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**A Research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities,
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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Education.**

February 2012

Including Child's Voice

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Abstract

In this research I present a conceptual analysis of conceptions of child and childhood. These conceptions largely point to a worldview that sees childhood as a universal construct, and I argue that the conceptualisation of childhood differs in cultural, historical, political, philosophical and developmental psychology domains. I argue that what is common to many of these discourses is that concepts and conceptions of child and childhood reveal differences in how one views the dichotomy between adult-child. I also go on to discuss the implications of these conceptions of child, childhood and child's voice in a school context. The many discourses of childhood are underpinned by beliefs and assumptions about the experience and purpose of childhood, and therefore inform policies and shape educational practice. How a community or society conceptualises childhood is implied in the practices and policies of that community or society. While some researchers agree there is a need to reconceptualise childhood, consensus dissolves around the diverse definitions of child and childhood and how child's voice should be included in educational contexts.

I explore the positioning of child in historical and contemporary constructs and discuss emerging trends of how child and childhood is conceptualised. I examine arguments with regards to opening up debates that suggest that if child and childhood is reconceptualised there is potential to move beyond normative policies, practices and pedagogies that remain entrenched in our current educational contexts. Drawing on my own experiences in working with children I use these experiences to argue that there has been a shift in my own thinking about child and offer through the literature that many authors suggest alternative constructions of child as a being, with capabilities of giving voice.

To consider what the concept voice means in terms of including child's voice in educational contexts, links emerge with the discourse of children's rights and the diverse and complex conceptualisations of child and childhood. Researchers, educators and policy-policy makers need to examine their meanings of child and childhood and critically engage with the assumptions thereof in order to reconceptualise hegemonic dominance of policies and practices based on one definition of child. Children's rights have been part of a legal framework, while understanding of what it means to be child run deeper into theories of childhood underpinned by moral, socio- economic and political agendas that are part of child's world. Advocates of the children's rights discourse argue that a contemporary crisis in

childhood has emerged, causing a power struggle between adult-child relationships, as child is acknowledged as a powerful individual whose experiences are to be taken seriously.

Key words: Child, Childhood, Children's Rights, Child's Voice

Declaration

I, Lauren Ann Rembach declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Education in the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in any other university.

Lauren Ann Rembach

Dedication

In memory of my father
Joseph Rembach
(8 November 1933- 8 December 2005)

"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but is woven into the lives of others " (Pericles 495-429BC)

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Chapter One

The Start of the Journey

1.1 Beginnings

Through the Masters courses I have recently attended, I have become acutely aware of my own positioning regarding child and childhood as a Learning Support Specialist. In retrospect, I can identify that the way in which I dealt with child in my practice was at the outset firmly located in what is called 'the deficit model' of childhood. I had studied developmental psychology before I started teaching. However, when I studied to be a Learning Support Specialist, certain shifts in my own thinking took place. I began focusing not so much on the individualised child, but on the social context and the importance of contextualised relationships between adults and children. It is for this reason that I now shy away from being called a 'Remedial Therapist' [1] and much prefer 'Learning Support Specialist'. The former emphasises my work as being 'remedial' and this brings about the assumption that child has a deficit that needs 'fixing', and labelling comes with this notion. In my school practice I do not 'pull out' pupils for individual work, but work in the classroom setting and I facilitate appropriate interventions in consultation with the teachers of those classes in order to support the child within the whole class environment. However, 'pull-out' practices still take place in normative situations where institutional systems dominate practices.

In reading about theories of child and childhood I have come to a deeper understanding of this change in how I practise. I have begun to interrogate my view of looking at child [2] through a lens of

[1] Remedial refers to the deficit or medical model where interventions are put in place to remediate or fix a problem inherent in the child. The White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education Practice in South Africa used the term Learning Support Specialist which leans towards a more ecosystemic approach to viewing child. Department of Education (DoE).2001, White Paper Six: Special Needs Education Building an Inclusive Education and Training System. Pretoria

[2] I will refer to child throughout this research to construct meanings of child through the different lenses or paradigms from different domains e.g. Developmental Psychology, Sociology .Standish in (Bailey 2009, p9) argues that concepts are not always "susceptible to a water tight definition' and mentions that important concepts are contestable as there may be disagreement about what 'their essence is" he draws the distinction between science and philosophy in positing that investigating concepts in philosophy are an 'inevitable part of the human condition' thus they are open to critique, argument, justification and may not always provide ready-made answers. The philosophy of childhood has become recognized as an area of enquiry and there have been numerous writings from the philosophical discourse about child and childhood dating back to Socrates. The concept 'child' has invited deeper meanings and questions. Child is often included

developmental psychology. Researchers in the areas of education and childhood have tended to focus on the basic assumption that all concepts of child should be viewed through the lens of a biologically constructed developmental path that leads from child to adult. Christensen and James (2008) suggest that viewing child from a developmental psychology base has led to researchers incorporating this into methodological designs as if it were a 'natural feature' of childhood research (Christensen & James, 2008, p. 156). There is space for theories of developmental psychology in viewing child, however, these theories perceive or view child through different lenses or limited interpretations or categorisations. Thus, there is a need to explore other theories that view constructions of child differently. Burman (2008) suggests that developmental psychology needs to be deconstructed in order to view it in a critical sense. There is a strong need to take a fresh, critical approach that challenges idealised models of childhood development. Her work draws on the notion that researchers, educators and practitioners need to "identify and evaluate the guiding themes or discourses that structure its current dominant forms" (Burman, 2008, p. 1). This notion of deconstructing developmental psychology will be explored further in Chapter Three, where a more in-depth account of conceptions of child and will be addressed.

Furthermore, child constructed through the lens of developmental psychology, is both historically and culturally conditioned. Kennedy notes that there are questions as to how the "conception of child and childhood has changed historically, and how these conceptions differ across cultures" (Kennedy, 2006, p. 4). He suggests that these complex different meanings lead to "scholarly controversy" and 'philosophical interest' (Kennedy, 2006, p. 4). How child is conceptualized should include the relationship between adult and child. This will be unpacked throughout this research.

The beginning of a journey

In my experience of working with children, this journey began with an incident that occurred which had a profound effect on my professional practice. Tripp (in Haynes & Murris, 2011, p.297) describes a

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in the writings within philosophy of education (Siegel, 2009) I will use child and childhood to construct my enquiry throughout this research.

critical incident as “an episode that needs to be interpreted and interrogated”. Critical incidents occur on two levels, the first being the actual encounter, my observation of Kate[3] and the recollection of this; the second being the analysis of what this conversation meant and the critical questions it raised about my practice and the way in which I acknowledged child. Even though this incident occurred during my day-to-day work with children, it was different as it sparked a change in my thinking about my motivation for how I worked and engaged with child. It is through this analysis that I began to examine my assumptions and interactions with child.

1.2 The significance of this critical incident

Haynes and Murris describe an incident as being critical when it leads to “an increased sensitivity to values and a re-examination of implicit beliefs and ideas” (Haynes & Murris, 2011, p. 298). I relate to this quote in terms of my own experience of this incident. It is through these shifts in my thinking that I began to question ways in which I engaged with child within my own practice. I also began to examine these shifts through the literature I had become exposed to throughout the Masters courses that I attended. I found myself cognisant of a change in my thinking when in a situation with one of my regular young pupils to whom I had been providing support, which turned out to be a foundation on which I have based my arguments throughout this research.

I recalled an incident with eight year old Kate, who was struggling to read basic sight words. I had suggested we follow a programme whereby she worked with a few words each day and together we played games to help her recognize and more importantly recall the words from memory and then identify them in context. We had been working this way for about three weeks when she suddenly took the cards containing the sight words off the table and proceeded to match them to the sight words in the text she was reading. I was thrilled that she was finally recognising the basic sight words and I proceeded to give her an extra sticker. What caught my attention was her reply, “You know I hate waking up in the morning, because I have to come to school and I find it hard because I am different to the others…. I will never get this [the sticker] in the class; I don’t deserve this because here [in the

[3] Name changed to acknowledge confidentiality

intervention] I am reading much easier books. In class I am different and I don't want to be there because I will never be the same as my friends. My teacher will never give me a sticker as I can't do the work. I wonder if I will ever get a sticker from my teacher?". This powerful voice touched a nerve, as I had never asked how she was feeling about her vulnerabilities with reading in class and I assumed that what I was intending to do was to motivate and build her confidence. However, hearing her authentic voice which gave me a sense of how she was feeling, suddenly opened my eyes to the fact that I was not hearing *her* concerns. I had not been listening to her, as I the [adult] was in control.

This incident led me to question how we (educators, Learning Support Specialists, educational psychologists) begin to negotiate or deliberate over the differences between adult and child and solve the moral dilemmas these differences cause. (Murris & Haynes, 2011) Do adults live in a world that allows them to create distance from views expressed by children? Another incident that motivated my research topic occurred between Helen and Tshego[4]. During a session, Helen, asked me "Why do adults always get served first at the tuck-shop?" She and her friend Tshego had been ignored, despite being at the front of the queue. I asked her what bothered her about this and she replied, "Why do we see difference? Is it because we are brought up to know that adults come first? "Why can't we be served first, as we were there first?" Helen seemed genuinely perplexed by the adult-child relationship. Tshego, on the other hand joined in the discussion by saying "We must respect adults", it's in our religion and our school rules" and thus adopted a more pragmatic [somewhat conditioned] view in her response. She seemed to have internalised much of adult discourse about children in her own thinking. I allowed the open and honest discussion between the two of them to flow, in my efforts to listen responsively to children, rather than giving my opinion or guiding the conversation. They chatted about adults and how children should listen to adults [educators and their parents]. They recognised the vulnerabilities of adult, when Helen remarked "Adults don't know everything and they also make mistakes and push to the front in queues". To this Tshego replied, "Yes, my dad forgot to fetch me one day; did he get into trouble that evening when mom came home!"

[4] Names changed to protect confidentiality

These critical encounters led me to examine the values behind my own practise and highlighted the need to explore the way in which I was working with children. It also led me to question the significance of adult-child relationships and the impact these have on deciding what is right for child in educational contexts. The incidents forced me to question why these voices triggered an emotional response and prompted me to question my professional judgement. I began using these incidents with the children to question my knowledge and experiences I held as practitioner, by critically analysing how these encounters did not always listen to child's voice nor more importantly, did they interrogate what it means to include child's voice.

I began to question how we (adults) listen to child and became interested in unpacking what the concept of voice means and how links could be drawn to evaluate how multiple definitions of child are understood and conceptualised with current understandings of children's rights. It opened up thoughts as to how I acknowledge the experiences of child in my own practice. I started to reflect on how I engaged with child; was I assuming child was innocent and in need of protection and adult expertise? What would happen if I acknowledged that child has power? And "Was I taking child's experiences seriously? The effect of these encounters with child disrupted my former beliefs and led me to question my own conceptualisation of child and more importantly the different conceptions of child, through various discourses.

1.3 Significance of this journey

Through my encounters with Kate, Helen, Tshego and many other children I have worked with. I realised that I had to address the ways in which I practised with regard to the new knowledge I had been engaging with over the course of the Masters programme and how this new knowledge was impacting on my daily practice. This led me to the aim of this research, which is to investigate the need by policy-makers, researchers and educators to have a deeper understanding of what it means to listen to child's voice within educational contexts, through the problematisation of the notion of child's voice and what it means to include this. There is an urgent need to explore what we as educators understand about what it means to include child's voice and to shift our assumptions as to how child is

conceptualised in school contexts, via our direct interactions with child and through policies and pedagogies that dominate educational discourse. Even though this research is conceptual, I have used thoughts from the research of McNiff and McCourt (2010) whose work is based on action research, yet their central theme links to the experiences I have had as practitioner. Central to their work is the vision of a commitment to democratic education. They emphasise the need for people to speak for themselves, drawing on the work of philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) who believed that all people are valuable and in occupying their own places on earth, it is their responsibility to speak for themselves. My central question is to problematize this responsibility, as I am proposing that child's voice ought to be included in school contexts.

