p. 18). Students demonstrate an "age-group" identity spatially in this research in their differentiation between "student space" and "teacher space." This spatial differentiation helps to define student collective identity in school space.

Massey suggests identity may also be defined in "difference" or in an "us" and "them" mentality (Massey, Allen, & Sarre, 1999, p. 156). Students in this research identify collectively through difference based on school, grade, and culture. Participants often differentiate themselves from students at other high schools in the district. Students express identities as "C.S.S. Grads" collectively. One student recalled choosing Cordova Secondary School over other schools:

> "Yah, it's meaningful to me. I had the option of going to another school just to finish my classes. I would have already been done but I said 'no' because I want to be known as a C.S.S. Grad. No Bridevale or Sunset or Pilgram. C.S.S. is my school."

Collective identification with Cordova Secondary School is a source of pride for students.

Participants collectively identify, further, as "Grads" in the school. Beyond "students" alone, participants differentiate themselves from other grades based on the years they have spent together at the school. Students frequently referred to "Grad" and emphasized their journey over the years at Cordova Secondary School. They are proud of their position in the school. Johnson describes the lineal nature of schooling as "a line along which students move" (Johnson, 1982, p. 86). This progression is significant to students: "Schooling is a ritual passage over time and space to successively higher levels of status and rank" (ibid.). A sense of the perceived position and power of Grade 12 students in the school emerges from participant responses. The spatial occupancy and

identification of social groups reflects status and rank at Cordova Secondary School.

Culture, finally, is a source of collective identity. Culturally-based collective identity is highly spatial in this study. Participants differentiate between "Canadian" and "International" students in school and identify the different spatial territories of culture groups. Identity through difference underlines the cultural dimensions of territoriality.

The spatial nature of collective identity involves power in school space. Students identify collectively with groups that occupy certain spaces in the school including hallway spaces near lockers, the cafeteria, and Castle Lobby. The identity of spatially-defined groups reflects perceptions of status and power. The "cafeteria" crowd is a good example of a group whose spatial occupation reflects perceived power and popularity.

The cafeteria in particular illustrates a double level of status and prestige as location within the cafeteria in addition to the appropriation and use of this space indicates social status and autonomy. The front central tables are "reserved" for Grade 12 students. Students describe the "tradition" in which Grade 8 students sit at the back of the cafeteria and with each grade they move up a table until they reach the head tables. There is a spatial hierarchy of rank and status in the cafeteria.

Some students identified themselves in difference to the "powerful" cafeteria social group by emphasising their choice not to go to the cafeteria. These students suggest they choose not to participate in that space or identity with those students. As one participant stated in reference to the students in the cafeteria, "they are just not my type of people." Another student declared: "I don't even pay attention. I don't care. I could care less. I just don't because I'm looking out for number one." Difference is a significant source of collective and individual identity among students.

Collective identity formation in school space revolves around processes of routine, shared experiences, and sense of ownership. The importance of predictability, habit and routinized behaviour emerged from the data as significant factors in the creation of a sense of collective identity. Students develop a sense of "knowing without saying" in schools through routines as they know where to go and whom they will meet there, what they will do there. Collective identity in school space forms also through the shared sensory experiences of students. Crumpacker describes how a sense of belonging and connectedness develops with familiarity and the "shared knowledge" of common experience (Crumpacker as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 35).

Ownership, finally, or a sense of territoriality is a process through which collective identity is formed in school spaces. Underlining all these processes for identity formation is the role of time. Meanings are constructed and acknowledged in spaces over time. The sense of belonging and connectedness that students identify collectively is an "insideness" or sense of place that develops through time and experience.

iii. Individual Identities

Students identify in a variety of ways with specific school spaces at the individual level. Identification with the school corresponds with a sense of belonging or connectedness as discussed previously. Student association with specific areas at the individual level is based on spatial use or the symbolic meaning of the space. Some students identify, for example, with the library as it is associated with academics. Another student identified with the drama room:

> "If you were to look at the drama room at face value it wouldn't really identify me because it is kind of stark and bleak. But if you were to go in there in the middle of a class when everybody is really getting into it, then

> it really does identify me. When you get the spirit emerging, then yah, that's me."

Students identify, further, with the spaces associated with things in which they are skilled or interested. In response to a question about the spaces with which he identified individually, a participant described a space in which he is skilled: "I'd say the metal shop for me. It's my favourite place I guess. I've been going there since Grade 9 and I know how to do a lot of stuff in there." Another student identified, similarly, with a space in which she was both interested and skilled:

> "I identify with the journalism and history rooms...they are the happy me and I find them calming. If I didn't have those spaces I don't think I'd actually be so cheerful anymore. I'd be very quiet. I wouldn't know where to go, I wouldn't know where I belonged."

Individual associations or identities with spaces are important for students, as they are sources of both comfort and confidence.

Not all students acknowledged individual identity with school spaces. All participants, however, acknowledge collective identity in some way. This participant was hesitant to identify with any one space in the school calling himself a "drifter." In doing so he created his own identity, one that secures him a comfort zone throughout the school. Those students that did not express an individual connection to Cordova Secondary School acknowledged its instrumental value as a "stepping stone" in their lives. This student, for example, described the functional value of the school: "I don't feel anything for this school. I just want to graduate. It's just a place I go to get where I want to go."

The identities revealed in this study, in summary, are as multiple as the senses of place from which they emerge. Spaces in Cordova Secondary School further, have different identities for students and lead to different senses of place. The cafeteria is a place to socialize, whereas the science wing is a place to work. The library is a place to find some privacy and solace. The meanings of spaces are not the same for any two students. The processes through which students develop individual identity within school spaces reflect the spectrum of student cultures at Cordova Secondary School. Familiarity, "sameness", and "difference", contribute to students' formation and recognition of collective and individual identities in this research. The spaces with which students identify are those they associate with comfort and empowerment. These areas correspond closely with "student spaces."

The senses of belonging or connectedness to school space that students identify as part of sense of identity are sources of security for students. With the sense of security emerging from a sense of connectedness to learning space students are more willing and motivated to come to school. Learning is facilitated once students' basic security and belonging needs are met. It is necessary to consider the implications for learning of those students who do not identify with school spaces or who feel "outside" student cultures in school spaces. Meeting belonging needs for all students is a significant factor for student success.

"A Place to *Be*..."

The student participants in this study express the multiple meanings of school space. This section is devoted to presenting the diverse ways in which students define spaces as meaningful including their perceptions of the links between sense of place and

learning. A wide variety of narratives are included in this section, moreover, so as to allow the students in this study to be heard.

i. Students Identify Meanings of Space

Familiarity of space, friends, and teachers emerge as a major unifying theme from student descriptions of the meaning of school space. Familiarity of school space is meaningful to students as it contributes to confidence and senses of "insideness" and belonging. Knowledge of spaces helps to connect students to school space. Familiarity of friends, further, is meaningful for students as collective identity with social groups contributes to students' senses of belonging. The spatiality, furthermore, of social groups in school space contributes to the meaning of school space in terms of territoriality and senses of ownership.

