Rosenthal: Well, starting with personal or family background, I think, yes, my childhood experiences, all of them, have a lot to do with the choices I made later in life, academic choices included— I think one of the first memories I have is of my father, my father's favorite lullaby, which was about believing in people, in their brave spirit, in the beauty of their soul and a positive future for mankind. My father died when I was very young and, in fact, this was one of the very, very few memories that I treasured of him. I fully understood the meaning of all the words only when I discovered the printed poem later on in life. Another important influence was of a teacher that I had in third grade. She was very, very important for me personally. She filled some of the gap that was created by my father's death. Her love for people only strengthened the effect that he had on my life. Every Friday she would take the last hour of her teaching and would read us a chapter from an adaptation she wrote of Les Misérables; she adapted it to the level of eight or nine years old. For the whole year she kept reading us that book. And then she left. This was following the end of the Second World War. I was very attached to her and, I don't remember if I cried or not, but she knew I was very upset and she called me and she explained to me why she must, must, absolutely must go to Europe. She talked about the many orphans there. She said she's going to find a home for them and bring them to their new homes. In fact, that was indeed what happened. She became later on very well known for her work with children and youth immigration to Israel after the Second World War. And I met her maybe once or twice again in my life, quite accidentally. She smiled when I told her I was studying psychology. She said, "Well, who would not have predicted that?" or something like that. Another formative experience, during my teen years I was a, a member of a youth movement. I was very active as a guide and had a very, very close relationship with the children and youngsters that
were under my guidance. I knew then that whatever I'll do later in life will have to do with working with people. And--so that's how after my army service, and a couple of years on a kibbutz I chose to study psychology. I went to the Hebrew University, which was at the time the only university in the country. Yes, I was born in Israel. I didn't leave the country until I was twenty-five years old, when I left for my graduate studies in Stanford. That was the very first time I left Israel, very first time I had to use spoken English. Although I had to read in English for my undergraduate studies, that was the first time I had to use the language for writing papers etc.

Shulman-Brody: And your graduate studies at Stanford for, were for both a second and a third degree, or just your third degree?

Rosenthal: I came with a BA in psychology and in philosophy. I also had one year of graduate studies in Israel in psychology while finishing, my BA in philosophy. In fact, when I came to Stanford I was going to work on "mathematical models of learning". This was the "in" field at the time. However, the research I'd done in Israel prior to going to Stanford had a strong influence on my final choice. As an undergraduate student I was a research assistant of Jack Gewirtz. We did a study on the development of smiling in infants residing in an institution. These were either orphans or children of non-functioning families. We developed the research methodology and collected data on that particular group. That infant institution was not very different from the one Spitz and Bowlby described in their work. This was 1960. There were still in Israel two or three large institutions with over a hundred children in each. And one of our findings was that by comparison with a group of children from middle class homes living with their parent, institution infants developed smiling much later than the home reared children. My heart was with this kind of research, but there was the group pressure of my fellow-students in Israel. The prestige in those days was to work on mathematical models. My closest friends at the time opted for mathematical models of decision-making. We all went, you know, as one group out of Israel. Amnon Rapoport went to North Carolina and Amos Tuersky to Ann Arbor. I went to Stanford, and chose to focus on learning models. As close friends, we remained in contact all of those first years. However, at the end of my first year at Stanford I got married and went through a personal crisis. I decided then that my real interest was in studying children and children's development, and I switched. My friends regarded it as "desertion" or even "betrayed". They could not understand it. It took a lot of explaining. But for me, that was really coming to the point where I knew I belonged. I was interested in what I was doing. Maybe it was an act of, you know, maturing, thinking, "What am I going to do the rest of my life?" I realized I was not really interested in playing with mathematics. I proved "to the boys" that I could do it and that was it. I enjoyed playing with equations but that was all. I chose something that was really of interest.

Shulman-Brody: And how did the interest formulate, that it was going to be child development and not mathematical models? When you say--

Rosenthal: I was working then on a mathematical model that predicts people's learning of nonsense syllables. But that was like, how can I put it, it was like a comparison between finding out about real life vis-à-vis solving crossword puzzles. Finding out about children, their behavior, their unfolding social behavior that was a real challenge. I find children and their interaction with the world, till this day, a fascinating and intriguing mystery.

Shulman-Brody: So you talked about three people that you remained in contact with, were there other people who were significant influences on your work, mentorship, or just colleagues?

