

**YOUNG CHILDREN'S ACTIVE  
CITIZENSHIP:  
STORYTELLING, STORIES, AND  
SOCIAL ACTIONS**

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## Abstract

This thesis inquires into possibilities for young children's active citizenship as provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling with one Preparatory<sup>1</sup> class of children aged five to six years. The inquiry was practitioner-research, through a living educational theory approach cultivating an interrelational view of existing with others in evolving processes of creation. Ideas of young children's active citizenship were provoked and explored through storytelling, by a storytelling teacher-researcher, a Prep class of children and their teacher.

The three major foci of the study were practice, narrative and action. A series of storytelling workshops with a Prep class was the practice that was investigated. Each workshop began with a story that made issues of social justice visible, followed by critical discussion of the story, and small group activities to further explore the story. The focus on narrative was based on the idea of story as a way knowing. Stories were used to explore social justice issues with young children. Metanarratives of children and citizenship were seen to influence possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Stories were purposefully shared to provoke and promote young children's active citizenship through social actions. It was these actions that were the third focus of the study.

Through action research, a social justice storytelling practice and the children's responses to the stories were reflected on both in action and after. These reflections informed and shaped storytelling practice. Learning in a practice of social justice storytelling is explained through living theories of social justice storytelling as pedagogy. Data of the children's participation in the study were analysed to identify influences and possibilities for young children's active citizenship creating a living theory of possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

## Keywords

Active citizenship, action research, agency, children's citizenship, children's rights, counternarratives, early childhood education, living educational theory, metanarratives, pedagogy, social actions, social change, social justice, storytelling, young children.

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<sup>1</sup> Preparatory is a full-time early education program offered in primary schools in Queensland, Australia. It is non-compulsory.

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## Statement of Original Authorship

The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material published or written by another person except where due reference is made.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## PROLOGUE

Inspiration for this study began with what to me was an allegory of colonisation: *The Rabbits*, a picture book by John Marsden and Shaun Tan (1998). It was the year 2000, and there was much discussion about reconciliation across many forums in Australia. Prime Minister John Howard refused to apologise to the Stolen Generations, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had been removed from their families by successive Australian governments. The general public expressed support for reconciliation through large-scale events, such as the *Walk for Reconciliation, Corroboree 2000*.

My son at age four found *The Rabbits* in our local library. It wasn't until we read the story at home that I realised the powerful use of metaphor in this text. I interpreted the symbolism of rabbits to represent a view of the white coloniser. The story is told from an imagined perspective of a numbat (the colonised being). Rabbits, like white colonisers, are an introduced species to Australia with a population that grew extremely rapidly, from 24 rabbits in 1859 to two million rabbits in 1869 (Light, 2008). Based on my reading of *The Rabbits* and discussion with Indigenous people, I inquired via the publisher as to what consultation the author and illustrator had with Indigenous people for the development of the book.

Part of illustrator Shaun Tan's reply to the publisher offered the following explanation of his conceptualisation of the book: "The 'numbats' do not represent Aborigines, and the rabbits are not white humans. They are two ways of being" (email via publisher 11 December, 2006). This response proposed possibilities for diverse interpretations, yet I along with others have recognised parallels between events in *The Rabbits* and events of colonising the Indigenous population of Australia.

From this perspective, I considered *The Rabbits* as the first picture book I had read that portrayed the impact of colonisation on Indigenous peoples. I did not realise the atrocities of colonisation in Australian history until I was 18, when I decided I wanted to know about the experiences of Indigenous Australians throughout Australian history as I struggled with my own cultural identity. From this realisation, I became acutely aware that Australian school education offered a whitewashed version of Australian history. A more accurate account of Australian history that openly exposed atrocities inflicted on Indigenous Australians is now accessible to young children through post-colonial texts such as *The Rabbits*. To me, *The Rabbits* acknowledges shameful events in Australian history rather than pretends such incidents never occurred, as so many accounts have done in the past.

I showed *The Rabbits* to the preschool teacher at the community child care organisation where I worked as a trainer and resource officer. The organisation had a strong commitment to confronting social biases through implementation of an anti-bias curriculum (Derman-Sparks & The Anti-bias Task Force, 1989), which the teacher and I both supported.

Enthusiastic to engage in critical dialogue with her class of children aged four to five years, the teacher shared *The Rabbits* with the class a number of times. Some days later, the teacher talked to me about how one of the children's parents wanted her to stop reading *The Rabbits* to her son, for he was having nightmares about his baby brother being stolen. A double page spread in the book reads: "...and stole our children" (Marsden & Tan, 1998). The teacher did not want to stop reading the book or stop the dialogue with the children about the issues that the book had raised, yet she also wanted to respect the parent's wishes and attend to the child's fears. We thought about it together and decided that I would visit the class and tell a story to bring another perspective to the practice of removing children from their families by previous Australian governments. I told a story of a young Indigenous Australian woman named Elsie, which drew from the childhood experiences of Aboriginal Australian women documented in the book *Murawina: Australian Women of High Achievement* (Sykes, 1993).

On completing the story two boys aged five expressed their outrage at the acts of the government officials with these comments "Put them in a brown bear cage" and, "Hang them upside down". I heard these comments as suggestions of violence or aggression. My training as an early childhood teacher drove me to redirect such suggestions to more constructive ideas. I then asked the children, "Well what do you do here when something unfair happens?" to which one child replied, "You say sorry". Then suddenly another boy leapt to his feet with urgency and blurted out, "John Howard did not say sorry". It seemed he had identified a connection between the story I had just told, possible discussions with his teacher and family, and a recurring feature in the media that year. Prime Minister John Howard refused to apologise to Indigenous Australians for the past government policy of forced removal of children from their families, contrary to the recommendation of the *Bringing Them Home Report* (Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission, 1997). The boy continued with, "Get John Howard to come here and say sorry to the Aborigines!" I was inspired by what I interpreted as passionate motivation in a child aged five to be political through social action to redress an injustice.

I wanted to support the children's enthusiasm to take action, but it was unlikely that John Howard would visit their childcare centre. As a compromise I suggested that the children could write letters to the government expressing their thoughts and feelings regarding the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. This suggestion had barely left my mouth when they all moved from the gathering on the carpet to the writing area of the room. Their letters revealed their earnest desires to rectify the situation:

"The Government took Elsie. Elsie sends a letter to the government to say my mother didn't die."

"Say sorry to the Aborigines. You're not very nice government 'cos you didn't say sorry to the Aborigines."

"I took all the Aboriginal children (the sisters, brothers and Elsie) back to their mother."

The next day we wrote a group letter to the government to accompany the individual letters, which included the children's drawings and messages. The group decided collectively upon the following words:

“To the Government,

Could you please say sorry to the Aborigines for stealing children from their families and home, and invading their land? Please find enclosed our drawings and messages.

From...”

Immediately on completing this script the children moved spontaneously towards the poster-size letter and signed their names on the bottom. I was stunned that this needed no prompting; they seemed proud to have their names associated with their social act of writing this letter to the government.

There were three points in this encounter at which I marvelled at the enthusiasm and capacity of young children to engage with social justice issues. The first point was when one child identified a connection between the Stolen Generation story that I had shared and John Howard's refusal to apologise for the practice of removing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families. The second point was when the whole group of children moved to the writing table to write their letters to the government without explicit instructions. The third point was when the children self-initiated signing their names on the group covering letter to the government.

These moments have resonated with me for years, and I have shared this account at many of my storytelling workshops and conference presentations with early childhood professionals. My frequent sharing of this experience has been motivated by celebration, a celebration of the capacity of young children to engage in dialogue on a social justice issue and demonstrate self-motivation to redress the injustice. When able to undertake postgraduate research some five years later, this encounter framed my doctoral study.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The experience described in the Prologue was such an inspiring moment in my storytelling and teaching career that I wanted to know more in two domains. First, I wanted to know more about the capacity of storytelling to motivate young children to be active citizens. Second, I wanted to investigate further what young children's active citizenship could and might be. Accordingly, this study was designed to investigate relations between storytelling and young children's active citizenship.

This chapter begins with a discussion of the research problem before building an argument for the study, and explaining key terms as they are applied in the study (1.1). Following this the research questions and objectives are defined and details of how these are addressed in the thesis are provided (1.2). An overview of the research design is then discussed (1.3). The chapter concludes with a thesis outline (1.4) and explanations about reading the thesis (1.5).

### 1.1 Research Problem: Social Justice Storytelling and Young Children as Active Citizens

To define elements of the research problem of how social justice storytelling provokes and promotes possibilities for young children's active citizenship, key terms are unpacked to extrapolate meaning as applied in this study and summarise previous research on children's citizenship, social justice storytelling and related fields. How this study addresses the research problem is then defined before outlining the contributions that this doctoral study makes to research on children's citizenship and social justice storytelling.

A notion of children's citizenship is a recently theorised concept. Contemporary social theory has positioned children as competent and capable of being citizens of today whereas pre-sociological views of children position them as citizens of the future (James, Jencks, & Prout, 1998). The United Nations (1989) *Convention on the Rights of the Child* and its application in social policy has incited current interest in the concept of children's citizenship. According to Millei and Imre (2009) this interest assumes "a legal-political link between citizenship and rights" (p. 280). The meaning of children's citizenship has been subject to much debate. Many sociologists (e.g., Alderson, 2008b; Cockburn, 1998; James, Curtis & Birch, 2008; Jans, 2004; Kulnych, 2001, Lister, 2007, 2008; Prout, 2001, 2002; Roche, 1999) have discussed what children's citizenship might be for young children and proposed various ways to view and address it. Some (e.g., Millei & Imre, 2009) claim that the term *children's citizenship* is problematic since children do not have access to the rights commonly included in definitions of citizenship, such as the freedom to own property or the right to vote. However, without clear explanation of its purposes, the inclusion of the term children's citizenship in social policy runs the risk of being a "tokenistic discourse" (Millei & Imre, p. 281). The idea of children's

citizenship continues to be ambiguous, with various loose interpretations of what it can mean in practice.

There has been little documentation and discussion of young children's engagement in active citizenship. In the context of this study, young children are defined as aged eight years and younger. Some recent documented examples of young children's engagement in active citizenship provide examples of adult consultation with young children on local issues. For instance, the City of Port Phillip project *Respecting Children as Citizens in Local Government* (MacNaughton & Smith, 2008; Smale, 2009) involved adults consulting with children to seek their views on public spaces that they use. Moving beyond definitions of young children's active citizenship consultation, such as that reported above, this doctoral study sought evidence of what young children may initiate themselves as active citizens. This study contributes empirical data to research on young children's active citizenship through investigation of a pedagogical practice of social justice storytelling exploring possibilities for young children as active citizens.

Citizenship is prefaced with the word *active* to explicitly articulate concern for citizenship participation and not passive citizenship, which implies simply being counted as a citizen (Isin & Turner, 2002). Active citizenship refers to being a social agent expressing opinions, making decisions and enacting social actions as an expression of civic responsibility. This view of active citizenship contributes to the goal of a cohesive and just society as envisioned in communitarian (Delanty, 2002) and global citizenship (J. Williams, 2002). Such an approach to citizenship provides real scope for real action.

Embedded in the term *active citizenship* is the concept of agency, which in this study refers to the ideas of Hannah Arendt (1958/1998), who insisted that to be agentic requires initiating actions that begin new ideas with other people, not daily routine actions or actions that we are told to do. These latter actions are viewed as either work or labour. The children in this study were positioned as active citizens; the teacher and I engaged with the children as active members of society with the potential to initiate action with others.

In a practice of social justice storytelling, storytelling is understood to be an oral art form where a teller shares a story with a live audience through dynamic application of voice, gesture and complementing props. Although storytelling may be widely recognised as an effective way of engaging with young children, there has been little research about its practice in education, as noted by Kuyvenhoven (2005) and Mello (1999). Much of the existing research about storytelling in early childhood education focuses on children as storytellers (e.g., Britsch, 1992; Dyson, 1994; Fox, 1983, 1997, 1998; Heath, 1983; Nicolopoulou, Scales, & Weintraub, 1994; Paley, 1981, 1991, 1993, 1997). Studies of social justice storytelling in early childhood education appear to have been limited to the use of picture books (e.g., Hawkins, 2008; Manifold, 2007) or the use of persona dolls to tell stories of diversity and marginalisation (e.g., MacNaughton & Davis, 2001).

Although the use of persona dolls has been found to be very effective in creating a forum for opening dialogue on issues of race with young children (Brown, 2001), there was limited attention to the art form of storytelling in this text. The use of persona dolls to tell stories is a very specific, formulaic technique; and poses a risk of patronizing children through portrayal of real concerns for children through a doll. There is also the possibility that the use of a doll to express the issues of real people may be read as disrespectful to cultural groups that they intend to represent (Md Nor, 2005). In comparison, this research project focuses on storytelling as a specific art form and pedagogy that requires specific skills and abilities that can engage young children in dialogue on issues of social justice through face-to-face interactions.

Understandings of *social justice* in this study draw from the work of Maxine Greene (1995), who advocates awareness of the need for regard of the *other*, regardless of differences. The term *social justice storytelling* then is used to describe storytelling that arouses awareness of others' experiences of unfair treatment. The idea of social justice storytelling was employed by Bell (2009, 2010) to explore race, racism and social justice with African American high school students in New York. This study applied similar ideas in a context involving much younger children.

One of the most influential social justice texts in early childhood education in the past 20 years has been *Anti-bias curriculum: Tools for empowering young children* (Derman-Sparks & The Anti-bias Task Force, 1989). This text launched an approach to early childhood education referred to as *anti-bias curriculum*, which aims to celebrate diversity, build respect for diversity, and promote democratic early childhood communities. The critical and transformative education notions of "the practice of freedom" espoused by Freire (1970, p. 15) were applied to the goals of anti-bias curriculum. The aim is for each child, "to construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity; to develop comfortable, empathetic, and just interaction with diversity; and to develop critical thinking and the skills for standing up for oneself and others in the face of injustice" (p. ix). This publication had a far-reaching impact on policy and practice in early childhood settings in English speaking countries such as the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and the USA, and has been used in tertiary courses for early childhood practitioners (Brown, 1998; Dau, 2001; MacNaughton & Williams, 2009; Nuttall, 2003; Swadener & Marsh, 1995). Australian commentators such as MacNaughton (2005) acknowledged that Derman-Sparks and the Anti-bias Task Force advocated an activist stance that sought to recognise and confront discrimination based on gender, race, ability, faith and/or sexuality. The vignette shared in the Prologue took place at an early childhood setting that engaged in the practice of anti-bias curriculum.

According to Cannella and Viruru (2004) and Ryan and Grieshaber (2005), real recognition of bias, diversity and social justice issues in early childhood education has been limited. These authors identified the prevailing adoption of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) in early childhood education as a

significant contributing factor to limiting recognition of bias, diversity and social justice issues. The guidelines of DAP are built upon notions of shared beliefs and agreed standards. The critique of DAP by Lubeck (1998) suggested that DAP celebrates commonality and consensus as opposed to difference and diversity. Grounded in the hierarchical theory of child development, Williams (1994) argued that the DAP guidelines result in regulating children's learning to what is considered normal, which cultivates a view of sameness. According to MacNaughton (2005), developmentally appropriate practice has shaped the beliefs of teachers in the universal child as an individual with western, white middle-class values, thus denying the diversity of experience across cultures and classes. Emphasis on the child as an individual can silence issues of social justice (Cannella & Viruru, 2004), as the teacher sees only a version of the person in front of them that is consistent with their own construction of the world. Differences in gender, race, ethnicity, ability, faith, sexuality and/or class are secondary to the drive to teach all children equally according to the standards of DAP. Collectively, these critiques identify that the emphasis on commonality, consensus, normativity, western middle-class values and individualism found in DAP cultivate a narrow view of "one model fits all" for young children.

The critiques of developmentally appropriate practice draw from critical, postmodern, poststructuralist, and post-colonial theories, which have recently informed some research and practice on social justice in early childhood education (Robinson & Jones Diaz, 2005). For example, children's understandings of gender (e.g., McNaughton, 1995, 2001a) and race (e.g., MacNaughton, 2001b; MacNaughton & Davis, 2001; Kaomea, 2000, 2003; Skattebol, 2003) have been investigated through post-structuralist approaches. Such works have problematised power relations, validated diverse expressions of identity, and contributed solid groundwork for investigating social justice issues in early childhood education.

The design of this study built upon the foundations of how social justice education has been explored in early childhood education and the contemporary claim of young children as active citizens. Storytelling was proposed and investigated as pedagogy that cultivates a forum for young children to engage in open dialogue about social justice issues and practices of active citizenship. From a critical theory perspective, this study recognised that metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984) of children as developing and innocent, and adults as experienced, competent protectors limit children's access to participation in society. As a storytelling teacher and researcher, I see children as agentic. To enact this view, the young children in the study were positioned as capable of engaging in dialogue about social justice issues and participating in society as active citizens.

The stories I shared as part of the study were about experiences of unfair treatment or injustice. According to Stephens (1992), characteristic childhood stories in the west tend to be built on certainties, such as happy-ever-after-endings, which support metanarratives of children as innocent. Telling stories of unfair treatment or injustice was a conscious decision and an

attempt to counter metanarratives of childhood innocence and widen access for the children to knowledge and participation as citizens. The stories were chosen to make visible the plights of others. There were two objectives to the research: to explore social justice storytelling as pedagogy that provokes and promotes young children's active citizenship and to investigate possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

This inquiry makes three contributions to knowledge about social justice storytelling as pedagogy and young children's active citizenship. First, it contributes to the noticeable gap in reflective research on social justice storytelling practices in early childhood education. Second, as a storytelling teacher, I was positioned as provocateur, actively cultivating space for young children's discussion of social justice issues and active citizenship. This is significant because in studies of social justice in early childhood education the researcher is typically positioned as observer and investigator of unfair practices (e.g., Connolly, 1998; Kaomea, 2000, 2003; MacNaughton, 2001a; 2001b; MacNaughton & Davis, 2001; Skattebol, 2003). Through a proactive approach I could adapt and explore various storytelling interventions for their capacity to provoke young children's active citizenship. Third, this study generates evidence of what citizenship might be for young children when provided with space to initiate and engage in active citizenship practices. The findings contribute evidence to a relatively new and emerging body of research about young children's active citizenship. To date, what has largely been documented is evidence of adults consulting with young children (e.g., MacNaughton & Smith, 2008; Smale, 2009).

## 1.2 Research Question and Objectives

With the Prologue as a starting point and based on the above discussion of the research problem, the research question that shaped this inquiry became,

“What possibilities for young children's active citizenship can be provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling?”

This question framed the exploration of my practice of telling social justice stories as well as investigation into what young children's active citizenship might be. The inquiry sought evidence of capacities and capabilities of a sample of young children as active citizens. My practice of social justice storytelling was a purposeful intervention to cultivate interest and motivation for young children to act as citizens. Figure 1.1 portrays the relational links between the research question, the two objectives and the six subquestions that underpinned the design a study that would best address the research question.

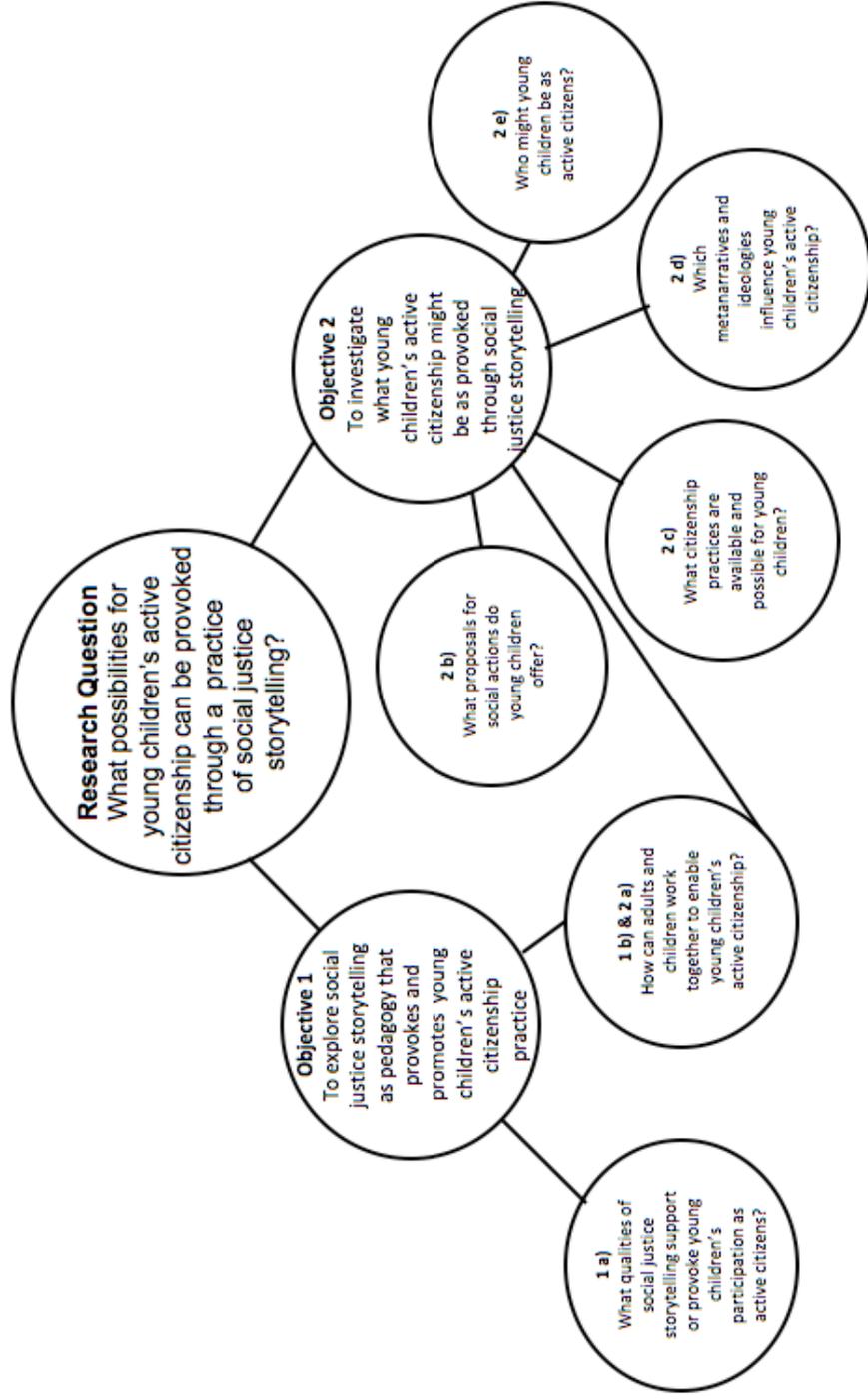


Figure 1.1. Relational links between research question, objectives and subquestions.

In order to address objective one, “To explore social justice storytelling as pedagogy that provokes and promotes young children’s active citizenship practice”, I was guided by the following subquestions:

- 1 a) What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children’s participation as active citizens?
- 1 b) How can adults and children work together to enable young children’s active citizenship?

Responses to these questions are addressed through explanations of influences in my learning through a practice of social justice storytelling (Chapter 5), as guided by a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

In order to address objective two, “To investigate what young children’s active citizenship might be as provoked through social justice storytelling”, the following questions were posed:

- 2 a) How can adults and children work together to enable young children’s active citizenship?
- 2 b) What proposals for social actions do young children offer?
- 2 c) What citizenship practices are available and possible for young children?
- 2 d) Which metanarratives and ideologies influence young children’s active citizenship?
- 2 e) Who might young children be as active citizens?

These questions were addressed by explaining influences in my learning in possibilities of young children’s active citizenship. Questions 1 b) and 2 a) are common because investigation of how adults and children can collaborate in active citizenship was an inquiry of both objectives one and two.

### 1.3 Design of Study

This study of social justice storytelling was approached as action research using a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). A social justice storytelling program was designed and facilitated in collaboration with the class teacher and involved one Prep class (children aged five to six years) in a public school in Brisbane, Australia. The program lasted thirteen weeks with one 90-minute workshop per week, which was both video recorded and audio recorded. Each workshop began with a metaphorical folktale, biographical story or self-crafted story that portrayed experiences of unfair treatment. After the storytelling, the whole class discussed the story content in a sharing circle. The final part of the workshop provided children with opportunities to respond to the story through related small group activities.

The intention of this social justice storytelling program was to obtain detailed understandings of how storytelling can provoke young children’s active citizenship. It was not my intention to formulate a social justice storytelling program as a model for replication in

schools and early childhood settings. Rather it is hoped that detailed accounts of this program provide understandings about children and pedagogical practices applicable to exploration of social justice issues and citizenship practices with young children.

Action research was selected as the methodology because of its organic, responsive and reflective nature (Dick, 2000). As a practitioner (i.e., a storytelling teacher), action research provided a methodology that positions the researcher within the study who initiates and responds to the changing research situation. Through action research I could interject actions (e.g., stories) to which the participants responded. Responses were collected from the children and teacher throughout the study. I reflected on these in consultation with the teacher to devise subsequent actions. The methodology of action research cultivated a collaborative research climate where all participants (i.e., children, teacher and teacher aide) were valued as active contributors of ideas and feedback. Welcoming ideas and feedback as part of the recursive cycle of action research created a responsive study where contributions of the participants steered the direction of the study.

#### 1.4 Thesis Outline

Over the course of this study, I struggled with the parameters of a traditional thesis format because of its linearity and definitive formula. Although I am a great supporter of theses that challenge the academy by presenting divergent formats, in the end I followed a traditional format in the hope of wider acceptance amidst the academic audience. This study has multiple themes that are linked in divergent ways, which makes a traditional thesis format problematic. In an effort to follow a linear format, yet also acknowledge the multiplicity and interconnectivity of elements of this study, diagrams have been included to aid clarity of understanding of the layers and intersection of the multiple themes.

The context of the study established in this chapter has explained the research problem, questions and objectives, and an overview of the research design. In Chapter 2, three major categories of literature are discussed as they relate to the research problem: children, citizenship and pedagogy. The social construct of children is discussed through varying ways of viewing children. Within the broader field of citizenship literature, definitions, approaches and spaces are discussed, followed by a section examining theorising and practices of the rights of children and children's citizenship. A review of the broader field of pedagogical literature includes early childhood practices, democracy in education, and education for social change. This is followed by discussion of aesthetic encounters, storytelling as a way of knowing, and storytelling as pedagogy to build a case for social justice storytelling in early childhood education. In Chapter 3, the theories that informed the research interests of practice, narrative, and action are explained. These theories are a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead, 1989; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), the concepts of metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984) and counternarratives (Lankshear & Peter, 1996), and the theory of action as espoused by Arendt

(1958/1998). The methodology is explicated in Chapter 4, defining application of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research. This chapter also details other methodological considerations, such as data collection, methods of analysis, quality, ethics, study site, research participants, and key themes identified in the data. What happened in the study is told in Chapter 5 through explanations of my learning in a practice of social justice storytelling through accounts of children's participation in the social justice storytelling program, and my reflections and amendments. In the next two chapters (6 and 7) I explore learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Chapter 6 contains exploration and discussion of the influence of metanarratives on possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Possibilities for young children's active citizenship, and who young children might be as active citizens is explored in Chapter 7 based on Arendt's proposal that people's actions and words (i.e., what they say and do) reveal who they are. Finally, in Chapter 8, I discuss the findings and implications for storytelling and young children's active citizenship as living educational theories. The significance of the findings and possible implications for those who engage with young children in regard to citizenship practices are then discussed along with recommendations for further research.

### 1.5 Notes on Reading this Thesis

Storytelling is a live experience. In this thesis I have included transcripts of the stories that I shared, but this is only part of the story. Like the accompanying video footage and audio recordings they cannot capture the whole experience. Storytelling is an aesthetic encounter, so it was the sensory and affective expression between teller and audience that were difficult to capture. It is only through live experiences of storytelling that the nuances between teller and listener can be seen, heard, and felt all at the same time. For these reasons I am acutely aware that readers experience only part of the stories through transcripts. This has frustrated me in the formation of this thesis, and I have pondered over different ways of presenting the stories. In the end I included transcripts of the first five stories as recorded from workshops, with children's contributions (Appendices C-G) to present evidence of the interaction between teller and audience. Due to the lengthy nature of these first five storytelling transcripts, I included written text of the story only for the second five stories (Appendices H-L).

Other points to note are my use of the feminine pronoun and the terms *child* and *children*. Throughout this thesis I use the feminine pronoun to imply both males and females. For many hundreds of years the practice has been to use the male pronoun to refer to both genders; this is a small effort to bring balance to this practice. Collectively, I refer to the core participants in this study (the Prep class of children aged between five and six years) as children. To the school they are seen as students, but for the purposes of this study I refer to these participants as children. I have deliberately done this, for this study examines how children are viewed in possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

## CHAPTER 2: CHILDREN, CITIZENSHIP AND PEDAGOGY

To conduct an inquiry into the possibilities for young children's active citizenship as provoked through social justice storytelling as pedagogy, it is necessary to examine three major fields of literature: children, citizenship and pedagogy. These fields provide background knowledge that informs and contextualises possibilities for young children's active citizenship in an educational setting. A discussion of ways of viewing children (2.1) and how various views of children shape notions of children's citizenship is followed by an examination of citizenship in relation to rights and how ideas of citizenship have been theorised and practiced with young children (2.2). Approaches to pedagogy (2.3) are then explored, beginning with broad fields of literature on pedagogy, building to the specific focus of social justice storytelling. The chapter concludes by making connections across these fields of literature concerning children, citizenship and pedagogy (2.4).

### 2.1 Ways of Viewing Children

Children have been defined and understood in numerous ways throughout history and across cultures. The concept of childhood is a relatively recent construction (Aries, 1962; DeMause, 1976) and is generally agreed to have developed with the establishment of schooling for children (Postman, 1982/1994; Luke, 1989). Theories of childhood inform the ways that people think about children and speak and interact with them. James, Jencks and Prout (1998) refer to varying concepts of childhood as theoretical models of childhood and identify two categories: presociological and sociological.

The identification of presociological and sociological categories signalled a distinction between earlier theories of children from disciplines other than sociology and contemporary sociological theories. Presociological theories of children and childhood were drawn from disciplines such as philosophy and psychology, which view children in terms of becoming adults. Sociological theories of children and childhood developed over recent decades acknowledge children as agentic in the here and now. These two distinctly different theoretical views of children shape notions of children's citizenship as either a future status or as a current status respectively.

In this section (2.1) presociological theories (2.1.1) and then sociological theories (2.1.2) of children are examined. In this review of the literature, the varying views of children within each category are examined critically by identifying how children, adults, learning and participation are defined within each model in relation to possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

### 2.1.1 Presociological Theories of Children

Five presociological theoretical models of children are discussed below with regard to how they shape notions of children's citizenship. These models were identified by James et al. (1998) as:

1. The evil child as shaped by the Christian Old Testament and theories of Hobbes (1660/1996).
2. The immanent child as shaped by Locke's (1690/1959) tabula rasa theory.
3. The innocent and individual child as shaped by the theories of Rousseau (1762/2007).
4. The naturally developing child as shaped by the theories of Piaget (1929, 1932, 1950/2001, 1952, 1962).
5. The unconscious child as shaped by theories of Freud (1923).

While this is not a definitive list of the ways of viewing children, these five major presociological theories have informed and continue to inform conceptions about children and adult interactions with children from the 1600s to the present. These models were shaped by theories that do not acknowledge the social context and "have become part of conventional wisdom surrounding the child" (James et al., p. 3). These theories continue to influence possibilities for children's citizenship.

First, a theoretical model of children as evil rests on a view of children as demonic, which "finds its lasting mythological foundation in the doctrine of Adamic original sin" (James et al., 1998, p. 10). The Christian Old Testament and the theories of philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1660/1996) shaped the thinking that children are born evil, so adults beat the evil out through discipline and control. Children are seen to be wilful with potential to disturb adult social order. The classic novel *Lord of the Flies* (Golding, 1954) portrays a cautionary tale of children descending to barbaric acts in the absence of adult discipline and control. Such a view of children actively denies children exercising their agency.

Discipline and control are the emphasis of learning and participation for children viewed as evil. The establishment of schools was informed by this way of thinking (Luke, 1989). Children were disciplined in schools with the expectation that over time they would become good adult citizens who followed the social order (James et al., 1998). Foucault (1977a) drew parallels between the model of discipline and control established in prisons with that of schools in modern industrialised society. He saw that both prisons and schools shared the mutual aim of producing good citizens. According to Foucault (1977a), timetabling works to "establish rhythms, impose particular occupations [and] regulate the cycles of repetition" (p. 149). Through timetabling in schools, children do not choose what, when and where they partake in activities and this has the effect of reducing their capacity for democratic participation. Other factors, such as the standardisation of curricular content and rules, also limit scope for children to make decisions and express opinions. Together, these factors of discipline and control insist on obedience and limit children's agency as active citizens. A theoretical model of children as evil

positions them as in training to be what Foucault referred to as “docile adult bodies” (p.135), that is, good citizens who comply with the social order.

Second, a theoretical model of children as immanent views children as blank slates informed by the tabula rasa thesis espoused by John Locke (1690/1959). Children are understood as becoming or latent reasoners with reason being acquired with age. Based on this view, adults have a higher status and exercise control over children by virtue of age, experience, and knowledge. Schools have also served the purpose of filling the blank slate (or state of ignorance) of each child with knowledge and experience (Luke, 1989). A view of children as immanent has also influenced social policy in western societies, which has largely defined children and young people as “incompetents” (Morrow, 1994, p. 51). From this position, children are removed from responsibility in that they do not vote or work. They are also seen as dependant, relying on adults for care, protection and education. When viewed as immanent, children’s participation as citizens is impacted through their exclusion from various social practices and responsibilities. Standards that do not consider individual consideration of competence (e.g., the requirement to be eighteen to be eligible to vote in Australia) enforce many of these exclusions. A theoretical model of children as immanent views children as not old or knowledgeable enough to be citizens.

Third, a theoretical model of children as innocent is shaped by conceptions of children as angelic, uncorrupted by the world, and naturally good, as espoused by Rousseau (1762/ 2007). To Rousseau, children were born with a natural goodness as expressed in his treatise on education, *Emile*: “Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things” (p. 37). On the basis of this understanding, adults “generate a desire to shelter children from the corrupt surrounding world” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, p. 45). Adults maintain the natural goodness of children by protecting them from violence and corruption through surveillance, limitation and regulation. This construct has privileged the position of adult to withhold knowledge in the name of protection and reinforces a notion of the child as ignorant or immanent, in turn creating children who feel vulnerable and disempowered (Cannella & Viruru, 2004; MacNaughton & Davis, 2001; Silin, 1995, 2000; Soto, 2005; Walkerdine, 1984). Adults play an important role as gatekeepers, protecting children from information considered too difficult for them to handle emotionally (K. Marshall, 1997). Silin (2000) suggested that this perspective has led educators “to underestimate what children know about the real world and to overestimate their own ability to protect them from it” (p. 259). Such a perspective limits children’s engagement with real world issues and active citizenship participation on these issues. As Dahlberg et al. claimed, by protecting children from the world in which they exist adults do not respect the rights and capabilities of children to seriously engage in the world.

The widespread impact of this theoretical model has produced a metanarrative of children as innocent and vulnerable to corruption, and adults as protectors and knowledge gatekeepers. The totalising effects of this metanarrative led to the formation of discourses of

protection (Cannella & Viruru, 2004; James et al., 2008; Silin, 1995, 2000) and discourses of early childhood niceness (Stonehouse, 1994; Hard, 2005). Discourses of protection place emphasis on protection rights in claims for children's rights (Archard, 1993; James et al., 2008) (this is discussed further in section 2.2.3). Niceness has been, and continues to be, a strong theme in early childhood practice with an example of such enacted niceness being the sharing of sanitised stories with young children (Zipes, 1983, 1994). Adult-imposed restrictions on the premise of protection can therefore shield children from participation as active citizens.

Fourth, a theoretical model of children as naturally developing was largely shaped by empirical research conducted by Piaget (1929, 1932, 1950/2001, 1952, 1962), involving his own children. This model brings together the naturalness of children (Rousseau, 1762/2007) and the tabula rasa thesis (Locke, 1690/1959) to form the idea of inevitable maturation. Piaget determined that there is a developmental pathway to intelligence that positions adults as competent and supreme, and children as incomplete, incompetent, and irrational as a result of their developing status (James et al., 1998). Learning and participation are understood in this theoretical model as being guided and limited by universally accepted stages of development.

A major theoretical field to contribute to a view of children as developing is developmental psychology, which is well supported in practices of medicine, education and government agencies (James et al., 1998). Support from such institutions has boosted hegemonic positioning of developmental psychology. Some (e.g., MacNaughton, 2005) see developmental psychology as having dominated early childhood education through DAP (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; NAEYC, 1987, 1997, 2009). For example, MacNaughton (2005) applied the term "regime of truth" coined by Foucault (1977b, p. 131) to describe the impact of DAP on early childhood education. By this MacNaughton suggested that DAP has become a discourse, which the early childhood field accepts, which makes it operate as true above other discourses of early childhood practice. By being positioned as a "regime of truth", DAP has been sanctioned and other practices have largely become marginalised or silenced in early childhood education.

With a view of children as naturally developing strongly influencing early childhood education, there are two significant impacts on possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The first is the emphasis on individualism. Through DAP, each child is considered individually against universal standards of developmental stages (Bredekamp, 1987, 1997, 2009; NAEYC, 1987, 1997, 2009). This can limit young children's understanding of diverse others (Cannella & Viruru, 2004; MacNaughton, 2005; Ryan & Grieshaber, 2005) as well as possibilities for difference in the practice and experience of young children as citizens. The second significant impact is that a view of children as naturally developing masks the extent to which they are capable and take responsibility in their lives, because children are seen to be in preparation for future participation, not agentic in the present. Adults are positioned as competent

and capable beings who understand, translate and interpret children's comments and actions (Waksler, 1991). This view of children is based on a deficit model, which positions children as needing guidance. According to Lansdown (2005), a deficit model makes much of children's agency invisible. This future orientation limits the possibilities for young children's active citizenship within the wider community in the here and now to being determined by adults according to defined developmental stages.

Fifth, a theoretical model of children as unconscious was shaped by psychoanalytic theorists, such as Freud (1923). To Freud, children were uncontrolled and impulsive. Children viewed according to this theoretical model are highly ego-focused; consciousness and therefore consideration of others is minimal. Emphasis is on children's unconscious instincts in their learning and participation. Like a theoretical model of children as naturally developing, recognition of the unconscious behaviours of children also views them as becoming, with the emphasis on becoming rational (James et al., 1998). Adults have the role of managing and supporting children's free expressions of instincts and impulses with the purpose of integrating them into the adult world as proposed by A.S. Neill in his progressivist approach to education (D. Carr, 1991).

This view of children as impulsive and/or irrational has been identified by Arneil (2002), Kulnych (2001), and Stasiulis (2002) as an argument used against children's recognition and participation as citizens. To counter this argument, Kulnych (2001) proposed a conceptualisation of children's citizenship that acknowledges and welcomes children's instinctive and impulsive expressions of anxiety, incoherence and disorder. She argued that welcoming this difference in communication styles would aid the inclusion of children's participation in public debates. Rather than viewing impulsivity as a deficit to rationality, Kulnych's proposal positions impulsivity as another means of expression. Welcoming impulsivity, Kulnych suggested, has the potential for greater inclusion of children as citizens in the public realm. Canadian artist Darren O'Donnell (2007) recently explored ways of cultivating civic engagement for children that are not usually available to them. One project *Haircuts by Children*, involved children aged ten cutting the hair of adults. O'Donnell expected anarchic scenes of hair flying everywhere, yet in practice he found the children took the responsibility seriously. However, O'Donnell and the children experienced media coverage of the project that manipulated and staged images of chaotic impulsivity. O'Donnell deconstructed the media coverage with the participating children, who acknowledged that both they and reality were manipulated. Such an example provides evidence of the prevalence of views of children as negatively impulsive, impinging perceptions of possibilities for children's civic engagement.

Each of the above presociological theoretical models views children as citizens of the future. Such views continue to shape both social and educational practices with children (James et al., 1998). Understanding how these ways of viewing children shape their positioning and

participation in society enables recognition of influential thinking on possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation. This contributes significant foundational knowledge to an inquiry into possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

### *2.1.2 Sociological Theoretical Models of Children*

According to James et al. (1998), there has been rapidly growing sociological interest and attention to children and childhood in recent times. As a result there has been a shift away from the influence of the individualistic doctrine of presociological theories. Sociological understandings acknowledge children as agentic with "social, political and economic status as contemporary subjects" (James et al., 1998. p. 26), that is, as citizens of today.

Socialisation from a sociological perspective is seen as "a process of appropriation, reinvention, and reproduction" in which "children negotiate, share and create culture with adults and each other" (Corsaro, 2005, p. 18). This differs from presociological theories and early sociological theories (e.g., Ritchie & Kollar, 1964), which view socialisation as a matter of adaptation and internalisation. Past sociological theories of socialisation position the child as passive in a process of becoming socialised to an adult world. Recent sociological theories of children view them as competent and capable social actors.

To understand how recently formed theoretical models of children in sociology have enabled children to be viewed as citizens of today, four major models identified by James et al. (1998) are discussed:

1. The socially constructed child.
2. The tribal child.
3. The minority group child.
4. The social-structural child.

Acknowledgment of children's agency and social structures are common to each of these models, yet they are conceptualised in different ways. The four models provide greater scope for the inclusion of children's voices in research and practice. According to James and Prout (1995), by viewing "children as competent social actors – we can learn more about the ways in which 'society' and 'social structure' shape social experiences and are themselves refashioned through the social action of members" (p. 78). On the basis of this understanding, sociological theories enable the impact of society and social structures to be examined in theoretical models of children. These four sociological models of children are discussed in relation to possibilities for young children's active citizenship. In addition, a notion of children as political is proposed for its capacity to support young children's active citizenship within the wider community.

First, a theoretical model of children as socially constructed acknowledges diversity in relation to the social, political, historical and moral context of each child. The idea of children as socially constructed draws from social constructionism. Social constructionist research about children suspends beliefs of taken-for-granted meanings about children (James et al., 1998). The

concept of a universal child as proposed in each of the presociological theoretical models of children is not accepted. Instead, plurality and diversity are welcomed. An understanding of children as socially constructed also enables the recognition of multiple discourses contributing to a collective appreciation of the condition of childhood. Childhood is understood as historically contingent and unfixed.

In social constructionism, learning and participation for children is understood to be influenced by context. Children construct meaning agentially through interactions with others, including peers and/or adults. Adults question, analyse, and reflect on the influence of social constructions of children's learning and participation. Such a view of children enables identification of social structures that shape the possibilities for children's citizenship. In addition, a view of children as socially constructed offers scope for diverse conceptualisations of children's citizenship according to context.

Second, a theoretical model of children as tribal celebrates children's difference from adults by recognising that children possess a culture that is distinct from adult culture (James et al., 1998). In learning and participation, children are seen as practising their own culture and adults appreciate children's views, difference, and autonomy. Children are understood as inhabiting an autonomous world separate from adults, where children have their own rules and agendas. The reference to children as "digital natives" by Prensky (2001) suggests a view of children as tribal; he acknowledged the ease that many children have in using digital technology. According to Prensky, children's preferences for many of the features of digital technology are seen as different from those of adults, who he referred to as "digital immigrants". Research that views children as tribal "offers potential for resistance to the normalising effects of age hierarchies, educational policies, socialisation theories and child rearing practices" (James et al., p. 215). Children's stories are honoured and located in a certain place and time with a strong sense of self-determinacy. For example, the research of Opie and Opie (1977) on children's rituals and rules in school playgrounds recognised specific practices that children devise. Viewing children as tribal recognises and honours children's views, difference, and autonomy in citizenship.

A view of children as tribal has been critiqued by Morrow and Richards (2002) who claim that such a view positions children as unknowable to adults. They argued that research with children viewed this way can be potentially misleading. This is especially so if adult researchers suggest that they have suspended their adult status to enter into the world of children to claim knowledge of children's ways of being. A theoretical model of children as tribal offers potential to foreground and celebrate differences of citizenship for children. Yet as Morrow and Richards argued, a child's account can never be presented unadulterated as the lenses of adult researchers invariably interfere.

Third, a theoretical model of children as a minority group recognises that children as a group are positioned as powerless, disadvantaged and oppressed (Oakley, 1994). Children in this model are viewed as deserving the same rights as adults, yet they rarely receive these rights. In contrast to the theoretical model of children as tribal where children's differences to adults are celebrated, this model recognises many of children's differences to adults as imposed disadvantages. Oakley proposed that children are a minority group in that they are positioned as less than adults with terms such as "childish" and "childlike" often used in derogatory ways. Further, children's minority group status is presented through adults making decisions for them on the basis of the claim that it is 'in their best interests' (Alderson, 1994; Coady, 1996; Lansdown, 1994; Oakley). Adults, who view children as a minority group, act as advocates for (or ideally with) children by arguing that children should have the same rights to citizenship participation as adults.

A theoretical model of children as a minority group draws from critical theory. Critical theorists such as Giroux (1983) viewed the social demarcation of childhood as justifying ongoing adult domination of children. A claim by Cannella and Viruru (2004) that children are colonised through acknowledgment of adult manipulation of children is such a view. Critical pedagogy (e.g., Freire, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1985, 1998; Giroux, 1983, 1988, 2003) draws from this understanding of children in that it endeavours to aid students to question and challenge practices of domination.

If children are viewed as a minority group their citizenship participation is recognised as limited and constrained by social constructions. Such a view provides a strong case for claiming citizenship rights for children. However, James et al. (1998) argue that this view groups children together, proposing uniformity while ignoring variations, in the same way cross-cultural critics of the feminist movement saw claims for women's rights. A view of children as a minority group presents a strong case for claiming citizenship rights for children; however, social and cultural variations may be invariably glossed over by grouping all children together.

Fourth, a theoretical model of children as a collective social structural entity recognises that children are a feature of all social worlds; though they may vary from society to society, within each particular society they are uniform (James et al., 1998). This model views childhood as a social phenomenon and promotes the commonalities of children and childhood across differing societies. Children are understood as a body of social actors and as citizens with needs and rights. They are seen as a constant group, or universal category, with acknowledgment of the influence of particular social structures on particular groups of children. This model differs from the theoretical model of children as socially constructed in that it recognises that there are certain universal characteristics in the structures of all societies. Recognisable components in social structures in different places and different times are seen as common to all (James et al.). For example, childhood is a social structure that is experienced differently from adolescence and

adulthood. A view of children as a social structural entity is based on constancy of common elements for all children as opposed to a view of children as socially constructed, which is based on contingency of socio-cultural contexts. The identification of universal characteristics across different societies offers scope for the development of frameworks or models of children's citizenship that could be applied in different societies regardless of socio-cultural contextual circumstances. Recognition of the generalisable category of children and childhood is perhaps why a notion of children's citizenship has emerged as a distinguished category of citizenship.

Another way of viewing children is as political. James et al. (1998) did not define children as political as a model in its own right. This study argues a case for viewing young children as active citizens with agency to be political through their participation in questioning normalised practices and taking action to redress unjust practices. A notion of children as political, like the four previously discussed sociological theoretical models, acknowledges children as agentic. However, a view of children as political is particularly pertinent to citizenship in that it emphasises access and participation in the public sphere. This is based on citizenship being lived with others (Lister, 2007). The term *political* draws from the Greek root of *polis*, which means a public sphere where members engage in activities of common interest (Turner, 1993). An intention of this study was to enable young children's participation as citizens in the public sphere.

A view of children as political is not concerned with government and party politics that large studies such as those undertaken by Hess and Torney (2006) in the US in the late 1960s and Connell (1971) in Australia examined. These political socialisation studies interviewed children with a view of becoming political on matters such as political party affiliations, government structure and voting. In contrast to these studies, this study views young children as political now. Although research by Connell into children's development of political beliefs was based on children becoming political, he found that children's constructions of beliefs and understandings were idiosyncratic. Children were seen to engage in creative conceptualising, which Connell claimed many studies of children's political beliefs had failed to recognise through preoccupation with political socialisation. More recently, Kulnych (2001) proposed children be viewed as possessing political identities. She proposed that political identities can be supported through children's access to the public sphere and acceptance of their expressions of resistant and disorderly forms of participation (discussed further in section 2.2.5). A view of young children as political welcomes their participation as active citizens in the public sphere.

The acknowledgment of children as agentic is common to each of the sociological theoretical models of children discussed and has grown to have a stronger presence in social policy, education and research. There is an attractive quality to this concept from an ethical position as it presents as empowering children. However, Kulnych (2001) claimed that talk of children's participatory rights (or agency) is often used to exaggerate children's status, thus

obscuring the actuality of children's experiences of authorship. Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) also suggested that recent sociological research that proclaims to acknowledge children's agency may actually risk disregarding children's agency and autonomy. This may occur through adherence to methods that are determined by adults to be agentic for children (e.g., drawing, storytelling and story writing) yet are blind to ways children choose to be agentic. These critiques provide caution to exaggerated and romanticised claims of children's agency.

All of the presociological and sociological theoretical models of children discussed can shape young children's active citizenship participation. The socialisation and acculturation of those engaging with children and the context within which the children exist influences the way children are viewed. Many of these different ways of viewing children influenced children's participation in this study. Recognising and understanding theoretical models of children provided solid groundwork for investigating possibilities for young children's active citizenship as provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling. The influence of certain theories on the possibilities for young children's active citizenship could be identified. Some theories of children were noted as contributing to metanarratives that espouse oppressive, exclusionary, and totalising effects on how children are viewed in society thus impacting possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Other theories contribute counternarratives that open doors for diverse possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Collectively, an understanding of varying theories of children enabled analysis of influential thinking and shaping of possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

## 2.2 Citizenship

Theoretical models of children shape theories, ideas, models and practice of children's citizenship. The term citizenship has various meanings across different disciplines. Recent discussion of notions of children's citizenship has emerged from sociological views of citizenship. To investigate notions of children's citizenship, definitions of citizenship and elements of citizenship require examination in relation to the experiences of children and the conditions of childhood.

In this section I begin with citizenship definitions and narratives (2.2.1), followed by citizenship approaches and spaces (2.2.2) to provide a basis for understanding the field of citizenship. The emergence of a notion of children's citizenship is provided through a discussion of children's rights (2.2.3). Recent notions of children as citizens (2.2.4) are then theorised. This is followed by critiques of proposed models of children's citizenship (2.2.5) and examples of practice of children's citizenship (2.2.6) with regard to possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Collectively, this provides a solid base for understanding conceptualisations of children's citizenship with which empirical data in this study of young children's active citizenship can be analysed.

### 2.2.1 *Citizenship Definitions and Narratives*

Citizenship is defined in different ways in different disciplines. Legal, social science, sociological, and socio-political definitions, along with a metanarrative of good citizen, are explored below for their relevance to possibilities for children's citizenship. In addition, the relationship between democracy and citizenship is discussed as relevant to children's citizenship rights.

One view of citizenship is simply as a legal status of nation-state membership, which is granted through birthright or naturalisation (Faulks, 1998; R. Gilbert, 1996). From this understanding citizens are viewed as loyal to the state and its institutions. The only active participation permitted in this view is that of the legislated convention of voting. This is a narrow view of citizenship that overemphasises the purpose of legislation in defining the scope of citizenship. In terms of children's citizenship this view is problematic, as children are recognised as citizens (through birthright), yet they cannot participate as they do not have the right to vote.

The notion of being loyal to the state as a faithful subject was formed by the ideas of Rousseau (1762/1968) about citizenship as devotion to civic duty and obedience to laws (Dagger, 1997). These ideas have become known as hegemonic ideology, a metanarrative of the *good citizen*, whereby citizens work hard and obey the laws (Batstone & Mendieta, 1999). For example, such an ideology has had a strong presence in children's stories with Tatar (2003) noting that the fairytales of Wilhelm Grimm are imbued with this message, as he manipulated the tales he heard with the values of the time. These lyrics that were sung by school children in Germany at that time typified such values: "Hard work and obedience: Those are the qualities to which all good citizens must aspire" (Tatar, p. 29). With Grimms' fairytales permeating Anglophone popular culture, Stephens and McCallum (1998) claimed that these tales contribute to the cultivation of metanarratives of the values that they espouse. Whalley (1996) concurred that the equation of obedience with good citizenship has continued to be a strong message in children's stories. The ideology of the good citizen has had a strong impact on narratives and discourses for both adults and children. For example, the recent media portrayal of terrorists as assailants of extreme evil is seen to attack the metanarrative of good citizen (Seymour, 2006). The metanarrative of good citizen continues to bear weight in discussion and practice of citizenship.

In social science, citizenship is defined "as passive and active membership of individuals in a nation state with certain universalistic rights and obligations at a specified level of equality" (Janoski, 1998, p. 9). This definition acknowledges the establishment of personhood within a geographical territory along with the experience of the passive right to existence and the active right to influence politics. It acknowledges certain universal rights of, and obligations to, all citizens of a nation state with emphasis on equality. Contemporary citizenship theory contests and broadens this social science definition to include the concept that it is "a social process

through which individuals and social groups engage in claiming, expanding or losing rights” (Isin & Turner, 2002, p. 4). This is a sociologically informed definition of citizenship, which shifts the emphasis away from legal rules to focus on rights, socio-political practice, meanings, and identities. Citizenship viewed as a socio-political practice differs from a social science definition in that it is a lived citizenship, thus proposing agency through active participation (Lister, 2007) as opposed to passive membership.

The emphasis on rights in sociological definitions of citizenship draws from what is understood as the first sociological theory of citizenship: *Citizenship and social class* by Marshall (1950). In this essay, Marshall defined a typology of citizenship rights for citizens in a developmental order, that was balanced against obligations. The categories of rights included civil, political and social rights. To Marshall, civil rights were rights for individual freedom or legal rights. Freedom of speech, the right to own property, the right to justice and the right to work in your choice of profession were classified as civil rights as exercised through the legal system. Political rights were defined by Marshall as the right to exercise political participation in institutions, such as parliament and local councils. Social rights were defined as the right to economic welfare and security provided through institutions, such as educational systems and social services. Based on these definitions of civil, political and social rights, children only have access to social rights. In this regard it is worth noting that Marshall viewed children and young people as future citizens and not as citizens of today. Children’s citizenship rights are discussed further in the forthcoming section on children’s rights (2.2.3).

If children’s citizenship is viewed as a process of expanding rights, a socio-political definition of citizenship seems to offer the greatest scope for the inclusion of children as citizens of today. Turner (1993) acknowledged that a socio-political definition of citizenship “places the concept squarely in the debate of inequality... because citizenship is necessarily and inevitably bound up with the problem of unequal distribution of resources in society” (p. 32). A socio-political definition of citizenship welcomes acknowledgment and redress of the inequality that children experience in society due to their reduced access to resources.

Democracy is considered a twin term to citizenship as it is understood as the participatory practice of citizens (Loenan, 1997). To Loenan, democracy and citizenship are mutually reinforcing in that democracy as a process is a means of enabling citizenship and the participation of citizens sustains democracy. Derived from the Ancient Greek words *demos* for people and *kratos* for rule or strength, democracy has evolved to have many meanings in many contexts (Dahl, 2000). According to Young (2000), political theorists acclaim the idea of democracy for how it provides greater voice and participation for the lives of active citizens. Young also acknowledged that many believe “democracy is the best political form for restraining rulers from the abuses of power” (p. 17). However, many countries across the globe claim to be democratic nations, yet there are numerous examples of abuse of power. For example, the USA,

claimed to be the beacon of democracy, has overthrown democratic governments in Chile, Iran, and Guatemala against the will of the people (Chomsky, 2006). Although democracy is understood to support the participation of citizens, and the term is warmly welcomed in rhetoric, in practice the acts of a nation can be at odds with such rhetoric.

Two staple principles of democracy are: all members of society have access to power and all enjoy universally recognised liberties and freedoms, such as freedom of speech and freedom of choice (Dahl, Shapiro, & Cheibub, 2003). These principles are applicable to a claim for children's citizenship rights. As acknowledged above, children do not have the same access to universally recognised liberties and freedoms as adults through their reduced access to rights and resources (Kulnych, 2001; Lister, 2007). Based on this deficit, attention to principles of democracy is required to enact a socio-political definition of children's citizenship.

The above discussion of different definitions of citizenship reveals a socio-political definition to have greatest relevance to a claim for children's citizenship, in that emphasis is placed on expanding rights. Democracy was recognised as enabling civil, political, and social rights of citizenship. The following section discusses how a socio-political definition operates in different citizenship approaches and spaces.

### *2.2.2 Citizenship Approaches and Spaces*

Citizenship can be approached and experienced in different ways. This section discusses four approaches to citizenship defined in political theory and their potential relevance to possibilities for young children's active citizenship. A recent proposal by Arvanitakis (2008) of citizenship experiences as heterogeneous, fluid spaces offers further relevance and possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

From modern political theories, the most widely recognised approaches to citizenship to have emerged are liberal, republican, communitarian, and cosmopolitan or global citizenship (Isin & Turner, 2002). A rights-based view of citizenship is couched within liberalism with the primary concern being individual rights. A liberal approach to citizenship emerged from theories of John Locke (1690) and John Stuart Mill (1869/1999) on individuality, self-interest and private property (Schuck, 2002). Central to liberal citizenship practice are the right to own property and the right to vote. To Millei and Imre (2009), a liberal approach to citizenship is problematic for children because children cannot own property or vote. A republican approach to citizenship has a solid commitment to civic virtue for nationhood, lending itself to strong patriotic identity and fundamentalism (Dagger, 2002; Honohan, 2002; Maynor, 2003; Pettit, 1997). The main emphasis on nationhood in republicanism defines citizenship as loyalty to the nation-state. Nationhood and nation-state were not research concerns of this study. The approach to citizenship that offered greatest relevance to young children's active citizenship in response to social justice storytelling is communitarian citizenship.

The relevance of communitarian citizenship lies in the definition of citizenship participation as purposeful group action to create a cohesive just society and a strong sense of community responsibility (Delanty, 2002; Etzioni, 1993; Janoski, 1998). The focus of this type of citizenship is care and concern for fellow community members expressed through responsibility to the community. Citizenship approached in this way seems possible for, and inclusive of, children. Recent theorising of a notion of children's citizenship builds on communitarian understandings of citizenship, making a case for children's agency in the public sphere or wider community (Kulnych, 2001; Lister, 2007, 2008). This is not to say that communitarian citizenship is an easy fit for children's citizenship. Millei and Imre (2009) argued that the notion of children acting as citizens based on a communitarian version of citizenship is problematic. Their argument is based on the dilemma of how to enable children to participate fully in political life when they do not have the legal status or administrative capacity for such participation. This study investigated this dilemma by exploring the possibilities and difficulties of supporting young children's political participation.

Another citizenship approach that has featured prominently in recent citizenship commentary is the notion of global citizenship. Global citizenship builds upon communitarian citizenship, accepting responsibility for common humanitarian concerns (e.g., poverty, freedom from violence) across the globe. It positions individuals as members of the wider community of humanity, beyond the nation-state (J. Williams, 2002). A global view of citizenship acknowledges the increased transnational movements of people and regard for all citizens of all nations. The focus of global citizenship is responsibility to humanity regardless of age, ability, culture, environment, faith, nationhood, occupation, political affiliation or sexuality. In an investigation of young children's responses to social justice issues (that are not bound by the nation-state), the qualities of global citizenship seem applicable to the possibilities for young children's active citizenship. However, Millei and Imre (2009) caution that a view of children as global citizens who act upon global issues invariably results in these issues being assigned by policy and curriculum documents rather than arising out of children's concerns.

The above discussion provides an overview of citizenship rights and approaches. However, citizens and citizenship practice within different citizenship approaches and discourses are not homogeneous. According to Arvanitakis (2008), citizenship practice is heterogeneous. In order to understand how diverse groups of citizens live together in the same community, Arvanitakis proposed that citizenship be understood as "a fluid and heterogeneous phenomenon that can be in surplus, deficit, progressive and reactionary" (Research agenda: Investigating citizenship surpluses and deficits, para. 6). To understand the heterogeneous nature of citizenship he identified a typology of four citizenship spaces:

1. Marginalisation and citizenship deficit.
2. Privatisation and citizenship deficit.

3. Citizenship surplus – Empowered not engaged.
4. Insurgent citizenship – Empowered and engaged.

Arvanitakis used the term *space* to address the fluid phenomenon of citizenship, allowing for instability and movement between areas.

Spaces of *marginalisation and citizenship deficit* (1) and *insurgent citizenship* (4) seem most applicable to possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation. Spaces of *privatisation and citizenship deficit* (2) and *citizenship surplus* (3) are not applicable due to references to independent economic resourcing. Young children are typically economically dependent on adult protectors (Lister, 2007). To Arvanitakis, spaces of marginalisation and citizenship deficit are those in which citizens feel marginalised by not being listened to or represented by civic institutions. Defined in this way, marginalisation and citizenship deficit can be an experience for young children, as they have no formal avenues for their opinions to be heard by civic institutions (Kulnych, 2001; Lister, 2007). Citizens in this space consider that any effort to participate will not be rewarded. To Arvanitakis, a space of insurgent citizenship views citizens as empowered and engaged. Citizens in this space come from positions of high social capital, which cultivate a willingness to engage in political processes. This space could be applicable to some young children, as there is potential for young children to be empowered and engaged as citizens if they are motivated to act on issues that concern them, as noted in the vignette shared in the Prologue. A proposal of citizenship spaces offers a way to identify how citizens engage in or disengage from civic participation. It provides another understanding of citizenship with scope to investigate possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation.

By defining citizenship in terms of rights (2.2.1), and consideration of citizenship approaches and spaces (2.2.2), I identified the elements relevant to an investigation of young children's active citizenship. Collectively, the recognition of citizenship rights, approaches, and spaces provides an overview of the context of citizenship in the broader society. Their systematic definition provides foundational knowledge from which to build an understanding of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. In the following four sections, possibilities for children's citizenship are explored through discussion of children's rights (2.2.3), children as citizens (2.2.4), models of children's citizenship (2.2.5), and practice of children's citizenship (2.2.6) respectively.

### 2.2.3 *Children's Rights*

If citizenship is viewed as a claim for social, political and civil rights consistent with the definition of Marshall (1950), then a discussion of children's citizenship needs to begin with children's rights. Children do not possess the same social, political and civil rights as adults. This section discusses early advocates for children's rights; the formation of the *United Nations*

*Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC); the rights it includes, its limitations, and the importance of participation rights for actualisation of children's citizenship.

The idea of a bill of rights for children (which informed the formation of the UNCRC) was first proposed by Polish doctor and pedagogue, Janusz Korczak (Alderson, 2008c). His bill of rights for children was built on three basic rights: a) the right to die, b) the right to the present, c) the right to be what s/he is (Cohen, 1994). Korczak dreamed of realising the rights of the child in a children's state. He established orphanages with a view to cultivating children's self-rule, and he wrote stories to manifest this utopia (e.g., *King Matt, the First*, a story of a child king who established a children's newspaper and parliament). Korczak's visions of children's self-rule have been described as pedocracy (Lifton, 1988). The legacy of his vision and devoted advocacy for children's rights led to the establishment of legislation for children's rights.

Children first received social rights through the 1924 Geneva *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* adopted by the League of Nations, which was then endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959 (Van Bueren, 1995). However, there was no reference to civil or political rights, as the purpose of these rights was to protect children and not to increase their autonomy (Coady, 2008). According to Isin and Turner (2002), children have been considered better served by human rights legislation in that such legislation has worked to protect the rights of those not protected by the state. The formulation of the UNCRC in 1989 went beyond protective social rights and included some civil and political rights.

The acceptance of the UNCRC was made possible through the modern understanding of children's separateness from adults, with marked distinctions in expected behaviours, roles, and responsibilities (Archard, 1993). All nations adopted the UNCRC except the USA and Somalia, making it the most widely accepted human rights instrument in the world (Prest & Wildblood, 2005). According to Prest and Wildblood, two important legal shifts created a climate for the wide acceptance of UNCRC. The first shift was that the state acquired the legal status of obligations towards children, providing additional support to existing parental obligations. The second shift was that international law no longer viewed children as objects needing protection but as subjects entitled to their own rights.

The UNCRC organises children's rights into three categories: provision, protection, and participation (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). The provision and protection categories address social rights and are largely supported by what Archard (1993) referred to as the "caretaker thesis" (p. 77). Such a thesis claims that children are not capable of making rational autonomous decisions and that caretakers should make decisions for them. According to Archard, the participation category of children's rights that is advocated by child liberationists has been accepted and supported less than the provision and protection categories. For example, Article 12 particularly emphasises children's participation through voice by assuring children's right to express their views freely in all matters that affect them (UNCRC, 1989). Some

(Lansdown, 2001; Van Bueren, 1995) consider this article as the most important in the convention. Ethical practices of research with children endeavour to honour children's right to express their views (MacNaughton & Smith, 2005; Roberts, 2008), such as was the intent of this study. However, the extent to which Article 12 is translated into enforceable rights varies among countries (Lister, 2007). According to Rayner (2002), the UNCRC only offers quasi-legal status in Australia because there is no national children's policy, and provision and protection rights are addressed through state policies. For these reasons full implementation of the UNCRC has not been achieved in Australia although the UNCRC has enabled further movement towards fulfilling citizenship rights for children through wide acceptance of children possessing the right to be consulted.

Many view the participation rights defined in the UNCRC as aspirational and not yet realised fully, as noted by Alderson (2008b, 2008c). According to Lansdown (1994), a reason for this is that the notion of children's participation rights requires a significant shift in the recognition of them as participants in society, which may be viewed as a threat to traditional boundaries between adults and children. This is linked, as Lansdown explained, to children not possessing civil status and their limited access to civil institutions to ensure that their interests are acknowledged. Another factor influencing realisation of participation rights is the use of the core principle of the UNCRC, that is, "in the best interests of the child" to justify adult decision-making in children's lives (Coady, 1996). According to Coady, this principle indicates that an adult or group of adults is in a better position than the child to assess the interests of that child. She suggested that this "ignores the central liberal insight about freedom rights: that the individual is *usually* in the best position to know what is in her own interests" (p. 20). This principle is also seen as "a powerful tool in the hands of adults" (Lansdown, 1994, p. 41) as it is "a woolly concept...incapable of being tested and monitored" (p. 42). To make a decision on behalf of another is susceptible to manipulation. Understood this way, the principle of "in the best interests of the child" is paternalistic and denies freedom rights, that is, that the individual knows best about her own interests. Metanarratives that cast children as innocent and incompetent feed the thinking behind this principle and impact the realisation of children's participation rights.

Though protection of the child is still the major focus of the UNCRC, there is increased recognition of children as competent decision-makers in judicial and administrative proceedings in Australia. For example, in Victoria, there has been an increase in acceptance of children's testimony in family court hearings (Coady, 1996). Further examples of children's participation in administrative proceedings in Australia include consultation with children to create government plans that recognise children as active citizens, such as *The ACT Children's Plan 2004-2014* (Australian Capital Territory Government, 2004; Saballa, MacNaughton, & Smith, 2008) and *The City of Port Phillip Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2008*

(MacNaughton & Smith, 2008; Smale, 2009). The establishment of Commissions for Children and Young People in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania, and Western Australia has also created avenues for children and young people's participation as citizens. Although participation rights are not fully realisable, progression has occurred at local council, state, and territory levels to consult with children on matters that affect their lives.

Limited support for children's participation rights has led to discussion and advocacy for children's citizenship (Lister, 2007). This argument is based on a view that citizenship offers more than rights in that it may increase children's status in society so that their voices can be heard through active engagement in decision-making that affects their lives. Even though children gain the legal status of citizenship in their country of residence by virtue of birth or naturalisation, Lister explained that children are entitled to a passport as symbolic of this legal view of citizenship, not the right to vote. James et al. (2008) declare that childhood studies research has noted that children lack political rights but also many social and civic rights. Some of the civic rights that James et al. identified as being denied to children include: access to courts, avenues to challenge decisions that have been made on their behalf, decision-making about their education, and a formal voice in society. According to DeWinter (1997) the exclusion from such rights places children in the same category as criminals and those diagnosed as mentally ill; however, children possess more rights to provision and protection. An alignment of children's access to rights with those of criminals and the mentally ill suggests a view of children as evil or irrational. Theories (e.g., Hobbes, 1660/1996; Freud, 1923) that have cultivated such views may have over time influenced thinking that has shaped decisions to exclude children's access to political rights and many social and civic rights.

According to Kulnych (2001), social and civil rights have not necessarily changed children's political status. These rights can be granted paternalistically without requiring democratic participation, as noted with the implementation of the UNCRC. Enabling children to possess political, social, and civic rights according to the theory of citizenship espoused by Marshall (1950) requires reconceptualising understandings of children, childhood and children's citizenship. Reconceptualisation is required to cultivate spaces for children to claim rights by having their voices heard and being active decision-makers about factors that affect their lives. Unless children lobby and claim rights themselves, children's rights will remain paternalistically conferred. Children's claims for rights may not present themselves in the same way as adult claims. New ways of thinking about children, childhood and children's citizenship are required to open avenues for children's claims for rights.

#### *2.2.4 Children as Citizens?*

With a view of children as agents gaining prevalence in education and society in recent times, a notion of children's citizenship has begun to be theorised and discussed in citizenship literature. This section explores the case for children's citizenship, drawing from literature on children's

citizenship in general (which tends to focus on children aged nine years and older) and an emerging body of literature specifically on young children's active citizenship. The possibilities, problems, and limitations of notions of children's citizenship are extrapolated.

Citizenship participation is considered to require reason, rationality and autonomy. These are attributes that many adults consider children do not possess (Stasiulis, 2002), as children are viewed as innocent and developing. Contrary to this understanding, Jans (2004) observed, "children ... are strikingly sensitive about global social themes, like the environment and peace" (p. 31). However, Jans noted that this sensibility of children is rarely used for actual citizenship but as a base for future citizenship. Sociological models of children that position children with competency and agency have helped to open discussion of possibilities for defining children as active citizens and supporting children's practice as citizens of today.