Familiarity of teachers as a contributing factor to the meaning of school space is also significant. Students express how positive relationships with teachers at Cordova Secondary School enhance feelings of security and belonging in school space. Students include relationships with teachers in the support system that facilitates their learning.

Relationships, therefore, between students and spaces, students and students, and students and teachers, are significant for a sense of place in schools. Students describe how familiarity of space, peers, and teachers result in a welcoming atmosphere in school space. Students feel a sense of connectedness to Cordova Secondary School and a fondness for parts of the school if not the school as a whole.

Table 5.1 illustrates the numerous ways in which students find Cordova Secondary School meaningful. The responses are varied, reflecting the multiplicity of senses of place students construct in school space. The narratives illustrate the

importance of familiarity to the meaning of space whether it be familiarity of space, people, or process. Familiarity increases for students with time. Levels of comfort and accumulation of memories increase with experience. Time, thus, is significant for meaning-making processes. Students with fewer memories due to a shorter time at Cordova Secondary School indicate they have less sense of meaning in school spaces. Refer to Appendix C for a comprehensive listing of student narratives.

Table 5.1 Student Perceptions of School Spaces as Meaningful

Dimensions of Meaning	Student Narratives
Spaces: Relationships between Students and Spaces	"everything just seems so natural..." "it is just a space that makes me happy...I like it there."
Friends: Relationships with Peers	"knowing most of the students helps...because you don't feel like a stranger in the school." "Meaningful? My friends of course."
Teachers: Relationships between Students and Teachers	"teachers, they totally welcome students to come...at first you may not know them but with time you do and it gets more fun." "...developing relationships with teachers is a big part of it too."
Time	"Five years here! That's a long time...there is lots here because it has been so long." "I mean it's *your* [italics mine] school...since Grade 8 right?"
Memories in School Spaces	"It is all the memories, like we all have memories pretty much *all over* [italics mine] the school and over the last five years I can think of loads of memories - good and bad - that's important."
A Fondness for "C.S.S."	"I like this school, I actually like it and I think it's *that* [italics mine] that keeps me coming back." "I want to be an C.S.S. Grad."

Some students, furthermore, do not consider the school meaningful space. These students emphasize the instrumental value of Cordova Secondary School as a means to achieve their goals in life. School space is meaningful for these students as a "stepping stone" or as one of their life "experiences." One student emphasized the skills he has gained at school: "I can't say so much now that it is meaningful, but it develops a lot of social skills for example and helps you learn to adapt to certain situations so I think that will help a lot in the future." For another participant Cordova Secondary School represents a sort of "beginning": "I just see it as the place from which the rest of your life starts. It is just where I'm graduating from." In another case a student described school as a necessary step in his life: "I just tolerate it. I come here to learn and I know I have to be here...because I want to get somewhere." The ways in which students identify meaning in school space illustrates the diversity of senses of place they construct. Eyles (1985) suggests four principle senses of place that may be used to simplify the multiplicity of student responses in this investigation.

ii. Four Senses of Place

Student responses illustrate multiple spatial meanings as students' senses of place reflect diverse interests and needs. Eyles (1985) describes in *Senses of Place* a variety of different ways in which space is meaningful to individuals. Eyles' four main senses of place are applicable to this research: social, apathetic-acquiescent, instrumental, and nostalgic (Eyles, 1985, pp. 122-126). Eyle's categorization is useful in this study as a means to better understand emergent themes and commonalities in the research data.

Social sense of place, first, is defined by Eyles as "dominated by importance attached to social ties and interaction...Place has little meaning without reference to these

ties and interactions" (Eyles, 1985, p. 123). A social sense of place is most common among students in this study. The social sense of place, further, is linked for Eyles to identity. The specific spaces, or places, in which social interactions occur become important to individuals because of the activities that occur there: "place has social significance and social ties have place significance" (ibid., p. 124). The social sense of place dominates this research.

An apathetic-acquiescent sense of place, second, is prevalent in this research with those students that do not acknowledge meaning of school space. These students suggest they have no sense of place in school space. Eyles uses the term "apathetic" to describe a lack of interest, commitment and attachment to place (Eyles, 1985, p. 124). Students demonstrating such apathy toward school space are generally not involved in school-based activities and acknowledge their limited participation in school life. Eyles uses the term "acquiescent" further as he believes "apathy" in these individuals may hide a sense of powerlessness (ibid.). In this investigation, students' lack of interest, indifference, or blasé attitude may also reflect such a feeling. It is also possible, however, that through apathy, students create "spaces" in which they have some power. Students may empower themselves through their own indifference, through distancing themselves from a school life from which they feel disconnected.

An instrumental sense of place, third, refers to "place as a means to an end" (Eyles, 1985, p. 124). Eyles suggests individuals consider the value of space in this sense of place based on potential use: "The place is significant in terms of what it does or does not provide in terms of goods, services and formal opportunities" (ibid.). "Service and employment functions", further, are emphasized over "sociability" (ibid.). Students

emphasizing the value of school as a "stepping stone" towards future goals de-emphasized the social nature of school life. For these students sense of place at Cordova Secondary School has "use" value.

McKinney, similarly, argues the instrumental value of space can lead to a sense of place. She rejects the view that only fondness or attachment to space results in sense of place: "Yes, some people experience place in the profound sense...but this does not mean that those who focus on function...do not relate to place in a significant way" (McKinney, 2000, p. 44). McKinney's remarks are supported by the data in this research in which the instrumental value of space contributes to meaning for students.

This study adds significantly to McKinney's work on sense of place in the school setting as it illustrates that sense of place exists for students in secondary school. McKinney states that students have "lost [their] relationship to the school" due to movement between classes in the high school setting (McKinney, 2000, p. 214). This research illustrates that the elementary school classroom is not the only space in which sense of place emerges. Students construct multiple senses of place in different school spaces at the secondary level.

The nostalgic sense of place, fourth, is based on memories and past feelings toward a place. Students' feelings in school space are shaped, thus, by particular past events: "...these past events colour and shape the individual's current appreciation of place" (Eyles, 1985, p. 124). As revealed in the research data, a nostalgic sense of place can have both positive and negative dimensions. Participants have positive and negative spatial memories associated with people and place (Eyles, 1985, p. 124). They describe how the good feelings stemming from positive memories contribute to individual and

collective identity. Negative memories, however, serve to detract from students' comfort and feelings of belonging in school.

Eyles senses of place are very useful in this study as they help to clarify the ways in which school space is meaningful to students. Students' active creation of meanings in school space whether they are social, apathetic, instrumental or nostalgic in nature, are products of student agency. Diverse senses of place represent "spaces of security" in schools. A variety of senses of place enables students to fulfill a spectrum of needs and wants. Students may, further, have more than one sense of place in schools. The multiplicity of students' spatial experiences is thus maintained with Eyles' categorization. The ways in which students perceive of spatial meaning as facilitating learning reflect the richness of student experience in school space.

iii. Student Views on Sense of Place and Learning

Students were asked to describe what significance they think meaning in school space has for learning. Table 5.2 illustrates the dimensions emerging from the data and the corresponding student narratives. Meaningful space is viewed overwhelmingly as positive for learning. Refer to Appendix D for a larger collection of student responses.