1.5 Rationale

I chose to investigate conceptualisations of child and childhood which run deep into many different discourses. In addition there are cultural differences underlying the wide bodies and schools of thought which view child each from ethical, moral, social and anthropological perspectives. Different researchers place different emphases on the adult-child distinction, these emphases contribute to the way in which child is defined and treated and raise issues as to the complexities in the different conceptualisations of child. There has been a growing body of research amongst contemporary writers about construction of child, to locate child in a position of "being", rather than "becoming" (Lewis, 2010). This means that, depending on which perspective adults adopt, if child is viewed as a "becoming" he/she is thus seen as a developing adult in need of support, as he/she has not developed the capacities that make a person adult. If a child is viewed as a "being", there is an acknowledgement that child is viewed as a person who has power and who is capable of participating in matters that affect him/her.

This new perspective in research has shifted the lenses as to how child is defined and has led to questions being asked about acknowledging and hearing the voice of child. The issue of hearing child's voice can be problematised as to how and in what ways or to what extent should child's voice be heard. Furthermore, research has begun to focus on viewing child as a contributor to research in school contexts and this has begun to influence the educational landscapes in many domains. This

research does not focus on doing research with children; however, I will refer to some of the literature written by researchers in this field to build up a central argument for the necessity and urgency to locate child's voice in educational discourse. Child's voice has not been heard, because of various conceptions of child and perceptions of child by adults in positions of power and, more broadly, by societal norms and constraints that have silenced this voice. Adults do not disagree that child's voice should be heard, but rather question what this means and should mean. This argument has become central to many articles written about child's voice.

When undertaking research with children, this shift of centering child as a person with voice and rights has led to many ethical, moral and methodological dilemmas. Christensen and James (2008) acknowledge that this shift has invited debate amongst researchers working with children as participants. They claim that the focus for research involving children should be done *with* child, rather than *on* child, and therefore needs to include their voice. However, the concept of child's voice is an ambiguous and abstract conception which needs further investigation in order to argue for its rightful inclusion in school contexts. While considering these arguments, it is important to reflect upon what the various authors in multi-disciplinary academics fields mean by child and child's voice.

Definitions of child and the justification for the inclusion of child's voice in educational practices can be found in legislated Acts, such as the UN Convention of the Rights of Children 1990 Article 12, which was ratified by South Africa and a number of international signatories,(excluding the USA and Somalia). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (No 108 of 1996) under Section 28 of the Bill of Rights has positioned child as a being who has rights that do not just stop at protection of him/her by adults, but extends to allowing child opportunities to make decisions that affect his/her life**.** The South African Children's Act No. 38 of 2005 safeguards a child's right to "care and protection accommodating any special needs that the child may have; and generally, ensuring that the best interests of the child is the paramount concern in all matters affecting the child " (RSA,2005,Articles 7, 18) . However, as this research will point out, this extension regarding child's voice and rights is not without its complexities and contested constructions of child. For example, Archard (2010) and John (2003) problematise the perception that in giving child rights, questions arise in terms of whether certain rights should be denied because of child's lack of understanding of such rights. They wonder whether child should be

given the same rights as adults. This problematisation of the child rights discourse has impacted shifting my own assumptions about child and I agree with Archard (2010) and John's (2003) claims that there are still many complexities and questions that we as educators need to examine, with regard to how rights are afforded to child and on what grounds. In this research I refer to conceptions of child and children's rights as it shapes my argument of listening to and hearing child's voice in a school context, as the topic of the children's rights discourse is too broad to discuss in its entirety. I explore the growing criticism of the notions of child's voice within certain research contexts, with the central focus being how child's voice should be located in matters that affect their lives and education contexts. I do, however refer to rights as they are enshrined in legislation, and to policies which place obligations on schools to acknowledge the views of child (Lewis, 2007).

By problematising what child's voice means and exploring the implications of my conceptual investigation, I hope that my research will not only contribute to the justification of the inclusion of an approach to teaching and learning called Philosophy for Children (P4C) originally developed by Lipman in the 1970's, but also enrich the acknowledgment of hearing child's voice within the school context. It certainly has influenced my own practice as a learning support specialist and the relationships I have with children and the way I listen to child.

My research focuses on the problematisation of constructions of child according to adult perceptions and subjectivities. I attempted to analyse critically how the assumptions about child and childhood have played in academic discourses that view child merely as an object of study, and therefore exclude child's voice. But what is child's voice and what do we mean that it is often not 'heard'? By drawing on the vast array of literature on child and childhood through the lenses of a number of discourses, I identify certain similarities in how child is defined and 'otherised' in certain discourses and explore what is meant by 'voice'. I conclude my investigation by putting forward moral and political arguments for a different conceptualisation of child that will include child's voice within certain pedagogies such as P4C.

What does it mean to include child's voice within educational discourse? I address this central question through unpacking the meanings of child and voice. Literature in favour of placing child's voice on the

agenda of academic debates is becoming more prolific. Rose and Shevlin posit that the time is "opportune as the international debate surrounding inclusion strives to maintain a clearer definition of issues" (Rose & Shevlin, 2004, p.152). Allan (2008) and Lewis (2007) state that researchers need to dig deeper in order to research ways of hearing and listening to child's voice so that they may facilitate a shared vision about how child should be included in educational discourse that is appropriate to their specific needs, notwithstanding the limitations that can arise from this shared vision. In reviewing the literature on child's voice, I refer to several references to initiatives made by researchers and educators, however few, in which child's voice is heard. Much research refers to the view that there are benefits for child's voice to be heard, but there is little evidence as to what these are. Researchers such as Ainscow (1999, p. 139) believe that child's "hidden voice has the potential to inform research". Ballard and McDonald (1999, p. 97) recommend that researchers investigating hearing child's voice should look to altering the power relations within research to enable children and young people to work together to "create a shared understanding of aspects of their lives."

My approach in this report is to engage in an in-depth literature review. I selected literature that contributes to the understanding of child and childhood and child's voice and which referred to policies pertaining to these concepts.

The issues focused on are the historical, philosophical and psychological views on child linking these to child's voice and rights. Child's voice has not been heard because of various constructions of child and perceptions of child by adults in positions of power and, more broadly, by societal norms and constraints that have silenced this voice. It is through this survey of literature and the selection of current writers such as David Archard, Erica Burman, David Kennedy, Walter Kohan, Mary John, Gareth Matthews, Pat Lundy and others that I have selected to build an argument around the debates that foreground conceptions of child and the impact on how adults acknowledge or undervalue child's voice

I hope that my research develops ideas that may transform the discourse of education as it is currently conceptualised in South Africa. I do not claim that it will find a solution to the complexities of hearing child's voice, I do hope, however to apply these shifts in my thinking in my own practice as a Learning Support Specialist and to see them acknowledged pedagogical practices such as (P4C).

1.6 Research Questions

The central question in this research is **"What does it mean to include child's voice in educational contexts?**

In order to explore the main research question the following guiding questions will frame this research.

I. What is child?
II. What does 'child's voice' mean?
III. What are the obstacles to hearing child's voice?
IV. What are the reasons for including and hearing child's voice in educational contexts?
V. How can child's voice be located in P4C pedagogy?

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Four constructs are essential to this study: child, childhood; child's voice and child's rights. I theorise these four notions that are interwoven throughout the literature I use to frame my central argument. I begin by defining and theorising these constructs through the diverse meanings shaped by many discourses I have referred to, and then attempt to relate it to my argument, in terms of how child's voice can be included in educational contexts. Thereafter, a more specific discussion of my own shifts in my thinking about how I have come to re-think my previous notions of child that suggest there is an urgent need to reconceptualise current understandings of child that many educators and theorists hold.

1.8 Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two reviews the literature in relation to concepts and conceptions of childhood. The theoretical frame is based on the concept of "What is Child?" and draws from different discourses of child and childhood. In this chapter I draw on these different conceptions of child and childhood and

attempt to unpack the underlying assumptions as to how child and childhood differs across cultures, political ideologies, and social and moral dimensions. I argue that modern conceptions of child call for a need to reconceptualise how child is positioned in the schooling context and in wider society. I begin to develop the adult-child dichotomy which is drawn upon throughout this research.

In Chapter Three I critically discuss Developmental Psychology and the growing interest amongst researchers to move beyond this paradigm that views child according to biological maturation and a stage theory based on age. I introduce the work of Erica Burman, Alison Gopnik, David Kennedy, Gareth Matthews and others who argue that there is a need to deconstruct developmental psychology as it is positioned as a dominant discourse in modern schooling. Hence they, suggest a move away from a domination of Piagetian theories when viewing child in a school context. I consider the arguments put forward by these researchers and show how their work has influenced a shift in my thinking about how I view and deal with child in my professional practice.

Chapter Four further develops the work of David Archard, Erica Burman, Gareth Matthews and David Kennedy and draws on other philosophers working in the discourse of philosophy of child who conceptualise child as a capable individual and who suggest the need for a strong call to reconceptualise the meaning of childhood. I present an overview of the programme P4C developed by Matthew Lipman in the 1970's and contrast this with conceptions of childhood from a Developmental Psychology discourse that has dominated school practice for decades. I draw on proponents of the P4C and more contemporary Philosophy with Children (PwC) to argue that a rethinking of child as having a critical voice and being capable of much more than many adults' perceptions of child is necessary to bring about opportunities to include child's voice.

Chapter Five explores the notion of voice and the recent research undertakings that suggest there is a heightened need to include and listen to child's voice. The latter is also linked to the rights discourse which will be touched on in this chapter and then elaborated on in Chapter Six. I draw on the concept voice and discuss the assumptions and challenges the concept voice has in theory and practice. I develop the notion of how important it is to create a culture of listening in a school context in order to

facilitate a greater acknowledgement of child's voice. I discuss obstacles that highlight the complexities of listening to and acknowledging child's voice.

Chapter Six discusses the discourse of Children's Rights and highlights the central debates that emerge when considering whether children ought to have rights. I discuss the rights discourse from two perspectives, the first being through a liberal discourse and the second, and an opposing liberal caretaking theory. Drawing on the discourse of children's rights, I discuss the suggested middle-ground between the liberal discourse and liberal caretaking theory, namely, the pragmatist ideology. Drawing on the work of David Archard and Mary John and other advocates of children's rights. I use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children to provide a conceptual framework of how the need for children's rights became established as an important agenda when conceptualising child and childhood. I link the rights discourse to the need for protection of child and its opposing concept of autonomy. I argue that through acknowledgement of children's rights and allowing child to participate and be consulted on matters affecting him/ a number of complexities and assumptions are laid bare that raise important debates amongst researchers with regard to consulting with child. If child's voice is not heard or considered by adult then child is excluded and undervalued. There is a strong need to examine the rights discourse pertaining to children, not through the eyes of individualistic bias, but rather to consider that cultural norms play an important role in how child is treated and responded to by adult.

Chapter Seven summarises the main arguments for and against including child's voice by referring to the many domains where child and child's voice ought to be included in educational contexts. Complexities within the discourse of childhood are summarised and argued by referring to a paper Fragments of an Endless Conversation on Childhood, a dialogue between David Kennedy and Walter Kohan who discuss the conceptions of childhood as being an endless conversation. The chapter includes my reflections whilst writing this report and provides anecdotal experiences of my work with children over the years. I refer to limitations of this research and suggest ways in which new ideas for further research have emerged from my study.

Chapter Two

Conceptions of Childhood

2.1 Introduction

Questions about child and childhood, the nature of child, and how child should be included in society, are central to education. Answers to these questions are assumed in the pedagogies and resources we use as educators, and how we conceptualise and negotiate the relationships with our learners. Concepts of child and childhood carry discursive beliefs and assumptions about what the purpose of childhood is, and therefore, what the aims of education should be based, upon these assumptions.

Childhood theories are informed by social, political, and economic ideologies and this will be explored through a discussion of various key theorists. These theories of child and childhood shape the way in which child is treated: as an individual, and in social contexts such as families, communities and educational contexts. Many discourses are problematic in that the particular constructions of child and childhood are produced, assumed or informed by a particular policy or educational practice. As a result of the prevailing discourses, marginalization or domination by adult over child, in matters that may affect child's status as an individual with rights, may occur. Both Kennedy (2006b) and Kohan (2011) argue for an expansive understanding of the child-adult concept in relation to one another, in terms of a causal model. This notion of causality of adult-child will be investigated further in this chapter.