Rosenthal: Well, when I came to Stanford, I came on a fellowship that allowed me to choose who I want to work with. So when I decided on the switch I went to work with Eleanor Maccoby and Bob Sears. I think sort of maybe the relationship with Eleanor Maccoby was the most influential. As a student I didn't always agree with the methodology or some of their theoretical arguments. They had a great influence on me. In terms of the personalities involved, not just the kind of work they did. In fact I, I did my studies at Stanford, I was there for only two years. I got married at the end of my first year at Stanford and my husband decided he's going back to England. So I stayed for an extra six months and as soon as I finished my prelims and my dissertation proposal and defiance I left for England. I must say that both Eleanor Maccoby and Bob Sears were very, very helpful in getting me to make my final decision as to my
dissertation subject and methodology. It was Eleanor Maccoby who was very helpful, extremely helpful, in helping me narrow down my ideas of what I wanted to do for my PhD into a sizeable and clean-cut study. I knew I was going to collect the data in England where I had no support. I had no intellectual or financial or any academic support. My being a non-American meant that I could not continue getting my fellowship support while collecting data in England. The department then suggested that what I should do is defend my thesis before I ever collected data, which meant I had to defend any possible result and explain it's theoretical implications. I must say, they were extremely considerate. That really enabled me to complete my studies without breaking a marriage. Unfortunately, this also meant that my stipend, or any kind of financial support was cut at that point, and I had to fend for myself both for my livelihood and for the expenses of data collection. Both of us, my husband and I, had no work at that stage. When he arrived in England, he realized he could not get the kind of a job he wanted to find. So that was, you know, a source of concern because I was afraid that I'll have to start working and I will not be able to finish my studies. And, again, you know, we didn't have e-mail in those days, but letters from both Eleanor Maccoby and Bob Sears were very encouraging. They helped setting me up in contact with people in London University. This helped me find a lab attached to a kindergarten. I did my study on preschool kindergarten children. And the person who, you know, became not exactly a mentor, but somebody with whom I had long debates on the design of my study and the interpretation of my data was John Bowlby. I was in touch with Bowlby ever since that study that we did on the institution babies in Jerusalem on the development of smiling. A student of his did a similar research in England on smiling. So although Jack Gewirtz came with a conditioning learning model, Bowlby was interested in the data from his ethological model. In 1960/61 he was not yet talking about the attachment model as we know it today. I met him again in '64 when I was collecting data. We had many meetings. He liked very much the design of my study. My lab situation was very similar to what later became known as "The Strange Situation". Likewise, it was designed to elicit what in the Sears-Maccoby model was called "dependency". Bowlby definitely did not accept the Sears-Maccoby model of early social learning and didn't like the term "Dependency", which was the main theme of my research. Bowlby thought that my findings supported his ideas, cine the increased "anxiety condition" effected only "proximity seeking" behavior closer to his and it had to effect on "attention seeking", or other "dependency behaviors". The papers based on this study definitely showed the fingerprints of Bowlby. Yes, during those years he definitely influenced my thinking. Still, I maintained my reservations concerning the attachment theory. I felt it was becoming like psychoanalysis, a theory that explains everything. My thoughts at the time were published in two papers in 1973. In spite of years and heavy volumes of research publications I still think the theory explains only a small part of early social-emotional development.

Shulman-Brody: And in the intervening years, have there been important people with whom you've had that kind of dialog, continuing dialog--people who were important in your intellectual development.

Rosenthal: I don't know. I, I, I'm not sure if I would call it intellectual development. Another person who influenced my professional life was Al Solnut from Yale Child Study Center. But this was years later.

Shulman-Brody: What has happened to your work on "curiosity"?

Rosenthal: It culminated as a theoretical monograph; it was a rather lengthy monograph in which I reviewed the literature. I discussed the effects of intra-psychological factors like temperament and gender as well as contextual factors and inter-personal ones. Harriet Rheingold from Chapel Hill, NC encouraged. Well, in fact not that many years, just from this perspective it looks like many years. But let me just kind of give you some biographical sequence data. So I finished, you know, I arrived in England end of '63, and finished my PhD in '65. At that point I got my first job as a lecturer in psychology at London University in Birkbeck College. Following my dissertation I became interested in children's response to novelty. I disagreed with the all-important role Bowlby attributed to the relationship with mother in children's curiosity. I planned to develop my research on this aspect of development. The following years, however, involved dislocation and moving from one county to another, requiring repeated adjustments. My husband was invited to work in Israel. I had to develop new courses at the Hebrew University. Just as I was developing my research my husband decided to take a job in Canada. The same pattern repeated. Soon
after I got my research grant (socio-emotional development in infancy) from the Canadian government, my husband decided to return to Israel.