Table 5.2 The Implications of Sense of Place for Learning

Influences on Learning	Student Narratives
Confidence	"I think that when you are comfortable or you have a certain confidence it means you learn there well."
Comfort	"I feel comfortable, and once I feel comfortable I want to learn. It's like I need that comfortable phase first."
Safety/Security	"if you feel secure then everything else is easier."
Belonging	"I would say it helps me learn because I know that here I'm kind of *welcome* [italics mine]...I'm *wanted* [italics mine] and I'm learning a lot here whereas if I went somewhere else that would all change."
Relationships	"having a bond or whatever with a teacher helps because you want to work for them."
Motivation	"it's just that I don't mind coming, not at all." "how I feel about this place just helps me come to school everyday, that's all."

Spatial meaning may also have negative implications. While the majority of students express positive effects of spatial meaning on learning, some students view sense of place as negative for learning in the sense of distraction or diversion. One student considered meaning an obstacle to learning: "it's more like a problem for me because if you just dropped me off somewhere else I'd actually learn a little better because I wouldn't be talking to my friends." Other students suggest that while positive memories contribute to a sense of comfort and facilitate sense of place, negative memories make school spaces uncomfortable and thus serve as an obstacle to learning.

Participants identify social groups, finally, as negative for learning. This

individual described the negative feelings associated with social segregation: "Cliques, social cliques. I think it would be a lot better if everyone just was one clique, if everyone just got along easier with everybody. If they didn't squabble, if they helped each other." The meanings of spaces in schools associated with exclusionary social groupings represent a negative influence on learning for this student. Social conflict detracts from students' sense of comfort in school spaces.

Students without a "place to *be*" express negative associations with school. A limited or lack of sense of ownership and meaning in school space may have profound effects on the degree to which students' security and belonging needs are met in schools. Participant responses suggest a sense of place facilitates learning by increasing levels of comfort, confidence, and motivation. Relationships with people, process, and space contribute to senses of connectedness and belonging. People and space are thus highly significant to students.

Students' "taken-for-granted" spatial meanings are fundamental to student security. The cumulative impact of sense of place for students seems to be a support system for learning. Students without "a place to be" do not have meaningful "spaces" whether emotional, physical, or intellectual, in which to escape the effects of stress and anxiety. Spatial meanings are sources of value for students as they represent ideational "spaces of security" at individual and collective levels.

Some students, finally, consider the meaning of school space as irrelevant for learning. These students suggest the school is "space" for them, separating the process of learning from the subjective meanings they construct in "learning" spaces. The work of Bronfenbrenner (1979) on the ecological influence on development rejects separation of

learning from environment. Bronfenbrenner suggests the environment is crucial to an individual's development. The potential importance for learning of students' subjective meanings of their school environment contributes to Bronfenbrenner's work.

iv. Ecological Influences on Learning

Bronfenbrenner (1979) recognizes the importance for learning of an individual's relationship with his or her environment. This study builds on Bronfenbrenner's work as it investigates students' perceptions of the spaces in which they learn, the meanings these spaces hold, and the possible implications for learning. The data indicates overwhelmingly that students construct a diversity of meanings in school spaces. "Learning spaces" are meaningful to students and represent various senses of place.

Meaningful school space is significant as Bronfenbrenner (1979) suggests the environments most powerful in shaping learning and psychological growth are those that have meaning to individuals. Space matters in schools. Sense of place, further, may be important for learning as a means of "connecting" students to schools. Meaningful space is important for fulfilment of students' needs for safety and belonging in schools. The meanings students construct in school terrain, further, contribute to students' sense of ownership and identity formation in schools.

The potential implications of sense of place for effective teaching and learning are central to this investigation. The findings in this study open up possibilities for greater understandings of students' experiences in schools and expand horizons of educational research. Chapter Six considers the applications of this investigation and recommends avenues of further research into the significance of space and place for learning.

CHAPTER SIX - CONCLUSIONS

This research investigates the significance of school spaces to students and the possible implications of sense of place for learning. This thesis is a "re-presentation" of students' perceptions of the meaning of school spaces based on my interpretation of the data. I acknowledge my perspectives as researcher in this hermeneutic study in which meaning as interpretation is central to the investigation. The responses in the data set are specific to Cordova Secondary School. The data are trustworthy and credible, nevertheless, and commonalities may be applied to other secondary school settings.

The data are diverse, reflecting the great variety of student participants and the multiple illustrations of students' subjective experiences of school spaces. Common themes emerge from the data set nonetheless, contributing to our understandings of the potential implications of students' relationships with school spaces for learning.

Commonalities Within Multiplicity

Students' numerous spatial experiences illustrate the diverse nature of their relationships with spaces and the meanings they construct individually and collectively. The commonality uniting all perspectives investigated in this study is the importance to students of "taken-for-granted" meanings they construct in school. My analysis reveals the significance for students of these subjective meanings for individual and collective identity and sense of belonging in schools. This understanding of the contributions of space to positive educational experience may be generalized to other schools. This exploration of the dynamics of meaning-making in schools extends the concept of learning and the self. This study furthers our understandings of student agency and ownership and opens up the possibility of even deeper insights into the important

relationships between spatial meanings and learning.

The development of a sense of place in school space whether it be social, apathetic, instrumental or nostalgic in nature, is profoundly significant to students. Underlying complex webs of student agency, identity formation, and ownership are meaningful spatial attributions. A sense of connectedness to specific school spaces and to the school as a whole emerges as a result of student agency. The ability to choose and to act in unique ways to meet their own needs allows students to fulfill safety and belonging needs in school spaces. Within this multiplicity, commonalities unite students' diverse senses of place.

Participants in this study believe, first, school space is both public and predominantly "student space." All respondants perceive a spatial division between students and teachers and express a sense of autonomy in their "student space." The identification of "student space" furthermore, is a source of collective identity for participants. "Student space" contributes significantly to their comfort levels in schools.

The majority of students, second, have some sense of ownership to specific locations at either the collective or individual level in Cordova Secondary School. Participants illustrate, moreover, how they claim and defend territories. Student territoriality both individually and collectively represents student agency to secure their "own" space in schools. The importance of territoriality at the collective level stems from student identity formation in schools with specific social groups occupying certain spaces. Spatial territoriality, further, illustrates the powered nature of school space. Students' personal territories are spaces of solace, balancing the potential negative associations of other territorial claims.

The meaning, third, of the existential spaces in Cordova Secondary School for students is profound. Participants' emotional attachments to school spaces are significant to them as they influence their spatial use and their sense of connectedness to school space. Memories, finally, contribute to the meaning of school spaces for students that have been attending Cordova Secondary School the longest. Familiarity of space emerges as crucial for sense of place in this investigation.