Kennedy (2000, 2006b) points out that one cannot help moving away from the conceptual relationship between adult-child. There is a reliance on one another. However, he refers to a space in between the child and adult that needs to be explored. Child in educational contexts has been conceptually isolated from adult into a category of its own and it is this construction that assumes the role that adult is supposed to play and this role influences how we [adults] value listening to child's voice. The problematisation of certain conceptions of childhood may unsettle dominant policies and practices (by

hearing only adult voice) and therefore challenge existing practices and policies in school contexts, specifically when including child's voice.

My research concerning the concepts of 'child' and 'childhood' reveals the various assumptions brought to these concepts in academic literature - border crossing many disciplines such as developmental psychology, anthropology, history, sociology of childhood, children's literature, and philosophy of childhood. Furthermore, these conceptualisations extend beyond mere academic discourses into different social and cultural practices, which have direct practical implications for children's lives, of an ethical, moral, religious, and political nature.

The complexity involved in enquiries about the meaning of the concepts child and childhood, and the increasing interest in doing research *with,* rather than *on* children (itself an expression of a particular conception of childhood) has heightened the need for researchers and practitioners, to re-examine their standpoints and assumptions. This report will not explicitly cover research with children; however, refer to areas within the discourse of doing research with children that relate to conceptions of child and child's voice. For the sake of both adults and children, there is a need to rethink the conception of childhood in order to question the assumptions involved in how we view child and what child 'is'. Discussion of the concept of 'child' will be elaborated in this chapter; however, it is important first to discuss the various ways in which childhood has been conceptualised.

2.2 Child in Historical perspective

Contemporary understandings of childhood are largely based upon the work of Philippe Aries (1914-1984). He has created opportunities for many theorists reading his work, to contest question, probe hidden assumptions, and formulate ideas as to how the concepts of child and childhood are used in society. Aries (1962) argued that childhood did not exist until after the Middle Ages. He posited that childhood was a momentary period of dependency, which was of no special significance to the society at that time. Child was thus an infant for a period and then became a small adult who participated fully in all activities in the adult world. There was no separation of child and adult during this period. According to Aries, childhood is a relatively new concept and emerged as a distinctive stage in the

upper classes only in the 16th and 17th centuries, and later became more significant in the 18th century. It was only at the beginning of the 20th century that childhood, as a stage, was identified as distinct and different from adult in upper and middle classes of Western society.

Aries did not make a claim that there were no young people in existence during these periods; instead, he argues that the Western cultures did not have a concept of childhood. His work described the stage of infancy rather than that of child. Due to the high occurrence of infant mortalities, the focus of his writing was about the rearing of infants and their position in society. In the Middle Ages, children were viewed as infants up until the age of 7, whereupon they were then apprenticed to become workers. Furthermore, Aries bases his argument on the evidence contained in the study of artwork of the time, which depicted infants, rather than children. In artwork, children were portrayed as miniature adults. According to Aries therefore, childhood is a historical creation. He wrote that the institution of childhood began to materialise when the position of the young person began to change in society.

It is through a modern conception of childhood that "child's world was viewed as innocent and adult was one of knowing" (Archard, 2010, p. 37). Thus, it was believed that child should be sheltered from the adult world, and events such as death and tragedy were hidden from the child. Child had previously been exposed to adult sexual behaviours while in a modern conception of childhood, this is deemed morally offensive. Of course, this does not mean that child is not exposed to adult behaviours in contemporary society. There is a strong body of advocacy around the protection of children's rights, specifically, in terms of abuse, the training of child soldiers and issues that arise out of the HIV-pandemic that has changed the role of child into adult. These issues are pertinent to how we conceptualise childhood; however, within the scope of this research the focus on these issues will be limited.

2.3 Modern conceptions of Childhood

Contemporary philosophers such as David Kennedy, Gareth Matthews and Andrew Stables have focused their research on *the discourse of philosophy of childhood*, toward an interpretation that suggests a heightened need for researchers and practitioners to extend their thinking beyond empirical

research to matters of child, schooling and adults rights in making decisions for children. Their studies on child and childhood from a philosophical perspective question the empirical findings in order to problematise the assumptions made and raise questions for philosophical enquiry. They suggest that viewing children as objects raises philosophical questions, but also raise other philosophical questions, such as, does all schooling benefit individuals and societies? Their theories challenge researchers and practitioners to look beyond the traditional constructs of childhood (written from a Western philosophical perspective) and argue that there is an urgent need to reconceptualise childhood. Stables, for example, argues that "conceptions of childhood have been insufficiently challenged in recent times" (Stables, 2008, p. 2). This quote suggests that there is not enough rigour amongst scholars, therefore conceptions of childhood need to be challenged in order to change our assumptions about child. Viewing childhood from a Western perspective has come under critique from post-modern writers, who contend that conceptions of child in the domains of history, sociology, and philosophy have viewed child as a marginalised object, and like women and slaves, they are portrayed as inferior in society.

One reason suggested for this reconceptualization of childhood is the argument that childhood should not be defined merely by age. French philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) described childhood as an "age of nature" occurring between birth and twelve years. Biological-anthropologists claim that childhood is a stage of growth that serves a purpose, that is, preparation for adulthood. From the perspective of sociology of childhood, according to James and Prout (1997), the 'chronological age' argument is of little use, when comparing conceptions of childhood among different cultures and societies. This new sociology of childhood identifies childhood as a "plurality of childhoods" rather than a structured conditional term (James and Prout, 1997). This "plurality of childhood" expresses the idea (akin to Archard's idea of conceptions) that different societies may define child differently. For example, in one society "a ten year old may be seen as a school child and in another as head of a household" (Burke, 2008, p. 1). The differences as to how child is treated by different cultures leads to the argument of cultural relativism , in which proponents of this argument suggest that because child is living in diverse communities and contexts, there cannot be a 'one-size-

fits all' approach to conceptualising child, as cultural traditions and ideologies pertaining to child differs from society to society.

Other theories of childhood are also based on the currently popular idea that childhood is a modern invention. Therefore, Aries's view of childhood is contentious and critiqued by Archard (2010), who makes an important distinction between 'concept' and 'conception'. He argues that because Aries's work was the first of its kind to provide an historical account of childhood, it was not without flaws. He rejects Aries's claim that it was not until the 17th century that a concept of childhood began to emerge.

Drawing on the Rawlsian distinction between 'concept' and 'conception', Archard (2010) argues that Aries' concept of child lacked the modern concept of child as we now define it. Archard (2010) describes the concept of childhood to be understood as the difference or distinction between child and adult which is linked to the attributes that are often unstipulated and not articulated. He defines a conception of childhood as specifying these attributes. In this way, suggests that if one "has a concept of childhood we recognize that children differ interestingly from adults; to have a conception of childhood is to have a view of what those interesting differences are" (Archard, 2010, p. 27). What has been important for me to consider is, Burman's claim that developmental psychology, has failed to take into consideration the distinction of child and adult, in that it singles out child, as an "ideal-typical subject" (Burman, 2008,p. 31). It is this view that has dominated my practice as an educator where these normative frameworks view child as a naturalized subject. Normative frameworks inhibit the differences cause by cultural, historical, class, sexual and gendered locations. Thus the formation of childhood is predetermined.

The ways in which we know child are subject to the view of how we balance the adult-child polarity. In the Middle Ages adult was, in many ways viewed as "childlike or childish" (Kennedy, 2006b, p. 109; Friquegnon, 1997 p. 47). In the Romantic period, child was defined by memories of the adult's childhood and this in itself, is problematic as these memories are disjointed, or "shaped by cultural-historical discourse" (Kennedy, 2006b, p. 109). This notion of culture and its importance in defining

childhood, has been a theme amongst most of the authors referred to in this research, namely Burman (2008, 2009), Friquegnon (1997) and Kennedy (2000, 2006a, 2006b, 2008).

Liberal perspectives of the conceptions of child, view adult as dominant or paternalistic this argument is posed by Archard (2010, p. 78), when he draws on the notion that this '"caretaker thesis" in which adult deciding for child. Furthermore, child is deemed not competent to make these decisions. The argument advocates "how they (children) should choose" (Archard, 2010, p. 78). This claim, according to Archard, presents an interesting argument as adult, is assumed to be the rational being, and therefore reinforces the view that child is a non-participant in society. The "caretaker thesis" will be further developed in chapter six.

Furthermore, "childhood becomes a set of multiple emotional as well as political investments: a repository of hope yet a site of instrumentalisation for the future, but with an equal and opposite nostalgia for the past" (Burman, 2008, p. 11). This is not a simple conception; different discourses construct different meanings, and therefore childhood is not just a state of human development. Different constructs of child and childhood question the positioning of child according to moral, political, and legal status, not just the placement of child in society by adults' views about how adult acknowledges child.

In sum, theories of childhood are concerned with *conceptions* of child, i.e. the *attributes* we bring to our notions of what a child is, the nature of childhood, its purpose, function, and how societies and cultures view the notions of child and childhood. Following Archard (2010), these conceptions are always contestable and defined in relation to our conceptions of what an adult and adulthood is. In the Middle Ages there *was* a conception of childhood, but simply very different from our contemporary understandings. Therefore, concepts of child and childhood are not modern inventions. They have always existed, but are defined differently in time and space and, as a result, a complex web of varied meanings of the concepts child and childhood has been created in and across various disciplines and historical periods.

Childhood has also been defined in legal terms, this emerged with the industrialisation of nations and the recognition of childhood as a stage, at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. This

development was significant in shifting the association of childhood with the world of labour and positioning childhood in the context of education (Burman, 2008). Child became defined in terms of serving the capitalistic notions of the society, child is thus seen as economically viable as a labour force, rather than attending school to get an education. A political critique of this development led to child viewed not as an object who is "economically viable or useful but rather to child who is valued as an emotionally priceless being" (Burke, 2008, p. 2). These theories and ideas about child development led to societies introducing compulsory education; this notion will be developed further in Chapter Five when discussing child's voice.

2.4 What is Child?

The question "What is child?" can be understood as an empirical question. Child can be categorised as a human being that has a small body in the real world that we can hear, see, smell and which possesses human characteristics. Adults also have been child in this sense once and have grown into adult bodies. Empirical child is more vulnerable as his or her body is less developed and capable than that of an adult, and therefore he/she in need of protection by adults. Friquenon (1997) suggests that we should be able to answer the question "what is child?" fairly easily, as child makes up every facet of everyday life in all societies; however, she argues that we do not fully know how to understand child, or more importantly, what is means *to be* a child. She claims that our current notion of childhood is "incomplete and open-ended" (Friquenon, 1997, p. 14). She argues that childhood is viewed as a normative process: a preparation for a period (adulthood) not yet reached. She suggests that there is a need to distinguish between concrete and abstract notions of child. Drawing on Hegel's notion of 'a concrete idea' she suggests that in order to problematize the question "what is child?' there needs to be both a concrete knowledge of child, which encompasses the detailed and scientific knowledge of child in relation to adults and a need for having an abstract knowledge about child. The concept of child thus also involves an embodied individual who is not yet adult, and who is therefore concrete as linguistically expressed in '*a* child' or 'children' (Friquenon, 1997). By contrast, the concept of childhood is always abstract and normative as it suggests the status ascribed to a period of time where child is not afforded adult status (Archard's notion of 'conceptions'). Thus, the concept childhood

varies and shifts in meanings. It is described in a number of ways; some adults may describe childhood in terms of ages, others by maturity and physical development or legal status. Furthermore, Friquenon (1997) mentions that there are assumptions and questions to be raised as to what is involved in 'preparation' for adult.