[Both speaking at once]

Shulman-Brody: Sixty-eight is when you returned?

Rosenthal: No. Sixty-eight was the first move to Israel.

Shulman-Brody: --war was in '67?

Rosenthal: Yeah. So '68, '69 I was teaching at the Hebrew University as a guest lecturer. At the end of that year my husband decided he's not going to stay in Israel, and he got an appointment in Toronto, Canada at York University. So in 1969-1971 I had a visiting professorship at York University in the Psych Department. After two years in Toronto my husband decided that he is going back to Israel. When we got there I went to work in the child psychiatry unit in Haddassa Hospital as their chief researcher. At that stage I think there were on my CV about three different projects where I started, you know, the preliminary data collection and could not proceed with it. So when I arrived in Israel, I must say, my vitae didn't really look very great. And then I started training and working as a family therapist in the child psychiatry unit. At that time I wrote a couple of theoretical papers and applied for a new grant from NIMH. I started collecting data then in the maternity ward, observing the very first interactions between mothers and their unborn infants. And at the same I started doing family therapy with children. And I thought to myself, All right, you know, it's okay to work in the medical school and even if I will not find my way back into academic life again, I felt it might not be all that bad. I had some success as a family therapist and I liked the combination of doing research and all my clinical work. But then, as things happen in life, because of various political and budgetary considerations, the child psychiatry unit was closed. A group of faculty members from the Hebrew University approached me to take upon--they managed to get some funding but had no time to do the project, and this was an action research, which was set, again, in that very same institution where I collected data on the development of smiling in infants. The idea was to develop a model that will bring about, that will close those two institutions that were still active at the time in Israel, and design an alternative way of helping these children. Either helping in their adoption process or finding good quality foster home care for them, developing the foster care system, and at the same time, you know, helping the staff and the children in the institution. Help the staff in developing more sensitive and responsive interactions with the children. So this was, you know, something that really, if I'm thinking of my academic work and the years after that, that was definitely a landmark, that particular project. It brought some closure and made me realize what I really wanted to do in my life. It became clear to me that if I'm going to continue with research and academic work, it should be around this area of children in need, children at risk, and the emotional development of very young children, infants. I am sure that having my own young sons at home gave an additional depth of understanding of how their environment affected those institution babies. I also became aware during those months of what we call today "resilience" the strength some children, babies, bring with them into this world. This was something that affected me greatly. And another thing that affected me tremendously was, beginning to feel empathic towards the caretakers, the caregivers working in this institution. You know, I remember doing my first study there, which was about--more than 10 years earlier, I felt, how could these supposedly horrible women feed them so fast. I still remember some of the data! The average feeding time took about six minutes per baby. And this was really like in a factory, you know, feed one baby, put them back, feed another baby, put them back. And I, you know, I remember as a young student of 22 or 23, whatever I was then, it was, I was infuriated with the staff that would not play with the children. It was only when I returned to the place with this project in the 1970's, sitting with these women, talking with and listening to them. Becau--I was trying to introduce some playtime and trying to help them do something different to improve the quality of life of these children. And--only then I realized what an impossible job they had. Some of them, you know, when I was talking to them, on a one-to-one basis, and each one of them had a story of a child they got attached to, and then the child was taken and they never knew where to, would never see that child again in their life, and could not even ask about it because it was not acceptable behavior. And they said, you know, after something like this happens to you, you protect yourself, you cannot allow yourself to get attached again. May of them went through this more than once since they claimed it's very difficult not to get attached to.
the babies you care for. That brought me to an understanding that I could have never had before. You can find traces of it in Sylvia's (dissertation student) research on "Labor of Love". At the same time I was collecting data of a qualitative nature. I was writing a continuous diary of both the factual things like, so many kids came in, so many went for adoption. I was monitoring the process of decision-making on the organizational level and policy level, and information about the available services for these children and their families. That was the nature of the research; it wasn't testing any hypothesis like I was used to. But a lot of learning took place, and a lot of understanding of what it is to operate an institution or a social service. This was a very formative experience for me. I had to work on several levels at the same time with the babies, with the caregivers, with the management, with the social workers of the institution, with the adoption services, with the psychiatrist or the lawyers who were involved with parents and social workers that were involved with parents and the various services. I still remember that psychiatrist who argued that his patient, a psychotic woman, should not agree to have her children be adopted or in foster care, "because she needed the experience of motherhood". She lived in the psychiatrist hospital, never visited her 5 children, who were spending their lives in institutions.