Purposive acts, fourth, to secure safety and belonging needs in schools represent essential movements in students' spatial "dance." The performance of empowering choices unites individuals in school spaces. The common thread connecting students' agential activity is the value they gain from their empowerment. Participants construct emotional, physical, ideational, cultural, and even intellectual "spaces of security" as they meet their safety and belonging needs in schools. Students' purposive choice to meet their own needs, further, is evident both in and out of classrooms. Individual acts of agency and the formation of individual senses of place assert the power of each student and are fundamental to the fulfilment of students needs. The very act of constructing meaning in school space represents agency as it connects students to school space contributing to a sense of belonging.

Students demonstrate identity formation, finally, primarily at the collective level, but also at the individual level. The identities students develop contribute to their sense of belonging and connectedness to school space. The various senses of place participants demonstrate illustrate the multiple nature of student identities and the cultures from which they emerge. Identities based on students' diverse attachments to school spaces lead to the construction of multiple "spaces of security" that meet students' safety and

belonging needs.

Participants identify, further, familiarity of space, process, and people as elements of sense of place. Space and process that students know and understand contribute to their levels of comfort and security. Students' relationships to spaces are thus significant. Social connections to peers are also crucial to a sense of belonging. Relationships with teachers, moreover, enhance sense of place.

Students in this study identify the power of positive relationships with teachers for creation of sense of belonging. Noddings (1992) in *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education* argues the establishment of caring relations between students and teachers is crucial for learning. Teachers, for Noddings, have a great impact on how students experience school space (Noddings, 1992, p. 106). A trusting relationship between students and teachers is necessary, therefore, for students' sense of safety and security: "All children need to feel safe in their relations with teachers" (ibid., p. 107). The data indicates overwhelmingly that a positive relationship with teachers represents an additional "space of security" for students contributing to their ability to feel safe and connected to school.

Participants value sense of place as a means to meet their safety and belonging needs in school space. Meaning-making is significant, moreover, as it is available to all students. Senses of place are diverse, embracing the multiplicity that a culturally rich student population represents. Educational research should acknowledge the possible effects of sense of place for learning in the rich cultural arenas of modern schools.

Participants believe spatial meaning is significant for learning. The implications of the significance of meaning to students and to learning open up directions for further

pedagogical inquiry contributing to and expanding literature on alternative dimensions of education. This study has potential applications and avenues of further research that will improve both teaching and learning by embarking into what constitutes multiple school cultures and forms of identity formation. Findings will deepen our understandings of the many dimensions of learning.

Contributions to Eductional Research

It is essential to outline the ways in which the findings from this study may be put into practice. The facilitation of students' ability to create multiple "spaces of security" is crucial at a time when school hallways and classrooms are increasingly crowded and violence is more prevalent in schools. The quality of education students are receiving should be a primary consideration. The following suggested applications emphasize the ways in which students may be empowered to create their "own" spaces to meet their safety and belonging needs in schools.

Choice is vital for students if they are to act as agents to fulfill their needs. Students demonstrate agency in numerous ways and for multiple reasons as illustrated in this research. Provisions of freedom of choice to students enables diverse needs to be met and allows students to create their "own" space in schools. Freedom to choose should exist, furthermore, both in and outside the classroom.

Choices of spaces in which to work or freedom in how work-space is used should be available to students in the classroom. Outside of classrooms, students should be able to choose the spaces they appropriate and use with the understanding they may not infringe on other students' ability to learn. Movement through the school should be unrestricted enabling students to choose their own routes. Students should be given

freedom to choose, further, the ways they express themselves including, for example, body language and dress.

It is important to support, moreover, the provisions of choice for students in schools with learning environments that are "open." These modifications apply to the physical spatial structure of schools as well as to the regulations students face in classrooms and in the school as a whole.

A sense of "openness" facilitates student agency. "Openness" in school space may be both physical and ideational. Students favour physically "open" spaces. Classrooms, therefore, should have large windows, open doors, and should not be crowded. In "open" spaces students feel a sense of freedom and are able to identify "spaces of security."

Ideational "openness" comes from environments in which students are free to be themselves and to express their opinions. Students express a sense of security from "open" ideational environments. Highly regimented learning environments, in which student choice is limited and student action is highly controlled, restrict students' ability to be agents and to maintain personal senses of security. Creativity in classrooms, further, allows ideational openness as students are not constrained but are encouraged to create their "own" spaces. Facilitation of choice and "openness" allows students to construct, adapt, and maintain their "spaces of security" as personal acts of agency are possible and students can meet their diverse needs in multiple ways.

The applications associated with student ownership may be extended, further, into student creation of learning spaces. Participation in planning of instructional space would serve to empower students. Allowing students to collectively decide which

"comforts" of positive spaces such as "comfy" chairs or tables for gathering, to bring into terrains they consider stressful or fearful would help to neutralize negative attributions of space. Security is achieved through balance. Student participation in the creation of learning space represents, thus, a possible solution for the negative spatial attributions in school. The role of collaborative structuring of learning space, further, must be considered. Collaboration would strengthen student relationships with teachers and support student ownership in learning space.

It is essential to educate teachers, administrators, and teachers-in-training on student need for their "own" spaces, the role of spatial relationships in students' sense of connectedness to school, and the role of agency in student construction of "spaces of security." The significance of sense of place in schools for the fulfilment of students' safety and belonging needs has not been the subject of much research and must, therefore, be shared with educators. Teachers must understand the importance of choice for students. Choice in schools empowers students to build and shape their own spaces in which to learn. Freedoms achieved through choice facilitate the fulfilment of students' diverse spatial needs.

Multi-use space in schools is important if students are to negate negative emotional associations to certain spaces. Students suggest the associations they hold for certain classrooms in this study, for example, negatively affect their learning as they do not feel secure in these areas. Spaces students associate with negative emotions have a sense of "closedness" for students. Multi-use space is flexible, allows for choice and student construction of multiple existential associations. Certain locations, therefore, may not only be stressful or negative but may have some counter-balancing positive

associations for students.

Common areas in which students may claim as their own "student space" are crucial in schools. Crumpacker argues "sociopetal" regions drawing students together support student cultures: "A healthy culture depends on its members ability to gather together informally" (Crumpacker as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 40). Butin argues, further, student commons are "integral to providing a welcoming environment and effective learning space for students" (Butin, 2000, p. 1). A student common space represents a social centre fulfilling students' needs and wants for security and may result in increased academic and social well-being (ibid.)

Student common areas should be accessible and centrally located in schools. Crumpacker describes student common areas as "the family room of the school" and suggests they should have homelike features and comforts such as couches and tables (Crumpacker as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 40). Positive interactions for Crumpacker develop from comfortable surroundings: "homelike surroundings can facilitate family-like interactions" (ibid.). The incorporation of home-like furnishings in school space would serve to facilitate students' associations of comfort in schools.