The concept child is often viewed in terms of inferiority, dependency and powerlessness. Childhood focuses on a more general state of being. Its focus is on a collective group described at that stage, rather than an individual being. Childhood is therefore a distinct group or category from adult. Its meaning is constructed by the binary relationship with adulthood, which is a universal notion. A universal notion of childhood has tended to dominate the way in which child is defined. This has caused a difficulty among many adults to avoid thinking in terms of the dichotomies child-adult that has brought about different meanings of child and childhood

From an historical perspective, it can be argued that the idea of childhood has not always been there, as its meaning depends on social and cultural boundaries, and therefore its conception is discursive and diverse. It is this historical construction that has raised different ideas as to how, child is perceived and treated by adults and how over periods of time, these ideas have changed. As mentioned above, Aries (1962) claimed childhood was a social and historical construction, rather than a biological or natural construction (as, for example, the developmental psychologist Piaget claimed).

The implications for education in terms of how child and childhood are constructed suggest that representations of childhood are seen through adult eyes. Childhood is constructed from adult beliefs and insights about children and childhood and these have shifted over time.

2.5 Post-Modern views of childhood

Kennedy (2006b) argues that a post-modern view of childhood has created a complex relation between what we were [our childhood] and what they are [child]. He suggests that this has been constructed by universal compulsory schooling. He draws on Bachelard's writings on childhood, and claims that "the childhood of the adult is an invention of sorts" (cited in Kennedy, 2006b, p. 57). If childhood is an invention then it is relative to the adult's own unique experiences and perceptions, it cannot then be a

universal construct, as childhoods are different and unique to each person and linked to cultural, social, political and economic contexts. I agree with Bachelard (in Kennedy, 2006b) who makes a strong argument against a universal notion of childhood. Bachelard defines "childhood as whatever the experience of one's particular childhood" Kennedy (2006b, p. 11). Kennedy provides a deeper questioning of Bachelard's claim as he suggests that there are "interstices" within an adult-child relationship. It is through these possibilities in the relationship between child and adult, and the different ways in which we construct school that it becomes possible to reconceptualise child. These 'interstices' represent the complex relationship between adult and child. They expose the gap between what we as adult were and what children are. Kennedy suggests that it is through these 'interstices' that possibilities arise for questioning and exposing assumptions that we hold when defining childhood.

In questioning childhood, three disciplinary fields have been historically central, namely, developmental psychology, sociology, and pedagogy. In the human sciences, child has become a serious object of study and much of the pedagogy around child focuses on this in terms of policy and practice in schools and institutions. Kennedy (2006b, p. 73) argues that the questions raised about child are from the adult. Furthermore, he posits that [mostly] the "study of child is an extension of science of biology". He acknowledges that this is problematic and leads to negative perceptions of child. He suggests that questions should be asked "of and to children and the childhood that it leaves out" (Kennedy, 2006b, p. 74).

Using the concept *thick*[5], Kennedy (2006a, 2006b) argues that this view of child is more dynamic than the view of child as a statistical norm - child as viewed through a scientific lens. His argument is that this narrow scientific framework neutralises child and he argues that this goes deeper than an epistemological problem: it becomes a political one too. He uses the term "hegemonic" to describe this adult framework of using science as a dominant discourse when viewing child. In this way, there is then no need for [adult] to problematize these knowledge claims and Kennedy argues that this is the

[5] Philosophers tend to look for particular words or concepts when developing arguments. On the one hand there are *thin* concepts that are general in nature e.g. 'good' 'bad' 'right' or 'wrong'. On the other hand there are *thick* concepts that express "a union of fact and value" e.g. treacherous, cruel or honest. See: Blomberg, 2007) Nordic Journal of Philosophy *8* (2) ,63-78.

reason that (adult) researchers do not investigate the underlying philosophical assumptions about these knowledge claims. This suggests that a culture of "direct knowers" rather than "understanding ourselves as interpreters" is dominant in the discourses of child study.

Kennedy (2006a, 2006b) argues that constructions of child have a philosophical basis. In order to deconstruct child as the object of scientific study, he claims that there is a need to decentre ourselves from this normative account of child to allow other perspectives of child to come into play. This raises the complexity of how we question child Kennedy (2006b, p.91) proposes that there is a need to ask, questions as to what the meaning of child is, what child has meant in different historical periods and what might child mean in a contemporary society, specifically through the eyes of the adult. His claim suggests that adults perceive child through an adult world and need to dig deeper in order to question assumptions as to how child is conceptualised in this adult world. This argument exposes the notion that adult constructs a child's world. The question "What *can* adults know about children and how?" (Kennedy, 2006b, p. 91) is central to the study of child, as our positioning as adult is dominant and it is from this position that adults view children and childhood.

Child is always described in relation to adult. Kennedy (2006b, p. 100) describes "childhood and adulthood as a bipolar concept". The boundaries of these two concepts are viewed differently, culturally and historically. Culturally, child is constructed differently across cultural divides and although one culture may seem "childlike" in adult western eyes, in contrast, adults in Western culture may be defined differently through the lens of non-Western adults. Friquegnon (1997) claims that the terms 'childlike' and 'childish' are often confused in that they suggest that these qualities of childhood are incompatible with adulthood. She suggests that we have not yet fully understood what it is to be child. There is a need to address issues as to how we problematise what mode of education is suitable to child. This uncertainty regarding education has brought about an "inadequacy of our understanding of childhood". Friquegnon's argument is central to the notion that childhood cannot be viewed as a fixed stage and that it can only be partially defined.

2.6 Adult-Child

Educational theorists have examined the effect of dichotomies of male/female, middle class/working class, white/black, bright/average in educational contexts on the experiences of children positioned as 'other'. The dichotomy of adult-child has only recently come to the fore. The argument I wish to raise is that because of this construction of adult-child being different to one another, child is often marginalised and seen as 'other'. In terms of policy and curriculum this construction of child as 'other' has influenced how adults regard children's capabilities. Recently, research into the impact of these dichotomies, in particular on the effects of the learning contexts and experiences of children, who have been constructed as 'other', has been undertaken by hooks[6] (in Cooper, 2006). However, Cooper (2006) argues that the adult-child dichotomy has not been sufficiently addressed or investigated in terms of its educational significance. John (2003) has also taken up this issue of adult-child relationships by suggesting that there needs to be a transformation of power between adult and child. Her argument is that this starts when child has his/her own engagement with the world. She argues that children do not need their "realities interpreted, or their needs defined by adults who see the world in a different way. "Their (children's) power lies in defining their own world" (John, 2003, p. 188). This quote raises important questions and shakes assumptions about how adult's domination of child has shaped the way in which child is treated and acknowledged by society, specifically in schooling, where there is much talk of democracy and rights. The notion that children's power lies in their ability to define their own world, argued by John, links to Kennedy's question as to what adults can know about children and how, as was discussed previously. Both researchers suggest that adults need to re-examine their assumptions and their control they exert over child. In practice, it is the adult world that dominates and shapes policies and systems that are based on principles of adult- knows what is best for child.

Furthermore, this notion of adult-child dichotomies has generated wide interest in how we recognize the difference between children and adults. Archard (2010) argues that although cultures do possess

[6] hooks, the researcher's name, is not capitalized in the literature.

a concept of childhood and define clear distinctions between adult and child, the differences are far less dramatic than is implied by the current conception of childhood.

There is a strong argument specifically in educational contexts to recognize the 'inner' child or child's identity. If educators speak about the identity of children, it is problematic to do so without taking into account the role adults play in shaping childhood identity (Cooper, 2006). This claim has profound effects on how child is acknowledged and conceptualised in educational contexts. If adults remain the dominant force in shaping childhood identity, then how do these identities limit child's participation in school contexts?

It is important then to consider that the dichotomy between childhood and adulthood is not only problematized in education, but, across cultures, the dichotomy is played out in political, social, religious and legal domains. These different lenses provide researchers with a broader view of the conceptualisations of childhood. In the new field of philosophy of childhood, Stables (2008) argues that how we think about childhood will have a strong bearing on how policies are theorised, especially those relating to children. More importantly, these philosophical reflections inform how policies are formulated as to how we should educate children. Furthermore, drawing on Hume and Wittgenstein, Stables (2008, p. 1) argues that there is a notion that practitioners and researchers cannot move "unproblematically from the 'is' to the 'ought' in adult-child relations or any sphere of life". This amounts to committing the 'naturalistic fallacy'[7]: from whatever adult thinks child 'is', it does not follow that therefore child should be treated in a particular way without further justifications or reasons offered.

It is this dichotomy of child-adult that has influenced my own thoughts about how I practise. It has profoundly shifted my assumptions and beliefs as to how I view child in practice, how I view myself as adult and how I, as adult, position myself when working with child. It has created a conflict within in my own professional growth. I find myself torn between paradigms of developmental psychology that have shaped my practice over twenty years, and a new paradigm of philosophy of child that questions

[7] A naturalistic fallacy addresses the 'nature' of what is natural and what is not natural. If a person, in this case adult equates child to be a lesser individual than adult. The adult thus perceives him/herself to be higher or better, and thus implies qualitative judgements upon child, who is seen to be lower.

the rigour of this scientific approach, which categorised, and in many ways shaped, how child is regarded by adult. Adult has dominated perceptions of how child should act, and what is best for the child. I am now questioning how I view child as a practitioner and my perspective is changing as I become more aware that child has capabilities of thinking, acting, and speaking in ways that I would never have expected if I had not started to question my own assumptions.

It is clear that the notion of childhood is interwoven with the corresponding idea of schooling. In order to develop this further, a link between 'the nature' of child, perceived as different from adult needs further investigation. The lens of developmental psychology will be the focus in the next chapter.

As has been described previously, there is a need to identify by some means the cultural significance of childhood by linking childhood to social and cultural origins. Viewing child in different historical and cultural contexts needs to be separated from biological reduction. This relates to the previous discussion of Archard's distinction between a 'concept' and 'conception' of childhood. In order to develop my argument further I return to the terms 'concept' and 'conception' of childhood. A 'concept' of childhood refers to the unspecified differences between adult and child, whereas a 'conception' of childhood, clearly specifies what these differences entail.

The 'concept' of childhood refers to the principle of difference whereas the 'conception' of childhood provides the details as to what that concept means in any given society.

My understanding of this distinction between 'concepts' and 'conceptions', is that a 'concept' thus leads one to think about the universal difference between adult and child. A 'conception' of childhood therefore suggests that there is a need to problematize the universal differences in the meanings of childhood, which may be shaped by a particular culture or society. Archard's (2010) distinction between 'concept' and 'conceptions' of childhood raises the question "What is childhood?". This question assumes that there are different views and beliefs of child and childhood depending on historical and cultural backgrounds. By asking "what is childhood?" significantly arouses one's attention to the different conceptions of childhood. In doing so, one is forced to ponder questions that arise, such as "when do children become adults?" and "how do different societies define when child is to be given adult status?"

Furthermore, Archard (2010) draws on another aspect where he discusses childhood in terms of 'boundaries and 'dimensions'. Childhood, in this regard is thus made up of a beginning and an ending. The argument raised by Archard (2010) proposes that adult-child boundaries are therefore defined by societies through the lens of a particular perspective or dimension and that childhood is thus defined according to the way in which different cultures define it. He argues that these boundaries created between child and adult are problematic to anyone of a different culture wishing to define childhood

2.7 Conclusion

Aries's (1962) work has had a significant impact on the study of childhood. Despite many criticisms of his theory and ideas about childhood, from my reading of his work I am able to see that his work has created a foundation on which other researchers and writers from different domains have based their theories. It is through his work that researchers have begun to problematize notions of childhood and continue to do so. In this chapter I have made the important distinction between concept and conceptions of child. Childhood is not simply a social construction, but also includes the physical, biological dimension: children as empirical, embodied individuals. Childhood, it has been argued, is a social, biological and historical construction that changes over time and place.

Contemporary thinkers, such as Archard (2010), Kennedy (2000; 2008) , Kohan (2008) and Friquegnon (1997), have begun to question profoundly what concepts such as child and childhood mean, and how reconstructions of child and childhood are essential in understanding how child is represented in society and in modern schooling.

It is apparent that what is missing from most accounts of child and childhood through the disciplines of history, psychology, sociology and philosophy, are the children. Much of the literature and theorising about child and childhood are conceived through the lens of adult's own experiences of their childhoods and their observations of child. There is no denial that children may possess different features to adult but; there is still nonetheless a need to be aware of how adult response to their differences has changed over time. I will continue to pick up on this argument in the next chapter,

where developmental psychology is discussed in terms of the assumptions that have been entrenched in educational theory for decades.