Models of citizenship are unilaterally designed for adults (Jans, 2004; Qvortrup, 2001). To Stern (2006), the right to participation as an issue of democracy is not considered as important for children as it is for adults. Typically children have been ignored in democracy and citizenship literature and discourse, which equates citizenship with adults only; or children are portrayed as citizens of the future through terms such as "citizens in waiting" or "learner citizens" (Jans, 2004; Lister, 2007). Sociological models of children (Corsaro, 1997; James & Prout, 1997; James et al., 1998) challenge these future orientations, arguing that children are citizens of today. A view of children as agentic enables them to be active in the here and now. However, it has more often been older children who have had opportunities to be active decision-makers and contributors to society. Only recently has a case been made for the participation of younger children (e.g., Alderson, 2008b; Lansdown, 2005; MacNaughton, Hughes, & Smith, 2008).

In western societies, children are seen to belong to the "'private' worlds of play, domesticity and school" (Roche, 1999, p. 479). Children are excluded from the public sphere in many ways. Parents, caregivers, and teachers carefully manage children's lives in these private worlds. Social policy on, for, or about children typically focuses on protection, thereby supporting this seclusion of children to private worlds (Woodhead, 1997; Wyness, 2000). Discourses of childhood innocence and vulnerability have shaped such policies and practice, which limit scope for children's participation in the public sphere.

A focus on participation offers scope to provide empowerment for young children as a social group who can be decision-makers on matters that affect their lives with access to engagement in the public sphere. Recent support for children's participation however is typically high in rhetoric and low in practical application (Kjorholt, 1998; Prout, 2002). Prout (2001) noted in a study in the UK with children aged 5-16 years that participants were alert to tokenistic adult support for their participation. Later, Prout (2002) noted that the promise to be heard is taken seriously by children and that failure to follow through "may risk disappointment and even

cynicism about democratic values” (p. 75). The findings of both Kjørholt and Prout suggest potential fallibility of adult intentions to support children’s citizenship participation. A notion of children’s citizenship participation may be able to be theorised and articulated but support for its actualisation is troubled by metanarratives of children as innocent and cocooned in private worlds or children as developing, so participation is oriented to the future. Further to this, embedded social structures and practices (e.g., children’s limited access to civic institutions) exclude children’s access to participation.

Research that theorises and conceptualises children’s citizenship is growing. Government and institutional policies are gradually changing to include language that positions children as social actors entitled to be heard, valued, and perceived as responsible citizens. Australian examples include: *The ACT Children’s Plan 2004-2014* (Australian Capital Territory, 2004; Saballa et al., 2008), and *The City of Port Phillip Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2008* (MacNaughton & Smith, 2008; Smale, 2009). According to Minow (1999), including children as participants alters their stance in the community so that they see themselves as members. Earlier, DeWinter (1997) established this notion claiming that by “involving children from a very early age in the organisation of the world in which they live, their repertoire of behavioural capabilities grows” (p. 163). The provision of opportunities for children to participate in citizenship has supplied substantial evidence that children are capable of much more than adults think (Lansdown, 2001, 2005; Stasiulis, 2002). For example, two internationally recognised child activist groups warrant mentioning: Article 12 in the UK (see Lansdown, 2001) and Free the Children in Canada (see Stasiulis, 2002). All members of both groups are under 18 years of age and demonstrate high degrees of autonomy in managing their respective organisations to take action on child rights issues (Lansdown, 2001; Stasiulis, 2002). Documented examples of young children’s citizenship participation are scarce, and Lister (2008) identified that for children’s participation to gain acceptance in many circles requires demonstration of their capacity as participatory citizens. The recent increase in literature and policies that positions children as participatory citizens indicates an effort to build acceptance of children’s participation. Based on the arguments of Lister, there also needs to be an increase in opportunities for children to engage in civic participation.

To enable children’s participation, Lister (2007, 2008) suggested that adults view children as citizens so that children experience being treated respectfully as citizens, come to see themselves as citizens, and participate actively as citizens. Evaluations of initiatives that enable children to participate as citizens testify to how participation strengthens children’s sense of belonging to the community as well as equips them with skills and capacities for active citizenship (Eden & Roker, 2002; Lansdown, 2001). These evaluations suggest that if adults view citizenship as part of children’s identities then opportunities become available for children to participate in citizenship and build citizenship capabilities, such as decision-making. To

Kulnych (2001), genuine democratic participation for children is only possible if children are recognised as possessing political identities. According to Lansdown (2001), democracy is strengthened through children's active participation in society as another group in society expresses their opinions and makes decisions. The understanding of political identity that Kulnych referred to is that of active participation, which draws from definitions of citizenship from Ancient Greece and communitarian theorists. Like Lister, Kulnych proposes that children need to be seen as full participating members in order for their citizenship to be effective and meaningful. Citizenship as political identity for either children or adults is central to genuine democracy in which all members of society can participate "...in public deliberation that seeks the most just solutions to common problems" (Kulnych, p. 232). If children are viewed as political, Kulnych claimed their voices will be included in the larger political culture in a comprehensive manner as genuine enactment of democratic participation rights.

Varying notions of children's citizenship can influence the scope of children's participation. A notion of children's citizenship as political, as Kulnych (2001) proposed, has the potential to offer scope for children's agentic engagement with the larger political culture. Others (e.g., Gullestad, 1997) have observed that a notion of children as citizens can strengthen images of innocence associated with national identity, which makes visible elements of romance or idealism that surround the notion of children as citizens. Notions of innocence also point to future orientations of citizenship, as children are illustrated as citizens of the future. Another notion of children's citizenship is the claim for greater rights, which positions children as a disenfranchised group that should have access to democratic rights or as a threatened group requiring protection (Kjorholt, 2002). This notion seems to support a view of children as a minority group yet involves adults as torchbearers for the children's movement. Rights discourses have led to increased reference in policy documents to children as citizens (Millei & Imre, 2009). However, as Millei and Imre (2009) note in their analysis of Australian early childhood policy documents, these references are mostly a "future building exercise" (p. 285) with children positioned as learning duty and responsibility. Such references suggest metanarratives of good citizen and developing child, with children schooled to be good citizens. Another notion of children's citizenship that Kjorholt noted in her analysis of discourses of children and participation was of children positioned as resources. A view of children as resources in citizenship practice emphasises adult wonder and honour at children's participation, which Kjorholt noted seemed to have a "significant mythical power" (p. 75). Each of these varying notions of children's citizenship is shaped by different discourses that define possibilities for children's citizenship participation.

The various views of children present in notions of children's citizenship signal the messiness of conceptualising children's citizenship. To Millei and Imre (2009), "children as a social category simply cannot act as citizens in the modern nation-state" because they do not

have access to institutional freedoms, or the freedom to organise, to own property or to “extract their labour from the ‘learning environment’” (p. 288). They concluded that children’s citizenship is a loose notion without any real possibilities.

Many factors work to exclude or limit children’s participation as citizens. These include metanarratives that contribute to attitudes and practices that view children as innocent or developing, and therefore not possessing the capacity to engage in civic participation or have access to the public sphere. Sociological models of children support an understanding of children as citizens of today; however, this seems to have produced more rhetoric than actualisation of children’s engagement as citizens. There is a bind, as Lister (2008) suggested, between children’s demonstration of citizenship practice and children’s acceptance as citizens. The following section (2.2.5) provides an overview of recently proposed models of children’s citizenship to guide adult support for children’s citizenship practice.

### *2.2.5 Models of Children’s Citizenship*

To provide scope for children’s actual citizenship practice a number of models have been proposed. In children’s citizenship literature, the eight-step ladder of children’s participation (Hart, 1997), the socially interdependent model developed by Cockburn (1998) and *The Evolving Capacities of the Child* by Lansdown (2005) are perhaps the most well-known and significant models. These models provide a solid base for advocating and enabling children’s active citizenship participation. In addition to these models the idea offered by Kulnych (2001) that children’s citizenship be viewed as children possessing political identities is discussed further. This idea is of particular interest to this study for its emphasis on raising children’s status in society as active, contributive members. What follows discusses how children and adults are viewed, how citizenship practice is defined in these children’s citizenship models, and their relevance to this study.

The eight-step ladder of participation proposed by Hart (1997) provides a useful hierarchical model of possibilities for children’s participation by identifying different degrees of children’s autonomy. These range from manipulation, where adults use children’s voices to carry their own messages, to child-initiated participation with shared decisions with adults. The highest rung of the ladder includes decision-making with adults, as Hart recognised that children’s proposed actions can exceed their abilities to execute them due to their limited access to civic institutions and resources. The adult-child divide in social structures of contemporary society makes it necessary for children to engage with adults, though to support children’s autonomy there needs to be joint decision-making. This is a view of children’s participation as interdependent with adults. Hart also proposed an emphasis on children’s participation in the local community so that children can build connections and affection for their local community. However, Sinclair (2004) critiqued the hierarchical nature of this model, claiming that it positions the highest rung of the ladder as the ideal form of children’s participation. This implies

the identification of a universal truth and disregards variants, emergence, and diversity in children's participation.

Interdependence is also embedded in the socially interdependent model of citizenship proposed by Cockburn (1998). This model suggests that children's citizenship involves children and adults as reciprocally dependent on each other through recognition of the interdependence of all human beings. To Cockburn citizenship is not something that is acquired or gained in increments by age, but rather is a quality that is pre-existing. This model emphasises connections among people, through rights, duties, and obligations. It supports practice of citizenship where children and adults collaborate, with children positioned as social actors and their contributions to society being valued. However, as Cockburn and others such as James et al. (2008) recognised, this requires a shift in the way childhood and adulthood are viewed and constructed. Cockburn was hopeful that this could happen: "If social relations can produce dependent and devalued children, it can potentially produce the converse, that of children valued and respected" (p. 113). To enable a model of children's citizenship participation as interdependence, Cockburn argued that a shift in social relations is required to cultivate spaces and places where children are valued and respected.

Another more recent model is a concept of children's citizenship as evolving capacities, as depicted in the UNICEF publication *The Evolving Capacities of the Child* (Lansdown, 2005). This model advocates for children's participation to create change and develop autonomy but recognises that possibilities vary according to a child's experience, capacity and socio-cultural context. This reinforces the arguments of Minow (1999) and DeWinter (1997) that children need opportunities to participate so that their citizenship capabilities can grow. Adults who are supportive of this model assist children's participation according to their capacities while protecting them from the full responsibility of adulthood. The acknowledgment of different capacities according to different ages and protection from unaccomplished capacities resonates with a view of children as naturally developing. However, Lansdown also recognised the influence of social construction in children's achievement of capacities so that in different contexts children of similar ages may have different capacities.

A different way to foreground children's understanding and voice was presented by Kulnych (2001) who proposed viewing children's citizenship as children with political identities. She suggested that children be seen as political actors, who authorize children's citizenship and are incorporated into political culture. However, she identified a dichotomy of order/disorder influencing the possibility of children's citizenship. According to Kulnych, views of children as disorderly, and the public realm as orderly, have shaped children's exclusion from the public realm. She proposed that adults welcome an understanding of autonomy that acknowledges experiences of anxiety, incoherence, and disorder as offering potential to public debates. Although her intention was to challenge the order/disorder dichotomy and embrace children's

participation on children's terms, the use of words such as anxiety, incoherence and disorder are negative or deficit terms compared with dispositions associated with adults (e.g., controlled, coherent and ordered). Perhaps for this alternative understanding of autonomy, parallel words such as concerned, tangent, and organic, suggest greater value of children's ways of thinking and expressing. From this understanding of autonomy, Kulnych suggested a greater compatibility with resistant forms of participation (e.g., protest rally) rather than conventional forms (e.g., voting). To Kulnych, the activities in which children are already engaged are resistant forms of participation rather than conventional forms. For example, Kulnych cited a case of street children in Brazil who rallied together seeking protection as a resistant form of participation that presented evidence for national policies to address their concerns. Kulnych saw support for resistant forms of participation possess the potential to challenge cultural constructs of children's identities and work to define, create, and recreate the world. This model offers scope for recognition of children within wider political culture in ways children choose to operate, not by conforming to adult conventions.

Although all of these models position children as social agents and actively support children's participation in society at all ages, they are adult constructed. Lansdown (2005), Hart (1997), and Cockburn (1998) recognise the importance of repositioning children's place in society and advocate for children as competent contributors. Such repositioning contrasts with views of children as incompetent, irrational, and irresponsible. Kulnych (2001) foregrounds children's ways of being and inclusion in the wider political culture. The domination of adult conceptions and articulations in the domain of children's citizenship makes notions of children's citizenship susceptible to paternalism. Adults invariably speak for children, especially young children, on claims for children's citizenship rights. This is different to the claims of other marginalised groups for citizenship rights, in which representatives of the group speak for themselves. However, young children's reduced access to resources and their economic dependence on adults affect their capacity to speak for themselves. This points to a central problem of a notion of young children's active citizenship, that is, young children's dependence on adults.

One way of addressing this was proposed by Lister (2008), who suggested that the distinction that Iris Young (1995) makes between autonomy and self-sufficiency offers a helpful guide. To Young, autonomy as the ability to make and act upon choices is contrasted against a view of self-sufficiency as not needing help from anyone to meet your needs. Advocates for the inclusion of participation rights in a definition of children's citizenship seek the inclusion of autonomy. Lister suggested that this definition of autonomy is most applicable given children's economic dependence on adults, as it offers scope for defining the parameters of children's participation, that is, how they make and act upon choices.

The above discussion has provided an overview of four models of children's citizenship, their possibilities, and limitations. What differentiates these models from the claims for citizenship from other marginalised groups is that they have not been proposed by the group seeking citizenship participation. Adults are claiming children's citizenship rights on children's behalf. A number of noted factors affect children's capacity to claim citizenship rights. These limitations aside, children have engaged in active communitarian citizenship as discussed in the following section.

#### *2.2.6 Practice of Children's Citizenship*

Opportunities for children's actual practice of citizenship seem to have been limited to small pockets, even though considerable theorising of children's citizenship in recent times has seen a shift in how children are positioned in policies. In the following section I discuss well-documented examples of child-initiated active citizenship, that is, children expressing responsibility to others through purposeful action. Recently documented examples of young children's active citizenship practice in Australia are also included, though these are examples of adult-initiated citizenship practice that focus on consultation with children. The relationship between children's citizenship policy and practice is also critiqued.

The largest network of children as active citizens in the world, with more than one million members, is Free the Children (Stasiulis, 2002). Craig Kielberger formed this network in 1995, when at the age of 12, he was motivated to take action on child labour after learning of the murder of Iqbal Masih, a debt-enslaved loom worker and child labour activist of Pakistan (Free the Children, 2007). Beginning as a group of friends gathering in Craig's family garage, the network now contributes to innovative education and development programs across 45 countries. This is the largest scale evidence of older children engaging in child-authored citizenship, as the formation of the group was child initiated and the group has continued to act autonomously by making and acting upon their decisions. This example of authorship and autonomy in children's citizenship practice highlights aspirations and possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

The practices of Free the Children were defined by Stasiulis (2002) as examples of child-authored global citizenship, which occur through the network's young members practising responsibility to others on issues of global concern. Members of Free the Children claim their rights as citizens to voice and act upon global issues as well as claim rights for children with less access to resources. Members of Free the Children speak and act for children in countries affected by war, child labour and/or poverty. Children from economically rich countries speaking on behalf of children from economically poor countries raises potential risks of colonial-like practices. However, Stasiulis claims that Free the Children leaders, Craig Kielberger and Laura Hannant, have taken care to avoid "neo-colonialist appropriations of third world issues" (p. 530), for example, Craig acknowledges that the struggle against child labour "did not begin in the

west, but rather began with organisations such as CWA [Child Workers of Asia]” (Kielburger, 1998, p. 75). The active members of Free the Children are articulate global activists who are empowered, knowledgeable, compassionate, and autonomous in achieving objectives. To Stasiulis, this image of children is noticeably incongruous with the widespread western hegemonic ideology of innocent, pampered, irrational, pre-political childhoods and children. The strength and momentum of this international organisation demonstrates that active citizenship by older children is possible.

Perhaps the most well known evidence of a young child initiating social action is the fundraising project for wells in Africa initiated by Ryan Hreljac. In 1998, at six years of age Ryan began raising funds to build a well for a school in a Ugandan village. With the support of his family Ryan went on to form *Ryan's Well Foundation*, which has contributed to 502 wells in 16 countries (Ryan's Well Foundation, 2007). This story is relayed in environmental education programs and humanitarian education programs to inspire upper primary students to also take action on issues that concern them. Documented evidence of young children initiating social action seem rare, so this story is heralded as extraordinary given his age at the time.

There are several examples of adults who consult with young children on issues relevant to their lives. These are purposeful acts by adults keen to support a notion of young children as active citizens. Two Australian examples previously mentioned include *The ACT Children's Plan 2004-2014* (Australian Capital Territory, 2004; Saballa et al., 2008), and *The City of Port Phillip Municipal Early Years Plan 2005-2008* (MacNaughton & Smith, 2008; Smale, 2009). Other documented examples of young children as active citizens portray children as citizens in their learning communities. For instance, a doctoral study by Page (2008) examined emotions and citizenship in lived experiences of friendship for children aged four and five years and concluded that acknowledgment of emotions in citizenship creates new opportunities for respectful communities that value emotions, agency and identity. Another Australian study is currently investigating young children's active citizenship in terms of their learning about social and moral values (Brownlee et al., 2009). Examples of young children as active citizens have only recently begun to be documented and researched, with possibilities for young children's active citizenship being explored. Various approaches and notions of children's citizenship are being trialled and analysed to determine how to foreground young children's expression of autonomy when widespread social structures and practices position young children as dependent on adults. Issues of working with children dependant on adults are much more prevalent for young children's positioning as citizens, than that of older children.

Even though many have theorised and critiqued the notion of children as citizens (e.g., Coady, 2008; DeWinter, 1997; Jans, 2004; Kjørholt, 2002; Kulnych, 2001; Lister, 2007; Millei & Imre, 2009; Prout, 2001, 2002; Roche, 1999; Stasiulis, 2002) and a number of models of children's citizenship have been proposed (e.g., Hart, 1997; Cockburn, 1998, Lansdown, 2005;

Kulnych, 2001), there have been few investigations of children's actual practice as citizens. Children could be much more involved as participants in the public sphere, but as Kulnych claimed, actualisation of children's participation has merely scratched the surface.

A shift in understanding of children as social actors has slowly begun through the use of language in international conventions, such as the UNCRC, local government policies such as *The ACT Children's Plan 2004-2014* (Australian Capital Territory Government, 2004) and curriculum documents, such as *Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia* (Australian Government Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2009). Each of these documents refers to children as active citizens. However, James et al. (2008) recognised a demarcation between policy and practice; they saw the adult emphasis on protection and care of children forming a "thin red line" (p. 89). Legislative controls that act under the guise of protective care for children were identified as a major limiting factor for children's participation. Their argument identifies the need for further investigation of the hegemonic positioning of discourses of protection over discourses of participation. Models of children's citizenship provide ideas for potentially supporting and enabling children's participation. However, it is close examination of what can be actualised when children and adults collaborate as citizens that contributes understandings of the real possibilities of children's citizenship participation. How children's active engagement in citizenship practice can be supported in educational settings is discussed in the next section through consideration of pedagogical principles and practices selected for their potential to support young children's practice as active citizens.

### 2.3 Pedagogy

The word pedagogy derives from French and Latin adaptations of the Greek roots *pais* meaning "child" and *ago* meaning "to lead" (Macedo, 2000). According to Macedo, pedagogy "is inherently directive and must always be transformative" (p. 25). There is a consciousness and purpose implied in pedagogy, as Watkins and Mortimore (1999) defined it as "any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another" (p. 3). They offer this definition to include learners and to not imply that it is always teachers who facilitate pedagogy. Understood in this way the intervention of a practice of social justice storytelling to provoke children's active citizenship participation is a conscious activity.

Another definition of pedagogy proposed by Freire (1970, 1973, 1974, 1998) was as a way of viewing and listening. This understanding presents a shift from an emphasis on one-way instruction to a two-way exchange of seeing, listening, wondering and dialogue. Such an understanding of pedagogy supports democratic practice as teachers and learners are viewed in more equal positions with both expressing opinions and being heard.

This section provides an investigation of pedagogical approaches that have the potential to promote and provoke young children's active citizenship. It begins with an

examination of teaching and learning practices in early childhood education (2.3.1) to assess their potential support for young children's active citizenship participation. Then specific pedagogical practices are explored for what they might offer to a storytelling program designed to provoke young children's critical awareness and active citizenship participation. Approaches to democracy in education (2.3.2) are examined for their capacity and suitability for engaging with young children as active citizens in a classroom setting. Education for social change (2.3.3) is explored as a platform for active citizenship to be enacted through open dialogue on social justice issues and encouraging responsibility and care about these issues. Next, the broad domain of aesthetic encounters (2.3.4) is discussed for its capacity to provoke education for social change. Finally, storytelling is specifically reviewed as a way of knowing (2.3.5) and as a pedagogy (2.3.6). A case for employing a practice of social justice storytelling (2.3.7) to provoke young children's active citizenship is then compared with similar studies that investigate young children's responses to social justice stories.

### *2.3.1 Teaching and Learning Practices in Early Childhood Education*

This discussion uses the term teaching and learning practices to include historical and contemporary contributions to early childhood education. Pedagogy as a term has only been recently introduced to early childhood education in Anglo-nations (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999). A number of theories have influenced practice in early childhood education. This section (2.3.1) provides an overview of some teaching and learning practices in early childhood education and how these position children. Critiques of these practices are discussed. These enable identification of the capacity of these practices to provoke and promote young children's active citizenship in an early childhood educational setting.

Many practices relating to contemporary early childhood education can be traced back to the ideas of German pedagogue Froebel (Weber, 1984). Play as education for young children was one of these ideas. To Froebel, play was "the highest phase of child development" and "the purest, most spiritual activity of man [sic] at this stage" (Weber, p. 38). It was his romantic reverence for "the inner law of the child's self-development" that led him to recognise the "educational significance of children's play" (Brubacher, 1966, p. 124). His view of children drew from romanticism, in which the child is seen as good by nature, such as discussed in a view of the child as innocent. The idea of play as a central integrating element of children's development and learning formed a core component of his concept of an educational program for young children: the kindergarten. His concept of the kindergarten proposed both an institution and an approach, which included a curriculum of play with designed objects such as balls and blocks, along with songs and stories "to present the ideal of good behaviour" (Weber, p. 42). Stories shared included Grimms' fairytales, which as previously discussed, espoused values of good citizenship. The concept of the kindergarten as both an institution and an approach has since been adopted across the globe. The widespread establishment of kindergartens has led to

an enduring commitment to the importance of play in early childhood education. The term *play-based* is frequently applied to foreground this importance.

Play in the early years was recognised by Wood (2008) as constituting “one of the most enduring discourses in early childhood education” (p. 6). Such discourses of play can be traced back to the ideas of Rousseau and Froebel of children as innocent or good by nature. In the Froebelian view of play, children are protected from corrupting influences of society and dangers of nature (Shapiro, 1983). According to Ailwood (2003), this romantic rhetoric assumes play is always positive, with negative aspects conveniently ignored. In terms of children’s citizenship, this protected view of play and its support for childhood as innocent seems incompatible or disparate to the socially aware practices of political and communitarian citizenship. Early childhood practices that support a romantic view of play would not welcome ideas of children engaging with the public sphere as is involved in political and communitarian citizenship.

Although play is strong in ideology, in practice there has been fuzziness between play as natural activity and play as an intentional educational activity. Sutton-Smith (1997) claimed that emphasis on play in children’s development has tended to ignore the ways in which children use play for power, construct meaning, devise and adopt multiple roles and identities. He recognised that play can provide a space where children can express their resentment at being a captive population through stories that portray a world of great flux, anarchy and disaster. Davies (2003) and Gilbert (1994) also suggested that children act out what they desire in their play. In addition, commitment to play in early childhood education draws from western ideologies, yet assumes universalism across the globe (Cannella & Viruru, 2004). The free-choice factor of a play-based approach has also been identified as not benefiting all children (Brooker, 2002) with discourses of gender practices identified as restricting choices for play (Ryan, 2005). These varying critiques of play have seen the practice of play in early childhood education reflected on and employed for specific purposes, such as those suggested by Sutton-Smith, Davies and Gilbert.

Child-centredness is also a key principle frequently referred to in early childhood education that draws from ideas such as the metaphor of the child as a seed, espoused by Froebel (1887), and theories of the child as developing, as espoused by Piaget (1929; 1932; 1950/2001, 1952, 1962). Central to the ideas of child-centredness is the emphasis on individualism through nurturing the unique needs and capabilities of each individual child (Shapiro, 1983). Core practices of child-centredness involve observing and recording individual children’s interactions to design learning experiences built on these observed needs. These practices have been recognised as continuing central practices in early childhood education by Siraj-Blatchford (1999) and Wood (2008).

The provision of an environment with hands-on activities supports a core principle of child-centredness and play in early childhood education, that of “I do and I understand”. Hands-on activities or experiential learning as advocated by Dewey (1938/1998) are understood to enable individual children to learn by doing at their own pace. In a study of early childhood teaching practices, Walkerdine (1984) identified that teachers viewed omission of child-centred play-based experiences in a child’s learning of concepts as “the worst sin of the child-centred pedagogy” (p. 188). This further indicates how the ideology of play and child-centredness has strongly influenced early childhood teaching practice. If child-centredness is understood as children learning by doing at their own pace in early childhood teaching and learning practices, then this may limit possibilities for citizenship collaborations with others.

Developmental psychology has also influenced early childhood teaching and learning practices. Piaget and Vygotsky are two of the most influential developmental psychology theorists. Piaget (1929, 1932, 1950/2001, 1952, 1962) contributed significantly to understandings of cognitive development, which have informed the learning theory of constructivism. The basic assumption of constructivism is that learning is an active process, with learning resulting from learners constructing their own knowledge. Key understandings from the theories of Piaget that inform some early childhood teaching and learning practices include:

1. Children progress through universal developmental stages.
2. Children construct knowledge through hands-on experiences.
3. Development and learning result from maturation and experience.
4. Play is an important vehicle for development (Berthelsen, 2008; Bredekamp, 1987, Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; NAEYC, 2009; Siraj-Blatchford, 1999).

In socio-cultural theory, Vygotsky (1978) also saw learning as an active process that was embedded with social events and occurred as a child interacted with people, objects and events in the environment. Vygotsky argued that these varied according to each child’s context. This way of thinking led to the formation of social-constructivism. Central to social-constructivism is acknowledgment of the socio-cultural context. Although Piaget and Vygotsky were contemporaries, the theories of Piaget were adopted in early childhood practices from the 1960s (Weber, 1984), whereas the theories of Vygotsky were not adopted until the 1990s (e.g., Bodrova & Leong, 1996).

Many commentators (e.g., Cannella, 1997; Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 1999; MacNaughton, 2005; Walkerdine, 1984) recognise developmental psychology as having a dominant influence on early childhood practices. This significant influence has occurred through widespread support for DAP (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; NAEYC, 2009). Underpinned by the theories of Dewey (1916, 1934, 1938), Piaget (1929, 1932, 1950/2001, 1952, 1962), and more recently Vygotsky (1978), Rogoff (1990,

1998, 2003) and Gardner (1993), the aim of DAP is to guide children's learning according to their development. DAP involves the provision of both adult-guided and child-guided hands-on learning experiences according to individual progression through universal developmental stages (Bredekamp, 1987; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; NAEYC, 2009). Teachers observe and record children's participation in these learning experiences to assess their developmental progress and identify developmental goals. Learning experiences are then planned to address these goals. In many ways DAP incorporates the principles of play and child-centredness with an emphasis on addressing children's developmental needs.

The significance of DAP is indicated through peak early childhood associations such as the US National Association for the Education of Young Children as marked through three editions of position statements on DAP (1987, 1997, 2009). These guidelines have had substantial impact on early childhood curricula, policies and practices (Raines & Johnston, 2003). The first edition (1987) was largely grounded in constructivism and the theories of Piaget on development. The second edition (1997) acknowledged the growing attention to socio-cultural theories in child development and addressed the need for a broader more socio-cultural perspective (Raines & Johnston). The distinguishing additions to the third edition (2009) were recent research on school-readiness and early literacy and numeracy development. This appears to be driven by the current US-emphasis on outcomes-based education as enforced by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. A new feature of the 2009 statement is reference to citizenship: "Teachers and administrators in early childhood education play a critical role in shaping the future of our citizenry and democracy" (p. 23). This reference however, positions children as future citizens. Although NAEYC included a notion of children's citizenship, a developmental view presents a future orientation.

In recent times there has been great interest in the teaching and learning practices applied in the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy (e.g., Cadwell & Rinaldi, 2003; Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1993, 1998) that are based on a view of children as competent and having rights. Practices in the schools of Reggio Emilia, Italy, are informed by ideas from Dewey (1902, 1899/1956) on social relationships and learning, and on the ideas of Piaget (1971) on epistemology. However, the ideas espoused by Vygotsky (1978) on learning as a socially and culturally situated activity and those who expanded on these theories, such as Bruner (1986) and Rogoff (1990, 1998, 2003), are the main influence (New, 1998). These approaches call for practices such as reciprocal learning, ongoing learning projects (e.g., Ceppi & Zini, 1998), cultivating partnerships between staff and families, producing detailed pedagogical documentation with children, and devoting time to analysing, debating and reflecting upon pedagogical practice (Cadwell & Rinaldi). Children interact and negotiate with others as social agents in these practices, which support a view of children as socially and culturally constructed. Learning is understood as relational. In Reggio Emilia schools, practitioners reflect on practice to

deepen understandings of the influence of practice on children's learning through documentation and dialogue with others (Malaguzzi, 1993). Malaguzzi drew inspiration for close critique of practice from Hawkins (1966) who argued for practitioners to be seen as interpreters of educational phenomena, appreciating knowledge of practice as deeply meaningful.

Ideas such as an *emergent curriculum* coined as a term by Betty Jones (Jones & Nimmo, 1994) are part of the practices of schools in Reggio Emilia and employed in early childhood education in other countries (e.g., Australia and the US). In an emergent curriculum, topics, projects and activities of learning interest are generated and plotted in a webbed pattern as documentation of the program/pathways of learning (Nimmo & Jones). In Australia, a growing number of early childhood services follow various versions of what is commonly referred to as the Reggio approach or "doing Reggio". This approach includes inquiry-driven teaching and learning practices and comprehensive documentation practices (Bowes, 2007).

Many of the practices associated with the schools in Reggio Emilia are supportive of young children's active citizenship participation. To Kinney and Wharton (2006), the practices of listening to children's many voices, learning in groups, and acknowledging the contributions of others implemented in schools in Reggio Emilia are displays of democracy in action. Such practices are recognised as providing a way for children's ideas and opinions to be heard, their capabilities to be celebrated, and a process of nurturing engagement with children as citizens in the learning environment. However, Cheeseman and Robertson (2006) recognised how children's right to privacy was often infringed in early childhood practices of pedagogical documentation. By this, Cheeseman and Robertson are referring to the practice of documenting and displaying children's participation in learning programs for all families, staff and visitors to see. At times the attention to children's participation in pedagogical documentation can overlook children's right to not participate, to not share their thoughts and actions with others in public spaces through pedagogical documentation.

Critical pedagogy supports notions of democracy in education along with education for social change (both of which are discussed in the next two sections respectively). Contemporary early childhood practice has seen critical pedagogy applied by some early childhood practitioners in recent years. Through engagement with critical pedagogy a number of early childhood practitioners and researchers (e.g., Soto, 2000; Kessler & Hauser, 2000; Kilderry, 2004) have claimed it is a useful theoretical framework in early childhood education to expose critical issues. Specific critical pedagogical practices include assisting children to question accepted practices and participate in community-building practices (MacNaughton & Williams, 2009). The application of critical pedagogy in early childhood education supports a view of children as socially constructed by positioning children as competent and capable social and political actors.

Through application of critical pedagogy, early childhood researchers and practitioners have observed that children can dialogue about real local and global issues. Evidence suggests

that young children can become critically aware of such issues as race (Derman-Sparks, Ramsey, & Edwards, 2006; MacNaughton & Davis, 2001), faith (Cowhey, 2006), AIDS (Silin, 1995, 2000, 2005), and the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington (Soto, 2005). Critical pedagogy practices offer scope to support communitarian citizenship participation through recognition of injustices and in some cases the enactment of social actions to redress these injustices.

Collectively, the above discussion provides an overview of some of the theories and practices informing early childhood education. More recent approaches such as emergent curriculum and critical pedagogy offer scope to support and enable young children's active citizenship participation. To build upon this base, different approaches to promoting and supporting democracy in education are considered for their relevance and suitability for young children's active citizenship participation in early childhood education.

### *2.3.2 Democracy in Education*

A concept of democracy in education has been discussed and theorised since its inception in the *polis* of Athens, mainly as a means of preparing young people for participation in the ruling of their society (Biesta, 2007). Different conceptions of democracy in education as pedagogical principles and practices that view students as agentic have been proposed in educational theory over time. Three conceptions as defined by Biesta are explored in terms of how each conception defines children, teachers and democratic practice in education. They include an individualistic conception based on the theories of Kant (1784/1992), a social conception based on the theories of Dewey (1916), and a political conception based on the theory of action espoused by Arendt (1958/1998). In this section, the capacity of each conception to enable and support young children's agency to be active citizens in their participation in an educational context is considered.

First, an individualistic conception of democracy in education is based on the thinking of Enlightenment philosophers such as Kant (1784/1992). The emphasis of this conception is on individuals being able to make up their own minds and think for themselves without direction from others. The central idea of the individualistic conception of the democratic person espoused by Kant is rational autonomy (Biesta, 2007), that is, free-thinking individuals. Democratic practice in this conception emphasises freedom of expression and choice for individuals. According to Biesta, teachers who practise an individualistic conception of democracy in education endeavour to teach children logical rules with the aim of cultivating rational individuals. Such practices are informed by the conception of the democratic person as rational and autonomous. The emphasis on rational autonomy involves the individual being a free subject, but also a moral subject, who engages in self-law or autonomy (Biesta). Such understandings are linked to the theories of Piaget (1929, 1932, 1950/2001, 1952, 1962) regarding cognitive and moral development and practices such as child-centredness. An

individualistic conception of democracy offers a strong basis for supporting the expression of individual opinions on issues, though there are potential dangers in denying or disregarding others through an individualist focus. This conception aligns with a liberal approach to citizenship through a common emphasis on the individual.

Second, a social conception of democracy in education, based on the influential text *Democracy and education* (Dewey, 1916), views the democratic ideal as requiring two elements:

1. Numerous and varied points of shared common interest with strong reliance on these mutual interests for social control.
2. Freer interaction between social groups that change and adjust through engagement with varied intercourse.

Dewey's emphasis was on the group, and differed from Kant's emphasis on the individual. To Dewey, democracy was enacted through groups that come together through common interests. Democratic practice then occurs as members of the group interact freely, changing and adjusting in response to their engagement with each other and external influences. This conception places an emphasis on interactions and an understanding that interactions inform thoughts and behaviours. A child is viewed as being shaped by interactions. Such understandings link with social theories of learning (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978), in which learning occurs through interactions with others. Practice in this conception is based on two-way co-operative interaction and communication where groups make something in common. To Dewey, a group that has many different interests, with full and free interplay of these interests, offers greater opportunities for individuals to develop and grow than a group that is isolated from other groups and united by few interests. Cooperation between members of a group, such as a class of students, is a central idea to this social conception.

In a classroom context, a social conception of democracy could be played out through both children and adults considering the direction of actions in reference to others. Teachers who practise a social conception of democracy concentrate on facilitating group co-operation in the interactions of the classroom as it supports a view of democracy as sharing power among people. A social conception provides a way to form a cooperative class community for the engagement of collective citizenship practices.

Although there is an emphasis on the social elements of democracy in the proposals of Dewey for democracy in education, Biesta (2007) argued there is still a trace of individualism. Dewey (1916) saw participation in democracy as creating a democratic person, that is, that the purpose of democratic education was to cultivate democratic individuals. The conception of the democratic person by Arendt (1958/1998) suggests a different perspective.

Based on the theory of action proposed by Arendt (1958/1998), a political conception of democracy defines the third conception as proposed by Biesta (2007). In this conception of democracy in education both children and teachers are seen as active beings, with what it means

to be human defined by human actions. To Arendt, the first step in human action is to take initiative. Through actions individuals bring something new into the world. This acknowledges that people do not act in isolation and that through action individuals insert themselves into the *polis* or public sphere: a place in which we live with others. This conception is also social. However, Biesta argued that it is political because agency is only possible in situations in which others are agentic as well. Arendt saw that it is only in action that the individual becomes a democratic agent. This is because others respond to our initiatives, and it is through the interplay of initiated actions and supportive responses to those initiated actions that democracy is practised. In situations where individuals try to control the responses of others or block their opportunities to begin, the agency of the individual is denied. In a political conception of democracy in education, children are viewed as political through their capacity to initiate and respond to others in ways that support the initiatives of each other.

Democratic practice from an Arendtian (1958/1998) political conception is action-focused. Support for action brings concern for others, as individuals take care to not block the initiatives of others. Actions then involve responsive interaction with others through interplay of doing, saying, listening and waiting. Such interactions welcome plurality and difference in that “beginnings are taken up by others in unprecedented, unpredictable and uncontrollable ways” (Biesta, 2007, Three questions for democratic education, para. 9). A focus on action addresses the *active* descriptor in young children’s active citizenship. A political conception of democracy therefore offers scope for children to initiate social actions that consider the agency of others as active citizenship with the class as well as the wider community.

Democracy in education offers scope for supporting children’s agency in citizenship practice, with each of the above conceptions offering different emphases and qualities. However, there have been critics of the notion of a ‘democratic classroom’, such as Raywid (1987) who suggested that it is a mistake or a misnomer, declaring that the principles of adult politics cannot be applied to the classroom. Raywid argued that young children need to learn control over themselves and their environment, not be given more freedom. To Raywid, the problem is that authority and control clash with democratic ideals of freedom. The idea of a democratic classroom is bewitching according to Raywid, yet she viewed it as impossible when teachers are in positions of authority. Freire (1998) addressed this dilemma by explaining that the democratically minded educator needs to critically and constantly question how to convey a sense of limit that could be ethically integrated into freedom itself. To Freire, democracy in education is a respectful practice where educator and students collaborate and involves teachers respecting the autonomy, identity, and knowledge of students orchestrated through cultivating a balance between freedom and authority. This signals a need for critical reflection of pedagogical practices to support democracy in education through awareness and questioning of individual expressions, interactions, dialogue and actions.

Democracy in education thus requires ongoing critical reflection of practices to ensure members of the learning community are agentic. Individualistic, social, and political conceptions of democracy in education offer different emphases on how students and teachers can be agentic in a learning community. In the context of this study, a political conception offers a stronger connection to supporting and promoting young children's active citizenship, through actions that support the agency of all participants. The following section discusses the democratic and citizenship practices of education for social change.

### 2.3.3 *Education for Social Change*

Education for social change offers a way to cultivate communitarian citizenship participation. Critical pedagogues, such as Freire (1974), Giroux (1983, 2003) and Greene (1995), advocate for education that provokes social change. These critical pedagogues support communitarian citizenship through education for social change by cultivating critical awareness of unjust practices and taking action to address these unjust practices.

To Freire (1974), the awakening of critical awareness or what he called *conscientização* was necessary for education to provoke social change. He explained that critical awareness could only occur in "active dialogical educational programs concerned with social and political responsibility and [that are] prepared to avoid the danger of massification" (p. 19). The concept of *massification* defines the process in which people remain susceptible to the magical, mythical, illogical, and irrational practices of power by following such practices blindly. Educators for social change seek to support communitarian principles by alerting students of unacceptable practices of power, and enabling social action to change these practices.

To add contemporary concerns to the ideas of Freire (1974), Giroux (2003) argued that educators need to combine both critical theory concerns (e.g., social justice, equality, freedom, and rights) and post-modern concerns (e.g., difference, plurality, power, discourse, identities and micropolitics). To Giroux, education for social change is more than appropriating difference as the reason for domination, oppression and struggle; educators for social change are concerned with knowing:

what it takes for individuals and social groups to believe that they have any responsibility whatsoever to care, have an investment in, or even address the often unjust consequences of class, race, gender oppression and related material relations of domination (p. 56).

This form of education embraces the goals of critical theory to provoke awareness of social justice issues through critical questioning of social structures. Giroux added that post-modernism can offer a way to understand how disadvantage is cultivated through identification of difference, plurality, power, discourse, identities, and micro politics in operation.

With regard to children's civic participation, educators for social change such as Giroux (1983) argue that the aim should not be to fit students into the existing society but to "stimulate

their passions, imaginations, and intellects so that they will be moved to challenge the social, political and economic forces that weigh so heavily upon their lives” (p. 201). Education for social change supports displays of civic courage through demonstrations of a willingness to act. To Giroux, support for civic participation in education must rest on the following pedagogical assumptions. First, students must be active in the learning process and be taught to think critically. Second, students are encouraged to speak from their experiences (or histories). Although Giroux’s ideas targeted high school contexts, these pedagogical assumptions could be applied in early childhood education.

The writings of American educational philosopher Maxine Greene (1995) on education for social change through the arts (especially narrative encounters) have great relevance to this study. Greene argued for treating the world as more than simply there, by stirring “wide-awakeness, to imaginative action, and to renewed consciousness of possibility” (p. 43). To Greene, this experience of *wide-awakeness* can occur when teachers teach for the sake of arousing vivid, reflective experiential responses by releasing imagination through the arts. Such an idea of wide-awakeness aligns with conscientização as espoused by Freire (1974). Like Freire, Greene also supported the opening of wider spaces of dialogue so that students and teachers speak in their own voices and reflect together on issues of critical concern. Greene saw that these spaces of dialogue could endeavour to nurture what Arendt (1958/1998) referred to as “in-between” or a “‘web’ of human relationships” (p. 183). Engagement in education for social change thus can relate and bind people together in the same way that communitarianism acts aim to create a cohesive and just society.

According to Greene (1995), the motivation to act for social change can in part be created by stories. By stories she meant the voice of personal perspectives as well as listening to the stories of others in the spaces of dialogue. Spaces for dialogue can inspire students to come together to understand what social justice actually means and what it might demand. Students can experience a sense of obligation and responsibility by acting on their own initiatives “in relation to such principles as freedom, equality, justice and concern for others” (Greene, 1995, p. 68). This in turn cultivates an awareness of other perspectives and identification of points of agreement. Greene saw that people could come together, as Arendt (1958/1998) proposed, through spoken words and action to create something in common. From this understanding, Greene envisioned classrooms that value multiple perspectives, democratic pluralism, life narratives and ongoing social change.

Education for social change offers a pedagogy that supports the intentions of this study to provoke young children’s active citizenship through social justice storytelling. From a position of conscientização, or wide-awakeness of social justice issues, a sense of responsibility to address injustices can evolve. Education for social change respects humanity and enables

communitarianism. The idea of art cultivating wide-awakeness as suggested by Greene is discussed further in the following section about the affective domain of aesthetic encounters.

#### 2.3.4 *Aesthetic Encounters*

In this section (2.3.4) I explore the idea of aesthetic encounters cultivating social change. This idea is discussed by defining aesthetic encounters, how aesthetic encounters provoke social change, and their application in education. Aesthetic encounters are considered to be a means of building an understanding of humanity among young children.

The experience of the aesthetic is an intangible, emotive experience that humans struggle to shape into words. It is a term that was coined by Baumgarten in 1750 by referring to the Greek root *aisthe*, which means to feel or apprehend through the senses (Abbs, 1987; Barilli, 1993). Aesthetics involves acute awareness of our sensory perceptions combined with intellectual cognition through interpretation or readings of our sensory perceptions (Diaz, 2004). To Greene (1995), aesthetic encounters include engagement with the arts (e.g., stories, poems, dance performances, concerts, paintings, films and plays) that offer pleasure but also demand affective responses, cognitive rigour and analysis.

To explain the aesthetic experience, Dewey (1934) applied the metaphor of a stone rolling down a hill that is looking forward to the journey, relishing the encounters along the way, and relates the end of the journey to all that went before. This understanding of aesthetic encounters views the whole experience as interconnected or relational to all its parts. It also highlights the emotive responses that are aroused, those of anticipation, enjoyment and reflection. The recognition of interconnections through reflection offers scope for new understandings and transformation. This definition from Dewey is useful in understanding what actually occurs in the experience of an aesthetic encounter and why it can provoke transformation. Contemporary authorities on aesthetics in education, Abbs (1989) and Greene (1995), concur that aesthetic encounters cultivate a sensuous, analogical and poetic mode of knowing. They claim this distinctive mode of knowing is what cultivates the strength of aesthetic encounters to provoke shifts in awareness to transform knowledge, making it more intelligible.

The aesthetic encounter often evokes metaphoric thinking, which connects disparate realms to create a deeper and extended meaning. To Dewey (1916), an aesthetic encounter offers alternative ways of understanding matter through presentation in a succinct and/or emotive manner. Through this combined sensory and intellectual experience, Diaz (2004) claimed that aesthetic encounters enable us to relate to the world of others and develop connections of a humane quality. Aesthetic encounters free us to imagine what we might not be able to know but can feel and experience. The aesthetic experience can inspire knowing and seeing the world differently.

According to critical theorist Marcuse (1978), the arts communicate the voices of the oppressed and the possibilities of human freedom symbolically, metaphorically and sensuously

with coherence, power and conviction. The aesthetic encounter, he argued, can provide a space for dimensions of reality to reveal and liberate what has been repressed and regarded as taboo. The symbolism and sensuousness of the aesthetic encounter possesses great power for new insight, especially when time is allowed for musings over the sensory perceptions. Marcuse encapsulated this sentiment with “Art cannot change the world, but it can contribute to the consciousness and drives of the men and women who could change the world” (p. 32). By positioning children as agentic, this study saw children as also possessing the capacity to change the world. To Marcuse, art can shift consciousness by inviting multiple, fragmented and diverse positions on social justice issues, so that values of diversity, tolerance, human dignity and equal respect are embraced. The language of aesthetics makes “perceptible, visible, audible that which is no longer or not Yet perceived, said, and heard in everyday life” (Marcuse, 1978, p. 72). By this Marcuse claimed that the language of aesthetics can communicate what is not communicable in any other language. Perhaps realities can be communicated in other languages but the language of aesthetics can offer a more coherent, clarified and emotive message. On the basis of these assumptions, aesthetic experiences can cultivate an awareness of the possibilities of a more just and humane world.

In education, Abbs (1989) saw the capacity of aesthetic experiences to cultivate shifts in consciousness and change occur when the teacher is positioned as coartist. In this position, the teacher not only initiates the aesthetic activity but is also creative agent throughout the activity. He provided the example of the method of creative intervention espoused by Dorothy Heathcote in what is known as process drama. In such creative intervention, the drama teacher moves from one role to another in response to what the creative process requires. For example, as organiser the teacher can observe and critique the whole action carefully, and as codramatist the teacher can enter ‘in role’ to free the creative process from blocks or clichés. According to Abbs, this “requires immense integrity and a sensitive feeling for aesthetic form” (p. 40). To act with integrity and sensitivity the role of creative agent involves careful observation to know when and how to intervene to develop and deepen the encounter.

To Greene (1995, 2004), the cultivation of shifts in consciousness through aesthetic experiences in education is defined as a notion of wide-awakeness, as discussed previously. Her notion of wide-awakeness is not about sudden or short bursts of shifts in consciousness but rather an ongoing deeper awareness of what it is to be in the world. Aesthetic encounters that cultivate such wide-awakeness are seen by Greene (1995) to be produced by teachers who employ the arts to create spaces for dialogue, personal connections, “renewed consciousness of possibility” (p.43) and imaginative action. She particularly saw that literature bore the capacity to captivate people to see and feel the perspective of another, which motivates relations, possibilities and actions. Greene has hope in the capacity of aesthetic experiences

to stimulate the kind of reflective practice and learning that is aimed for by educators for social change.

Aesthetic encounters as clarified, coherent and intensified forms offer ways of understanding humanity that are not as accessible in other forms. In this way aesthetic encounters are understood to trigger shifts in consciousness by enabling new and diverse understandings of the experiences of others. Engagement with aesthetic encounters can also provoke understanding of others through interactive, emergent responses to each other in the creative process. With the inquiry of this study based on storytelling, in the next section I discuss storytelling as an aesthetic encounter and its capacity to cultivate understandings of humanity and provoke shifts in consciousness.

### *2.3.5 Storytelling as a Way of Knowing*

Storytelling was selected for this inquiry into young children's active citizenship based on my prior experiences as discussed in Chapter 1. In this study, storytelling is positioned as an aesthetic encounter and as a pedagogy. In this section (2.3.5) I discuss the particular qualities of storytelling as an aesthetic encounter and how these qualities can provoke and promote active citizenship.

The term storytelling is used so broadly that there are many varying interpretations of what it means. In this study storytelling is understood to be an oral art form where a teller performs a story with a live audience. Both teller and listener experience the story together in the same place at the same time. In this understanding there is no book present to separate the relationship between the teller and the listener. The storyteller holds the story in her mind and uses words and gesture to bring the story alive before the listeners. Critical theorist Walter Benjamin (1955/1999) described the act of storytelling as the storyteller drawing from her experience or that of others and "making it the experience of those who are listening to the tale" (p. 87). Listeners can connect with the characters and accompany the teller on the journey of experience, then emerge with new insight and understandings. To Zipes (2005), the storyteller is "an actor, an agent, a translator, an animator, and ... a thief who robs treasures to give something substantive to the poor" (p. 17). The treasures are the collective pool of stories of humanity. Storytellers hear or read stories and take what they like, then transform them with their personal and ideological viewpoints to perform (verbally and kinaesthetically) a substantive tale for their chosen audience.

Storytelling enables connection with the other. Even though storytellers may share a story that is not their personal experience, a good storyteller will always share something of herself through the intimacy of connection with her audience. Benjamin (1955/1999) describes this quality of storytelling as: "traces of the storyteller cling to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel" (p. 91). In many ways this personal sharing creates intimacy and thereby draws the listener in, as she identifies her life with that of the storyteller. There are

points of connection that resonate with listeners, for they may have had similar experiences or they can imagine that the same could happen to them. This intimacy can invoke what Arendt (1958/1998) referred to as a web of human relationships, as the connection between storyteller, story, and listener cultivates connections with others.

The relationship with others is at the core of live oral storytelling. It is not a lone experience; there must be tellers and listeners. This significant feature sets it apart from reading literature. In her work on Hannah Arendt, Julia Kristeva (2001) described live oral storytelling as an experience of “inter-being” (p. 15). The fate of the story depends on being with others. To Kristeva the co-implication of selves and others is in the loop of storytelling. Storytelling implies an existence of community because it requires storytellers and audiences who listen and respond. The involvement of others is necessary for meaning. Benjamin (1955/1999), Arendt (1958/1998) and Kristeva all claim that in storytelling, meaning rests with the listeners. The experience of meaning-making in storytelling is distinguished from reading by Benjamin, who explains that story is consumed collectively, whereas a novel is devoured selfishly.

Storytelling has the capacity to activate plurality of possible meanings that multiplies significance, yet resists closure. Through storytelling our experiences, desires and anxieties can be made evident to us and to others. To Arendt (1958/1998, 1970), storytelling captures the shape of an individual human life and endows it with meaning: “storytelling reveals meaning without the error of defining it” (1970, p. 105). By this Arendt inferred that meaning is never definitive, as listeners will create meanings applicable to their lives and experiences. The nature of story and storytelling allows listeners to form multiple possible meanings. To Benjamin (1955/1999), the possibility of multiple meanings is half of the art of storytelling, that is, “to keep a story free from explanation as one reproduces it” (p. 89). Although a storyteller will paint incredible detail of the extraordinary and the ordinary for the listener, the psychological connection of the events is not forced on the listener. This is why Benjamin claimed that story achieves a fullness of understanding that information lacks, because it is up to the listener to interpret the content of the story in the way she understands it. There is scope through story for the listener to make personal connections, an exchange of experience that Benjamin called *Erfahrung*, when one learns something about oneself and the world. Further to this idea of multiplicity of meanings, Fisher (1987) claimed that there is no story that is not embedded in other stories and the meaning and merit of a story is determined through its positioning against other stories. This shared experience of meaning is heightened in the collective context of live oral storytelling as opposed to the individual experience of story through text or new media technologies.

Story provides a way for humans to frame their understanding of the world, giving shape and order to it (Fisher, 1987). To Bruner (1986), story is defined as a way of knowing. Through his explanations of how readers interpret stories he identified three features of readers making a

story their own: implicit meanings, subjectification and multiple perspectives. When each reader or listener experiences a story they read into the text implicit meanings, understandings of the world from the position of the protagonist (subjectification) and understandings of story events from multiple perspectives. To Bruner “‘great’ storytelling is about compelling human plights that are accessible to ‘readers’” (p. 35). The accessibility of stories is his key point. Connection with a story is necessary to be affected. Yet Bruner clarified that the story still needs to allow space for the reader’s (or listener’s) imagination so she can make the story her own. Each person can experience the same story differently. A story will trigger different personal connections, different messages and different levels of meaning for each person in different contexts at different times. Saxby (1994) and Dyson and Genishi (1994) acknowledge that young children in particular possess a disposition to explain and explore both their inner and outer worlds through story.

The capacity of story to provoke understanding of the world includes cultivating a deeper sense of humanity. One argument for this was offered by Bruner (2003) on the basis of medical cases of people with the neurological disorder *dysnarrativia*, the inability to tell or understand stories. Bruner described how people suffering from *dysnarrativia* are unable to sense what other people might be thinking, feeling or even seeing. According to Bruner, these people present as having lost a sense of self as well as a sense of others. On this basis, Bruner concluded that we need the ability to tell and understand stories to develop an understanding of identity and humanity. Such understandings are acquired through developing understandings of thoughts and feelings in oneself and recognising them in others.

Like Bruner (2003), Nussbaum (1997) recognised that if people are deprived of stories their capacity to understand other people is limited. She claimed story was particularly useful for children to nurture understanding of others because the complexities of humanity are not always visible in everyday interactions for children to view and understand readily. Understandings of humanity are only reached according to Nussbaum, via the training of the imagination that storytelling fosters. People in stories are imagined, then understood “as spacious and deep, with qualitative differences from oneself and hidden places worthy of respect” (p. 90). To Nussbaum, storytelling cultivates deeper understanding of difference that nurtures respect for others. She proposed that as children grasp complexities of humanity (such as perseverance and unfairness) by learning their dynamics through story in particular tragedies, they become capable of compassion. To be compassionate Nussbaum claimed, requires “a sense of one’s own vulnerability to misfortune” (p. 91). This involves imagining that this suffering could be happening to one’s self, which Nussbaum refers to as *sympathetic imagination*. To Nussbaum, sympathetic imagination requires “imaginative and emotional receptivity” and demonstration of “a capacity for openness and responsiveness” (p. 98). Storytellers such as Estes (1992) refer to this ability of storytelling to provoke a merger of the mind with another reality as

“sympathetic magic” (p. 387). Storytelling is understood to have a unique capacity to cultivate sympathetic imagination, to imagine another’s perspective and build a greater understanding of the complexities of humanity.

By imagining the predicament of another, a precise awareness of our common vulnerability is nurtured. This, Nussbaum claimed (1997), is a valuable attribute to becoming global citizens. Through cultivation of sympathetic imagination, we are then able to comprehend the choices of people different from ourselves. She proposed that sharing tragedies with children acquaints them as citizens with understandings of the bad things that may happen in a human life but also equips them with understanding of diversity of choice of action. Arendt (1958/1998) also saw that story has the capacity to carry the weight of tragedy, to convey it and offer insights. On the basis of such understandings of story, Nussbaum suggested that the goals of global citizenship are best promoted through story in a deliberative and critical spirit. She proposed that stories are not simply shared to provoke compassion, but that the stories are deliberated and critiqued as if the story is a friend.<sup>2</sup> From this view Nussbaum suggested we ask “What does this friendship do to my mind? What does this new friend ask me to notice, to desire, to care about? How does he or she invite me to view my fellow human beings?” (p. 100). Such questioning offers a means to promote or provoke participation as global citizens who act for humanity.

Philosophers, theorists, storytellers, linguists and educators have thus claimed that the live, oral artform of storytelling cultivates understandings of humanity. By being a live, descriptive, performative and collective experience storytelling facilitates connection with others, that is, between the storyteller and listener but also between the storyteller, listener and the characters in the story. These connections enable understandings of other experiences and build respect and compassion for others. They also point to storytelling being an effective tool to promote or provoke citizenship participation. These ideas hold relevance for sharing social justice stories with young children to create a space for broadening understandings of humanity and active citizenship participation, through responsive interactions with others. The possibilities of storytelling as pedagogy are discussed in the next section to contextualise the use of storytelling in an educational setting used in this study.

### *2.3.6 Storytelling as Pedagogy*

This section discusses the application and benefits of storytelling in education, notable works, and recent research about storytelling as pedagogy. Gaps in this body of literature are identified and an explanation offered of how this study adds to emergent research on storytelling as pedagogy through an investigation of a practice of social justice storytelling.

There is a strong tradition of oral storytelling as education, though Zipes (1995) surmised that much of the research on the tradition of oral storytellers is speculative as little was

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<sup>2</sup> Nussbaum adopted this idea from Booth (1988), who suggested viewing a literary work as a friend.

written about storytellers until the nineteenth century. Zipes stated that tellers came from all sectors of society and told purposeful and functional stories that fitted with their situation. Stories “were disseminated to instruct, warn, satirize, amuse, parody, preach, question, illustrate, explain, and enjoy” (p. 20). The intent of meaning depended on the teller and the situation. This tradition of oral storytelling for educational purposes occurred and continues to occur across cultures according to cultural genres and values (Kramsch, 1998).

In early childhood education, storytelling is recognised as a core component of the kindergarten curriculum proposed by Froebel (Weber, 1984). Many educators acknowledge long lists of benefits of storytelling in early childhood education (Barton & Booth, 1990; P. J. Cooper, Collins, & Saxby, 1994; Egan, 1986; Hamilton & Weiss, 1990; Jaffe, 2000; Jennings, 1991; Mallan, 1991; Paley, 1981, 1993, 1997; Rosen, 1988; Trostle Brand & Donato, 2001). These include qualities such as stimulating imagination, improving listening, aiding critical thinking, building understanding of emotions and forming a strong learning community. American educator Jaffe claimed storytelling could be a vehicle “for effective communication of curriculum content, with long-lasting repercussions for children as learners and participants in a complex and demanding world” (p. 175). According to Kuyvenhoven (2005), these benefits account for storytelling as a teaching method, as a tool. What is absent in the literature is a rationale for storytelling itself to affect the entire teaching process, not just as a tool on an ad hoc basis. Both Rosen and Kuyvenhoven have expressed frustration at not being able to source an educational theory of storytelling. Although much is written on the beneficial nature of storytelling in education, storytelling as pedagogy has not been theorised adequately.

The use of storytelling as an engaging and meaningful teaching methodology in the literature is most notable in the work of Egan (1986, 1997, 2005) and Paley (1981, 1993, 1997). Egan proposed that teachers approach a unit of learning as a story to be told. He built his argument on the notion that “children’s imaginations are the most powerful and energetic learning tools” (p. 2) and that stories are an activity that engages children’s imaginations. Egan drew on the power of the story form for teaching. He argued that carefully crafted stories enable children to acquire higher levels of meaning of abstract concepts of humanity, such as death, love, honour and courage. However, noted that few teachers have embraced fully Egan’s storytelling approach to curriculum (Mello, 2001). Paley provides detailed accounts of story as the pillar of the kindergarten curriculum. She positioned children as storytellers through a curriculum that consists largely of children dictating stories that are then acted out (P.M. Cooper, 2005). However, very few researchers and writers have expanded on or critiqued either the case for teaching as storytelling advocated by Egan or the attention to story at the core of the kindergarten curriculum advocated by Paley.

To be a storyteller or a storytelling teacher is an acquired skill that draws from both performance and language arts. As accounted for earlier by Benjamin (1955/1999) and Zipes

(2005), multiple skills and positions are performed at once. The drawcard for many teachers who switch to storytelling teachers is what Kuyvenhoven (2005) referred to as the “listener’s hush” (p. 34): those moments when listeners are completely entranced by the ability of the storyteller to bring the story alive. She noted how storytelling teachers (e.g., Dailey, 1994; Rosen, 1988) switch to regularly incorporate storytelling into their teaching because of the power of the hush. What this effect told these teachers was that the students were engaged; they were switched on as listeners and learners. Yet this is not the primary rationale for storytelling teachers to embrace storytelling in their teaching practice. The listener’s hush may account for the change to storytelling teaching, but it is the deep connection and pleasure of being together through storytelling that truly converts teachers to be storytelling teachers (Kuyvenhoven).

The identified theoretical gap in the notion of storytelling as pedagogy prodded Kuyvenhoven (2005) to define a pedagogy of storytelling from her ethnographic study of a storytelling teacher with a grade 4/5 class. In this study, Kuyvenhoven identified that a pedagogy of storytelling operated on three rings of participation. These included *social awareness* operating in the outer ring, *mindful interaction*, and *deep imaginative engagement* at the core. As a teaching practice she found it created a rich learning place. For example, the teacher told the story of Anne Frank when the children were learning about Remembrance Day, which drew awareness to the plight of Jewish people in WWII. This led onto further discussion and inquiry of the Nazi movement. The teacher told a story to commence a unit of learning that crossed many curricula areas and welcomed children’s stories. Through story, the children found new understandings and possibilities that they reflected upon, wondered about and linked to their class community. They learned that stories are socially constructed, and mediated and understood story as situational, referential and connected to human experience. This occurred through the teacher and children sharing stories and jokes, which exposed their individual values, interests and experiences. This social awareness enabled the children to listen and think with mindful interaction. Through mindful interaction the children could work with stories as models, concepts, illustrations, metaphors and analogies for learning to cultivate deep imaginative engagement. Circles of learning were then nourished through the storytelling teacher and children’s social awareness, mindful interaction and deep imaginative engagement experienced through stories.

The above framework for storytelling as pedagogy proposed by Kuyvenhoven (2005) contributes useful understandings to the practice of storytelling as pedagogy. However, it is only a recent and small contribution to a narrow body of research on storytelling as pedagogy. Although Kuyvenhoven is a professional storyteller and teacher, she did not study her own practice but that of another storytelling teacher. Only a few storytellers have completed in-depth studies of their own practice (e.g., Josephs, 2005; Mello, 1999). In Australia, Mallan (2003) completed doctoral research that focused on storytelling with two classes of primary-aged

children, but her research inquiry attended to children's storytelling. Most studies on storytelling in education involve researchers observing the teacher and/or the children's storytelling practice in the classroom (Boone, 2005; Britsch, 1992; Groce, 2001; Heath, 1983; Kuyvenhoven). Many others have also written about children as storytellers (e.g., Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Fox, 1997, 1998; Paley, 1981, 1993, 1997). Deeper understandings are still needed to form theories of storytelling as pedagogy that can impact on everyday teaching practice. Such deeper understandings can be achieved through self-reflection of a storyteller's practice, identifying emergent unanticipated learning. My inquiry of a practice of social justice storytelling provoking young children's active citizenship endeavoured to cultivate deeper understandings of storytelling as pedagogy.

### 2.3.7 *Social Justice Storytelling*

The particular interest of this study in terms of storytelling as pedagogy is social justice storytelling to explore issues of social justice with young children as active citizens. Storytelling in this study examined the telling of stories that provoke awareness of social justice issues. A case for inquiry into social justice storytelling as pedagogy is argued through reference to related studies and literature and their different foci. In this study, social justice is based on the definitions of Greene (1995) and Benhabib (1986, 1992). To Greene, social justice involves people becoming aware of the need for regard for the other, regardless of differences. To define the other, Benhabib offered distinguishing explanations of the *generalised* and the *concrete* other. The generalised other requires a view of every individual entitled to the same rights that we want. From this position we look for commonality with the other and build expectations and assumptions of reciprocity and equality. Such a view of the generalised other operates in public spaces, based on universal rights of humanity. In contrast, the concrete other requires a view of every individual with "a concrete history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution" (Benhabib, 1986, p. 411). From this position there is greater potential to understand the needs, motivations and desires of others; differences are seen to complement each other rather than exclude. This view of the concrete other operates in private spaces through expressions of responsibility, bonding and sharing. From an understanding of how this dichotomy operates, Benhabib then argues that justice always requires engagement with the concrete other. By this, Benhabib sees that it is only through efforts to understand the history, identity and affective-emotional constitution of an individual that we come to understand her experience of injustice. On the basis of this understanding, individual (concrete other) histories, identities and affective-emotional constitutions were shared through story in this study as a way to cultivate understanding of injustice.

There is a noticeable paucity in research that investigates social justice storytelling as pedagogy with young children. Studies that examine the responses of children to children's literature on social and/or civic issues abound (e.g., Davies, 1991; Hawkins, 2008; Manifold,

2007; Schwerdt, 2006). Some storytellers have published or recorded their experiences of social justice storytelling with children, for example Judith Black (2005) and La'Ron Williams (Brother Wolf, 2008) in the USA, and Boori Pryor (Pryor & McDonald, 1998) and Donna Jacobs-Sife (see [www.donnajacobsife.com](http://www.donnajacobsife.com)) in Australia. As mentioned in Chapter 1, social justice storytelling with high school students has been researched recently (Bell, 2009, 2010), and the use of persona dolls to tell stories of discrimination has been documented and researched (Brown, 1998, 2001; MacNaughton & Davis, 2001; Whitney, 1999). However, as noted earlier the emphasis in literature on persona dolls was not on the art of storytelling. Another body of research that has some similarity with this study consists of investigations of the employment of traditional stories in moral development and education. For example, psychological studies completed in the USA (Beal, Garrod, Ruben, Stewart, & Dekle, 1997; Garrod, Beal, & Shin, 1990) and war-torn Bosnia (Garrod et al., 2003) investigated the moral development of children by seeking their responses to fable dilemmas. However, these studies had a scientific focus on eliciting the verbal responses of children, not on creating personal connection through the stories or on citizenship participation. In citizenship education, stories have been used to develop social and moral responsibility in primary classrooms through teaching resources such as the UK Citizenship Foundation publication *You, Me, Us!* (Rowe & Newton, 1994). The use of traditional stories with moral content as pretexts for process drama with primary students has been investigated by Winston (1998). Winston found that through dramatic engagement with stories the students appeared to understand that the moral meanings in stories are not simple and didactic; instead, the students made personal connections, cultivating a relational view of morality. Although all the above examples point to a strong convention of the use of story for exploration of moral values, and moral values are seen to be part of citizenship (Halstead & Pike, 2006), this study is concerned with actions not moral values. Of interest to this study is the use of traditional stories to make visible injustices and identify how young children respond to these injustices through active citizenship participation, not moral deliberation. The children were positioned as active citizens with valuable opinions and contributions to address the dilemmas in the stories by being agentic in real situations.

In terms of social justice stories, some early childhood reconceptualisers such as Silin (1995) have discussed topics with young children that are considered controversial and taboo, such as AIDS and sexuality. Silin shared his experience of a friend dying from AIDS with elementary school children and found that sharing a firsthand experience held tremendous power to raise difficult issues. The personal tone of this experience created a safe space for sharing emotions and asking questions that enabled the children to deal with these issues, which in many other contexts are silenced or withheld intentionally from them. Silin probably does not describe himself as a storyteller; he was not concerned about the art form of storytelling but rather the openness and honesty of sharing personal experiences. The above alerts to the intimacy of

relationships that personal stories facilitate between listener and teller for respectful and sympathetic understanding of social justice issues.

Another field of research with regard to social justice storytelling is the telling of *counternarratives* or *counter stories*. Counternarratives, or what Lyotard (1984) described as “*petit récit*” (p. 60), are small localised narratives of individuals or groups whose knowledge and history has been “marginalised, excluded, subjugated or forgotten in the telling of official narratives” (Lankshear & Peters, 1996, p. 2). Counter stories are used in critical race theory research and involve the development of stories on life experiences of people of colour that counter majoritarian or monovocal stories that perpetuate racism (Solarzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002). To Solórzano and Yosso (2001, 2002) majoritarian stories are deficit stories that social scientists commonly use to exemplify social and cultural issues for people of colour. Majoritarian stories are stories of blame, causation and responsibility that are heralded as truth. For example, the sharing of a story based on the experiences of people from the Stolen Generation in Chapter 1 is a counternarrative or counter story in that it provided the story of an Aboriginal woman to counter aspects of majoritarian stories: the commonly known “white” version of Australian history. The main purpose of counternarratives and counter stories is to challenge dominant ideologies by sharing stories of experiences that are rarely told and therefore rarely heard. In this regard counternarratives and counter stories offer understandings of what Benhabib (1986, 1992) referred to as the concrete other and in turn can challenge perceived wisdoms by providing a context to transform belief systems. The social justice storytelling project with high school students undertaken by Bell (2009, 2010) employed counter stories in a practice that she defined as counterstorytelling. She viewed counterstorytelling as a political practice of creating new stories that challenge the status quo and offer an alternative version of reality. The idea of counternarratives is discussed further in Chapter 3 as a theoretical concept applied in the study.

Metaphoric stories provide another genre for social justice storytelling. As discussed with aesthetic encounters, metaphors have the capacity to convey meaning in a succinct and affective way. The capacity of metaphoric stories to evoke affective meaning was noted by Egan (1986). Exploration of social justice issues requires engagement with abstract concepts, so metaphor can act as a valuable linking device for meaning-making for young children. To nurture these responses, Manifold (2007) suggested selecting stories that offer small details to serve as metaphors of overwhelming realities yet still answer why people come to inflict suffering on one another. Metaphor can lead to new meaning and insight. It can activate deep levels of imaginative understanding to make meaning of the world through the mutually beneficial interrelationship of visual and linguistic rhythm. It is metaphoric stories that hold the greatest capacity to offer multiple possible meanings that Benjamin (1955/1999) and Arendt (1958/1998, 1970) acknowledged in storytelling.

In a study of the responses of young children to picture books that possess feminist messages, Davies (2003) found that metaphoric stories (such as *The Princess and the Dragon* and *The Paperbag Princess*) as a genre can play a significant role in presenting shifting images. However, Davies found in her research that the children invariably did not get the feminist messages that she saw in the picture books. For example, in *The Princess and the Dragon* the princess does not want to be a princess and counters the expected presentation of a princess by being dirty and mean. To Davies, this story metaphorically represented the freedom to be who you want to be, yet the children had no sympathy for the princess at all and simply described her as dirty and mean. Winner (1988) explained that the capacity of metaphor to be affective lies heavily in the framing of the metaphor within the familiar. To understand a metaphor one must understand the qualities of each of the elements being linked, so if there are few familiar references the metaphor is not recognised. Metaphoric stories can offer potential to shift understandings of social justice issues, yet the elements that are referred to need to be well understood by the audience for the effect of the metaphor to work.