Tape 1, Side B

Shulman-Brody: And how did that lead you to Al-Solnit?

Rosenthal: It was during the work on this project that I met Al Solnit, who came to Israel at the time as a consultant to the Adoption Services at the Ministry of Welfare. Al Solnit had a great influence on my thinking at the time. He was my only professional support. Whenever he came to Israel I could consult with him. It was during this project that I realized that there is a great need to educate and train developmental psychologists to do this kind of a multi-level professional work that I was doing with children and with the caregivers, with the management of the institution, with woman organization that ran that institution, with social services, with legal services, judges, psychiatrists, all of whom had a great impact on the lives and development of young children.

Shulman-Brody: Everybody.

Rosenthal: At the time I proposed to the Psychology Department the idea of developing a graduate program in a systemic approach to developmental psychology. They did not accept the idea. I came to the realization that the only way, if you want to work with children and influence their life, it's not enough to see them in individual sessions of play therapy, and that you have to do something much more systemic regarding the whole environment which influences their lives. During these years I began forming, intellectually forming, this kind of conceptual ideas of what Uri Broufenbrennes eventually termed so eloquently the "ecological model of development". This project came to an end when, with the help of the Ministry of Welfare, the voluntary woman organization that used to operate the institution and the Hebrew University, we formed an Amoto (Hebrew)--

Shulman-Brody: A non-profit organization?

Rosenthal: Yes. A non-profit organization called "A Home for Every Child". The organization functioned as a professional address for every child that originally was just automatically taken out of home and placed in an institution. More or less at that time I was approached by the Hebrew University School of Social work together with the School of Education asking me would I consider helping develop a graduate program for Early Childhood. The idea was to set up a professional academic professional program that will train people for leadership roles in Early Childhood. Meaning, you know, the way I imagined it is, training people to do the kind of work I just did. That is, educate students of early development to accept this kind of systemic or ecological approach to child development will be able to understand all these processes that happen in the community, and as well as know how to work, to train people to work with children, how to supervise consult, be consulting to parents. In short, be like the brokers of child development knowledge based on theory and research to professionals and lay people who bar on children's lives in real life out there.
Miriam R. by Shulman-Brody, C.

Shulman-Brody: Did Al Solnit continue to have contact with you as you were beginning to set up a program on early childhood at the university?

Rosenthal: Definitely, yes.

Shulman-Brody: Okay. So--

Rosenthal: So he continued and, in fact I think the very first "honorary lecture" that we had Al Solnit was the person we invited and, yes, he was very much involved. And also, at some stage I went to Yale and spent a month at the Child Study Center and with Ed Zigler in his department. Of course their work is totally different from what we are doing here, but I've learned a lot from them. I believe one can detect their influence till this day, especially in my work in Social Policy and Early Child Care.

Shulman-Brody: So given that very impressive background, and contact with people in the field and getting, actually, your own ideas kind of concomitantly with the time that they were coming up. You told about the beginning interests in your career, how do you say today, as you look back on your research contributions, what shifts occurred, what events were responsible for those shifts, and your strengths and weaknesses in your personal--

Rosenthal: Whoa, whoa, wait, wait, that's too much--

Shulman-Brody: All right. Let's start--

Rosenthal: I'll start. I'll start.

Shulman-Brody: Right.

Rosenthal: Well, first of all, during, when I was in, you know, I'm going back for a moment. When I was still in Hadassa Hospital in the Child Psychiatry Unit, I started collecting data, which followed my earlier interest in mother-infant interaction. I carried out observations of mothers and infants during breastfeeding. And this was done very, you know, in the old tradition, charting down on paper using a timer with an earphone marking every five seconds a predefined set of categories. Three months later I visited those mothers at home with their babies and did a second section of recording of the interaction in general, not breast feeding anymore. And then we also, more or less at the end of collecting the data, the department closed and I found myself swamped by the experience of the infant-institution project. Only when the project at the university started, I went back to that data, I got a small grant from NIMH to analyze it. But I didn't realize how taxing and demanding setting up a new academic program will be; finding the suitable academic staff for it. There were not enough developmental psychologists in those days who were interested at all in inter-disciplinary work. And--let alone any developmental psychologist that knew much about infants and young children in general, or about the effects of various settings outside home, including day care centers. Following the social unrest in the 1960's, the Katz committee at the Prime Minister's Office recommended to develop day care centers as intervention programs for poor children in Israel. By the way, that building where the infant institution was, when we closed the institution, the building was immediately filled, filled with 19 day care center--19 classrooms, which meant it went back to being an institution. The only difference was that at four o'clock in the afternoon those children went home. But that's another sad story, but not for this time.