Chapter Three

Child through a lens of Developmental Psychology

3.1 Introduction

Childhood, defined as a natural biological stage of development, is central to the influential writings of Jean Piaget (1896-1980), who developed his theory of genetic epistemology. His research suggested that in order for a child to develop cognitively, he/she would have to move through four stages of development based on maturation from one stage to the next. Piaget (1972) proposed that a child learns through the development of thought processes which influence the way in which he/she interacts or understands the world. Piaget suggested that a child is an active participant in his/her learning and that there is an active construction of knowledge and understanding of this world. His work centred on the biological notions of "how we come to know" (Piaget, 1972 p. 121). He outlined key concepts relevant to learning during each stage of development. Development, according to Piaget is guided by the principles of adaptation and organisation. Piaget (1972)[8] believed that humans possess mental structures often called schema, which assimilate external events and convert them to fit their mental structures. Any changes to the existing environments or events need to be accommodated into new and changing aspects, of the external environment. Piaget believed that as these schemas become more complex, they are organized in a hierarchical structure from general to specific. Despite these strong arguments and evidence put forward by proponents of theories of developmental psychology, many critics (Burman, 2009; Kennedy, 2006) of developmental psychology

[8] Piaget's Key concepts as to how child learns are as follows:

- **Adaptation**: adapting to the world through assimilation and accommodation
- **Assimilation**: the process by which a person takes material into their mind from the environment, which may mean changing evidence of the senses to make it fit.
- **Accommodation-t**he difference made to one's mind or concepts by the process of assimilation
- **Equilibration:** when an individual strikes a balance between assimilation and accommodation through a mechanism called equilibration.
  As a child moves through the stages of cognitive development, there is a balance between applying previous knowledge(assimilation) and changing behaviour to account for new knowledge (accommodation) (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2010)

have voiced extensive concerns about the dominance of theories of developmental psychology in shaping how child is constructed in school contexts.

The child, as defined by Piaget, moves through predictable and clearly defined stages, which are chronologically ordered[9]. His theory of development clearly illustrates that the child moves from infant to adulthood through a sequencing of different conceptual levels. The child thus moves into the next stage when there is a mastering of the previous stage. This is the theory that has shaped my professional practice and still dominates educational policies and practices. In reviewing literature that critiques Piagetian ideas, I have come to examine my own assumptions about theories of child development.

A critic of Piaget, Jenks (2010, p. 25) rejects Piaget's theory of childhood development stating that "the child is abandoned in the theory" as it is grounded in scientific rationality. He states that child in Piagetian theory has been "wrenched from the possibility of difference…and integrated into the tyrannical realm of fact". Jenks' claims that Piaget's notion that all children develop, through a mastery of different stages, undermines children's individuality. He argues that these notions shut down opportunities to question possibilities of profound difference, and instead, normalise and standardise child as an object of study.

Hence, Piaget would define developmental psychology as a study of development of child according to the development of child's mental functions, at each stage of development. It is within each stage that particular developments occur which the child fits into his/her existing mental functions in order to reach the next stage of development. For Piaget, development is universal in that all children will develop or mature according to specific stages or competencies. It is the term competencies, that has raised criticism from sociologists and philosophers, who suggest that Piaget was incorrect in assuming

[9] Piaget's Stages of Development (ibid)
Sensorimotor: between the ages 0-2 here the infant tries to make sense of the world via the senses and motor activities.
Preoperational: between the ages of 2-6.- Language is the distinguishing feature of development in this stage. Child does not yet understand concrete logic or mentally manipulate information. Egocentricity dominates child's world.
Concrete Operational: between the ages of 7-11 here child gains a better understanding of mental operations and begins to think logically about concrete events. Abstract and hypothetical concepts are a difficulty at this stage
Formal Operational Stage: from the age of 12 to adult. During this time the child begins to develop the ability to think abstractly. Skills such as logical thought, deductive reasoning begin to emerge during this stage.

that children have limited cognitive capacities, based on chronology and specific stages. For Piaget, the development occurs through "child's mastery and transcendence of schemata at each stage" (Jenks, 2010 p.12). His claim is that theories of developmental psychology are too hegemonic and he (among many other theorists), draws on a strong critique that developmental psychology has "failed to attend to, or even acknowledge its own paradoxical character" (Jenks, 2010 p.3).

3.2 Deconstructing child: Multiple voices of critics of Developmental Psychology

Matthews (1996) much like Jenks problematises developmental theories, when he discusses child in the light of the moral theories of development (similar to Kohlberg's in particular, who is also a Piagetian developmental psychologist). He does not say that moral development is unhelpful; however, he posits that these theories often "distance ourselves from children" (Matthews, 1996, p.66) thus suggesting that these theories need to be handled purposefully and carefully. Much like Jenks's critique above, Matthews demands that adult look more critically at who the 'masters' are: theories about development or us [adults]. He suggests that looking at children and ourselves can be a risky practice, in that adults position themselves as the knowing experts within these theories, therefore distancing child rather than acknowledging that child is capable of knowing. Matthews (1996a, p. 67) poignantly states:

> "*Any developmental theory that rules out, on purely theoretical grounds, even the possibility that we as adults may occasionally have something to learn, morally from a child, for that reason: defective; it is also morally offensive".*

Feminist philosopher, Fricker (2007) would agree with Matthews's term 'morally offensive' in that adults positioning themselves as masters of a developmental theory are committing what she terms an 'epistemic injustice'. There is a moral transgression on the part of the adult in the capacity of the knower that places judgements and normative conceptions upon the child. The child is therefore not part of the knowledge that informed adult theories, and in this way an 'epistemic injustice' is done.

Matthews (1996) further challenges the Piagetian theory of developmental psychology that presupposes adults' view of children as different from themselves. It is a limited adult view of

children's cognitive abilities. His critique is that seeing child move through these four developmental stages distorts the view of child as a being capable of having his/her own ideas and thoughts.

Matthews provides evidence with many examples of philosophical conversations with children. He cautions researchers and practitioners by offering an argument against the prescriptive conceptualisation of Piaget which prescribes how child develops cognitive thought. In an attempt to expose these distortions, he states that "[W]e must guard against letting….models caricature our children and limit the possibilities we are willing to recognize in our dealing with them as fellow human beings" (Matthews, 1996a, p. 29). This exposure of a caricature disrupts notions of developmental psychology and suggests that adults have by-passed the conceptual and philosophical ideas that have emanated from Piaget's work, in favour of observations about child development through the experiments Piaget conducted about the observed behaviours of child. Proponents of developmental psychology may disagree, claiming that within these stages, child can still express his/her own ideas.

Burman (2009) suggests that theories that conceptualise stages of development with specific endpoints are problematic as they do not consider economic and political change. Her main critique is that theories of developmental psychology, economic, cultural and historical ideologies, are interwoven with dominant ideologies that "reduce and abstract the complexity of children's lives" (Burman, 2009, p. 9). This results in child being viewed through a lens of normativity, and if the child does not conform with the endpoints of the developmental theory (idealized norms identified by adults), marginalization and pathologising of child are the result. In a sense, I am beginning to question the developmental theories that construct child through an artificial lens, and it is through my exposure to the work of Burman, Mathews, Kennedy and Kohan that I argue there is a need to shift dominant developmental theories that result in endpoints for children. Burman, Matthews, Kennedy and Kohan remain respectful to the notions of reconceptualising child and deconstructing the dominant notions of developmental psychology which filter into most aspects within the school context, such as policies, curricula and legislation regarding how child ought to be managed and educated in school contexts. It is through their writing that I have begun to question the need to look beyond theories of development.

In their critique of developmental theories of child development, Lipman (1991), Matthews (1996a, 1996b) and Kennedy (2000) defend child's ability for rational thought (and philosophising). Their research questions the theory of Jean Piaget, which has dominated theoretical models of childhood. Matthews (1996) questions why there should be theories of development in the first place, as these models may "dehumanize" child and encourage adults to develop "inappropriate attitudes towards child" (Matthews, 1996b, p. 27). Matthews, (1996b) is particularly critical of the cognitivist conception of child posited by Piaget, which conceptualises child as gradually developing through specific stages that are dependent on maturation. He also examines Kohlberg's theory[10] of moral development, maintaining that both these theories underestimate child's capacity for thought. Lipman (1991) was committed to bringing a programme into schools that would build on child's capacity for thought. This will be developed in Chapter four.

Furthermore, Matthews questions the notion of these developmental theories that argue that a child can only reach competency by developing through fixed stages. He argues that these theories view child through a deficit model of development that conceptualises child through intellectual inadequacies. It focuses on what children cannot do, and not on what they can do. Matthews' claims that developmental thinking is responsible for the distancing between child and adult. Kennedy (2006b, 2008) and Kohan (2008, 2011) would agree with Matthews as they refer to adults' distancing themselves from their own childhood selves in their research. Matthews' central argument is that dominance of developmental theories of child and childhood has led to adults' inabilities to examine and problematise their own assumptions about "What is child?" And more importantly, he and other critics of developmental psychology stress the need to examine the hidden assumptions in these scientific theories of development, still mainly taken for granted in education.

[10] Kohlberg used Piagetian works on moral judgment as a base to inform his own theory of moral development. He proposed a stage theory of moral thinking. He divided this theory into six stages of development based on moral thinking, not moral action. Kohlberg's theory differed from Piaget in the sense that he defined two stages of development, the second beginning at the start of adolescence. Kohlberg, however, believed that there were additional stages which develop well into adolescence and adulthood. A main critique of Kohlberg's theory is that it was culturally biased and based on Western philosophical thought. There is also a feminist critique from Gilligan that claims his research was biased towards male subjectivity. (Crain,1985)

Similarly, Rose (1996) argues that psychology positions child as the object of scientific enquiry. Thus, psychology has constructed or invented a theory of childhood that consists of categorising, measuring and managing child according to set standards. Rose's argument is that childhood is conceptualized as a process of development, progressing toward adulthood, and it is through this decisive role that theories of development dominate the way in which schools are structured (Rose,1996). Modern schooling is therefore regarded as a context in which to infuse theories of development of child into the dominant practices of policy and systems of schooling.

Mary John's work on children's rights[11] and power critiques developmental psychology as being related to "an epistemological framework". She describes this as a "cult of the expert emphasizing that psychological procedures distance the subject matter under investigation" (John, 2003, p. 187). I identify a strong link between John's "epistemological framework and Fricker's notion of epistemic injustice (as referred to in Chapter 2), in that both theorists claim that the subject (child) is in need of investigating and rescuing by the expert knower (adult). Child is not viewed as a knowing subject; their voices are absent from these psychological procedures. This is not to say that child never has the opportunity to express their thoughts and ideas in a psychological intervention, but it suggests that voice may be heard by the adult, but not always listened to, in the sense of being taken seriously.

3.3 The voice of a schooling system: a gap between education and child

Kennedy (2006a, 2006b) and Stables's (2008) research also links to John's claim of child as the subject matter distanced from adult in developmental theories. Their work draws on the dilemma of viewing child and education as separate entities. Kennedy prompts us to think about stage theory and its place in a schooling system. He claims this is problematic, arguing that "A stage theory of schooling fits very nicely with the practice of modern schooling, which had its origins in a larger project of "discipline" of the marginalized- the poor, the insane, and the native- in the interests of social control (Kennedy, 2006b, p. 117). Burman (2008; 2009) cautions practitioners that current developmental research, which measures development via descriptive structures is fraught, with assumptions. It is these

[11] The notion of children's rights will be taken up in more detail in Chapter Five.

assumptions that suggest what development look like and which decide who is developed and who is not. In this paradigm of thinking, theories of development are embedded in political structures. Thus, these political interests decide who is more or less developed and places child in relation to adult, or one society in relation to another. In many instances, this is how schools are constructed in terms of protecting the political interests of society. These political ideologies dominate curricula and policy, and undermine child as a subject distanced from adult decisions.