Social justice storytelling in this study draws inspiration from a range of fields due to minimal research on social justice storytelling in education. These include studies of: a) the engagement of children with persona doll stories and social justice picture books, b) the engagement of children with stories for moral education, c) counter stories in critical race theory, and d) the engagement of children with metaphoric stories. The purpose and goals of social justice storytelling in this study are informed by education for social change literature. My practice of social justice storytelling is guided by literature on democracy in education, aesthetic encounters, storytelling and storytelling as pedagogy, which combine to inform my practice of social justice storytelling as pedagogy with young children. The idea of social justice storytelling as pedagogy that provokes young children's active citizenship uses story as an agent of socialisation, which is a conscious and deliberate act. In this regard, Stephens (1992) argued that ideology is present. For this reason, my research values have been outlined explicitly in Chapter 3 to acknowledge subjectivity in my practice of social justice storytelling.

#### 2.4 Making Connections Between Children, Citizenship and Pedagogy

Study of the possibilities for young children's active citizenship as provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling has been informed by literature on children, citizenship and pedagogy. Identification of various ways of viewing children was required in this study to recognise the thinking that shapes theories, ideas, models and practice of children's citizenship. Citizenship definitions, approaches and spaces along with democracy were examined to understand the issues of citizenship broadly entwined in the debates that occur about notions of children's citizenship. This led to recognition of conceptual and practical possibilities and difficulties with the actualisation of participatory rights of children to citizenship. To inquire how young children's active citizenship participation can be supported in early childhood education,

some teaching and learning practices were critiqued. To add to this foundational educational context, specific pedagogical practices were explored to inform a practice of social justice storytelling. These included democracy in education, education for social change, aesthetic encounters, and storytelling. Discussion of these pedagogical practices provided understandings of the qualities and possibilities that they offer for provoking and promoting young children's practice as active citizens.

This inquiry locates a notion of children's citizenship in early childhood education with democracy in education, education for social change, aesthetic encounters, and storytelling. Most of the literature and research on children's citizenship draws from sociological theories on models of children and citizenship theories. The intention of this study was to marry sociological ideas of citizenship with social justice storytelling through the ideas above to create an educational space where possibilities for young children's active citizenship may be cultivated. The next chapter discusses the theoretical foci of this study: practice, action, and narrative.

### CHAPTER 3: PRACTICE, NARRATIVE, AND ACTION

In this chapter, I discuss three theoretical foci of this study: practice, action and narrative. These theoretical foci are the foundations of this study and build understanding of the thinking that shaped the study. Practice was a theoretical focus through investigation of my practice as a storytelling teacher. Research was approached from the perspective of a practitioner through a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Narrative was a theoretical focus through my practice as a storytelling teacher being informed by stories. Social justice stories were told to provoke citizenship action. The concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives informed the intent and content of the social justice stories told and offered a way to inform critique influences on young children's active citizenship. Action followed as the third theoretical focus to explore possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The theory of action espoused by Arendt (1958/1998) provided a means to define citizenship action.

To explain these three theoretical foci, practice is first discussed through explanations of the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical assumptions of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (3.1). Second, narrative is discussed through the concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives (3.2) as a way to identify influences on possibilities for young children's active citizenship and ways to counter these influences. Third, action is discussed through Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action (3.3) as a means to define young children's active citizenship and read who young children might be as citizens. The chapter concludes by defining the core values of the study (3.4) as informed by theories and literature.

Figure 3.1 provides a diagram of how these three theoretical foci informed the study. All three informed the ontology of the study, which is explained through declaration of the core values of the study. The theoretical focus of practice through a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) broadly informed the ontology, epistemology and methodology of the study. The concepts of metanarratives (Lyotard, 1984) and counternarratives (Lankshear & Peters, 1996) specifically informed the design of the study, intent and content of social justice storytelling, and analysis of influences and possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action was specifically employed to define active citizenship and analysis of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Collectively, these theories and concepts brought clarification and meaning to the study.

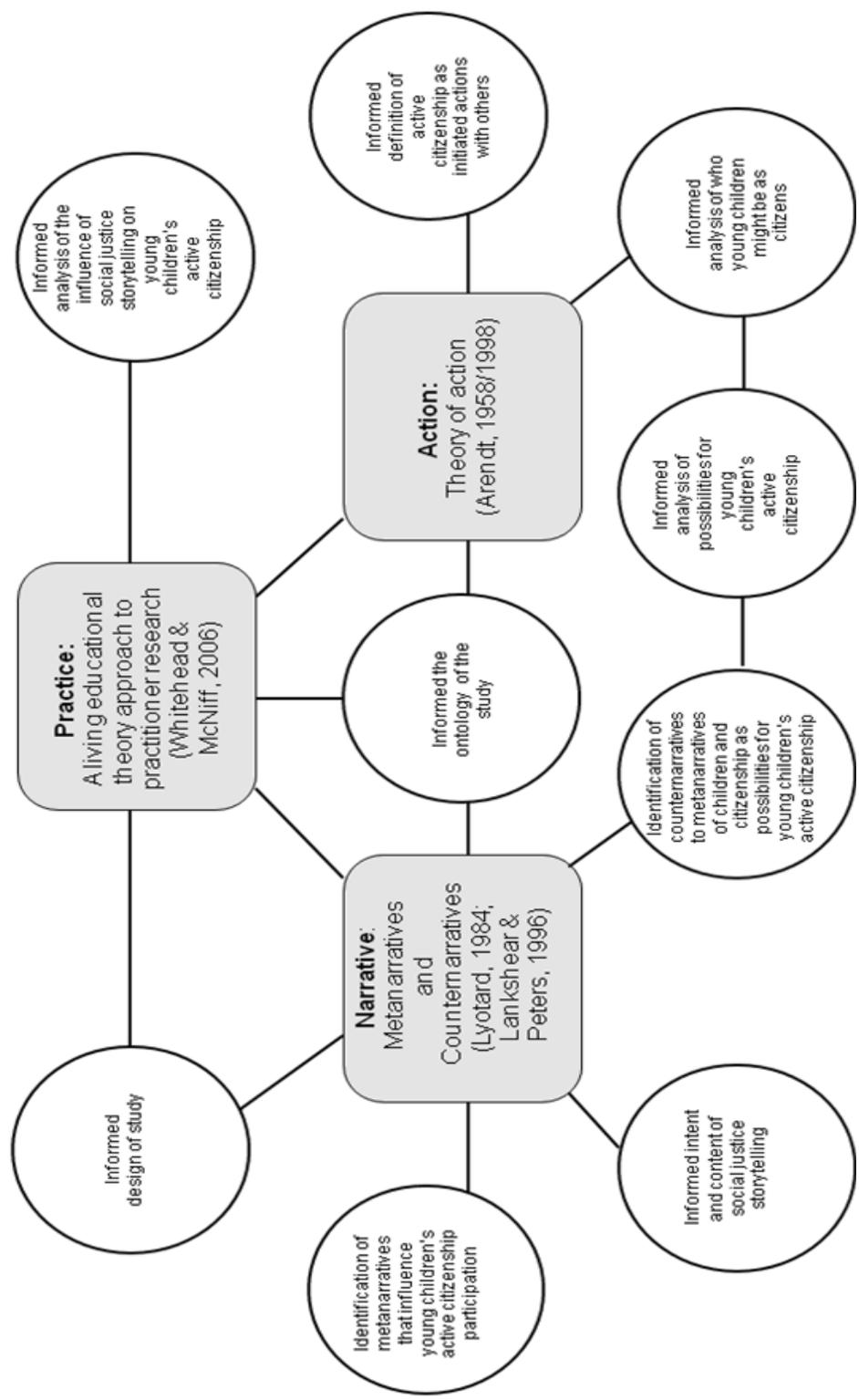


Figure 3.1. Map of the conceptual framework.

### 3.1 Practice: A Living Educational Theory Approach to Practitioner Research

A living educational theory approach to practitioner research is action research that involves practitioners investigating their own practice and producing a living theory, that is, their own explanations for what they are doing and why (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; McNiff, 2007). The theory produced is living in the sense that it is formed through living practice. A living educational theory is constantly tested, reflected and amended through practice and is open to new possibilities. It continues to evolve in response to context as a living thing. Practice is seen as “real-life theorising” (p. 32). This approach is based on ontological understandings of an inside and interrelational view of evolving processes of creation. These understandings shape epistemological, methodological and pedagogical theoretical assumptions of this approach. This section discusses sources of inspiration for this approach, ontological assumptions, and how these assumptions shape the epistemological, methodological and pedagogical assumptions. It concludes with how these theoretical assumptions apply to this study.

The ideas for a living educational theory approach to practitioner research draw from the proposal of action research as critical educational science by Carr and Kemmis (1986), who saw research as participatory. Participants in such research explore contradictions in the consequences of educational practices as seen through moments of social solidarity and social division. The theoretical underpinnings of critical educational science proposed by Carr and Kemmis are based on the ideas of critical social science developed by Habermas (1974) with core emphases of being human, social and political. Critical social science is understood as human in that it involves active knowing by those engaged in practice. A living educational theory approach to practitioner research applies this understanding through practitioners creating knowledge with others through reflection on practice. Critical social science is understood as social in that dynamic social processes of communication and interaction influence practice. A living educational theory approach to practitioner research is social as it and cannot occur in isolation; it involves reflection on practice that is influenced by those who participate in the practice. The combination of these human and social actions forms the political emphasis in critical social science by acknowledging that what happens depends on how ways of knowing and doing are influenced by historical and social conditions.

According to Habermas (1974), to engage in critical social science involves democratic political theory about social life, political processes, and their effects on social life. Critical social science seeks to recognise forces that have a negative impact on practice. In a living educational theory approach, values are recognised as influencing ways of knowing and doing with a view to improving practice (Whitehead, 1989). These values are then aspirational. Recognition of the influence of values in practice is based on an understanding that education is a value-laden activity (W. Carr & Kemmis, 1986). Reflection on practice in living educational

theory identifies moments when historical and social conditions interfere with endeavours to bring values alive in practice.

The ontological assumption of an inside view in practitioner research imagines existence with others, not as separate from others. This assumption draws from the ideas of theory and practice proposed by Habermas (1974), who argued for the roles of practitioner and researcher to merge. Habermas proposed collaboration between practitioner-researcher and participants, and practice and theory through processes of critique and critical praxis. Practitioner-researchers and participants are seen to engage in doing research together. In a living educational theory approach to practitioner research, the practitioner-researcher sees herself as part of the lives of the participants with whom she conducts her practice.

The ontological assumption of an interrelational view sees all beings as connected. An interrelational view in a living educational theory approach to practitioner research draws from the suggestion that everything is linked through invisible ties with space and boundaries (Bateson, 1972) and the idea of *inclusionality* (A. Rayner, 2004). Rayner argued that all phenomena are related to each other, and metaphors of fluid and dynamic networks describe these relations. In a living educational theory approach to practitioner research, the practitioner-researcher belongs to and is part of an inclusive and relational universe.

The ontological assumption that people exist in “constantly unfolding processes of creation” (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 86) emphasises creative processes rather than working towards closure. Creative processes are understood as “free, self-transforming, relational and inclusive” (p. 86). This ontology is based on ideas from Polanyi (1958) and Chomsky (1986). Polanyi acknowledged that all people possess a wealth of tacit knowledge. Chomsky suggested that all people have boundless aptitude for the creation of language. On the basis of these ideas, Whitehead and McNiff formed an understanding “that people have infinite capacity for the creation of new ways of thinking and acting” (p. 87). A living educational theory approach to practitioner research recognises the capacity of people to apply their embodied tacit knowledge in creative processes with others to form living educational theories.

An ontology of existing with others interrelationally in processes of creation shapes the epistemological ideas of the creation and testing of living educational theories. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) saw all people as agentic in knowledge acquisition by creating their own knowledge, drawing insights from the knowledge of others, and explaining influences on their learning and others. Learning is understood as an evolving and creative process with others. A living educational theory involves articulating what was learned and what happened during the research process. The values of the practitioner-researcher form the standards of judgment of the claims of a study to knowledge. Knowledge is claimed through accounts of the consequences of practice contradicting the values of the practitioner-researcher with explanations of influences in the learning of the practitioner-researcher and participants. Ways of knowing in a living

educational theory approach to practitioner research embrace the ontology of inclusion, relationality and creative processes. The epistemological assumptions are inclusive and relational in that theorists, and those with whom practitioner-researchers engage in practice, shape the knowledge of the practitioner-researcher. The epistemology is understood to be creative and relational as each person is thought to have capacity to make original contributions in relation to others in the creation and testing of living theories.

Methodologically, research approached from the perspective of a practitioner is understood as existing with others, acknowledging the influence of others on systems of inquiry. Greater status and agency is enabled for both practitioner-researchers and participants because of the relational approach. Whitehead and McNiff (2006) argue against prescribed approaches to action research that function as a form of performance management and welcome multiplicity in the creation of new ways of thinking and acting. Practitioner-researchers devise diverse methods of inquiry with participants to cultivate embodied knowledge into living theories. The methodological assumptions embrace inclusion, relationality, and creative processes by creating knowledge with others through inquiry into practice in relation to others.

A living educational theory approach to practitioner research applied in educational research also informs pedagogical assumptions of “a deep sense of self and how we are in relation to those whose studies we are supporting” (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006, p. 91). Engagement in teaching and learning is seen as a process of deep relation with participants. To Whitehead and McNiff, the pedagogical assumptions of a living educational theory approach align with the ideas of Raz (2001) in which meaning is cultivated through attachments. Attachment is theorised in terms of what Buber (1937) referred to as an “I-thou” relationship, that is, a familiar relationship. Pedagogy then involves a mutual sharing of identities. Teachers and learners are not fenced separate identities; instead, there is fusion of identities as participants engage in teaching and learning together. Whitehead and McNiff also applied Buber’s idea of attentive silence by giving full and undivided attention to dialogue so that dialogue of teaching and learning is approached with a contemplative attitude. Whitehead and McNiff saw openness to learning as reciprocal, with teachers and students learning from each other. Collectively, the pedagogical assumptions include close relationships, attentive listening, and reciprocal learning. The idea of close relationships embraces the ontological assumption of existing with others. The ideas of attentive listening and reciprocal learning embrace the ontological understandings of relationality and creative processes, as all parties are seen to relate and create respectfully in the processes of teaching and learning.

To summarise, a living educational theory approach to practitioner research enables research to be seen as the creation of knowledge with others from the inside as a practitioner. The generation of personal theory is created rather than being moulded by the theory of others. Personal voices of practitioner-researchers and participants are interwoven with the voice of the

academic community, as advocated by other action researchers (e.g., Atweh, Kemmis, & Weeks, 1998; McNiff, 2007; Stringer, 2004). The ontological assumptions of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research include: a) existence with others, b) all beings are interconnected by responding and learning from each other, and c) people exist in constant unfolding processes of creation. These inform epistemological assumptions as creation of living theory with others through critique of practice. Methodologically, inquiry examines the practice of a practitioner-researcher in relation to others through dynamic creative processes of reflection, practice, and the formation of living educational theories. Pedagogically, assumptions of close relationships, attentive listening, and reciprocal learning are embraced to live the ontology of existing with others in evolving processes of creation.

Based on these theoretical underpinnings of living educational theory approach to practitioner research, I approached this study as a practitioner existing with others. From this position, I saw myself belonging to a community of learning through a practice of social justice storytelling with a class of young children, a teacher and a teacher aide. I saw that we were all connected and that the phenomena in which we were engaged were interconnected. In my practice of social justice storytelling I endeavoured to build familiar relationships with children by cultivating open and attentive spaces for sharing reciprocal learning. The participants (the teacher, teacher aide and children) influenced my practice and reflection, just as I influenced their actions and thoughts. We engaged in creative processes of building on our tacit knowledge through critique and reflection. Reflection and amendment of my practice generated evidence of learning in a practice of storytelling. Analysis of children's engagement in a practice of social justice storytelling identified how my practice influenced the learning of the children as active citizens and possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

This study adopted a critical view of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research. I sought to understand influences on my practice of social justice storytelling and possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Both negative and positive influences were recognised. My aspirational values were understood as an influence. In addition, the concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives (Lyotard, 1984; Lankshear and Peters, 1996), and Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action provided political theories to examine processes and negative and positive effects on social life. These are discussed in section 3.2 and 3.3 respectively. The next section (3.2) explains how the concepts of metanarrative and counternarrative informed the study and examined influences on possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

### 3.2 Narrative: Concepts of Metanarratives and Counternarratives

My research focus on narrative began with the idea of exploring my practice of social justice storytelling. This was built on the understanding of story as a way of knowing (Arendt, 1958/1998, 1970; Benjamin, 1955/1999; Bruner, 1986; Nussbaum, 1997) that could provide a

means for young children to come to know social injustices and be motivated to act to redress these injustices. It seemed conceptually consistent to then view influences on possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation in terms of narrative, that is, as ways of knowing. In particular, the concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives offered ways of examining political influences on possibilities for young children's active citizenship. This section explains these concepts and the four ways they were applied in this study: a) identification of metanarratives that influence young children's active citizenship participation, b) informing the design of the study, c) the intent and content of social justice storytelling, and d) identification of counternarratives to metanarratives of children and citizenship as possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

The concept of metanarrative was defined by Lyotard (1984) as a narrative that legitimates knowledge. In his critique of modernism, Lyotard explained how metanarratives shape knowledge and grow in strength having oppressive, exclusionary, and totalising effects as they work to explain a concept rather than just tell the story of an event. The concept of metanarrative was used broadly in this study to recognise universalistic and hegemonic ideology (metanarratives) of children and citizenship.

Used in both critical and postmodern research, metanarratives were of interest in this study from a critical perspective by acknowledging their continuing effect on adult views of children and citizenship. Lyotard (1984) argued that metanarratives have declined or collapsed in the post-modern world. In critical theory, metanarratives are understood to have a hegemonic impact on beliefs and practices and are used to justify acts of oppression. For example, critical theorists such as Lukacs (1920/1967) and Marcuse (1964), viewed metanarratives as having a false consciousness effect. Metanarratives are understood to dominate the consciousness of exploited groups through explanations of truths that justify and perpetuate their exploitation. A critical understanding then positions capitalism and neoliberalism as metanarratives through the totalising narratives that they project on ordering and explaining knowledge and experience. For example, in metanarratives of neoliberalism, individuals are cast as self-made entrepreneurs (Barnes, 1987, 1988) in persistent plots of wealth creation through production and property acquisition. The totalising effect of this metanarrative disregards the negative impact on others (e.g., dislocation from homeland), for the primacy of economic wealth creation. In this regard, metanarratives are understood to "conceal patterns of domination and submission" (Mishler, 1995, p.115). From a critical theory perspective, the identification of metanarratives offers a significant process for understanding how oppression functions in society (Hoy & McCarthy, 1994) through the legitimization of hegemonic ideologies.

Examples of metanarratives of children as innocent and developing, and citizens as good have a totalising effect on who children can be and what citizenship might be (see 2.1 and 2.2). Metanarratives also permeate traditional stories and children's literature according to

Stephens and McCallum (1998). They base their argument on the much higher proportion of retold traditional stories in children's literature than general literature and a view that traditional stories "have the function of maintaining conformity to socially determined and approved patterns of behaviour" (pp. 3-4). Such approved behaviours are conveyed in stories through positive role models and the condemning of unacceptable behaviour, whilst affirming cultural values, practices and establishments. For example, in traditional tales such as *Cinderella* and *Snow White*, and classic children's novels such as *Peter Pan* and *Coral Island*; being civilised, good, and innocent are projected as approved behaviours. Widespread sharing of these stories has a significant influence on shaping of children's understandings of expected social behaviours. Traditional stories and much of children's literature then, perpetuate metanarratives of children and citizenship.

The concept of metanarrative was applied in this study through identification of metanarratives that influence possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation. It provided a way to define and recognise the influence of grand stories or dominating ideologies of children and citizenship. Answers were sought to the research question, "What indicators point to metanarratives that influence young children's active citizenship?" Through identification of metanarratives the consequences of hegemonic influences on children and citizenship were recognised.

The idea of counternarratives offered a means to make visible the dominating and exploitative effects of metanarratives. As described in 2.3.7, counternarratives are small localised narratives that provide accounts of individual experiences of exploitation. Informed by explanations from Lankshear and Peters (1996), this study employed counternarratives to cultivate critical awareness of the effects of metanarratives for participating children. Counternarratives to metanarratives of children and citizenship were also identified in young children's active citizenship practice. Used in this way, the concept of counternarrative supported the commitment of critical theory to social justice by making the exploitation or marginalisation visible that is concealed in metanarratives. My intention through social justice storytelling was to offer a broader view of humanity to young children, and welcome diversity of experience in citizenship. The inter-relationship between metanarratives and counternarratives aligns with the ontology of interrelated existence with others in a living educational theory of practitioner research. Metanarratives and counternarratives enable recognition of negative influences on practice.

The design of the study was informed by what Lankshear and Peters (1996) refer to as the first dimension of counternarratives: to "function generically as a critique of the modernist predilection for 'grand', 'master' and 'meta' narratives" (p. 2). In this way, counternarratives disturb the legitimacy of metanarratives. The provision of a program that viewed young children as politically and rationally capable of dialoguing on social justice issues and participating as

active citizens was a small but intentional act to disturb metanarratives of childhood innocence and impulsivity.

This second dimension of counternarratives provided a useful story genre to create space for dialogue and action on social justice issues in the study. In this dimension, counternarratives act by countering “legitimate stories propagated for specific political purposes to manipulate public consciousness by heralding a national set of common cultural ideals” (Lankshear & Peters, 1996, p. 2). The use of counter stories in critical race theory to challenge dominant race ideologies and myths (see 2.3.7) is an example of this second dimension of counternarratives. Counternarratives defined in this way provide alternative and diverse positions, which can contribute to critical awareness and a broader humanitarian outlook.

To Stephens and McCallum (1998), metanarratives in traditional children’s literature can be challenged through introduction of counternarratives or modifications of metanarratives. The way that counternarratives or modified metanarratives are told requires careful consideration of the register that the teller selects as the ground for how the story and its significance are communicated. This involves consideration of the elements of field (i.e., subject matter or situation), tenor (i.e., relationships), and modality (i.e., point of view and focalisation or origin of perspective). All of these factors shape how the story is told and the meaning and values it conveys. To redress metanarratives of retold traditional stories, Stephens and McCallum suggest altering the modes of representation, the point of view, and textual self-reflexiveness to make visible how some traditional stories suppress the invisible, untold and unspoken. For example, pirates are frequently positioned as evil in comparison to the innocent child and good citizen in traditional children’s stories. To redress metanarratives of innocent child and good citizen, tales can be told by focalising or emphasising acts by children that challenge views of citizenship and childhood as obedience. This suggestion of attention to the register of retold stories provided points of consideration for telling counternarratives in a practice of social justice storytelling. Stories were told of individual and group experiences of injustice that countered and exposed consequences of metanarratives.

The concept of counternarrative was also applied in the study through analysis of the children’s participation to recognise and describe individual experiences of young children’s active citizenship. Individual experiences were recognised as counternarratives to metanarratives of children (e.g., child as innocent, child as developing) and citizenship (e.g., citizen as good). This application of counternarratives provided openings to further possibilities for young children’s active citizenship.

Together, the concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives were used to examine political influences on possibilities for young children’s active citizenship as provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling. In this study I sought to recognise metanarratives and employ counternarration in the four ways discussed. Although they have been explained in this

order to enable understanding of the concepts of metanarrative and counternarrative, this was not the methodological order in which they were applied. First, the metanarrative of young children as pre-political and irrational was countered through a practice of storytelling that engaged with young children as capable of questioning, theorising and acting on social justice issues. Second, counternarratives of individual experiences of subjugation were told, making visible consequences of metanarratives of capitalism and neoliberalism. Third, data were analysed for indicators of metanarratives of children and citizenship to build understandings of the influence of such metanarratives on possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation. Fourth, examples of young children's active citizenship participation were recognised as offering counternarratives or countering possibilities to the metanarratives of children and citizenship. Collectively, these four applications of the concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives enabled a critical investigation of young children's active citizenship provoked through social justice storytelling. The following section discusses the theoretical focus of action as provoked through narrative.

### 3.3 Action: Arendt's Theory of Action

In this study I examined the engagement of young children in action as citizens. As discussed in Chapter 1, the theory of action espoused by Arendt (1958/1998) offered a means to define and understand the processes of action in active citizenship. In Chapter 2, this theory of action was understood as political, as Arendt's conception of democratic action supported agency with others. Arendt's theory of action was used in this study for political purposes. In this theory, speech and action are understood as conditions of political life, that is, human practices of living with others. Emphasis is placed on interactions between people and an understanding of humanity as a web of relationships. Such emphasis yielded a means to explore political processes in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. This section explains the definitions of action and speech developed by Arendt and how together they form stories of who people are. Connections between a living educational theory approach to practitioner research and Arendt's theory of action are also explained.

To Arendt (1958/1998), action is about beginning something new in the world, public realm or *polis* (as distinguished from our internal and personal spaces), and speech consists of the spoken words that articulate an initiated action of setting something in motion. The impulse for action comes from wanting to begin something new and emerges unexpectedly from what has happened before. Action differs from that of routine actions (such as eating, washing and cleaning), which consume most of our day as these are either work or labour. Actions do not exist in isolation: instead, "they fall into an already existing web where their immediate consequences can be felt" (p. 184). In Arendt's theory, actions are recognised as affecting others, yet the effect is invariably not what the initiator intended because of conflicting wills and intentions in the web of human relationships in the *polis*. If an initiator tries to control how others

respond to her action, or if individuals block others' opportunities to begin, agency is denied. Arendt advocated for worldly care for the public realm, where initiated actions are enacted with consideration for others. This understanding of action seemed workable in possibilities for young children's active citizenship through recognition that young children would be motivated to begin something new in response to the stories told in this study. In addition, Arendt's emphasis on actions with others aligns with the ontology of an interrelated existence with others in a living educational theory approach to practitioner research.

Used together, action and speech form a life story according to Arendt (1958/1998). Action with speech inserted into the public realm and subjected to unpredictable and uncontrollable responses produces stories. If actions were responded to predictably there would be new stories, as they would not hold attention through anticipating the unexpected. Action starts a new process, which in time emerges as a "unique life story of a newcomer affecting uniquely the life stories of all those with who [s]he comes into contact" (p. 184). To Arendt, accounts of the actions people initiate tell more about the person than any tangible product produced by the person. Everything else only offers understandings of what the subject or active agent is. Actions and speech show who people are, that is, "the unique and distinct identity of the agent" (p. 180). According to Arendt, we can only know who somebody is by knowing the story in which she or he is the hero. The place of story in this theory of action is explained through an examination of courage.

The connotation of courage, which we now feel to be an indispensable quality of the hero, is in fact present in the willingness to act and speak at all, to insert oneself into the world and begin a story of one's own. (p. 186)

Those who have the courage to start something new are seen as heroes in their own stories. Actions then tell about who the heroes are, thereby exposing deeper understandings of qualities of humanity. This view suggests that a person's activity emanates from the core of her being. The idea that action and speech inserted into the public realm forms stories of courage offered a means to read young children's initiated actions in the public realm as life stories of young children's active citizenship. Further to this, these understandings align with the ontology of people existing in evolving processes of creation in a living educational theory approach to practitioner research.

The suggestion of young children initiating actions with others as being political differs from the ideas of Arendt (1977) developed in *The Crisis in Education*. In this essay she argued against children having a political identity and for education as separate from political life. Arendt stressed that children ought to remain in the private realm, protected during childhood, as it is a time of concealment and preparation. Biesta (2010) read this view of children and education as suggestive of being defined within a psychological paradigm shaped by terms such as "development", "preparation", "identity", and "control" (Introduction, Para 4). To

Arendt, where education ends and politics begin is a temporal distinction between childhood and adulthood. It is possible that metanarratives of children and education at the time shaped Arendt's claim for this temporal distinction and exclusion of children from politics. In this study, I viewed children as agentic and entitled to participate in the public realm. Like Biesta (2007, 2010), I see that Arendt's view of initiating actions among others as being political offers a definition of being political that can include children's participation. The definition of being political as having the courage to initiate new beginnings with others is possible for children. It offers scope for children and adults to co-exist politically and learn from these attempts of political co-existence. Even though Arendt may not have supported a notion of children engaging in the political, her conception of the political provided a means to read political possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

In conclusion, Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action offered two ways to read possibilities for young children's active citizenship, which are presented in Figure 3.1. The definition of action as political activity informed how active citizenship was viewed in this study. This was applied firstly by identifying children's initiated social actions that aim to redress injustices and how these actions exist with others as political active citizenship. Second, these actions and accompanying commentaries were interpreted as life stories that describe who young children might be as active citizens. Together these two applications of Arendt's theory of action informed analysis of possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

### 3.4 Core Values of the Study

The above theoretical foci of practice, action and narrative informed the core values of the study. The study was shaped by five core ontological values of agency, interconnectivity, responsiveness, multiplicity, and practice. These beliefs of the nature of being in turn informed my epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical values. Collectively, they represented what was important to my practice as a storytelling teacher and researcher. In my practice, I endeavoured to be agentic and respect others' multiple and diverse ways of exercising agency, acknowledging the interconnectivity of our responses to each other. These values of agency, interconnectivity, responsiveness, multiplicity and practice are proposed as the standards of judgment for the quality of this thesis. The theories discussed in this chapter to address the research concerns of practice, action, and narrative embrace these values. In a living educational theory approach to practitioner research, practitioners are agentic because they create knowledge in multiple ways through practice with others in an interconnected and responsive world. To Arendt (1958/1998), people are understood as agentic by initiating actions (practice) that are responsive to others in a web of relationships (interconnectivity). The concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives are interconnected, with counternarratives constructed in response to metanarratives. Counternarratives challenge universalism by welcoming diversity and multiplicity through sharing individual stories of those who have been marginalised. Sharing

counternarratives provides space for those who have been marginalised or silenced to be visible, heard, and therefore agentic. Application of these theories aided attempts to bring these values into practice. The sources of belief that shaped my practice as a storytelling teacher and researcher are discussed respectively in the following subsections of agency (3.4.1), interconnectivity (3.4.2), responsiveness (3.4.3), multiplicity (3.4.4) and practice (3.4.5).

#### *3.4.1 Agency*

Ontologically, all participants were understood to possess the capacity to be social agents. Ideas of agency were based on the explanations of Arendt (1958/1998) that humans are agentic when they initiate actions with others in responsive and considerate ways. This ontological value of agency shaped the epistemology, methodology and pedagogy of this study. Epistemologically, all participants were viewed as instrumental in cultivating ways of knowing. Methodologically, both practitioners and participants were seen as agentic in the research process through critical thinking, making choices and engaging in and reflecting on actions. These epistemological and methodological views were drawn from the theoretical underpinnings of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Pedagogically, children were recognised as agentic by being viewed as possessing political identities (Kulnych, 2001) with the right and capacity to voice opinions, make decisions and participate. In addition, children were seen to actively construct learning and understanding as agentic creators of knowledge. These pedagogical assumptions were informed by ideas of socio-cultural theory (e.g., Vygotsky, 1978), which sees learning as an active process with others and the social conception of democracy in education espoused by Dewey (1916).

#### *3.4.2 Interconnectivity*

An ontological view of all beings and matter as interconnected shaped the epistemology, methodology and pedagogy of the study. This view was informed by the theoretical underpinnings of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), which drew from the works of Bateson (1972) and Rayner (2004). Appreciation of people existing in a web of relationships (Arendt, 1958/1998) also informed the ontological view of interconnectivity. Epistemologically, I understood knowledge and processes of knowing to be in constant flux through interconnectivity with others (e.g., children, practitioners, academics, theorists and writers), as informed by the understanding that knowledge is created by drawing insights from the knowledge of others (Whitehead & McNiff). In addition, live oral storytelling nurtured an intimate way of knowing with others by building connections between teller and listener, and characters and events in the story. The writings of Arendt, (1958/1998), Benjamin (1955/1999) and Kristeva (2001) on the ability of storytelling to cultivate relationships with others shaped this understanding of story as an intimate and interconnected way of knowing. Methodologically, all elements of research were seen as interconnected, drawing from

the relational view of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff). Pedagogically, children's learning was understood as interconnected by recognising links between each theme of social justice explored. This was informed by the emergent curriculum practice of webbing pathways of children's learning (Jones & Nimmo, 1994).

### *3.4.3 Responsiveness*

A value of responsiveness is intertwined with a value of interconnectivity. A view of everything as interconnected sees matter and beings responding to each other. This view was drawn from Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action, in which initiated actions are responsive to others in a web of relationships. Epistemologically, all people were recognised as creators of knowledge that is responsive to the knowledge of others (children, practitioners, academics, theorists and writers). Methodologically, all participants were seen to be responsive to context and events through processes of creating, extending, amending and appraising. Both these epistemological and methodological perspectives were informed by a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), which sees practitioners respond to others in knowledge creation through reflection and amendment of practice. Pedagogically, teaching and learning were viewed as responsive interaction and based on the ideas of Freire (1970, 1973, 1974, 1985, 1998) and Dewey (1916). From Freire, I adopted a view of pedagogy as a two-way exchange of seeing, listening, wondering and dialogue. From Dewey, I adopted a view of democratic practice in education, in which group members freely interact, change, and adjust in response to their engagement with each other and external influences.

### *3.4.4 Multiplicity*

This study was approached with an ontological view that there are many ways of being. Multiplicity was welcomed in opinions, choices, and ways of participating. The idea of counternarratives (Lyotard, 1984; Lankshear & Peters, 1996) supports such an ontological view through the proactive sharing of stories that counter a universal view of being, and offers multiplicity in ways of being. Epistemologically, story was perceived as cultivating multiple ways of knowing and communicating, with each person having their own interpretation of a story shaped by their social and cultural context. This perspective was informed by the suggestion from Benjamin (1955/1999) that good storytelling cultivates the possibilities of multiple interpretations. Methodologically, diverse methods for diverse purposes welcomed multiplicity, and worked to create new ways of thinking and acting (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Pedagogically, aesthetic encounters of storytelling, drawing, dancing, and construction offered multiple modes for learning and teaching, freedom of expression, multiplicity in meaning, sensory and emotive connection. Such understandings of aesthetic encounters were drawn from acknowledgment and appreciation of the multiplicity of perspectives that the sensory and emotive qualities of aesthetic encounters can enable (Abbs, 1989; Greene, 1995).

### *3.4.5 Practice*

This study began with an interest in exploring my practice as a storytelling teacher. A value for practice was present from the beginning. This foregrounded me as a practitioner in the research. A living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) endorses ontological values of practice, cultivating insider views of engaging in practice with others, which in turn influenced the epistemology and methodology. Epistemologically, critical reflection of practice was seen to bring wisdom of what constrains and supports ways of knowing in a lived context. Methodologically, research of practice enabled practitioner understandings of lived experiences, creating living educational theories. Pedagogically, all elements of practice were considered through careful planning and critical reflection based on the notion that practitioners possess deep knowledge of practice to contribute to research (Hawkins, 1966; Malaguzzi, 1993). Approached as a practitioner, this study foregrounded practice in the epistemology, methodology and pedagogy of the study.

The values of agency, interconnectivity, responsiveness, multiplicity, and practice permeated how possibilities for young children's active citizenship provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling were approached. A living educational theory approach to practitioner research cultivated a perspective of existing with others, which involved creating knowledge with others in multiple ways within a responsive and interconnected climate. Application of Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action enabled recognition of agency through actions being initiated and responded to by others in a web of relationships. The concept of counternarratives introduced multiplicity in understandings of humanity that embraced agency, interconnectivity and responsiveness. These values are woven throughout this thesis.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The theories of practice, action, and narrative discussed in this chapter informed and shaped the investigation of possibilities for young children's active citizenship provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling. A living educational theory approach to practitioner research enabled the perspective of a practitioner. This perspective enabled identification of influences of learning in my practice, and in the learning of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The concepts of metanarratives and counternarratives were applied in four ways: a) identification of metanarratives that influence young children's active citizenship participation, b) informing the design of the study, c) the intent and content of social justice storytelling, and d) identification of counternarratives to metanarratives of children and citizenship as possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action enabled two ways to read possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation. These included a definition of active citizenship as initiating actions with others, and interpretation of these actions and accompanying commentaries as stories of citizenship practice that describe who young

children might be as citizens. In conclusion, practice, narrative, and action formed three theoretical foci that thread through this inquiry into possibilities for young children's active citizenship provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling. The methodological processes employed in this inquiry are discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the methodology used in this study. A living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) provided a systematic form of inquiry to explore what is of prime importance to me and my practice: storytelling and the inclusion of young children as active citizens in the public realm. Both a practice of social justice storytelling and possibilities for young children's active citizenship could be investigated through a living educational theory approach to practitioner research by questioning, reflecting and amending practice to form explanations of influence in practice, "in the learning of others, and in the learning of social formations" (Whitehead & McNiff, p. 68). The preposition *in* is purposefully used to convey the inside and interrelational view of a living educational theory approach. In the context of this study, the practice of inquiry is my practice of social justice storytelling with a Prep class. The 'learning of others' in this inquiry is the participation of young children as active citizens, and the 'learning of social formations' is the exploration of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. To conduct this inquiry, data were collected and analysed for meaning to generate evidence to form living educational theories about social justice storytelling and young children's active citizenship. The processes employed are explained to ensure the rigour and validity of the research.

This chapter begins with explanations of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research as the methodology for the study (4.1). Research with children (4.2), the research design (4.3), systematic methods of data collection (4.4), and analysis (4.5) are then detailed. This is followed by explanations of how quality (4.6) and ethics (4.7) were addressed. To conclude the chapter, descriptions of the study site and participants provide an understanding of the context (4.8) along with initial analytical findings through identification of themes in the data of children's participation (4.9). These details of the research location, participants and themes set the scene for the subsequent analysis chapters (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). This is especially important for a study about storytelling; as Kristeva (2001) noted, a story cannot be fully understood without an understanding of its context.

### 4.1 Methodology: A Living Educational Theory Approach to Practitioner Research

A living educational theory approach to practitioner research is a type of action research as noted in 3.1. Action research was selected to enable active participation and intervention as a practitioner-researcher in the study. Generally, action research is considered an ideal research methodology for practitioner research in that the dual roles of practitioner and researcher can be performed (Brown & Jones, 2001; Reason & Bradbury, 2006; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). In this study, I performed the dual roles of storytelling teacher and researcher. Through a practice of social justice storytelling, I collaborated and participated with a class of young children, the

teacher, and teacher aide to research possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Active involvement in both practice and research enabled fulfilment of what Dick (2000) defined as three key qualities of action research: responsiveness, flexibility, and action. As an active participant my aim was to engage in action by creating and facilitating a social justice storytelling program that both initiated and responded to the comments and actions of the children and teacher, to explore what was important to the children about social justice issues. The flexibility of action research allowed both practitioner-researcher and participant contributions to steer the direction of the study.

A living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), was selected as the methodology for this study because of its theoretical underpinnings (as discussed in 3.1), for the method of inquiry it offers, and the scope for what Dadds and Hart (2001) referred to as methodological inventiveness. Dadds and Hart claimed that a practitioner's choice of methodology and control of how she conducts research is just as important as her choice of research topic "to their motivation, their sense of identity within the research and their research outcomes" (p. 166). On the basis of this understanding, Dadds and Hart suggested that it is important for practitioners "to create inquiry approaches that enable new understandings...that empower practitioners to improve their work for the beneficiaries in their care" (p.166). The idea of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research offers a means to address methodological inventiveness. Whitehead (2009a) proposed that researchers could develop their own living theory methodology by combining, drawing insights from, and going beyond the major qualitative research approaches, such as those identified by Creswell (2007) of narrative research, phenomenography, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study. The following defines how a methodology of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research was applied in this study.

Application of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research involved generating explanations of educational influences in my learning from practice, in the learning of young children as active citizens, and in the learning of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Learning was understood as a process of evolving and creating, not as an outcome. The identification of learning in my practice involved recognising that my values did not flow fully into practice; plans were made, enacted, and reflected upon as endeavours to live my values more fully in practice and to learn from practice. Explanations of influence on my learning created living theories of social justice storytelling and young children's active citizenship.

The methodology involved reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action as discussed by Schon (1983) in practitioner research. I reflected and amended my practice whilst in action and afterwards on numerous occasions, such as later that day, with others in interviews, days later when planning the next workshop, and when transcribing, analysing, and writing up this thesis. The focus of my reflections was to create and facilitate a practice that provoked

possibilities for young children's active citizenship. According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), the practice of action research involves "self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understandings of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (p. 162). My reflections were concerned with the rationality and justice of my practice in terms of creating possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

Reflection informed subsequent plans and actions that were observed and reflected upon, as is the typical case in action research (W. Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Creswell, 2005; MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009; Stringer, 1999). The action research cyclical process of plan, act and reflect occurred on a weekly basis by planning the intervention of the workshops (i.e., the stories, discussion, and activities), through the action of the workshops, and observation and reflection in and on the workshops. The research journey was mapped during data collection, plotting the interconnectivity and multiplicity of themes to produce a vision of multiple interconnected possibilities and interrelated learning. Unintended praxis was charted and connections across the study mapped. This practice was informed by a relational view of research that is encompassed in a living educational theory approach to practitioner research through application of the idea that phenomena are interconnected (Bateson, 1972; A. Rayner, 2004). By plotting interconnectivity between interrelated themes, three clusters of weekly cycles were defined by different foci in the stories and discussions. Diagrams of these clusters are included in Chapter 5.

A living educational theory approach to practitioner research produced unique explanations of educational influences in my learning of social justice storytelling and possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The methodology began with defining the research problem and questions (as discussed in Chapter 1). A common focus of inquiry in studies that apply this methodology is the improvement of practice (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006; Whitehead, 2009a, 2009b). The objectives of this study did not seek to measure improvement or growth, but rather to further understand social justice storytelling as pedagogy and possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation. My interest lay in seeking ways to provoke and promote possibilities for young children's active citizenship and a greater awareness of the complexities of notions of young children's active citizenship, which was guided by my research foci, values, and the children's responses. The focus was how young children responded to my practice; the influences of my practice in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Evidence of such learning was generated through sourcing data that suggested influence of a practice of social justice storytelling in young children's active citizenship. The intent was not to demonstrate a cause and effect relationship between my practice and the children's comments and actions. My practice of social justice storytelling was the vehicle employed to provoke learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Research then involved observing

and monitoring young children as active citizens in relation to how they responded to my practice of social justice storytelling. Recounts of the study in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 present claims to a greater understanding of my practice, and possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

The process of explaining influences in my learning through practice produced living theories based on the claim made by Whitehead and McNiff (2006) that practitioner action researchers are capable of "making significant contributions to quality theory" (p. 5). Living educational theories were composed of my unique explanations of the influences in my learning, which included the creation of knowledge with the children, the teacher, teacher aide, my supervisors, other practitioners, academics, and theorists. Whitehead (2000) claimed that the inclusion of *I* in explanations of a practitioner's learning in living educational theories signifies a practitioner's educative influence with students. By using 'I', subjectivity was foregrounded along with self-accountability and responsibility for the research process. Educational influences in my learning were explained by engaging with issues of theory and practice and my ontological, epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical values (defined in 3.4). According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006), clear statements of the values of the practitioner-researcher provide a way to state what is important to the researcher and are proposed as the standards of judgment of quality. Carr and Kemmis (1986) also argued that "any educational theory worthy of the name cannot rest content with providing value-neutral theoretical accounts, but must be able to confront questions about practical educational values and goals" (p. 99). Through explicit statements of my values and actively reflecting on the influence of my values throughout the thesis, reflexivity was addressed. I composed living educational theories by questioning moments in which my practice contradicted my values and seeking ways to amend practice to live my values. Living theories evolved through engagement in a social justice storytelling practice with a Prep class as I endeavoured to influence possibilities for their participation in active citizenship.

A living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) provided a way to gather and interpret data systematically and generate evidence of learning in a practice of social justice storytelling, young children as active citizens, and possibilities for young children as active citizens. Detailed explanations of the process of analysis through a living educational theory approach are provided in section 4.3. Explanations of my learning in practice are told in Chapter 5, and explanations of learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship are told in Chapters 6 and 7.

#### 4.2 Research with Children

In this study my research as a practitioner was undertaken with children. The children were seen as social actors. From this understanding, I engaged with the children as active subjects and not objects of inquiry (Christensen & James, 2008). The inquiry involved collaboration

with a class of children and their teacher, with their contributions steering the direction of the study. Care was taken to explain the inquiry in accessible language, seek children's consent, listen to the children's views and suggestions, clearly communicate research procedures and be sensitive to children's queries and concerns about participation. These practices were implemented in respect for children's right to voice and active participation.

My research sought to identify what it can mean for young children to be active citizens. I wanted to learn from children about their lives. To do this I selected ways that were familiar and meaningful to children for consultation, such as storytelling, group discussions, play activities and conversations. However, the act of recognising the power imbalance between adult researcher and child participant does not mean that this is easily shifted and, for the most part, power remained mostly with the researcher. My influence in the study cannot be denied, particularly as my storytelling practice was an explicit act of research intervention. Though I sought to learn more about young children's experiences of citizenship, their contributions to the inquiry were interpreted by myself, an adult researcher. The way I see the world shaped how I heard the children's comments and how I saw them acting upon social injustices.

#### 4.3 Research Design

To explore possibilities for young children's active citizenship with a Prep class, a study was designed that consisted of a series of weekly social justice storytelling workshops. Ideas for stories, questions, and activities for the workshops and interviews were created, enacted, reflected on, and amended on a weekly basis, as guided by my reflections on the children's and teacher's responses to the workshops. The workshops were organised into three clusters, distinguished by different foci of justice. The duration of the study was not predetermined; as in action research, attention was on the present and no neat conclusive endpoint was envisioned (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). The workshops occurred once per week. The first cluster lasted five weeks and the subsequent two clusters lasted four weeks each. There were reflective weeks between each cluster of workshops (see Appendix A).

The action research process of planning, action, and reflection occurred on a weekly basis in the weeks of the storytelling workshops. I planned the stories and workshops based on discussions with the children and the teacher along with my reflections of the preceding workshop. The storytelling workshops were the action. I began the storytelling workshops by telling a purposefully crafted story to provoke critique of social justice issues (Appendices D to M are transcripts of the storytelling of each of the 10 stories). After the storytelling, the teacher and I co-facilitated a critical discussion of the story based on a community of inquiry approach (Lipman, 1988) in which children and adults dialogue to search out the problematic borders of puzzling concepts. Further interaction with the story occurred in small group activities where the children explored the stories by drawing, sculpting/building, dancing, and developing social

actions to redress injustices (see Appendix B). Such play-based activities were included as they are understood to be an accessible means for pre-literate children to contribute data (Hart, 1997). These small group activities provided space for aesthetic engagement to process affective responses (Greene, 1995) to the stories. Small group activities also provided space for the children to engage in active citizenship through by enacted social actions to redress injustices. Enactment of social actions occurred in the small group activity time in support of the ideas of rational autonomy (Kant 1784/1992), with the children making participation choices. Self-selected participation in social actions also aided identification of influences in young children's active citizenship. All participants contributed to critical reflection on the workshops, through follow-up conversations, and the summative/reflective workshops held in weeks five and nine. Two to three days after each storytelling workshop, I visited the class to gain feedback about the workshop through separate follow-up conversations with the teacher and a group of five to six self-nominated children. I reflected on the feedback from these conversations with the teacher and the children, and data of preceding workshops to identify points of interest and concern that warranted further exploration to guide the crafting of the following week's story, critical discussion, and extension activities.

No new story was told in workshops five and nine; instead, these workshops provided further space for children to contribute their views on the stories told in that cluster through drama, drawing, and construction. The intent of these workshops was to provide more space for children to explore and respond to the ideas in the stories. In the last workshop (week 13), the children told me stories individually, in pairs or in groups of three. This required two visits to record all of their stories. The children were invited to tell me stories as a meaningful and familiar way to convey their thoughts and feelings about the influence of my practice of social justice storytelling. This opportunity for children to tell stories was offered as a way of sharing the role of storyteller.

On completion of the storytelling workshops, a final conversation was shared with the teacher to discuss overall reflections on the workshops. Two unplanned interviews also took place: one with Molly, Ella, and Fergie to inquire how they formed the story they told in the last workshop and another with the teacher aide to gain her observations of the children's participation throughout the study. Appendix A provides a dated schedule of the storytelling workshops, conversations and interviews.

#### 4.4 Data Collection

Data were collected from different sources using diverse methods to produce evidence to address the research question. The storytelling workshops were video recorded and audio recorded to produce data of possibilities for young children's active citizenship provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling. In accordance with the recommendation of Whitehead and McNiff (2006), data were gathered to monitor my actions and learning and to monitor the actions and

learning of others (in this case the class of children). My actions and learning were documented through my plans, facilitation, and reflections of the workshops. The actions and learning of the children were recorded in transcripts of the workshops and interviews/conversations with the teacher, children, and teacher aide. To demonstrate evolving developments, data were gathered over time, as recommended by Whitehead and McNiff. A range of data was gathered to construct a story of what happened in the study. The data sources included the storytelling workshops, interviews with participants, written communications, and my reflective journaling. Multiple and diverse data sources diminished the possibility of one perspective shaping the direction of the study and portrayed “the complexities and richness of people’s lived experiences” (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009, p. 156).

To build rapport with the children participating in the study, I drew from my experience as an early childhood teacher of knowing how to fit into the context of an early years class. I was introduced to the children as a storyteller, setting the tone for the research so that the children came to know me as someone who told stories and was interested in talking about stories. I frequently conversed with the children before and after the storytelling workshops to build trust and rapport.

This section (4.4) provides an overview of data collection. First, details of the story transcripts and workshop plans as the devices designed to generate data are provided (4.4.1). Then the range of data sources and methods applied are detailed. They include data collection at workshops (4.4.2), interviews with the teacher (4.4.3), follow-up conversations with children (4.4.4), written communications (4.4.5), and a reflective journal (4.4.6).

#### *4.4.1 Story Transcripts and Workshop Plans*

The stories told and workshop plans were devices designed for generating data. Between each storytelling workshop I spent considerable time reflecting on data from the workshop held in the previous week to form the story transcript and workshop plan for the subsequent week. Common concerns in the children’s comments and actions to the stories were identified by coding the data. The subsequent story was crafted to address identified common concerns yet offered an alternative position. After I sourced or created a story, I wrote a transcript of the story (and devised how to tell it) and a plan for the workshop. The workshop plan included the story, possible questions for critical discussion after the story, and possible post-story activities. This plan was emailed to the teacher a couple of days before each workshop for her feedback about suitability. The story transcripts were distributed to each of the children’s families on the day the story was told as a means to inform and include them.

#### *4.4.2 Data Collection at Workshops*

The main sources of data were video recordings and audio recordings of the storytelling workshops, which included the storytelling, critical discussion, and small group activities. Both

types of recordings were used to provide data assurance for technological errors and malfunctions but also to provide multiple perspectives. This proved useful in workshop three when the audio-recorder did not record. Audio recording and video recording of the workshops using two different operators produced differing perspectives and offset the limitations of a single recording from a single interpretation (Goldman-Segall, 1998). The different capacities of each recording device provided different attributes to the data. In addition, the two recording devices were particularly useful during small group activity time, as there were multiple concurrent activities creating multiple sites for data collection. By positioning the devices in different places, different data were collected. Unfortunately, this also meant that some data were not recorded for the full duration of all of the activities. With the study investigating my practice and its relation to young children's active citizenship, a digital audio recorder microphone was attached to me to maximise recording of the storytelling and dialogue of the activities that I facilitated. The video recorder was handheld by a videographer cognisant with the aim and objectives of the research. A videographer recorded the storytelling workshops so that I was able to participate fully in the workshops. The videographer remained stationary during the storytelling and moved between the subsequent activities to capture sections of dialogue and action. Video recordings of whole events are recommended in research (DuFon, 2002), as having a recording of parts of an event can make it difficult to assess the appropriateness of a comment, question, or response. This pointed to the need to provide careful instructions to the videographer. However, it proved difficult to impart useful directions whilst engaging with the children, as children's responses significant to the research question often appeared unexpectedly and/or at multiple sites at the same time. Collectively, the audio and video recordings produced 37 hours of data: 19 hours of video recordings and 18 hours of audio recordings. There was one more hour of video footage as the children's stories in workshop 13 were video and not audio recorded.

At the start of the first storytelling workshop, the teacher and I introduced the videographer, her purpose and then invited the children to engage in the storytelling workshops and forget the presence of the videographer in the room. The videographer was also briefed on minimising intrusive effects of the presence of a camera in the classroom. In research, Asch (1992) recommended that a videographer not manipulate the setting, the participants, or participant comments. DuFon (2002) reiterated this caution, identifying the intrusion of another body into the research context as one of the disadvantages of using a videographer. On the basis of these recommendations, care was taken to reduce the effect of intrusion. Workshop five was audio-recorded only, to observe if this made a difference to the participation for some of the more reserved children. No distinguishing difference was noted, so the workshops continued to be both video and audio recorded.

Transcripts of the video and audio recordings of these workshops produced data to explain what happened in the study. The data provided evidence of my learning as a storytelling teacher. Data also provided evidence of the influence of my actions in the learning of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. In this way, data from the storytelling workshops generated evidence of possibilities for young children's active citizenship provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling.

#### *4.4.3 Follow-up Conversations with Teacher*

One to three days after each storytelling workshop, I facilitated and audio-recorded a conversation with the teacher. We had conversations rather than interviews, for I sought rich detailed data to map the learning as opposed to precise data that aligned with predetermined codes that fully structured interviews elicit (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Sample conversation starters included:

1. What were your thoughts and reflections on the story?
2. What were the significant moments for you at the last workshop?
3. What do you think is important to follow-through with, in the next story?

After commencing with a starter question to initiate the conversation, further questions were asked in response to the responses of the teacher. Often I asked questions regarding moments in the workshops that I read as significant to the research questions, such as "What did you think when ... said ...?" Ideas for subsequent workshops were also discussed in these conversations. Building a positive and comfortable relationship with the teacher was a primary concern in these conversations so that all factors affecting the study could be discussed openly. To Fontana and Frey (2003), researchers facilitate relationships by connecting with the cultural context, understanding the language and culture of the participants, presenting one's self in a way that sets the tone for the research, gaining trust, and establishing rapport. To cultivate a positive relationship with the teacher the conversations took place in a familiar space, which allowed her to feel comfortable and in control. Our weekly face-to-face conversations and email messaging built a positive and comfortable relationship that grew stronger over time as trust and rapport were established. These conversations created openings for the teacher to debrief about issues related to the school context. This space for debriefing was important for building trust and rapport, and for understanding the cultural context of the study site.

Follow-up conversations provided an opportunity for the teacher and me to reflect collaboratively on the previous workshop and consider suggestions for future workshops. They contributed to the reflexivity of the project, as points in our conversations arose where our own biases, values, and assumptions impacted on the direction of the study. My reflections on these conversations informed the crafting of subsequent stories and facilitation of workshops. Data from these interviews were used as evidence to explain what shaped my practice, as discussed in Chapter 5, and in the analysis of possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

#### *4.4.4 Follow-up Conversations with Children*

Follow-up conversations were conducted with five to six self-nominated children, one to three days after each storytelling workshop. These conversations were facilitated to acknowledge that children have the right to engage, and are capable of engaging in research conversations with adults, as advocated by authors on children's rights (e.g., Archard, 1993; Franklin, 1995; Freeman, 1996; Scott, 2000). According to Scott (2000), to honour children's rights, children have the right to choose whether or not to participate and the topic needs to be of interest to the children. Taking this recommendation into account and attending to ethical research practice, all children were invited to participate in the group interview each week. Often more than six children wanted to participate, so records were kept of the interviewees to ensure equitable participation among the class members across the duration of the study.

A natural unstructured format was selected for the group interviews because of the capacity to produce data that were "cumulative and elaborative" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 705), as the children's comments built upon one another. The data recorded from these interview conversations documented children's evolving ideas about social justice as they responded to the comments of others. The evolving nature of the conversations as different children built on each other's ideas was an advantage of a group conversation as opposed to individual ones. However, as Stringer (2004) observed, ideas can also bounce off in a direction away from the research topic in group interviews. This did occur at times, and if the conversation was irrelevant, I asked another question about the story to bring the conversation back to the topic. Efforts were also made to provide space for each child to contribute to the interview by asking questions of individual children.

A conversational approach was used based on consideration of the issues of how children are conceptualised in research, adult to child power relations, and reflexivity in research with children (Christensen & James, 2008). Through a conversation format, children can be agentic, with scope to take control of the pace and direction of the conversation (Myall, 2008). In addition, Myall found conversations particularly suitable when interviewing young children, as children responded to this context positively, listening and supporting the contributions of each other. A conversation format was applied in this study to nurture positive and comfortable relationships with the children, to share their thoughts and feelings on the stories. The children were more familiar with each other than they were with me. As Myall (2008) found, children can help with the social presentation of their peers by explaining to the researcher reasons why a child may have difficulty participating. For this reason, Myall claimed that group conversations with children provide space for children to showcase their collectivity. A group of children can work to reduce adult power and cultivate a climate of research with children rather than on children.

These follow-up conversations were an open space for the children to comment further on the story told earlier that week in a way that was meaningful to them. The following lists some of the questions that I used to begin the conversations or bring the focus back to the story.

1. Tell me what you remember about the story.
2. What concerned you most about the story?
3. Did the story make you think about anything or remind you of something?
4. Is there something that you want to do after hearing the story?
5. Have you talked to anyone about the story? What did you tell them? What did they say?

Once children were talking about the story, I responded to the content of their comments by seeking further clarification or explanation of their thinking. This responsive approach to interviewing created space to respond and follow children's tangential and diverse ways of meaning-making with regard to the stories.

In conclusion, the follow-up conversations with the children provided an opportunity for the children to share further thoughts on the story told that week in a conversational manner. The children were seen as capable of contributing to research conversations. The group conversational approach enabled rapport to be built and the children's thoughts on the stories to accumulate and be elaborated. This produced useful data on learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

#### *4.4.5 Written Communications*

The teacher and I frequently communicated via email each week as a means of continuing the reflections and planning that commenced in the weekly interviews. Emailing allowed both of us the flexibility to read messages in our own convenient time; in addition it automatically produced electronic data. Further to this, letters of communication between the class and outside sources relevant to plans for citizenship participation were also collected as data. Data from these written communications were analysed to identify influences in a practice of social justice storytelling and in possibilities for young children as active citizens.

#### *4.4.6 Reflective Journal*

Throughout the study I maintained a handwritten journal, documenting my reflections on the workshops, discussions with supervisors, and critical friends, along with links to theories and literature. After each workshop I also recorded reflections in *Microsoft Word*<sup>TM</sup> documents before viewing the video recording and transcribing cursorily. More detailed reflections were recorded at the end of each cluster. These reflections guided amendments to my practice and steered the direction of the study. Many action researchers (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009; Stringer, 2004; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) claim that journaling is a core data source for documenting the reflective component of action research. Reflective documentation kept

accounts of my learning as is recommended in a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006).

In summary, data collection drew from five different sources: the storytelling workshops, debriefing interviews with the teacher, follow-up conversations with children, written communications, and personal reflections. The different sources generated data from multiple perspectives for investigating a social justice storytelling practice and possibilities for young children's active citizenship. How data were analysed is discussed in the next section.

#### 4.5 Analysis

In accordance with action research methodology, analysis occurred during data collection through the recursive cycles of plan, act, and reflect as well as after data collection. Analysis sought to generate evidence to test and support claims to knowledge with regard to influences in my learning of social justice storytelling and possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Drawing on a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead and McNiff, 2006) and other action researchers (Dick, 1993; MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009) the following processes were applied to generate evidence. Identification of learning in my practice of social justice storytelling and in possibilities for young children's active citizenship involved:

1. Monitoring my and the children's learning and action.
2. Transcribing and organising data.
3. Reading data for evidence.
4. Identifying themes.
5. Interpreting data through links with theory and literature.

Although there was interconnection between my practice and possibilities for young children's active citizenship, they were analysed as separate entities. Figure 4.1 provides a diagram of the analytical processes and the research questions each process sought to address. To investigate social justice storytelling as pedagogy that enables young children's active citizenship practice, my practice as a storytelling teacher was monitored. Findings were sought to these questions:

- 1 a) What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children's participation as active citizens?
- 1 b) How can adults and children work together to enable young children's active citizenship participation?

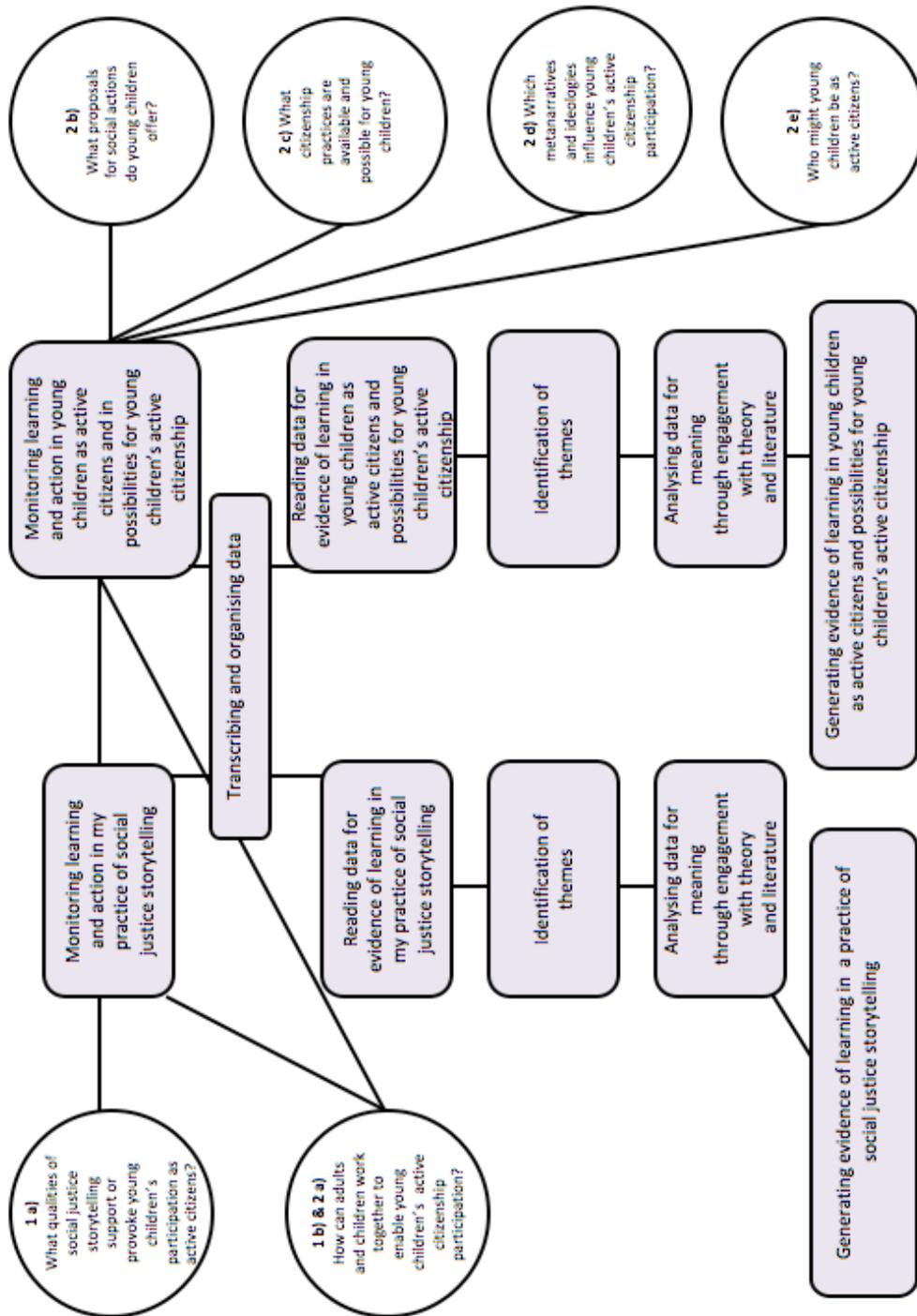


Figure 4.1. Relationships between analytical processes and research subquestions.

To explore what young children's active citizenship might be as provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling, learning was monitored in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Findings were sought to these questions:

- 2 a) How can adults and children work together to enable young children's active citizenship?
- 2 b) What proposals for social actions do young children offer?
- 2 c) What citizenship practices are available and possible for young children?
- 2 d) Which metanarratives and ideologies influence young children's active citizenship?
- 2 e) Who might young children be as active citizens?

The following details the processes applied in chronological order. First, processes applied to monitor learning and action in practice (4.5.1) are discussed. Second, the process of transcribing and organising the data is explained (4.5.2). Third, processes of reading data for evidence are described (4.5.3). Fourth, the identification of themes is explained as a means of identifying significant elements of the research inquiry, reducing data, and determining direction for more detailed analysis (4.5.4). Fifth, interpretation of data by linking with theory and literature is detailed (4.5.5). Collectively, these processes generate evidence of learning in my practice of social justice storytelling to children, in young children as active citizens, and in possibilities for young children as active citizenship: the articulation of this thesis and the creation of living educational theories (4.5.6).

#### *4.5.1 Monitoring Learning and Action*

My learning and actions were monitored through reflective cycles of plan, act, and reflect. I reflected both in and on my practice as a storyteller and the content of the stories, then planned for new stories and amended acts in my practice with the aim of provoking possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Reflection in my practice was shaped by endeavours to live my values. I recognised moments in which I contradicted these values and sought ways to further support agency, multiplicity, interconnectivity, responsiveness, and practice.

The shaping of each story was informed by interpretations of what the children saw as significant in the previous story. Significance was interpreted based on the suggestion by Stephens (1992) that narrative consists of three interlocked components: story, discourse, and significance. Significance is derived from interpretations of the story and the discourse. Story is the primary reading for sense. Discourse, according to Stephens, is what he later referred to with McCallum (Stephens & McCallum, 1998) as register, that is, the way the ideology of the narrator or teller comes through into the story (as discussed in 3.2). I selected and crafted stories based on my interpretation of the significance of each story. The children's reflections on the stories were interpreted as indicators of what they saw as the significance of the story as shaped by the sense

they made of the story and my ideology that transpired in my telling of the story. This suggestion of Stephens (1992) for interpreting narratives enabled a way to read differences in what I read as the significance, compared with what the children saw as the significance, of the story.

The interpretation of what I read as significance in the stories and what the children read as significance was one specific framework that was applied to monitor learning. Generally, monitoring learning involved documentation of actions, reflections and notes on the significance or importance of the learning. The processes of transcribing and organising data are described in the next section (4.5.2).

#### *4.5.2 Transcribing and Organising Data*

After completing the workshops, I became intimately familiar with the data by transcribing the many hours of video and audio recordings. For each storytelling workshop I transcribed the video footage first, then listened to the audio-recordings and transcribed additional data that was not in the video footage.

The greatest struggle with the recordings and transcribing was sourcing technology and techniques that would make the children's voices audible. Audibility was compromised for a number of reasons, which included technical faults with recording devices, soft voices, others talking nearby, background noise from the Prep class, and noise from machinery during maintenance work at the school.

Each workshop was coded by its week number and date, such as W1 16/07/2007. The interviews were coded with the week number and date along with the code TC for teacher conversation (e.g., W1 TC 18/07/2007), CC children's conversation (e.g., W1 CC 18/07/2007), and TAI for teacher aide interview (e.g., W13 TAI 27/11/2007). Although the transcripts of both video and audio recordings provided detail of words spoken, there was so much more that was communicated or expressed that was missed in creating textual representations. To describe some of these details further codes were devised. Table 4.1 provides a legend of these codes.

Data were sorted into entries for each week (1 to 13), which included the workshop plan, reflections on the initial viewing of the video recording, the transcript of the workshop, the transcript of the conversation with the teacher, and the transcript of the group conversation with the children. In some weeks additional related data, such as photos of children's participation in activities and/or emails with teachers or experts in relation to the content of the story being explored, were included. My journal was handwritten and so was not placed into electronic folders with all the other data documents. Appendix A provides a table of dates and codes of each data collection process (e.g., storytelling workshops, interviews with teacher, and follow-up conversations with children) and those who participated. The title of the story told at each workshop is also noted. Systematic organisation of the data was necessary to manage such large volumes of data in preparation for data analysis.

Table 4.1. Transcript codes.

Code	Meaning
FC	Few children
MC	Many children
UN	Unidentified child
/	Speaker interrupted
...	Irrelevant data edited
CAPITALS	Spoken with a loud or strong emphasis
<i>(italics)</i>	Descriptions of speaker's actions
—	Words that were unable to be deciphered
[ ]	Researcher's correction to child's error with word choice or grammar to support meaning-making
( )	Explicit metacommunication signals to other players when engaged in group storytelling

#### 4.5.3 Reading Data for Evidence

During and after transcription, the data were read to identify issues relevant to social justice storytelling as a means of provoking possibilities for young children's active citizenship. According to Whitehead and McNiff (2006), this process involves sifting through the data and looking for meanings. Moments of critical questioning and reflection of my practice in relation to my research values were recognised as sites of potential learning in my practice. Evidence of possibilities for young children's active citizenship was shaped by literature on communitarian citizenship, education for social change, and democracy in education as discussed in Chapter 2, and the theory of action (Arendt, 1958/1998) discussed in 3.3.

Analytical memos (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009; Creswell, 2005) were recorded using the comments feature of *Microsoft Word*<sup>TM</sup> on each of the documents. These memos were short phrases of ideas and hunches that occurred to me as I read the data. These memos signaled possible evidence of learning in my practice, and in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Memos also noted recurring themes in comments and actions that indicated evidence of the influence of my practice of social justice storytelling on children's actions that was not representative of citizenship literature. According to Creswell (2005), the process of reading the data for evidence and memoing ideas produces a general sense of the data.