Shulman-Brody: So what happened to the data analysis?

Rosenthal: Whenever I could find few minutes of time I would go back to the data analysis. In those days we started working on those giant computers and took me, I don't know, ages and ages to computerize all the data from the data sheets that I had. And the, the analysis just dragged on. It took me a good number of years to complete the analysis and publication of that data. I wrote most of it while on a year sabbatical at Stanford in 1981. The papers were published during the early 1980's. The two phases of my work in the infant institution triggered the main research themes I worked on till this day. One has to do with the effect of a childcare setting on children's lives and development. First, I was interested in the quality of life of
children in a childcare setting and the relationship of this quality to their development. Furthermore, within an ecological model framework I became interested in the effect of social policy and regulation on the daily experiences of children in a childcare setting. And this led to my study in Family Day Care, which was then a new sponsored system in Israel I compared children's daily experiences in different child care settings (Kibbutz settings and Day Care Centers), as well as across Family Day Care homes with varied degrees of adherence to regulations. Another study linked to the same sample focused on the attitudes and beliefs of caregivers and of mothers of children in Child Care. These studies led to several publications in the late 1980's and the early '90s. "An ecological approach to the study of Child Care: Family Day Care in Israel" published in 1994 by Lawrence Erlbaum. The ecological aspect was expressed in the examination of the interaction between culture, social policy, family influences and setting influences on children's play behavior. One of the intriguing findings of those studies had to do with the differences observed between children's play with objects and social play. Social play, or toddler's peer interaction in a natural group setting, became another focal theme of my research. Social and emotional development of very young children always fascinated me. Years of observing infants and toddlers in group settings, from the 1960's on convinced me that we know very little about this development in infants and very, very young children. So I started sending my students observing. We focused both on social competence, as well as on emotional understanding and expressions of "concern for others". At that stage I stopped more or less applying for research funds from outside and was working mostly with my students who were collecting the data, and analyzing it under my supervision. One of these studies (Hana Zur's) highlighted the importance of what caregivers do and the concern they express during children's emotional arousal, conflicts and peer interaction in general. We recorded what do caregivers do when children are in social interaction with each other. Already during that family day care study, I realized that in some settings you find much richer and different quality of social interaction among infants and toddlers, unfortunately, when Hana Zur started observing social interactions in Day Care Centers she did not see the rich and complex interactions that I saw in my Family Day Care study. She saw a lot of fighting between children, or a lot of wandering and children playing alone. She saw very little, if at all, toddlers expressing concern for each other or any cooperative play of one sort or another. Only when she sifted her observations to Family Day Care could she start collecting data. This is part of the sad story of Day Care Centers in Israel. The data showed very clearly that what the caregivers are doing during peer interaction, not--I'm not talking just about what they're doing in general, such as being responsive etc., etc. We found that just being responsive and warm is not enough, she had to do certain things which were facilitating the social interaction between children, facilitating conflict resolution and facilitating expressions of empathy and concern for other children. This was really the second theme of my research, as you can see both themes tied together to lives of children in group settings rather than children at home. Based on this study, Hana Zur and Lihi Gatt (another graduate student) developed the intervention-training project called "Learning to Live Together". In this project caregivers work (a) on their beliefs and attitudes (research in another study with Hana Zur) concerning aspects of peer social interactions among toddlers, (b) on developing skills of facilitating 1 group entry skills, 2 empathy and 3 conflict resolutions among toddlers.

Shulman-Brody: So the only thing I'd like you to comment on, if you can, is your participation in shaping research funding policy, implementation of the policy, support for your own work, and maybe support for the program as well.