Kennedy (1996) and Kohan (2011) present a plausible case when they claim that there is a 'gap' between education and child. Educational systems rely on ideological assumptions and frameworks, resting on the assumptions that, because children are not-yet adults, they are viewed as not being rational (like adults). As a result, children's own experiences and preferences are not valued as considerations in schooling contexts. Political and cultural ideologies and assumptions intersect with claims made about child's position in education. This is problematic in terms of where we position child in educational contexts as it questions the assumptions we make when categorising child according to stages of development.

Kennedy (2006b) agrees with Matthews on the dominance of Piagetian theory of development in education, but he examines this notion through a different lens. For Matthews (1996b) children are a bit like small adults, capable of philosophising, therefore just as capable as adults of thinking abstractly[12]. Matthews argues that developmental psychologists are incorrect in suggesting that children's manner of knowing is inadequate compared to that of adults, and that subsequently, child is viewed as not- yet- adult. Therefore, child is objectified in that there is no acknowledgement of child's capacity to know like adults (e.g. abstractions).

In contrast, Kennedy (2006b) refers to children as possessing a unique form of knowing. He claims that developmental theories represent an epistemic positioning based on the writings of adult males through a Western perspective. Kennedy defines this epistemic orientation in terms of a Cartesian binary relationship between subject and object. Furthermore, he suggests that by viewing conceptions of child and childhood together, with factors of influence such as cultural, societal, historical and

[12] This notion of child able to think abstractly will be discussed in Chapter Five

biological determinants, a different space is opened up that involves mutual knowledge. Previously this mutual knowledge was limited to dominant groups, and excluded the 'voices from the margins', such as women, children, and the poor. He claims these voices have become marginalized and silenced, by the dominance of power held by theories of development (Kennedy, 2006b).

Burman (2008) focuses on the link between development and cultural, psychological, social, and economic practices and models. Burman (2008), Matthews (1996b) and Kennedy (2006a) are all in agreement that development practitioners and educationalists are what Burman terms "ill-equipped by their theories, and the ways those theories are taken up, to attend to contexts and positions of actual children the world over" (Burman, 1998, p. 1).

Burman (2008) refers to two key claims when discussing the concept of development. Firstly, she suggests different disciplines address the notion of development in different ways. Her argument suggests that because of these differences, there is a strong need to engage with these differences. Failure to do so may result in misconceptions, or one group being dominant over another (Burman, 2008). Secondly, she suggests that the concept development "as singular not only dangerously simplifies the diversity of possible and available forms but thereby contributes to their marginalization, devaluation and even exploitation or oppression" (Burman, 2008, p. 6). The first claim has implications as different lenses are cast on different conceptions of development depending on "others", such as historical, political and cultural dimensions. The latter claim suggests there are methodological and practical consequences in terms of examining possibilities for change (Burman, 2008).

Examining the concept development more closely, it is important to understand what development means. The concept development reveals a number of definitions; from a developmental psychology stance it may mean 'normal' or 'within acceptable limits'. On the other hand, development may mean contested beliefs about what is right for the child, or, as I will argue throughout this research, the importance of my considering and acknowledging child's voice. Furthermore, development goes hand in hand with cultural beliefs that have been passed down through generations, and thus development will have different meanings to different cultures.

Moreover, Burman (2008) suggests that the status of developmental psychology is not clear. This will be further developed when the notion of hearing child's voice will be addressed (which has often been devalued, marginalised and exploited) in terms of rights and inclusion of voice[13] in school contexts.

If beliefs about children and childhood are seen through a Western societal perspective then it is clear that these ideas remain contested and elicit debate amongst researchers today. Some ideas that have shaped beliefs as to how we conceptualise child can be traced back to Thomas Hobbes (1588-1699) who believed that children's development was shaped by their socialisation within that society, so that they would learn their rightful place. John Locke (1632-1704) argued that development was critical to lay down foundations for child to reach his/her potential as he claimed that we are all born as a 'tabula rasa' or blank slate. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) believed that in order for a child to develop his/her natural innocence needed to be protected, and in doing so, child should be afforded the freedom to play, learn and mature. The philosopher Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) claimed that development was an interaction between child's potential and experience, nature verses nurture. It is through these beliefs about young children that fundamental questions are still being raised about child and childhood and have shaped policy and practice in school contexts.

3.4 A Post-Piagetian Era

Researchers in a post-Piagetian era suggest that there is a need to deconstruct developmental psychology. This shift in thinking has brought about a change in the way in which cognitive development of children which previously existed has been viewed. Gopnik (1996, p. 221) advocates a "kind of developmental pluralism". Her argument suggests that new theories spring from old ones. This shifting of ideas has led to many theorists questioning 'developmentalism' and a rejection or revision of existing ones.

The continual shifting of, and development of new theories or ideas, according to Gopnik (1996, p. 221) are "representations of the world that have distinctive features, and they include rules that allow the generation of new representations". In view of this, there has been a greater awareness of the fact

[13] This will be developed in Chapter 5

that there is a strong need to view child through a different lens, where child is viewed as competent, rather than abstracted from educational contexts.

What perpetuates this abstraction is that schools are organised according to these so-called age-related stages, which are assumed to be valid. However, child cannot or should not be viewed as an object of category, who is moved from grade to grade. If so, children are viewed as vulnerable, needing adult direction and protection; they are often regarded as what John (2003, p. 19) refers to as "people in the making" rather than "people of power".

Developmental psychology has been central in shaping policies about child and defining how we conceptualize child. Burman's claim is that we need "to deconstruct developmental psychology, and to identify and evaluate the guiding themes or discourses that structure its current dominant forms" (Burman, 2008 p. 1). Burman describes the term 'deconstruction' as 'in the sense of laying bare" and suggests that we need to "look beyond current frameworks, within which developmental psychological investigation is formulated. There is a call to take up broader questions of where these themes fit into the social practices in which psychology functions" (Burman, 2008, p.1).

This notion of developmental norms, whereby child is pathologised and categorised, according to developmental norms, has informed my own practice. This reflects a model of practice that marginalizes and excludes child because of a deficit. The deficit within the child is the central focus for separating him or her from others who are 'normal' or 'ordinary'. Bradley, in (John, 2003) suggests that few psychologists are active in the field of children's rights and it is this issue that has impacted on child not being given voice, as child's experiences of the world have not been addressed or recognised. Bradley's argument suggests that developmental psychology, as it is being taught in teacher training institutions, is failing to open researchers' and practitioners' eyes to more global and important issues such as poverty, violence and war that underpin how we deal with child and conceptualise child.

Philosophers would argue that psychology is "grounded in procedures that distance the knower from the subject matter under investigation" (John, 2003, p. 59). It is this distance between the psychologist and the subject (child) that has raised critique from advocates of children's rights and feminist psychologists. They argue that child's experiences are ignored in developmental psychology, due to the

positioning of the psychologist as expert and child as object. This power relationship has resulted in child being overly assessed and categorised according to the expertise of adult. John (2003) suggests "children's experiences have to be valued "as if"' they mattered (John, 2003, p. 61). These feminist writers (John and Burman) suggest that our current view of developmental psychology is fraught with adult domination of child neglecting the view that child has power and rights, as they are regarded as not-yet-adults.

These perspectives advocate that child has not been heard in terms of life experiences, such as their position in society, where they are oppressed and sometimes victims of violence or abuse. This leads adult to question the difficulties faced when we are dealing with child, it is politically and morally naïve to assume that this is not problematic, as society constructs child as not-yet-adult. A deepening of questioning of our assumptions is needed to ascertain how seriously we value child's experiences and accept them as meaningful.

The scope of this research is too limited to elaborate on the notion of societal statuses with regard to marginalised groups (women and children).However, where relevant issues are raised regarding the status of women and child and the distinction between adult-child, they will be incorporated into my argument. Historically, the voices of woman and child have been marginalised in many societal contexts.

It is particularly for this reason that Burman's (1998, 2008, 2009) work is relevant as she claims that psychologists' views of childhood are incomplete. She argues that even though there is a wealth of literature written from a psychological perspective on child development, her work suggests that developmental psychology models are contestable, and these contestations have led her to comment on the limitations of developmental psychological models and practices in terms of economic development policies.

The notion that the different discourses of childhood are fundamental to how adults perceive child in relation to adult form part of social and cultural narratives that position our identity; what makes a child a child, and an adult an adult. Developmental psychology positions the way in which we define child and informs social policy and practice. From this, I have attempted to draw the threads of

conceptions of childhood and ascertain the impact these have on the decisions adults make through a lens of developmental psychology. This argument will be taken up later in this research report, when discussing the work of Mary John. She claims that it is not only within the domain of developmental psychology that childhood has been misunderstood, but also in a broader sense, in the way in which society and institutions have interpreted, formulated, and implemented children's rights.

Burman (2008 p.69) argues that nuanced meanings of child from 'nostalgic romanticism and naturalization' emphasize how adults learn about developmental psychology as dominant models of child, where development is observed as natural and inescapable. She draws on the notion that we also view child through our memories of our own childhood, which we find reconstructed in developmental psychology norms. By completely deconstructing the nature of developmental theories, Burman claims that society will conceptualise child and childhood in less restricted ways.

3.5 A changing view of childhood

This links to the work of the sociologist, Jens Qvortrup, who highlights "the conceptual homelessness of childhood" (Qvortrup, 2007, p. 395) and argued that structures in society (class, gender, race) were "all reserved for adults" (Qvortrup, 2007).

Furthermore, Qvortrup stresses that childhood forms part of the permanent structure of society, yet childhood constantly shifts and changes. His work (much like Burman's), explores how children's contributions to societies has changed, and argues that childhood has become institutionalised. This raises questions as to the impact of global policy shifts, which suggest that there is a danger that because childhood has been universalised and dominated by schooling, there is no conceptual space left for any other activities of childhood.

In sum, until quite recently, developmental psychology has tended to focus on compartmentalising child into ages and stages, rather than focusing on what it means for child to have a voice. Furthermore, age may not equate with a child's psycho-social, moral or cognitive development. Therefore, justifying child's participation in decision-making according to chronological age is a too narrow view. Developmental stages, from a deficit model point of view, provide a general idea of

child's cognitive capabilities; however, they do not consider other factors that may hamper or otherwise influence a child's contribution to educational processes such as experience, capabilities, family circumstances, cultural differences, and education, to name a few.

Developmentalism does not take into account a more contemporary shift in developmental psychology which looks at a child through an ecosystemic or systems model[14] that would take such socio-economic, ethnic and cultural factors into account. Individual children may differ radically from other children of the same age and 'stage of development'. A strong argument is that children are generally capable of giving voice to matters that affect them, and of making choices. Judgments about 'appropriateness' or 'normality' are profoundly influenced by the conceptions of child and childhood that shape how adult interprets his or her educational encounters with child. The ecosystemic or systems model of child development is not without its critics. I do not suggest that following this approach is the only authentic way to include child's voice. I believe that by working systematically, and viewing child through the various systems that influence their lives brings adult a step closer to understanding what it means to be child, and allows us to question our existence within the contexts of who we are and how we respond to life experiences. This model views child as part of a system that shapes the essence of being, rather than as an isolated individual. In thinking more systematically, we are able to examine the assumptions underlying relationships and the dynamics that may have not been explicit.

Adult's perceptions and decisions about capability have dominated views about participation. A child not following the characteristics that are supposedly typical or normal for their stage and age, may be viewed as different or labelled as portraying 'abnormal', 'inappropriate' or 'inadequate' behaviour. Child is thus viewed as incomplete and deficient, as compared with adults' conceptualisation of 'other', which is separate from adult. In educational contexts children are traditionally viewed as belonging to their parents and in need of protection and therefore decisions are made for them, rather than by

[14] For further reading, refer to Bronfenbrenner's Ecsosytemic Theory, based on Child Development according to a nested systems theory, which proposes that child develops within a social context and develops according to the various systems that are interdependent on one another, thus impacting on development. (Donald, Lazarus, Lolwana, 2010)

them. I will return to this idea of childhood as a state of incapacity in the context of human rights. The question of whether child can or cannot be afforded rights is explored in Chapter Six.