#### 4.5.4 Identifying Themes

After reading the data for evidence, the transcripts were reviewed again to reduce the data by identifying commonalities in the analytical memos. Common key terms in analytical memos

were grouped together to identify themes in my learning in practice, and in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. According to Creswell (2005), "themes are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea" (p. 243). I recognised recurring patterns in the questions I asked, which led to the identification of themes. Noting repeated ideas in memos and grouping together ideas with similar meaning identified themes of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The frequency of entries that indicated each theme was calculated and Table 4.2 (in section 4.8.1) provides a summary of the major themes identified. Key participants were identified through the frequency of their comments and noted in analytical memos of key themes. Table 4.3 (in section 4.8.2) provides a summary.

#### *4.5.5 Interpreting Data by Linking with Theory and Literature*

High frequency themes signalled data that warranted detailed analysis for evidence of learning through engagement with theory and literature which, according to Dick (1993), widens the dialectic and strengthens the research rigour. As Dick suggested, existing literature was applied and new literature sought to confirm or disprove what the data were suggesting. This search for additional literature enabled me to form tentative ideas in order to draw conclusions with more confidence. Relating data to theory and literature created a process of what Winter (1998) referred to as "dialectical analysis" (p. 67) through contemplation, speculation, and placing the data in wider contexts.

Data were used to explain the importance of the frequencies of themes in relation to the research subquestions. To explain their importance in my learning in practice, I used stories as metaphors and explained influences in my learning through engagement with theory and literature. Themed evidence of learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship was analysed for meaning by identifying indicators of metanarratives that influence young children's active citizenship. Narratives in particular were explored as influences on children's comments and actions, based on an understanding that children make sense of the world through story (Dyson & Genishi, 1994; Saxby, 1994). Well-known story themes were identified along with metanarratives of children and citizenship as possible influences on children's comments and actions. Themed evidence of learning in young children as active citizens was analysed by reading the children's comments and initiated actions as stories of who the children were as active citizens. This approach to analysis was based on Arendt's (1958/1998) suggestion that initiated action and its accompanied speech reveals who an agent is. Attention to actions that young children initiated in response to social justice issues offered scope to make visible: a) what concerned the children, b) what they considered to be just or fair remedies to redress injustices, c) how they acted, and d) possible influences on their ideas and inspiration for action. Examination of initiated actions provided greater understanding of children's agency in citizenship by identifying the ways that children chose to be active citizens. Interpretation of the themes through

contemplation with theory and literature clarified influences on my learning in practice, and in possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

#### *4.5.6 Generating Evidence*

The articulation of this thesis is the generation of evidence of learning in my practice, and in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. To form this thesis, in accordance with a living educational theory approach (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) data were selected that carried meaning to justify my provisional claim to realising my research values of agency, interconnectivity, responsiveness, multiplicity and practice. Explanations were constructed of influences in my learning and judgments made on the quality of my practice in terms of my values to form living educational theories. The following section explains further endeavours employed to address quality.

### 4.6 Quality

There is considerable debate about measuring the quality of research (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Those who support a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (e.g., McNiff, 2007; Spiro, 2008; Sullivan, 2006; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) claim that practitioner-researchers are capable of articulating their own standards of judgment, that is, the values of the researcher are living standards of practice. In Chapter 3, my ontological, epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical values of agency, multiplicity, interconnectivity, responsiveness, and practice were explained. These values guided my practice, analysis, and writing and are proposed as standards of judgement for quality. The following two sections provide further details on how I addressed rigour (4.6.1) and validity (4.6.2).

#### *4.6.1 Rigour*

The rigour of living educational theory approach to practitioner research is evident in application of the principles of reflexive critique and theory-practice transformation as espoused by Winter (1989). The core ideas of this approach are critical reflection of the place of the practitioner-researcher in the research, and that practice can create theory. Well-considered and consistent attention to these principles and ideas establish and maintain rigour. Critical reflections of my practice along with critiques of the workshops by the teacher and critiques of the stories by the children informed amendments to my practice. These reflections provided multiple perspectives from the teacher, different children, and me, so that individual biases or assumptions intersected with points of view from others presenting evidence of rigorous research.

Throughout data collection and analysis, action was taken to address four characteristics of rigour that MacNaughton and Hughes (2009) collated from the work of several action researchers (Branigan, 2003; Coghlan & Brannick, 2004; Dick, 1999). These characteristics include: a) data collection through several diverse methods, b) analysis from several perspectives, c) explicit values, and d) systematic enactment of the action research cycle.

In this study, data were collected through several diverse methods from different sources (see 4.4). Data were analysed from multiple perspectives: the three theoretical foci, literature, and values. This enabled different readings of the data to be presented. Research values were stated explicitly and reflected upon throughout the thesis. Finally, I engaged in the systematic processes of planning, acting, and reflecting on a weekly basis around the weekly storytelling workshops. The detailed explanations of these processes in this thesis collectively address these four characteristics of rigour through multiple perspectives and systematic approaches.

#### *4.6.2 Validity and Trustworthiness*

In this study validity was seen as establishing the trustworthiness of a claim to knowledge (MacNaughton & Hughes, 2009; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). This action research understanding of validity involves a rational process that seeks to establish authority of the scholarship and reduce bias (Whitehead & McNiff). Authority of the scholarship was addressed through the practice of inquiry being my own and accounts given of ongoing critical reflection of my practice cultivating change and learning in my practice. Bias was reduced by gathering critiques of the workshops and stories from the teacher and children to cultivate dialectics. Through these practices, trustworthiness of the research findings can be claimed.

Trustworthiness can also be established through procedures that attain dependability, confirmability, credibility, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability or reliability of the study can be claimed through the detailed articulation of the research design, including the research question, methodology, data collection, and data analysis. Confirmability or the certainty of the research can be claimed through the systems that were established to code, categorise, and store the data. Credibility or believability of the study can be claimed, as Stringer (1999) suggested, through prolonged engagement with participants, multiple data sources, and participant debriefing. These factors contribute detailed accounts of the study from multiple perspectives which aid belief in the findings of research. Through investigation of a highly contextualised and subjective account, a living educational theory approach to practitioner research does not claim transferability or generalisability. Investigation of my practice of storytelling cannot be replicated. The nature of the data is very specific to the context of the study. However, it is hoped that there are elements of this thesis that readers find applicable to a range of storytelling, educational, and community practices. In summary, detailed explanations of the research design, data systems, data collection, and critical reflection of the study were provided in an endeavour to establish the validity and trustworthiness of the study.

#### 4.7 Research Ethics

Ethical approval was provided for this study with a Level 2 clearance for human research (QUT Human Research Ethics Committee). Approval to conduct research in a Queensland state school was also obtained via the school principal prior to the commencement of the research, in

accordance with the guidelines of the state education authority. Appropriate research methodology and pedagogical practices were implemented throughout the study to ensure the physical, emotional, and psychological safety of the children. Research protocols were followed in accordance with the relevant guide at the time: *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans* (1999).<sup>3</sup> This guide included processes and practices honouring the principles of integrity, respect for persons (and groups), beneficence and justice, and the practice of seeking informed and voluntary consent verbally and in written form from all participants in the project.

Written voluntary consent from the parents of participating children was gathered. In viewing consent as a process rather than a moment in time, I sought the children's verbal consent at the commencement of each storytelling workshop and for participation in each interview, and to share their stories at conferences and seminars. In honouring children's rights, as MacNaughton and Smith (2005) suggested, I provided frequent opportunities for the children to express their right to refuse participation and for their actions, words, and creations to be recorded. These regular checks conveyed respect for children's voluntary participation and their right to exit at any time. To address potential ethical dilemmas arising in discussions with the children, I saw myself as part of the children's lives, as recommended by Myall (2008) and Birbeck and Drummond (2007) in research with young children. I sought to build relationships of trust and mutual respect to uphold ethical imperatives of researching with children.

According to Alderson (2005), undertaking ethical research with children requires that the design incorporates children being treated as competent research participants from the early plans through to dissemination. On ending my research with the children, I shared initial findings with the children and their families through a presentation, of comments made by each child in relation to the research questions. In addition each child received a DVD recording of the story that they told in week 13 with a montage cover of what each child named as most precious to them. The naming of what was most precious was a workshop activity in week 13. These acts were an effort to share with the children elements that they contributed to the research and honour the value of their participation.

#### 4.8 Participants in the Study

This section (4.8) introduces the participants and research site. The participants in this study were children aged five to six years attending a Preparatory class, their teacher, and teacher aide.

Selection of a group of young children to participate in a social justice storytelling program involved circulating a brief about the study through early childhood professional

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<sup>3</sup> Since completion of data collection, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans* (1999) has been replaced with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* (2007).

networks. A number of early childhood teachers responded, yet geography and time impinged on their suitability. Some teachers in pre-Prep services expressed interest, though a Preparatory class was selected with the view that a study at a school site could offer wider scope for the consideration and application of the findings of the study. The group was selected on the basis that: a) the class was the youngest age group at school as the research focus was young children, b) the class teacher expressed interest and enthusiasm for participating in the project, and c) the site was a convenient location.

Purposeful sampling, as Creswell (2005) claimed, helped to support collaboration and obtain rich data for the project. In honouring the privacy of information in accordance with ethics guidelines, pseudonyms were used for all participants and the research site. The following provides details of the school and community (4.8.1), the teacher (4.8.2), the children (4.8.3), the teacher aide (4.8.4), and how collaboration with the participants was facilitated (4.8.5).

The Blue School is positioned within an inner suburb of the capital city of Queensland, Australia. The school has been in existence for more than 100 years, so its buildings are a mixture of vintages. The school catered for classes from Prep to year 7, with approximately 700 students enrolled. At the time, the Prep class that participated in the study shared a new building with another Prep class. The class spaces were divided by a shared teachers' office, storage room and open kitchen, which permitted noise travel between the two classes. There was a large verandah running the length of these classrooms, providing space for lockers and small group activities. The data collection phase occurred from July to November in 2007, which was the first year that the Prep year was offered state-wide, following a four-year trial period in selected schools. It was also the first year that this school provided a Prep program.

Data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2007a, 2007b) provides a picture of the socio-cultural context of the school's local community. Eighty-two percent of residents of this suburb are Australian born (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007b) as opposed to 74 percent of the population of the state capital, Brisbane (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007a). The top five religions identified are all Christian based (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007b). Forty-three percent of the population of the suburb are professionals or managers (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007b) as opposed to 32 percent of the Brisbane-wide population (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2007a). These statistics present a community profile of a mostly Christian-based population that has relatively low immigrant numbers and high employment status compared with the Brisbane population as a whole.

The teacher (the term she chose for her pseudonym) and I knew each other prior to the study. She is young, dynamic, and vibrant with a strong performing arts background, and at the time had eight years early childhood teaching experience. Because of her interest in performing arts, the teacher was readily supportive of my research proposal. At the time of data collection

she was one of three Prep teachers at the Blue School. It was her first year of teaching a Prep class but her second year of teaching at this school.

Prep L consisted of 20 children aged five to six years. In accordance with ethics and the principle of honouring children's rights, each child was invited to suggest his or her own pseudonym. The pseudonyms are David, Denmark, Declan, Charlie, Jules, Carl, Max, Patrick, Mat, Juliet, Liam, Molly, Fergie, Ella, Peter, Finlay, Ebony, Tony, Scott, and Nick. Cultural heritages that were represented in the class included Nepalese, Indian, Spanish, Sri Lankan, Papua New Guinean, Hong Kong Chinese, Danish and Anglo-Australian.

Prior to commencing data collection, I visited the teacher and the class at the Blue School on four occasions (2/05/2007; 28/05/2007; 14/06/2007; 19/06/2007) to build rapport and establish my role as a visiting storytelling teacher/ researcher. On the first visit the teacher and I explained that I would be visiting on a weekly basis in terms three and four to tell them stories, because I was interested in researching their responses to the stories. I did not define the stories as social justice, so as not to influence their interpretations and responses. The children were informed of the format of the workshops and the opportunity to provide feedback through the follow-up conversations. I told a different folktale on each of the first three visits. On the fourth visit a character from the last story was *hot-seated* (a dramatic convention where a teacher or student in role is interviewed by the rest of the class) to further build the children's questioning skills, as the teacher and I had observed that the children asked mostly fact-finding questions. The dramatic convention of hot seating was employed to cultivate critical thinking and questioning. This strategy was guided by the recommendation of Giroux (1983) that for civic participation in education, students need to be taught to critically question accepted practices. The intention of each of my visits was to form comfortable working relationships with the teacher and children.

A written summary of the study (see Appendix C) was distributed to the children's families with an invitation to attend an information session prior to school closure one afternoon. The parents that attended asked to be able to watch the workshops and to receive copies of the stories told each week. I was able to introduce myself as a storytelling teacher/researcher and explain the study to most other parents when they came to collect their children. It was at this meeting that consent forms were distributed and discussed.

The Teacher Aide had worked at the school part-time for many years. She supported the teacher in Prep L on Mondays, which was the day of the week that I mostly facilitated the workshops. Like the teacher, she was very supportive and interested in the study but had difficulty sourcing time to discuss the study with me due to her commitments to other classes. Teacher aide rostering and class allocation was complicated at the Blue School. For example, Prep L had a different teacher aide each day except Thursdays, on which no teacher aide worked in the class.

Based on the relational view of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006), the study was approached as a collaborative venture with the children, their teacher, and teacher aide. Each participant was respected as a valuable contributor, with feedback regularly sought through the critical discussions and conversations (and also via email with the teacher). Participants were seen as agentic in the research process, with their knowledge welcomed, shared, and used to guide the direction of the study. Participation was voluntary, yet it was invaluable to the study. Collaboration with each of these people cultivated rich learning regarding social justice and active citizenship.

#### 4.9 Thematic Analysis

In this section, key themes (4.9.1) and key participants (4.9.2) identified through thematic analysis are described at this point in the thesis to explain what steered the selection of data samples for detailed analysis in the subsequent analysis chapters. Key themes were identified through reading data as a step in the process of deducing findings to the research question. Findings from thematic analysis led to decisions to analyse in detail selected data samples that indicated meaning to the research question.

##### *4.9.1 Key Themes*

Readings of the data for findings of possibilities for young children's active citizenship identified recurring themes. The four most common themes were critical awareness, consideration of another, suggestions of social actions, and suggestions of retributive actions.

Critical awareness of unjust practices was defined as a key theme of possibilities for young children's active citizenship as influenced by critical pedagogues (Freire, 1974; Giroux, 1983, 2003; Greene, 1995), who claimed critical awareness to be an attribute of active citizenship. Examples of critical awareness included: a) making personal connections to experiences of injustice in stories, b) critical questioning of why antagonists acted unjustly in the stories, c) consideration of wider social issues and their relation to the injustice in the stories, d) posing 'what if', 'how come', and 'why' questions, e) critical reasoning of the intent of actions in the stories, and f) ability to explain the importance of a story.

Consideration of another and suggestions for social actions were identified in accordance with the aims and practice of education for social change (Freire, 1974; Giroux, 1983, 2003; Greene, 1995) and the theory of action (Arendt, 1958/1998) as a political conception of democracy (Biesta 2009, 2010). The identification of these two themes was also influenced by definitions of communitarian citizenship, which, according to Etzioni (1993) involves a commitment to collaborating with others through purposeful group action to create a cohesive and just society. Evidence that was suggestive of consideration for another was read as children's commitment to their community members. The children's suggestions of social actions were read as purposeful acts with the intent of creating a cohesive and just society. Examples of

children's consideration of another included: a) explicitly seeking ideas from peers on an issue, b) offering to tell peers about stories that they missed, c) making explicit advocacy statements for peers (e.g., "Ebony doesn't have any"), and d) comforting gestures (e.g., pat on shoulder) when a peer was distressed. Examples of children's suggestions of social actions included: a) offering ideas for resources to aid those who experience injustice, and b) offering strategies to aid those who experience injustice.

The children's suggestions of retributive actions were also seen as attempts to create a just society, although perhaps not as cohesive or considerate to others. Examples of suggestions of retributive actions included: a) arresting/trapping/jailing antagonists, b) inflicting physical harm on antagonists, c) stealing what the antagonist treasures, and d) recreating the same experience of injustice for the antagonist as the antagonist inflicted. Suggestions made for retributive action were seen as an anomaly to the literature in that they did not fit with definitions of communitarian citizenship. Yet the high occurrence of suggestions of retributive actions signalled importance.

Suggestions of alternative story endings to some of the stories I told were also identified as a recurring theme, though were not as frequent as the other four themes. Like suggestions of retributive actions, this theme was not representative of literature on children's citizenship. On each of the occasions this theme was noted a child provided a positive, happy-ever-after story ending to counter the loss and suffering in the story told. Examples of suggestions of alternative story endings included: a) countering told stories with non-violent story endings, and b) countering suffering in stories with escape plans for those who experienced injustice. These acts could be interpreted in many ways, such as acts of resistance by seeking to change the direction of the story, thus providing critical feedback to my practice of social justice storytelling. In terms of citizenship, they could be viewed as displays of the democratic right to freedom of speech (Dahl, 2003; Mills, 1869/1999). The children expressed alternative endings to stories freely. The suggestion of happy-ever-after endings could also be read as idealism, which Kielburger (1998) identified as providing vision for acts of children's citizenship. In these ways, suggestions of alternative story endings were suggestive of indicators of children's citizenship and although their occurrence was not high in frequency, they raised many questions warranting further investigation in analysis of my practice of social justice storytelling and exploration of what young children's active citizenship might be.

In recognition of the frequent recurrence of these themes, the analytical memos of each transcript were scanned for entries that noted the recurring themes. Frequencies were tallied for each week of data. Through the process of tallying frequency, some weeks presented more evidence of particular themes. Table 4.2 provides a summary of the frequency of these themes, per data week. The high frequency of suggestions of social actions (35 entries) and retributive actions (27 entries) pointed to these two areas as particularly important to the inquiry. Based on

importance through high frequency, samples of these themes were subjected to more detailed analysis to gain further understandings of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. To begin with, the prevalence of these themes for some children more than others was identified.

*Table 4.2.* Summary of frequency of major themes in children's citizenship practice per data week.

Themes	Critical awareness	Consideration for another	Suggestions of social actions	Suggestions of retributive actions	Suggestions of alternative story endings
<b>Data codes</b>	W1 16/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W3 30/07/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W4 CC 9/08/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W7 3/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W9 19/09/2007 W9 TC 19/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W11 15/10/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W12 23/10/2007 W12 TC24/10/2007 (TOTAL = 2)	W4 6/08/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W5 21/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W6 CC 31/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W7 CC 5/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W 8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W9 19/09/2007 (TOTAL = 6) W 11 15/10/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W11 TC17/10/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W12 23/10/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W13 5/11/2007 (TOTAL = 2)	W2 23/07/2007 (TOTAL = 5) W3 30/07/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 4) W6 CC 31/08/2007 (TOTAL = 5) W7 3/09/2007 (TOTAL = 14) W 8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 5)	W2 CC 25/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W4 6/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W4 CC 9/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W5 21/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W7 3/09/2007 (TOTAL = 12) W7 CC 5/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W10 10/10/2007 (TOTAL = 5) W13 2/11/2007 (TOTAL = 1)	W1 16/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W1 CC 18/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W2 23/07/2007 (TOTAL = 2)  W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W6 CC 31/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1)
<b>Total entries</b>	16	21	35	27	6

#### 4.9.2 Key Participants

In the process of identifying themes, the same participants were consistently noted as displaying evidence relevant to the key themes of possibilities (that is, capabilities and capacities) for young children's active citizenship. On noticing comments by the same children that were representative of the key themes, records for each of these children were created of dates, transcripts, line number/s, and themes. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the tally of entries according to the five key themes mapped across six key child participants. Six children were identified as key participants from the class of 20, because more than five of their comments were noted as representative of the key themes. These six children were Juliet, Denmark, Max, Molly, Declan, and Ella. They were all regular and active contributors to the storytelling workshops and interviews, providing rich data to the research inquiry. This may be seen as only telling the stories of the more vocal children whilst ignoring the stories of citizenship from the less frequent contributors. The rest of the class did engage actively in the workshops and efforts were made to listen to their views in respect for the right to freedom of expression, yet their level of motivation to express opinions on social justice and active citizenship was not as strong as that displayed by Juliet, Denmark, Max, Molly, Declan, and Ella. Juliet, Denmark, Max, Molly, Declan, and Ella regularly demonstrated an ability to theorise and hypothesise the meaning of

actions and events in the stories and made suggestions of social actions in response to the stories, therefore displaying capabilities and capacities for young children’s active citizenship.

*Table 4.3.* Frequency of contributions by key participants according to identified themes in children’s citizenship practice.

<b>Key participants</b>	<b>Critical awareness</b>	<b>Consideration for another</b>	<b>Suggestions of social actions</b>	<b>Suggestions of retribution</b>	<b>Suggestions of alternative story endings</b>
<b>Juliet</b>	9	4	2	3	
<b>Max</b>			6	3	4
<b>Molly</b>	3	2	5	2	
<b>Declan</b>	1	1	3	3	
<b>Denmark</b>		5	6	4	
<b>Ella</b>		2	7	1	2

As these six children contributed most of the themed comments and actions, data samples from them feature most frequently in the analysis chapters. The following descriptions of each of these children attempt to paint a portrait of their character in the study. These portraits are offered to provide more detail of how these children participated beyond names and numbers.

Juliet was 6 years of age at the time of the study, positioning her as one of the oldest in the class. She was a focused and keen listener in the storytelling workshops. When she missed hearing a story due to absence, Juliet asked to interview a character from that story as a way of obtaining a glimpse into the story. As evident in Table 4.3, Juliet displayed by far the most evidence of critical awareness. She was consistently an enthusiastic and articulate contributor to the critical discussions after each story, providing clear explanations and theories as to why certain events occurred in stories and hypothesising the thinking behind the actions of the characters. Often Juliet readily pointed out connections in a story that other children had not identified, or if the children’s responses were similar. When questions were posed that asked the children to imagine beyond the content of the story, Juliet could predict the possible consequences, offering plausible answers. She was quite capable of defining abstract concepts, such as: “They are free” for a definition of “freedom”; then contrasting this with the analogy of a pet as “They are locked up” (Lines 140-147 W1 16/07/2007). Juliet could identify symbolic meanings in metaphoric stories, such as “the freedom bird was trying to say something” (Line 270 W1 16/07/2007). She was one of the most frequent participants in the follow-up conversations. Her preferred choice during activity time in the workshops was drawing about the stories.

Denmark was also 6 years of age and a confident contributor to the critical discussions. He proposed theories as to the meaning of concepts and made links between story content and events in his life, e.g., “I’ve got two little sisters and Mummy and Daddy listen to them” (Lines

352 W4 6/08/2007). In these critical discussions, he was able to follow the thread of the conversation and extend a previous comment or offer counter arguments to those being proposed. He also said quite quirky comments such as “It really hurts my brain” (Line 369 W1 16/07/2007) when thinking of an answer. Efforts to problem-solve the story dilemmas were the dominant feature of his comments (Lines 160-162 W 1 CC 18/07/2007; Lines 483-485 W 2 23/07/2007; Lines 125, 150, 179-181, 305-306, 311-313 W3 31/07/2007). Denmark participated in a wide range of activities across the duration of the program, which included interviewing a character from a story, an anti-poaching campaign discussion, listing ways to arrest carpet factory owners who forced young children to work, a meeting on child labour, drawing, and block-building. In many of these activities he included and collaborated with others keenly.

Max was 5 years of age at the time. He listened to the stories very seriously and readily questioned the content of the stories, not only for clarification but from a moralistic perspective (“Why do he kill animals to get food? No! Only walk to the shops, get food, then come home.” Lines 80-81 W1 16/07/2007). His family were devout Hindus and vegetarians. Max suggested alternative story endings to the stories on four noted occasions, replacing violent acts with non-violent acts (Lines 80-81W1 16/07/2007; Line 214 W2 23/07/2007). He also suggested frequent social actions, such as “We could buy some more sheep for the farmers here” (Line 655 W2 23/07/2007); “They would call the cops and tell them (*deep voice*): ‘No kids are working in any factory’ ” (Lines 533-534 W6 30/08/2007), and “Tell some people what is happening in the country we live in” (Lines 589-590 W6 30/08/2007). He seemed to really enjoy the opportunity to discuss the stories and consistently requested to attend the follow-up conversations. At activity time he chose diversely, frequently opting to be an active contributor to group tasks (e.g., anti-poaching campaign discussion, listing ways to arrest carpet factory owners who forced young children to work, building and painting a school, and listing ways to play with just two blocks).

Molly was also 5 years of age. She identified keenly with the injustices in the stories (e.g., “’cos his brother bossed him around and no one listened to him” Line 303 W4 6/08/2007). This meant that at times that Molly appeared to emotionally connect with the stories. Her frequent contributions to the critical discussions and follow-up conversations explained causal links between actions and events, and connections between story content and personal experiences. During the storytelling, Molly was also a regular active participant, volunteering to role play characters in the stories. Her most frequent choice during the activity time was drawing.

Declan, like Juliet and Denmark, was 6 years of age. In the critical discussions he frequently asked clarifying questions and made links between story content and personal experiences (e.g., “I’ve got a little brother and we listen to him and my Mum and Dad listen to me as well” Line 333-334 W4 6/08/08). He often thought through the story dilemmas and offered feasible solutions (e.g., planting fig seeds). Declan frequently contributed heartfelt connections, appreciating the points of hope in the stories. He participated in a diverse range of

activities, such as the silence game, making a papier-mache Coxen's fig-parrot, miniature worlds, drawing, building, and painting a model school.

Ella was 5 years of age and became a more verbal contributor in clusters two and three of the study. She was the highest contributor of comments that suggested social actions. One of her suggestions was that the class seek help from their buddy class (Line 574 W6 30/08/2007), which instigated a joint class project on the issues of child labour in Pakistan. Ella suggested alternative story endings to the stories of child labour, placing the protagonist where she was free from suffering. Ella's alternative stories were usually plans of escape for the protagonist (Lines 657-660 W6 30/08/2007; Lines 12-13 W6 CC 31/08/2007). Ella most frequently chose drawing during activity time. She shared a close friendship with Molly and offered to tell Molly the story that she missed when she was absent one week.

Each of these six children made suggestions of social actions and retributive actions. In Table 4.3 it is evident that these two themes were noted in the comments of each of the key participants, whereas some children did not make comments that reflected critical awareness, consideration of another, or suggestions of alternative story endings. The prominence of these two themes suggested that they were important to this inquiry into possibilities for young children's active citizenship as provoked through social justice storytelling.

The relationship between themes and the story told are analysed in detail in Chapter 5 through critique of my practice of social justice storytelling in action. More detailed analysis of children's suggestions of social actions is discussed in Chapter 6 in terms of how discourses and metanarratives shape young children's active citizenship participation. Chapter 7 provides a more detailed analysis of children's consideration for another, suggestions of social actions, and suggestions of retributive actions. The importance of these three themes are explored through application of Arendt's theory of action (1958/1998) and the ideas of metanarratives and counternarratives to describe who young children might as citizens. In this way the identification of themes and key participants steered the direction of further analysis to obtain detailed findings to the research subquestions.

#### 4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the methodology of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research. The multiple data sources were described. Application of a living educational theory approach to practitioner research involved critical reflection, both during data collection and after, to generate explanations of learning in my practice, and in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Transcribing and organising data, identifying themes, and analysing them for meaning through engagement with theory and literature generated evidence of learning. Explanations of learning in my practice were judged according to the core values of the study. These methodological procedures and approaches formed systems to address quality.

The research participants and site were introduced, and the key themes and participants identified, to set the scene for the subsequent analysis chapters.

## CHAPTER 5: EMERGENT MOTIFS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

### STORYTELLING AS PEDAGOGY

Influences and learning in my practice are explained in this chapter. The story of what I did and why I did it as a storyteller is told by responding to questions, quandaries, and puzzlements that arose in my practice in relation to objective one and its two subquestions (see Figure 1.1), and endeavours to live my values of agency, multiplicity, responsiveness, interconnectivity, and practice. My practice was steered by my reflections, the children's responses, the teacher's responses, literature, and theory. Explanations are provided of how these informed my decisions for stories and amendments to my practice at the time of data collection. This chapter presents the 'what happened' component of this action research study. Reference to the timetable of dates of storytelling workshops, follow-up interviews, and titles of stories told (Appendix A) may guide reading of this chapter.

The shaping of my storytelling practice as a means to provoke and promote young children's active citizenship is the focus of this chapter. Analyses of possibilities (as capabilities and capacities) for young children's active citizenship are discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. In this chapter accounts are provided of what I did, questioned and changed as acts to motivate young children to express opinions and suggest actions to redress injustices in the stories told. This not a neat success story. The tension between uncertainty and the search for and resistance of certainty was constantly present.

During data collection it was a case of rapidly planning, acting, and reflecting. I made decisions during my interactions with the children or in the week between each workshop. Between storytelling workshops I reflected on the previous workshop to consider where to go next. After finalising data collection, more detailed reflections of my practice were possible. I analysed my reflections to identify what shaped my practice. The recurrence of four main questions that determined the form and direction of my storytelling practice was recognised. These questions were:

1. Which new story will extend children's understanding of social justice issues?
2. What do the stories set in motion?
3. How can children's agency be welcomed and cultivated?
4. What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children's participation as active citizens? (research subquestion 1 a)

These four questions were what drove and shaped my storytelling practice in pursuit of answers to the research subquestions.

By repeatedly asking these questions attention was brought to different elements in my practice of social justice storytelling. The elements included customising stories to audience, responsiveness and interconnectivity of stories, agency of audience, and cultivating audience

sympathy. Upon identification of these elements I cross-checked data across the duration of the study to verify that they were important recurring themes in my practice. To name and explain these elements, I sought terminology synonymous with storytelling. For this reason I use the term *motifs*, which are understood in storytelling as recurring themes with underlying meanings (MacDonald, 1982). For example, the motif of the wolf is present in many fairy tales and is understood as “a force of destruction endangering the status quo” (Zipes, 1983, p. 74). I have named these four motifs *story-tailoring*, *spinning and weaving*, *freedom of expression*, and *walk in the shoes of another*. They feature as motifs in stories and capture the essence of the elements identified by repeatedly asking the above four questions to guide the planning of stories and amending my practice. These motifs are metaphors for how I crafted the stories, and facilitated the workshops as endeavours to provoke and promote young children’s active citizenship.

In this chapter the motifs of story-tailoring (5.1), spinning and weaving (5.2), freedom of expression (5.3), and *walk in the shoes of another* (5.4) are explained by discussing how my learning influenced my actions. Each motif is introduced with a folktale that portrays the metaphoric ideas and purpose of the motif. These stories were selected for their capacity to bring deeper layers of knowing (Benjamin, 1955/1999; Bruner, 1986) to the motif and make visible underlying meanings through imagery and symbolism as aesthetic encounters.

. What happened in the study in relation to the motif is then described with data examples from Cluster-one and Cluster-two of the study that portray how the motif shaped my storytelling practice, reflections, and engagement with relevant literature.

My explanations of these motifs include reflections of my storytelling practice in relation to my research values. There were moments when I contradicted my values and explanations are offered of influences on my practice, with accounts of amendments made to address contradiction and bring my values into practice. Through the structure of describing the function of these motifs in my practice, this chapter provides an account of my learning as a process of evolution and creation. My storytelling practice evolved by responding to the children, the teacher, literature, theory, and my reflections. Explanations of how these four motifs functioned together are then provided through an account of Cluster-three (5.5). The chapter concludes with a summary of the learning achieved through close reflection of my practice of social justice storytelling with a Prep class (5.6).

### 5.1 Motif One: Story-tailoring

The ideas that informed naming the motif of story-tailoring drew from the legacy of the union of two crafts: tailoring and storytelling. Tailoring has a long tradition in pre-industrial societies and a strong presence in folktales. Haase (2008) suggested that the practice of tailors travelling from house to house and village to village seeking trade shaped them to be carriers of news, gossip, and stories. He proposed that because of these work conditions, tailors became storytellers and came to feature in folktales as everyday heroes, characters, to which storytellers and their

listeners could relate readily. *The Tailor* (Schimmel, 2002) is one such story that offers insight to the union of the two crafts.

### 5.1.1 *The Tailor*

*In a village there once lived a poor tailor. He had made overcoats for many people, but he had never made one for himself, though an overcoat was the one thing he wanted. He never had enough money to buy material and set it aside for himself without making something to sell. But he saved and saved, bit by bit, and at last he had saved enough. He bought cloth and cut it carefully so as not to waste any. He sewed up the coat, and it fitted him perfectly. He was proud of that coat. He wore it whenever he was the least bit cold. He wore it until it was all worn out.*

*At least he thought it was all worn out, but then he looked closely and could see that there was just enough material left to make a jacket. So he cut up the coat and made a jacket. It fitted just as well as the coat had, and he could wear it even more often. He wore it till it was all worn out.*

*At least he thought it was all worn out, but he looked again and could see there was still enough good material to make a vest. So he cut up the jacket and sewed a vest. He tried it on. He looked most distinguished in that vest. He wore it every single day. He wore it until it was all worn out.*

*At least he thought it was all worn out, but when he looked it over carefully he saw some places here and there that were not worn. So he cut them out, sewed them together and made a cap. He tried it on, and it looked just right. He wore that cap outdoors and in, until it was all worn out.*

*At least he thought it was all worn out, but when he looked he saw that there was just enough to make a button. So he cut up the cap and made a button. It was a good button. He wore it every day until it was all worn out.*

*At least he thought it was all worn out, but when he looked closely he saw that there was just enough left of the button to make a story, so he made a story out of it and I just told it to you. (Schimmel, 2002)*

*The Tailor* metaphorically explains a motif of story-tailoring and acknowledges it as a practice of shaping stories for audiences. The tailor crafts from what is still good material to create a new wearable item. There are remnants of the first garment (the coat) in each subsequent item. The real art in the craft is knowing which parts to keep and which to discard, and what to fashion it into. This is the metaphor and meaning that I sought to portray in the idea of a motif of story-tailoring.

The following sections explain learning in my practice of social justice storytelling in relation to the motif of story-tailoring. First, the process of tailoring stories is explained (5.1.2). Ownership of the tailoring of stories is then explored (5.1.3). Next, ideas of listening closely to

the audience and tailoring to their requirements are discussed (5.1.4). The final section discusses closing reflections on the motif of story-tailoring (5.1.5).

### 5.1.2 Tailoring Stories

Stories were tailored to the Prep class in my practice of storytelling in this study. Although each story was a story in its own right, there were remnants of previous stories within each subsequent story. Traces of previous stories remained in the shaping and crafting of subsequent stories. This section explains how I tailored stories by providing an account of how the first three stories told in the study were selected and crafted. The telling and crafting of stories are also critiqued by applying ideas regarding narrative interpretation from Stephens (1992) and Stephens and McCallum (1998). From Stephens (1992) the idea that the sense of a story and the embedded discourses (perspectives or ideologies) of a narrative are interpreted for significance was used to compare what I read as significance and what the children read as significance of the stories that I told. From Stephens and McCallum (1998) I applied the suggestion of examining the register in which a story is told, that is, the field (situation or subject matter), tenor (relationships), and modality (focalisation and perspective) to bring to the fore how my intentions influenced my storytelling.

The study began with an idea for the first story only. I purposefully did not have a predetermined list of stories that I wanted to share with the class. Instead, I wanted each subsequent story to be responsive to the meaning-making of the children. This was an endeavour to bring into practice my value of responsiveness through a commitment to listening to comments and actions from the children and the teacher in the workshops and interviews. What I heard the children and teacher say about each story guided the planning of the following week's story and workshop. I read the children's comments to identify what they interpreted as the significance of the story, following the ideas of Stephens (1992) on interpreting narrative. My intention was to make meaningful links for the children. This practice was informed by advice from Roche (1999) that adults should listen seriously to children on what is important to them, and what concerns them, and explore fully their various suggestions for courses of action to support their participation as citizens.

The first story I told, *The Freedom Bird* (see Appendix D), was selected from my existing repertoire because of my previous experience with it being entertaining whilst provoking many layers of meaning on freedom, tolerance, and survival. In this story, the song of the freedom bird annoys a hunter, so he employs numerous methods such as bagging, chopping, burying and drowning to stop the song, yet the bird continues to sing. It is a humorous story that engages young audiences readily as they laugh and participate in the "na-na-nana-na" and raspberry blowing. I read the significance of this story as the injustice of being silenced and the enduring pursuit of freedom.

To demonstrate how story-tailoring occurred in my practice, examples of comments and questions from the children and teacher are presented, followed by my reflections and what determined my selection and crafting of the next story. I performed *The Freedom Bird* story with aggressive enactments of the hunter bagging, chopping, burying, and drowning the bird. My focalisation was on the brutality of the attacks on the bird by the hunter to make clear the juxtaposition between pursuit of freedom and enduring persecution. As soon as space for critical discussion of the story was opened, Max was the first to raise his arm to signal his urgent desire to comment on the story.

Max: The hunter, only if he had a car—so no car—or walk. He could walk to the shops to get food. Why do he kill animals to get food? No, only walk to the shops, get food, then come home—like that.

Louise: You think he should be going to the shops instead of killing animals. Is that what you are saying? Are you concerned about him killing the animals?

Max: No I am sad.

Louise: You're sad?

Max: I'm afraid if someone chase the kangaroo when I am friends with the kangaroo.

Teacher: So you don't like the idea, Max, of animals being killed?

(Max nodded his head)

...

Max: Because if we have no animals it will be s-o-o quiet. A little bit noise\_\_\_If people kill them and tie them down and so we have to help to save the animals. (Lines 79-109 W1 16/07/2007)

Max's comments indicate a strong objection to animals being hurt, especially through his question "Why do we kill animals to get food?" and declaration that "We have to help save the animals". I have told this story to many groups of children across a range of ages, yet no child had questioned the practice of hunting for food before. Nor had I experienced this degree of vehement resistance to the hunter's actions. The above transcript tells only half the story; intonation, facial expressions and gestures expressed with volume Max's passion on the issue of animals being killed.

Teacher: It was interesting for Max from his point of view because culturally from his culture they would perceive meat and things being hunted and targeted and used in a carnivore kind of way as being very disrespectful. In fact his initial comment really honed in on that, so I thought for him what he experiences is completely different to what a lot of other children would experience. (Lines 25-31 W1 TI 18/07/2007)

The teacher also recognised how Max's initial comment (Lines 79-81 W1 16/07/2007) expressed his outrage at the hunter's actions. When I debriefed with the videographer after the workshop she also commented on Max's strong opposition to hunting. To some degree I even felt that he was outraged that I was telling such a story. As a pacifist it certainly presented a contradiction to my values if the story was understood in a literal manner. Other children in this study were also alarmed about the hunter harming the bird. Perhaps Max set the tone for responses. However, it was the deeper layers of meaning that I had hoped the children would engage with, yet only Juliet voiced comments about tolerance and freedom. For example, when we were asking the children to define freedom, Juliet offered the opposing view of a caged pet to support understanding of freedom (Lines 140-149 W1 16/07/2007).

Later, Juliette asked to interrupt a conversation on revenge to propose this theory:

Juliet: The freedom bird was trying to say something. (Line 270 W1 16/07/2007)

This was suggestive of an understanding of one of the themes of the story: the right to freedom of expression. I saw freedom of expression as a major theme of the story, one that I knew could evoke understandings of people's experiences of being silenced and persecuted for expressing their culture. The first time I heard this story, the storyteller (Donna Jacobs Sife) dedicated it to the people of Tibet. In my reflections about which story to tell next, I considered telling a biographical story from the Tibetan people in an effort to support the children's understanding of the experience of being silenced.

Data from the follow-up conversation with six children two days later provoked me to consider otherwise. The children replied to my question: What concerned you most about the story? with the following comments:

Max: When you kill two animals, like kangaroo, it is very sad. (Line 2 W1 CC 18/07/2007)

Juliet: That the hunter killed the bird and it was the freedom bird. (Line 4 W1 CC 18/07/2007)

David: When the hunter put the bird wrapped with paper with the rock on top of it and put it in the ocean. (Lines 6-7 W1 CC 18/07/2007)

Later Max asked, "Who protects the animals from the hunters?" (Line 16 W1 CC 18/07/2007). I explained recovery programs for endangered animals, and Denmark suggested a plan for creating an enclosure for the birds to protect them, with no gate so the hunters could not get in. Their attention was on stopping the practice of hunting. To many of the children the significance (Stephens, 1992) of the story seemed to be the injustice of hunting. To support their understanding of justice, I felt I needed to follow where their attention was focused, not impose what I thought was the significance of the story, that being the enduring pursuit of freedom in the face of persistent persecution. The children's disapproval of cruel hunting was what I heard and was the inspiration for the next story. I noted this in my reflective journal after the interview:

“Strong feelings (esp.) from Max—regarding the cruelty of the hunter—concern about killing animals. (Source story that presents a respectful approach to hunting to present alternative point of view of storytelling” Reflective journal 18/07/2007).

My decision to present an alternative view, in this case to hunting, was guided by the concept of counternarratives (Lankshear & Peters, 1996) and counter stories (Solarzano & Yosso, 2001, 2002) and the suggestion to modify the register through shifts in the field, tenor, and/or modality (Stephens & McCallum, 1998). I chose to retain the theme of hunting, crafting a story with another perspective that differed from the selfish cruelty that was portrayed in *The Freedom Bird*. With regard for the emerging motif of story-tailoring, I looked at what was not worn out and still had presence to shape the next story.

The next story was the Cherokee story *Awi Usdi* (see Appendix E), which embedded Cherokee teachings of hunting only at times of necessity. Hunting in this story countered the way hunting was presented in *The Freedom Bird*. In *Awi Usdi*, hunting was conducted in a respectful manner by seeking permission from Awi Usdi (Little Deer) before killing and then after killing to honour the spirit of the animal by seeking forgiveness.

I told the *Awi Usdi* story in gentle tones, a vastly different register to that in which I had performed *The Freedom Bird*. My focalisation was on respecting a story from an Indigenous culture. I paid careful attention to not overdramatise or manipulate the text to limit portrayal of the story through my lenses. This was an endeavour to attend to the cautions of Stephens and McCallum (1998) that western audiences misread stories from other cultures and apply western values of truth and justice.

Yet when I proposed imagining and role playing a ceremony to consolidate the children’s understanding of what this hunting practice may have looked like, Max responded with:

Max: I’m not going hunting. I want to stay home and do some games or invite some friends over. (Lines 115-116 W2 23/07/07)

Max: I don’t want to kill animals. I want to go to the shop and get food and go home. (Lines 208-209 W2 23/07/07)

Max: We could get seeds, then they grow then we eat them. (Line 213 W2 23/07/2007)

At the time I interpreted Max’s statements as strong opposition to hunting, even though this time I had presented it through the Cherokee world view of respectful practice. The shift in focalisation of my telling had not made a difference to Max’s reaction; he did not want anything to do with hunting. The field (or subject matter) of hunting was common to both stories. Max’s attention was on hunting, my efforts to present a different perspective did not seem to alter his resistance to stories of hunting. Max’s first comment was in response to my questions:

Louise: How might we do the ceremony that Awi Usdi suggested? Imagine we are all hunters. What respectful caring way would we kill an animal?" (Lines 113-114 W2 23/07/07)

Max refuted this by declaring that he was not going hunting. Other children seemed willing to discuss hunting but with parameters. Juliet adopted the Cherokee teachings in the story *Awi Usdi* and stated:

Juliet: If I wanted to go hunting I would ask the animals first. (Line 121 W2 23/07/07)

Peter appeared to surmise that hunting was not condoned and stated:

Peter: When I go hunting I only look at the animals. (Line 118 W2 23/07/07)

In the follow-up conversation two days later, the children went on to talk about ways of stopping the hunters.

Juliet: When you are stopping hunters you might ask them in a very caring way: "I love having animals, so stop killing them". (Lines 79-80 W2 CC 25/07/07)

Declan: Put up signs. (Line 134 W2 CC 25/07/07)

Declan: I could tell my friends. (Line 136 CC W2 25/07/07)

I listened to the children's energy and interest in stopping hunters, in particular Max's resistance to hunting in the storytelling workshop on *Awi Usdi*, and considered Hart's plea (1997) for adults to support children's participation in matters that interest children within their local environment. According to Hart, a local focus enables children to be involved directly, and in turn deepens their understanding and connection with the issue. This informed my decision to source a story that could motivate citizenship participation in their local environment. I realised that if I wanted to present storytelling that provoked meaningful local social action, a story based on an animal that needed support in our local environment was required. This was a conscious decision to build real world connections.

I sourced information on a critically endangered bird in South East Queensland. A bird was chosen, as opposed to any other animal, to follow the children's attention to the vulnerability of a bird first aroused in *The Freedom Bird* story. At the next follow-up conversation with the teacher I shared these reflections to seek her opinion.

Louise: I really want to shift the focus away from hunting. I feel like I'm putting poor Max through hell. I'm a vegetarian as well and we keep talking about killing animals.

Teacher: Yeah.

Louise: So I'd like to move away from that.

Teacher: But DEFINITELY caring for animals. (Lines 32-37 W2 TI 23/07/2007)

...

Louise: I was trying to find something local. There is this bird that is endangered here in South East Queensland: the Coxen's fig-parrot.

Teacher: Oh definitely! (Lines 47-49 W2 TI 23/07/2007)

Acknowledgment of the children's concern for animals through their desire to stop the hunting of them was what led me to seek out a critically endangered bird in South East Queensland. The teacher affirmed this idea, so I crafted the next story on the plight of the endangered Coxen's fig-parrots, using the theme of caring for animals to tailor the next story.

### 5.1.3 *Is There One Teller (Tailor) or Many?*

With enthusiasm for supporting the idea a story on Coxen's fig-parrots, the teacher shared information about these parrots prior to my storytelling of *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* (see Appendix F). This equipped the children with knowledge of the story content.

When I told the story, Juliet and Denmark frequently interjected with predictions of what I would say next in the story. Although what they said flowed with the story, I felt that my storytelling was interrupted and perhaps had not been adequately engaging to keep them transfixed on my telling. I questioned why the "listener's hush" (Kuyvenhoven, 2005, p. 34) had lost its spellbinding capacity.

The teacher explained that she believed that the children needed prior knowledge to engage with the stories, and this was why she had shared information on the Coxen's fig-parrot before my storytelling of *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* (TC 31/7/2007). This was an uneasy moment. I noted these thoughts in my journal.

But I want the story to be responded to on its own—purely. That it should be able to inspire thought, comment, action on its own. Is this a reflection on my storytelling? A need to make it more engaging—perhaps interject dramatic conventions into my storytelling.

(Reflective journal 31/7/2007)

I then clarified with the teacher that for the purposes of the study I wanted the stories to speak on their own, to examine the capacity of storytelling (alone) to provoke critical awareness and social action with her class of young children. The teacher understood and agreed to not provide knowledge on story topics prior to the storytelling workshops.

Because of this uneasy moment I looked back over the transcript of *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* storytelling. I realised that the children completed my sentences. Perhaps they did this from their position of knowing and so could pre-empt what would happen in the story. Rather than viewing their contributions as interfering with the story I considered whether it could be viewed as co-storytelling. The children certainly seemed to be engaged, for they contributed actively during the story and in the critical discussion and dramatisation after the story. I reconsidered my position of storyteller and questioned who controls the story. In preparing to tell a new story I read the story over and over, not to memorise it but to familiarise

myself with the plot, descriptions of settings and characters, and key pieces of dialogue. When telling a story my mission was to relay all of this.

On reflection of my thought processes when telling a story, I recognised that I saw myself as the keeper of the story until I completed the telling, then the children could do with the story what they pleased. As Benjamin (1955/1999) explained, it is up to the listener to interpret the story the way she understands it. Yet in telling *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot*, some of the children seemed to seek ownership and control of the story before it was completed. This was an example of the unexpected ways children choose to be agentic alerted to by Gallacher and Gallagher (2008). This experience, my reflections and engagement with literature provoked a broadening of awareness in my practice of storytelling that I needed to be more responsive to the responses of the children during the telling. The act of tailoring requires careful attention to crafting a garment that fits the customer's body. The creation of a final garment that the owner of the garment brings to life when worn is a responsive process of fitting and refitting by being attentive to the customer's requirements. Through reflection of the experience of telling *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot*, I came to realise that the same applies to a practice of story-tailoring; a storyteller needs to shape and fit a story by responding to the listeners both before and during the storytelling.

Another point of consideration in the above account is the collective nature of storytelling as acknowledged by Benjamin (1955/1999). In my telling of *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot*, I saw my role as telling the story and the children's role as listening and making comments or undertaking actions at my request. Juliette and Denmark's comments during the telling of *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* alerted me to be more mindful that I was a member of a learning community, where meaning-making occurred between teller and listeners through collaboration.

Following this experience I endeavoured to be more open to active listeners, who too could steer the direction of the story. It was not an easy task to loosen control of the storytelling that was the intervention of the study. Yet I valued agency and wanted to welcome and support children as agentic beings, and it was the children's meaning-making through their comments and actions to social justice issues that I sought as data for this study. For all stories after *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* story I created spaces for the children to be active listeners in order to nurture a collective climate. I did this by inviting children's suggestions (both verbal and role played) at points in the stories that allowed for children's embellishments and embedding of these into the stories. This is not to say that I had not included children actively in my storytelling prior to this, as I have advocated strongly for this for many years in my storytelling workshops and conference presentations. What this experience taught me was to be more open to children's contributions as tellers. Yes, I still had considerable control as the visiting storyteller, but I had been awakened to loosen it and shift questioning away from:

How can I convey meaning-making about social justice issues through storytelling for young children?

to

How can we explore social justice issues through storytelling together? What do the children want to do with the ideas in the stories? Where do they want to take them?

On close examination of my practice against my values, particularly agency and responsiveness, I was alerted to contradiction. I had struggled with being responsive and adaptive to the unexpectedness of some children's expression of agency through their verbal contributions to the story. Acknowledgment of these points of contradiction in my practice informed a subsequent amendment to my storytelling practice. Although I was already listening to the children's responses to the stories in the discussions and interviews to inform the tailoring of the next story, I endeavoured to listen and observe the children's responses *during* the storytelling, to be responsive to children's collaborations. The experience of children's frequent contributions to my telling of *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* provoked broader awareness of the loosening of control, and flexibility to be more responsive and adaptive to support children's participation.

Enthusiastic contributions from the children to *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* stirred me to be more welcoming of the contributions of the children as possibilities for story diversions. However this was not easy, as it involved relinquishing some of the control I held over the stories I told, and at times I struggled with this. The experience provoked learning in my practice of social justice storytelling, as I became more aware and attentive to being open to listening to others whilst telling stories. Such learning involved a greater interchange of listening and responding that held potential to inspire growth, creation, and an expansion of awareness for myself and others.

#### *5.1.4 Further Listening and Tailoring*

In my practice of listening to the children's responses to each story to interpret significance and guide the selection of the next story, I heard in the children's comments about *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* a common theme of human disregard for animal wellbeing. Some of these comments included:

Juliet: They weren't thinking about the animals. Like if they were chopping down the trees with a bird in it—they've got to be careful of other animals. (Lines 176-177 W3 30/07/07)

Max: What happens to the animals, if they be friends. Be kind to the lorikeet and everything else. So why are they killing them? (Lines 199-200)

Molly: The people were not thinking about the things that live in the trees. (Line 7 W3 CI 31/07/07)

Their common concern of human practices that harm animals steered my selection and crafting of the next story.

I selected the West African story *Two Brothers* (see Appendix G) next to provide a counter perspective to human and animal relationships. I told of how the great achievements of a mouse inspired the younger brother to leave his village and live with animals in the forest to learn from them. This story was selected to provide an alternative relation between humans and animals. The previous stories presented humans violating animals, whereas in this story the younger brother looked to the animals for wisdom. I read the significance of this story to be that some humans respect and learn from animals.

To welcome more opportunities for the children to contribute I asked more questions throughout the telling of *Two Brothers*, and I embedded their responses into the story. At one point I asked the children to make suggestions of what the younger brother learnt from the animals. In addition to verbalising their suggestions, they were invited to act out their suggested animal survival practices.

Later in the story I incorporated the dramatic convention of gossip mill, with the children in role as villagers sharing their thoughts on the younger brother. This provided an opportunity for all children to contribute to the story. In this convention, each person talks to another about their thoughts of an event or a character, in this case the younger brother. These actions worked to create a more responsive environment where children participated in the story as villagers, through suggestions of animal survival practices, and their thoughts on the younger brother. Although these may be viewed as small contributions to the whole story, they marked a beginning step in relinquishing some control of the story and welcoming invited contributions from the children into the story.

I read the significance of *Two Brothers* as human respect for animals. However, this was not significant for the children. The children's comments in the critical discussion of the story focused on another justice issue. Declan began the critical discussion by asking why the younger brother left the village, to which David and then Molly replied:

David: 'Cos he wanted to learn more about animals. (Line 300 W4 6/08/2007)

Molly: 'Cos his brother bossed him around and no one listened to him. (Line 303 W4 6/08/2007)

It was this experience of the younger brother not being listened to that then dominated the remainder of the discussion to which I initiated further discussion in the children's follow-up conversation three days later.

Louise: Molly you said you told your Mum.

Molly: Yeah and my brother.

Louise: What did you think was important to tell them about the story?

Molly: No one listened to the little brother—'cos they thought of him as a beggar.(Lines 18-22 W4 CC 9/08/2007)

Many of the children related to the experience of the younger brother of not being listened to, relating their own experiences or experiences of their younger sibling of not being listened to by older people. Later, Fergie, a quiet girl aged 5 years, spoke with sadness about how the younger brother was bossed around by the older brother. Attentive to the possibility of her emotive connection with the story being triggered by a personal connection to this experience, I asked her if this reminded her of something. She replied that just like the older brother in the story her older sister forced her to do household chores.

Identification of young people not being listened to as a common significance of the story signalled that this was an issue that the children wanted to explore further. The concept of not being listened to had been introduced in the story *The Freedom Bird* and was acknowledged by Juliet in her comment “The freedom bird was trying to say something” (Line 270 W1 16/07/2007). The theme of being silenced had been lying dormant for weeks in that it was not discussed explicitly. The time was now ripe for the tailoring of a story of young people’s experiences of being silenced using material that was present in the first story, just as the tailor’s cap was made out of material that had been present in the tailor’s coat.

#### *5.1.5 Closing Reflections on the Motif of Story-tailoring*

The motif of story-tailoring as a strategy in social justice storytelling was practised through acts of listening. My efforts to listen were somewhat like a tailor listening, measuring, and attending to the requests of the client to fashion garments that fit comfortably and offer new ways of being. It involved listening to the children’s comments but also measuring all their dimensions to craft stories that would fit their being. Sometimes the story fitted some children better than others. The recycling practice of tailoring in *The Tailor* resonated, as I saw that my practice of listening and noticing what stayed with the children (the remnants) was what I used to shape and craft the next story so that a part of the first story was in all of the stories. They were story themes (or threads) that remained present throughout the study. The remnants were at the core; they maintained the presence of the past. The parts that were no longer relevant were dropped along the way. The real skill in this recycling practice of tailoring was calculating which parts to cut off and which to retain. Stephens’ (1992) suggestion of interpreting stories for significance provided a way to guide this process. Though I was always uncertain. It was a calculated decision, but I never really knew if I kept the most relevant pieces and crafted the most suitable story to cultivate and build children’s understanding of social justice, because my story-tailoring travelled forward. Sideways comparisons of story-tailoring from different remnants did not occur. Story-tailoring as a motif brings attention to sustaining openness through careful listening and responsiveness. It is not about crafting the perfect story, but about inquiring with others through story.

Learning occurred in my practice of storytelling through a combined recognition of the motif of story-tailoring and attention to my research values. The practice of tailoring required me

to heighten my awareness of the need to welcome children's agency and be responsive to children's story contributions. The motif of story-tailoring provided aspirations of becoming a fine story-tailor, that is, one who skilfully assesses the requirements of the listeners to craft a story that responds seamlessly to the ideas, changing circumstances, and demands of listeners.

The *Two Brothers* was the last story I shared in the first cluster of this study, as the shift in attention from justice for animals to justice for people formed a clear demarcation for a new cluster. In my reflections at the end of Cluster-one, I questioned further whether I was really listening to what the children wanted me to or if I was listening to the parts that would create 'good fits'? Were the connections between the stories a reflection of serious or deep listening to children? Did the readings of significance in the children's responses to the stories support meaning-making of social justice issues and the complexities of humanity for children? I documented this quandary in my reflective journal at the time in this way:

Realising that the way workshops are going is not sitting well with me. I keep questioning is it really meaningful? Is it what children want or is it what I want? Are we doing activities for the sake of the predetermined structure? (Reflective journal 8/08/2007)

This quandary sparked two significant changes to my storytelling practice in the second cluster that brought to the fore my values of interconnectivity and agency. These two changes are presented as two motifs: spinning and weaving (5.2) and freedom of expression (5.3). Although these changes occurred concurrently the motif of spinning and weaving is presented first, which provides an account of my exploration of interconnectivity to support the children's ability to connect related issues, and consequently their meaning-making of justice and humanity. In the motif of freedom of expression, closer consideration of the inclusion and application of children's agency is investigated with regard to the children's participation in this study.

## 5.2 Motif Two: Spinning and Weaving

The motif of spinning and weaving has a long history in storytelling. In centuries gone by women gathered in small groups and spun yarn for garments in spinning rooms, which became social and cultural centres. To pass the time they exchanged tales of their lives and others. The stories they told were connected, just as they spun one long connected thread. Spinning is reflected in countless mythological and folkloric sources (Haase, 2008), and the most well-known in Euro-centric cultures is probably *Rumpelstiltskin*. I have selected the Greek story *The Child Who was Poor and Good*, to present the idea of the motif of spinning and weaving, as both the acts of spinning and weaving combine to create desired meaning.

### 5.2.1 *The Child Who was Poor and Good*

*Once there was a poor woman with four daughters. She worked long hard hours to earn only just enough money to feed them. Occasionally, dames who noticed her*

*plight would give her their worn-out garments. The poor woman fashioned the worn garment to fit her eldest daughter and with the remains she would cut it down to fit her second and third daughter, but there was nothing ever left for her youngest. She went about in just a ragged shirt both winter and summer.*

*One year, the winter was so bad that she told her mother, "Mother, I must leave this place and go and find another mother, who can make me a garment now and then. I shall die if I stay here any longer. I cannot go on with only this shirt to wear."*

*So she went on her way, walking and walking. Then she came across a spider spinning a web up and down and back and forth. The child halted and said, "Spider I will not break your web, I will go around", to which the spider replied, "Thank you my good child. What would you have me do for you in return? Why are you going around all unclad and barefoot?"*

*"I am going to find some cloth, so I can take it to my mother to make me a little garment, for I am cold."*

*"Go then," said the spider "and on your return, come this way again and tell me what I can fashion you."*

*Further along she came upon a little bird that had fallen out of its nest onto the road. She held it gently in her hands keeping it warm, and when a man walked past she asked him to place it back in its nest.*

*She walked on but came across a bramble bush. She tried to get past it but her shirt caught on its thorns and ripped it to shreds, so now she was naked. She fell down crying in despair. A lamb in a nearby field heard her sobs and asked, "What ails you child? Have you had a whipping?"*

*The child blurted in between sobs, "I was going to find a garment to keep me warm when the bramble bush ripped my shirt and now I have nothing to clothe me at all."*

*The lamb questioned the bramble bush, "Why did you do this? What is to become of her now?"*

*"Give me some of your wool and I will card it for her to take to her mother to make something warm out of," said the bramble bush. The lamb walked around the bramble and tufts of wool came off on its thorns. The child plucked it off and said, "Thank you, now I have something to give to my mother to spin and weave me a garment."*

*As she was walking along, she realised that her mother did not have time to spin and weave; this saddened her. She reached the foot of the tree where she had saved the young bird. The bird's mother called out to her, "Dear child how can I*

*thank you for saving my baby? What is that in your arms?” The child told the bird that it was wool that the lamb had given her and that she was taking it home for her mother to spin and weave. “Let me spin it for you,” said the bird. The bird took one end of the wool and flew up and back, spinning the thread and rolling it into a ball. The young girl thanked the bird and went on her way.*

*Then she reached the spider that then asked her, “Did you find anything to keep you warm?” The spider saw the ball of wool and immediately took an end of the wool and wove back and forth, as fine as any weaver. She then thanked the spider and walked home to her mother with the cloth, who was pleased to see her daughter and promptly sewed her a dress out of the woollen cloth. The young girl was now warmly clad. (Ragan, 1998)*

In this story, I appreciate how the characters (a lamb, a bramble, a bird, a spider, and a mother) collaborated to create what the young girl needed so desperately. The story acknowledges the qualities that each of these living things offers to make it possible to form a warm garment. There is interconnectivity between all elements of the story. The story does not continue in a linear format but doubles back on itself after the climax of the bramble bush, forming an intertwined loop of connections. Meaning is then shaped by the interconnectivity of the characters and the story structure. The following sections explain learning related to interconnectivity in my practice of social justice storytelling by exploring the interconnectivity of stories (5.2.2), how this aided identification of significance common to the first four stories (5.2.3), and links between social actions and stories (5.2.4). Closing reflections on the motif of spinning and weaving in my practice of social justice storytelling conclude this section (5.2.5).

### *5.2.2 The Interconnectivity of Stories*

To further understand the children’s meaning-making of the four stories that I had shared in Cluster-one and to critique whether my practice of tailoring stories was supporting children’s meaning-making of social justice, I began to play with interconnectivity, like spinning and weaving from a tangled thread. That is, I attempted to shape the messiness, confusion, and uncertainty of my story crafting thus far into a form that offered meaning. I mapped interconnections between the four stories already discussed based on my readings of significance and readings of what the children seemed to interpret as significant. Figure 5.1 provides a diagram of this mapping. Though the interconnecting lines in this figure and the subsequent figures in this chapter appear neat and regulated for ease of reading, the experience of the connections was sketchy, tangled, knotted and fuzzy.

This mapping foregrounded my value of interconnectivity and applied the strategy of webbing ideas used in the early childhood practice of emergent curriculum (Jones & Nimmo, 1994). The representation of interconnectivity to form a cluster of cohesiveness is why each cycle in this study is referred to as a cluster. What I read as the significance of each story is noted

in the circles, and what the children commonly read as significance is written on the line linking it to the next story. When I began this process of webbing connections between stories I was already aware of how story one related to story two, how story two related to story three, and how story three related to story four, as these links were determined through my practice of story-tailoring. The four stories are not presented in a chronological line but rather a square to portray connections between all four stories. This process also enabled identification of what I read as a common thread between all the stories: impact of human greed or selfishness on living things.

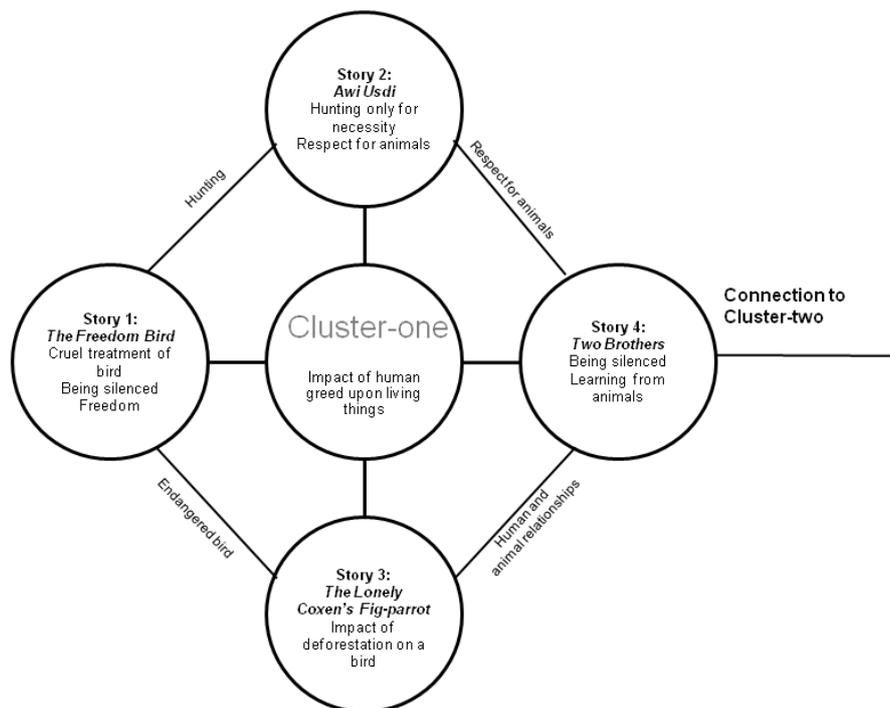


Figure 5.1. The interconnecting story themes of the four stories in cluster-one.

### 5.2.3 Identification of the Significance Common to the First Four Stories

In each of the stories, human actions driven by greed adversely affected living things. In *The Freedom Bird*, the hunter harmed the bird because he did not want to hear its song. The children noticed the unfairness of the hunter's action, expressed in comments by Juliet and Denmark.

Juliet: The freedom bird was trying to say something. (Line 270 W1 16/07/2007)

Denmark: It is not a good reason to kill a bird because its song goes like this nanana blahh blahh! (Lines 42-43 W1 CC 18/07/07)

Juliet and Denmark considered the desire of the hunter to silence the bird's song an invalid reason for killing the bird. *Awi Usdi* told of how the invention of the bow and arrow had increased killing of animals beyond what was necessary for their survival, and how the animals

(after a number of attempts) managed to reduce the Cherokee hunting practice to killing only what was necessary. At the time I read that the impact of hunting on animals troubled the children, as expressed through comments from Peter and Juliet.

Peter: When I go hunting I only look at the animals. (Line 118 W2 23/07/07)

Juliet: If I wanted to go hunting I would ask the animals first. (Line 121 W2 23/07/07)

In the third story, *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot*, the impact of human logging for housing drastically reduced the Coxen's fig-parrot population. The comments by Juliet below seemed to express an understanding of deforestation on the Coxen's fig-parrot population.

Juliet: They weren't thinking about the animals. Like if they were chopping down a tree with a bird in it. They've got to be careful of animals. (Lines 176-177 W3 30/07/07)

Then in the fourth story, *Two Brothers*, the greed of the older brother led him to own more than his younger brother and forced his younger brother to work all the time. The children noticed the unfairness of this and how it impacted upon the life and status of the younger brother.

Molly: His brother bossed him around and no one listened to him. (Line 303 W4 6/08/07)

Finlay: I think one brother should have [half] the money and the other brother should have the other half. (Lines 104-105 W4 CC 8/08/07)

By reflecting on what I saw as the significance of each story, human greed presented as the driving force behind the injustices in each story. This was not intended. Recognition of this common theme brought to the foreground my ideological thinking about justice as fair access to rights and resources and consideration of others in the process of sharing access making explicit the potential influence of my thinking on the children's meaning making of social justice.

In the section on story-tailoring, I provided an account of how I planned each subsequent story based on children's comments to the preceding story. However, by seeing the connections between readings of the significance of the stories, my action research journey was imagined as an interconnected process.

The realisation of connections between stories began to emerge in my discussion of the motif of story-tailoring as I identified a connection between the fourth story, *Two Brothers*, and the first story, *The Freedom Bird*, with regard to the experience of being silenced. The notion of interconnectivity beyond a linear sequence began to form. Mapping these connections made visible the commonalities between stories and issues that were explored.

The impact of human greed on living things continued to be the cause of the injustices in each of the stories told (see Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4). It provided a way to recognise the networking of connections across the study. Elements of the study were connected together, just as the lamb's wool was spun, woven, and tailored to form a woollen dress.

### 5.2.4 Mapping Actions Set in Motion

The mapping of connections also provided a way to plot the social actions that the stories set in motion. This resonated with my earlier shift of questioning to: What do the children want to do with the ideas in the stories? Where do they want to take them? These connections were plotted during data collection, through reflection of children’s responses to the stories. Figure 5.2 provides a visual representation of the social actions that were set in motion by particular stories. The social actions noted in Figure 5.2 are the focus of analysis in Chapter 6.

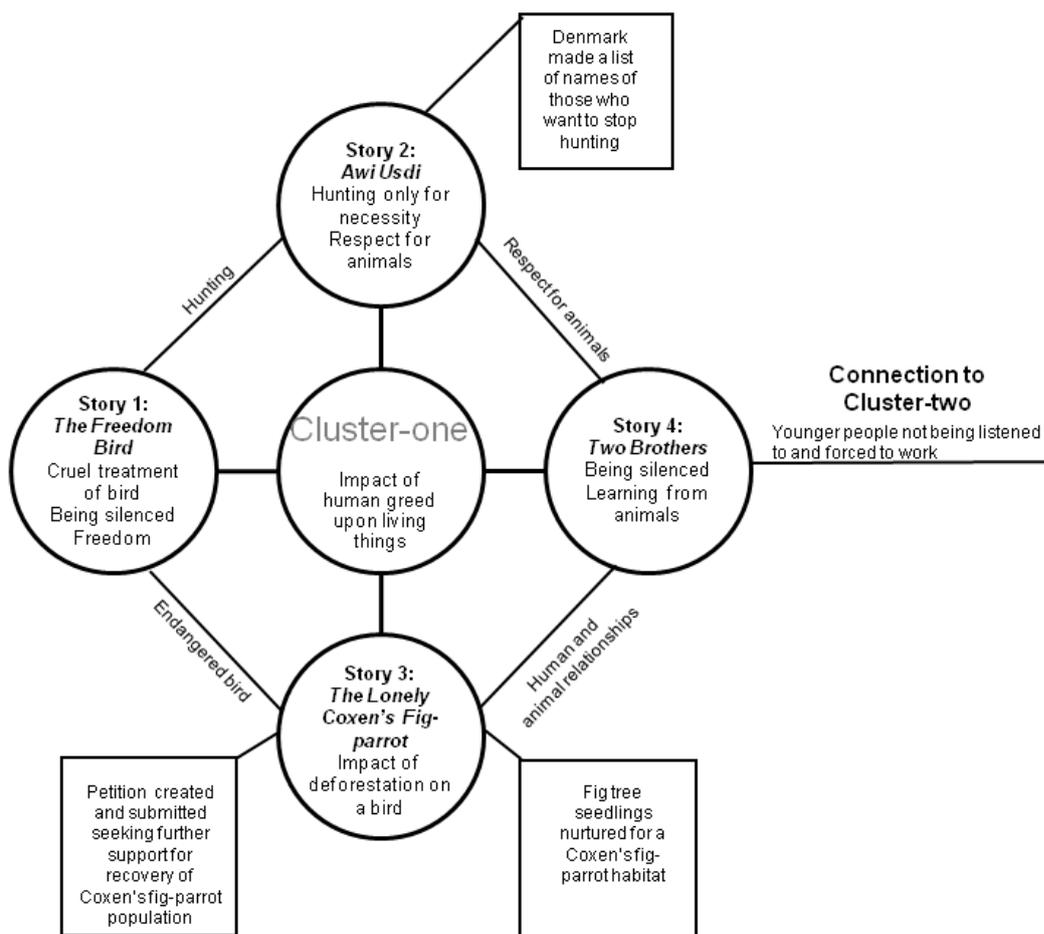


Figure 5.2. Cluster-one: The social actions the stories set in motion.