The cafeteria at Cordova Secondary School represents an unofficial student common area. It is accessible, centrally located, and described by the majority of students as the "heart" of the school. The cafeteria is also a powered space, however, and associated with negative emotions for some students. Common areas in schools should, therefore, be multiple so that students may have a choice of spaces in which they feel psychologically, emotionally, and physically comfortable.

Sense of place must be fostered in schools. This research shows that sense of

place contributes to student identity formation and a sense of belonging in schools. A sense of comfort and connectedness in school space increases student motivation and desire to come to school. Crumpacker suggests a focus on "being close, sharing, connectedness, and trusting" is necessary to facilitate sense of place in schools (Crumpacker as cited in Meek, 1995, p. 35). Relationships are thus essential. Relationships create "place" out of "space" and contribute to feelings of security.

Knowing and being known by others is crucial for students. A secure sense of self is a basic human need. Belonging, similarly, represents an important component of sense of place. This study shows that a "social" sense of place is the most common among participants. Spatial relationships and interactions should be investigated as a means to contribute to community-building in schools. Work on community-building in schools has not considered the influence of space and sense of place on a sense of community.

For sense of place to develop students must be familiar, moreover, with the spaces in which they go to school. Spatial familiarity contributes to the spatial meanings students construct. The meanings of school spaces have significant effects on students. The possible impacts of spatial meaning on learning must be explored as a sense of place or a sense of belonging is fundamental for human identity.

In order to foster student and teacher relationships schools should consider keeping students together longer with the same teachers given the mutual consent of both student and teacher. Students generally do not have continuity of teacher from year to year in secondary school and they do not spend extended periods of time with any teachers. Secondary school students do not have, therefore, the same opportunity as

elementary school students to develop a relationship with any one teacher. Continuity of teacher should be considered as part of place-making in schools.

Cultural separations in school spaces should be a focus for teachers and administrators. Despite the fact cultural spatiality may contribute to collective cultural identity and sense of belonging at the level of the social group, this study shows students from cultural minorities are less likely to feel connected to the school as a whole. While official student common areas may be a means to foster cultural integration in school space, this research demonstrates that student groups claim and defend spaces and thus student common areas, too, may perpetuate cultural divisions in school spaces.

Cultural divisions in schools are not new nor are they unique to Cordova Secondary School. Great cultural diversity is the reality of modern schools. Student cultures in school spaces are extremely diverse. Students suggest they feel most comfortable with those people with whom they can freely communicate. In this study language is a barrier for communication between "Canadian" and International students. Overcoming such obstacles are a challenge all culturally diverse schools face. Cultural divisions in schools remain, thus, an issue that individual schools must address. It is important to assist all students develop a sense of place in schools if they are to meet their basic needs for safety and belonging. "Openness" through encouragement of creativity and choice is a means to incorporate and embrace diversity in schools.

Privacy needs, finally, must be fulfilled in schools. This study illustrates a perceived lack of privacy at Cordova Secondary School. Students express privacy as scarce in school space but achievable through their own agential action. Areas should be available in schools for students to temporarily claim as their own individual territory.

Individuals' needs for spaces of personal solace will increase with increased numbers of students in classrooms. Restrictions on access to places like the library during the school day limit students' ability to find "privacy" in school space when they need it. Students, as a result, are unable to create necessary "spaces of security."

As a teacher I am very aware that learning is not effective when students feel uneasy or sense they are under threat. Crowded classrooms impact students' abilities to maintain personal spaces and levels of comfort. Students need avenues through which to create their "own" space. The provision of choice is vital in schools if students are to be able to meet their security needs. Creation of a sense of "openness" through freedom of choice and encouragement of creativity empowers students to create "spaces of security" and fulfill safety and belonging needs.

Teachers must work with students collaboratively to create a sense of comfort in their classrooms. In doing so, students may begin to associate "teacher space" with the attributions of comfort and confidence they sense in "student space." It is possible to bring the positive attributes of comfort and confidence associated with the "heart" of the school into the classroom through the development of positive spatial and personal relationships and the recognition of students' personal, social, and spatial needs.

Implications for Future Research

This investigation focuses specifically on Grade 12 students at the secondary school level. Future research on this topic should address, therefore, the "silences" in this study. Factors affecting individual meaning-making in schools such as age, gender, and culture should be the focus of micro-studies. Different spatial school designs and approaches to education such as private or traditional schools at elementary and

secondary levels could serve as points of investigation into the factors affecting place-making in school space. Research should address moreover, how teachers, administrators, and support staff construct meanings in schools. Future study may consider the collaborative construction of meaning in school space by teachers and students collectively. The implications of meaning-making in space for effective teaching as well as learning would contribute significantly to educational research.

Comparative studies may examine sense of place for secondary versus elementary students. A comparison could address sense of place for Grade 12 students and Grade 7 students both at the "top" of their respective schools. Studies in elementary schools should address students' sense of place both in and outside of classroom spaces. The ways in which students and teachers, furthermore, construct meanings in schools spaces should be the basis of a comparative study. Considerations of how sense of place evolves over time through longitudinal studies of students, finally, would contribute to educational research. The implications of "sense of place" for schools beg further investigation. School "spaces" and "places" are highly significant for identity formation and sense of belonging. This study contributes to our understandings of student experiences in schools and alternative dimensions of education. Deeper understanding of processes and dimensions of spatial meaning-making in schools has profound significance and implications for improvements in teaching and learning.

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APPENDIX A - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The Instrumental Perspective

a. Appropriation

1. What area(s) in the school do you spend the most time in?
2. Why do you favour these spaces (this space) in particular?
3. Where do these spaces begin and end?
4. How long do you spend each day in this location?
5. What do you do in this space in the school each day?
6. Are the spaces you use most this year the same as those you used most last year?
7. How have they changed? Why?

b. Access

8. What areas do you consider "public" in the school?
9. What areas do you consider "private" in the schol?

c. Use

10. What behaviours are appropriate in these spaces?
11. What behaviours are inappropriate?
12. Are there "cues" to behaviour? People? Structured space? Sounds?
13. What are your signs that it is "time to..." do something, go somewhere, act a certain way...?
14. What "languages" are spoken in different spaces in the school?
15. What is the "language" (chosen words, tone, body language) of the gym? Hallway? Library?
16. How do the meanings of spaces change? For example, the hallway at 11:30 (lunch) versus the hallway at 12:00 (class time)?
17. Can you identify between "front stage" versus "back stage" in the same space?
18. How does your *actual* use of space in school conflict with *intended* use of school space?
19. Are the "expected" norms/roles negotiated by students in school spaces?
20. How are conflicts resolved? Who wins?

d. Restriction

21. What spaces are "reserved" in the sense of denial of access to certain groups?
22. Is this negotiated by those excluded?
23. From where are others excluded and you have access? (and vice versa)
24. From where are students excluded?
25. Where do students have access?
26. Are these rights of access negotiated by study?

(APPENDIX A CONTINUED)

Routinized Behaviour, Patterns of Use

1. Do you have any routines? Something you do everyday at certain times?
2. Can you give me an example?
3. What are your patterns of spatial use?
4. Why do you choose to use these particular spaces?