Developmental psychology has had a powerful influence on policies and curricula, and still dominates the ways in which child is conceptualised and how child is positioned in school contexts. Theories of development based on sequenced stages have played an important role in the way in which pedagogies are used in education. However, there has been a call by various researchers such as Burman, John, Kennedy, and Matthews to consider alternate ways of viewing child and more importantly considering ways in which to deconstruct developmental norms that have shaped educational practices for many decades. Their main argument is that there is a need to look for alternative ways in which to theorise school curricula and draw up policies that acknowledge child as a knower rather than an incompetent receiver of adult ideas.

There is a strong call in current literature on philosophy of childhood and child development theories to examine and shift paradigms of theories of childhood in order to include child in the educational context. For example, Cook and Cook (2009, p. 3) argue that although hierarchical models of development can be useful in that they "enable psychologists and educators to assess rational forms of thought"; they also make their concern explicit. It is therefore necessary to examine these assumptions that construct child in an artificial, scientific manner and move beyond the Cartesian dualisms.

It is these developmental models that separate and restrain movement between boundaries of adult and child and which do not allow for common perceptions or sharing of experiences between adult and child. This argument mirrors Jenks's (2010) observation that adult and childhood have become 'locked'. Child is perceived as a being he/she possesses invalid knowledge, and only adult is the knower. Thus these models create a notion that limits the validation of child's capabilities and assumes that child cannot be a knower. Moreover, these models assume that *because* adult is the knower, adult possesses an ability to know. Cook and Cook (2009) caution that the adult-child dichotomy is complex and that the relationship should not be over-simplified. They argue that if there is an

oversimplification of this dichotomy, both adult and child will lose out. There is a place for universal stage theories in educational contexts, if adult and child relationships are reconstructed within this dichotomy so that there is "co-identity formation" between adult and child. This 'co-identity' may shift adult's dominant role over child and allow for child's voice to be heard and included. Cook and Cook (2009) offer a compromise in that there is a need to be aware of this adult-child dichotomy. This mirrors what Kennedy (2006) proposes when he problematizes the notion that childhood is not to be viewed through an epistemological lens only. Therefore, adult cannot over-simplify and become stuck in defining child according to rigid scientific criteria. His argument is that if the relationship between adult and child becomes an oversimplification, then adult will remain in a fixed state as the 'direct knower' who no longer believes that it is important to question assumptions and enquire beyond the epistemological norms that may, in fact, oversimplify the complexity of this dichotomy.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to address the complexities involved in problematising different concepts and conceptions of child and childhood through the lens of developmental psychology, which has dominated theories of childhood for decades. I have argued that there has been an increased and growing awareness that there is a need to reconceptualise how child and childhood is defined. This has been done through the work of various writers such as Jenks and Qvortop from a sociological perspective, and Kennedy, Kohan and Matthews from a philosophical perspective. These writers have suggested that there are other ways of viewing child and that developmental psychology often abstracts and objectifies child as a subject, rather than a person with competencies and capabilities. I have argued that the writings of Burman and John suggest that there is concern that developmental models of childhood need to be deconstructed, as they are fraught with adult domination of child. This chapter has highlighted the need to move beyond developmentalism and has explored the complexities between the dichotomy of adult and child. These ideas will continue to be integrated in the chapters that follow.

Chapter Four

Philosopher's Child

4.1 Introduction

Contemporary philosophers have brought new perspectives (inspired by contemporary Western philosophical thought) to discussions about childhood, to reinforce the relevance of philosophy and its foundations in schooling contexts. There is a developing conceptual framework of ideas in recent work on the notions of childhood that critiques discourses that have dominated schooling over the centuries. Current notions in the study of philosophy of childhood, have posited a strong call to reconceptualise the meaning of childhood (Archard, 2010; Kennedy, 2000, 2006a, 2006b; Murris & Haynes, 2011; Stables 2008).

Recent criticisms from the domain of philosophy and proponents of critical thinking programmes have challenged the assumptions that the main purpose of education is to impart knowledge. In many instances, research on educational systems has centred on this transmission of knowledge model as the main focus to assess child learning. Philosophers of education have been urging educational reform and have explicitly rejected ideas that the main purpose of education is to impart knowledge. A central figure in this movement, Matthew Lipman, argued that children have capabilities of reasoning and that the teaching of critical thinking is not to be regarded in an incidental manner, or as an add-on to the curriculum. His argument reflects his strong beliefs that educational systems have failed to encourage critical thinking amongst children as well as adults. Out of his strong desire to promote critical thinking in the classroom, Lipman developed a program entitled *Philosophy for Children* (P4C), with the expectation that it would make educationalists, researchers and practitioners think more deeply about the way in which schools serve educational goals.

Lipman also challenged the various claims made by developmental psychology, which still dominates the goals of schooling, and has argued that the appropriate vehicle for teaching thinking in the classroom is philosophy. More importantly, he viewed philosophy taught in the classrooms as something that is done through dialogue, rather than taught though transmission models of teaching.

Significantly, he did not advocate that children should be taught philosophy, but rather be given opportunities to practise rigorous thinking through philosophising in a supportive, democratic and reflexive environment. In view of the fact that Lipman not only challenged preconceptions about child/adult relationships, what children are capable off intellectually and emotionally, as well as offering a practical educational alternative to include child's voice, I will focus part of this chapter on the programme and the related ideas that he developed.

Lipman's ideas led to the development of his P4C programme, and its theories and practices have been taken up globally by many schools and teacher training institutions since the 1970's. This programme opened doors to a shift in thinking about how child is viewed in the classroom, and how conceptions of child have changed over decades. I will argue that child's voice is a critical component within P4C, and discuss the more recent research by various post-modernist writers, who have been referred to by Vansieleghem and Kennedy (2011, p. 268) as 'second-generation' P4C practitioners[15]. Philosophical thinking with children poses a challenge for Piagetian thinking in that conceptions of how we view child are problematized through its practise (as well as its theory), and this will be explored further below.

4.2 Philosophy of Childhood

Philosophy of Childhood, as a new branch within the field of philosophy, has become a topic of debate and discussion in recent years. There is a growing body of literature that has questioned theories which have defined child according to certain limiting moral, ethical and cultural views. As argued in the previous chapter, Kennedy (2000) and Matthews (1996b) argue that developmental psychology as the dominant discourse has shaped and seriously limited the way in which institutions have viewed child and child's position in family, school and society in general. These philosophers foreground a number of central concerns as to how conceptions of child are viewed by modern society and the ideologies embedded in different conceptions of childhood.

[15] Although generalisations are fraught with complexities as not all "second-generation" P4C proponents are committed to a radical reconceptualization of child and childhood. Thus for the purpose of this research project I will only focus on only those who do.

As a starting point, I will touch on the writings of Aristotle and Plato to suggest how child is referred to in ancient writings, although this will be limited by the scope of this research report. Aries, as referred to in Chapter Two, argued that medieval civilisation had forgotten the classical aims of education as posited in the writings of ancient paideia[16]. He claimed that there was a distinction between the worlds of child and adult. Formal education was conceptualised around the idea that it was necessary for child to receive an education in order to move into the world of the adult.

In Ancient Greece, the writings of Plato (427-437 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC) concerned themselves with the problems of education, looking at it through the lenses of educational philosophy and pedagogy. These two perspectives, educational philosophy and pedagogy, are closely interwoven. This argument will be developed later, specifically with reference to Kennedy's, Stables's and Kohan's claims that modern schooling has ignored the importance of embedding pedagogy in educational aims and objectives. Aristotle built upon Plato's ideas and central in both their writings is the suggestion that educational philosophy and pedagogy are intertwined, with a distinct role for philosophy itself in pedagogical constructs. Plato, for example, advocated that the goal of the State was to bring up children to be adults who would be capable of living virtuous lives. It is important to acknowledge, that many references to children in ancient writings are not specific. The Greeks did not have a word for child; the word *pias* indicated boys who were under 17 or 18 years old or girls that were not yet married (Postman, 1994).

Kennedy, (2006a) proposes that adults construct the world for children and schooling, and proposes that school is the important area where adult and child meet. He discusses childhood in the Romantic era as dominated by adult and, more importantly, refers to the dreary institutionalised model of schooling as an "utter travesty" (Kennedy, 2006a, p.40). He further suggests that schooling and the treatment of child in that era could be construed as "a calculated act of social construction" (Kennedy, 2006, p. 41). Like others, his argument is that Rousseau paved the way forward in changing the vision of how adult-child relationships are conceptualised. His Romantic reconstruction of how the

[16] The ancient Greek word meaning 'child-rearing education'. It aimed at producing a higher type of man. Paideia meant the process of educating man into his true form, the real and genuine human nature (from: Naugle, 2002).

relationship between adult-child should be considered radically altered adults' way of thinking about child and childhood in the early 20th century.

Philosopher John Dewey proposed that schooling must be reconstructed in order to value child as a contributor to educational processes. Dewey's book *Human Nature and Conduct* was critical of the education of his time (1930's), which he called 'training', rather than 'education', where "plasticity is warped and docility is taken to mean advantage of…to learn just those special things which those having the power and authority wish to teach" (Dewey,1930, p211). Dewey advocated that viewing educators as masters of authority was wrong. He claimed that educators should view child as a "being with which to share views" and who is able to make free suggestions regarding his/her learning. He did not mean that children should be left to their own devices, but that true intellectual shaping involved the relationship between adult and child through a process of "social intelligence" (Dewey, 1930, p. 212). Nevertheless, these changes were superficial or largely ignored (Kennedy, 2006b).

4.3 The Voice of Child in Philosophy for Children (P4C)

The possibility that children are able to philosophise has gained wide interest in the domain of philosophy of education and philosophy of childhood. Matthews (1996b) argues that being able to philosophise is natural to all human beings. In fact, child, according to Matthews, can do this better than adults, whom he claims have internalised the "requirement for knowing" (Matthews, 1996b, p.28). Matthews does caution readers of his work that children cannot be compared to any adult and that children may not be as disciplined, or not as rigorous, as adults, in terms of philosophising (Matthews, 1996b, p. 17). He suggests that adult has lost his or her philosophical sensitivity, by claiming that child is the epitome of a philosopher, as child is able to 'detach' and ask questions that are complex in nature. Similarly, Murris, (2000, p. 263) claims that young children raise questions that "academic philosophers are often puzzled about, when they have just started doing philosophy". Murris (2000) raises questions about comparing a child's ability to do philosophy with that of adults, and alerts one to be careful of which adults are being referred to. Adults may take the meaning of the language that children use for granted, or may interpret the opinions and ideas children voice inaccurately and on their own terms.

Lipman (1991) acknowledges that rethinking educational change is not an easy task. His supposition is that there are obstacles present in the form of how schools see the nature of thinking, and disparities about psychological issues and the role that philosophy should play in schools. He argues that dominant assumptions as to how schooling is metered out tend to view thinking skills as separate courses to be transmitted in a decontextualized or isolated manner. In contrast, his suggestion is that thinking skills should also form part of an infusion into traditional subject courses, although it is recommended to include separate philosophy lessons as well. He illustrates this by contrasting what he claims is "the standard paradigm or normal practice and the reflective paradigm of critical practice" [17](Lipman, 1991, p. 13) against the current educational contexts. Lipman's claim was that a reflective paradigm to education would shift the way in which educators viewed child in a classroom context, through a guided 'community of enquiry'[18]. The role of the teacher is seen as enquirer and facilitator, not one of authority. Although the teacher is in control of procedural matter, the content of lessons is partly shaped by children's own interests and experiences. In this paradigm, child is not abstracted in the process, but rather has an important role to play in constructing new knowledge within the classroom context. Child is viewed as a thoughtful, reflective and reasonable person, who has a voice. The standard paradigm, in contrast, raises an assumption that knowledge is fixed and a product to be transmitted by educators, who hold the power and authority on what counts as important knowledge.