The process of mapping what the stories set in motion enlarged the scope and interconnectivity of the study. The mapping of where the children wanted to go with the stories enabled scope for children to contribute to the direction of the study. The welcoming of children’s influence on the direction of the study is evident in the formation of Cluster-two (see Figure 5.3). The attention in Cluster-one had grown to be the impact of hunting and deforestation as acts of human greed on animal populations. The story *Two Brothers* interrupted this, forming a shift in attention to young people’s experience of being silenced and forced to work. This had not been my intention, as I

had selected the story because it told of how a human respected animals as great teachers. This shift in attention formed a new cluster with a focus on unfair treatment of young people. Although a new cluster was formed, it was not completely disconnected from what had already been mapped. It was still connected to the legacy of cluster-one through the story *Two Brothers*.

This act of acknowledging and following what many of the children seemed to read as the significance of the stories was a conscious act to welcome children’s agency. If I had not listened to what aroused the interest of the children in the *Two Brothers* story and stayed with the theme of human relationships with animals (Figure 5.2), then I would have missed learning about concerns of young children as citizens. The children’s interest in and energy to explore an issue would have been missed. In addition, had the children’s interest in beginning something new been blocked then, as Arendt (1958/1998) claimed, their agency would have been denied. Acknowledging children’s readings of significance loosened adult control and led to welcomed contributions from children to steer the direction of the study, the aim of which was to support their meaning-making.

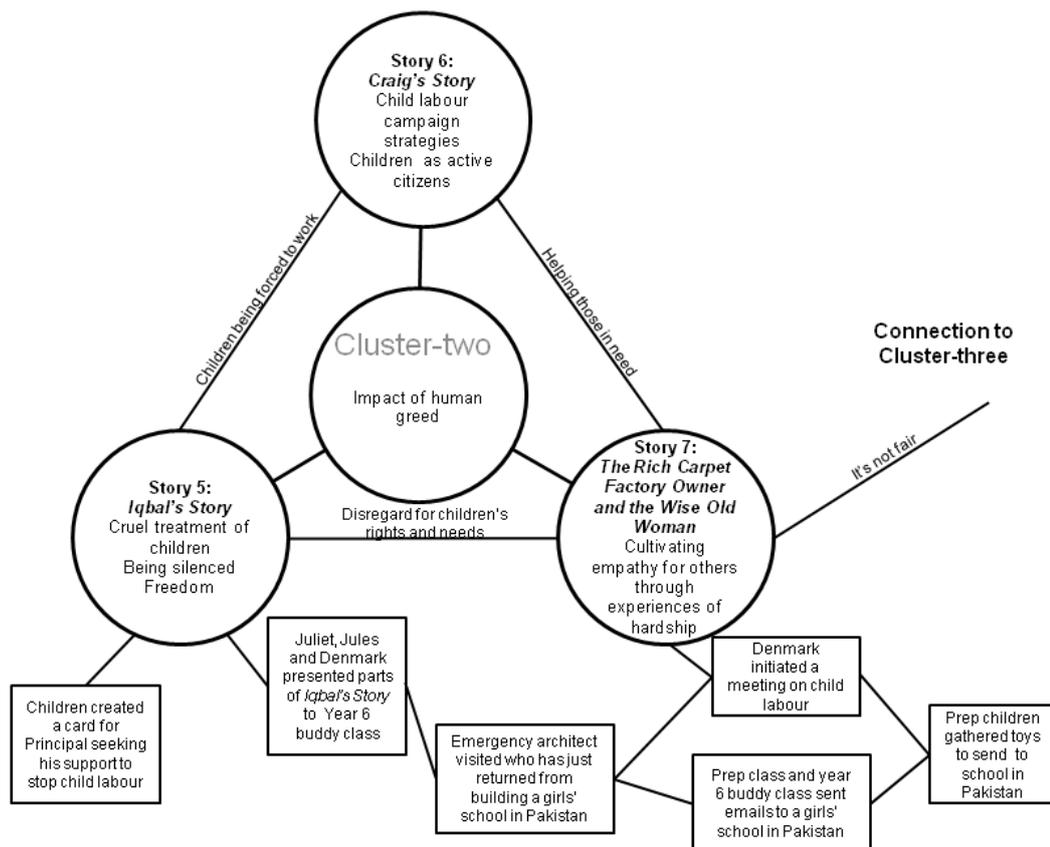


Figure 5.3. Cluster-two: Interconnectivity of stories and social actions set in motion.

Plotting the social actions that the stories set in motion during data collection shaped subsequent stories and social actions. Through the visual representation of the interconnections

between stories and actions, I became more aware of what had happened and the possibilities for where the inquiry might go. Later in data analysis, when children's suggestions of social actions were identified as the highest frequency theme, the mapping of connections between stories and social actions aided investigation of research subquestion 1 a) What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children's participation as active citizens? The relationship between the stories told and the social actions the children initiated is explored in section 5.4.

#### *5.2.5 Closing Reflections on the Motif of Spinning and Weaving (Interconnectivity)*

Spinning and weaving are well-established metaphors in storytelling. A storyteller spins and weaves a tale by leading listeners from one element to the next, with interrelationships made visible through the telling, or the interconnectivity is revealed as a delightful surprise at the end. The act of spinning, undertaken by many women over many centuries, involved connecting pieces of wool, cotton, hemp, or flax to form an ongoing thread, similar to the actions of the bird in *The Child Who was Poor and Good*. Weaving interconnects the thread at multiple points, just as the spider did by weaving up and down and back and forth. Once spinning and weaving is completed, interconnectivity is presented as an aesthetic form. The motif of spinning and weaving was present in my practice in many ways. The metaphor of spinning and weaving a tale was present not only in how I formed and told a tale but also in how I saw opportunities to spin and weave significances together, along with plotting social actions the stories set in motion. These maps of interconnectivity guided the selection and shaping of stories and identification of the motif of spinning and weaving in my storytelling practice. Mapping these connections offered greater scope for plotting what Greene (1995) defined as the intention of education for social change to inquire what social justice means and what it might demand.

By mapping the interconnection of elements across the study, my epistemological, methodological, and pedagogical values of interconnectivity were foregrounded and embraced. With storytelling foregrounded as a way of knowing in this study, I built connections epistemologically between characters and events in one story and another. Methodologically, mapping connections between elements ensured that my research journey was interconnected and had multiple directions. Pedagogically, the maps plotted the interconnectivity of children's interpretations of significance in the stories told, which guided decisions for future directions to further support children's meaning-making. I acknowledge that the connections mapped are my readings of the study as I pieced together connections based on resounding comments from individual children. By paying attention to the interconnectivity of elements of the stories and social actions, the interconnectivity of all participants in the study was foregrounded. More scope for children's agency was possible than if I had ignored their tangent directions and insisted on an adult-driven pathway. Yet it was still limited by the research focus on social justice storytelling, the brevity of my relationship with the children, and the lenses that shaped and guided my practice and that of the teacher. I questioned whether my practice could further

address my pedagogical value of agency and looked more closely to examine limitations on, and possibilities for, children's freedom of expression.

### 5.3 Motif Three: Freedom of Expression?

My ontological and pedagogical values of agency support notions of freedom. From an ontological position, I recognise that each of us possesses the right to be who we are, express our opinions, make choices, and participate freely in society. This value influenced my actions pedagogically, both in this study and beyond, in that I view children as possessing the right and the capacity to voice opinions, make decisions, and participate actively in their education and society. This section provides a close examination of facilitation of the discussion and activity component of the storytelling workshops with regard to the children's freedom of expression. In the section on the motif of story-tailoring (5.1), I reflected on and changed my storytelling practice in an endeavour to provide further scope for children's freedom of expression by shaping my storytelling practice to be more collaborative with the children.

This section (5.3) reflects on contradictions in my facilitation of the discussion and post-story activities of the storytelling workshops with regard to children's freedom of expression or enacted democracy. Problems in seeking to enact democracy within an early years classroom are identified. The conceptions of democracy as individual, social, and political outlined in Chapter 2 are considered. To commence this discussion of children's freedom of expression in a practice of social justice storytelling, *The Freedom Bird* story is told. This story was selected because of its metaphoric representation of freedom that evokes deeper thinking of freedom and its enduring capacity.

#### 5.3.1 *The Freedom Bird*

*Once there was a hunter who was out in the forest looking and listening so very carefully, when suddenly he heard a noise, a very strange noise—a very annoying noise. Do you want to hear it? Well it went like this “nah nah na-nah nah”.*

*“What’s that song? I don’t like it!” growled the hunter. The hunter looked around to see where the sound was coming from, and then he spotted a bird high up in a tree—a beautiful bird, a small golden bird, the most beautiful bird he had seen in his whole entire life. The bird looked down at him and sang, “nah nah na-nah nah”.*

*“How can such a beautiful bird have such an ugly voice?” uttered the hunter in puzzlement. The bird sang again: “nah nah na-nah nah”.*

*“Oh yeah! Well I’ll teach you a lesson,” and the hunter climbed up the tree and threw a sack over the bird. “There, that will stop you making that dreadful noise.” But as he walked on the bird continued with “nah nah na-nah nah”, although it was somewhat muffled through the bag. This made the hunter angrier, so when he arrived home to his hut he took out a knife and chopped the bird into a hundred small pieces.*

*But as he washed the knife he heard “nah nah na-nah nah”, although it was somewhat disjointed as the bird was in pieces.*

*This made the hunter even angrier, so he threw all the bird pieces into a pot of boiling water. But as soon as the hunter turned his back he heard the annoying bird’s song bubbling through the water.*

*“I don’t believe this!” blurted the hunter as he ran outside, dug a deep hole in the ground, then climbed out of the hole and threw all the pieces of bird into the hole. He covered it up then stamped on it and sighed: “HAAA!” Then as he headed towards the door he heard from deep down in the ground, “nah nah na-nah nah”.*

*The hunter was furious, so he ran and grabbed the shovel and dug up the bird pieces, laid them on sheets of newspaper, wrapped them up to make a parcel, then tied a huge rock to the parcel and took it down to the river and flung it in. He watched as the parcel splashed and sank. “There,” said the hunter, and he stood on the bank and listened and he didn’t hear a thing so he walked home. The hunter then continued to look and listen for animals in the forest. Many days later the hunter so happened to pass the river where he had thrown the parcel of the bird when suddenly out of the river flew a bird, then another bird, then another bird, then another bird until there were a hundred golden birds flying around the hunter and they all sang: “nah nah na-nah nah”.*

*The hunter shook his head, looked up at these birds and thought and thought: “Why has it taken me so long to realise this? I know who you are. You’re the freedom bird. Freedom can’t be killed off; we just have to let you be!” Then all those birds looked down at the hunter and sang “nah nah na-nah nah!” (Hartley, 1996)*

The notion of impingements on freedom is conveyed explicitly in this story. Although I have already discussed how the children received my sharing of this story, I have included the story here to represent the motif of freedom of expression in my practice. The significance I drew from this story for this discussion is that if freedom is not granted then the urge for expression resists and multiplies, symbolised by the endurance and multiplication of the bird one hundred-fold. The following sections discuss my reflections and amendments to cultivate more space for children’s expressions (5.3.2), freedom of decision-making (5.3.3), and to problematise strategies for equality (5.3.4). The section concludes with discussion of why freedom is questioned in a motif of freedom of expression (5.3.5).

### *5.3.2 More Space for Children’s Expression*

On the 9/08/2007 I noted, “I want more time for children to freely express.” After discussing this dilemma with others and consulting with the teacher, we decided to provide further space for children’s free expression by dedicating the last workshop of each cluster to child-directed

activities with no storytelling. This workshop format was also considered to offer space to summarise and reflect on what had occurred in the previous workshops.

Interestingly, when I introduced this strategy in week 5, I was reluctant to enter a teaching context empty-handed. I still planned the activities and discussion beforehand. I did this as a means of being prepared, as the regular teacher was absent that day. The possibility of an open space for children's free expression leading to noisy and chaotic classroom behaviour provoked cautionary practice, particularly as I was a guest at a school in which neighbouring teachers would not welcome a rowdy class. My support for and intention of active and expressive learning collided with a metanarrative of schooling that emphasises authority and control and views a quiet class as indicative of engaged learning and good teaching. This collision created a dilemma in my practice, as doubt and uncertainty destabilised the balance between freedom and authority, which Freire (1998) advocated for democracy in education.

I began the workshop by asking the children to recall the four stories that I had shared to gather data on their strongest memories of the stories and set the scene for the subsequent activities. I wanted the stories to be present in their play, as weeks had passed since the children had heard them. However, this was a painful, laborious session. The children were distracted and unsettled due to changes in their routine, having a substitute teacher, and because of the change in the timing of the storytelling workshop (which was held in the afternoon rather than before lunch). Although many of them had much to say, it was difficult to keep their attention on the task at hand. I drove the task. It was my agenda; mutual interest was not apparent.

After the whole group recollection of the four stories, I planned for the children to choose a character from one of the stories to interview through the dramatic convention of *hot seat*.<sup>4</sup> Thirteen of the 21 children voted to interview the Coxen's fig-parrot. This was a moment where the children were agentic by voicing who they were interested in interviewing. Before the interview commenced children also chose whether to be part of the interview, draw in their story journals, or play out stories in miniature playscapes. Overall, the workshop offered little scope for possibilities of children's free expression to emerge, as an emphasis on authority overrode freedom. The enactment of democratic principles, spaces, and possibilities for the children to participate as active citizens in a democratic community needed to be provided. To embrace this fully, I needed to engage in a democratic relationship with these young children as citizens. I needed to support their agency in the class community. With this in mind, I questioned what was possible within the parameters of a school setting.

The democratic ideal of freer interaction between social groups that engage in varied communication exchanges proposed by Dewey (1916) was considered. In this study varied

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<sup>4</sup> Hot seat is an engaging method to provide children with an opportunity to dialogue with a character from whom they want to know more.

communication exchanges were offered through the different stories and their critiques. However, to embrace and enact democratic principles more fully the concept of freer interaction required further consideration.

Another intention of the reflective-summative workshops at the end of each cluster was to provide more space to gather data of children's comments and actions in response to the social justice stories. The data gathered in these reflective-summative workshops (5 and 9) offered snapshots of children's meaning-making of the stories as they recalled the stories and played further with characters, themes, and ideas. The children did not suggest any social actions to redress injustices in these workshops. This suggested that the presence of story provoked emotive connection, which I discuss in the fourth emergent motif of this chapter (5.4).

### *5.3.3 Freedom of Decision-making*

In week 4 of the study I wrote in my reflective journal:

“Is it what children want or is it what I want? Are we doing activities for the sake of the predetermined structure?” (Reflective journal 8/08/2007)

I had realised that the planned format of the workshops was a living contradiction of my pedagogical values of agency and responsiveness. The study had been conceptualised on principles of social justice, positioning children as knowing, competent, and equal participants in the study who possessed rights to freedom of expression and choice. Yet I pre-planned post-story activities for the children in Cluster-one. I wrote in my reflections at the end of Cluster-one:

“Follow the children's interests—don't force my agenda.” (24/08/2007).

The activities that I pre-planned for the children to engage with after the critical discussion of the story were determined in consultation with the teacher. There were usually three or four activities for the children to select from. At the end of Cluster-one, I became aware of the contradictions in this practice. I had become so focused on managing the storytelling program that I had not realised that I was controlling the ways that the children could respond through the predetermined activity selection, which therefore limited genuine/authentic responses from the children. My practice of offering a selection of predetermined activities to the children was not enabling the children to be agentic. For these reasons, I suggested to the teacher that I ask the children “What do you want to do?” after the critical discussion of each story, The teacher responded with, “Yeah they would get more out of it because they are being empowered into how they want to respond” (Line 71-72 W4 TC 9/08/2007). Her comment suggested that the idea would provide scope for the children to have greater connection with the experiences. I expanded on the idea:

Louise: Exactly, not only on the aesthetic response, but if there's something they might want to do to take action on the issue as well.

Teacher: Yeah like ‘what can we do?’ (Line 73-75 W4 TC 9/08/2007)

The idea of collaboration between teacher and students is suggestive of a social conception of democracy (Dewey, 1916) expressed through two-way co-operative interaction and communication in groups to make something in common.

To widen scope for children's agency, space was provided for children to make suggestions about what they wanted to do in response to the story from week 6 in the study. In week 6, I told *Iqbal's Story* (see Appendix H), the life story of Iqbal Masih, a Pakistani boy contracted to bonded labour in a carpet factory from the age of 5. In response, Max began a list of what we might do:

Max: Help some people around the country [Pakistan] tell some people what is happening in the country we live in.

Teacher: We are talking about what we are going to do in the classroom today. Right now for 15 minutes. (Lines 589-592 W6 30/08/2007)

He suggested a social action to redress the injustice of child labour, but unfortunately we had only fifteen minutes left before lunch due to the story and critique consuming one hour. With this small amount of time, a condition was placed on what was possible in the space we had supposedly offered for 'freedom of choice'.

The teacher and I managed this space by limiting the choices to short activities with easily accessible resources. We took three suggestions: building a carpet shop and factory with blocks, drawing, and making a card for the principal to seek his support on stopping child labour. The children could voice what they wanted to do and chose which activity to attend. If they did not make a suggestion directly, they still had a choice of three. It was however, disappointing that Max's suggestion was lost. Max chose to play with the blocks and his suggestion of telling more people about what some children experience in Pakistan, not just in his immediate community but Australia-wide, was quashed due to time restraints. The energy he had for this was channelled into the construction of a plane using wooden blocks. Reflection of this image of this presents as resoundingly patronising. Imagine an adult suggesting an Australia-wide education campaign on child labour and being told there is no time for that, you can choose to draw, make a card, or build with blocks. Even though the teacher and I intended to position the children as active citizens in this study, we were located within a school with timetable restraints and an early childhood setting where play is privileged (Wood, 2008). Play activities were easily orchestrated in this early childhood setting, whereas opportunities for active citizenship required more time and access to resources beyond the classroom.

The children continued to make suggestions for how they would respond to the story for each of the following workshops. Each week they had plenty of ideas. Additional ideas to those already mentioned included listing ways to arrest cruel factory owners, building a model school for children who had been child labour slaves, and having a meeting to address child labour. Each week children always suggested building something connected to the story with

blocks and drawing about the story. The repetition of these suggestions was a challenge for the teacher and myself, as we questioned whether to intervene and provoke diversification in ideas or to respect freedom of expression and children's right to choose. The teacher explained that whenever free choice was available, block building had become a standard preference for many of the boys and drawing had become a standard preference for many of the girls. This indicated that the repetition of preference that occurred in these workshops was not different from what occurred at other times. Though it may appear that the children freely chose an activity, discourses of gender practices may also be at play here as Ryan (2005) found in her critique of free choice in early childhood education. The hesitation to intervene suggests that the teacher and I did not want to tamper with the sacred principles of child-centred pedagogy. As Walkerdine (1984) claimed, the worst sin of child-centred pedagogy is teacher intervention that 'pushes' a child in new or more challenging directions. This signals a dilemma with the freedom emphasis of child-centred pedagogy, because if children are always steering their learning, then exposure to new concepts and materials can be limited.

Although the result of offering children scope to suggest the post-story activities presented as a stagnation of ideas to the teacher and me, to the children it might have been a chance to do what they really enjoyed doing. However, emphasis on children's individualism and autonomy in choice of activities is a liberal view of freedom of expression. In contrast, my value for freedom embraced consideration of others within a community and was not based on simply doing what an individual wants to do. Instead, my value embraced practising listening, waiting, doing, and saying with others in a community as seen in a political conception of democracy in education informed by the writings of Arendt (1958/1998).

#### *5.3.4 Equality: Expression Expected from All*

In Cluster-three, the teacher and I decided that every child would be asked to express an opinion verbally or non-verbally (i.e., through dramatic expression) during the discussion of the story. The intention was to support the inclusion of all children. As noted in Chapter 4, six children were identified as the key participants as they were the main contributors to data. At times I wondered about the idea of all children contributing to the discussion of the story because it produced very long whole group sessions, and it may not have been what all of the children wanted to do. However, the teacher was strongly supportive of asking all children to express an opinion, as noted in the following transcript excerpt from our debriefing interview in week 10.

Teacher: There are a few quieter souls who are still struggling to express—so being able to express without words is a good option for those kids.

Louise: Yeah, that's when I thought realising the time factor [that is the restraint of 75-90 minutes for each workshop]—to get everyone to have a turn.

Teacher: And "No I can't think of anything"—I'm not standing for that; it's fourth term—you've been doing class news talking in front of your friends. And

it's not a question of them getting upset and crying. It's "I can't be bothered" almost. That's mean isn't it? They were fine. They all coped with it. (Lines 26-33 W10 TC 12/10/2007)

In this excerpt I was attempting to create space to raise my concerns about the strategy of all children offering a response during the whole group discussion. I thought that other options might be considered, such as seeking out other ways children may choose to express responses to the stories. Yet the teacher appeared to insist that all children respond. Her reasoning was suggestive of cultivating a more inclusive dialogic space, as espoused in a social conception of democracy in education (Dewey, 1938); as well as promoting rational autonomy as espoused in an individualistic conception of democracy (Kant, 1784/1992). However, support for the expression of individual opinions on issues, can deny or disregard others. The teacher realised how harsh her words sounded and quickly noted that the children did not present behaviours of distress. In the realisation that force and lack of choice were present in this strategy, the teacher determined that it was all right because the children "were fine".

To conclude the interview, I sought clarification on the management of the 'all children to express an opinion' strategy, as I was still concerned that it was too long in an adult-directed activity, and I read it as forced expression, not free expression.

Louise: What about this strategy of getting them all to talk—I'm thinking about time.

Teacher: I like it—if not something, a comment.

Louise: Even if they have the option to [express an opinion].

Teacher: Express non-verbally. (Lines 121-124 W10 TC 12/10/2007)

My intent was to propose that children could opt whether to express an opinion or not, and the teacher declared that their choice could be whether to speak or to express non-verbally. However, the option to express their response to the story, either in words or dramatically, seemed to be well received by the children. There were positive outcomes of responsive interactions between the children, with some children interpreting other children's non-verbal actions readily and accurately. Yet I was concerned that sometimes a child might not have anything to say, or might feel uncomfortable expressing herself verbally or non-verbally in the large group setting. The strategy arose from recognition that the same children spoke in each workshop, so it was an attempt to provide space for all children to have their opinions heard. I wondered whether insistence that everyone express an opinion could also be experienced as an infringement of the liberty to choose when and where opinions are expressed. Although our intentions were for inclusion, this strategy could be read as being shaped by universalism, where the same rules apply to all. Universalism does not recognise diverse needs. My uneasiness about this strategy prompted me to wonder why some children had not contributed an opinion about the story in the whole group discussion in clusters one and two.

To me, expecting all children to express an opinion in the discussions of the stories presented a clash between equality, plurality, and difference. At the time of data collection I did not pursue discussion of the strategy further with the teacher for the reason that I was a guest in her classroom. Later, I recognised four ways of reading this strategy. First, my response to the strategy may be read as concern over tampering with the ideology of child-centred pedagogy in that I view the teacher as committing the worst sin, that is, ‘pushing’ children (Walkerdine, 1984) into expressing an opinion about the story. However, a case could be argued for prompting the quieter children to express an opinion, as their contributions increased in complexity. For example, in the first week that we asked Mat (a boy of Bangladeshi heritage who commenced the school year with no English) for an opinion, he placed his block in the centre<sup>5</sup> with no comment. Yet 2 weeks later, Mat presented a dramatic response to the *Two Rocks* story and provided verbal justifications for his non-verbal expression. Asking all children to contribute to the discussions of the stories did enable opinions of children to be expressed who had not been heard previously.

A second reading could be that although the intent of the strategy was to support agency in the group discussion for all children, it was adult directed. The children were not agentic in their own ways. This was the caution expressed by Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) to those who research with children that adult-devised ways to acknowledge children’s agency can risk disregarding their agency. The teacher and I had intended to provide equal access for all the children to express an opinion, yet their diverse ways of responding to the story were controlled or limited. Some children may have preferred to express their opinions in a personal reflective space (e.g., their story journals), with a small group with whom they had rapport, or with a family member or friend. Others may not have wanted to say anything at all. This interpretation views this strategy of all children responding to the story in the whole group discussion as contradicting my value of multiplicity. To live this value in a practice of social justice storytelling requires diverse forms of participation and responsiveness to be welcomed by responding to children’s personal preferences, concerns, or anxieties.

A third reading recognises the suggestion mentioned in the previous paragraph that some children may not have wanted to say anything at all, and that to make them contribute was an infringement on their right to privacy. Cheeseman and Robertson (2006) recognised this in early childhood practices of pedagogical documentation. Young children’s right to privacy seems difficult for young children in group settings, where spaces and resources are shared by all

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<sup>5</sup> In the discussions of the stories in which everyone contributed, everyone was given an object (it was a block in week 10, a stick in week 11, and a stone in week 12) to symbolise their contribution. After each participant expressed an opinion they placed their object in the middle of the circle where a cumulative construction formed.

children. By reading this practice as a potential infringement on privacy, my practice contradicted my ontological value of agency as a right to act as the individual chooses. The concern for children's right to privacy signals a need for further attention to this in early childhood practices through consideration of personal spaces and choice of mode of participation.

A fourth reading of this quandary could be that the expectation that all children make a comment, be it verbal or dramatic, was a decision to address what Freire (1998) called the educator's challenge of forming a balance between freedom and limits. The teacher seemed to be proposing that limits needed to be imposed to encourage dialogue of critical thinking. Perhaps this was necessary to encourage engagement in critical thinking by all children, which Freire saw as a quality of democracy in education, along with respect for children's autonomy, identity, and knowledge, and critical reflection on pedagogical practices. These other qualities of democracy in education were also reflected upon in our facilitation of the storytelling workshops. First, with regard to respecting autonomy and identities, the teacher and I endeavoured to position the children politically by welcoming their opinions, decision-making, and initiated social actions to redress injustices. Second, we endeavoured to respect children's knowledge by creating open forums for children to articulate their understandings of story content, which was listened to in the discussions, post-story activities, and follow-up conversations. Third, the teacher and I reflected critically upon our practices through follow-up conversations, and I reflected further through my reflective journaling. Collectively, through these practices the difficulties of cultivating a balance between freedom and authority were identified. The accounts described for this motif only scrape the surface of exploring and cultivating democracy in education. The qualities of democracy in education that Freire identified require ongoing awareness, reflection, and amendments to practice.

### *5.3.5 Closing Reflections on the Motif of Freedom of Expression*

My support for freedom of expression is linked to my value of agency. As a motif in my practice, freedom involved exploring opportunities for participants to express opinions, make choices, and participate freely in ways that they choose, acknowledging the resistance and persistence of freedom as articulated in the story of *The Freedom Bird*. The recurrence of a motif of freedom of expression was a consistent reminder to listen to children's comments and notice their actions, and question what, when and how children choose to be agentic.

Three intentional attempts were made to amend practice to provide scope for the children's expression. One was the introduction of a workshop at the end of each cluster to provide more space for expression in response to all of the stories in that cluster; another sought children's suggestions for the post-story activities. The third attempt required all children to express a response to the stories in whole group discussions. Upon critical reflection of the implementation of these amendments, I recognised that what the teacher or I may see as freedom

of expression may not be experienced as freedom by the children. For this reason freedom of expression was recognised as an ideal but not fully realisable. Instead, the accounts discussed acknowledged conflicting pedagogical practices that hindered or limited children's freedom of expression or infringed children's rights to participation and privacy.

The story of *The Freedom Bird* offers an analogy of the pursuit of freedom, with the actions of the hunter representing the forces that impinged on attempts to support the children's freedom of expression. These forces included emphases on classroom control, school timetabling, primacy of play in early childhood settings, and same rules for everyone. Space for diversity and freedom in children's expression was not always made possible. Opportunities for freedom of expression were controlled, as in the account of the reflective workshop in week 5. Children's freedom of expression was blocked and redirected, as in the response to Max's suggestion for a post-story activity in week 6. Expression was expected, as was the practice in the discussions of the stories in cluster-three. Examination of the conflicts, clashes, and contradictions in the attempts by the teacher and me to embed further scope for children's freedom of expression seemed to support the suggestion of Raywid (1987) that democracy is not suited to classrooms where authority and control are at the core of pedagogy. Yet I am not willing to accept inadequacies in pedagogical attempts to create further spaces for children's freedom of expression as a *fait accompli*, nor as implausible as Raywid suggested. I still value agency for freedom of expression. Further exploration of the problems and possibilities for democratic practice in classrooms is required.

Freedom emerged as a motif that was regularly debated and challenged. It raised awareness of the impositions to freedom and the questioning of their effects. As a term, freedom of expression is susceptible to ambiguity, so its meaning as a motif in my practice is rubbery. As a motif in my practice, freedom of expression is about providing space for people to express opinions, make choices, and participate freely. Yet by this I do not support opinions, choices, and free participation that are harmful to others. This is where the values of agency, multiplicity, responsiveness, and interconnectivity intersect to further clarify this motif of freedom of expression. What I hope for through a motif of freedom of expression in my practice is to continually question how support for the expression of multiplicity among participant's opinions, choices, and free participation can be practiced as responsive and interconnected to others.

#### 5.4 Motif Four: Walk in the Shoes of Another

From years of telling stories to a wide range of audiences, I have come to know that storytelling as a live intimate art form possesses a capacity to speak to both the hearts and minds of listeners, to leave lasting impressions, and evoke shifts in awareness and understanding. The vignette I shared in the Prologue provided an account of one of the many experiences I have had where storytelling inspired critical thinking and social action. One of the intentions of this study was to seek answers to the question "What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke

young children's participation as active citizens?" Through close reflection of my storytelling practice, I sought to understand what it was about storytelling that enabled understanding of unjust experiences of others and provoked social actions to redress these experiences of injustice. This motif explores my learning in terms of the relationship between storytelling and social actions. *The King and the Fisherman* portrays the motif, *walk in the shoes of another*.

#### 5.4.1 *The King and the Fisherman*

*Long ago, there was a king who ruled over a large kingdom. The king lived high on a mountain in his castle. From his window, he could look down on villages, which surrounded his castle on three sides. On the fourth side, the king could see the sea, an endless blue ribbon stretching out toward the horizon. It was a beautiful view from the castle, and so the king assumed that everyone lived as happy a life as he. However, among the people of the kingdom there was great unhappiness. Little rain had fallen in more than a year. The drought brought hunger because the crops were meagre that year. The people were hungry and feared starvation. Yet the king's pantry was well-stocked with foods from all over the world, including a hundred different delicacies. He could have whatever he desired. The king was unaware of what was happening in his kingdom because he rarely spoke with his people and did not care much about their lives.*

*The people of the kingdom were worried. They were starving and miserable. They knew that the king had a castle filled with food and gold. They gathered and talked about what to do. Some people suggested that they approach the king and ask for food but everyone was afraid to go to the castle.*

*Finally, in desperation, an old fisherman volunteered to go speak with the king. "Why not?" he reasoned, "I am old and will soon die, anyway. If I don't die of old age, I will surely die of starvation." And so he set out, trudging up the mountain to the castle.*

*The king did not know this fisherman, so he rudely asked: "Why are you here?" The fisherman described to the king how the people were starving for food, for exercise, and for fresh air. The king yawned looking bored and replied, "That is not my concern. I don't feel hungry and I don't feel their hunger."*

*The fisherman could feel anger welling up inside him. He thought he would explode with anger, but he realized that this would accomplish nothing. He thought quickly. Then he responded, "I see your point, Sir. And, naturally, you are right. And just so that you know I mean you only well, I would like to invite you to come fishing with me. I have heard that you love to go fishing and I know the most wonderful spot."*

*Now the king couldn't resist an invitation like this, and so he went with the fisherman. They got into the fisherman's tiny, dilapidated, rowboat. The fisherman rowed hard, and the factory owner rested, sunning himself. Finally, after an hour of*

*rowing along the shore, they arrived at a beautiful little inlet. The king looked around, but saw nothing but rocks and seaweed. "This is the spot from which we head out to sea, Sir," said the old fisherman and he rowed straight out away from shore for another half hour. Then the old fisherman pulled his oars into the boat, took an awl out of his back pocket, and began chipping a hole in the bottom of the boat under his seat.*

*"What are you doing, old man?" exclaimed the king in alarm. "Stop that this instant! Do you realize what you're doing? You're going to sink the boat!"*

*"Yes, I know. That is what I intend to do," responded the fisherman quietly. "I am trying to sink the boat. I am so hungry, like all the people in your kingdom, that I want to die."*

*"But I do not want to die!!" shouted the king. "No, Sir. I know that. That is why I am only making a hole under my seat in the boat, at my end of the boat. What happens at your end of the boat is not my concern."*

*The king's anger turned to laughing, and then to sadness and he eventually spoke: "I see what you are saying, old man. You have made your point well. I have closed my eyes to what others feel because I did not feel it myself. Please row me back to shore -- safely -- and I will open my food stores. And I thank you, fisherman, for your great wisdom in teaching me a lesson I sorely needed to learn."*

*The fisherman rowed the leaking boat back to shore as water slowly trickled into the boat. In desperation, the king helped with his bare hands. When they made it ashore the king did two things: he promptly arranged for food to be shared and he invited the fisherman to be his trusted advisor. And so the king and the fisherman became good friends, and frequently met to talk business. (Jacobs Sife, 2007)*

In this story, the king came to understand the plight of the people through a concrete experience that placed him in a similar plight to the people, that is, the impending threat of death. When the fisherman first approached the king, his response to the people's starvation was that it did not concern him. His pantry was full, so he had no understanding of starvation. This story can be critiqued based on the idea that justice requires engagement with the concrete other (Benhabib, 1986, 1992). Through experiences with the concrete other, an understanding of an individual's history, identity, and affective-emotional constitution can be acquired. The king had a generalised view of the people. Not until he experienced suffering through a concrete experience with the fisherman did he develop an understanding of the plight of the people. The following section discusses how *walk in the shoes of another* is a metaphor for engagement with the concrete other (5.4.2). This is followed by discussion of aesthetic qualities (5.4.3), sharing tragedy (5.4.5), and compassion leading to action (5.4.6), which are posed as findings to the research subquestion "What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children's participation as active citizens?" Closing reflections of meanings of a motif of *walk in the shoes of another* are then shared (5.4.7).

#### 5.4.2 Engagement with the Concrete Other

The phrase *walk in the shoes of another* as an expression of developing sympathy for another's position emerged as a motif in what steered my selection and crafting of stories. This motif of feeling sympathy for another was most evident in the stories that I shared based on real lives, such as *Iqbal's Story* (see Appendix H) and *Craig's Story* (see Appendix I). This is noted in Table 5.1, which presents a record of data entries that were coded as evidence of children expressing sympathetic responses to stories told in the study.

Table 5.1. Record of sympathetic responses to each story told in the study.

Story	Number of sympathetic responses from children
The Freedom Bird	3
Awi Usdi	1
The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot	6
Two Brothers	5
Iqbal's Story	19
Craig's Story	18
The Rich Factory Owner and the Wise Old Woman	2
Two Blocks	6
The GREED Machine	4
Two Rocks	10

Sympathetic responses were identified when children associated a feeling or expressed care for those who experienced suffering in the stories. Sympathetic responses to stories require imagination and emotional receptivity (Nussbaum, 1997). For example, the following is Juliet's response to *Craig's Story*, which told the story of Craig Kielburger becoming a child activist after learning of Iqbal Masih's experience as a child labourer.

Juliet: I was worried because all of those people who were forced to work in the factory. I felt sad for them, 'cos they were FORCED. (Lines 89-90 W7 5/09/2007)

Juliet expressed feelings of concern and sadness for those who were forced to work in the factory. Immediately after I ended *Craig's Story*, Molly wanted to help the children who were forced to work under harsh conditions, which was reiterated by Declan.

Molly: To go on holidays there and help them.

Louise: Is that what you want to do?

Molly: Go there to help them.

Louise: Molly really wants to help them. She wants to go these countries that I told you about.

Declan: Me too! I was going to say the same. (Lines 326-330 W7 5/09/2007)

Both Molly and Declan seemed to have felt the suffering in the story so strongly that they wanted to go there and help. The stories based on real lives seemed to possess a greater capacity to evoke a shift in understanding of the other, which aligns with Benhabib's (1986, 1992) recognition that justice requires engagement with the concrete other. *Iqbal's Story* and *Craig's Story* were both about real life experiences of other children, not generalised accounts of others. By being real accounts, the children could connect with the children in the stories, perhaps imagining that the suffering could happen to them. Emotive connection with an individual's experience of injustice seemed to be one quality of social justice storytelling that may have led to young children's active citizenship. However, this could have been presented as a report or in a picture book. What were the qualities of live storytelling that provoked emotive connection as a motivator for young children's active citizenship participation?

#### 5.4.3 Aesthetic Qualities of Storytelling

According to Abbs (1989) and Greene (1995) an aesthetic encounter cultivates a sensuous and poetic mode of knowing and affective responses. If storytelling is understood as an aesthetic encounter, then sensuous and poetic modes of knowing may have been cultivated through descriptive language, use of gesture, tone to evoke imagery, and mood to recreate the events in the story. Care was taken to evoke imagery and mood with the intent of bringing the stories alive or, as Benjamin (1955/1999) described, making the story the experience of those who are listening.

To identify aesthetic qualities of storytelling that may have contributed to many children expressing sympathetic responses, I explain how I crafted and told *Iqbal's Story*. This story is examined because it evoked the most sympathetic responses (Table 5.1), as well as triggered most of the children's enacted social actions (Figure 5.3). I crafted this story from biographical details of child labourer and activist Iqbal Masih (1982-1995), which I acquired from books (Crofts, 2006; Kielburger, 1998) and websites (The World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child, n.d). The register (Stephens and McCallum, 1998) in which I told *Iqbal's Story* involved narration through an emotive mode. I purposefully chose to share excerpts of Iqbal Masih's life because he was a child who advocated for children's rights. The story told of Iqbal and his friends having their rights to freedom being abused, but also told of Iqbal advocating for himself and others to ensure their rights were honoured. Following the proposal for narrative interpretation suggested by Stephens (1992), I read the significance of *Iqbal's Story* as the inspiration of Iqbal's advocacy for children's rights, given his youth and adverse situation.

I told this story in week 6 and began by asking the children to close their eyes whilst I described a two-roomed home that a young boy shared with his mother and sister, in which they each had a string bed in one room. The other room was for cooking. Apart from the clothes Iqbal wore, the only thing he could call his own was an old battered cricket bat. The imagery that I

painted with words was intended to set the scene of *Iqbal's Story*. It left an impression, as noted in Carl's account of what he thought was important to tell his family about the story.

Carl: That he was very poor and that he had no mattress on his bed. (Line 174 W7 CC 5/09/2007)

Denmark: I told my family. I told them this morning ... I was talking about the poor stories ... the one where the kid only had a cricket bat for a toy. (Lines 62, 72, 74 W8 CC12/09/2007)

In week 13, when the children told their stories, Scott told this story:

Scott: It's a very small home, which they didn't have a wall here and they didn't have a roof and they didn't have a kitchen or anything else. No. No lounge if they wanted to watch TV, they didn't have that. They only had a bedroom. (W13 /11/2007)

The home Scott described in his story emphasised what was missing, which in some ways seemed to resonate with how I described Iqbal's home in *Iqbal's Story*, setting a scene of difference to the physical environments of the participant children's homes. The description that I provided of Iqbal's home was based on what I had read in biographical details of his life. It was provided as fulfilling the conventional storytelling strategy of setting the scene (McKay & Dudley, 1996). The imagery of Iqbal's home seemed to stay with some children, perhaps due to the difference of it when compared with their own homes. It seems that Carl viewed sleeping without a mattress as significant, just as Denmark viewed having only a cricket bat for a toy as significant. The image of a small home with one room seemed to stay with Scott, as he played it out in his story in week 13. Viewed in this way, these responses can be read as what these three boys read as elements of significance in *Iqbal's Story*: a deficiency of belongings.

Throughout *Iqbal's Story*, I used carefully chosen words, pace and gesture, assuming an emotive mode for the register of my telling of Iqbal's suffering, bravery, and achievements in a respectful way. The following comment by Molly gives an account of the influence of emotive descriptive language and gesture used in telling *Iqbal's Story*.

Molly: I imagined I was the one who worked in the carpet factory and when I was sleeping—he [carpet factory owner] kept on dragging me out of the blankets when I was cold. (Lines 51-52 W6 C1 31/08/2007)

Descriptive language with synergised gestures appeared to have provoked Molly to imagine herself experiencing *Iqbal's Story*.

To further facilitate the children's engagement with the story, I projected photos of Iqbal on a screen and invited the children to assume roles in the story. At one point I asked the children to role play working in the carpet factory. They squatted on their haunches in rows, knotting threads with their hands. The teacher guided their expression by saying:

Teacher: You are EXHAUSTED, UNHAPPY, TIRED, you've been doing this for YEARS, day in day out. You haven't played sport for weeks. (Line 109-111W6 30/08/2007)

In this context, I asked Molly what she was thinking about, to which she replied:

Molly: I'm imagining what it would be like to play. (Line 121 W6 30/08/2007)

Molly knows what it is like to play. She engaged in play in the classroom on a regular basis. To shift to a place in which she "imagined what it would be like to play" was a significantly different position for Molly. This comment can be read as suggestive of the descriptive and expressive accounts of Iqbal's experiences being felt by Molly so that she placed herself in the shoes of another. Through story and drama the teacher and I facilitated acts with the intent, as Benjamin (1955/1999) stated, of making the story the experience of the listener.

I ended the story by inviting Max to be Iqbal returning to his village in Pakistan after his trip to Sweden and the USA to raise awareness of child labour, and the rest of the class to cheer. Then I asked Fergie to place a necklace of threaded flowers around Max's neck to honour his return. In role as Iqbal, Max expressed pride and bowed spontaneously. This was a moment of strong connection to the story that both the teacher and I noticed.

Teacher: He was really in role. Understanding what storytelling is really about. It is not just sit and listen. It is whole thinking. (W6 TC 31/08/2007)

Max seemed very focused in his portrayal of Iqbal; he took his role seriously and responded aptly to my narration of the story. In the discussion, Max gave this account of his experience of being in the story.

Max: When they [carpet customers] buying, and I use my hands and I use my teeth to work, to make it more easier for me. (Line 314-315 W6 30/08/2007)

This comment indicates that Max felt like he was in the story, because of his use of personal pronouns and expression of effort to work more efficiently (with hands and teeth) to meet the demand for carpets. Perhaps being assigned the role of Iqbal may have aided his capacity to imagine and connect with the story, so that he saw the story as his own experience. This account can be read as illustrating the capacity of drama and storytelling to enable connections with others (Abbs, 1989; Arendt, 1958/1998; Benjamin, 1955/1999).

*Iqbal's Story* certainly cultivated affective responses, indicated by the 19 sympathetic responses noted in Table 5.1 and the examples discussed above. For some the affect was lasting, as evidenced in Max's comments below. This is Max's explanation for choosing Iqbal to interview through the dramatic convention called hot seat (as noted earlier in discussion on workshop 5) used in workshop 9, three weeks after hearing the story.

Max: Because the other boy who's sick and the old man who's so angry hit the poor boy who sick. The poor kid who sick, so that why more important

(rests his head in his hand with downward, despondent gaze). (Line 164-168 W9 19/09/2007)

Even though it was three weeks after I had shared *Iqbal's Story* with the class, Max was still expressing emotive responses to the unfair treatment of Iqbal's friend in the story. Would the children have felt the same degree of emotion if they had simply heard information about child labour? Max's comment above indicates that he saw *Iqbal's Story* as significant because of the unfair treatment of a sick child.

Another example of storytelling provoking a lasting impression and building knowledge is evident in the teacher's comments below where she speaks about differences between the engagement of the Prep class and their Year 6 buddies in a child labour project.

Teacher: The Year 6s have been working on machines that could assist the lives of people in Pakistan and the Prep's have really contributed. Year 6s were really surprised how much they knew. When talking about it, it was actually the Prep's that talked more. (Lines 102-104 W12 TC 24/10/2007)

The Year 6 assessment task of designing and making a machine that would assist the economically poor people of Pakistan grew out of members of the Prep class sharing an account of *Iqbal's Story* with their Year 6 buddies. The Year 6 class was stunned by this recount of *Iqbal's Story*. This led the Year 6 teacher to orchestrate a unit of learning on the issue of child labour for all the Year 6 classes, and for the rest of the year when the Prep class and Year 6 class met, the focus of their investigations was child labour. The teacher's comment suggests a marked difference in knowledge (and perhaps awareness and understanding) between the Prep children who had experienced three storytelling workshops that explored the issue of child labour in Pakistan, and the Year 6 children who had investigated child labour through non-narrative means. This experience suggests that real life stories told with descriptive language to paint images of scenes and events, accompanied by vocal and kinaesthetic expression to convey feelings and mood, offer scope for deeper emotive connection between listeners and the characters in stories. Further to this, the comment by the teacher indicates that the storytelling experience created knowledge for the Prep children about child labour, enabling them to engage in dialogue with older others.

Connection between story and imagination has been theorised by philosophers such as Benjamin (1955/1999) and Nussbaum (1997), along with storytellers such as Zipes (1995, 2004). The notion of sympathetic imagination (Nussbaum) aided understanding of the aesthetic qualities that provoke young children's emotive connection with those who experience injustice as a precursor to active citizenship participation. According to Nussbaum, storytelling can enable listeners to imagine and identify with the feelings of others. Stories can provide inside views of people's feelings that are not usually on display. Connection with these feelings can lead to compassion for another, as the listener imagines this suffering person as if she is involved. This

builds on Benhabib's (1986, 1992) suggestion that justice requires engagement with the 'concrete other'. By bringing imagination into the equation, the children imagined feeling another's experience of suffering.

In response to my query as to how storytelling of real life experiences, in particularly *Iqbal's Story*, provoked sympathetic responses that led to enacted social actions, two factors are apparent in the data presented thus far. One factor was the use of emotive and descriptive imagery, and another factor was children's active participation in the story. Based on recognition of the influence of these factors, I continued to include these factors in my practice. I endeavoured to pay particular attention to providing clear imagery that set the scene for each subsequent story, using words, media, and props. I incorporated ways that children could actively 'be' in the story, through contributing suggestions to the stories and drawing on dramatic conventions of role-play, gossip mill, chants.

#### *5.4.4 Sharing Tragedy*

Another factor that may have been particularly pertinent to *Iqbal's Story* could be the degree of tragedy in the story. The sharing of tragedy may be a significant factor, as Nussbaum (1997) recommended sharing tragedies with children as a means of building compassion and active citizenship. Her suggestion was that tragedies acquaint children with understandings of the tragic events that may happen in a human life but also equip them with understanding of diversity of choice of action. In this way, as noted in the children's responses to *Iqbal's Story*, hearing of tragedy through story can promote or provoke civic participation as global citizens who act for humanity.

This study was approached with a view that young children possess the capacity to engage with tragedy. Some adults who are influenced by a metanarrative of children as innocent may be alarmed at sharing stories such as *Iqbal's Story* with young children, as they choose to protect young children from what they view as tragedy. As noted previously, a metanarrative of childhood innocence shapes a culture of sharing sanitised stories with young children (Zipes, 1983, 1994). The children's responses to stories of tragedy indicate that they are capable of engaging with tragedies. The communal space created by live storytelling enabled the weight of tragedies to be shared. Arendt (1958/1998) saw significant merit in the capacity of storytelling to bear the weight of suffering. With this understanding, storytelling provided space for airing emotions and forging solidarity through sharing. To create spaces where the children's thoughts and feelings could be expressed and shared, a number of opportunities were provided for the children to express feelings, make comment, and ask questions within whole group discussions, small group activities, and follow-up conversations. In addition, a transcript of each story was sent home with each child on the day it was shared (as was requested by a parent), so that families were aware of the story content and could support discussions of the story at home.

Collectively, all of these strategies offered means for the children to process their thoughts and feelings in response to the tragedies.

An example of a child expressing her thoughts and feelings in response to a tragedy occurred when Finlay shared in a follow-up conversation that she had a bad dream after hearing *Iqbal's Story*.

Finlay: It was like the story but it got a little bit scarier.

...

Every night the man, when Iqbal went home, the carpet factory man went after him and pulled him back. (Lines 34-39 W6 CC 31/07/2007)

The follow-up conversation provided a space for Finlay to share her dream, which opened the door for Molly to share that she also had a dream where she was working in the factory. I then asked the group, "What do you think you can do about bad dreams?" (Line 55 W6 CC 31/07/2007). Molly, David and Ella offered these suggestions:

Molly: Think of good stories. (Line 58)

David: Tell people just in case it is still on your mind—Tell it out. (Line 65)

Ella: I'd draw a picture. (Line 70 W6 CC 31/07/2007)

This discussion was the only occasion the teacher and I were aware of any child sharing an account of being troubled by any of the stories of distress. The intimacy of this follow-up conversation seemed to cultivate a space where uncomfortable feelings could be aired, identification with others who felt the same realised, and practical strategies offered by peers. In this way the communal space of storytelling and discussion supported the weight of felt emotions in response to tragedies.

#### *5.4.5 Compassion Leads to Action*

The preceding discussions have identified the significance of sharing real life experiences, applying aesthetic qualities of sensuous and poetic language, dramatic engagement of audience, and sharing of tragedies. They indicate the capacity of storytelling to provoke emotive and sympathetic responses from young children. However, this contributes only some understanding to the research question, "What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children's participation as active citizens?" What is the link between emotive and sympathetic responses and active citizenship? What motivates young children to be active citizens? To explore what provoked or motivated young children to be active citizens, examples of some of the children's suggestions of social actions are considered.

According to Nussbaum (1997), compassion is necessary for citizenship responsibility, and as established above, narratives can cultivate compassion. Nussbaum suggested that to nurture citizenship responsibility requires specific teaching intervention, which involves not only sharing tragedies that provoke sympathetic responses, but also asking critical questions about the

experiences in the tragedies. In the follow-up conversation in week 6, after discussing what to do if you have a bad dream, I proposed:

Louise: The other thing is if you do something about it, it helps—other than feeling sad about it how dreadful that is. I wonder if there is something we can do to help these children. (Lines 73-75 W6 CC 31/07/2007)

The children readily made suggestions for ways to help children harshly affected by child labour.

Molly: We could go over, someone could go over, someone could send an email to the person who owns the carpet factory and tell them to stop being greedy. (Lines 80-81 W6 CC 31/07/2007)

Ella: If I was 15, and I was a big girl, and I was very big, and my mum let me go by myself then I would help children there. (Lines 98-99 W6 CC 31/07/2007)

The conversation then flowed onto ideas about bringing the child labourers mentioned in *Iqbal's Story* to the Blue school, as they discussed where an extra classroom could be built, and where the children could play whilst the building was being constructed. Their enthusiasm and ideas flourished for 'collecting' these children and bringing them to Australia. Such suggestions sparked concerns that I had inadvertently cultivated 'missionary-like' attitudes that support children being taken from their families, home and culture; especially, when Ella added:

Ella: We could build a carpet factory for them and they will say, "Oh! There is the carpet factory." (Lines 120-121 W6 CI 31/07/2007)

Viruru (2008) warned of the danger of western imperialist conceptions of work and children being projected upon other nations' practices. She argued that the complexities of individual circumstances are denied through universal conceptions of work and children. Perhaps by asking, "what can we do to help" promoted suggestions of salvation. I became aware of a need share another story about child labour in an effort to make visible these complexities through another perspective.

After *Iqbal's Story*, I chose to tell *Craig's Story*, about Craig Kielburger's experience of establishing the Free the Children network (discussed in Chapter 2). In *Craig's Story* the children came to hear a range of social actions that Free the Children have employed to redress the suffering of child labour. At the time I thought *Craig's Story* would be a suitable sequel to *Iqbal's Story* and the children's interest in taking action on child labour. To give further perspective to the children's suggestions for social actions, I thought that *Craig's Story* would provide additional understanding of conditions in which child labour occurs, along with understanding of social actions that others have implemented to redress the suffering of child labour. In the discussion after this story, almost every child contributed an idea for a social action to assist child workers. There were 14 suggestions of social actions noted in the discussion after *Craig's Story* (see Week 7, Table 4.2), which was the largest number of social actions suggested

in a storytelling workshop. None of the children suggested taking the children away from their families, home or culture in this discussion; all of the suggestions offered resource support, except for Molly's suggestion that seemed to promote advocacy by children disadvantaged by child labour themselves.

Molly: We could send some of these (*a small placard on a stick saying: "Free the Children"*) to them. Some signs like this to them. (Line 405 W7 3/09/2007)

The small placard was a replica of a banner that was used at a stop child labour rally in India that Craig Kielburger attended. A photo of this scene was shared as part of the slide show in telling *Craig's Story*. In the storytelling workshop based on *Craig's Story* this small placard was the object<sup>6</sup> that was passed from speaker to speaker in the critical discussion. The telling of *Craig's Story* about enacted social actions to redress child labour seemed to cultivate a shift in the children's suggestions of social actions to offer support where the children who had experienced injustice lived.

Although there was a shift in the children's suggestions of actions I am not suggesting that the telling of *Craig's Story* resolved all concerns regarding the projection of western imperialist conceptions of children and work on other nation's practices. There continued to be many uneasy moments when the children seemed to view the issue of child labour in terms of a simple binary of good versus evil (this is discussed further in Chapter 7), and the teacher and me supporting the projection of our western practices, such as compulsory schooling. The tremendous loss and suffering in *Iqbal's Story* and *Craig's Story* seemed to spark a stronger fire in the children's compassion for child labourers that fuelled their motivation for action. However, it was messy business because the children, teacher and I were so removed from the socio-cultural context of the children in *Iqbal's Story* and *Craig's Story* to understand the complexities and honour the agency of these children. We ran the risk of deciding what was best for others. Questions of What does this story ask me to care about?; and What does this story ask me to do? (Nussbaum, 1997) may offer some way out of the mess. These questions place emphasis on the listener to nominate what they care about and what they want to do, rather than making suggestions in the interests of others.

#### 5.4.6 Closing Reflections on the Motif of Walk in the Shoes of Another

*Walk in the shoes of another* became a recurring motif in my practice of social justice storytelling because recognising that bringing unjust experiences of others alive through stories can cultivate awareness, compassion and action to redress injustices. In the same way that the fisherman created a situation for the king to experience his life being threatened and to cultivate compassion

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<sup>6</sup> Each week (in Clusters one and two) I supplied a different object that symbolised the story as the indicator of who was speaking in the story critique.

for the predicament of the people, the stories I told endeavoured to cultivate compassion toward others who experience injustice. Sharing of experiences of others through story seemed to broaden the children's understandings of humanity, through the diversity of human experience.

Explanations of the motif *walk in the shoes of another* produced some answers to the subquestion, "What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children's participation as active citizens?" Recognising the recurring motif enabled identification of the following qualities, which contributed to a greater number of sympathetic responses and suggestions of social actions: a) biographical tragedies, b) aesthetic qualities (e.g., descriptive language), c) active participation of children in the story, and d) opportunities for the children to express opinions and feelings about the stories. These qualities were identified through reflections upon my practice and guided the amendments and shaping of subsequent workshops. This is not to say I continued to tell biographical tragedies. The concern of projecting western imperialist conceptions onto other nation's practices also informed my practice and steered me to shape fictitious stories in Cluster-three, which brought together many previous themes in an effort to support children's meaning-making of social justice as explored in the stories so far.

### 5.5 Cluster-three: Bringing It All Together

At the start of Cluster-three I knew it would be the last cluster, as the school year was ending. With a view to imposed closure, I endeavoured to tie all the story themes together to create a cohesive form that could support young children's meaning-making of social justice issues and active citizenship. Cluster-three was also a space to consolidate what I had learned in my pursuit of further embedding my values within my storytelling practice. Themes and features of the stories shared in clusters one and two merged. What was learned through exploration of the motifs of story-tailoring, spinning and weaving, freedom of expression and *walk in the shoes of another*, was consolidated with the four motifs functioning collectively in my storytelling practice.

#### 5.5.1 Two Blocks

The story told first in Cluster-three (week 10) was *Two Blocks* (see Appendix K), which I wrote to follow on from the theme of "it's unfair", which had a strong presence in week 9 (the summative workshop at the end of cluster-two). In week 9, a small group of children played the Oxfam game *It's just not fair* (Oxfam GB, n.d.), which was designed for children aged 4 to 11 to experience unequal trading relationships. The children played in teams of three, yet there was a deliberately unequal distribution of resources between teams. Juliet was in the team that had the least resources, yet her team members did not give her a turn, which upset Juliet and provoked much discussion about different ways to share resources and consider others. In the debriefing interview that week with the teacher, this was the first point that the teacher raised with regard to my question of Where to next?

Teacher: I think what came up right at the end with what Juliet was saying, “How I felt it was so unfair”, that really is something that kids understand really well and have stories to tell about it. ’Cos they always struggle with this.  
(Lines 7-9 W9 TC 19/09/2007)

The teacher’s comment about how the experience of unfairness is part of children’s everyday lives led me to write a story that was based on a context relevant to children’s lives. I fabricated and tailored the story based on the remnant of “it’s unfair”, with children’s interest in block play and concern for equitable block distribution. Many of the children played with the blocks on a regular basis, yet there were frequent disputes over sharing blocks. The teacher and I were interested to see if the children could apply their understandings of unfairness gained through a story to their own interactions.

The story told of five children who had full access to all blocks except five. The remaining 15 children played with these five blocks. I created the story for the children of the study. It was a raw story that was not bound to honour the heritage of tradition or the accuracy of facts, as was the case with previous folktales or life stories that I shared. It had grown out of my imagination, so it was organic and much more open to co-storytelling with the children. I strung together the children’s contributions made throughout the story whilst endeavouring to maintain the interconnectivity and cohesiveness of the story. The collective nature of storytelling that Benjamin (1955/1999) recognised was further embraced through this genre of co-storytelling. Through co-storytelling I aimed to support my values of agency, responsiveness, and interconnectivity by creating space for children’s contributions, which I wove into the story. *Two Blocks* involved the antagonists being subjected to *a walk in the shoes of another* experience to cultivate a shift in their attitude. This took place when the five children who played with most of the blocks could not access their blocks because the lock on the cupboard that protected their blocks from the other children jammed. In time these five children came to learn from the other children many ways to play with only a few blocks. The children also experienced this firsthand as they role played the children in the story.

In this story, all four motifs were present. Story-tailoring was present in my customising of the story for the class. The motif of spinning and weaving was present in my telling, spinning, and weaving together the children’s ideas. Freedom of expression was present in children’s contributions to the stories. *Walk in the shoes of another* was present as a theme that enabled learning of another’s position in the story.

### 5.5.2 *The GREED Machine and Two Rocks*

The four motifs continued to function collectively in the following two stories that I shared in cluster three, *The GREED Machine* (Appendix L) and *Two Rocks* (Appendix M). These two stories patched together remnants from all the previous stories, tailored into a patchwork vest (or perhaps it was just a button) in the hope that it would be worn close to the children, so the stories

of the stories of the stories would stay with them and settle on their beings as their knowledge of the world grows. The story of *The GREED Machine* grew out of recognition of the underlying theme of greed across the previous stories and a decision by the teacher and me to further explore inequitable distribution of resources that occurred in *Two Blocks*. The teacher and I discussed a number of possible stories, such as *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein (1977), *The Lorax* by Dr Seuss (1972), and folktales such as *It Couldn't be Worse* and *The Little Old Lady in the Vinegar Bottle*. After much pondering over these stories and consideration of the stories and themes explored previously, I wrote the story *The GREED Machine*. It was a tale of two countries: Greenland and Black-n-White land<sup>7</sup>, and the unequal distribution of resources that occurred between the two countries when a man in Greenland invented the GREED (Great Reproducer of Everything Everyone Desires) machine. The man came to learn the failings of his GREED machine through the wisdom of a beggar woman who explained the never-ending nature of greed through a magic bowl that could not be filled. This story ended with the GREED machine inventor hosting a meeting seeking solutions to rectify the damage the GREED Machine had created.

The ideas that were offered in the meeting at the end of *The GREED Machine* were then included in the next story *Two Rocks*, which was a sequel to *The GREED Machine*. When the children's suggestions were implemented in *Two Rocks*, the Greenlanders were not open to sharing their land with Black-n-Whiters. Similar behaviours emerged that occurred in *Two Blocks*, such as the Greenlanders being overly protective of their possessions, and the Black-n-Whiters experiencing exclusion and despair at their scarcity of resources. The wise old woman helped to resolve the conflict, and the Coxen's fig-parrot re-appeared as a sign of hope.

My creation of stories specifically for the Prep class seemed to further enhance intimacy and a communal climate in the storytelling workshops. The motif of spinning and weaving continued its presence along with the corresponding value of interconnectivity by themes and characters from previous stories being woven together in these last two stories. Figure 5.4 presents a diagram of the interconnectivity of themes from the stories in cluster-three. *Two Blocks* and *The GREED Machine* both explored the theme of inequitable distribution of resources, from a class context to a bi-nation context. *Two Rocks* made visible the secondary impacts of greed: exclusion and dislocation.

By bringing together themes and characters from previous stories, the children were reminded of them and came to acknowledge further connections of meaning. After telling *The GREED Machine*, I asked the children if this story reminded them of another story.

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<sup>7</sup> The names of these two countries were simply based on the colour/s of the material that represented each country in my storytelling of *The GREED Machine* and *Two Rocks*.

Many of the children identified links between themes and characters in *The GREED Machine* and other stories that I had previously told.

Max: It reminded me of the Coxen’s fig-parrot, ’cos like the birds dying, ’cos the animals dying from this story and like a hunter killing them, [yet] it was a machine. Animals, the animals have no more food, so that’s why I remember. (Lines 233-235 W11 15/10/2007)

Patrick: I was thinking about the story of the wise old woman ... ’cos she wanted to share some food. (Lines 249 & 255 W11 15/10/2007)

Tony: It reminded me of Iqbal, ’cos the animals were poor and all dying and Iqbal he was poor. (Lines 267-270 W11 15/10/2007)

Mat: It was like the Coxen’s fig-parrot. They chopped down the trees. (Lines 344 & 346 W11 15/10/2007)

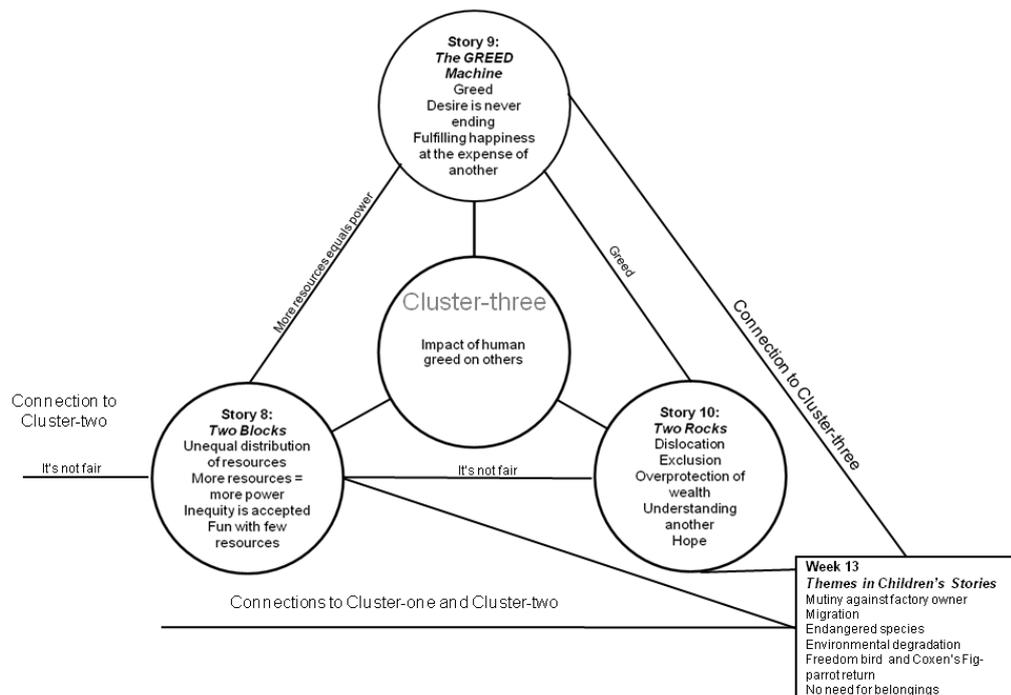


Figure 5.4. Cluster-three: Interconnectivity of themes from Cluster-one and Cluster-two.

Each of these children was capable of expressing verbal links between themes and characters from *The GREED Machine* and previous stories. Mat had only begun to learn English earlier that year, and the teacher viewed Patrick’s thinking as “very disconnected” and “developmentally very young” (Line 137, 156 W5 TC 22/08/2007), so for these two children, their capacity to build connections was appreciated by the teacher and me. By asking the children which parts of *The GREED Machine* reminded them of other stories, the teacher and I were able to see the children’s meaning-making between the stories.

Teacher: Talk about being in the third cluster ... you can really see what they know. They haven't forgotten what started, and where they've come, and where they are at now. That was really good. Wow that's fantastic! (Lines 18-21 W11 TC 17/10/2007)

The provision of opportunity for the children to reflect over past stories via storytelling and discussion worked to provide evidence of the children's memories of the stories and their capacity to recognise connections between the stories, which in turn were clear feedback of the stories leaving lasting impressions.

Efforts to further support children's freedom of expression came into fruition through the three stories of cluster-three, all being self-authored for the class at the time of the study. Their raw and loose nature offered many openings for the children's contributions, which I wove into the stories so that a sense of collective ownership was nurtured. This genre of co-storytelling positioned the children as active members of a community. The community was one that we collectively created through the study, and included the children, teacher, teacher aide, and myself.

Cluster-three also led to the practice of children offering suggestions for the post-story activities continuing from Cluster-two. With the stories being fictitious, the children's suggestions for social actions stopped. As noted in Table 4.2, there were no data entries of suggestions of social actions after week 8. Instead, the children seemed to explore story content through drawing, block play, and story making. Drawing and block construction continued as recurrent requests as post-story activities for each of the workshops in Cluster-three, which was discussed as a pattern in 5.3.3. In week 13, as the summative workshop for Cluster-three, the children told stories to me. Some of the themes that emerged in the children's stories were: mutiny against factory owner, migration, endangered species, and environmental degradation. Some of the ideas that the children explored in their block play and story-making are analysed in Chapter 7 to investigate who young children might be as citizens.

My storytelling with this class ended with the *Two Rocks* story. To conclude, I thought carefully about the last message to leave with the children as I wove many of the themes and characters from previous stories together. I decided to leave traces of hope by painting a closing image of trees being planted and a sighting of a Coxen's fig-parrot. This may seem idealistic, but as Craig Kielburger (1998) claimed, hope sustains motivation for change for a better tomorrow. Many of the children's faces came alive at the sighting of a Coxen's fig-parrot in the story. Declan made the following comment in the discussion after the story.

Declan: Oh yeah that was so COO-OL (*smiles*). I wonder how it [Coxen's fig-parrot] could appear out of nowhere. (Lines 261-262 W12 23/10/2007)

At the follow-up conversation the next day, Denmark gave an account of *The Two Rocks* story to David who had been away, with his final statement being:

Denmark: And at the end there was the Coxen's fig-parrot and things only got better. (Line 6 W12 CC 24/10/2007)

The children seemed to appreciate the reappearance of the Coxen's fig-parrot. Declan seemed to express joy and wonder. Denmark clearly read the same significance of hope as I intended with "things only got better". These comments suggest the influence of my practice of social justice storytelling in the learning of young children as active citizens.

Evidence of ongoing influence was not captured. My visits to the class ended in November, a time of the year in which the teacher was consumed by school, curriculum and assessment requirements. The teacher was frustrated by this as expressed in her comment:

Teacher: If you could imagine having a classroom where this would have been my whole focus, day in and day out. It would have been awesome! (Lines 91-92 W13 TC 11/11/2007)

What the teacher did manage to continue beyond my visits was discussion of child labour and schooling in Pakistan. She also made email contact with a girls' school in Pakistan through collaboration with their Year 6 buddy class and teacher. Then the school year ended and the children and teachers moved onto other classes, other countries and other careers.

## 5.6 Conclusion

This chapter told the story of what informed and steered my storytelling practice. It provides a map of the study as three clusters, plotting the interconnectivity between the 10 stories told, which have been discussed and presented in Figures 5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. Figure 5.5 presents a visual view of the whole study as three linked clusters. The interconnections presented in each of these diagrams are my readings of what the children saw as commonly significant in the stories and their relevance with subsequent and preceding stories. I reflected on my practice by assessing it against my research values in accordance with a living educational theory approach to practitioner research (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). Reflections on my practice in relation to my research values brought realisation that at times my practice contradicted my values. To address these contradictions and endeavour to honour these values in my practice I made decisions and amended my practice. This chapter told of my learning as a storytelling teacher and how it was shaped by others, as each decision to alter my practice was informed by the children and teacher's responses to my storytelling practice.