The Territorial Perspective

a. Individual Territory

1. Would you consider any area or areas at school as *your* individual space?
2. Where do these spaces (does this space) begin and end?
3. Do people infringe on your space? What do you do?
4. Can you give me an example?
5. How did this space come to be *your* space? Who selected it?
6. Do you personalize this space? How?
7. Do you have a strong sense of personal space?
8. Where are your boundaries?
9. Where does your personal space begin and end?
10. Do you ever feel crowded at school? Where? When? Can you give me an example?

b. Private Space

11. What private spaces (areas) do you have at school?
12. How are these private spaces (areas) identified?
13. Where do these spaces begin and end?
14. How do you use your private spaces?
15. How do you personalize these private spaces?
16. Do you feel you have privacy at school?

c. Collective Territory

17. Would you consider any area or areas at school as the space of your *friends / social group*? 18. Where do these spaces (does this space) begin and end?
19. Do people infringe on your social space? What do you do?
20. How did this space come to be *your* space? Who selected it?
21. Who do you meet in these spaces? When do you meet in these spaces?
22. Can anyone use/enter the spaces you describe? *Does* anyone use these spaces?
23. Would you describe your space(s) as private or public?

(APPENDIX A CONTINUED)

d. Defence of Space

24. Are the "turfs" / territories you identified ever infringed upon?
25. How are spaces negotiated?
26. How are territories maintained?
27. Are spaces negotiated between individual students?
28. Between social groups?
29. Between students and school staff?

The Sentimental and Emotional Perspective

a. Comfort and Fear

1. Are there spaces in which you feel most comfortable? relaxed?
2. Where do these spaces begin and end?
3. Where are the spaces you associate with stress? fear?
4. Where are the boundaries to these spaces?
5. Are there "thresholds" between these spaces of fear? stress? comfort?

b. Play and Work / Stimulation and Boredom

6. Where is the centre of the school for you? That is, where would you call the "heart" of the school? Why?
7. What areas of the school do you associate with play? With leisure? With work?
8. Can you identify areas of stimulation? boredom?
9. Where are these spaces? What makes them stimulating? boring?
10. Can you identify areas of status versus stigma? What makes them so?

c. "Open" and "Closed"

11. Where are the "open" spaces in the school? (Those spaces with a sense of freedom)
12. Where are the "closed" spaces in the school? (Those spaces with a sense of boundedness)

d. Memories

13. What spaces evoke fond memories for you? Can you give me an example?
14. What spaces evoke feelings [positive and/or negative] for you?

e. Meaning

15. Are certain school spaces meaningful to you?
16. What makes school space meaningful to you?
17. What makes you feel comfortable or makes you feel as though you belong?

(APPENDIX A CONTINUED)

Collective / Individual Identity

1. Do you identify with certain spaces in the school?
2. Do certain spaces identify you? Your social group?
3. Do you think this space is important? Valuable as your identifier?
4. Do you feel as though you belong in school space? What gives you this sense of belonging?
5. What makes you feel "connected" to school?

Space and Learning

1. What areas do you most associate with learning?
2. In what spaces do you learn best? Are these spaces always good for learning? Explain.
3. What features of these spaces facilitate your learning?
4. What features of this school facilitate or hinder your learning?
5. Would you say that your association with school spaces facilitates your learning? If so, how? If not, why not?

APPENDIX B - OBSERVING SCHOOL SPACES

Before School

It is 8:00 A.M. late in March and students arrive at school in time for first class. There is a line of students sitting outside the library waiting for it to open. The halls are clean and garbage cans empty. Students stand in groups in the main hallway while others sit up against their lockers reading. Grade 11 students fill the benches in the Castle Lobby and students sit at tables in the cafeteria, some sleeping, some eating, some just talking. The first bell, the warning bell, rings and students head off in varying directions to their classes.

***

Students enter the classroom one or two at a time. As they arrive they remove their hats. The desks are arranged in five straight rows. There is a seating plan. The room is quite dark as tattered brown curtains are pulled to cover four large windows. Sunlight shines through holes in the curtains. Students pick up handouts laid out on the side counter before sitting down. The handouts are coloured coded. Students file them in the appropriate sections of their binders. The volume is low. A large sign dominates the front of the room: "When in doubt change into moles."

Instruction begins at the bell. The teacher's voice is loud and he quickly takes control of the class. I sit in the back corner of the room in a desk to which no one is assigned. The seat feels hard and cold. To my right the walls are covered with tattered posers of periodic tables and equations. To my left there are models of molecules and chemical compounds as well as lab equipment set up in preparation for the lesson. No hats, no food, no drink. Both doors are closed.

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

Students are called at random to answer questions. They pay close attention. No one raises a hand. Two students quietly talking are called on next. I feel a sense of pressure and urgency. The teacher stands at the front of the class on a higher level, writing on the chalk board, looking down at the students. He controls the space, the activity, the students. After twenty minutes the first equation is solved and the board is covered with symbols and numbers. The class begins question number two.

I feel uncomfortable and confused. Students have told me in interviews they associate this space with work, stress, even fear. Drawn curtains make it dark, closed. My own memories of Chemistry rush back to me making me feel uneasy.

***

I slip quietly into the classroom halfway through the period. Both doors are open. The teacher walks around the room, helping students with their assignments. Numbers and symbols cover the board. There are two small windows on the far wall and both are covered by curtains. Some students are working while others are chatting about jobs, life, sports. Students are wearing hats, some drinking pop. There is no seating plan. The desks are empty in the middle of the room the rest, like a picture frame, are full. Books and bags lay scattered between the desks next to students. Some students work alone and others with a partner.

To my left there are scattered textbooks, papers, maps, binders, boxes, and folders. On the wall there are posters of current events, flags of the world, and a large painted scene containing a sun, a ship, mermaid, and jumping fish. Next to this image there is a dinosaur. To my right, vine-like lines are painted above two chalky

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

blackboards. There is writing on the desks. Students around me are speaking a language I don't understand.

There is a sense of work and yet it is relaxed. I don't feel overwhelmed or pressured. The maps remind me of my own classroom - something I understand. The room represents multiple things. I cling to the maps as the math goes on around me.

Morning Break

The hallways are clean and empty. First period is about to end. One boy sits at a desk in the hallway outside the closed door of his classroom. The bell rings and students spill into the corridors. There is a flow of people through the veins of the school. People stop, others dodge to get around them. Garbage begins to dot the floors.

Students gather at the tables in the cafeteria. Two boys are punching one another. A boy and girl embrace. Grade 12 students occupy the central tables. Students sit at one table and this table is the focus of all attention. Others sit on surrounding tables facing inward. The "Grade 12 table" tradition students speak of is a reality.

Students flow through the Castle Lobby, no one stops. Ten minutes later there is garbage - siren wrap, plastic bags and food wrappers - scattered in the main hallway. As I head down the Home Economics wing a teacher notices me. "Are you lost? You never come down here." The space is unfamiliar to me and I feel somewhat lost.