Rosenthal: Well, I'll tell you, my only involvement was in getting funds for our various projects and intervention. I had no involvement with funding policy, except for reviewing research proposals made to different funding agencies, like the bi-national fund. It is an Israeli/American fund--

Shulman-Brody: Yeah, but you should say something about your own research--

Rosenthal: My strategy over the past 25 years was to embed my investigation of theoretical issues, within the context of applied research. It was easier for me to raise funding for intervention and applied project. My research on Family Day Care, for example, allowed me to investigate besides policy issues related to quality also more basic research questions related to early social-emotional development and to the interaction of "quality of care" with caregivers' and parents' attitude and beliefs. Similarly, the 3rd theme of my recent research on the child rearing beliefs of parents from different cultural communities combined
more applied interest in finding ways of helping immigrant parents and their young children with the more theoretical interests in how cultural socialization scripts and eco-cultural change interact with parental beliefs. This allowed me to explore the usefulness of the conceptual distinction between "collectivist" and "individualist" cultural scripts as well as learn about the socialization ideas of parents from the former Soviet Union, from Ethiopia, secular and orthodox Jews, Bedouins as well as rural and urban Arabs. Harriet Rheingold from Chapel Hill, when she was setting up, I think, the very first publication of the Social Policy Report for SRCD.

Shulman-Brody: What about your involvement in Social Policy and Quality of Care in Day Care?

Rosenthal: It is many years that I feel upset by Israeli policy makers who, besides paying some lip service, totally ignore what we know about the impact of early life experiences on children's development and on the society at large. I remember meeting with and discussing those ideas with her. I also met with Ed Zigler at Yale and discussed the work of the Bush Foundation centers. So I became very much involved with the policy-making aspect (in Israel not in the States) related mostly to day care for young children, but also children at risk. I hoped very much that our "Graduate Program in Early Childhood Studies", which I developed at the Hebrew University in 1974/75, and which I am directing till this day, will socialize graduate students to likewise combine academic research with applied work with children, parents, educational settings and social services. A few became interested also in aspects of Social Policy.

Shulman-Brody: --about the program.

Rosenthal: Our program is set at the university under the joint sponsorship or auspices of the School of Social Work and the School of Education. But over the years, mostly for administrative reasons (because the budget had to sit in one of these two schools) we remained basically as part of the School of Social Work rather than the School of Education. So that was also a natural thing for me to work more with these people, and also because many educational programs for young children in Israel, basically have nothing to do with Ministry of Education, or the Schools of Education

Shulman-Brody: Very young children.

Rosenthal: Yeah, my interest was in improving Social Policy to benefit the development of very young children. As a result I became very involved with policy makers in different government ministries, with Knesset (Israeli parliament) members, sitting on a number of steering committees. I was also appointed as a chairperson for a committee with a mandate to formulate regulatory criteria for Day Care Centers. This has been a very frustrating experience, as all the recommendations made by all these committees (which took months of work each) were vetoed by the Treasury officials. So my work carried me towards work with the policy-makers and those committees and so on. As a result of this involvement, my research work remained at times very much on low flame.

Shulman-Brody: Yeah.

Rosenthal: My writing was lagging behind even more. Like following that research of caregivers' interventions and the social interaction between children. Instead of sitting down and writing a few papers based on that study, when we got a grant, not a research grant, but a grant for action, for an intervention project, we started working with caregivers. We started Early Childhood professionals training to work with caregivers, to implement what we have learned from that study. This is the beautiful project called, "Learning to Live Together". And with all that goes with setting up an intervention program: writing manuals, creating, you know, video vignettes that would be used in training, training the trainers and so on. Again, this led to another dissertation. This was a qualitative study, based on in-depth interviews with caregivers. It investigated their beliefs and attitudes, their understanding of what is "good" social behavior. We found that it was difficult for them to break away from a cultural script of "survival". The results of this study led to further changes in the intervention projects, where we anchored now knowledge and skill acquisition in attitude change. Like the previous study this was never published. So when you asked me before what am I going to do when I retire and I told you that, first of all, I'm taking my few months sabbatical to complete writing.
Shulman-Brody: Wonderful. So you actually really talked very clearly about that tension that exists--

Tape 2, Side A

Shulman-Brody: --applied child development research in having to make programs and, and teach, and train people to work as well as teaching and training people how to research and how that came together very much with your students. Do the course that you teach also directly impact upon these kinds of issues? What do you teach at the university, and how is that pulled together as part of what you're trying to do?