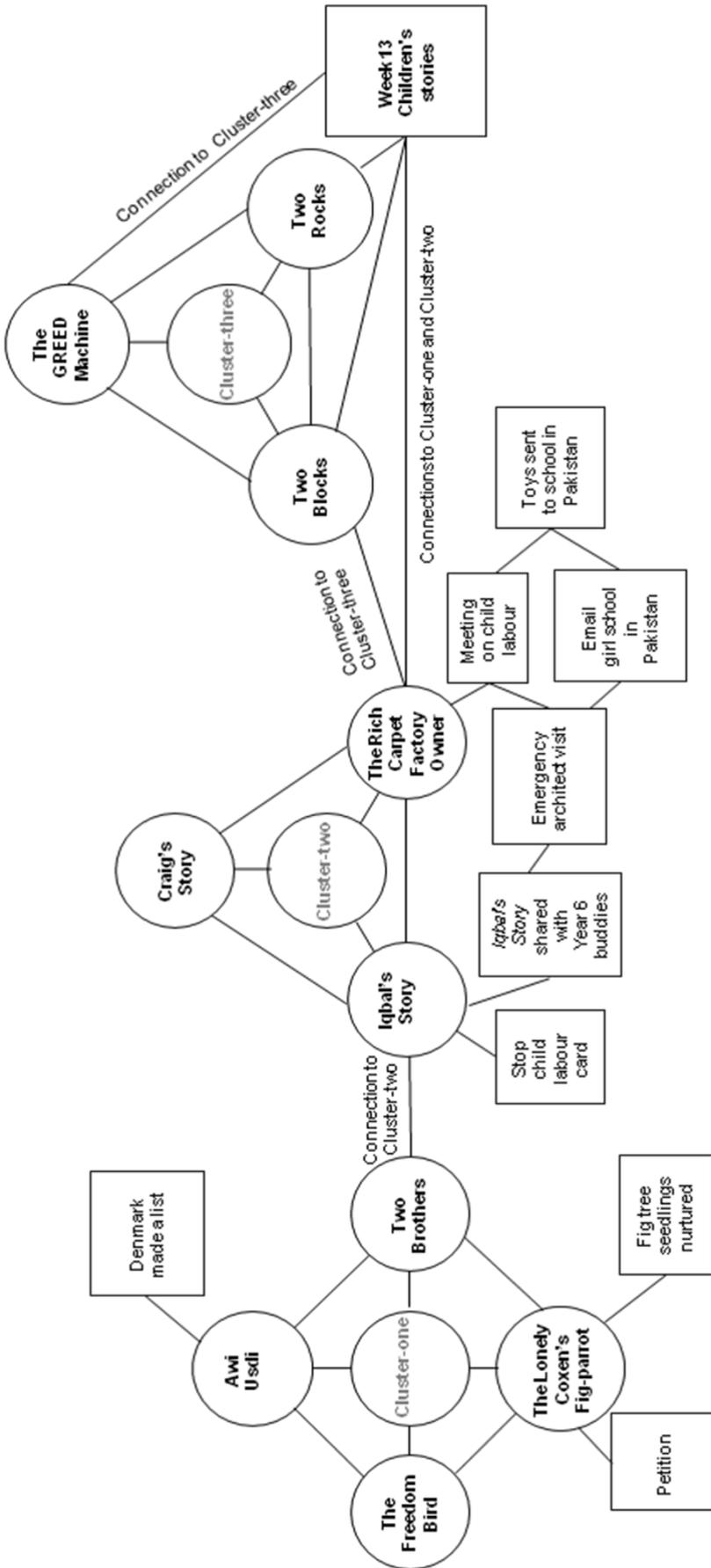


Figure 5.5. The study represented as three linked clusters.

Four motifs emerged from reflections of my practice in relation to my values. Recognition of the motifs story-tailoring, spinning and weaving, freedom of expression and *walk in the shoes of another* worked to guide my practice in relation to provoking young children's active citizenship. I did not name these motifs as such until after data collection, yet they were present in my decision-making about my storytelling practice throughout data collection. These motifs steered and shaped my practice, yet they are not proposed as a conclusive list or a recipe. Instead explanations of these motifs bring understandings of the influences in my practice of social justice storytelling. The motifs also offer points of attention for future practice.

1. To notice where listeners take a story, and respond, adapt, and welcome their contributions.
2. To spin and weave elements of stories, and be attentive to what the interconnections set in motion.
3. To support freedom of expression for participants in the ways they choose to be agentic within a responsive and considerate climate.
4. To source and share stories that make the complexities of humanity visible so that sympathetic imagination is nurtured.

These possibilities of social justice storytelling as pedagogy are a beginning that is open to further exploration and intersection with other possibilities.

The process of reflection of my practice has awakened deeper understandings of social justice storytelling as pedagogy that enables young children's active citizenship practice. Qualities of social justice storytelling that support or provoke young children's active citizenship were identified. How adults and children can work together to enable young children's active citizenship participation through a practice of social justice storytelling was investigated. An intimate learning community was cultivated, where stories awakened awareness of the complexities of humanity, which were discussed critically and responded to through aesthetic experiences and social actions. Possibilities for young children's active citizenship did emerge. The following two chapters (Chapter 6 & 7) explore the influence of my practice on these possibilities.

## CHAPTER 6: INFLUENCES ON POSSIBILITIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN'S ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

In this chapter I explore the influence of adult ideas on young children's active citizenship. Data selected from Cluster-one is analysed that tracks social actions initiated by children that were transformed and responded to by both the teacher and me as well other adults in the wider community. These child-initiated social actions were selected because of the variation of transformation and response they attracted from adults. The data events are described and analysed chronologically.

The research subquestions frame the analysis:

2b) What proposals for social actions do young children offer?

2c) What citizenship practices are available and possible for young children?

2d) Which metanarratives and ideologies influence young children's active citizenship participation?

2e) Who might young children be as active citizens?

Metanarratives of children and citizenship are recognised as influencing possibilities for children's social actions. Arendt's theory of action (1958/1998) is used to provide a means to read and define young children's active citizenship.

This chapter is divided into sections according to how the children were viewed as citizens at different stages in the formation and implementation of social actions. The different ways of viewing children as citizens were as social actors (6.1), as political actors (6.2), and as future citizens (6.3). Within each of these sections other images of children as citizens were recognised as interrupting and influencing what young children's active citizenship participation could be. Upon analysing the children's participation in Cluster-one of the study, I realised that there is much confusion and ambiguity over the meaning of the terms *children* and *participation*. In section 6.4, I discuss this confusion. The chapter concludes with a way of viewing young children's active citizenship (6.5) based on Arendt's theory of action (1958/1998).

### 6.1 Children's Citizenship: Children as Social Actors

In this section I analyse evidence of one child (Denmark) as a social actor initiating and independently completing a social action. Upon examining the data more closely, I identified metanarratives that had interrupted my practice and intention of supporting children as social actors. This section begins with an account of the conversation that provoked the initiated social action (6.1.1). The social action suggested by Denmark is then analysed for possible influences (6.1.2). Next, I explore how Denmark and I persisted with different proposals for children's participation as active citizenship (6.1.3). In the closing section (6.1.4), I explain which social action was enacted and suggest reasons why.

### *6.1.1 Sharing Information with Children Viewed as Social Actors*

The context in which Denmark suggested a social action evolved from Max, who asked the following question in the follow-up conversation after *The Freedom Bird* story workshop (week 1):

Who protects the animals from the hunters? (Line 26 W1 CC 18/07/2007)

In response to his question, I sourced further information on campaign activities of organisations (WWF and Voiceless) that protect animals and are supportive of child participation. In the following storytelling workshop (week 2), I shared information on animal protection campaign activities with a small group of children in one of the post-story activities. This discussion of animal protection campaigns was one of three post-story activities that the children could choose from. The other activities included designing a device that nurtured or protected an animal or drawing about the story in their story journals.

Denmark, Max, Charlie, Molly, Finlay, and Patrick chose to attend the discussion about these campaigns. After independently making the choice to attend, they sat down promptly at the table and lent forward, eager to hear of the organisations' activities. Molly began the discussion by asking keenly:

Molly: Louise, what ARE they doing to the hunters to stop them?  
(Line 351W2 23/07/2007)

I provided brief explanations of the Terai Arc Anti-poaching Project in Nepal, the Help End Tiger Trade Project (both WWF projects), and the Animal Club activities of Voiceless (an Australian animal protection organisation). For the Help End Tiger Trade Project I stated:

Louise: ... and these people from the World Wildlife Fund made a big list of all the people in the world who are saying, 'No! You should not do that' and they showed it to all the leaders of different countries and they thought 'Mmm, many people want to stop the killing of tigers', so they decided that they would make it against the law.  
(Lines 452-456W2 23/07/2007)

Throughout my explanations the children asked clarifying questions (e.g., "which country?"; "is it true?"). All of the children actively participated in the discussion of campaigns to protect animals. Their many questions and comments suggested a keen interest in what other people were doing to protect animals from the practice of hunting.

### *6.1.2 Denmark Suggests a Social Action*

When the children viewed pictures from each of the campaign webpage fact sheets, Denmark spontaneously proposed this plan for action.

Denmark: I'm going to ask my Dad if he knows the people who are working for that and doing that and I want to make a list of the hunters and

make a list of the people who are stopping the hunters. (W2 23/07/2007 Lines 483-485)

These comments are suggestive of Denmark being a social actor, as he expressed interest in taking voluntary action on an issue of global concern. These are qualities of communitarian (Delanty, 2002; Etzioni, 1993; Janoski, 1998) and global citizenship (J. Williams, 2002). His comment suggests autonomy in accordance with the definition of Young (1995) regarding the ability to make and act upon choices, thus providing evidence of Denmark as a social actor through autonomous, self-motivated, and self-initiated action to address a global concern.

Denmark's idea of making a list could have been shaped by my explanation of the Help End Tiger Trade campaign, in which I stated that they "made a big list" (Lines 452-456 W2 23/07/2007). My use of the word 'list' was an attempt to translate the term 'petition' into a more recognisable and accessible word for children aged five and six years. To Lansdown (2005), viewing children as developing can mask the extent to which they are capable. In this case I did not see the children as capable of engaging with the word 'petition', and so I positioned myself as a translator and altered the language. Denmark used the generic word 'list', which had contextual meaning to the group but not to outsiders who had not heard my translation and interpretation. To Denmark's suggestion I replied:

Louise:           Mmm—I'm not sure if it is a problem here in Australia, but you could ask your Dad, and when I come on Wednesday you tell me what you found out. (Lines 486-488 W2 23/07/2007)

This was an effort to support Denmark as a social actor capable of seeking knowledge on whether hunting takes place in Australia and suggests evidence of my practice of social justice storytelling provoking education for social change by motivating action to redress unjust practices. I did not give him answers but rather supported his intention to seek information from his father. By welcoming Denmark's initiated action to seek new knowledge, I endeavoured to support his agency through self-initiated knowledge seeking and social actions (i.e., list-making).

Denmark responded positively to my comment, taking on board my suggestion of reporting on his inquiry:

Denmark:        I'll take the lists with me and every time I'll take the lists with me. (Line 489 W2 23/07/2007)

This comment expressed commitment to the responsibility of the lists that he had voluntarily undertaken. Viewed in terms of Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action, both Denmark and I were openly responsive to each other. Up to this point, we did not block or control the responses or actions of each other: agency was not denied.

### 6.1.3 Children as Social Actors Versus Children as Dependent on Adults

The aim of the discussion with this small group of children on animal protection campaigns was for the children to choose one of the campaign strategies in which to participate. I had chosen campaigns with established strategies that supported child participation. For this reason, the goal was to obtain a decision on supporting a campaign even though Denmark had suggested his own idea for a social action.

The following data excerpt from this discussion makes visible the ways in which I struggled to manage two agendas: responding to the group of young children, and obtaining a decision on citizenship participation with an established campaign strategy.

Louise: So there are three different things you can do. Molly, you might want to have a think about what you as a class want to do. You could set up here, at school, an animal club, where you do different activities to

protect animals. Do you think there might be other people in the school who might be interested in protecting animals?

Molly: Um can I invite my brother? (Lines 493-499 W2 23/07/2007)

Denmark: I might ring some of my friends. This afternoon I might ring some of my friends and see if they can help me.

Louise: Oh ok, can I just ask you one more thing? Would you like to help any of these projects?

Molly: I would.

Denmark: I'm going to call some people to help me do some lists.

Louise: You want to do the lists. I think Finlay and Carl /

Patrick: (*To Louise*) I'm going to make a list for you.

Louise: Oh you like the idea of lists, because we could get a passport with the World Wildlife Fund, and whenever they need help from us they will ask us to write letters and get names of lots of people to make lists, saying stop hurting the animals. Is that what you think? Is that what you are interested in when you are talking about lists?

Denmark: You can't ring the hunters?

Louise: No. (Lines 515-529 W2 23/07/2007)

In this excerpt I was endeavouring to facilitate a group decision on which established campaign activity the group wanted to contribute. Although I was attempting to support the children's agency through consultation, greater support for their agency would have occurred had I worked with their ideas. Yet I was unwilling to surrender my pre-planned agenda of selecting an animal protection campaign for class participation. This contradicted my value of responsiveness.

In the position of facilitator I maintained group cohesion (e.g., “I think Finlay and Carl”), listened and paraphrased (e.g., “You want to do the lists”), and sought opinions (e.g., “Do you think ...”; “Is that what you think?”). In the position of authority on campaigns to protect animals, I shared knowledge (e.g., “an animal club, where you do different activities to protect animals”). Through a position of knowing came power to take control as I manipulated the WWF Passport strategy to sound like Denmark and Patrick’s plan to make lists (e.g., “we could get a passport ... to make lists”) and refuted Denmark’s query of the possibility of telephoning the hunters. I acknowledged the children’s agency through my endeavours to seek their opinions and engage them in decision-making. Yet in my efforts to obtain a decision, I also positioned the children as immanent, disregarding their ideas for my “knowledgeable” adult ideas. The only opportunity for children’s agency was deciding which campaign strategy to support. A metanarrative of children as immanent, and the teacher as knowing and controlling influenced my practice to contradict my values of agency and responsiveness. In this case the children’s ideas for social actions were excluded, as the metanarrative of teachers entering the classroom equipped with knowledge to impart on students dominated. Without analysis, disregarding children’s suggestions and negating their position as valuable contributors would have passed unnoticed.

My pedagogical and research agenda of following a predetermined plan collided with my attempts to be responsive and supportive of children’s agency. To follow leads from children was uncertain territory. Pre-planned activities offered predictability. This was an example of a moment in my practice in which differing views of children determined pedagogical practices that influenced possibilities for young children’s active citizenship.

At this point in the conversation, the teacher approached our gathering to hear the outcomes of the discussion.

- Teacher:           *(Comes over to table)* What are they thinking of doing?
- Louise:            They are very interested in the idea of lists and names.
- Teacher:           Lists? *(with a puzzled look)*
- Louise:            I think they like the idea of a petition.
- Denmark:          I’m going to be doing the list ... (Lines 530-536 W2 23/07/2007)  
*(The children say many things about what they are going to do, talking over the top of each other)*
- Louise:            But I think that maybe the idea of the passport and then they can tell us when they need help.
- Teacher:           That’s a good idea, sounds good. (Lines 542-544W2 23/07/2007)
- Louise:            We’d better go back to the whole circle everyone. Well done friends. Good job.

Molly: I might ring some of my friends. This afternoon I might talk to my friends.

Denmark: I'm going to get some people to help me do the lists. I'm going to get lists for you. I'm going to do the lists. (Lines 548-553 W2 23/07/2007)

In this excerpt, the teacher directed her question about what the children were thinking of doing to me, privileging my position as storytelling teacher/researcher over the children. I relayed the children's plan to "do lists". I offered the teacher the more accurate term "petition", as within metanarratives of children as immanent or developing, the identity of adult is seen as knowing.

None of the children indicated a preference for any of the projects, yet I claimed a decision was made by stating, "I think they like the idea of a petition ... But I think that maybe the idea of the passport and then they can tell us when they need help." Even though I presented the decision cautiously by prefacing it with "I think", I spoke for the children ("they like") and selected a project that would largely be controlled externally ("they can tell us when they need help"). I took the opportunity for decision-making away from the children by selecting an external project, the structure of which was already fixed. By doing this, I positioned the children as incapable of making decisions, suggesting, or steering the direction of social actions. By selecting a fixed pre-determined project, I positioned the participants as passive in citizenship practice. My actions unwittingly denied, muted, and limited children's agency to make suggestions or decisions on the possibilities and direction of social actions. My practice was a living contradiction with my value of children's agency. I struggled to juggle multiple agendas, and metanarratives of children as immanent and developing permeated my comments.

I made a decision on the children's behalf. Although I endeavoured to consult with the group of children, in the absence of an answer from them I matched my interpretation of their responses with what I saw as the most closely aligned campaign strategy. Like the UNCRC principle, "in the child's best interests", I positioned myself as an adult and more informed about assessing their interests. Yet as Coady (1996) suggested, implementation of the UNCRC principle can deny the children's rights and ability to determine their own interests. By making a decision on the children's behalf, their interests were muted.

Even though I made a decision on the children's behalf, Molly and Denmark did not let go of their self-initiated plans for social actions, as noted in the last section of the conversation (Lines 548-553). As the group moved to join a whole-class gathering, Molly (Lines 550-551) and Denmark (Lines 552-553) still professed plans to enact their suggestions for social actions. Metanarratives of children as immanent and developing, with adults as knowing, competent, and supreme did not appear to encroach upon the self-

motivation and commitment of Molly and Denmark to follow through with their plans for social actions. This was exciting because at the time I had not actively supported and extended their ideas. The closing comments of Molly and Denmark expressed autonomy because of their declarations to act upon their choices (Young, 1995). Their comments did not fit with metanarratives of children as innocent, immanent, and developing, as within these discourses children do not possess the capacity for autonomy (Stasiulis, 2002). Molly and Denmark's comments presented a possibility for young children's active citizenship as young children initiating autonomous social actions.

#### 6.1.4 *Child Initiated Versus Adult Initiated Social Action*

Following the above conversation, the group joined the whole class in a circle on the carpet to close the workshop. I explained the idea of the WWF Passport to the whole class. The teacher asked:

Teacher: And is it only for children or can I join as well?

Denmark: You can join too!

...

Denmark: Maybe we could get some for them.

Teacher: For who?

Denmark: For the other class—the other Prep (*pointing at next door class*).

(Lines 670-681 W2 23/07/2007)

Even though I made Denmark's idea fit with an adult-directed, externally controlled strategy (WWF Passport), Denmark was eager to include his teacher and the neighbouring class. He seemed willing to participate in the strategy and actively support group participation. Yet in the small group discussion none of his responses affirmed the passport strategy. Why did he support the passport strategy in this context? Was it that he was with the whole class and that the passport strategy was declared as the campaign in which the class would participate?

The above comments by Denmark can be read as responsive actions (Arendt, 1958/1998), by welcoming the inclusion of others. He did not seem to block or control the responses of others to his actions, nor did he block suggestions of actions by others (e.g., my suggestion of registering for the WWF Passport). Viewed this way, the actions initiated by Denmark supported his agency and that of others. If he had attempted to control how others responded to his initiatives, he could have deprived others of the opportunity to begin, to act; and agency could have been denied for both Denmark and others. Data explored in this section provide evidence of Denmark being agentic in Arendtian terms, that is, an initiator of social actions that started something new and responsive to the initiatives of others.

Just as Denmark expressed support for the passport strategy, I expressed interest in supporting Denmark's enthusiasm for his list. We both seemed to be open to further deliberation over the form of social action for animal protection. As I was leaving the class

that day, I confirmed with Denmark his agreement to bring his list to class when I next visited. Denmark said that he would do the list that night, although he was concerned that he would keep the rest of his family awake with the light on as it would probably take him all night. A few days later, Denmark proudly brought his list (recorded in an exercise book) to school. It included my name, the teacher's name and the names of all his classmates as well as names of other friends from outside the school.

The WWF Passport idea did not progress any further than the teacher and me both registering for it. At the time I thought the idea of subscribing and contributing to the WWF Passport strategy was a conscious effort to support children's agency through participation in the wider community. However, my focus on this strategy hindered my awareness of and attention to how Denmark chose to be agentic himself. Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) recognised that sociological research methods that proclaim to acknowledge children's agency can be blind to ways children choose to be agentic. In this example, the children did not have a connection with the concept. In terms of citizenship, children require a voice in the citizenship experience in order to build connection with its purpose and meaning (Hart, 1997; Kulnych, 2001). The children did not connect with the WWF Passport idea, probably because they had limited understanding of how the passport strategy worked and it was not their idea. They had no energy invested in it and therefore no emotional connection. Yet Denmark's idea of making lists came to fruition. Denmark had connected with the idea: he suggested it and he steered it. The fact that he created a list, and the WWF Passport strategy was not adopted, indicates that ownership of the idea may have motivated Denmark's participation. This suggests that opportunities for children to initiate actions are required to cultivate motivation for active citizenship participation. The outcome of this experience is indicative of why Cockburn (1998) and Roche (1999) recommended that adults should listen seriously to what is important to children and what they suggest as actions to address injustices, and then devise ways with the children to support their ideas. The WWF Passport did not offer the flexibility to address what was important to the children, to incorporate their suggestions of actions, or to devise ways to bring their ideas into action.

This section has explored Denmark initiating and enacting a social action to redress the injustice of hunting. This is evidence of the influence of my practice of social justice storytelling in the learning of a young child as an active citizen. Denmark responded to what I had shared through stories and the provision of information on animal protection campaigns. He suggested a social action and expressed his commitment to it by enacting it despite lack of initial encouragement. His actions are evidence that young children's active citizenship can be provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling. However, my efforts to support active citizenship were not always aligned with my pedagogical values of agency and responsiveness. Metanarratives of children as immanent and developing

interrupted and shaped the possibilities that I saw for children's participation. Determining the social action in which the class would participate was adult-initiated and directed. However, the stories and information on animal protection campaigns that I shared acted as a catalyst for Denmark's idea of creating a list of people who are against hunting. At the time I recognised the list of names Denmark gathered as an act of citizenship that warranted further attention and purpose in the public realm. In the next section I explain how the teacher and I steered the list made by Denmark towards local purpose and action in the public realm.

## 6.2 Children's Citizenship: Children as Political Actors

Children can be political actors (Arendt, 1958/1998), capable of taking action in the polis, or public sphere. They also possess political identities (Kulnych, 2001). To Arendt, if someone starts something new in the polis or public sphere she is making a mark as a political citizen by expressing opinions and being motivated to initiate actions. To Kulnych, children are political actors if they authorise children's citizenship and are incorporated into political culture. In this section, I discuss endeavours to support young children's active citizenship by following the suggestions of Hart (1997) that children's participation in their local environment enables greater scope for direct civic engagement of children. Lansdown (2005) also argued that children's citizenship participation in a local context offers potential for meaningful action that can make a difference, as children have opportunities to actually see the impact of their actions. Based on these ideas, the teacher and I endeavoured to apply the list compiled by Denmark to a real issue within the local geographical area to cultivate possibilities for young children's active citizenship in the public realm. To enable the recognition of the list beyond the classroom as an act of active citizenship, I identified a local bird species that was critically endangered: the Coxens' fig-parrot. The anti-poaching campaigns that provoked the development of the list focused on endangered animals of Africa and Asia. These contexts were far removed from the children's daily lives. My intention was to localise their practice of citizenship so that they may have greater opportunity to be directly involved and see changes from their social actions. The need to source possibilities for children's participation in the local environment guided the crafting of *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot*, the story that I told in workshop two (previously discussed in section 5.1). The teacher and I had hoped that through engagement with a story about a local issue, young children's active citizenship would be provoked.

The cultivation of children's interest in the plight of the Coxen's fig-parrot is told in section 6.2.1. This is followed by explanations of how the teacher and I initiated action for children's citizenship participation in the political realm (6.2.2). Analysis of children as political actors is then discussed through their participation in this adult-initiated action (6.2.3).

### 6.2.1 Adult-initiated Local interest: *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot Story*

To cultivate children's interest in a local issue related to the harming of birds, I wrote the story *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* (see Appendix F). The story painted a picture of life for the Coxen's fig-parrot in the pre-colonised forests of South East Queensland. It then followed one bird's experience of deforestation from colonisation to present day, as if the bird had lived for many generations. Following the story, the children participated in a re-enactment of the deforestation of native fig trees and the consequential decline in the population of Coxen's fig-parrots. Through the story and the re-enactment, the children linguistically, visually, and kinaesthetically experienced the impact of deforestation on Coxen's fig-parrots. The final scene of one tree and two birds seemed to leave a strong impression, as expressed by Juliet in her comment:

Juliet: When the people were chopping down the trees I felt like the parrot was dying.  
(Line 913-914 W3 30/07/2007)

In the whole group discussion after the story Juliet and Max contributed these comments.

Juliet: They weren't thinking about the animals. Like if they were chopping down the trees with a bird in it—they've got to be careful of other animals. (Lines 176-177 W3 30/07/2007)

Max: What happens to the animals? If they be friends—be kind to the lorikeet [Coxen's fig-parrot] and everything else. So why are they killing them? ... Shouldn't have only one more left. What happens to stop killing? (Lines 199-202 W3 30/07/2007)

These comments suggested emotive, sensuous, and reflective responses to the story. As identified in section 5.4, stories provoked sympathetic responses when they told of suffering, evoked imagery and emotive connection, and engaged children. These factors were present in *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* story, which may have contributed to the sympathetic responses above. Comments by the children indicated passion for the plight of the Coxen's fig-parrot and a desire to stop those who were harming them.

The post-story activities offered in *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* storytelling workshop included drawing in their story journals, making a Coxen's fig-parrot replica, and making signs to support the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population. At the sign-making activity, children suggested the following messages, which I wrote and the children copied onto cardboard signs:

Plant more fig seeds (Mat)

Don't cut the trees down (Peter)

Don't steal the Coxen's fig-parrot (Nick)

It's very sad that lots of the Coxen's fig-parrots are dying (Scott)

We need to plant more fig trees (Declan)

Don't kill the Coxen's fig-parrot (Finlay)

Please plant more fig seeds (Juliet).

When Declan was writing his sign, he thought about fig seeds and trees and asked:

Declan: You can buy them from shops can't you? (Line 750 W3 30/07/2007)

Declan and I then puzzled over the kind of shop that would sell the species of native fig trees that Coxen's fig-parrots eat. Our conversation continued with plans.

Louise: Maybe I should see if we could get some fig trees ... mmm I could bring them here and you could give them out to people. (Line 760-762 W3 30/07/2007)

Declan: We could plant them in the school and the fig-parrots could come around, so we could see a real one. (Line 764-765 W3 30/07/2007)

Declan's last comment indicated delight at the possibility of actually seeing one of these elusive birds.

From the idea proposed by Declan, the teacher started to consider and consult with the principal about planting a fig tree at the school. Over the next week I made contact with numerous organisations in search of native fig seedlings, which included the Threatened Bird Network, the Blackall Ranges Landcare Group (who work in a known Coxen's fig-parrot habitat), and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services Coxen's Fig-parrot Recovery Team. Eventually, it was through a resident of the Blackall Ranges who had devoted much of her life to recovery work for the Coxen's fig-parrot that brought success. I learnt that the Coxen's fig-parrot eats only a few native fig species, and their seeds could only be sourced from these trees, not from nurseries. This resident also advised against planting a fig tree in the school grounds for two reasons: the hazard of their size; and that to have any chance of supporting recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population, the fig trees needed to be planted in known habitat areas, such as the Blackall Ranges. The resident kindly volunteered to travel from the Blackall Ranges to Brisbane to bring seedlings for the children to nurture until they were sufficiently mature to be planted in the Blackall Ranges. Unfortunately, illness prevented her from visiting the class. We then waited for a suitable time for the designated Coxen's fig-parrot expert from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services to visit after he had collected fig seedlings from the Blackall Ranges.

When a Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services Officer visited six weeks later he also brought a preserved Coxen's fig-parrot from the Queensland Museum collection and a recording of its song. In this way, Declan and the class had an as-close-as-possible experience of a real Coxen's fig-parrot. This visit not only enabled the children to contribute to the recovery of a Coxen's fig-parrot habitat but also led to the children becoming more informed about it and becoming advocates for its recovery.

Care of the seedlings became a challenge, as at the time the locality was experiencing a drought and watering was not permitted during school hours. At a loss for

solutions, the teacher took the seedlings home to care for them. This then meant that the children only briefly contributed to nurturing the seedlings and limitations were placed on their citizenship participation due to circumstances beyond our control. Some months later the seedlings went back to their native area to grow and bud fruit for Coxen’s fig-parrots to eat.

Declan’s suggestion of planting fig trees for Coxen’s fig-parrots led to the children, teacher, and me participating in encounters with community members who broadened our understandings of the complexities and delicate nature of endangered species recovery work. According to Arendt’s (1958/1998) the theory of action, Declan’s initiative brought action into the public sphere. The nurturing of fig tree seedlings can also be seen as child-authored citizenship in the wider political culture as Kulnych (2001) suggested. It was child authored because the idea to plant fig trees was contributed by Declan. The experience brought the class into contact with the wider political culture through contact with other people and organisations involved in strategies to aid recovery of the Coxen’s fig-parrot population. On the basis of this evidence, Declan can be understood to be a political actor.

The children built a connection with the Coxen’s fig-parrot and its plight. In week 12, when I asked each child which story they learned the most from, the most common answer was *The Lonely Coxen’s Fig-parrot* (see Table 6.1). Yet the Coxen’s fig-parrot was not a local issue that directly affected their lives. Their interest in the endangerment of this bird did not emerge from their daily life experiences. I provoked the children’s connection with the Coxen’s fig-parrot through my storytelling of *The Lonely Coxen’s Fig-parrot* as an idea to steer Denmark’s list towards a local purpose. The children’s interest in the plight of the bird was ignited by storytelling. The decision to introduce the plight of the Coxen’s fig-parrot was influenced by my value of interconnectivity in that I selected an endangered local bird to build connections with *The Freedom Bird* story, and the local environment. In this way, the children’s engagement with recovery strategies for the Coxen’s fig-parrot was adult initiated. I intentionally crafted the story of *The Lonely Coxen’s Fig-parrot* to provide a context for social actions that could build upon Denmark’s list. This was followed through in workshop four.

*Table 6.1. List of stories that the children identified as having learned the most.*

<b>Story</b>	<b>Number of child nominations</b>
<i>The Freedom Bird</i>	3
<i>The Lonely Coxen’s Fig-parrot</i>	7
<i>Iqbal’s Story</i>	2
<i>Craig’s Story</i>	1
<i>The Wise Old Woman and the Rich Factory Owner</i>	1
<i>The GREED Machine</i>	1
<i>Two Rocks</i>	4

### 6.2.2 Adult-initiated Action for Children's Citizenship in the Political Realm

With the children interested in the plight of the Coxen's fig-parrot, the teacher and I planned for action to support the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population that involved citizenship participation in the political realm. When planning the post-story activities for the *Two Brothers* storytelling workshop (W4 6/08/2007) that followed *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* storytelling workshop, I proposed in an email to the teacher:

We could create our own [petition] re: Coxen's fig-parrot or we could add to existing petition re: population growth in SE Qld, as there are plans to clear 65000 hectares over the next few years for housing—chn would connect with this after last week & clearing of trees [reference to *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* story]. Let me know. Perhaps chn can come up with their own words & if parents approve we could send it in to Govt. (Email sent 3/08/07)

The teacher replied to these suggestions with:

I like the idea of doing our own petition for the Coxen's fig-parrot (as Denmark has started). (Email received 5/08/07)

I agreed with the teacher's choice and the rationale for her selection, so I replied with:

I am pleased that you want to go with petition re: the CFP—more meaningful & valuable to follow on children's ideas. It would be great if they come up with their own wording for the petition statement. (Email sent 5/08/07)

Close examination of this email interchange saw multiple meanings applied to citizenship participation for children. The meaning of the petition and suitable civic participation for children was influenced by how the teacher and I viewed children and citizenship participation. My suggestion of "perhaps chn could come up with their own words" was suggestive of supporting children's agency by valuing their right to express their own opinion on social matters, as advocated by many authors on children's citizenship (e.g., Hart, 1997; Kulnych, 2001; Lansdown, 2005; Lister, 2007, 2008; Prout, 2002; Roche, 1999). It was also indicative of viewing children as tribal by celebrating children's practices (e.g., wording) for their difference (James et al., 1998). However, acknowledgement of young children's dependence on adults and consequential need to seek parental permission to participate in the community beyond the school interrupted my comment with "if parents approve". Citizenship participation was also defined as possessing collective ownership in references to the petition by both the teacher and me: "our own petition" and "we could create our own". Socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and associated pedagogical practices support group projects on real issues and position children as social actors in the learning community. In terms of citizenship, collective ownership is also indicative of communitarian citizenship. Civic participation was planned to be local by making connections to *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot* story, which in turn would make it "more

meaningful". A view of children as developing (James et al) informed the idea of young children's active citizenship participation as adult-initiated and directed (e.g., adding to existing petition on forest clearing in South East Queensland). However, children were also positioned as capable of having ideas and interests thus enabling them to express opinions and make decisions (e.g., building on Denmark's list to form a petition seeking support for the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population). These different ways of viewing children shaped how the teacher and I attached meaning to children's citizenship participation.

The teacher appreciated the idea of forming a petition to seek support for the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population. She viewed it as a way to build on the list compiled by Denmark, of those who are against hunting (e.g., "as Denmark has started"). By building on this list and the children's concern for the plight of the Coxen's fig-parrot, the teacher and I thought we were taking children's participation seriously and supporting possibilities for their participation (Prout, 2002). We saw Denmark's action of collating the list as a valid act of citizenship participation and as something to be taken seriously and supported. We saw the idea of the petition as enabling an interdependent approach to children's citizenship (Cockburn, 1998; Hart, 1997) by proposing the Coxen's fig-parrot as a collaborative project with the children (e.g., "our own petition"; "follow on children's ideas" and "their own wording for the petition statement").

The teacher and I also considered our proposal of forming a petition with the children as an opportunity to support children's political identities, as Kulnych (2001) suggested through children-authored citizenship participation in the wider political culture. The petition was seen as child authored in that it built on Denmark's idea and was to be worded by the children. The process of petition submission also engaged children with the larger political culture, as they came to know the petition process and gain some understanding of government. In addition, the welcoming of the children's wording of the petition can be understood, as challenging the dichotomous perception of "order" in the adult world and the "disorder" of the child's world (Kulnych, p. 232). To Kulnych, by welcoming children's communication, a common argument for exclusion of children from public debates of social problems is challenged, that is, a view of children's communication as disordered in relation to that of adults. The teacher and I did not see the children's communication as disordered, but we were interested in supporting children's participation in the political realm and challenging arguments that excluded their participation.

The proposal of the petition could also be understood as manipulation of Denmark's list to follow adult citizenship practice, as petition writing is a conventional democratic method of seeking change from governments. To be recognised as citizenship, Denmark's idea had to follow conventional adult citizenship practice. By imposing adult definitions of citizenship participation, our actions could be viewed as not valuing Denmark's list as a practice of

citizenship in its own right, as we sought to transform it into an adult act of citizenship. The adult-initiated idea of a petition followed a fine line between what might be viewed as honouring the children's political identities and supporting their engagement with the wider political culture; and what might be viewed as manipulating their suggestions to conform to adult values and understandings of citizenship and children. Multiple ways of viewing children and varying definitions of citizenship practice collided in our endeavours to support children's participation.

So far this account of the formation of a petition to support the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population presents a view of children's citizenship participation as an adult-initiated local interest and associated action. The teacher and I initiated both the connection with the issue of the endangerment of the Coxen's fig-parrot and the social action of forming a petition. Although the teacher and I were responsive to supporting the agency of each other by welcoming ideas and thoughts from each other, we planned the petition without input from the children. According to Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action, we had denied the children's agency. The next section examines how Denmark responded to the idea of a petition seeking support for the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot.

### *6.2.3 Children's Participation in the Public Realm: Petition Formation*

The teacher introduced the idea of creating a petition to the class as one of the post-story activities of storytelling workshop four. The following transcript shows how this occurred.

- Teacher: And I'm going to be working over at this table and we are going to be adding to Denmark's list. Denmark you started a list with your Mum and Dad, a list with names on it and that list was people who were going to
- Denmark: Help
- Teacher: Help what?
- Denmark: Help care for the animals.
- Teacher: Yes and we are going to do a petition or a list, going with what Denmark has already started.
- Denmark: The whole class is already on it, even you two (*points at teacher and me*).
- Teacher: And we can add other people onto it. We might even go for a walk around the school to add some more names to it and we are going to talk about how we are going to put it all together. Okay? And I will be doing that over here at this table.
- Denmark: Or we can talk about walking around the school.
- Teacher: Do you think, Louise, I should do one up on the computer or just a handwritten one?

- Louise: I think a handwritten one would be fine.
- Denmark: 'Cos I have already handwritten it.
- Louise: 'Cos it would be nice for the children to have their own handwriting on it with their names and their signature next to it.
- Denmark: People can copy mine.
- Teacher: We'll talk about it. (Lines 467-498 W4 6/08/2007)

In the beginning of the transcript the teacher positioned Denmark as the initiator of the list. He was acknowledged as a social actor who initiated a project that was worthy of continuing. Previous citizenship participation by Denmark was validated. He responded by assuming a position of expert or experienced petition/list maker (e.g., "People can copy mine"). However, as the conversation continued, Denmark, the teacher, and I had different visions and therefore meanings as to what building on the list that Denmark had complied to form a petition would require. Denmark asserted his position as autonomous social actor through his comments of "The whole class is already on it, even you two" and "'Cos I have already handwritten it." From the position of autonomous social actor who had already produced a list, Denmark made it known that he had already addressed our suggestions. He declared the extension of the list as involving walking around the school to collect more signatures and people copying his list.

These comments by Denmark brought to the fore that the teacher and I had made decisions regarding the class's citizenship participation without their input. First, we had decided to transform Denmark's list into an adult practice of citizenship without prior consent before presenting it to the whole class. The list of people who could help care for animals was social action initiated by Denmark, yet we did not respect his ownership and authority on the idea by consulting him. Second, I decided on the format of the petition ("Cos it would be nice for the children to have their own handwriting on it with their names and their signature next to it"). My intention was to support children's voices, to acknowledge that they have signatures and enable an opportunity for the children to have their signatures accepted in the wider community as a mark of their identity. I saw children's signatures on the petition as a claim for political rights for children and validation of their position in society. However, my use of the word "nice" suggests traces of a view of children as innocent, where the naivety of children's handwriting is appreciated. As Stonehouse (1994) and Hard (2005) acknowledged, the niceness factor has had a strong influence in early childhood education. Awareness of these factors points to the delicate nature of supporting young children's citizenship participation. As noted before, it was a fine line between honouring the children's rights and supporting their engagement with the wider political culture, and what might be viewed as manipulating their suggestions to conform to adult values and understandings of citizenship and children. As McNaughton and Smith (2008) advocated

“adults need to reflect critically on if, why, how, when and where they engage children in consultations” (p. 33) in order to enhance children’s participatory rights.

In closing, the teacher identified that the meaning of the petition formation required further clarification with Denmark, “We’ll talk about it.” The struggle for meaning could be resolved through further dialogue, but as a teacher managing a group of children within a school where timetabling restricts and constrains activity (Foucault, 1977a), the timing of the dialogue was postponed until later. Based on Arendt’s (1958/1998) theory of action, the comment by the teacher could be read as blocking Denmark’s agency. Her comment stopped the conversation and the flow of initiating, responding to, and building on ideas.

Close examination of the responses by Denmark to the idea of creating a petition identified conflict over the meaning of children’s participation in the formation of the petition. Both the teacher and I had intended to further validate the list by scribing a letter with specific requests to a Member of Parliament and gathering signatures of support for the requests. Yet Denmark seemed to question why, declaring that he had already created a list that included all of our names. Based on what the teacher and I said, Denmark seemed to think that we viewed the list as incomplete or ‘not quite good enough’. This was not our intention. Our efforts to facilitate an interdependent practice of children’s active citizenship had evolved from child-initiated to adult-managed practice. The idea had been taken out of Denmark’s hands and managed by the teacher and me. We managed the situation according to the *Evolving Capacities* model of children’s citizenship (Lansdown, 2005), as we supported their participation to the level we determined their capacities to be. Yet by doing this, their right to participate in decision-making was not entirely honoured.

Five self-nominated children (Denmark, Charlie, Liam, David, and Patrick) worked with the teacher to develop a petition format and letter in one of the post-story activities of the fourth storytelling workshop of the study. The teacher typed the letter (see Figure 6.1) and formatted a petition on the computer, guided by the children’s suggestions on the content of both the letter and petition. The teacher constructed sentences based on the children’s suggestions. Our intent to have the children word the petition required negotiation to manage the children’s emerging language and literacy skills. The petition pages were headed with this text:

Please sign this petition to help save the Coxen’s fig-parrot. We are writing a letter to the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism, Ms Lindy Nelson-Carr, to let her know we are really worried about the Coxen’s fig-parrot, which is an endangered Australian Species.

The children wrote their names alongside their typed names. The children set a goal of 110 signatures, as they planned to walk around the school asking students in other classes to support the recovery of the Coxen’s fig-parrot population by signing the petition. However, this was not possible, as the principal stipulated that the study could only involve the selected

participatory class so as not to position this class as doing something different from other classes. His decision limited the possibilities for children's active citizenship within the school community. The teacher and the children then sought others (such as parents and teaching staff) who could sign the petition given these parameters. During the time it took to gather signatures and wait for a reply from the Minister, many children frequently asked the teacher about the progress of the petition.

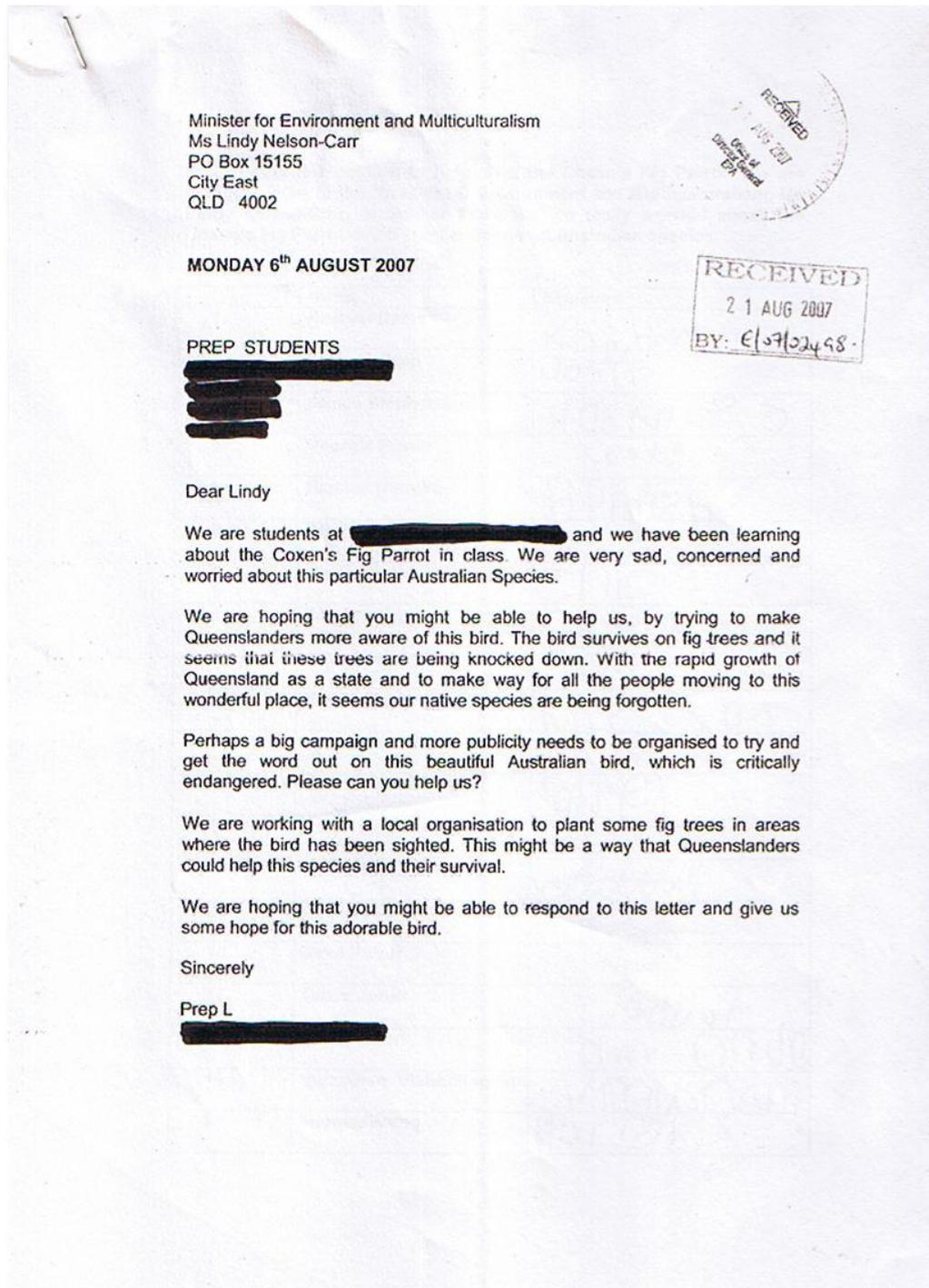


Figure 6.1. Scan of letter sent to the Minister for Environment and Multiculturalism.

In the above account of the formation of the petition, the teacher acknowledged Denmark as the initiator in recognition of his prior act of producing a list of people who wanted to help animals by stopping hunting. According to Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action, Denmark initiated action that connected with others, which instigated responsive actions, that is, the petition. The responses by the teacher and me to Denmark's initiated social action brought his idea into the public sphere through a petition to parliament. He was recognised as agentic. If we had not responded to the list, it would have remained simply words in an exercise book. Responding to and extending Denmark's initiative of creating the list can be understood as enabling the continued life of his initiated action. If Denmark had controlled our (or others') responses to his initiative or if the teacher and I had deprived Denmark or any of the children an opportunity to begin, it would not have come into the world, that is, the polis or the public sphere. According to Arendt, initiated actions need to be responded to in order to be political. The combination of Denmark's initiative and the responses by the adults in the classroom enabled Denmark and his peers to engage in the public sphere. This view defines Denmark's experience of agency as political.

Denmark was not the only child who initiated social actions that were enacted as a whole-class project. A number of social actions were enacted across the study, as noted in Figures 5.2 and 5.3. Declan initiated the whole-class project of nurturing native fig tree seedlings (6.2.1). The accounts of the actions initiated by Denmark and Declan and the efforts by the teacher and me to support and extend these initiatives is evidence of children as political actors who initiated social actions in the public sphere. It also shows how social justice storytelling influenced learning young children as active citizens. Like the view of children as social actors, a view of children as political actors acknowledges children's initiated social actions but differs by orchestrating the interplay of these actions in the public realm. However, analysis led to identification of a fine line between supporting children's engagement with the wider political culture and what might be viewed as manipulating their suggestions to conform to adult values and understandings of citizenship and children. For adults to support young children as political actors requires listening seriously to children to recognise moments of possibility for active communitarian citizenship that could enable children's participation in the public sphere. Reflection on the above experience of forming and submitting a petition also led to recognition that including children as agents throughout the entire process sustains their political identities.

### 6.3 Children's Citizenship: Children as Future Citizens

This study actively acknowledged children as citizens of today, challenging ideas that position children only as future citizens. A common approach to democratic education is preparing students for future citizenship participation in democratic life (Biesta, 2007). Metanarratives of children as innocent and developing position them as citizens of the future

in both the wider community and schools. Although engagement of the children with the political realm through petition submission was based on a view of children as citizens of today, metanarratives that view children as future citizens and citizenship as obedience to the state blocked opportunities for their participation to create change. The following provides an account and possible influences on the reply of the minister to the petition (6.3.1) and analysis of why the petition was not tabled in parliament (6.3.2).

### *6.3.1 Minister's Reply to the Petition*

Not long after the visit to the class by the officer from the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services, the children received a letter of reply from the Minister (Figure 6.2) acknowledging the children's concern for the plight of the Coxen's fig-parrot. The letter outlined what the department had already implemented as recovery strategies for the Coxen's fig-parrot population. The Minister claimed that, "The recent work my department has done covers many of the things you mentioned in your letter". The children were seen as agentic in the request for advocacy: "Please keep telling people about this bird." The letter provided the children with further information about the Coxen's fig-parrot recovery program and supported their interest as concerned citizens.

The petition was not however, acknowledged. The transformation of the list compiled by Denmark into a petition had stopped its journey to create change when it reached the Minister's office, as it was not recognised as a petition. There was no mention of a petition in the letter of reply, nor was it tabled in parliament. The explanation for the petition not being tabled, offered on inquiry, was that it did not precisely follow the prescribed wording and format for petitions. This information had not been volunteered but was provided when I inquired. Disregard for the petition and provision of information to learn about petition procedures could be interpreted as a disregard for a children's version of a petition and children's capacity to learn petition procedures. According to Lister (2007), children are typically seen as "citizens in waiting" or "learner citizens". Yet the opportunity for children to learn as citizens was neglected in this case. Petition legislation that dictates precise wording does not allow for children's ways of communication. Because Kulnych (2001) suggested that welcoming children's ways of communicating was an important part of children's citizenship, the teacher and I specifically chose to document the children's words for the petition to support child authorship and enable the children's opinions to be heard. At the time we did not consider that by doing this the validity of the petition would be jeopardised. Understandings of citizenship, which emphasise legal status, rights, and obligations as demonstrated in this case of petition legislation, are inflexible. Petitions are designed for conventional participation (e.g., following legislation), not unconventional participation, such as variations in wording.

A metanarrative of citizenship in which legal status and obedience to the state prevail dictates petition legislation and disregards variations such as a petition worded by children. The letter, and not the petition, was acknowledged as an expression of interest for the plight of the Coxen's fig-parrot. Although the young age of the children was appreciated in the letter from the minister (e.g., "I am encouraged to see that you have such a keen interest in the environment at such a young age—well done!"), they were not responded to as citizens with the right to a voice in parliament to request government action. In a metanarrative of citizenship as legal status, children are not citizens capable of participation as they do not have civil or political rights (e.g., the right to vote) (Coady, 2008; Kulnych, 2001). In addition, citizenship viewed as legal status must follow conventional forms (Gilbert, 1996), such as the legislated wording and procedure for petition submission. The workings of the metanarrative of citizenship as legal status forced an end to the journey of this endeavour to seek further support for the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population.

An opportunity for the children to challenge the decision to disregard their petition was not possible for a number of reasons. First, by the time the letter of reply arrived, attention had shifted from the Coxen's fig-parrot to child labour in Pakistan. Second, the children had moved onto different classes by the time I realised that the petition had not been tabled, so they were unaware of this omission in the petition process. Third, my capacity to ensure follow-up action in a crowded curriculum as an external researcher was limited. This experience identified that further consideration of citizenship collaboration between children and adults is required for young children's voices to be heard in the wider political culture. The next section (6.3.2) analyses why the petition was not tabled.



Hon Andrew McNamara MP  
Member for Hervey Bay



Queensland  
Government

Minister for Sustainability,  
Climate Change and Innovation

Ref: BNE20758-1  
BNE2007/10352  
E/07/02498

26 SEP 2007

[REDACTED]

Dear Prep Students

I refer to your letter of 6 August 2007 to the Honourable Lindy Nelson-Carr MP, regarding the endangered Coxen's fig-parrot. As I have now been appointed Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation, I am pleased to respond to your letter.

I am encouraged to see that you have such a keen interest in the environment at such a young age – well done!

I am also concerned about this particular bird. We are trying to help this bird. In 1993, a national team was first formed to try to save it and we have been hard at work since then. In 2001, we prepared a 'recovery plan', a document setting out all the important things that needed to be done to prevent the bird from becoming extinct and to improve its chances of survival. We have done many of these tasks and continue to carry out more to this day. If you haven't done so already, you may want to look at the recovery plan to see what it recommends. You can find it on the Internet at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/biodiversity/threatened/publications/recovery/fig-parrot/index.html>

The work being done involves many activities to educate the public on this bird, as well as growing and planting trees that provide food and places to live for the Coxen's fig-parrot. Some of this work has been done with the help of people like LandCare bodies and community conservation groups, such as the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland.

The publicity campaign has included talks, community displays, articles in local newspapers and newsletters, training workshops, information display boards at places where many people visit and a colour brochure and poster about the Coxen's fig-parrot. A total of 10 000 of the brochures were printed for distribution to landholders, schools and interested members of the community to raise awareness of this endangered bird.

.../2

Level 17  
160 Ann Street Brisbane 4000  
PO Box 15155 City East  
Queensland 4002 Australia  
Telephone +61 7 3336 8032  
Facsimile +61 7 3227 6309  
Email [sustainability@ministerial.qld.gov.au](mailto:sustainability@ministerial.qld.gov.au)  
ABN 65 959 415 158

- 2 -

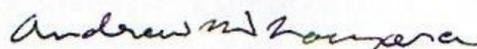
Several Queensland projects involving planting fig and other rainforest trees have been done on the Sunshine Coast with the aim of increasing the amount of food available for fig-parrots and ensuring there is always some food available at different times of the year. Turning cleared or partly cleared areas back into natural forest also helps the Coxen's fig-parrot by linking areas of good habitat with corridors along which the bird can move safely.

The recent work my department has done covers many of the things you mentioned in your letter. With your valuable help and the help of the rest of the community, we can try to make sure the fig-parrot will be safe from extinction.

Please keep telling people about this bird.

I hope this information is helpful to you. If you would like any further information, please contact Ian Gynther of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, who coordinates the Queensland part of the recovery program, on telephone 3202 0250.

Yours sincerely



**Andrew McNamara MP**  
**Minister for Sustainability,**  
**Climate Change and Innovation**

Figure 6.2. Letter of reply from the minister.

### 6.3.2 Analysis of Why the Coxen's Fig-parrot Petition Was Not Tabled

To explore factors relevant to citizenship collaborations between children and adults, two possible interpretations of why the Coxen's fig-parrot petition was not tabled are discussed. One explanation is derived from Lister (2008), who acknowledged that a key dilemma of children's practice of citizenship is that children's acceptance as citizens requires demonstration of capacity. The children needed to demonstrate their capacity to be recognised as citizens, but the adults also needed to acknowledge the children as citizens who could contribute actively to society. This is indicative of different views of children leading to different meanings of what children's participation can be. Requiring children to demonstrate capacities fits with metanarratives of children as developing. Acknowledging children as citizens who can actively contribute to society resonates with views of children as political actors. These ways of viewing children inform differing ways that adults relate to children. Viewing children as agentic and seeing children as developing adult citizenship capacities creates the dilemma of children's

practice of citizenship that Lister recognised. This raises the question: is it possible for children to be seen as political actors by demonstrating citizenship practice as they see it? If the teacher and I had ensured that the petition followed the prescribed petition wording, would the children have been seen as possessing capacity? Would the petition have been tabled? Kulnych (2001) welcomed children's ways of communicating in the political arena and this may present as advocacy for children's agency, but it can also be understood as a romantic ideal with little hope of being realised or being 'practical' in the wider picture. A notion of honouring children's words as something precious and different to adult words seems to resonate with a view of children as tribal (James et al., 1998). Through such a view, children's practices are appreciated and celebrated, yet scope for children's learning of socio-political practices can be reduced. In this case, the teacher and I could have explained and followed petition protocol. The challenge for adults is to locate a balance between supporting political identities in young children and enabling points of connection between child and adult practices of citizenship. A view of children as political actors requires acknowledgment of interdependence with adults (Cockburn, 1998; Hart, 1997). Without connections with adults, children's citizenship may offer reduced capacity for both adults and children to learn from each other and reduced capacity for social change. Adults need to accept children as citizens and support children's capacities. The challenge is to find a balance between children's ways of participating, and building capacities in adult citizenship practices.

A second explanation is that agency occurs when we begin an action and bring ourselves into the world or public sphere, which is responded to by others and not blocked (Arendt, 1958/1998). To Arendt, agency is not possible in situations where the opportunity for others' actions is denied in the public sphere. Understood in this way, the petition was an initiated action in the public sphere that was not responded to, so the children's agency was denied, as was that of the minister. No further action occurred. To Arendt, the public sphere is a place where we live together with others who are different from us, and it emphasises interaction with these others. By not tabling the petition and not voluntarily offering an explanation as to why it was not tabled, interaction with the public sphere ceased. If we had challenged the decision to not table the petition, interaction of initiated action and responses would have continued. Based on this understanding, to promote and support the growth of young children's active citizenship participation requires ongoing interaction.

These two explanations make visible the difficulties and complexities of children's practice of citizenship within the public realm. Barriers and limitations affected children's citizenship participation in the public sphere and pointed to hegemonic views of children as future citizens, as opposed to views of children as citizens of today. However, two considerations for adults engaging in citizenship practice with children were identified: a) to build children's capacity as citizens to support wider recognition of children as political actors, and b) to respond

to children's initiatives in ways that provide further scope for children's participation. These two points offer further understanding of how adults can support young children's active citizenship participation and address research subquestion 1b) and 2a): How can adults and children work together to enable young children's active citizenship?

#### 6.4 Different Ways of Viewing Children and Citizenship Participation

In analysing children's suggestions and implementation of social actions from Cluster-one, it was clear that the terms 'children' and 'citizenship' participation were understood in different ways. Metanarratives and ideologies defined characteristics of children and citizenship participation. Children were viewed as social actors, political actors, and future citizens. Intentions to support children as social actors and political actors were influenced by metanarratives of children as dependent on adults, immanent, and developing. Different ways of viewing children informed by different ideologies were present in conversations between different speakers and in comments by the same speaker made only moments apart. Consequently, ambivalence and paradox affected possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The variability of meaning ascribed to children cultivated ambiguity and weakened the positioning and practice of children as active citizens. Ambiguity and variability over meanings ascribed to children produced limitations, confusion, and dead ends for children's citizenship participation.

Different contexts, different agendas, and different prior experiences explain the presence of the variety of meanings given to children in the data presented. For example, in the discussion about campaigns to protect animals (section 6.1.3), prior knowledge and experience of viewing children as developing influenced my suggestion to participate in the adult-initiated and managed WWF Passport strategy. The meaning of the list continued to change as the idea evolved into a petition seeking support for the recovery of the Coxen's fig-parrot population. Children's citizenship participation was ascribed different meanings from the emergence of Denmark's suggestion to make the list to the minister's reply to the class letter. These meanings included child initiated, autonomous, adult initiated, adult directed, adult-child interdependence, local interest, engagement with the public realm, and legislated. Although the wide range of factors that influence varying meanings given to children and participation can be read as producing ambiguity, they can also be read as enabling diverse possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Citizenship participation in this chapter included young children being autonomous social actors, political actors, or assigned future citizenship orientations of immanence, innocence, or dependence.

In conclusion, close examination of data revealed that different ways of viewing children and citizenship influenced possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The intention of the teacher and me in supporting children's agency was interrupted on a number

of occasions by metanarratives of children as developing, immanent, innocent, or dependent. These metanarratives have a hegemonic impact on people's views regarding children and citizenship participation (Roche, 1999; Stasiulis, 2002). The interruptions and ambiguity that they created made it evident that adult support for young children's active citizenship participation is complicated. The different meanings ascribed to children and participation shaped the ways in which adult support for young children's active citizenship participation occurred. What was possible and what was available were influenced by different ways of viewing children and citizenship participation. None of the accounts in this chapter provided a neat package of successful adult facilitation. There were moments of success that were interrupted by metanarratives drawn on by the teacher and me, which denied children's agency. An awareness of the different and conflicting meanings ascribed to children and participation, and how they influence and shape adult responses to children's initiated actions is required to better understand possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

#### 6.5 A Political Possibility for Young Children's Active Citizenship: Children as Initiators and Adults as Responders

Analysis of selected data using Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action offered an understanding of young children's active citizenship as political through the interplay of child-initiated actions that are responded to with others in the public sphere. Such an understanding offers potential for enabling children's citizenship in ways that include meanings that children want to give to citizenship, realised by following their ideas with others. In addition, it offers potential to elevate young children's status in society.

Application of Arendt's (1958/1998) theory of action to analysis of suggestions of social actions by young children revealed a workable possibility for young children's active citizenship, which views children as initiators and adults as responders. The teacher and I responded to a number of the children's initiatives, such as Denmark's list and Declan's fig tree planting, which created social actions. This approach to young children's active citizenship not only involves listening to children's suggestions, as Cockburn (1998) and Roche (1999) recommended, but also responsive actions. A view of children's citizenship that involves adults responding to young children's initiatives to create social actions in the public sphere has greater relevance for young children, because they have less access to resources to function independently than children aged twelve years and older. Organisations such as Free the Children largely consist of children twelve years and older who initiate and enact social actions autonomously. James et al. (2008) suggested that the emphasis on care and protection in policy and practices for young children limits children's access to resources and participation. Given these limitations, a view of children as initiators and adults as responders seems applicable to young children's active citizenship. It also

addresses the research subquestion: how can adults and children work together to enable young children's active citizenship? However, as noted earlier, how adults respond requires careful judgment and critical reflection to ensure that subsequent social actions engage children throughout the entire process.

Responses to children's initiated actions need to be considered carefully to sustain a climate of interdependence and ensure that adults do not control and deny children's agency. Reflections on my own practice alerted me to the need to be mindful of positioning children as agentic, for example making decisions with children. This study viewed children as political through application of a view of young children as citizens who initiate social actions. Arendt (1958/1998) explains that initiating something is about bringing ourselves into the world or public sphere and taking the risk of inserting a new idea among others in a web of relationships. In this sense a view of children as initiators recognises children bringing themselves into the world: making their voice, their opinions, and their intentions known to others. To sustain this view, responses to young children's initiated actions need to continue to support opportunities for children to bring themselves into the world through speech and action with others.

This chapter has provided accounts of children as citizens and possibilities for young children's active citizenship as influenced by a practice of social justice storytelling. Social justice storytelling as pedagogy influenced Denmark and Declan to initiate social actions to redress injustices exposed in the stories told. Facilitating the social actions that Denmark and Declan initiated revealed how metanarratives and ideologies of children and citizenship influence the way in which citizenship participation for young children is defined. A view of young children's active citizenship as political is a way to promote and support young children's agency. It occurs through interplay of child-initiated actions that are responded to with others. This view requires ongoing critical reflection to ensure children's agency is not denied. The next chapter analyses themed comments that suggest retribution, rebellion, and responsibility in young children's active citizenship.

## CHAPTER 7: RETRIBUTION, REBELLION, AND RESPONSIBILITY IN YOUNG CHILDREN'S ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

This chapter explores possibilities for young children's active citizenship and who young children might be as active citizens by drawing on individual stories of experience. Young children's individual experiences were identified as active citizenship through actions they initiated to redress injustice. Actions and comments produce life stories of courage (Arendt, 1958/1998). They demonstrate a willingness to act and speak.

Data were selected from the three most frequently recurring themes: consideration for another, suggestions of social actions, and suggestions of retributive actions (see Table 4.2 reproduced on the following page). Due to their frequency, these themes provide evidence of how young children can be active citizens as well as other possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Data indicative of these themes were analysed to address the research subquestions:

2 c) What citizenship practices are available and possible for young children?

2 e) Who might young children be as active citizens?

Analysis involved interpreting children's initiated actions and comments as stories of citizenship practice. Indicators of possible metanarratives influencing children's comments and actions were identified and discussed. Through these analytical processes the following insights were identified: a) what concerned the children, b) what they considered to be just or fair remedies to redress injustices, c) how they acted, and d) possible influences on their ideas and inspiration for action. These insights contribute findings to possibilities for young children's active citizenship. This chapter explores three categories of identified possibilities for young children's active citizenship: retribution, rebellion, and responsibility. These three categories were selected from the data because they offer possibilities of young children's active citizenship that are counternarratives to metanarratives of children and citizenship. In the first section (7.1), I explore retribution in children's citizenship through analysis of data representing suggestions of retributive actions as punishment and reciprocal justice. In the second section (7.2), I explore rebellion in children's citizenship through analysis of data that was themed as a suggestion of retributive action and took a rebellious approach to retribution. In the third section (7.3), I explore responsibility in children's citizenship by analysing data representative of children expressing responsibility to others as a subset of data indicative of the theme: consideration for another. In the final section (7.4), I summarise findings of what is possible for young children's active citizenship and who young children might be as active citizens. These findings are discussed as evidence of learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship as influenced by a practice of social justice storytelling.

Table 4.2. Summary of frequency of major themes per data week (reproduced for ease of reference).

Themes	Critical awareness	Consideration for another	Suggestions of social actions	Suggestions of retributive actions	Suggestions of alternative story endings
<b>Data codes</b>	W1 16/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W3 30/07/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W4 CI 9/08/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W7 3/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W9 19/09/2007 W9 TI 19/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W11 15/10/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W12 23/10/2007 W12 TI 24/10/2007 (TOTAL = 2)	W4 6/08/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W5 21/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W6 CI 31/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W7 CI 5/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W 8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W9 19/09/2007 (TOTAL = 6) W 11 15/10/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W11 TI 17/10/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W12 23/10/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W13 5/11/2007 (TOTAL = 2)	W2 23/07/2007 (TOTAL = 5) W3 30/07/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 4) W6 CI 31/08/2007 (TOTAL = 5) W7 3/09/2007 (TOTAL = 14) W 8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 5)	W2 CI 25/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W4 6/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W4 CI 9/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W5 21/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 3) W7 3/09/2007 (TOTAL = 12) W7 CI 5/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W8 10/09/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W10 10/10/2007 (TOTAL = 5) W13 2/11/2007 (TOTAL = 1)	W1 16/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W1 CI 18/07/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W2 23/07/2007 (TOTAL = 2) W6 30/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1) W6 CI 31/08/2007 (TOTAL = 1)
<b>Total entries</b>	16	21	35	27	6

### 7.1 Retribution in Young Children's Active Citizenship

The suggestion of retributive actions was identified as a major theme in the children's comments and actions suggested in response to the stories told. My initial response to children's suggestions of retribution was to discuss the consequences of their suggestions. However, the passion, persistence and proliferation of their suggestions provoked closer examination of the place and purpose of their ideas. The children's suggestions of retributive actions were understood to be for punishment, reciprocal justice, or rebellion. Space to process these purposes occurred, to honour the children's ideas before critique through discussion of consequences.

Data that displayed retribution as punishment and retribution as reciprocal justice are discussed in this section. The children's suggestions of retributive actions as punishment were particularly high in frequency in storytelling workshop seven, in which *Craig's Story* was told. Many of these suggestions (12 suggestions noted in Table 4.2) were cumulative, as *Craig's Story* built on the suffering attached to child labour that was introduced with *Iqbal's Story*. The three suggestions for retributive action as punishment selected for discussion include the suggestion by Molly to burn Ghullah (the factory owner in *Iqbal's Story*) (7.1.1), the block construction by Scott and Liam that blended or pulverised factory owners (7.1.2), and the ideas of Denmark and Max to arrest or trap cruel factory owners (7.1.3). To discuss suggestions of retributive action as reciprocal justice (7.1.4), three suggestions contributed by Declan are explored. This type of response appeared as a pattern across comments made

by Declan and offers an alternative view of retribution. Exploration of retribution is concluded with discussion of the place and purpose of retribution in young children's active citizenship (7.1.5).

### *7.1.1 Retribution as Punishment: Burning the Factory Owner*

The whole-group discussion after *Iqbal's Story* began with many children expressing their feelings in response to the story. I posed the following question to steer the children's comments to suggestions of actions:

Louise: I know you talked about feeling really sad and angry, so perhaps there is something that you think you as an individual or we as a group could do? (Lines 406-408 W6 30/08/2007)

Declan was the first to reply, "Tell the owner of the factory to the police, because he is guilty" (Line 409 W6 30/08/2007). Then Molly spoke slowly and carefully with this suggestion.

Molly: To try and—get him—to set a fire and—put him inside the fire (*spoken carefully and slowly with mouth down turned at end of comment*). (Lines 413-414 W6 30/08/2007)

Her comment surprised me, so I sought clarification.

Louise: You want to set a FIRE and put Ghullah [the factory owner in *Iqbal's Story*] in the fire?

Molly: (*Nods head*). (Lines 415-416 W6 30/08/2007)

Molly's comment positioned Ghullah as a perpetrator for whom death was the only answer. Declan's suggestion of reporting Ghullah to the police was indicative of a metanarrative of good citizenship through lawful citizenship practice (Batstone & Mendieta, 1999). This metanarrative was probably readily available to Molly, as her father is a police officer. However, Molly suggested burning the perpetrator or unlawful citizen: an act of violent resistance. The teacher considered Molly's suggestion atypical for Molly.

Teacher: Yeah the message Molly gave was quite powerful. She's so much a conformist. I wouldn't have imagined that, you know. (Lines 147-148 W6 TC 31/08/2007)

The comment from Molly presented as an anomaly (to the teacher) and suggested a need for closer examination about why Molly made a suggestion that was considered unconventional.

Stories of painful punishment inflicted on villains to establish the happiness of the hero feature in a number of fairy tales. Tatar (2003) recognised this pattern in her critique of the Grimm Brothers' versions of fairy tales, where the more painful a punishment is, the greater the corresponding happiness of the hero. In Molly's comment, the hero seemed to be Iqbal in that she suggested that he set the fire (e.g., "To try and get him to set a fire"). According to Tatar, heroes are either presented in fairy tales as helpless victims (e.g.,

Cinderella), or seekers (e.g., Prince Charming), or both (e.g., Hansel and Gretel). Counter to the position of the victim is the villain, who is often so demonised in fairy tales that it is impossible to forgive him or her. This seems to be the case with Molly's positioning of Ghullah, as she saw his acts of cruelty to children as so unforgiveable that total annihilation through fire was the answer. A metanarrative that permeates this pattern in fairy tales is the "Old Testament logic of an eye for an eye" (Tatar, 2003, p. 183). This kind of logic works by balancing the humiliation and helplessness of the victim/hero with retaliation and punishment. The metanarrative of 'eye for an eye' may have shaped Molly's response to the question of what could be done to address the ill treatment of child labourers. Her strong identification with the "helpless victim" (Iqbal) appeared to fuel Molly to articulate this response.

The way Molly expressed her comment offered a strong indication of an affective response. She delivered the words with intensity and purpose whilst transfixing a steely gaze. I had never heard her express a comment in the story discussions in this way before. In no way was this comment delivered lightly. Her comment then is evidence of the influence of my practice of social justice storytelling.

To read Molly's suggestion of retributive action as producing a story of who Molly is as an active citizen provides two possibilities. First, Molly presented as someone who views inhumane practices as so unforgiveable that the person who inflicted cruelty on children (Ghullah) does not have the right to life. Second, Molly presents as a citizen who wants to enable happiness for those who have suffered by removing the causes of their suffering. This paints a brief portrait of who Molly might be as an active citizen in this context. This interpretation of Molly's suggestion of retributive action describes a possibility for young children's active citizenship as a passionate means of balancing the humiliation and helplessness of the victim/hero with retaliation and punishment of the villain.