***

The room is bright and very yellow. Sunshine streams in large windows along one wall of the classroom. Students are self-directed, collecting supplies and ingredients, putting on aprons. It is relaxed and warm. I smell food. I hear the cutting, clinking,

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

chopping sounds of knives on cutting boards. There is a hum of refrigerators and a whirr of tumble driers and blenders. Water is running.

A large poster faces me: "Fruit - More Than Just Apples and Oranges." There are glossy images of different foods on the walls. The room is very bright with yellow tables, orange chairs, and cupboards that could use some paint. Through the windows I see students out playing soccer. Pots bubble on the stoves. A student arrives halfway through the class, "Yah, I know, I'm late." He grabs a chair and sits down.

***

The library is quiet, bright, open. Through the windows green fields are visible. Students sit alone, scattered throughout the library at tables listening to walkmans as they work, read, sleep. The space seems to be used in multiple ways, as work space, as sleep space, as social space. Students "surfing" the net, responding to emails, and typing compositions occupy the computers. Students with spares lounge in four "comfy" chairs. Some read magazines, others sleep or talk softly.

In the Science Wing I enter a girls washroom I have never been in before. The space is unfamiliar. It feels odd, foreign, cold. I am forced to squint due to the bright sun streaming through large windows. One window has been broken and is temporarily patched. As I leave I notice someone has written "Grad 2002 rocks!" in thick black ink on the wall.

***

The room is dark. Torn curtains cover the windows. To my right cases of rocks and posters of the earth curling off the walls. There are sinks and empty beakers. To my

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

left at the far side of the classroom I see more sinks, more cases displaying rocks. There are shelves of glass test-tubes and containers. The teacher sorts papers at an old table at the front of the room. He stands before a large screen next to an overhead projector. Students stand around chatting. Their voices are loud. Some eat and drink.

The bell goes and students continue to talk, eat, and drink. The teacher calls for attention and closes both doors. Students slowly take their seats. There is no seating plan. Most students sit in the middle of the room at the back. The lesson begins. Two students continue to talk. They are not even facing the front of the room. Another student appears to sleep on his desk, his head propped up on a book. All students turn to a certain page in their textbook when instructed to do so, even those apparently sleeping.

A late arrival sneaks in the side door and indicates for me to move. There are empty desks around me and no seating plan in the class. Apparently, I am in his desk.

Lunchtime

Students again fill the hallways. Some head towards the art wing on their way outside to smoke, or to their cars to take off for lunch. Other students who were outside smoking head into the cafeteria. In the Castle Lobby students are pushing, yelling, and standing on benches. International students and English Second Language students form groups in the Castle Lobby. Canadian students flow through and do not stop. Others form teams and play volleyball in the gym. The Castle Lobby is open and bright.

Heading towards the cafeteria I notice the bench between the Castle Lobby and the Cafeteria is filled with the Spanish-speaking students. Both sides of the hallway are lined with students so I am forced to swerve through on my way to the cafeteria.

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

The hallways seem to flow into the cafeteria. It is crowded. There are not enough seats for everybody so students stand around tables eating and talking. Grade 8 students sit near the back of the room next to the doors heading out into the courtyard. Grade 9 and 10 students sit in the middle of the room. There is a table of Asian students separate from the others. Grade 11 students fill side tables and Grade 12 students sit and stand in a large group at the front of the cafeteria. There are no Grade 12 students at other tables.

Voices are loud. The remarks of two students yelling at each other across the cafeteria stand out "Save me a spot!!" A bag is thrown and placed on a seat. "Fuck!" Amid the chorus of different voices and languages I can not help but notice the vulgarity.

I stand to the side of the cafeteria. There is a garbage can off to my right. Students throw garbage from their tables towards the can. They miss. They look at me. I say nothing and do nothing. They leave the garbage on the ground. Again. I say nothing. Students do not seem concerned with what I will do. Are they testing me? I feel ignored. Surveillance and supervision is limited in the cafeteria. I see a custodian and several teacher's assistants dispersed throughout the room.

Two students play fight. Students use cell phones, chuck a ball around. A senior student has a junior student in a headlock. Another student enters the cafeteria alone, notices an empty seat at a table occupied by Grade 10 students. He sits down and is ignored by those at the table. A Grade 12 student arrives late to the cafeteria. He signals to someone as he arrives at the head table. Another boy gets up and he sits down. This guy must have some power. Teachers come in to buy food, jumping the line they quickly get their food and leave to eat elsewhere. The sense of the space as a social meeting

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

place dominates. Students talk first and eat second. It seems to get louder and louder as the lunch break progresses.

In the main hallway groups of students with bright blue, red, and green hair sit up against lockers. Both boys and girls wear dark black makeup and chains. Not far away, a young girl sits alone reading a book, eating her lunch. Toward the library Grade 9 students form a large circle blocking the hall. They are playing with a hacky sack, kicking and jumping to keep it in the air.

Walking down the Home Economics wing is difficult. Senior Grade 11 students line both sides. I am forced to step over their legs extended across the hallway. Their activity and conversation stops dead as I go by. This is intimidating. As I pass swearing resumes. They talk of drinking and a party on the weekend when "John" was "so wasted."

The room next to the library is jammed with International Students. I don't see any way to enter. The language is foreign to me. Upstairs overlooking the library there are two separate but large circles of students seated on the grounded. One is composed of seniors and the other juniors. There is no interaction between the two. Volume is loud, students sprawl out on the ground. At the bell students get up and move. They disperse in various directions, navigating through the hallway, dodging obstacles on their way to next class.

***

The theatre is dark and cool. Students are sprawled out on chairs and couches blowing huge bubbles with pink gum. They shout and laugh. The teachers asks students

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

to move up onto the bleachers for the start of class. They try to drag the couch onto the bleachers. The talking continues as the teacher calls for attention. Students wear hats, listen to walkmans, eat.

There is loud yahooing and booing as the teacher continues to get students' attention. The atmosphere is energized. Wild behaviours are okay. Creativity and verbal and physical expression is encouraged. Students start class with a game. The space feels so different from others I have visited. For some students it is here they are most comfortable. Others fear this space.

***

It is warm and bright. Two small windows at the back are uncovered. The desks are in rows and students head to assigned seats. The classroom is decorated with student projects, and images of flowers, posters of Monet. Classroom rules are posted. There is a hum of fans and the flicking of pages as students grab dictionaries and begin looking up words listed on the chalkboard. The teacher greets students as they enter. The teacher connects with students, looking at each and smiling. One comes in ten minutes late, dragging her shoes as she walks.

***

The bell goes. Students are standing throughout the room chatting. The teacher enters the room and they slowly take their seats. There is a seating plan. Announcements play over the speakers in the room. No one is listening. It is hard to hear the announcements over the buzz of conversation. One student goes into the hallway in order to hear them. The teacher stands at the front of the room at a podium and begins

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

the class as soon as the announcements end. There is a sense of formality. Ssshhh. The students begin to quiet down. Some students sit with books open, others leave their books closed. Some students have no books at all. These students slide their desks over to share with someone else in the class. No food or drink is allowed. I notice bottles of water and someone with a drink from McDonalds. One door remains open at the front of the room and the other, at the back, is closed with a sign reading: "Use Front Door Only" Thank You." Students are permitted to come and go as they wish. The teacher continues the lesson.