Rosenthal: Definitely yes. What I teach was, in a sense, a luxury because I could teach what I wanted to teach and what I love to teach. It's the first time that I'm really thinking about it. It just kind of followed naturally I imagine. One of my main courses is on early social-emotional development. When I retire one of the things I want to do, looking at my course, is write a book in Hebrew in that area. I realized I spent much more time on social-emotional development of children in group settings and less on what's happening on the family level. Another course focused on research methods. Specifically, students learned different methods of collecting data on childcare (observation methods of different kinds, usage of questionnaires, interviews and so on). You know, and students, again, go out and practice these things and, using them as tools in training teachers. Then there are my research seminars that dealt in the last few years with various aspects related to quality of care: quality of care and social policy, quality of care and cultural context. This last topic relates to a third line of research that I mentioned to you. It covered my interest in cultural influences on how researchers define "quality care", on how parents' perceive "quality care" in different cultural communities. I published a critical review paper that focused on research that has been done on childcare and its influence on child development highlighting cultural influence on the research questions, measures, and also on the funding of the research on child care. Basically showing how most of child cares research, as we know it, was driven by a concern in western societies, but mostly in North American society. A concern about the negative effect of early childcare may have on children's development. The well known "child care debate" in the United States highlights the cultural assumptions about the role of the family and the role of the mother and the importance attributed by the culture to "attachment" and it's effects on child development. My reading of the research literature in this light got me interested in how political, social, cultural processes influence our basic assumption in our research. And more and more literature started appearing on that, slowly people started deconstructing everything in sight. This was very noticeable in the field of early education.

Shulman-Brody: --cultural groups--

Rosenthal: It was very clear that, in different cultures people have different goals for the development of their children, and this affects how they run their education programs and what they want, what they consider effective educational practices. So this led me to an analysis of educational or developmental goals and educational practices in different cultural communities. If you look at the home setting, we will talk about developmental goals and socialization practices. But it's basically the same thing. In different cultures, you find that parents, and also educators may hold, different goals and value different practices in socializing children. The theoretical analysis of our data led us to the construct of "an adaptive adult" which we examined vis-à-vis the distinction between individualistic and collective oriented cultural scripts. It seemed at the time that the field of child development was going through a sort of a cultural revolution with many debates as to the nature of cultural psychology. In my own research together with Dorit Roer-Strier we focused on what is happening to the beliefs and values of immigrant parents and care givers who are going through drastic eco-cultural change. I became fascinated with the changes in perceptions and in values and beliefs that are associated with eco-cultural change. The interviews with parents, immigrants from the former Soviet Union, who had gone through a first change during the Glasnost in the NSSR and then through the change in immigrating to Israel, were fascinating. We then interviewed the parents who had different exposure to cultural variation and cultural change. On one extreme in these comparisons we had ultra-orthodox Jewish parents who live in a highly controlled social world that minimize any exposure to any culture, which is different to their own. I compared the developmental goals of mothers from this cultural group with those of immigrant parents who came from a country that was under the control of the
USSR, but also had strong Islamic tradition. These parents went through an extreme eco-cultural change. In addition, I had three groups of Muslim Israeli Arabs. One group was of Bedouins who went through a tremendous shift in their lifetime. They grew up as nomads, but were parenting children living in a village (township). Within that same village, we interviewed villagers who lived all their life and their parent's lives for generations in the same village. I compared their beliefs with those of parents who left that village and other villages like it, and where they grew up, are now residing in a city. They have academic education and are lawyers, doctors or teachers. We analyzed the developmental goals all these parents had for their children. The striking finding was that a society's attitude towards change seemed to be more important in determining the change in values and beliefs than the actual extent of the eco-cultural change experienced. And fascinating, fascinating to see how those groups who resisted change like the ultra-orthodox, the immigrants from Bulehara and the Bedouin Arabs remain very traditional with very collectivist value system. This study became an academic adventure for me. It was the first time I collected what you may call "ethnographic" data, using "qualitative" research methodology. I felt lost when it came to the publication phase. My colleague, Dorit, was very helpful in describing the methodology, and changing the language used in the discussion part of the paper.

Shulman-Brody: But that's the interests. There you go. All right, so let's move on and just, I guess to pull this all together, what has your contact been with SRCD, when you first join it and what has been its place in all of the wonderful things that you've mentioned in terms of your own professional and intellectual development?