### *7.1.2 Retribution as Punishment: Blending the Factory Owners*

Scott and Liam, two boys aged five years, also made comments that suggested violent resistance in response to child labourers experiencing inhumane treatment at the hands of factory owners. The following excerpt shows their response to *Craig's Story*. In this story the children heard Craig's account of the experiences of child labourers in workplaces in India, Pakistan, Nepal, the Philippines, and Thailand. One of these accounts involved children making bricks in a brick factory. During the post-story activities in week seven, Scott suggested and participated in building a brick factory. When the videographer asked Scott what he had built, he replied:

- Scott:           The person blended all the BAD /  
Juliet:           It's a brick factory that's why these look like bricks, that's why.  
                      This is a brick factory.

- Liam: And it cut up people. It cut up people—BAD people.
- Louise: Tell me about this.
- Scott: It blends the people who are bad. It blends the bad people. They get carried up and sucked in. They get taken into the big blender, and then everything stays in there. (Lines 612-617 W7 3/09/2007)
- Louise: So they go in through here? (*points to top of tower*)
- Scott: And the blade goes here (*points at base of tower*). (Lines 622-624 W7 3/09/2007)

Like Molly, Liam and Scott cast those who harmed the children in the story as villains or “bad people”. They too seemed to view the acts of the “bad people” as unforgivable, devising a brutal punishment of blades chopping them to pieces through their macabre invention of a brick factory tower that also functioned as a human-pulverising machine. It is possible that Old Testament and fairy tale logic of brutal punishment for the villain who inflicted harm on victims (Tatar, 2003) is also present in the ideas behind the block construction. Tatar noted that physical violence in fairy tales had special appeal for children, especially with the punishment of villains. She suggested that children see themselves as downtrodden and underprivileged and therefore identify and empathise with the protagonist. This may be what drove Liam, Scott, and Molly’s desires for the punishment of cruel factory owners.

Superhero stories that feature elaborate weapons and the moral order of good reigning over evil (Hall & Lucal, 1999) may have influenced the creation of a model human-pulverising machine by Liam and Scott. Dyson (1997) suggested that machines are often used in superhero stories to ward off catastrophe and that superhero stories enable “children to feel powerful in a (pretend) danger filled world” (p. 14). The human-pulverising machine seemed to be constructed with the intent of ending evil catastrophe. In explaining their construction, Scott and Liam were excited, energetic, and their utterances were fast and urgent, also illustrative of action in superhero “get the baddies” adventures.

Another possible influence for Scott may have been his interest in technology. I had come to know Scott as a child who was fascinated by machines. On many of my visits he asked questions about the features and functions of the digital audio recorder, the digital video recorder, and the data projector that I brought to the classroom. An interest in technology may have influenced Scott’s contribution to devising a machine to inflict death on “bad people”.

Who Scott and Liam were as active citizens in this moment can be interpreted from their comments and actions. Like Molly, they seemed to view inhumane practices as unforgivable and wanted to enact violent resistance. Yet Scott seemed to have a more technical and calculated approach to claim power (Dyson, 1997) than Molly, as his

comments in particular were focused on explaining the technical features of the human-pulverising machine. Scott and Liam did not seem to have the same anger that Molly's expression intimated. Instead, they seemed to be excited about the thrill of getting a "baddie" and maybe by the thrill of their innovative idea of the human-pulverising machine. Their citizenship response to the inhumane treatment of children was to invent a machine for violent resistance. Who Scott and Liam are as citizens in this example is then suggestive of being inventors, thrill seekers, and violent resisters, who put an end to evil practices.

This describes a possibility for young children's active citizenship as acts of technically focused violent resistance to injustice. For those who position children as innocent, the ideas of Scott, Liam, and Molly for violent retribution present a contrasting image of children. Some may view these suggestions of retributive actions as indicative of children as evil through their violent and barbaric implications (James et al., 1998). However, in terms of young children's active citizenship I propose that these suggestions are indicative of how Molly, Scott, and Liam identified with the protagonists in the stories about child labour and their urge to fight back. Liam and Scott were committed to justice, yet seemed unaware that their suggestions denied the rights of the villains.

### *7.1.3 Retribution as Punishment: Arresting the Factory Owners*

Denmark and Max also suggested retributive actions in the storytelling workshop in week seven. Their ideas began as a proposal for a post-story activity with the following conversation, which had a theme of 'catching the baddies'.

- Denmark: Maybe we could make a list of ways to try and arrest them more easier and quicker if they might be speedy or something, like a cheetah.
- Declan: A police car.
- Denmark: (*To Tony*) Oh YEAH! They are the fastest land animal.
- Tony: They can even go faster than a car!
- Louise: Did anyone have another idea?
- Max: We could make a trap for them.
- Teacher: Trap for who?
- Declan: Bad people.
- Max: Bad people who are hurting kids in factories.
- Louise: Maybe that links with Denmark's idea—ways of arresting them.
- Denmark: You could join in too (*points to Max*) you join in. (Lines 457-469 W7 3/09/2007)

In Denmark's first articulation of his idea, the theme of speed has a strong presence in his "catch the baddies" idea. There is a strong sense of adventure and action in his comment. Themes of speed, action and adventure in the pursuit of catching the baddies are common in

superhero stories (Hall & Lucal, 1999), which are appreciated by many young children (Carter & Curtis, 2000). In storytelling workshop two, Denmark told me that his father is a police officer; this may have influenced his interest in arrest as an act of retribution.

Max added to Denmark's idea with the suggestion of making a trap, which continued the "catch the baddies" narrative. At the request of the teacher, Max defined "who" the trap was for, that is, "bad people who are hurting kids in factories". The suggestion of arresting those who inflict unjust treatment portray Max and Denmark as citizens who want to stop harm to child labourers. The remedy they propose for this injustice is restraint of those who inflict the harm. However, suggestions of restraint do not present an understanding of "hurting kids in factories" as so unforgiveable that the punishment should be brutal death as Molly, Liam and Scott suggested. Instead Max and Denmark present a desire to control these "bad people" by capturing them.

Later, David joined Denmark and Max with the teacher to record a list of ways to arrest the "bad people who are hurting kids in factories". The list included: a) hiding and then having a rope to try and catch them, b) locking them up with handcuffs, c) capturing them in a trap, and d) putting a rope on the floor and letting them trip (W7 3/09/2007). The conversation around the trap idea went as follows.

Max: When they are about to work, we got to trap, lift them up, so it falls on them (*uses hands to shape an image of a trap and looks upwards towards ceiling*).

Denmark: Oh YEAH that would be AWESOME and you could carry them to jail.

Max: And push them around.

Denmark: And they'll be in jail with a net inside.

Max: Put them in jail, like a slide. He falls to jail by the slide. (Lines 476-500 W7 3/09/2007)

Max and Denmark seemed quite excited by their plans (e.g., "that would be AWESOME"). Max's ideas for trapping could have been informed by popular culture stories that he had previously experienced, where a net falls onto the baddie and he lands in jail via a slide. Their comments, in particular those from Max (e.g., "and push them around") are suggestive of having no respect or care for people who harm child labourers.

The suggestions of retributive actions from Max and Denmark differ from the instant gratification of the definitive proposals of capital punishment from Scott, Liam and Molly. A desire for ongoing gratification through controlling or manipulating the "bad people" seemed to drive their various suggestions (e.g., handcuffs, traps, "pushing them around", "put them in jail"). Like Scott and Liam, Max and Denmark seem to enjoy the thrill of power and adventure embodied in the "catch the baddies" narratives (Dyson, 1997). Ideas

of retributive actions from Max and Denmark suggest an understanding that by being bad, “bad people” lose their right to freedom. This presents Max and Denmark as citizens who support the removal of freedom from those who have inflicted harm upon others. Their ideas appear to be influenced by the metanarrative of good citizenship, in which the law is upheld through disciplinary control (Batstone & Mendieta, 1999; Foucault, 1977a). They seemed to appreciate the shift in power, where the “bad people” (factory owners), who had created situations where children experienced powerlessness were now experiencing powerlessness themselves (e.g., handcuffs, traps, “pushing them around”, “put them in jail”). In *Iqbal’s Story* and *Craig’s Story*, the class heard about children being forced to work long hours with no control over when they did and did not work. The ideas of handcuffs, traps, “pushing them around” and “put them in jail” from Max and Denmark seem to seek to control and restrain “bad” factory owners.

This provides an interpretation of comments and actions by Max and Denmark as a story of who they are as active citizens. They present as citizens who uphold the law with a strong commitment to justice. This vignette defines a possibility for young children’s active citizenship as supportive of the removal of freedom from those who cause harm upon others.

#### *7.1.4 Retribution as Reciprocal Justice: Declan’s Ideas*

Declan had a different approach to retribution compared with most of the other children, and it is because of this difference that I have selected his suggestions for analysis. I noted this difference in his suggestions of retributive actions on three occasions. The first occasion was the children’s follow-up conversation in week two. The second was in response to *Iqbal’s Story*, and the third was a suggestion in the *Two Blocks* story.

At the follow-up conversation in week two, I explained how in the WWF Terai Arc Project (discussed in Chapter 6) poachers who were arrested were probably fined or sent to jail, to which Declan replied:

Declan:            Maybe they could put them in a birdcage. (Line 121 W2 CC 25/07/2007)

His statement surprised me. I appreciated Declan’s creativity, and his idea provoked me to consider the situation differently. Although the other children and I all laughed at the image of a hunter in a birdcage, we discussed its possibilities. Perhaps Declan suggested a birdcage because prior to these comments we had been talking about birds. I had just told them of the Coxen’s fig-parrot and suggested that we could use Denmark’s list to aid the recovery of the Coxen’s fig-parrot population. This may have influenced Declan’s plan of reciprocal justice, where those who capture and cage birds are given the same experience. Declan’s suggestion was indicative of a view of retribution as reciprocal justice. His idea for those who inflicted infringement of liberties on birds was to experience the same infringement of liberties

themselves, that is, being trapped in a bird cage. Denmark and Juliet responded to Declan's idea with these comments:

Denmark: And lock it up. (Line 124 W2 CC 25/07/2007)

Juliet: Same as in jail. A very interesting idea, mmm. (Line 130 W2 CC 25/07/2007)

They associated Declan's idea of the birdcage with conventional human incarceration. The experience may be the same as conventional human incarceration, but by being locked in a birdcage those who capture animals could feel what it was like for the animals that they caught. In this way Declan's idea possessed potential to provoke a shift in consciousness for those who have hunted birds to consider the plight of hunted birds and cease their hunting practices.

The second occasion occurred in week six. After Molly suggested setting Ghullah on fire, Juliet, then Declan, made the following suggestions.

Juliet: You could do something mean to him to make him feel like the same as they were treated.

Declan: YEAHHH!! Like make HIM work. (Lines 432-434 W6 30/08/2007)

The comment by Juliet can be aligned with thinking about reciprocal justice to which Declan offered an apt suggestion given the context: make the carpet factory owner (Ghullah) work. Declan suggested that Ghullah needed to experience labour firsthand. I suspect Declan was referring to the same work that the children experienced, that is, 12-hour days of knotting threads on a loom in cramped conditions without breaks or food whilst enduring verbal and physical abuse. Through this proposal of reciprocal justice, Ghullah could learn of the impact of his actions upon others.

The third occasion occurred in week 10 during the telling of the *Two Blocks* story, when I asked the children to devise ideas of how the large group of children could get more blocks. This occurred with the children seated in two concentric circles, with each child in the inner circle facing a child in the outer circle. The inner circle of children constituted the ideas people, who told, at timed intervals, their ideas to children in the outside circle, who would move on one place to hear another idea. In the busyness of this I recorded the following comments among several children in one section of the concentric circles.

Ebony: (*To Patrick*) We could STEAL them.

Patrick: (*Thrusts both fists in the air with enthusiasm*)

Nick: We could steal the blocks.

UN: No we could go to jail.

Nick: (*To Denmark*) If we steal all the blocks we could put them there(*points to where the blocks are kept in the room*).

Declan: *(Denmark and Nick's conversation becomes so animated that Declan joins in with them rather than talking to Charlie who he is facing)*

We could take all their blocks away so they know what it FEELS like to not have a lot of blocks \_\_ Mine's a bit better because they will know what it feels like to not have a lot of blocks. (Lines 79-89 W10 10/10/07)

Ebony, Patrick, Nick, and Denmark all seemed keen supporters of the idea of stealing the blocks as a way of establishing balance in the distribution of blocks. The suggestion made by Declan differed from that of the others by his use of the word "take" instead of "steal", and he offered a justification for his plan of action, that is, to enable the group with plenty to know what it would feel like to have few. He declared that his idea was better for the reason that the group with plenty would then know what the group with only a few were experiencing, and that from this position they would know what it "feels like". Even though the action suggested by Declan was the same as that proposed by Ebony and Nick, he packaged it with explanations that presented potential positive outcomes for both groups of children in the story *Two Blocks*.

Like Molly, Liam, Scott, Max, and Denmark, Declan's way of redressing injustice was to focus his comments on retribution for those who have caused harm. Yet Declan did not propose violent acts of retribution like Molly, Liam, and Scott. Instead, he seemed to view retribution as reciprocity with regard to the experience of victimisation. He appeared to recognise the infringement of liberties the victim had experienced and then devise a way that the person who had acted unfairly could be made to experience the same infringement of liberties. His approach is suggestive of the narrative theme, *walk in the shoes of another* (that was discussed as a motif in section 5.4). He seems to consider that similar experiences of disadvantage may cultivate empathy or at least experiential knowledge of such suffering, similar to the idea of sympathetic imagination (Nussbaum, 1997).

The suggestions of retributive actions by Declan to redress unjust treatment of others produce a story of who Declan might be as an active citizen in these contexts. They portray Declan as a citizen who sees justice as being best played out through reciprocal means. He seemed to want those who treated others unfairly to come to know what it feels like. This seemed indicative of wider and deeper thinking on the issue. He considered that the unfair treatment could be addressed through a possible shift in awareness of the person who caused the harm. In effect, he was proposing provocations that could lead to shifts in understandings by knowing what it feels like. This is significantly different to the ideas of Molly, Liam, Scott, Denmark, and Max in that they seemed to consider that the unfair treatment could only be stopped if the people who act unfairly were stopped, either by ceasing to exist (through brutal death) or being incarcerated. Declan presented as a citizen

who wanted to address injustices through provocations that had potential to provoke awareness for the perpetrators of the impact of the harm or disadvantage that they had inflicted on others. He did not deny the offenders a right to life, as Molly, Liam, and Scott did, or their right to free participation in society, as Max and Denmark did. Instead Declan seemed committed to plans of equitable repercussions to redress unfair treatment of others.

The ideas of reciprocal justice proposed by Declan suggest conscious creative conceptualising, such as that observed by Connell (1971) in his study of children's development of political beliefs. Declan's suggestions of reciprocal justice provide examples of a young child's idiosyncratic thinking of ways to redress injustices; demonstrating the potential of idiosyncratic creativity that is possible in young children's active citizenship. These suggestions of reciprocal justice provided by Declan present possibilities for young children's active citizenship built on creativity and hope to cultivate empathy in perpetrators towards their victims.

#### *7.1.5 Why Retribution? What Does it Mean?*

The above accounts demonstrate how retribution became a notable theme in comments and actions suggested by some children to the stories told. After the shock of Molly's comments, the teacher and I consciously decided to provide space for the children to express their emotive responses to *Iqbal's Story* and *Craig's Story*, rather than attempting to maintain an early childhood environment of niceness (Hard, 2005; Stonehouse, 1994) where acts of violence are actively excluded from being talked about or performed. Our conscious pedagogical decision was informed by ideas on aesthetic encounters in education (Dewey, 1934; Abbs, 1989; Greene, 1995). The story initiated the aesthetic encounter and then interactive activities cultivated imaginative action. The children's engagement in these activities provided ideas about what citizenship might be for young children. Through this, plans for retribution were a strong element of the children's suggestions of actions to redress unfair treatment of others. The suggestions seemed to encapsulate the children's reaction to injustice in the respective stories. For example, Molly's idea of burning Ghullah suggested anger over the harm Ghullah had inflicted on the children who worked in his carpet factory. The invention of a human-pulverising machine by Scott and Liam, and the list of ways to arrest by Denmark and Max provided an avenue for the children to conquer who they saw as the baddies. The ideas of reciprocal justice from Declan exhibit a desire for perpetrators to know what their acts of harm feel like. All of these suggestions seem to present the intensity of these children's resistance to unfair treatment on others.

Providing space for children to suggest retributive actions enabled autonomy as Young (1995) defined it. The children made and acted upon choices that they considered to be fair remedies to injustices, which in these data were retributive actions.

The children readily sorted the people who featured in these stories into either good or bad categories. Possible thinking behind their comments and actions could be that being good (i.e., helping others) was acceptable; yet being bad (i.e., harming others) was intolerable. This message is indicative of the metanarrative of the good citizen equating with obedience, which is perpetuated through fairy tales (Tatar, 2003) and other children's stories (Whalley, 1996). Such messages invariably have had an impact on the children in this study, with traces of these messages of good and bad infiltrating their responses. However, the complexities of humanity required exploration beyond the binary of good and bad (as noted in Chapter 5), as the children were responding to biographical stories, so real people were being demonized.

The high frequency of children's expression of citizenship through suggestions of retributive actions to redress unfair treatment pointed to a significant feature of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. There was diversity among their suggestions. Each suggestion had meaning for each child who initiated the action. They produced stories of children's motivation to redress injustice by punishing the perpetrator. These examples illustrated young children's capacity to sympathise with those who experience injustice, which in turn motivated their actions to redress the injustice.

## 7.2 Rebellion in Young Children's Active Citizenship

Rebellion as a response to unfair treatment was strongly evident in a story told by three girls (Molly, Ella, and Fergie) in the last week of data collection. The suggestion of stealing blocks in the *Two Blocks* story discussed in the previous section may be considered a rebellious act, but that was not the children's intention. Their intention was to establish balance in the distribution of blocks. The story discussed in this section details rebellious acts seemingly played out for retribution. Although this is the only example of a theme of rebellion present in the data, it is discussed because it presents a marked difference to other responses from the children throughout the study, in particular to the stories that the children told in workshop 13.

First, to establish the significance of the example of retribution as rebellion, an example of the absence of rebellion in the children's participation in the social justice storytelling program is described (7.2.1). Next, the story of rebellion by Molly, Ella, and Fergie is told and analysed (7.2.2). This section concludes by discussing the place and purpose of rebellion in possibilities for young children's active citizenship (7.2.3).

### 7.2.1 No Rebellion

An example of the absence of rebellion in responses to unfairness was notable in the whole group discussion after the *Two Blocks* story. The teacher had asked the children what action they would take if she did not let them play with the blocks for the rest of the year.

- Teacher: What would you do? Would you sit and take that? You wouldn't mind not playing with blocks all year?
- Max: I would just take that, because I don't like playing with blocks very much ... I'd just do some drawing or colouring.
- Teacher: So you think you'd do something else. What about you Declan, would you do something about it—if I said you are not playing with the blocks all year?
- Declan: Yeah I would go to Miss R's class and ask her.
- Teacher: What if Miss R said: "No you are not going to play with mine either." What would you do then?
- Declan: Then I would go to Miss G's class and ask her.
- Teacher: And she said "No you are not playing with mine either." What would you do then?
- Declan: Give up.
- Teacher: NO! You wouldn't do that. Would you?
- Ella: Go to the new classroom.
- Peter: Go to the new classroom and nobody will see.
- Teacher: No, nobody's using those blocks they're brand new. What would you do...that means we've got four classes of blocks and no one can use them what are you going to do?
- Declan: Just give up.
- ...
- UN: Go home.
- Ella: Buy more blocks.
- ...
- Charlie: Go to a different class.
- Teacher: I don't know of any other classes that have blocks.
- Peter: Go to a different school.
- UN: A different kindy. (Lines 315-348 W10 10/10/2007)

The conversation continued on until the teacher asked, "Wouldn't anyone complain?" (Line 355-356 W10 10/10/2007). Rebellion or resistance did not seem available in this context. The children all seemed to accept the ruling of the teacher and were prepared to accept it, give up, or find other sources of blocks. None of them indicated any action other than seeking alternative sources of blocks.

Rebellion as an act of defiance is an uncommon theme in stories told by young children, especially girls (Broström, 2002). Stories for children typically have an underlying moral tone (Whalley, 1996), which was shaped largely by early recorders of fairy and folk

tales (e.g., the Brothers Grimm) who manipulated the stories to embed the moral order of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Tatar, 2003; Zipes, 1983). In modern times rebellion has become more common in stories for children, with *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963) being a classic example. Yet the legacy of niceness and goodness in children's stories has left a strong impression on moral order in early childhood (Zipes, 1983, 1994). The presence of moral messages in stories for young children may have had some influence on the availability of ideas for defying authority for this Prep class.

### 7.2.2 *The Story told by Molly, Ella and Fergie*

In week 13 I asked the question, "What story do you want to tell me?" This was a conscious decision to provide space for reciprocal story-making/storytelling. The children had listened to the stories that I chose to tell for many weeks, so workshop 13 was designed to provide space for each child to present a story in reply. At the workshop, a range of materials was available for the children to select props for their stories, including pieces of fabric, stones, sticks, small blocks, animal figures, finger puppets of families that represented differing cultural backgrounds, Guatemalan worry dolls, and small carpets from Pakistan. Open-ended natural materials were selected, along with some materials that were representative of stories told (e.g., Pakistani carpets). I wanted the stories that the children told to be responses to the stories I told, not to be re-enactments. The mixed selection of materials was chosen for this reason. The teacher managed the materials like a props department, keeping track of borrowing and offering guidance on selection of materials when children asked. The children then found a space in the room to play with the materials and create their stories. I video-recorded their storytelling when each child, pair or group of three indicated that they were ready.

The stories told by the children were shaped in three different ways. Some stories seemed to be shaped by the props that the children selected. For example, Denmark told a story of a racing car driver winning a trophy, as car and trophy pieces were unwittingly included in a set of blocks. A second group of stories were recalls of stories that I had told. For example, Carl told of the wise old woman's boat sinking from *The Rich Factory Owner and the Wise Old Woman*. A third group of stories presented as playing with themes and/or characters from stories that I told, yet took a new direction, a different context, or combined multiple characters and themes in a different way. For example, Juliet told of two endangered emus with many people and animals gathering together, yet there was no action taken, as that would occur in the sequel. The story Molly, Fergie, and Ella told fitted within this third category in that it drew from *Iqbal's Story* yet took the story in a new direction. I have selected their story for analysis, as it seemed to present the strongest response among the stories the children told with regard to citizenship as taking action to address unfairness.

In preparation for their story, Molly, Ella and Fergie gathered wooden peg figures that they had made themselves, a felt finger puppet that represented a man of dark skin colour in overalls, a piece of green velvet material, and one of the Pakistani carpets. The following is a transcript of their story interspersed with interpretations of narrative influence and Arendtian (1958/1998) interpretations of who they present as citizens. The comments made in regular font in parentheses were explicit metacommunication signals to other players.

Molly as Factory Owner:	( <i>Stern voice</i> ) Do the carpets! Do the carpets NOW!! Hurry up! Hurry up! Hurry up! HURRY!!
Ella as child labourer:	I'm trying to put my hair on.
Molly as Factory Owner:	(You have to say I'm trying)
Ella as child labourer:	I'm TRYING!!
Fergie as child labourer:	I'm hurrying.
Molly as Factory Owner:	Quick!
Ella & Fergie as child labourers:	( <i>In unison</i> ) Twist, twist, twist.
Ella as child labourer:	I've done it!
Fergie as child labourer:	I've done it!
Molly as Factory Owner:	Quickly! Quickly! QUICKLY!!
Fergie as child labourer:	I'm TRYING! I'm TRYING! I'm trying! I'm done!
Molly as Factory Owner:	Are you all done? I'm writing you done. Ching ching! But you still stay here and make more carpets the same as THOSE. Quickly! QUICKLY!!
Fergie as child labourer:	We're flying.
Ella as child labourer:	(We are going home and you didn't know where our house was.)
Molly as Factory Owner:	QUICKLY!
Fergie as child labourer:	(And they flew away to their house.)
Ella as child labourer:	Let's just snuggle up. Okay?
Fergie as child labourer:	We're freezing! Everybody in it.
Ella as child labourer:	Come on everybody! You too with our carpet. (Now we are in bed.)

So far in their story-making/storytelling, Molly presents a believable account of the “work harder and faster” work ethic of a factory owner, to which Ella and Fergie respond earnestly (e.g., “I’m trying”; “I’m hurrying”). This is suggestive of a master and slave narrative, yet the factory workers that Ella and Fergie play were not passive followers who helplessly and silently did the tasks they had been assigned, such as the younger brother in *Two Brothers* (Appendix G). Instead, they declared that they were “trying” and that they

were “done”. Ella and Fergie’s characters show streaks of agency, as they resist staying to do more work as the factory owner had demanded by absconding home to bed. Out-of-role directions were issued by Ella (e.g., “you didn’t know where our house was”) to control the actions of the factory owner and the plot. Through their characters, Ella and Fergie seemed to be presenting a story of survival as a child labourer, where you do what you can to survive. In this case their survival strategy was to escape to the safety of bed.

Their story-making/storytelling continued, presenting a new twist to their tale of child labour.

Fergie as child labourer:	(Just pretend he could find us)
Fergie as child labourer:	YOU GO AND MAKE SOME FACTORIES [carpets]!
Molly as factory owner:	I found you GIR-R-R-LS! (That’s the factory owner and that’s Iqbal) ( <i>points to finger puppet of man in overalls for factory owner and wooden peg figure for Iqbal</i> )
Ella as child labourer:	Get A-WAY!
Fergie:	(No that’s the factory owner.)
Fergie as child labourer:	GO AND MAKE SOME CARPETS!!!
Molly as child labourer:	Now we’re the boss[es] now!
ALL as child labourers:	DO IT DO IT DO IT DO IT!!!— ahhhhhhhhh!!! ( <i>addressed to finger puppet of man in overalls as factory owner</i> )
Fergie as child labourer:	( <i>Tosses factory owner across the room</i> ) WEEEEEE!
Ella as child labourer:	And we snuggle up in bed (pretend you don’t see me go)
Molly:	(You sneak away and we don’t know that you have gone until the morning)
Fergie as child labourer:	Sis?!
Molly as child labourer:	Where is she?
Fergie as child labourer:	She might be on the kite.
Molly as child labourer:	She might be downstairs.
Ella:	(Pretend I wasn’t downstairs and no one looked for me and no one could find me)
Fergie as child labourer:	If we go away for a minute then she might come to us.

(*To factory owner with a stern voice*) You make the carpet!

Fergie & Molly as child labourers: GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!  
 AHHHHH!!!  
 GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!  
 AHHH!!!  
 GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!  
 AHHH!!! (*Fergie tosses factory owner*)

Molly as child labourer: Sis-terrrr! (pretend she's in the shadows)  
 She's in the SHADOWS!!  
 (*Quietly*) Quickly he might find us. They are going to kill us.

Ella as child labourer: Over here! He will never find us here.

Fergie as child labourer: Let's dump it in the garbage (*making reference to the precious carpet they have stolen from the factory owner*). Can I come?

Ella as child labourer: Yes.

Fergie as factory owner: Where are those GIR-R-R-LS????

Molly: (And he didn't even see them)

Fergie as factory owner: My glasses are not working.

Ella: (And then we hop up and say 'go and make the carpets')

All as child labourers: GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!! GO  
 AND MAKE THE CARPET!!  
 AHHHHHHH!!! (*Fergie tosses factory owner puppet across room*)

Fergie: (And we keep saying and then he came back again and again and we keep saying it together)

ALL as child labourers: GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!! GO  
 AND MAKE THE CARPET!!  
 AHHHHHHHHH!!! (*Fergie tosses factory owner puppet across room*)

Fergie: (That's the end)

Ella & Molly: (No its not)

ALL as child labourers:	GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!! GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!! AHHHHHH!! ( <i>Fergie tosses factory owner puppet across room</i> )
Ella as child labourer:	GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!!
Fergie:	(Up here, up here.) ( <i>Gesturing to Molly and Ella to join her with her character's figure on teacher's desk</i> )
Molly as child labourer:	We stole his precious carpet!
Fergie as child labourer:	Everybody hop on.
Ella:	(And I'll drive)
Fergie as child labourer:	His precious carpet. (It's his flying carpet)
Ella as child labourer:	Go and make the CARPET! Go and make the CARPET!
Molly as child labourer:	Shhh! Shhh!
Fergie as child labourer:	Quick I think the man is coming. (and then he comes)
Fergie as factory owner:	I found—Oh NO! My precious carpet!! ( <i>his carpet is now a crunched piece of cellophane</i> )
Molly as factory owner:	Where are those cheeky GIR-R-R-LS? (and he couldn't find them could he)
Fergie as factory owner:	WO-O-O-WW!! ( <i>factory owner falls off desk to floor</i> )
Molly:	(We're done.) (W13 30/10/2007)

In the remaining passage of this story, the child labourer characters progress from survival strategies to outright rebellion through an act of mutiny. The existing authority (the factory owner) was overthrown (both in position of power and literally as Fergie repeatedly tossed him across the room) with the declaration of “We’re the boss[es] now” and “GO AND MAKE THE CARPET!!!” Through this blatant power reversal, a theme of the desire of children for power over authoritarian adults, such as carpet factory owners, is made visible. Molly, Ella and Fergie seemed to connect with the helplessness and powerlessness experienced by child labourers in *Iqbal's Story* and recognised that freedom could be achieved through power reversal.

Themes of defiance were strong in the story. The inclusion of such elements as mutiny and stealing treasure suggested traces of pirate adventure stories. Molly, Ella and

Fergie even included the concept of “hiding in the shadows”, which featured in the classic pirate adventure *Peter Pan* (Barrie, 1911). Pirate adventure tales that counter metanarratives of good citizenship convey disregard for authority, rules and conformity. However, pirate adventure stories rarely position females as non-conformist adventurers; male characters are more commonly positioned as active and potent (Nikola-Lisa, 1993; Turner-Bowker, 1996; Zipes, 1983). Non-conformist behaviour was previously observed as atypical for Molly (section 7.1.1). This raises questions as to why Molly, Ella and Fergie played out a story that defies authority. Molly, Ella and Fergie conveyed an affective response to the powerlessness and suffering that they felt in their experience of *Iqbal's Story* (as discussed in section 5.4 in Chapter 5). This affective response spurred their desire for power reversal as a means of stopping the unfair treatment of children: another possibility for young children's active citizenship.

Further to these elements of power reversal, defiance of authority, and non-conformity, Molly, Ella and Fergie present awareness of their offences through their acts of hiding to avoid being caught. This suggests that their acts of defiance were not performed with a completely anarchic attitude. Although they expressed little regard for the factory owner by frequently tossing him across the room, they acknowledged it was risky for them as they chose to hide for fear of repercussions. This is suggestive that Molly, Ella, and Fergie possessed awareness of possible consequences of their actions, that although they may have placed themselves in the position of power, and the factory owner in a position of subservience, they knew that the factory owner had the lasting authority. As storytellers, Molly, Ella, and Fergie made numerous efforts to sustain a more powerful position for child labourers by stealing the factory owner's carpet, repeatedly demanding “GO AND MAKE THE CARPET”, tossing him across the room, damaging his carpet, and finally, throwing him off the desk. A possible underlying meaning to this story of mutiny could be that as children, Molly, Ella, and Fergie were acutely aware that children possess only brief moments of power, and that it is adults who hold positions of authority in society. With this understanding, Molly, Ella and Fergie saw that only through the physical removal of the factory owner was there any hope of releasing the children from forced labour.

Analysis of the story told by Molly, Ella, and Fergie provides an example of who young children might be as active citizens as demonstrated through play. Their creative story-making was packed with elements of magic (flying carpet, hiding in the shadows) and adventure (mutiny) and offered innovative and playful suggestions to redress injustices. Analysis of their suggestions reveals an underlying desire to disempower the factory owner. From an Arendtian (1958/1998) perspective, the story revealed possible answers to who the heroes were, which in this case is just as much about Molly, Ella, and Fergie as the characters they portrayed. The line between Molly, Ella, and Fergie as narrators and as

characters was blurred in their story-making/storytelling. Perhaps they acted out what they desired in their play, which is what Davies (2003) and Gilbert (1994) say children do. Molly, Ella, and Fergie were citizens who resisted injustice and valued freedom of choice (e.g., the choice to go home when their work was done in the factory) and expression (e.g., to express their opinions and decisions to the factory owner). However, in their story it is not people in general, but children in particular, for whom they devised ways to obtain and sustain power. Rather than the general term of democracy, perhaps Molly, Ella, and Fergie enacted pedocracy or children's self-rule such as Janusz Korczak endeavoured to create in orphanages in Poland (Cohen, 1994; Lifton, 1988). A strong message in their story was a desire to overpower the factory owner because of the unjust treatment of child labourers, presenting a possibility for young children's active children's citizenship in which children express their desires to disempower those who treat others unjustly.

### *7.2.3 Why Rebellion? What Does it Mean?*

As presented in the story told by Molly, Ella, and Fergie rebellion might be viewed as a claim for power. Molly, Ella, and Fergie portrayed the experiences of Iqbal and his peers as powerless and helpless, making rebellion necessary. The story emerged from the children playing with the materials. A context of play provided space for the children to portray a world of great flux and anarchy (Sutton-Smith, 1997). The story told by Molly, Ella, and Fergie provided space for them to express their affective response to *Iqbal's Story*. The three girls had not rehearsed or planned the story together beforehand, as I discovered when interviewing them two weeks later (ME&F I 14/11/2007). By providing space for the children to tell a story, feelings and thoughts about the events that occurred in *Iqbal's Story* were expressed.

Documentation and analysis of the story told by Molly, Ella, and Fergie explains possibilities for young children's active citizenship as resistance to unfair treatment through rebellion against authority. Molly, Ella, and Fergie played out this possibility through the imaginary world of story-making/storytelling. Yet if play is understood as a place to express desires (Davies, 2003; Gilbert, 1994), their claim for power through rebellion may have wider meaning than simply as a response to *Iqbal's Story*. The story provided a view of citizenship (for these children in this context) in which unfair treatment is actively resisted. Children are constantly told by adults what to do throughout their school day. This may be why when the teacher asked what they would do if they were not allowed access to the blocks that none of the children said they would complain or dispute authority even if unfair. The opportunity for story-making offered a space to defy unfair authority and claim power, making visible what citizenship participation might be to young children. Molly, Ella, and Fergie imagined a place where children could defy unfair authority through power reversal,

expressing opinions, making decisions, and generally having greater control over their actions.

This story of rebellion portrays a possibility of young children's active citizenship as defiance of unfairness and injustice, and desire for some control of their actions. Molly, Ella, and Fergie are citizens who resist injustice and value freedom of choice and expression. This possibility for young children's active citizenship differs from those previously discussed in that Molly, Ella, and Fergie were seeking civil rights for the child carpet factory workers that they portrayed (or possibly themselves). The previous examples addressed the perpetrators of unfair treatment to others.

### 7.3 Responsibility in Young Children's Active Citizenship

Another major theme identified in children's participation in the workshops was consideration for another, with 21 entries noted in Table 4.2. Many of the data samples representative of this theme related to one child considering another child or family member during discussions in the storytelling workshops. One data event stood out from the other entries representative of this theme because the children did not just express consideration for another but responsibility to others through enactment of social actions. Data from this event provided examples of a communitarian understanding of citizenship: purposeful group action and a strong sense of responsibility to others (Delanty, 2002; Etzioni, 1993; Janoski, 1998). Two data samples of closing reflections on the study are included towards the end of this section as they also illustrate displays of responsibility to others. Evidence of children expressing responsibility to others is investigated because the actions of responsibility to others were initiated and enacted by the children, unlike some events discussed in Chapter 6, which were adult initiated, directed, and manipulated.

The data event that provided evidence of children expressing responsibility to others was a meeting initiated by Denmark to discuss child labour. The following section (7.3.1) provides an account of Denmark initiating this meeting. A social action that was initiated and organised by Ebony in this meeting is then discussed (7.3.2). Further evidence of children's responsibility to others is provided in 7.3.3. Explanations of children's expressions of responsibility to others are contained in each section. This section concludes with a discussion of the place and purpose of responsibility to others in possibilities for young children's active citizenship (7.3.4).

#### *7.3.1 Initiating a Meeting to Listen to Others*

After the whole-class discussion of *The Rich Factory Owner and the Wise Old Woman* in workshop eight, Denmark suggested having a meeting as one of the post-story activities. At the time, I interpreted this as an interest in discussing the issue of child labour to devise

plans of action. Denmark and I attended the meeting along with two other children, David and Ebony. It began in this way.

Louise: So first would you like to talk about how you feel about how these children are treated?

Denmark: Oh I'M not coming up with any ideas.

Louise: You're not—coming up with any ideas?

Denmark: (*shakes head*)

Louise: So why did you suggest the meeting?

Denmark: To listen to what other people have to say. (Line 373-387 W8 10/09/2007)

The reason Denmark offered for the meeting genuinely surprised me, as it seemed atypical of what I had come to know of his behaviour and thinking. He was usually quite verbal, as evidenced in Table 4.3 where Denmark is identified as one of the major contributors of data representative of the identified themes. In addition, most of his comments were suggestions of solutions to address problems presented in the stories.

Denmark's suggestion of a meeting to listen to others indicates an active citizen who organises, facilitates, and networks. He expressed interest in making action happen by initiating the meeting and then planned to listen to the ideas of others. In terms of citizenship, Denmark acted as a rational autonomous being according to the definition of autonomy espoused by Young (1995) and the conception of a democratic person espoused by Kant (1784/1992) by making an explicit choice to create space for the expression of opinions. From an Arendtian (1958/1998) understanding, Denmark was being political and agentic by initiating the action of a meeting with others. He took the risk of starting something new. Further to this, he maintained agency and supported the agency of others by not controlling their responses to his initiated actions; instead, he stated that he wanted "to listen to what other people have to say". The meeting continued with discussion of ways to redress injustices in child labour and what we could actually do. Suggestions from the children focused on gathering supplies to build schools. I suggested we could build a model to which Denmark replied, "I want to do real things" (Line 425 W8 10/09/2008).

This assertion of a genuine desire to engage as a citizen in the wider community made visible how young children often engage in pretend or play situations rather than in "real things". Denmark's comment could be interpreted as a rebuttal of romantic notions of play advocated by Froebel (1887) and Rousseau (1762/2007), which has children sheltered from the corrupting influence of society. An assertion for "real things" challenges the metanarrative of young children existing in worlds of play, domesticity, and school (Roche, 1999). It also indicates the limitations young children can experience when opportunities for

meaning-making are consistently restricted to the world of play, such as occurred for Max in the activities after *Iqbal's Story* (section 5.3.3).

Denmark's comment signalled an indication of the marginalisation that children may experience in citizenship practice due to limited access to engagement with the wider community. This aligns with what Arvanitakis (2008) defined as the marginalisation and citizenship deficit category in his typology of citizenship spaces. In this category, citizens feel they are not listened to or represented by civic institutions and consider participation pointless because they claim their opinions will not be heard. In this context, Denmark is a citizen who wanted to perform actions in the real world, seeking to make a real impact. He was not satisfied with the conventional experiences offered to children aged five to six years where real world contexts may be played with, drawn, built, talked about, but rarely engaged with directly through participation as communitarian citizens.

After Denmark's request for engagement with the real world, Ebony suggested writing a letter to seek help from someone to build a school. The children suggested a number of possibilities, such as the principal, the Prime Minister, and builders. Then I remembered that an emergency architect who had recently returned from building a school in Pakistan<sup>8</sup> was visiting the class together with their buddy class the next day. I proposed that the emergency architect could be a suitable recipient of their letter. The children agreed and made suggestions of what to include in the letter. The letter read:

“Dear Joe

Could you please bring some wood to help build a school in Pakistan? Could you collect the timber from our homes to take as well? We will give you some toys to take for the school. Thank-you for coming to visit us.” (W 8 10/09/2007)

Denmark, David, and Ebony signed the letter. When I was writing the letter, Denmark offered this contribution:

Denmark: And I was just thinking that we could ask those people what their ideas were and I could share it with you guys. I could ask them.

Louise: Which people?

Denmark: Umm the kids at the other table. (Lines 488-491 W 8 10/09/2007)

I agreed with his suggestion, so Denmark went to the drawing table and asked what their ideas were, then returned to our meeting and relayed what he had heard.

Denmark's action to gather ideas from other children presented another expression of responsibility to others, similar to that which he had suggested at the start of the meeting.

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<sup>8</sup> The emergency architect visit had been arranged after the Prep class shared their recollection of *Iqbal's Story* with their buddy class, which sparked a commitment by both classes to embark on ongoing collaborative work on the issue of child labour in Pakistan.

He took responsibility to gather and include ideas in the letter to Joe from children attending other activities. Denmark acted politically by initiating an action with others that others supported, so that his agency and that of others were enabled (Arendt, 1958/1998). It seemed to present as responsive and purposeful interaction with others.

On reflection of the meeting in a whole-class discussion at the close of the workshop, Denmark offered this account:

Denmark: The meeting was KIND of like a big meeting, like a BIG adults' meeting, kind of. (Line 804 W8 10/09/2008)

One way of reading Denmark's desire "to do real things" and classifying our meeting as "like a BIG adults' meeting, kind of" is that he had set the meeting up and then assessed or measured it against his emerging understandings of active citizenship. In this comment, Denmark seemed acutely aware of the demarcation in society between adults and children and placed meetings within the adult world ("like a BIG adults' meeting"). Perhaps this relates to his request "to do real things", assuming that he equates "real" with "adult". In this interpretation of his comments, the meeting can be read as "kind of" satisfying Denmark's request "to do real things". His comments present an understanding of a child's view of adult meetings, suggesting a degree of excitement at having access to "a BIG adults' meeting, kind of". Like Denmark's request "to do real things", his comment on the meeting raises the issue of young children's access to resources to engage in active citizenship. Denmark's comments make visible young children's experience of marginalisation and citizenship deficit, as defined by Arvanitakis (2008), in that it indicates young children's limited access to avenues for their opinions to be heard.

Denmark's comments resonate with findings by Prout (2001), in which he recognised that children aged five to sixteen were alert to adult tokenism. In addition, Denmark's plea for real participation connects with the suggestion by Lansdown (2001) that there needs to be scope for meaningful action so children can actually use their citizenship skills to make a difference. Other researchers (DeWinter, 1997; Kulnych, 2001; Minnow, 1999) have also noted that if children actually witness change as a result of their actions this can enable children to view themselves as citizens. The actualisation of change can in turn support recognition of children's citizenship identities and sustain their motivation for ongoing participation. Denmark's participation alluded to a possibility for young children's active citizenship as a desire for real world experiences to create real change.

When Joe the emergency architect visited, he read the children's letter requesting that he collect wood from their homes. He explained to the Prep class and the Year 6 class (the Prep class' buddy class) that it was very difficult to ship timber into Pakistan. Most of the timbers used for buildings in Pakistan came from Russia. This provided practical information on the logistics involved in sending raw materials to Pakistan to build a school. Joe supported the

children's idea of collecting toys, and he provided the teacher with a suitable contact person and address for receiving the collection. There was still a chance for Denmark to participate in real social action.

### *7.3.2 Organising Toy Collection*

Ebony took responsibility for the idea of organising a toy collection, which she initiated at the meeting. After I had written in the letter to Joe that he collect timber from the children's homes to ship to Pakistan to build a school, I asked what the children thought should be inside the school. Ebony replied, "toys" (Line 497 W8 10/09/2008). I then lead a discussion on how to organise the class to collect toys to send to Pakistan.

Louise: What do you think Ebony? Do you think we should have a whole-class meeting and tell everyone that they need to bring a toy in or should we send a note home so they'll remember it better?

Ebony: Send the note home. I'm going to write the note I think at home.

Louise: Okay?!

Denmark: The people that worked here, they could do their own note.

Louise: Well maybe we could write it here and I could get it photocopied and I could bring it tomorrow.

Ebony: If you want to do that.

Louise: So then you don't have to write it twenty times. It would take a long time to do that. (Lines 598-607 W8 10/09/2008)

Ebony: My Mum can write it down and then photocopy it twenty times.

Louise: Oh, so does your Mum have a photocopier?

Ebony: Yes she's got a printer at home.

Louise: So do you want to do it at home or do you want to do it now? It's your choice.

Ebony: I'll ask my Mum. I think I'll get a piece of paper at home and I'll ask. (Lines 612-616 W8 10/09/2008)

The discussion went on to determine the words for a note to go home that read, "Please bring a toy to school no bigger than a shoe box that we can send to children in Pakistan." Following through on her promise, the next day Ebony delivered to the teacher twenty copies of the note for distribution to every child in the class. Ebony had not required support in explaining the task to her mother from the teacher, the teacher aide, or me. Every child in the class did donate a toy, and the toys were sent to the contact in Pakistan that the emergency architect had given to the class teacher. They were not received in Pakistan before the Prep children graduated to different year one classes, so the class did not hear of the impact of their social action.

This account of Ebony's participation offers further understanding of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Ebony, like Denmark, presented as a citizen who accepted responsibility by volunteering to undertake one of the tasks that emerged from our meeting. In addition, she thought through the task to devise an efficient way to produce twenty copies of the note by accessing her available resources, that is, her mother and her mother's printer. She was responsible in following through on her commitment to complete the task with the assistance of her mother. Interpretation of Ebony's comments and actions as a story of young children's active citizenship reveals Ebony as a citizen who is pragmatic, keen to get the task done, a helper, a doer, and a reliable 'completer' of tasks in organising social action. All of these qualities reflect possibilities for young children's active citizenship as responsibility to others.

Ebony also displayed autonomy as Young (1995) defined it, as she made the choice to undertake the task of producing copies of the request for toy donations and acted upon her choice. As noted by Stasiulis (2002), children are often assumed to be excluded from autonomy (along with reason and rationality) in participation rights, yet Ebony's display of autonomous participation challenges this assumption. These acts of participation performed by Denmark and Ebony provided further evidence to support claims by de Winter (1997), Lansdown (2001), and Stasiulis (2002) that children are capable of much more than many adults think.

### 7.3.3 Concluding Displays of Children's Responsibility to Others

In week 12, when reflecting over many of the stories that I had told, I asked each of the children to identify the story from which they learnt the most. Every child readily nominated a story. When I asked children why they identified with the story that they nominated, most replied along the lines of "Because it was sad". Declan however, offered more detail.

- Louise: Declan are you ready to tell me which story you learnt the most from?  
Declan: Iqbal—that one I learnt a LOT!  
Louise: What did you learn?  
Declan: How poor they actually are. And I was going to think about going on, when I'm an adult, going on a huge trip to Pakistan exploring all of the sad parts and making rich and giving all of the money away. (Lines 497-502 W12 23/10/2007)

Declan's explanation of his learning from *Iqbal's Story* indicated responsibility to others. Instead of simply acknowledging *Iqbal's Story* as a 'sad' story as many of his peers had, he seemed to feel a sense of responsibility towards the suffering of some children in Pakistan, illustrated through his philanthropic plans for adulthood. It was inspiring to hear from a child at six years of age. From the above comments and ideas for actions, Declan can be described as an emerging humanitarian citizen, good Samaritan, and philanthropist.

His expression of “exploring all the sad parts” also indicates a sense of curiosity and perhaps a need to believe that children can experience such poverty and suffering. In this regard he does not present as an armchair philanthropist, but one who plans to engage in ‘on the ground’ philanthropic support. From this reading, his responsibility to others is expressed through money. Perhaps he recognised a disproportionate distribution of money between himself and some children in Pakistan and felt responsible for redressing the imbalance.

Declan’s plans for the future in response to *Iqbal’s Story* can be read as ongoing plans for responsibility to others. Another indicator of children’s displays of ongoing or sustained responsibility to others was noted in the reflections and observations of the teacher aide on the children’s participation in the study.

Teacher Aide: They seem to be much more aware. Not only of the things that you have been telling them, but things on television—they are taking note. (Lines 1-2)

...

Louise: So generally it’s that they are more aware—as you mentioned in your opening comment, so more aware of?

Teacher Aide: Yes even more aware of their peers. I mean that comes and goes, but when they are doing something wrong, you know to each other, they stop to discuss it with them. They seem to be able to draw more on the experiences of these stories about having respect and valuing people. (Lines 42-47 27/11/2007)

These comments suggest an increase in the children’s awareness of experiences and opinions of others obtained through participation in the study. Children discussing their conflicts with each other can be read as an expression of responsibility to others by engaging in dialogue to resolve the conflict. The children’s increased awareness of each other also suggests their growing capacity for compassion for one another, which Nussbaum (1997) identified as a requirement of world citizenship. From a position of compassion, there is respect and care (responsibility) for one another and a deeper awareness of the suffering of others. This reflection paints a picture of the children in this Prep class as peacemakers and global citizens with a growing awareness of humanity. The comments offered by Declan and the teacher aide indicate the influence of social justice storytelling as pedagogy for young children to engage in active citizenship.

#### *7.3.4 Why Responsibility? What Does it Mean?*

Violent proposals of retribution and rebellion may be read as negative qualities of citizenship in that they clash with ideals of humanitarianism and obedience, yet responsibility to others would more commonly be welcomed in pedagogical ideals for citizenship practice. The data from Denmark, Ebony, Declan, and the teacher aide have been included in this chapter because they are displays of child-initiated responsibility for social

actions. Being responsible is often equated with adults not children. Beliefs about children's diminished capacity for responsibility have been used in arguments against children's citizenship rights (Kulnych, 2001). The comments and actions from Denmark and Ebony, and Declan's plan provide evidence that young children can express responsibility to others and therefore engage in a communitarian understanding of citizenship (Delanty, 2002; Etzioni, 1993; Janoski, 1998).

The above examples from Denmark, Ebony and Declan suggest children can be responsible to others on real projects that can create real change. Both Denmark and Ebony took their participation in the meeting and its related tasks seriously. Their citizenship practice displayed evidence of young children as active communitarian citizens through purposeful group action with a strong sense of responsibility to others (Delanty, 2002; Etzioni, 1993; Janoski, 1998). The arguments of Millei and Imre (2009) that children do not have legal or administrative capacity to fully participate in political life are countered by the demonstration of Denmark and Ebony that there are possibilities for children's participation in communitarian citizenship. Adults can observe what children initiate and employ their legal and administrative capacities to support children's access to communitarian citizenship participation. Demonstration of young children's capacities, such as those of Denmark and Ebony, provides evidence to support the acceptance of young children as citizens in wider circles. As Lister (2008) noted, demonstration of capacity is required for children's acceptance as citizens.

#### 7.4 Possibilities for Young Children's Active Citizenship

The significance and purpose of the themes of retribution, rebellion and responsibility were explored in young children's active citizenship to redress injustices. Suggestions of retribution were interpreted to convey the intensity of the sympathies of young children with those who experience injustice. Rebellion was interpreted to convey intense feelings of powerlessness and helplessness that motivated acts to claim power and control in children's lives. Children's expressions of responsibility to others were interpreted as desire and capacity for children to engage in communitarian citizenship. The ways these young children chose to redress injustices are defined as examples of active citizenship.

Exploration of young children's expressions of retribution, rebellion, and responsibility identified possibilities for young children's active citizenship, which included:

1. Ideas to balance the humiliation and helplessness of the victim/hero with retaliation and punishment of the perpetrator/villain.
2. Technically focused violent resistance to unfair treatment of other children.
3. Support for the removal of freedom from those who cause harm upon others.
4. Creativity and hope to cultivate empathy in perpetrators towards their victims.

5. Children exercising agency by controlling their actions, expressing opinions and making decisions.
6. Consideration of the points of view of others.
7. Recognition of children's marginalisation in active citizenship through their limited access to real resources.
8. Desire for participation in real action in real world experiences to create real change.
9. Autonomous acts of participation that express responsibility to others.

This range of possibilities for young children's active citizenship recognises heterogeneity and fluidity in citizenship as defined by Arvanitakis (2008). The notion of being heterogeneous is evident across the diverse displays of citizenship presented. The notion of fluidity is evident in the different displays of citizenship by individual children in different circumstances. For example, Denmark acted by supporting the removal of freedom from those who cause harm to others, then later expressed desire for participation in real action. Recognition of heterogeneity and fluidity illustrates that these findings are not generalisable; instead they offer insight into the breadth of possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

In this chapter, understanding of speech and action forming life stories (Arendt, 1958/1998) was used to interpret who nine young children were as citizens. Descriptions of these nine children as active citizens include:

1. Molly, Liam, and Scott who viewed inhumane practices as unforgivable.
2. Max and Denmark who upheld the law with a strong commitment to justice.
3. Declan who sought to provoke empathy for those harmed in those who caused the harm through equitable repercussions.
4. Molly, Ella, and Fergie who resisted unfair authority and valued freedom of choice and expression.
5. Denmark who desired participation in the adult/'real' world and demonstrated responsibility to others through self-initiated responsive interactions.
6. Ebony who autonomously completed tasks to support the class participation in a communitarian act.
7. Declan who saw himself as a humanitarian and philanthropic citizen in the future.

These portraits recognise the complex range of qualities young children possess as active citizens, as well as their capacity and strength. These children were compassionate and autonomous, qualities that are often not associated with young children. Each of these children portrayed courage and willingness to act by initiating actions. They exercised agency in many ways and defined themselves as agentic beings. Different views and values shaped who each child was as a citizen. These young children were value-driven, agentic citizens.

Exploration of children's comments and actions as examples of their active citizenship enabled recognition of how children choose to be agentic to redress the unfair treatment of others. In each of the data events discussed in this chapter the children were agentic, expressing opinions and participating autonomously. Such a view recognises children's agency not as a quality that adults can cultivate but rather as something that emerges, that children seize at their will. As Gallacher and Gallagher noted (2008), children exercise agency when and how they choose, regardless of the methods a researcher uses. The suggestions and acts of retribution, rebellion, and responsibility to others were evidence of children exercising agency. Violent resistance and rebellion may not be condoned by those who honour niceness in early childhood education, yet they are valid responses. By scratching below the surface, understandings of desires to seek balance to unfair treatment and desires to claim control of their own actions were identified. This suggests validity in a shift from pedagogical and research emphases on adults endeavouring to support and enable children's agency, to being alert to how, when, and where children are agentic. Such an approach could offer greater scope for authenticity in children exercising agency as they choose. This offers a more authentic approach of engaging with children as agentic beings, as only individuals themselves have control of their agency. Young children's active citizenship may then be defined as when children exercise agency to redress injustice. This understanding builds on the view of young children's active citizenship, discussed in Chapter 6, in which young children initiate actions and adults respond to and support the enactment of these actions.

## CHAPTER 8: LIVING THEORIES, SIGNIFICANCE, AND IMPLICATIONS

This final chapter discusses learning that occurred through my inquiry into what possibilities for young children's active citizenship can be as provoked through a practice of social justice storytelling. I began with knowledge that young children can express enthusiasm and capacity to engage with social justice issues and initiate social actions to redress injustices, as described in the Prologue. This study was framed to learn more about the capacity of storytelling to motivate young children to be active citizens and what young children's active citizenship can and might be. After four years of research into this inquiry, this chapter summarises findings that are the refined tip of the iceberg of broad and deep explorations into social justice storytelling and young children's active citizenship. Engagement in research of my practice created living educational theories (McNiff, 2007; Whitehead, 1989; Whitehead & McNiff, 2006) of social justice storytelling as pedagogy and of possibilities for young children's active citizenship. These theories are living, as they consist of tentative and emerging ideas that articulate my learning in a practice of social justice storytelling, and in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. These theories are not statements of certainties and did not emerge out of neat success stories, but instead emerged from questions, struggles and conflicts over meaning, over issues such as how freedom of expression can be addressed (Chapter 5), and what young children's citizenship can be (Chapters 6 and 7). Potential significance and implications of these theories to the fields of storytelling, education, and citizenship are explained. First, findings in response to objective one are summarised and presented as a living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy (8.1). Second, findings in response to objective two are summarised as a living theory of possibilities for young children's active citizenship (8.2). Possible implications for early childhood education, children's citizenship, and storytelling are discussed as relevant in both sections 8.1 and 8.2. Third, recommendations for further research are proposed in relation to limitations of the study (8.3). The chapter concludes with closing reflections on the significance of the study (8.4).

### 8.1 A Living Theory of Social Justice Storytelling as Pedagogy

A living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy emerged through analysis of my practice of social justice storytelling. A practice of social justice storytelling involved sharing social justice stories as aesthetic encounters, combined with critical discussion and activities to share thoughts, ideas and search out the problematic borders of issues of injustice. This living theory was driven by objective one, "To explore social justice storytelling as pedagogy that enables young children's active citizenship participation", and addressed the research subquestions:

- 1 a) What qualities of social justice storytelling support or provoke young children's participation as active citizens?

1 b) How can adults and children work together to enable young children's active citizenship?

Four motifs emerged from regular reflection on recurring questions and offered a way to explain through stories the qualities that supported or provoked young children's participation as active citizens (as discussed in Chapter 5). The motifs are ideas formed through reflection in and on action. They explain the influences in my practice at the time in relation to young children's active citizenship and form statements of explanation of my learning for a living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy.

A motif of story-tailoring highlighted a need for responsiveness in my practice in order to build community and meaning with listeners, by tailoring subsequent stories based on responses to preceding stories. A motif of spinning and weaving functioned by plotting how the stories and the social actions they set in motion interconnected to form meaning. A motif of freedom of expression illustrated a need for ongoing critical reflection of endeavours to support agency and multiplicity in young children's free expression of contributions, opinions, choices, and decisions in a practice of social justice storytelling. A motif of *walk in the shoes of another* involved: a) biographical tragedies, b) aesthetic qualities (e.g., descriptive language), c) active participation of children in the story, and d) opportunities for the children to express opinions and feelings about the stories, to cultivate experiential understanding of what someone else has experienced. Collectively, these four motifs form a living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy that provokes and promotes young children's active citizenship. This living theory was formed through reflection of practice at a particular time; it is not fixed, nor replicable, rather it is alive and open to ongoing intersections with others.

Although this living theory was created through subjective reflection of a contextualised practice shaped by my values of agency, responsiveness, interconnectivity, multiplicity and practice, others may learn from these descriptions of motifs of social justice storytelling as pedagogy. The proposal of four motifs contribute knowledge to previously proposed notions of storytelling as pedagogy (e.g., Egan, 1986; Jaffe, 2000; Kuyvenhoven, 2005; Rosen, 1988). The motifs may be considered relevant signposts to other storytelling teachers wishing to cultivate understandings, responsive interactions, and empathy in ways that are relevant to participating learning communities. They have potential applicability for single storytelling experiences to ongoing storytelling programs. The motifs alert storytelling teachers to:

1. *Tailor* stories for the audience to cultivate broad awareness of the complexities of social justice issues.
2. *Spin and weave* connections between stories and actions to acknowledge and follow what the stories set in motion.

3. Continually reflect on opportunities for *freedom of expression* as endeavours to engage with children as agentic beings in diverse ways.
4. Cultivate aesthetic and affective story experiences that take the listener for a *walk in the shoes of another*, as if the story is happening to them.

Storytelling teachers may draw from this living theory to inform their own practice by taking what has meaning for them just as an individual draws from a story her own implicit meanings, subjectification and perspectives (Bruner, 1986). Different aspects may speak to different people in different ways, just as a story triggers different meanings for different people in different contexts at different times. Storytelling as pedagogy was applied according to how Freire (1970, 1973, 1974, 1985, 1998) defined pedagogy, as a two-way exchange of seeing, listening, wondering, and dialogue. My practice of social justice storytelling sought to provoke and promote young children's active citizenship by seeing and imagining, listening, wondering about and dialoguing the complexities of humanity, and taking action to redress injustices. Understandings of my practice and its potential may inspire others to engage with storytelling as pedagogy to provoke and promote active citizenship with children of all ages. The possibilities for a teacher to engage in social justice storytelling with a group of children in an ongoing working relationship have potential to be far more fruitful than what was possible in this study, given I was an external researcher with confined time restraints.

My living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy contributes implications to early childhood education. In particular it offers possibilities for early childhood practices that address outcome two of the recently introduced Early Years Learning Framework of Australia (Commonwealth of Australia, 2009), which states that "children are connected and contribute to their world" (p.25). Social justice storytelling as pedagogy provides a way to cultivate young children's connections and contributions to communities in which they belong. Through storytelling and discussion of stories broader understandings of fairness and diversity can be provoked. And by asking: 'What does the story ask you to do?', children can then engage in social responsibilities through active community participation. The accounts of social justice storytelling as pedagogy provided in this thesis and the framework of four motifs provide possibilities and considerations for early childhood practitioners to address outcome two of the Early Years Learning Framework and promote and support young children's active citizenship.

My living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy contributes implications to education for social change. Although the use of narratives has been discussed in education for social change literature (e.g., counternarratives), the use of storytelling has been explored minimally. Most literature on education for social change involves children of upper primary or high school age. Explanations of learning in my practice of social justice storytelling provoking social change with young children provides evidence of the possibilities for storytelling and young children in education for social change. The intimate, performative and aesthetic qualities

of storytelling cultivated compassion, the understanding of others, and in turn motivated young children to express responsibility and action for social change to redress injustices. A living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy contributes knowledge on the potential of storytelling to provoke education for social change, and for young children to contribute to social change.

The above summarises my living theory of social justice storytelling as pedagogy as explanations of my learning articulated through four motifs: story-tailoring, interconnectivity, freedom of expression, and *walk in the shoes of another*. Formed through reflection of my practice, this living educational theory is alive and open to ongoing intersections with others. It is hoped that storytelling teachers, early childhood practitioners and educators for social change explore and expand on this theory to increase possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

## 8.2 A Living Theory of Possibilities for Young Children's Active Citizenship

A living theory of possibilities for young children's active citizenship is proposed through statements of explanation of my learning through analysis of young children's participation in a social justice storytelling program. This theory was shaped by the second objective of the study, "To explore what young children's active citizenship might be as provoked through social justice storytelling". To address the second objective, findings were sought to these questions:

- 2 a) How can adults and children work together to enable young children's active citizenship?
- 2 b) What proposals for social actions do young children offer?
- 2 c) What citizenship practices are available and possible for young children?
- 2 d) Which metanarratives and ideologies influence young children's active citizenship?
- 2 e) Who might young children be as active citizens?

Analysis of evidence of young children's active citizenship discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 produced the following statements of explanation of learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship:

1. Different ways of viewing children influence young children's active citizenship (8.2.1).
2. Retribution, rebellion, and responsibility have a place and purpose in possibilities for young children's active citizenship (8.2.2).
3. Young children possess complex qualities as active citizens (8.2.3).
4. Young children's active citizenship can be political and authentically agentic (8.2.4).

The following sections extrapolate each of these statements of explanation respectively with suggested implications for early childhood education and children's citizenship. My living theory of possibilities for young children's active citizenship offers ideas for early childhood practitioners and those who engage with young children in the public sphere to support the

inclusion and participation of young children as active citizens both in the learning community and public sphere. It is a living theory, so it is open to ongoing change as I share it with others.

### *8.2.1 Different Ways of Viewing Children Influence Young Children's Active Citizenship*

Throughout this thesis the influence of different ways of viewing children has been recognised and discussed. In particular, ways of viewing children that have a totalising effect (metanarratives) were seen to limit possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Metanarratives of children as developing, immanent, innocent, and dependent were recognised as having a hegemonic impact on what was possible and what was available for young children's active citizenship. Even though my intentions in this study were shaped by ideologies and values that welcomed agency and multiplicity, these metanarratives were still present and interfered with the capacity for agency and multiplicity in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. To bring young children's active citizenship to fruition, children need to be seen as agentic beings of today. Metanarratives of children as developing, immanent, innocent, and dependent cast children as citizens of the future. Analysis of my facilitation of citizenship collaborations with young children found that critical awareness of the influence of different ways of viewing children is required. To build on these findings, unacceptable practices of power as the outworkings of these metanarratives need to be questioned with and by children, and social action to change these practices enabled. These are processes that Freire (1974) advocated to "avoid the danger of massification" (p. 19) in education for social change. Widespread belief in children as developing, immanent, innocent, and dependent cultivates blind following of what may be seen as irrational practices of power over children, such as withholding knowledge from them. Critical awareness of the influences of these metanarratives can identify ways to avoid following irrational practices of power blindly.

Recognition that metanarratives influence young children's active citizenship has implications for storytelling as pedagogy. Awareness of the influence of different ways of viewing children can guide the selection of stories to be told to young children and the way in which they are told. Biographical tragedies crafted with aesthetic qualities and the active participation of children were identified in this study to provoke and promote young children's active citizenship. Opportunities for the children to dialogue about such stories further cultivates young children's awareness of the influence of metanarratives of children and citizenship on possibilities for their engagement in active citizenship. Attention to the influence of metanarratives of children and citizenship in social justice storytelling aids promotion of agency and critical awareness in young children's active citizenship.

Awareness of the influence of metanarratives of children and citizenship on possibilities for young children's active citizenship can guide pedagogical practices that provoke

and promote young children's active citizenship in early childhood education. Reflection on my pedagogical practices found different practices shaped by differing ways of viewing children limited or supported further possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The teacher and my endeavours to support young children's active citizenship were messy as metanarratives of children and citizenship infringed on our attempts to promote children as agentic. Learning from this experience alerts to a need for critical awareness of the influence of metanarratives of children and citizenship in early childhood education, to question irrational practices of power and seek pedagogical practices that support young children as agentic beings. Pedagogical practices need to challenge accepted limitations perpetuated by metanarratives, and engage in practices, such as making decisions with children, and seriously listening and responding to children's ideas, that offer greater scope for young children's active citizenship in the public sphere.

In citizenship, awareness of the influence of metanarratives of children and citizenship on possibilities for young children's active citizenship is required to better understand how to include young children as active citizens in the public sphere. Metanarratives of children as developing, immanent, innocent, and dependent limited possibilities in this study. Evidence generated in this study is applicable to others beside educators who may engage with young children in the public sphere, such as public servants, members of parliament, and ministers. Awareness of how the above views of children limit possibilities for young children's active citizenship can provoke reflection on, and reconsideration of, policies and practices regarding young children's participation in the public sphere. Increased awareness of the influence of different perceptions of children may provoke social change that increases young children's participation as active citizens in the public sphere.

### *8.2.2 Retribution, Rebellion, and Responsibility Have a Place and Purpose in Possibilities for Young Children's Active Citizenship*

Retribution, rebellion, and responsibility were found to have a place and purpose in young children's active citizenship that was defined as young children initiating social actions to redress injustices. Each of these themes was motivated by affective responses to the social justice stories told. Suggestions of retribution were punishment for the perpetrators of injustice. Ideas of rebellion sought power for the oppressed. The expressions of responsibility to others sought to remedy the loss and suffering for those who experienced injustice. Analysis of the place and purpose of these themes contributed learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

Recognition and inclusion of retribution, rebellion, and responsibility in young children's active citizenship has particular implications for early childhood education. Space can be provided for children to play out their suggestions of retribution, to express their affective

responses to social justice stories. By playing, drawing, dancing, building (and so on) their suggestions of retributive actions, children can express the emotional intensity of their affective responses. A forum could also be created to process young children's ideas and build understandings of consequences of retributive actions through dialogue with others. Themes of rebellion in children's suggestions to redress injustice can be recognised not just as defying authority but as a claim for power for the oppressed. Attention to these suggestions of rebellion can cultivate explorations of acceptable ways to be powerful, such as expressing opinions, initiating actions, and making decisions. How claims for power can be played out in active citizenship can be explored, for example, expressing opinion on an injustice to relevant authorities. Teachers can also cultivate a classroom and school culture that welcomes young children initiating and enacting responsibility to others. This requires attention to young children's ideas, and trust in their capacity and commitment to be responsible to others. Using the ideas, thoughts, feelings, and opinions of children can help realise possibilities for young children to be active citizens.

Recognition of retribution, rebellion, and responsibility as having a place and purpose in young children's active citizenship has implications for citizenship, what it can and might be for young children, and how young children might be included as citizens. Suggestions of retributive actions provide evidence of children's passion to take action redress injustice. Ideas of rebellion provide evidence of children being agentic, expressing opinions and taking control of their actions. Retribution and rebellion demonstrate young children's interest in active citizenship. Social actions that were initiated and enacted to show responsibility to others provide evidence of young children's desire and capacity for active participation in communitarian citizenship. Collectively, these examples offer insight for those who engage with young children in the public sphere as to what young children's citizenship might be, defined by the ways that young children choose to respond to injustices. It is hoped that acknowledgment of the place and purpose of retribution, rebellion, and responsibility in young children's active citizenship will lead to greater inclusion of young children's interest and capacity to engage in communitarian citizenship. To begin this process young children need to be included in dialogue on community issues, listened to and the ways in which young children want to contribute supported.

### *8.2.3 Young Children Possess Complex Qualities as Active Citizens*

The analysis of who nine young children might as citizens (Chapter 7) found that they possess complex qualities as active citizens. These young children demonstrated qualities that are often not associated with young children, such as compassion and autonomy. They chose to act and speak in ways that they thought were valid to redress injustice. Analysis of actions initiated and accompanying comments identified possible influences that shaped what the children did and said. Different views and values shaped who each child was seen to be as an active citizen, such as metanarratives of eye-for-an-eye logic and good citizenship, and values of equality, inclusion

and pragmatism. The differing complex qualities that young children portrayed as active citizens revealed heterogeneity and fluidity in citizenship (Arvanitakis, 2008). Recognition of complexity, multiplicity, heterogeneity and fluidity in who young children might be as active citizens provides evidence of learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship. The children initiated social actions not just for the sake of it, but for equality, inclusion and pragmatism.

Acknowledgment of the complex qualities that young children can portray as active citizens has implications for early childhood education and citizenship. The multiplicity of complex qualities that the selected young children portrayed is an invitation to practitioners who work with young children to acknowledge the complexities of who young children can be as active citizens in daily interactions. This acknowledgment can then fuel interactions with young children as complex active citizens. Young children can be recognised as active contributors in their learning communities and the public sphere.