I leave and wander back through "lunchtime hot-spots." Students walk down the hallways alone or in twos heading to or from class. They avoid my gaze. Students on spares sit in groups of two or three in the cafeteria and Castle Lobby. Only one tables remains in the cafeteria. The hallway between the Castle Lobby and Cafeteria is empty as is the main hall in front of the office. I see no administrators or other teachers in these spaces.

There is a strong smell of smoke. Someone has set fire to the dumpster behind the gymnasium. From the Castle Lobby I can smell cigarette smoke from students standing smoking next to the building instead of off school grounds.

***

The room is dark and quiet. There are lots of windows but they are covered with sliding panels. The teacher stands next to an overhead projector. Students sit at six large tables located near the front of the room. The room is very pink. At the back there are tables with sewing machines, ironing boards, baby chairs, and stacks of magazines.

(APPENDIX B CONTINUED)

The objects in the room are varied, from sewing materials to collages of music groups. The room is warm and there is a humming sound of driers next door. Tables are pulled up against shelves. There is a wheelchair in the corner and kites posted high up near the ceiling. A row of scissors clings magnetically to the wall. About half the class watchs the teacher, others are doodling, talking, and sleeping.

APPENDIX C -
TABLE 5.1 STUDENT PERCEPTION OF SCHOOL SPACES AS MEANINGFUL

Dimensions of Meaning	Student Narratives
Spaces: Relationships between Students and Spaces	"you know, you just *know* [emphasis mine], where to go and where everything is and where everyone is going to be." **"everything just seems so natural."** **"it is just a space that makes me happy...I like it there."** "the cafeteria is meaningful because that is where everyone just knows to go and that is where you can keep in with everything that is going on...in the cafeteria you get to sit down with people and really talk...that's important."
Friends: Relationships with Peers	**"knowing most of the students helps...because you don't feel like a stranger in the school."** "I think just because I know everyone in Grade 12 and sometimes you're walking around even at the mall and you see people and even if you don't know their names you can recognize just their face." "it's the friends I have here that make it meaningful, not the school really." **"Meaningful? my friends of course."**
Teachers: Relationships between Students and Teachers	"with the teachers, it's like you know each other...they make me feel comfortable here." **"teachers, they totally welcome students to come...at first you may not know them but with time you do and it gets more fun."** "the teachers are really important because, like, I made a really poor impression when I was younger and now it's like I want to leave here with them having a good impression of *me* [italics mine]." "...developing relationships with teachers is a big part of it too."
Time	**"Five years here! That's a long time...there is lots here because it has been so long."** **"I mean it's *your* [italics mine] school...since Grade 8 right?"** "it's like we've all grown up here together." "the teachers and my friends are meaningful and the building means something to me because it's where I've grown." "I think it means something just because I've been here since Grade 8 and it's kind of like it's *all* [italics mine] going to be ended kind of thing. It has been five years of my life!"
Memories in School Spaces	"there is just so much here...I guess all the memories and all the years I've been here and how it has changed with different teachers and principals. That is why it is meaningful to me." **"It is all the memories, like we all have memories pretty much *all over* [italics mine] the school and over the last five years I can think of loads of memories - good and bad - that's important."**
A Fondness for "C.S.S."	**"I like this school, I actually like it and I think it's that *that* [italics mine] keeps me coming back."** "I just love coming to school - I hate the work of course, but I love having fun." **"I want to be an C.S.S. Grad."** "Meaningful? Yah, I'll look back fondly on this school."

APPENDIX D -
TABLE 5.2 THE IMPLICATIONS OF SENSE OF PLACE FOR LEARNING

Influences on Learning	Student Narratives
Confidence	"it feels good to know what will happen, where and when...you know the routine and that helps learning I think." "when you know the space and where your friends will be and stuff, it takes that confusion out of your mind and helps you concentrate more on school I think." **"I think that when you are comfortable or you have a certain confidence it means you learn there well."**
Comfort	"a sense of belonging, yah, it helps me learn because feeling a part of something - that you belong - makes you feel a little bit better inside." **"I feel comfortable, and once I feel comfortable I want to learn. It's like I need that comfortable phase first."** "it helps learning because you feel more comfortable and secure in the space...You feel like you know what you're doing." "when I'm comfortable I can focus more on what I need to focus on whereas if I'm uncomfortable I pay more attention to that than anything else." "I think you learn more from it if everything is meaningful to you because that way you're more comfortable in the space as a whole. You get more from it."
Safety/Security	"it helps me to know where I can get help if I need it...and not just where but to who." "there are a lot of people I could go to for help and I feel like they'd help me." **"if you feel secure then everything else is easier."** "I know that if I need extra help people will help me, they won't say no or whatever. I know how friendly everyone is here."
Belonging	"I feel like I fit in and so I want to come and learn and I have a reason for coming here." "because I feel welcome I don't mind going to class and I like to see my teachers after...I have a feeling they think quite highly of me so yah, that makes it easier to learn." **"I would say it helps me learn because I know that here I'm kind of *welcome* [italics mine]...I'm *wanted* [italics mine] and I'm learning a lot here whereas if I went somewhere else that would all change."**
Relationships	**"having a bond or whatever with a teacher helps because you want to work for them."** "when something is meaningful it totally opens you up to things...like to more relationships with people...like with teachers, and that helps me learn."
Motivation	"I think *liking* [italics mine] something obviously makes you want to be there, right?" "if I like the atmosphere there, then yah, it helps me learn because I want to go there." "it helps you learn by you wanting to come I guess. I live right next to Bridgeview but I spend all that time and money to take the bus here everyday." **"it is just that I don't mind coming, not at all."** **"how I feel about this place just helps me come to school everyday, that's all."**

APPENDIX E -
HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

challenge minds
change worlds

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA - HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR	DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL	SUPERVISOR
Gillian Judson **Graduate Student**	**EDCD**	**Dr. Elizabeth Churcill**

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):

TITLE: **Investigating the Meaning Students Give to Learning Spaces**

PROJECT No.	START DATE	END DATE	APPROVAL
384-01	**1/18/2002**	**1/17/2003**	**1/18/2002**

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the University of Victoria Ethics Review Committee on Research and Other Activities Involving Human Subjects has examined the research proposal and concludes that, in all respects, the proposed research meets appropriate standards of ethics as outlined by the University of Victoria Research Regulations Involving Human Subjects.

[redacted]

J. Howard Brunt,
Associate Vice-President, Research

This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above term provided there is no change in the procedures. Extensions/minor amendments may be granted upon receipt of "Request for Continuing Review or Amendment of an Approved Project" form.

384-01

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A Place To *Be*

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August 22, 2002