Rosenthal: First of all, my contact with SRCD has been marked by the fact that, as you know, I have been living in different parts of the world and not in the United States. This meant that I could not be an active member in its various institutions as I might have, had I been on a faculty at an American University. Let me add, though that in spite of all that, that I haven't been involved, SRCD played a very important role in my career and in my life, and let me explain how. I joined SRCD when I was still a student at Stanford. I think it was 1963. I believe there was a conference in San Francisco. I remember this was just my first conference. I was amazed at the number of people interested in the subject of child development. Then in '71 I joined a new society that was just formed in Europe, the ISSBD. These two societies remained sort of my academic cornerstone. Reading the journals such as Child Development, attending conferences and the occasional correspondence, or visits with colleagues. This is how I remained in touch, really, with what's happening around the world in the child development field. Comparing the conferences of the two societies, SRCD and ISSBD, as well as their publications I began to realize how SRCD, in spite of its attempt to bring in other cultures, or researchers from other cultures, remained predominantly American, with all the good things that it could offer. But also I became aware of the limitations. As I said, I owe my "adult education" as a researcher of children's development to my membership in SRCD. Yet, I was aware of the fact that SRCD was mostly interested in research that was relevant to its American members. Research from all parts of the world was welcomed but it had to be "relevant". But without being a member of SRCD, I would have not been aware of all that. So as much as I could, I've participated in conferences, always feeling guilty afterwards because people asking, well, whenever are you ever going to finish writing that paper you presented, where most times I did not. So part of it is procrastination, which is very probably second nature to me. But, and part being too demanding on myself, a sort of perfectionist in my writing. The end result was feeling guilty always after these conferences, coming to a conference with a new paper, you know, and not having published the previous one. I must say, also, attending the conferences had an important social aspect. This was the only place I could meet people I studied with at Stanford, or worked with over the years. With a few of them I remained in contact, in touch, through these conferences where we meet each other, talk briefly about our work, our lives, famines and so on. This was very important for me. These meetings enabled me to keep up my relationship with Eleanor Maccoby, sometimes knowing that I'm going to see her would be a main reason to come there. I spent also a couple of sabbatical periods at Stanford with Eleanor Maccoby and Shirley Feldman.

Shulman-Brody: What do you think were the main changes that happened in SRCD over the years with which you've had contact?

Rosenthal: That's a difficult one. I knew that question was going to come. It seems I have not been involved enough to answer such a question in a meaningful way. I don't know. I think one of the big
changes was the growing involvement of SRCD in social policy. It's obvious expression is in the Social Policy Report. There were changes in the subject matter dominating conferences and the themes in Child Development papers. Cognitive themes as opposed to social emotional themes. It both mirrored the research interests in the field, but also influence these changes. You could see, for example, how "culture" comes in, you could see lots of publications related to "Child Care". Then again, the growing focus on very early social-emotional development in the last few years. A topic that seems ever so robust, and a favorite of SRCD, or American researchers, or American foundations supporting research, is attachment.

Shulman-Brody: I kind of see similar changes in SRCD as you've seen in some of your own interests, which I guess is how you connect there. So it's very--

Rosenthal: Well, maybe the correlation you observe simply reflects the fact that my mind is the one who reports both sets of observed changes--

Shulman-Brody: How do you see your hopes, your fears, your thoughts about where the field is going, where research and child development is going, and--

Rosenthal: You see, I would say I don't have any fears as such. I think the reason is not because there isn't anything to be worried about, but because I think it would be too presumptuous if I say, you know, "the field should go this way or that way." I think the most important thing is not to become--

Shulman-Brody: Static?

Rosenthal: Not to get stuck on a topic--

Shulman-Brody: Stagnant.

Rosenthal: No. Not that.

Shulman-Brody: Fossilize?

Rosenthal: Not exactly. Well that, you know, translating my thought from the Hebrew I sometimes lose a word. But, you know, I think the, the main thing that the Society (SRCD) should continue to reflect the concern of its member researchers. And I believe that the concerns of the researchers reflect what the society and the culture are concerned about. I only wish that SRCD, as the largest Child Development research society in the world, will make room also for research that deals with concerns of the American society. Other than that, I don't think that myself, or my generation, should tell the future generations of SRCD what they should study or research. The only thing is not to believe that what you've just discovered is the ultimate truth, and that's probably what would guide me.

Shulman-Brody: Thank you. Your life and history and how it's intertwined has been fascinating. Anything else to add?

Rosenthal: No, I don't think so.

[End of Interview]