Evidence of who young children can be as active citizens contributes rich understandings to the growing body of research on children's citizenship. These nine portraits of young children as active citizens challenge closed, deficit definitions of young children as irrational, impulsive, and pre-political. They acknowledge the sophistication, heterogeneity and fluidity of who young children can be as active citizens. It is hoped that this evidence improves young children's status as active citizens and opens doors for greater possibilities for young children's active citizenship participation.

#### *8.2.4 Young Children's Active Citizenship as Political and Authentically Agentic*

Young children's active citizenship can be political, by young children initiating actions and adults enabling these actions in the public sphere. Young children's active citizenship can be authentically agentic if adults recognise how, when, and where young children choose to exercise their agency to redress injustices and offer support at these moments. These statements of explanation provide insight to the role of adults in young children's active citizenship. The following discussion explains these statements and their implications for education and citizenship.

An interest in young children's active citizenship cultivated recognition of children as political through participation in questioning normalised practices and taking action to redress unjust practices in the public sphere. This followed the recommendation by Kulnych (2001) to acknowledge that children can have political identities. Young children in the study came to be known as political as a result of applying the definition of initiating action as an intentional act of inserting both something new and oneself into the social world (e.g., the classroom, school, and community) (Arendt, 1958/1998). The individual takes a risk by beginning something new amongst others, who may respond to the initiated action in unexpected and unpredictable ways. For example, the act of making a list undertaken by Denmark and Declan's suggestion of fig tree

planting were recognised as being political, as they involved starting something new in the public sphere. Denmark and Declan's initiatives were responded to by the teacher and me in ways that sustained the intent of their initiated actions (e.g., Denmark's list evolved into a petition). Actions taken up by others enabled agency of both the initiator and responder. This explains learning in possibilities for young children's active citizenship as young children initiating actions and adults responding by enabling these actions in the public sphere

This statement of explanation is particularly relevant to young children in contemporary western nations where children have reduced access to social structures (Kulnych, 2001), are economically dependent (Lister, 2007), and endure a strong emphasis on care and protection in policy and practices (James et al., 2008). This context reduces young children's capacity for active citizenship. Given the parameters of this social context, the possibility for young children's active citizenship requires that adults use their greater access to resources to bring young children's initiatives on humanitarian issues into the public sphere.

A view of young children's active citizenship as authentically agentic acknowledges how, when, and where young children choose to exercise their agency to redress injustices, such as the data examples in Chapter 7, which revealed young children expressing macabre and creative ideas for retribution, rebellion against unfair authority, initiative in seeking others' opinions, and autonomy in completing social actions. In Chapter 6, reflection showed that at times my attempts to support children's citizenship participation masked recognition and support of children's self-initiated ways of being active citizens. Many models of children's citizenship, such as those described in Chapter 2, position adults as enablers of children's citizenship practice. My experience in this study was that no matter what I did in my attempts to support children's citizenship, for children to be authentically agentic as citizens it needed to come from them. In this regard, children's citizenship can be viewed as pedocracy. In the context of young children's active citizenship, I imagine pedocracy to be ways that children choose to be agentic, that is, to act in the world with others.

Young children's active citizenship as authentically agentic embraces expressing opinions and making decisions by children when they choose. Expressing opinions and making decisions are understood as core democratic acts in that all members of society have access to power and enjoy universally recognised liberties and freedoms (Dahl et al., 2003). Yet children do not have the same access to the same control over their lives as adults, nor the same scope for participation in society. The story told by Molly, Ella, and Fergie was enacted in a place where children rebelled against unfair authority and took control of their own actions. A view of young children's active citizenship as authentically agentic acknowledges and appreciates the ways in which children express agency. This view is not a suggestion of chaos and barbarism as depicted in *Lord of the Flies*; what William Golding imagined fitted with discourses that construct the child as evil. Instead, a view of young children's active citizenship as authentically agentic is

more illustrative of viewing children as tribal, celebrating children's ways of being. This view has potential to increase awareness of the scope and possibilities of children's agency with matters that concern their lives. Although there are limitations in how young children can exercise their agency given that they are economically dependent on adults and they require care from adults to ensure their survival, consideration of children's citizenship as authentically agentic offers scope for greater awareness of emergent pedagogical acts. Opportunities for children to express opinions and make decisions are further possibilities for young children's active citizenship.

These explanations of young children's active citizenship as political and authentically agentic provide suggestions for pedagogical practice for practitioners promoting young children's active citizenship in early childhood education given young children's limited access to resources. Practitioners need to notice the social actions young children initiate; and how, when, and where children choose to be agentic. Well-considered responses that sustain rather than constrain agency are required, ensuring that subsequent actions engage children in decision-making throughout the initiation, planning, and implementation of social actions. Practitioners need to be alert to blocking or manipulating children's initiatives, as this limits the agency of both parties.

A view of young children's active citizenship as political and authentically agentic sees both children and adults experiment with co-existing in the political realm through interplays of initiating and responding actions. Instead of idealising children's agency for the sake of honouring the child, attention is focused on the interplay of actions between young children and adults learning together to activate real change as citizens. Such a view involves adults acknowledging children's initiatives and responding to children's initiated actions with further ideas to cultivate social actions that make a difference in the public sphere. By viewing young children's active citizenship as political and authentically agentic, unpredictability, emergence, and experimentation are embraced and concern for the other is always present. Two-way learning is cultivated rather than solely supporting children's agency in an adult world, so adults also learn to enter, understand, and acknowledge pedagogy in children's world/s. This reduces emphasis on adults as 'enablers' of children's agency and brings greater recognition of the complex and diverse ways that children choose to exercise their agency. This requires adults to listen and recognise the ways children exercise their agency, paying attention to the purposes underpinning the way children make and enact choices. These implications of viewing young children's active citizenship as political and authentically agentic have great potential for child and adult citizenship collaborations in early childhood education and beyond.

### 8.3 Limitations and Possibilities for Future Research

This study of one Prep class with social justice storytelling captured only a brief glimpse into possibilities for social justice storytelling as pedagogy and young children's active citizenship. In this regard it is limited in what can be claimed, yet the emergent understandings do indicate possibilities for future studies on storytelling and young children's active citizenship, which could include:

1. *Comparative Studies Between Storytelling and Non-Narrative Provocations of Young Children's Active Citizenship.* Understandings of the capacity for storytelling to arouse sympathetic imagination and motivate action warrants further investigation. This study investigated the capacity of storytelling to provoke young children's active citizenship. A comparative analysis between storytelling and non-narrative strategies (e.g., through discussing newspaper clippings and other relevant artefacts) would offer scope to more adequately distinguish the qualities of storytelling in relation to compassion and social action.
2. *Similar Studies in Other Socio-Cultural Contexts.* The study was limited in that it involved one class of children from one socio-cultural context. Studies of young children's participation in social justice storytelling as pedagogy within other socio-cultural contexts would provide scope for comparison and further investigation of emergent themes between storytelling and young children's active citizenship. Similar studies in other socio-cultural contexts would enable recognition of commonalities and differences as well as identify the influence of differing socio-cultural contexts.
3. *Studies on Children's Engagement in Active Citizenship with All Members of an Educational Community.* As the study involved one class, the scope for social action was limited. Studies with a whole educational community (e.g., a school) would provide greater scope for social change within the school and the community. Timetabling restraints and standardised curriculum requirements were identified as limiting the breadth of possibilities for children's engagement in active citizenship. If a similar study was supported and undertaken with a whole educational community, such as a school, kindergarten, or childcare centre there would then be potential to alter timetabling and curriculum requirements to allow for flexibility to support the emergent directions of the study.
4. *Longitudinal Studies on Children's Engagement in Active Citizenship.* Data collection of this study tracked one Prep class across thirteen weeks. This reduced potential for children's active citizenship in ongoing communitarian projects. A longitudinal study would be able to track growth in the children's understandings of social justice issues and what they might demand. Monitoring children's citizenship participation across a longer period of time could provide space for greater self-authoring of young children's

acts of citizenship through involvement in ongoing communitarian projects. In addition, interviews with the children sometime after active participation in a study (e.g., six months to a year) would offer understandings of the lasting impressions, dispositions, and attitudes that participation in communitarian projects may leave with young children.

#### 8.4 Closing Reflections

After spending two school terms together, life for the children, teacher, and me has taken different directions, and so I imagine, have our thoughts of the experiences we shared together. However, just like a story, I have had to purposefully craft an end, as I did a beginning. The idea of storytelling provoking young children's active citizenship was what determined the beginning of this study. Research into social justice storytelling and young children's active citizenship involved evolving processes of creation that formed living theories of social justice storytelling as pedagogy and possibilities for young children's active citizenship. Though these living theories are defined and documented in this thesis, they are beginnings of further possibilities for storytelling and young children's active citizenship rather than endings. These beginnings suggest that pedagogical practices of social justice storytelling include attentive and responsive listening, connectivity, and the cultivation of voice, empathy and compassion as a means to promote active citizenship, through dramatic endeavours to make the story the experience of the listener. Stories of what young children were motivated to do as active citizens were told, recognising the influence of metanarratives, themes of retribution, rebellion and responsibility, the complexity of their citizenship practices, and that young children's active citizenship can be political. These are my readings as an adult. It is hoped that further ideas and possibilities emerge for young children's active citizenship as young children and adults continue to explore and experiment with political coexistence.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: Table of Storytelling Workshops and Follow-up Conversations

<b>CLUSTER ONE – TERM 2/3 2007</b>		
<b>DATA CODES AND DATES</b>	<b>RESEARCH PROCESS/ PHASE</b>	<b>WHO</b>
2/05/2007 28/05/2007 14/06/2007 19/06/2007	Preliminary visits to build rapport	Researcher, teacher, children
W1 16/07/2007 W1 TC 18/07/2007 W1 CC 18/07/2007	Storytelling workshop one – <i>The Freedom Bird</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children Researcher and teacher Researcher, Max, David, Juliet, Denmark, Molly and Ebony
W2 23/07/2007 W2 TC 25/07/2007 W2 CC 25/07/2007	Storytelling workshop two – <i>Awi Usdi</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children Researcher and teacher Researcher, Declan, David, Ebony, Denmark and Juliet
W3 30/07/2007  W3 TC 31/07/2007 W3 CC 31/07/2007	Storytelling workshop three – <i>The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children  Researcher and teacher Researcher, Juliet, Max, Molly, Finlay, Liam and Fergie
W4 6/08/2007 W4 TC 9/08/2007 W4 CI 9/08/2007	Storytelling workshop four - <i>Two Brothers</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children Researcher and teacher Researcher, Denmark, Molly, Finlay, Liam and Fergie
W5 21/08/07  W5 TC 22/08/07	Storytelling workshop five (no story – summative/ reflective workshop) Follow-up conversation with teacher	Researcher, supply teacher, teacher aide, children  Researcher and teacher
	Critical review of data and planning for next cluster	Researcher
<b>CLUSTER TWO – TERM 3 2007</b>		
W6 30/08/2007 W6 TC 31/08/2007 W6 CC 31/08/2007	Storytelling workshop six – <i>Iqbal's Story</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children Researcher and teacher Researcher, David, Juliet, Ebony, Molly, Finlay and Ella
W7 3/09/2007 W7 TC 5/09/2007 W7 CC 5/09/2007	Storytelling workshop seven – <i>Craig's Story</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children Researcher and teacher Researcher, Scott, Carl, David and Juliet
W8 10/09/2007  W8 TC 12/09/2007 W8 CC 12/09/2007	Storytelling workshop eight – <i>The Rich Factory Owner and the Wise Old Woman</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children  Researcher and teacher Researcher, Denmark, Peter, Liam, Patrick and Max
W9 19/09/2007  W9 TC 19/09/2007	Storytelling workshop nine (no story – summative/ reflective workshop) Follow-up conversation with teacher	Researcher, teacher, teacher aide, children  Researcher and teacher
	Critical review of data and planning	Researcher
<b>CLUSTER THREE – TERM 4 2007</b>		
W10 9/10/2007  W10 TC 10/10/2007 W10 CC 10/10/2007	Storytelling workshop ten – <i>Two Blocks</i>  Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children  Researcher and class teacher Researcher, Patrick, Ella, Fergie, Mat, Juliet and Carl
W11 15/10/2007  W11 TC 17/10/2007 W11 CC 17/10/2007	Storytelling workshop eleven – <i>The GREED Machine</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children  Researcher and class teacher Researcher, Peter, Max, David, Ebony and Molly
W12 23/10/2007 W12 TC 24/10/2007 W12 CC 24/10/2007	Storytelling workshop twelve – <i>Two Rocks</i> Follow-up conversation with teacher Follow-up conversation with children	Researcher as storyteller, teacher, teacher aide, children Researcher and class teacher Researcher, Denmark, David, Declan, Ebony, Carl and Ella
W13 2/11/2007 W13 5/11/2007 W13 TC 11/11/2007 W13ME&FI 14/11/2007 W13 TAI 27/11/2007	Storytelling workshop thirteen (children tell stories) Additional recording of children's stories Follow-up conversation with teacher Interview with Molly, Ella and Fergie  Interview with teacher aide	Researcher as videographer, teacher, teacher aide, children Researcher as videographer, children Researcher and teacher Researcher and Molly, Ella, and Fergie  Researcher and teacher aide

## Appendix B – List of Activities in Each Workshop

<b>CLUSTER ONE – TERM 2/3 2007</b>		
<b>DATA CODES AND DATES</b>	<b>WORKSHOP</b>	<b>ACTIVITIES – suggested by researcher and teacher</b>
W1 16/07/2007	Storytelling workshop one – <i>The Freedom Bird</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Hot seat (interview) the Hunter from the story</li> <li>- Play “Doggey who’s got the bone” game with half group only communicating through gesture.</li> <li>- Dance – as if free, then as if trapped.</li> </ul>
W2 23/07/2007	Storytelling workshop two – <i>Awí Usdi</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Discussion of organisations that protect animals (e.g., WWF and Voiceless)</li> <li>- Designing a device that nurtures and/or protects birds &amp;/or animals</li> </ul>
W3 30/07/2007	Storytelling workshop three – <i>The Lonely Coxen’s Fig-parrot</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Making signs to alert others about protecting the Coxen’s fig-parrot</li> <li>- Making a papier mache Coxen’s fig-parrot replica</li> </ul>
W4 6/08/2007	Storytelling workshop four - <i>Two Brothers</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Coxen’s fig-parrot petition</li> <li>- Miniature playscapes</li> </ul>
W5 21/08/07	Storytelling workshop five (no story – summative/ reflective workshop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Miniature playscapes</li> <li>- Hot seat Coxen’s fig-parrot</li> </ul>
<b>CLUSTER TWO – TERM 3 2007</b>		<b>ACTIVITIES – suggested by children</b>
W6 30/08/2007	Storytelling workshop six – <i>Iqbal’s Story</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Making a card to Principal seeking help to stop child labour</li> <li>- Block building a factory</li> </ul>
W7 3/09/2007	Storytelling workshop seven – <i>Craig’s Story</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Building a bigger factory</li> <li>- List of ways to arrest cruel factory owners</li> </ul>
W8 10/09/2007	Storytelling workshop eight – <i>The Rich Factory Owner and the Wise Old Woman</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing</li> <li>- Building a model school (out of a box)</li> <li>- A meeting on child labour</li> </ul>
W9 19/09/2007	Storytelling workshop nine (no story – summative/ reflective workshop)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Hot seat wise old woman</li> <li>- “It’s not fair” – Oxfam UK education game (suggested by researcher)</li> <li>- Building a boat with blocks</li> </ul>
<b>CLUSTER THREE – TERM 4 2007</b>		
W10 9/10/2007	Storytelling workshop ten – <i>Two Blocks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Making a list of what to do with 2 blocks (suggested by researcher)</li> <li>- Build a really big thing together with blocks</li> </ul>
W11 15/10/2007	Storytelling workshop eleven – <i>The GREED Machine</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Build the GREED machine</li> <li>- Have a meeting</li> </ul>
W12 23/10/2007	Storytelling workshop twelve – <i>Two Rocks</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing in journals</li> <li>- Draw animals on the computer</li> <li>- Build Greenland and Black-n-White land</li> </ul>
W13 2/11/2007	Storytelling workshop thirteen (children tell stories)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Drawing what is most precious on a small bag</li> <li>- Making wooden peg puppets</li> <li>- Playing with figurines in preparation for storytelling</li> </ul>

	<b>CHILD PARTICIPANT INFORMATION for QUT RESEARCH PROJECT</b>
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Leaving traces: A social justice storytelling program for young children
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Research Team Contacts	
Principal researcher: Louise G. Phillips (PhD student)	Principal Supervisor: Professor Sue Grieshaber
Phone:	Phone:
Email	Email:

**Description**

This project is being undertaken as part of a PhD project by Louise G. Phillips. The purpose of this project is to understand how young children respond to social justice issues through an arts based storytelling program. The research team requests your child’s participation in this program as a member of ..... prep class.

**Participation**

Your child’s participation in this project is voluntary. If you do agree for your child to participate, you can still choose to withdraw your child from participation at any time during the project without comment or penalty. Your decision for your child to participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or Education Queensland.

Your child’s participation will involve experiencing storytelling workshops of ninety minutes duration facilitated by the principal researcher and your child’s class teacher. These workshops include: a told story, group discussion, and a range of visual art, dance and drama experiences. Each workshop will be both video and audio recorded. It is anticipated that there will be approximately twelve (12) workshops spread across terms three and four in 2007. Your child will also be asked for feedback on these workshops by contributing to a small group conversation on occasions throughout the program. A schedule of the dates for each workshop and interview will be made available prior to the event.

**Expected benefits**

It is expected that this project will benefit your child through participation in an innovative and collaborative educational storytelling program.

**Risks**

There are no risks, beyond typical classroom experiences, associated with your child’s participation in this project.

**Confidentiality**

All comments and responses made by your child are anonymous and will be treated confidentially. The names of individual persons are not required in any of the responses. The principal researcher will maintain the confidentiality of the audio and video recordings. The audio and video recordings may be used in conference presentations on the findings from this research project, with the use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of your child.

Appendix D: Workshop One Story - *The Freedom Bird* (Thai folktale)

- Louise: This is a story about a hunter. I wonder what you know about hunters. Carl?
- Carl: They hunt.
- Louise: They hunt. Max?
- Max: They kill animals. Hunters kill animals.
- Louise: Why might they kill animals? What do they want the animals for, Nick?
- Nick: For eating.
- Louise: For eating. And Juliet?
- Juliet: Because its there prey. Because there are no shops out there.
- Louise: They are preying on the animals. Now there are probably lots of skills that hunters need,  
but there are two skills that they must have to be able to catch an animal. To be able to find  
the animal where the animals are what do they need to do to be able to find the animal.
- Declan: They need to be quiet.
- Louise: (*whispered*) Yes they need to be quiet (*normal voice*) because if the animal heard them what might the animal do.
- UN: Run away.
- Louise: What's another way, Denmark?
- Denmark: They need \_\_so they can see. (*held up hands to eyes like binoculars*)
- Louise: They need to be very good at looking to be able to spot any movement that might be an animal coming... the crunch of a leaf. So this hunter was out in the jungle looking and listening. When he heard a very strange noise. Do you want to hear what it sounded like?
- MC: YES!!!!
- Louise: It went like this – “NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!”
- MC: (*laughter*)
- Louise: And high up in the tree you know what he saw?
- MC: (*heads shaking*)
- Louise: He saw a beautiful golden bird and the hunter thought, “How could something so beautiful have such an ugly song”.
- FC: (*laughter*)
- Louise: And then the bird went (do you want to join in?) – “NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!”
- All: “NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!”

Louise: The hunter thought: “How dare you!”. So the hunter climbed up the tree and he threw a sack over the bird. “There that will stop that dreadful noise.”

MC: *(laughter)*

Louise: Then whilst he was walking along the bird went *(hand over mouth – muffled voice)* “NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!” “How dare that bird!” thought the hunter so he went home, untied the bag, pulled out a knife, and chopped up the bird whilst muttering “that horrible bird” and he was just washing the knife when he heard the bird sing “NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!” *(disjointedly shifting jaw from side to side)*

MC: *(laughter)*

Louise: And so he took all the pieces of the bird and put them in a pot of boiling water threw them in. But as soon as the hunter turned his back he heard: “NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!” *(bubblingly)*. “I don’t believe this!” blurted the hunter as he ran outside and dug a deep hole in the ground, then climbed out of the hole and threw all the pieces of bird into the hole. He covered it up then stomped on it and sighed: “HAAA!” Then as he headed towards the door he heard from deep down in the ground: “NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!” The hunter was furious, so he ran and grabbed the shovel and dug up the pieces of the bird, laid them on some newspaper, wrapped them up, tied some string around it, then tied some big rocks to it. Then he took his parcel to the river. (Are you ready to make a big splash?)

All: SPLASH!!!!!!

Louise: “Now it is quiet,” thought the hunter, so he went back home to his hut to have some dinner. Then he came back down to the river the next day, then suddenly out of the river flew hundreds and hundreds of these birds and they sang. (Do you remember the song?)

All: NANANANA – BLAHH!! BLAHH!!

Louise: And the hunter looked up: “I know who you are now. You are the freedom bird. I should have known that. You can’t kill freedom.” And that is the story of the freedom bird.

Story adapted from: Livo, N. (Ed.). (1988). *Joining in: An anthology of audience participation stories & how to tell them*. compiled by Teresa Miller with assistance from Anne Pellowski. Cambridge, MA: Yellow Moon Press.

Appendix E: Workshop Two Story – *Awi Usdi* (Cherokee Story from North Carolina)

Louise: Today's story is from a long, long time ago, when the world was young and animals talked to each other. The animals and people lived peacefully together until the people discovered how to make a bow and arrow so people could kill animals easily.

Denmark: My dad made me one.

Louise: The animals became very worried for the people were killing more and more animals than they needed. Before they just killed the animals that they needed to eat or for skins to keep them warm. Now they were killing the animals so quickly that the animals feared that one day there would be none of them left. So the animals thought it was time they had a meeting and each group of animals met together. The first group of animals to meet was the bears. All the bears got together and the chief old bear said, "I think that we need to fight back". One of the warrior bears questioned, "How can we do that when they have bow and arrows. We can't get close to them and if we get close to them, we will get killed. We must use the same weapons as they do." They found a stick and tied some vine to one end and then the other. They found another stick and sharpened one end and they lifted it up but they couldn't hold it very well because their claws got in the way. One bear said I think we should cut off our claws then see if we can do it. So he found a sharp stone to cut their claws on one paw then the other and then lifted up their bows and arrows and they could shoot with such precision reaching their targets every time. (*Children mimicked actions of making bow and arrow.*) And then the old bear said, "Can you still climb a tree?" And then the bears tried and their paws kept sliding down without claws they could not climb anymore. Then the old bear said, "Can you dig?" So they tried but they could only make surface marks. Before their claws could dig really deep holes in the ground to dig up bugs and worms. The old bear said, "This is no good. We must give up. We can't fight the humans. We still need our claws." Then the other animals started to meet. (What's another group of animals? Name an animal.)

Declan: An elephant.

Louise: So the elephants all came together. (What would the elephants think of as an idea to stop the humans from killing so many of them. Max?)

Max: Put water on them.

Louise: Water on them. (What's another idea, Denmark?)

Denmark: Make their (*moved hands from face out in curves*) spear them.

Louise: Oh their tusks. They're quite huge.

Denmark: Or whack them with their trunk.

Juliet: I was thinking of that too.

Louise: So lots of ideas to fight them back. So the elephants thought about all of these ideas and they tried some of them, then another group of animals met and they were (*looked to Liam*)

Liam: Hippos.

Louise: (Hippos and what ideas did they think of? Fergie what idea did you have?)

Fergie: They could roll on them.

Louise: They could roll on the humans because they are so big and heavy. Yes Denmark?

Denmark: They could eat them up with their big mouth.

Louise: So the hippos thought about some of these ideas. Then tried some of them but you know they could not get close enough to try these ideas before the humans shot them with an arrow. The next animals to meet were the deer and the leader of the deer was Awi Usdi. And she said, "This is the way it is meant to be. Humans do need to eat animals but these animals are doing it the wrong way. They should not be killing for what they want but for what they need and they should be doing it respectfully. They should have a special ceremony before they kill, and they should ask for permission before, and then after, they should ask for forgiveness. This is the right way." And then Awi Usdi said, "I will go now and tell the hunters". So she went and she whispered into the ears of all the hunters about her teachings of the right way to hunt. Some of the hunters woke up and said, "I think I had a strange dream last night. This deer was talking to me. Huhh!!" And then didn't think anymore about it. They continued to kill animals whenever they felt like it. Some of the hunters did listen to Awi Usdi's important message. "I've heard that we must think before we kill and kill only when we are really hungry or really cold. And we must have a special ceremony and ask for permission from Awi Usdi, the deer and afterwards we must ask for forgiveness from the animal's spirit." Now some of the hunters – you know how some of them didn't listen; well they just kept on shooting their arrows wherever they felt like it.

Denmark: They had to fight with the other hunters.

Louise:           What happened was, they soon couldn't walk anymore so they couldn't go hunting anymore. Awi Usdi stopped them. So hunters soon learnt that they should only kill when they need to and do it in a special and respectful way , so they could live together. This is how the Cherokee people in North America have agreed to live with the animals.

Adapted from *Awi Usdi* (pp. 173-174) in Caduto, M.J. & Bruchac, J. (1997). *Keepers of the earth: Native American stories and environmental activities for children*. Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing.

Appendix F: Workshop Three Story - *The Lonely Coxen's Fig-parrot*

- Louise: A long, long time ago the land that we live in and the places that we now visit and holiday at were covered with rainforests—beautiful rainforests with huge trees—moreton bay fig trees and green strangler vine fig trees laden with succulent figs. This story is about a beautiful green parrot who lived amidst these trees. He had a broad round body and short stumpy tail.
- Denmark: I know what it is—a king parrot.
- Louise: (*points at poster of CFP*)
- UN: King parrot.
- Juliet: Not the king parrot.
- Louise: The Coxen's fig-parrot. He had distinctly blue feathers on his forehead surrounded by a few red feathers and an orange-red patch on his cheek with a blue band below. His beak was pale grey in colour and the tip was a dark grey. His eyes were brown like the colour of the earth. A very beautiful parrot that would fly amidst the majestic fig trees and would call out “zeet zeet” and all the parrots would do the same. Because there were hundreds of parrots, they would call back. (*gestured to all to make call*)
- All: “Zeet zeet—zeet zeet”.
- Louise: And they would fly around together and swoop down when they found a fig tree  
  
abundant with ripe figs, feasting on the seeds (*myself and some children make flying actions and feeding actions*). Their favourite food is the seeds from ripe figs on moreton bay fig trees and green strangler vine fig trees. There were hundreds of them and they shared these figs with other birds and animals and the Jinibara people and Turrbal people, there was plenty to go around. Everyone ate just what they needed. (*Peter and Charlie continue flying swooping actions*). But more people came from another land. They came in big ships, firstly, from England and Ireland.
- Tony: My Daddy comes from England.
- Louise: And they came with axes and started to chop down the trees to build houses (*I stood up to act out chopping down a tree – Declan, Peter, Charlie all join in*). They used the wood to make houses. And then more people came so they built more houses. They chopped down more trees.
- Juliet: And they chopped down the fig trees.

Louise: That is exactly right Juliet and then they brought huge machines that could knock down many trees at once. And people came from other countries like India -

UN: Chinese

Louise: (What's another country where people came from to live in Australia?)

UN: China

Denmark: Denmark

Juliet: Japan, China

Max: USA

Denmark: Denmark—my mum came from there.

Declan: Spain—my Mum came from Spain so that is why I chose it.

Louise: Molly?

Molly: Brazil

Louise: People came from all these countries. For all these people to live here they needed a house. Every family that came here needed a house. So they cleared land to build houses on so what they would do is chop down trees or get the big machines to knock down many trees. This affected the food supply for the beautiful Coxen's fig-parrot. They were finding it harder and harder to find food because there was less trees, so many of them died. With fewer left it was harder for them to find a mate to make more Coxen's fig-parrots. This poor little Coxen's fig-parrot flew around looking for other's like it screeching "zeet zeet" in search of others that might return his call but there was silence. And so it learnt to do everything by itself. Find water by itself. Find figs by itself and preen its own feathers.

Juliet: And it couldn't breed.

Louise: Yes it found it hard to find another mate. And being all alone it was very vulnerable so the parrot needed to be very quiet. It had to move very quietly on branches so predators would not hear it. Predators like the owl, the goshawk and people. This bird is so rare. So few of them left now. They think only fifty. That is not much more than this class and Prep R. Because they are so rare you know what might be happening. These birds are so rare and so precious that they are worth a lot of money, so some people might be catching them and selling them overseas. What this bird needs is more forest.

Denmark: More fig trees.

- Louise: More fig trees like you're saying Denmark and this bird needs (*hand gesture to Juliet*)
- Juliet: A mate then it could breed more.
- Louise: So it could breed more to increase the population.
- Denmark: And make a machine one with a remote control.
- Louise: So that is the story of the Coxen's fig-parrot. That is what has happened to the beautiful Coxen's fig-parrot.

Written by author for study based on information detailed in

The State of Queensland, Environmental Protection Agency (2001). *Coxen's fig-parrot cyclopsitta diophtalma coxeni recovery plan 2001-2005*. Retrieved July 27, 2007, from [http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/publications/p01379aa.pdf/Coxens\\_figparrot\\_iCyclopsitta\\_diophtalma\\_coxeni/i\\_recovery\\_plan\\_20012005.pdf](http://www.epa.qld.gov.au/publications/p01379aa.pdf/Coxens_figparrot_iCyclopsitta_diophtalma_coxeni/i_recovery_plan_20012005.pdf)

Appendix G: Workshop Four Story - Two *Brothers* (West African folktale)

- Louise: This story, my friends, is about a rich cocoa farmer. (Who knows what you can make out of cocoa? Denmark?)
- Denmark: Milo MILO-O!
- Louise: (Put up your hand if you can think of something else that you can make with cocoa? Something that I think a lot of you like that begins with ‘ch’ -)
- FC: Chocolate.
- Louise: So now we know what this farmer was growing. He had lots of plants growing cocoa and he had two sons. When the time came for the cocoa farmer to die, he asked his two sons to come close to him whilst he was lying on his bed. And he called his eldest son, “Eldest son you may have my land and all my riches and what is most precious to me, your younger brother. Look after him as I have looked after you.” Then the old man breathed his last breath.
- When the funeral and the forty days of mourning was over, the elder brother changed. You know what that eldest son did when the forty days were over?
- Denmark: What?
- Louise: He started to boss his younger brother around. “Go and get my dinner” “Wash my clothes” (What else could he tell him to do?)
- UN: Clean his clothes
- Louise: “CLEAN MY CLOTHES”
- Molly: Umm wash up
- Louise: “WASH UP THE DISHES!”
- Declan: Make the beds
- Louise: “MAKE THE BEDS”
- Denmark: Umm he could clean the car
- Louise: “CLEAN THE CAR!”
- Denmark: (*laughter*)
- Louise: “CLEAN THE HOUSE – GO TO THE MARKET TO GET SOME MORE FOOD!” He was always telling that younger brother what to do. If you were that younger brother how would you feel?
- FC: Sad
- Louise: That’s how he felt. He felt that life was unfair and he wondered was that what his father really asked his older brother to do. He missed his father. Life was bad. He was so sad about it that you know what—he found it hard to eat and he found it hard to sleep. That’s how sad he was. And at night

time the older brother slept in a bed and the younger brother slept on a mat on the floor. When he was lying on the floor crying himself to sleep, one night he heard some scratching. He sat up and wondered what it was. You know what it was? Near a sack of rice at the end of his brother's bed on the floor was a mouse. He watched it and the mouse did a big jump up onto the end of his brother's bed then the mouse looked up towards the ceiling where a basket of nuts hung. The mouse with all its might leapt up to the basket. That younger brother thought that was amazing what that mouse did. That tiny little mouse could jump so high and you know what that mouse did?

FC: No, what?

Louise: That mouse picked up one nut and put it in like this (*tongue used to poke cheek out*), then another nut in the other cheek, then another nut up here (*tongue used to poke upper lip out*)

Denmark: (*Imitates mouth contortions*)

Louise: So it had three nuts in his mouth and then with his full mouth he leapt down and landed on his brother's bed and then went under his brother's bed and disappeared. That younger brother thought that was the most amazing thing he had ever seen. He thought, "WOW! You don't have to be rich or big to achieve great things that little tiny mouse jumped such a huge distance. I'm going to tell people. This is an important lesson. I'm going to market tomorrow to tell everyone about this mouse. As soon as the sun woke in the morning he washed himself and got dressed so he was ready to go to the market. When he got to the market he started to tell everyone about the mouse. But you see all the people in the market were used to him coming to the market just to buy things. They always saw him in raggedy clothes and they always saw him doing the jobs so they thought of him like a beggar. So they thought, "What's this boy telling a story. He just wants attention. He's just jealous of his rich brother—making up stories to get attention—ha ha ha!" they laughed. They didn't believe his story. "Silly story about a flying mouse. Hahaha!" How do you think the younger brother felt about that?

FC: Very sad.

Louise: Very sad and you know what—the elder brother heard what the younger brother was doing and he was angry. "You are bringing shame on our family name—making up stories!" The younger brother thought, "If my older brother treats me so bad and the people in the market don't listen to me. You know that little mouse taught me an important lesson maybe some other

animals have important lessons to teach me. I'm going to live in the forest and learn from the animals." So he went off to live in the forest. The next night the older brother was lying in his bed awake because he was worrying about his farms and how he could make so much money, when he heard that scratching noise and he looked and he saw the little mouse. He watched it jump on to the end of his bed and it looked up towards the ceiling and with all its might it leapt up onto the basket.

Denmark: AGAIN!

Louise: Again and it took one nut and another nut (*puff cheeks out*)  
(*Scott, David, Finlay, Liam all puff their cheeks out*)

Louise: Until it had a mouthful of nuts then it jumped back down onto the bed then disappeared under the older brother's bed. "Oh this is a very interesting thing I will tell everyone in the market place about this." The next morning in the market place he met all his friends—all his rich friends and he started to tell them about the mouse.

"How high did it jump?"

"It jumped ten metres!"

"Oh"

They thought he was so knowledgeable, so clever and so good at watching and observing. They thought he was a wise man for sharing this story. And soon people would come to the older brother to ask him for advice to help them with their problems because they thought he was so wise for noticing this mouse, but it was same the story that the younger brother had told.

Now in the forest the younger brother was learning many many things from the forest animals. He was learning how to keep warm when it is cold

Fergie: Get a jumper.

Louise: Well they didn't have jumpers in the forest.

Denmark: You could make jumpers out of the forest.

Louise: I wonder how the animals could teach him how to keep warm.

Denmark: By snuggling in a hole.

Louise: (Do you want to choose two friends and show us how to do that?)

Denmark: (*nodded*) Declan

Louise: So Denmark is going to choose two friends to show us how to snuggle in a hole to keep warm. So Declan and

Denmark: Charlie

*(He directed Declan and Charlie to stand facing each other and stretch their arms up to touch finger tips – creating an arch – or a hole and Denmark went under)*

Louise: Ahh! So two animals making the hole and a smaller animal going in it. Is that how it works?

Denmark: No.

Louise: (Well show it again and we will look at it more closely. What does it look like to

you? What does it look like to you David over there? How are they keeping him warm?)

David: By putting their arms out.

Louise: (Using their arms to make a shelter?)

Fergie: But there are some gaps.

Louise: (There are some gaps do you think they should come in closer. That's a good idea. Good tip Fergie.)

*(Declan & Charlie takes steps closer)*

Denmark: That was digging a hole and snuggling in it.

Louise: That was a good idea. One of the other lessons that he learnt from the animals was what to do if you have a sore—if you have been cut.

Fergie: You could kiss it better

Louise: (Can you show us how they would do this with a friend. Who's the sore one? Stand up now you tell Molly what she has to do.)

*(Molly stands up and Fergie whispers into Molly's ear Fergie points to forehead and Molly kisses it in the air.)*

Louise: How did they make it better?

Teacher: What happened Nick?

Nick: Fixed it with a kiss.

Louise: With a kiss—kissed it better. Do animals kiss?

Denmark: No. Oh yeah they do!

Louise: Another lesson he learnt from the animals was what to do when you are very very hot. (Have you thought of an idea?)

Ebony: Go to the river.

Louise: Maybe elephants.

Denmark: And that could be the water, lying down that blue.

Louise: (Yes so imagine the river starts here.)

Teacher: Off you go Finlay, David & Ebony.

*(They hold out one arm for a trunk)*

Louise: (That's it splash around. And you might even spray water from your trunk over your head to cool your body down.)

Louise: So the younger brother learnt all of these things from the animals and he also learnt what to do when you get sick. He learnt about a tree called the fever tree that the leaves from this tree can heal you. Now whilst the younger brother was living in the forest with the animals he learnt their language. He learnt how to talk to them, to listen to them, watch them, and learn many things. And one day the animals came over to him and they told him through their language that there was trouble back in his village and that he should go back because many of the people in his village were sick. So the younger brother wasted no time and went and collected leaves from the

All: Fever tree

Louise: And he walked quickly back to his village then he got a pot of water and he boiled it with the leaves in it and then scooped up cups for the people who were sick and they drank up the tea from the fever tree leaves. *(Handed out imaginary cups of fever tree tea)*. The village was so quiet because everyone was so sick. There was no more laughter from the children. Nobody was in the market place—it was so quiet. Everyone needed the tea. *(Drink up your tea everyone.)* So they all drank up their tea and slowly by the next day they started to feel much much better. People were so happy to feel better. Everyone met in the market place and started to talk about the younger brother. How he helped them and how good they felt. *(We are going to pretend that we are in the market place. So everyone standing up now pretend we are at a market place walking around go to buy some fruit now. When I shake the calabash I want you to find a friend and tell them what you think of the younger brother.)*

Declan: His father died then his older brother started bossing him around

Nick: His Dad got lost

Louise: *(David what did you say or hear others say?)*

David: He's nice.

Louise: He's nice yeah. That's what they were saying: "Isn't he great he saved us all. He healed us. What a great healer he is." Is that what you heard? Everyone was so happy that he had come back and he had healed them all. And you know what? You know what the younger brother did when he heard people saying these things.

David: He smiled.

Louise: He smiled and then he said, "You know I learnt this a long time ago from a tiny little mouse—you don't need to be big or rich—what you need is determination to achieve great things."

Nick: What's determination?

Louise: It means to keep trying.

Teacher: To keep going and going - don't give up.

Louise: You believe in yourself. Yes I can do it!

Adapted from: Sorsy, I. (1995). Two brothers: A story from West Africa. In M. Medlicott & A. Akintola (Eds.), *The river that went to the sky* (pp. 65-70). London: Kingfisher.

## Appendix H: Workshop Six Story - *Iqbal's Story*

Louise: (Everyone close your eyes and I want you to imagine.) Imagine a room which just has a dirt floor and a bed that's made out of wood but there's no mattress, there's just string; strong string across and some sheets on it. This is Iqbal's room. Iqbal is a boy from Pakistan and he shares his room with his Mother and his sister. There are two other beds in that room as well, just the same that have a wooden frame and string over the frame. Now the only thing that Iqbal owned—the only toy that Iqbal owned is a cricket bat, which he kept under his bed. In their house they have another room, that's the kitchen where they make their food. Their house is made out of mud. Mud walls—the mud is set hard—it's like bricks. (Open your eyes.)

This is story of Iqbal. Iqbal lived in Pakistan—a country next door to India. And when he was five his family was so poor that they sent him to work in a carpet factory. There he is (*pointing to projected slide of Iqbal aged 5*) there he is weaving a carpet—he did this by tying knots. And he has to work there as soon as the sun comes up, till when the sun goes down. It's a very long day. He doesn't get to go to school. He doesn't have time to play.

UN: He has to work always?

Louise: He comes home so tired and he doesn't get to eat all day. When he gets home he collapses in his bed and says, "Mama! Please bring me some bread". And he eats some bread then falls asleep. He spends all his time working very long days —not getting much money—just 50 cents a day. That's less than one dollar for a long day's work. His family is so poor that when his Mother gets sick and she needs an operation they don't have the money for the operation and the only place that they knew where they could get the money is from Ghullah: the man who owns the carpet factory. They ask him can they borrow some money—could they have Iqbal's wages in advance. He says, "yes", so Iqbal's mother can have her operation. Here is Iqbal still working at age ten (*point to projected image of Iqbal*). But now that they owe money to Ghullah, Ghullah thinks that he owns Iqbal. There is a big demand for carpets. Lots of people wanting to buy carpets, so Ghullah comes around to Iqbal's house in the middle of the night and wakes up Iqbal and drags him back to the factory half asleep. Poor Iqbal is so tired. He can't even sleep anymore. And you know what this factory owner does? Here's the fork (*view slide of carpet fork*) that they use to push the carpet threads

down. Sometimes when he is very cross—to wake Iqbal up, he hits him with the fork. (Let's see what this looks like.)

Max: Can I be the boy who's sleeping?

Louise: Okay.

Max: (*Raises fist jubilantly*)

Louise: (*to Charlie*) (And you can be the factory owner: Ghullah.)

Louise: (*to Max*) So you go into sleeping position as Iqbal and (*to Charlie*) you're going to be Ghullah, you come to his house and you wake him up. (*Charlie gently rubs Max's back*). Come on pull his arm, come on, that's it tell him: "You have to come and make more carpets.")

Charlie: Go and make some more carpets!

Louise: (And Max you wake up—you look a bit sleepy. Get up. Stand up. Sorry let me have a close look at this scene. (*to Max*) You look sleepy (*demonstrate drooped posture and facial expression*). (*to Jack*) You look serious and strong, you're pulling him. Then back at the factory. (*to Jack*) You stand here. Let's make the factory scene. Everyone is working in the factory. So what we need to do is we all need to be in three rows, sitting on the floor squatting do you remember how he was sitting? So there will be seven in one row facing that way and seven in another row facing that way and seven in another row facing that way.)

Max: Also I have to do it.

Louise: (*to Max*) (You can stay where you are sitting. Okay so you are working hard tying lots of knots. And Ghullah you are fierce and say, "Work harder".

Charlie: Work harder!!

Teacher: (Your bodies are listless and exhausted – their flopping looking out at the windows wishing you were out there playing – exhausted – unhappy – tired – you've been doing this for years day in day out – you haven't played sport for weeks.) (*Tony, Max, Ella, Molly sit with very floppy bodies – nearly falling over with exhaustion*).

Louise: (What are you thinking, when you are tying the knots?)

Denmark: Speed—speed.

Molly: I'm imagining what it would be like to play.

Fergie: Go really fast so you can do anything you like after you did it really speedy.

Louise: So Iqbal works like this many years. Then one day one of his friends was very sick, he had a high fever. Some of you have been sick lately so you know what it is like to have a high fever and you stay home from school.

Well this boy stayed home from work in the carpet factory, but Ghullah was so angry that he went around to his house and dragged him in and he said, “I’M THE ONE HERE WHO SAYS WHEN AND WHEN YOU CAN’T WORK. NOT YOU!” And he forced this boy to work even though he was so sick. Imagine what that would feel like. When you are sick you don’t feel like doing anything—let alone work. And when Iqbal saw this he decided at that point he had had enough of the cruel treatment from Ghullah. So then he started to work out plans for how he could escape. What he would do when Ghullah wasn’t there—he would say to the person who was the foreman (managing the carpet factory at that time), “I need to go to the toilet.” He would then go outside and some of his friends would say the same thing then they would run off down to the canal or the fields and they would play. They would have such good time playing together. Then one day when Iqbal got up very early in the morning to go to the factory, he met these people that were on a truck and they told him that what Ghullah was doing was against the law that Iqbal didn’t have to work. That Ghullah did not own him. He had the right to not work. Iqbal listened very carefully for this was important information. And he went to a meeting that they had and he told them about his experience of working in a carpet factory—how cruel Ghullah was to Iqbal and his friends. Iqbal told this to a big crowd. And they gave him a special letter. It was called a freedom letter. So he took it to Ghullah to say that he was free. He did not have to work, so he went back to the carpet factory and he handed this letter to Ghullah and you know what Ghullah said?

Declan: You have to stay.

Louise: That’s right he said, “I don’t care about that letter.” He even ripped it up. “I don’t care about that letter. You have to stay here. Your family owe me money, so you are working for me.” Now fortunately these people that he met knew that there might be trouble so they came to the factory and they helped Iqbal to get away. And they invited Iqbal to their school. This is their school (*view slide of school*) and they called it, “Our own school” It was for children like Iqbal who used to work in factories. Iqbal was ten years of age when he first went to school, that’s much older than you isn’t it? He loved it. There he is with his book (*pointing to projected slide of Iqbal at school*). He just had one book and there’s his bag. He loved going to school and the other things that he would do now is that he would help lots of other children to escape or find a way to get out of having to work in factories. He

helped so many other children that by the time he was twelve he was invited to go to Sweden, which is way over the other side of the world, in Europe. He went there to speak to people all over the world about how children are forced to work in factories.

Max: Also when he went—did he go to India?

Louise: Ahh! Not that I know of. Maybe he might have had to go their to fly out of Pakistan. I'm not sure. When they were getting ready for their big trip to go to Sweden, which was so exciting for Iqbal for he had only ever travelled to the next village. He hadn't been out of his country, let alone gone on a plane. He didn't have a passport. He didn't even have a birth certificate. So they had to do lots of things to get ready and then they heard that he was going to be given a prize. They told Iqbal. He had no idea what a prize was. He had never heard about prizes. No one had ever noticed the good things that he had done. He was getting a prize for helping so many other children who were working in factories to freedom. So not only was he going to Sweden, but now he was going to America as well. There he is protesting for his other friends (*slide of Iqbal behind a banner*) who are still forced to work in factories. He's holding a sign that says: "Don't buy children's blood". Some children work so hard in these factories that they are hurting.

Declan: Carpets should be made by adults.

Louise: Here he is at his prize ceremony (*pointing to slide of Iqbal receiving Reebok Human Rights Prize*). He's all dressed up getting his prize and he's showing them a carpet, like the carpets he would have made. There's Iqbal being interviewed (*slide of Iqbal being interviewed on national US television*). When Iqbal was in these other countries he got interviewed by newspaper reporters on TV. He went to go and visit schools and told them about what was happening in his country and in America he even got to be person of the week by the TV station they call ABC. What I mean is that they voted him the person of the week, so everyone got to know about him. When he came back to Pakistan, he was a hero. Everone was so excited. All the people in his village, his friends and family came around to meet him. (Max do you still want to play the role of Iqbal?)

Max: Yes

Louise: (Fergie you stand up and you could be a person who has come to see Iqbal come home, so you put these flowers over his head.) (*Max stands proudly receiving flowers and Fergie smiles as she places them around his neck*). And everyone was so excited to see him and then Iqbal said his little speech

that he gave at the schools that he visited. He said, “THE CHILDREN SHOULD HAVE PENS NOT TOOLS!”

Max: The children should have pens not tools! (*stands proudly*)

Louise: And then he said, “For the children are”

Max: For the children are

All: FREE!!

Louise: And they all cheered yay!! (*clapping*)

All: Yay!!! (*clapping*)

(*Max bows*)

Louise: And this is the story of Iqbal.

Story created from information from:

The World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child. (n.d). *The World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child 2000: Iqbal Masih*. Retrieved August 27, 2007, from <http://www.childrensworld.org/prizelaurates/page.html?pid=344>

## Appendix I: Workshop Seven Story - *Craig's Story*

When Craig Kielburger was 12 years old he read about Iqbal Masih in the newspaper. Craig saw him as a hero for speaking out about child labour. He saw that Iqbal had lost his freedom to laugh, to play, to go to school by being forced to work in the carpet factory. And then by speaking out against child labour Craig saw that as a young person, Iqbal had made a difference.

Craig asked his parents if *Iqbal's Story* was really true, if children were forced to work in other countries, "Read up on it", they answered. Craig then went to the library to find out more. He also contacted different organisations that help people who are being treated unfairly. He discovered that there were more than 250 million child labourers in the world, many working in slave-like conditions. Craig knew he had to do something.

He asked his teacher if he could tell the class something. "Go ahead", he answered. Then Craig told his classmates about child labour and about Iqbal. After school, twenty of his classmates met at his house. They decided to hold a garage sale and sold juice and other things to raise money to stop child labour.

When Craig was doing his research, he spoke to a man called Allam who was about to go on a big trip over to India, Nepal, Pakistan and Thailand. Allam said to Craig, "If you really want to know more about the lives of these children, then you should visit them. You should come with me to India, Pakistan, Nepal and Thailand." Craig was only 12, do you think his Mum and Dad would let him go? Craig couldn't stop thinking about this trip. But his mother said, "No way, it's out of the question." But then Allam promised to take care of Craig on the seven-week trip to India, Pakistan, Nepal and Thailand. Craig's parents eventually agreed for Craig to accompany Allam on the trip through Asia.

During his trip, Craig met a boy who had been seriously injured by an explosion in a firework factory, where he carried out dangerous work without any protective clothing. And Craig tried to make bricks with the children working in the brick factory, and they laughed together when his bricks fell apart. In India, Craig helped some children free from a very cruel man, who said he 'owned' them and forced them to work long hard days in his carpet factory. In the Philippines, Craig talked to an eight-year-old boy who had never set foot outside a rubbish dump where he was born and worked all day, every day searching for useable pieces of rubbish. The only thing Craig felt he could promise these kids he met was that he would tell their stories to anyone who will listen.

After this trip Craig wrote about this experience in a book that he called *Free the Children*. That is what he felt he really wanted to do was free these children. He met with his group of friends and they called themselves as a group: *Free the children*, as well. And do you know at first they had a garage sale and then they decided to do things like a petition. And Craig and his schoolmates signed petitions demanding that child labour be stopped and faxed the

petition to world leaders, such as their own prime minister in Canada. They raised funds for *Free The Children* by holding garage sales, car washes, and bake sales totally run by children. No one in the organisation is older than 18. Craig and *Free The Children* worked to ensure that their country Canada would label rugs from India, Pakistan and Nepal, so that people buying a carpet in a shop would know that it was not made by children (the *Rugmark* label). Unfortunately, some adults thought Craig and other members of *Free The Children* were too young to be telling them what they should and should not do. But this did not stop Craig and his friends. They knew that what they were doing was right, that they were helping other children in other countries to be free from slavery, free from cruel treatment. Helping these children to have the right to laugh, the right to play, the right to go to school. And there were many children and adults that did listen to them.

Within two years, *Free the Children* had raised enough money to help build a centre that provided housing and schooling for Pakistani children who had escaped from slavery. And some sporting goods manufacturers agreed not to buy soccer balls stitched by Pakistani children. Craig and *Free the Children* believed that they needed to tell more and more children in schools all over the world about how children in some countries were being forced to work. Children understood and saw a need to do something, they collected school kits and health kits to send to these children.

As *Free The Children* grew, Craig travelled the world, meeting with world leaders and Nobel Peace Prize winners to talk about stopping child labour, and he received international awards because he had helped so many children free from slavery. Craig found true heroes among the street children and child workers he met in poor countries. "They impress me the most because they never give up hope. They have this amazing spirit about them, and this amazing sense of friendship where they take care of each other. They've taught me more than any meeting with a TV star or world leader ever could." *Free the Children* has grown into the largest international network of children helping children, with more than one million young people involved in 45 countries. They take action on child-labour, children and poverty, war-affected children, education and children's rights.

Craig has now grown up. Here's Craig as an adult and he has received a number of awards for all his hard work for helping children all over the world. To the children that he met in all these different places that had really sad lives he said to them, "You know all that I can promise is that I will keep telling your story". He thought it was important that he told their stories to lots of people that many people got to hear how hard it was for them. And sometimes when he was telling these stories and asking adults to help, some of the adults said, "You're just a kid I shouldn't have to listen to you. Why are you telling us what to do?" You know what he didn't give up. He kept trying. He kept telling people and there were lots of children and lots of

adults that did listen to him. So this is Craig's story about his journey of helping children like Iqbal.

Story created from information from:

Free the Children. (2007). *History*. Retrieved September 1, 2007, from <http://www.freethechildren.com/aboutus/ftchistory.php>

Kielburger, C. (1998). *Free the Children: A young man fights against child labour and proves that children can change the world*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Peaceheroes.com. (n.d.). Craig Kielburger biography. Retrieved September 2, 2007, from <http://www.peaceheroes.com/CraigKielburger/craigkielburgerbio.htm>

## Appendix J: Week Eight Story - *The Rich Factory Owner And The Wise Old Woman*

Long ago, there was a rich factory owner who ruled over a large factory. The factory owner lived high on a mountain in his mansion. From his window, he could look down on his factories which surrounded his mansion on three sides. On the fourth side, the factory owner could see the sea, an endless blue ribbon stretching out toward the horizon. It was a beautiful view from the mansion, and so the factory owner assumed that everyone lived as happy a life as he. However, amidst the children who worked in the factory there was great unhappiness. They worked such long hours, hardly ate, so they were starving and had no time for any enjoyment be it simply to laugh, or to play. Little rain had fallen in more than a year. The drought brought hunger because the crops were meagre that year. The people were hungry and feared starvation. Yet the factory owner's pantry was well-stocked with foods from all over the world, including a hundred different delicacies. He could have whatever he desired. The factory owner was unaware of what was happening in his factory because he rarely spoke with his workers and did not care much about their lives.

The factory children and their families were worried. They were starving and miserable. They knew that the factory owner had a mansion filled with food and gold. They gathered and talked about what to do. Some people suggested that they approach the factory owner and ask for food but everyone was afraid to go to the mansion.

Finally, in desperation, a wise old woman who cared deeply about the children volunteered to go speak with the factory owner. "Why not?" she reasoned, "I am old and will soon die, anyway. If I don't die of old age, I will surely die of starvation." And so she set out, trudging up the mountain to the mansion.

The factory owner did not know this woman, so he rudely asked, "Why are you here?" The wise old woman described to the factory owner what was happening to the children of his factory, how they were starving for food, starving for exercise, starving for fresh air. "They are children and should be able to play and to learn." The factory owner yawned looking bored and replied, "That is not my concern. I don't feel hungry and I don't feel their hunger."

The wise old woman could feel anger welling up inside her. She thought she would explode with anger, but she realised that this would accomplish nothing. She thought quickly. Then she responded, "I see your point, Sir. And, naturally, you are right. And just so that you know I mean you only well, I would like to invite you to come fishing with me. I have heard that you love to go fishing and I know the most wonderful spot. The water is stiff with fish, and you will have a wonderful time."

Now the factory owner couldn't resist an invitation like this, and so he went with the wise old woman. They got into the wise old woman's tiny, dilapidated, rowboat. The wise old woman rowed hard, and the factory owner rested, sunning himself. Finally, after an hour of

rowing along the shore, they arrived at a beautiful little inlet. The factory owner looked around, but saw nothing but rocks and seaweed. “This is the spot from which we head out to sea, Sir” said the old wise old woman and she rowed straight out away from shore for another half hour. Then the old wise old woman pulled her oars into the boat, took an awl out of her back pocket, and began chipping a hole in the bottom of the boat under her seat.

“What are you doing, old woman?” exclaimed the factory owner in alarm. “Stop that this instant! Do you realise what you're doing? You're going to sink the boat!” “Yes, I know. That is what I intend to do,” responded the wise old woman quietly. “I am trying to sink the boat. I am so hungry, like all the people in your factory, that I want to die.” “But I do not want to die!!” shouted the factory owner. “No, Sir. I know that. That is why I am only making a hole under my seat in the boat, at my end of the boat. What happens at your end of the boat is not my concern.”

The factory owner's anger turned to laughing, and then to sadness and he eventually spoke, “I see what you are saying, wise woman. You have made your point well. I have closed my eyes to what others feel because I did not feel it myself. Please row me back to shore—safely—and I will open my food stores to my workers. And I thank you, wise old woman, for your great wisdom in teaching me a lesson I sorely needed to learn.”

The wise old woman rowed the leaking boat back to shore as water slowly trickled into the boat. In desperation, the factory owner helped with his bare hands. When they made it ashore the factory owner did two things: he promptly arranged for food to be shared amongst his workers; and he invited the wise old woman to be his trusted advisor. She gladly accepted the role and advised the factory owner to:

“Build a school for the children—they should not be working. They need time to grow, to play and to learn.”

"Ask adults to work for you and pay them well"

“Provide meals for your workers everyday—then they will have energy to work.”

And so the factory owner and the wise old woman became good friends, and frequently met to talk business.

Adapted from the folktale “The king and the fisherman”

Jacobs Sife, D. (2007). *The king and the fisherman*. Retrieved June 6, 2007, from <http://www.donnajacobsife.com>

## Appendix K: Workshop Ten Story - Two Blocks

Once there was a place where children went to school to play with blocks. There was one class with one teacher. However, a small group of five children had most of the blocks, whilst most of the children had only five blocks to play altogether. The five children who had most of the blocks were happy. They could make whatever they wanted. They did not notice the other children were miserably sad, as they struggled to share five blocks. These five children with most of the blocks were so noisy that the other children were scared of approaching them to ask for some blocks. Besides that is the way it had always been. No one knew any different.

Then one day a new girl (Mukti) arrived and she could see quite clearly that it was unfair that one small group of children had most of the blocks, whilst the rest only had five blocks to share between them. She told the teacher but the teacher said, “That is the way it is here and has always been. Go and play with the others.”

Mukti was puzzled. Why did the teacher not see how unfair this was and why did the children with so few not say anything. She joined them and suggested: “Why don’t you ask those children for more blocks?”

“This is the way it is. There is nothing we can do about it”

“No it is not fair. You can’t even build anything with just five, whilst they can make whatever they like. We must do something. Let’s think of things we can do.”

And so they tried to think of ideas, and slowly the children made suggestions.

David: We could really really really ask them for the blocks.

Declan: We could take all their blocks away so they know what it feels like to not have a lot of blocks.

“Let’s try some of these ideas,” encouraged Mukti. First they tried really really asking but they didn’t listen. Then they tried suggesting that they not have many blocks so they know what it feels like, but they didn’t listen to that suggestion either.

Now the children with many blocks soon developed feelings of suspicion towards the children with few. They realised that all the other children sought after their blocks, so they started to carry them around with them. Each child had six pockets to keep six blocks safe at all times. They then walked around at recess, lunch, and playtime clutching onto their pockets to make sure that they were safe. Quite quickly these children grew very tired of being alert to the safe-keeping of their blocks, not to mention it was very uncomfortable to sit down. They then approached their teacher, “We need to keep our blocks safe. Please help us. We need tighter security. We need a locked cupboard”. So the teacher had padlocks installed on the block cupboard. These five children were then given a key to the block cupboard that they each hung

on a string around their neck. This was much easier to protect than six blocks each in their pockets.

Mukti was shocked and the other children felt now that there was no hope of having access to more blocks. Though in time many accepted that they had five blocks and devised many different ways of using five blocks between twenty children. Then one day the lock to the five children's blocks jammed.

"WE WANT BLOCKS, WE WANT BLOCKS", they demanded bitterly. They stood strong and fierce in front of the other children and demanded: "GIVE US YOUR BLOCKS!".

They managed to get three blocks but this was so little they could still do nothing with so few. Whilst the children who were left with two blocks, took turns of the two blocks as they played a game of one potato, two potato. Then they thought of another really great game with a song, a singing game, Obwisana, where you pass a rock or in this case two blocks around as you keep to the beat of the song by patting your hands on your knees. Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na - Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na - Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na - Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na.

Meanwhile the children with three struggled, pulling and tugging at the blocks, "I want it to go here." "No I want it to go here!" Then one of them heard the other children singing and he turned his head and saw how they were having so much fun with just two blocks. "I can't believe it. Look at them, they are having fun with just two blocks"

"Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na."

The group of five wanted to join in so they approached the large group and said, "Can we join in?" Mukti asked the large group, "Shall we let them in?"

"Yeah come on over. Bring your blocks. Lets go—Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na!" And so all the children learnt that you can have fun with a few blocks—just five blocks or even two.

Source: Written by author at the time of the study.

## Appendix L: Workshop 11 Story - *The GREED Machine*

Imagine a world where there are only two countries, one called Greenland and the other called Black'n'white. They both began in the same way, as land covered with trees and animals. With people who only ate from the plants and animals what they needed. But then one day one man from Greenland invented a machine that could chop down plants and trees fast and make them into food, clothing, houses, furniture—in fact anything. They called this machine the Great Reproducer of Everything that Everyone Desires (or GREED for short). They loved this machine and everything that it could make for them. So the people from Greenland had houses now with furniture, they wore clothing, they had a tremendous variety of food, and they had toys and gadgets that could do this and gadgets that could do that.

However, there were now fewer trees and many of the animals died, as there was less food and shelter for them, but each person from Greenland now owned many things. The Greenlanders realised that they needed more trees and animals to be able to continue to make more things with their fabulous GREED machine. So two Greenlanders travelled to Black'n'white to offer the people fine clothes and furniture in return for more trees and animals. The people from Black'n'white agreed for they too desired the beautiful clothes and fine furniture.

Then to keep the GREED machine working they needed more workers so they asked the people from Black'n'white to work for the GREED machine, but paid them little in return. The people from Black'n'white now had few plants and animals to feed on so they now relied on money from the owners of the GREED machine to purchase food that the GREED machine made. They were paid such little money it was not enough for just the adults to work so they had to ask their children to work as well.

Now everyone was working long hours so they could have what they needed to stay alive in Black'n'white land. Whilst people also worked in the GREED machine country but not for as long and they were paid more money so they could buy what they needed and what they wanted. The wealthiest of them all was the inventor and owner of the GREED machine, for every time people bought something that was made by the GREED machine, most of the money went to him.

Then one day the GREED machine inventor was coming out of his mansion for his morning walk when he met a beggar, named Mukti from Black'n'white. He asked the beggar, “What do you want?” Mukti laughed and said, “You are asking me as though you can give me what I want or desire!” The GREED machine inventor was offended. He said, “Of course I can give you what you desire for I am the inventor of the Great Reproducer of Everything that Everyone Desires. What is it? Just tell me and I will give it to you.”

And the beggar said, “Think twice before you promise anything.”  
“I will fulfil anything you ask. I am the very powerful GREED machine inventor, what can you possibly desire that I cannot give to you?”

The beggar said, “It is a very simple desire. You see this begging bowl? Can you fill it with something?”

The GREED machine inventor said, “Of course!” He called one of his assistants and told him, “Fill this begging bowl with money.” The assistant went and got some money and poured it into the bowl, and it disappeared. And he poured more and more, and the moment he would pour it, it would disappear. And the begging bowl remained always empty. Everyone who lived and worked in the GREED machine inventor’s whole palace gathered. By and by the rumour went throughout the whole country, and a huge crowd gathered. The prestige of the GREED machine inventor was at stake. He said to his assistants, “If all my wealth is lost, I am ready to lose it, for I will not be defeated by this beggar.”

Diamonds, pearls and emeralds were poured into the begging bowl but as soon as they entered the bowl they disappeared. All the treasures of the GREED machine inventor were nearly gone. The begging bowl seemed to be bottomless. Everything that was put into it—immediately disappeared. Finally it was the evening, and the people were standing there in utter silence. The GREED machine inventor dropped at the feet of the beggar and admitted his defeat. He could not meet his promise to Mukti. In desperation he begged, “Just tell me one thing. You are victorious but before you leave, just fulfil my curiosity. What is the begging bowl made of?” Mukti laughed and said, “It is made up of the human mind. There is no secret. It is simple made up of human wants and as you have just seen they are bottomless.”

The GREED machine inventor sighed as he realised what he had done by inventing the GREED machine. He had triggered all human minds to want and want and want and to continue to want but the number of plants and animals did not go on forever, and they did not grow as fast as the GREED machine could make things. And so the GREED machine inventor called a meeting to work out a plan for all the people, animals, and plants to live together harmoniously.

“I will invite everyone from Black-n-white and everyone from Greenland to the meeting. Please everyone come, we need to have a meeting. Our countries are in ruin.”

Declan: We could get the GREED machine to pick some seeds from the trees and we could plant them and make more forest.

Max: You can share, because the animals from Green world to Black-n-white world. We make a line with a stick. The animals in different countries, they have each more food to have.

Denmark: How would they do that?

Declan: It could be a bridge.

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): That's a very interesting idea – any other plans?

Juliet: With the things the GREED machine has made, you give them to this land  
(*points to Black-n-white*) because they don't have much.

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): Some of the fine clothes and furniture.

Juliet: Yep.

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): Is anyone else thinking of some great plans. I  
realise that I have been wrong in creating the GREED machine. I realise that  
my invention has caused the problems and I am terribly sorry about this but  
I am now trying to see if we can make things better and I'm listening to your  
ideas. Any more ideas?

Max: Make new—make new machines—different machines that are electric. The  
animals from the country what died—bring them back to life.

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): A machine that can make animals come back to life.

Max: Yes!

Peter: WOW!

Declan: No one had thought of that.

Patrick: We can't let the animals die.

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): So what can we do to stop the animals dying?

Juliet: My idea was if you put more food back, more animals will come back. If  
animals are coming they can breed.

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): Okay well thank you very much for coming to the  
meeting. We'll all need to start working on the plans.

Denmark: What do we do?

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): Well maybe these two countries will come back  
together.

Denmark: Put a rope on to pull the countries together.

Louise (as GREED Machine Inventor): Well this young man talked about having a bridge,  
but I'm meaning that the countries can start to thrive again having more  
trees and more animals.

And that's what happened in the story, they talked and talked and worked out what to do.  
Worked out ways that they could live peacefully with the plants and animals. They only ate  
what they needed and there weren't children having to work. There were still forests. That is  
the end of the story about Greenland and Black-n-white and the GREED Machine.

Source: Written by author at the time of the study drawing inspiration from:

Dr. Seuss. (1972). *The Lorax*. London: Collins.

Jacobs Sife, D. (2007). *To fill a bowl*. Retrieved June 6, 2007, from  
<http://www.donnajacobsife.com>

## Appendix M: Workshop 12 Story - *Two Rocks*

After the meeting, the GREED machine inventor acted on some of the ideas suggested. Firstly, he invented a new machine—a machine that planted seeds for more trees to grow, in an effort to replace the ones that the GREED machine had chopped to make all those desirable things. And then he had a bridge built between the two countries.

The people from Black'n'white found it so hard to live in their country with so few trees and animals to provide food. Everyone, and I mean everyone (yes - parents and children) had to work so hard just to be able to feed him or herself. The money they earned was so little and food was so scarce that Black'n'whiters began to steal from each other and fight with each other, just for food to stay alive. Black'n'whiters knew that people in Greenland had a better life so many Black'n'whiters left with hope for a great life in Greenland by crossing the bridge.

Unfortunately, as soon as they arrived in Greenland the Greenlanders saw that they were not Greenlanders, so they were not welcomed. For the Greenlanders feared that the Black'n'whiters would take their precious things (of which they had so many). Greenlanders were very concerned about their things, they knew that they were precious and that others wanted them too so they locked all their things up and they became suspicious of anyone who came near them for fear that they may take their things.

Each morning Greenlanders would get dressed in their fine clothes, then lock them on (click-click), then they would pack their lunches, then lock their lunch boxes (click-click), then they would walk out of their house locking all the doors and windows (click-click click-click click-click click-click) then they would drive to work in their car, then lock it (click-click). Then they would spend the day working for the GREED machine making more and more things, reasonably content that all the things that they did already have were safe. Some Greenlanders had the special job of watching over all the things in Greenland by standing guard with arms folded looking to the side, then ahead, then to the side, and then behind and then to the side, then ahead, to the other side, and then behind, and so on. No one was going to take their precious things.

The Black'n'whiters who had made it to Greenland sat on the edge of Greenland, unsure of what to do. They couldn't go back to Black'n'white, there was nothing there for them, yet Greenlanders would not let them work or be a part of Greenland activities. They sat feeling miserable, feeling despair, feeling like giving up. How were they going to have a better life? Then one Black'n'whiter started to sing “Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-sa Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-sa” as they sat in a circle and passed around two rocks that they had brought with them from Black'n'white for memories.

The Greenlanders started to hear a strange noise, a noise they had never heard before, but they thought it was a terrible noise, an annoying noise. They heard, “nah nah na”. This made the Greenlanders angry and they tried everything to stop it. They built sound barriers, they made earplugs, earmuffs and all kinds of things to block the noise. They knew it was the Black’n’whiters but they did not like the sound, they did not understand the sound so they blocked it out.

More and more Black’n’whiters came to Greenland and each one of them was forced to stay with their own people on the edge of Greenland. They went on singing their song. “Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-sa Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-sa”

The Greenlanders called a meeting in desperation as “nah nah na” echoed loudly across their land. The Boss of Greenland, the GREED machine inventor of course had ideas for yet another machine that would silence the “nah nah na”. Some other Greenlanders asked, “Can’t we just ask them to leave, to go back to Black’n’white?”

Then a wise old woman shuffled forward from the crowd. She had travelled to Black’n’white many moons ago so she knew the language of Black’n’white. “This song you hear is the Black’n’whiters plea for freedom, they want to be heard. Please listen to them.”

There was a hush among the crowd. Greenlanders were stunned, puzzled as they questioned if this was really true. Had they really been so rude as to not listen to fellow humans? The Greenlanders then did as the wise old woman had suggested and invited four Black’n’whiters to a meeting: a man, a woman, a boy and a girl. The Greenlanders made sure that the wise old woman was present so she could help them to understand what they were saying. And so the Greenlanders sat and listened and they heard of the Black’n’whiters’ need for food, warmth, and a place to belong in peace: a home.

So slowly over time things began to change. The people in Black’n’white were paid the same amount of money as Greenlanders for their work. Schools were built in Black’n’white for children to attend, as they no longer needed to work to feed their family. Forests were replanted and in time more animals started appearing in the forests. Some Black’n’whiters even sighted the Coxen’s fig-parrot, their beautiful parrot that they thought they had lost for no one had seen one for such a long time from when Greenlanders first started chopping down their trees for the GREED machine. The Black’n’whiters rejoiced for this truly was a sign of hope. They gathered in a circle and invited the Greenlanders as well to sing “Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-sa Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-na Obwi-sa-na-sa-na-sa” as they passed around two rocks: one from Black’n’white and one from Greenland.

Source: Written by author at the time of the study to bring previously shared stories together with some inspiration from Oliver, N. (2005). *Dancing the boom cha cha boogie*. Malvern, SA: Omnibus Books.