Kennedy (2006a, 2006b) and Matthews (1996b) argue that Piaget failed to recognise the philosophical dimension of young children's thinking. In his dialogues with young children, Matthews observed that child's thinking and reasoning is philosophically sophisticated, and his work highlights the importance of inviting children to reflect on their own experiences philosophically. A strong critique by philosophers of childhood is that developmental psychology has underestimated the significance of

[17] For further reading on Lipman's characterisation of each paradigm and its dominant assumptions, see Lipman, M (1991) *Thinking in Education*. New York: Cambridge Press

[18] Community of Enquiry was developed by Matthew Lipman based on the scientific model of Pierce. Lipman (1991, p. 20) for further reading refer to Lipman *Thinking in Education*. Children participate in a 'community of enquiry', which may be defined as a reflective approach to classroom discussion built up over time with a single group of learners. In a community of enquiry children vote for a question to be used for discussion and within the dialogical process where they sit in a circle facilitated by the educator, they learn to build upon one another's ideas and give reasons for their responses. The 'community' embodies co-operation, care, respect and safety; the 'enquiry' reaches for understanding, meaning, truth and values supported by reasons. (Williams, 2011) www.thinkingscripts.co.uk

listening to child's voice. This coincides with current literature on child's voice regarding Children's Rights which will be addressed in Chapters Five and Six.

Adults' conceptions of child colour the evaluation of child's capabilities. Matthews (1996b) argues that not only developmental psychologists, but also adult philosophers reinforce the idea that philosophy is rooted in the knowledge that adults pass onto children, rather than focussing on the natural curiosity children possess and express in philosophical enquiry. Matthews (1996b) believes that adults' view of child as not being philosophical is due to the fact that philosophy has disappeared from the adult world. This is the reason many educators and educationalists believe that children are not capable of philosophical thought or higher-level engagement with concepts that are abstract.

Like Matthews, Lipman believed that "children are naturally disposed to acquire cognitive skills, just as they naturally acquire language" (Lipman, 1991, p. 40). His life's work was devoted to the notion that education systems can be established that nurture a child's capacity to think better, and his radical proposal was his claim that the only way in which to build on this natural capacity was through philosophy "when properly reconstructed and properly taught" (Lipman, 1991, p. 3).

Lipman (1991) is not suggesting that education should not be without some form of knowledge content, however, he believed that the best way of accessing this content was through a proper induction in the thinking characteristic of the various disciplines (rather than rote learning). He believed that if a child could think well, then he/she could access the content that is needed in various contexts. His suggestion was to build on a capacity for reasonableness and his vision was to see democratic education as "a context in which young people learn to be reasonable" (Lipman, 1991, p. 16). It should prepare people to "live as inquiring members of an inquiring society" (Lipman, 1991, p. 246). Many have critiqued this assumption, namely academic philosophers, who see no place for child in any philosophy programme especially in a school context. Eccelestone & Hayes, (in Bramall 2009; Gregory, 2009; Haynes; 2009; Murris, 2009; Williams, 2009); Flay (in Murris 2000).

Lipman introduced his programme in the 1970's and established with colleagues the Institute for Advancement of Philosophy for Children (IAPC) at Montclair State College - now Montclair State University. IAPC's role was to develop materials and educators' guides for doing philosophy with

children in schools and colleges in the US, and to run international educational training programmes. P4C advocates such as Laurence Splitter and Ann Sharp (1995) suggest that even though educators may not have been exposed to philosophy, they may have a natural aptitude to philosophise with others. It was through this vision that philosophy for children was initially introduced into middle schools in the US. In developing materials for educators, the program was thus introduced into schools. In 1985, upon reflecting on the international growth of the P4C program, the International Council for Philosophical Inquiry (ICPIC) was established to continue the momentum of the program and further its ideals through international conferences and a journal entitled *Thinking: The Journal for Philosophy for Children*.

However, many critics of the pedagogy, Philosophy for Children[19] suggest that the place for the study of philosophy is in higher institutions. One of the central questions shaping this debate is whether Philosophy for Children is 'real' philosophy. For example, White (1996) argues that P4C cannot be philosophy because it is too abstract for children. His argument critiques the idea that children can do second-order thinking, and his claim is that real philosophy requires the thinker to "reflect on the interrelations between concepts and allied ideas, against the background of larger frameworks of ideas" (White, 1996, p. 75). Children, so the argument goes, miss this larger framework and can only think about the concrete use of concepts.

In contrast, Murris (2000) and Sutcliffe (2011) argue that academic philosophers do not understand philosophy as a process, nor the importance of pedagogy, which is underpinned in any P4C programme. This raises the argument that P4C and traditional academic philosophy are at odds with one another. P4C is not only a critique of current education, but also of the way philosophy is currently taught in higher education institutions and secondary schools. Hence, the question "What is philosophy?" needs to be reframed as "What ought philosophy to be?" This challenges the

[19] This program was started in the United States in the 1970s, by Matthew Lipman who published a novel for secondary school children entitled *Harry Stottlemeier's Discovery* which encouraged children to develop philosophical thinking. The central feature of this pedagogy is to use a Community of Enquiry, facilitated by the teacher, using various stimuli such as pictures,and picturebooks. Karin Murris and Joanna Haynes developed this pedagogy further by suggesting that instead of following Lipman's approach of using prescribed pre-written materials, enquiries could be developed by using picturebooks. Practitioners such as Roger Sutcliffe use news stories and Steve Williams posit the importance of dialogue to raise philosophical issues using this pedagogy. (www.plato.Stanford.edu)

assumptions of academic philosophers and suggests that philosophy is not fixed, and its place is not only in a university context.

Both P4C and academic philosophy are built on assumptions that philosophy encourages students to think critically and engage in enquiries that foster reflective thought. Both require a form of a community wherein philosophical concepts can be discussed and justified through reasoning. However, there is much controversial debate that suggests that the two can be afforded the same status, in their different takes as to how they define philosophy.

These critiques of P4C are often forged by philosophers who have had no training in the P4C programme or little exposure to working with children in communities of enquiry. Critics that have argued against the P4C programme have termed it "unintellectual" (Eccelestone & Hayes, 2009), "unsocratic" (Smith, 2011), "undialogical" (Vansieleghem, 2006), and "imperialistic "(Biesta, 2011). Many of these critics have an academic philosophy background, thus their critiques are often centred in a hegemonic domain where little engagement with the actual practice of P4C and its research findings have been considered.

Proponents of P4C (Bramall 2009; Gregory, 2009; Haynes; 2009; Murris, 2009; Williams, 2009) responded to some of these critics at a symposium. The main goal of this symposium was to engage with the critics of P4C and suggest ways in which it could play a role in Higher Education. The objections raised by the proponents of P4C were that all the critics had dismissed P4C as if it had "one identity" (Bramall 2009; Gregory, 2009; Haynes; 2009; Murris, 2009; Williams, 2009, p. 3). The respondents suggested that the critics had failed to engage with the theoretical underpinnings of P4C and had obtained data for their critique mainly from websites, rather than focusing on the vast research literature on the subject. Another criticism by the respondents was the fact that the works of Matthews (1996) theories of child's competency in thinking abstractly, and Lipman's (1991) vision and theories of the P4C programme, had not been studied or included.

A second generation[20] of proponents of P4C has emerged out of the foundations of the work done by Matthew Lipman. These proponents take a critical distance of the P4C programme, though broadly speaking they share Lipman's similar educational values, new orientations have emerged as a result of re-examining the historical and epistemological foundations of P4C. For example, Murris (2008) suggests that as P4C has extended into different school contexts in different countries, it has encountered new challenges. She claims that individuals bring their own identities and philosophies into P4C. Vansieleghem and Kennedy claim that this second generation P4C is "internally diverse but unified by a two-fold ideal: (i) a quietened emphasis on logic and reasoning and (ii) an amplified emphasis on reflection and dialogue" (Vansieleghem and Kennedy, 2011, p. 177). Children participating in a community of enquiry are therefore encouraged to set out standards or rules as a community and discuss and reflect on concepts that are meaningful to them.

In the 1990's the Society for Advancing Philosophical Enquiry and Reflection in Education (SAPERE) was founded in the UK by Roger Sutcliffe, Karin Murris and Chris Rowley. SAPERE replaced Lipman's suggested curriculum, which contained written dialogues and extended educator's manuals by suggesting that a wider variety of strategies could be included to do philosophy in schools. The new changes allowed the proponents of second-generation P4C to look at methodologies and stimuli for lessons that promoted reflection and dialogue. SAPERE's vision mirrors Murris' notion that each individual has their own identity and philosophy. Second-generation P4C practitioners have thus promoted the use of a variety of different methods. Changes have taken on different ideas. Murris (1992) pioneered the use of picture books as stimuli to develop philosophical reasoning. Fisher (1996) advocated using poetry and narratives and Liptai (2005) has worked extensively with art and music (in SAPERE, 2006, p. 1). This capacity for change has brought new identities, positioning and expanded opportunities for practitioners wanting to implement philosophy with children in their schools.

[20] There is a second generation of P4C advocates within the discourse of philosophy for children. These advocates (Margaret Sharp, David Kennedy, Karin Murris, Joanna Haynes, Walter Kohan and others) have created new thinking and ideas around P4C. The new ideas that have been conceptualized are not seen as an attack on the predecessors of the programme developed by Lipman, but they are rather viewed as a move towards a changing global environment in education. For further reading see Vansieleghem & Kennedy (2011)

Where does P4C position itself in a post-Lipman era? Murris and Haynes (2011) acknowledge the pioneering work of Lipman and the P4C program that has gained momentum internationally over the last few decades, but suggest that working with prewritten material and questions as used by Lipman is too prescriptive. The process of facilitating P4C programmes, as they stand traditionally, is too directive and is more like a discussion between teacher and child than a mutual reflection of ideas. They strongly advocate that P4C 'rolled out in this way', and is at odds with the ethos of a community of enquiry, which should express democratic notions of sharing and building on each other's' ideas.

Furthermore, Murris and Haynes (2011) suggest that the incorporation of P4C in schooling contexts should be seen as an integral part of the curriculum, rather than as a non-systematically integrated add-on. In my own experience of being exposed to a P4C programme through the Masters Course I took, I was able to see the links between the theories behind bringing P4C into a curriculum. I was also able to begin to work with children in my practice using picturebooks and I realised despite their age, eight year olds were able to ask insightful questions and discuss abstract ideas such as love, hate, fear and forgiveness amongst others, through building on each other's ideas and justifying their reasons through dialogue with one another. I agree with the claim by Murris and Haynes (2011) that "P4C puts philosophy of education, firmly on the agenda of *all* educators, not just teachers of philosophy" (Murris & Haynes, 2011, p. 60). In this regard, educators' understandings of the nature and role of philosophy and the important role it can play in educational contexts needs, to be cultivated. Therefore, philosophising with child challenges educators to hear child in a unique way. Suddenly, power is shifted; adult is not the dominant player in the process and through a thorough knowledge of the philosophy behind the P4C programme and proper training, these challenges are exposed. Adult in a sense is challenged by this loss of control as there is a focus on child's questions and responses and the session is not teacher-directed; the children map the concepts to be discussed during the lesson, and with careful facilitation by the teacher, the dialogue is developed to incorporate multiple voices rather than one dominant teacher's voice. The voices heard are the children's more than the teacher's. The danger here is that P4C taught by untrained practitioners may "introduce a philosophy program such as the P4C program in an uncritical way" (Murris & Haynes, 2011, p. 60). The core of a P4C programme thus lies in the construction of a dialogical encounter between adult (educator) and child. Educators

(adult) ought to appreciate that childhood is a valuable phase of life and philosophising with child enables adult/child to consider issues based on their own experiences. The danger is if the educator (adult) does not consider child's view and does not engage critically with this transformation of creating dialogue between adult and child, child is not acknowledged as being competent to philosophise.

As explained before, Matthews develops the argument that children are capable of philosophical thought, a fact underestimated by educators and educationalists. He claims that educational systems prioritise 'ordinary' questions that are of the empirical, factual kind, over and above complex questions- abstract questions that sometimes can result in perplexity and uncomfortable situations for the adult. For example, schools are structured to work along conceptual frameworks where standardisation of assessment and curricula are used as a measure of whether a child is competent or not to be promoted to the next level or grade.

These two contrasting views, that child is viewed as competent and capable of philosophical thought, or that child is seen through a stage-theory that measures competence through maturation, give rise to what Kennedy & Vansieleghem's (2011) call 'cracks in the concept'. They claim that a concept should emerge and develop through experience and reflection. It is through these experiences that we encounter, that the concepts we hold both transform and are transformed. Furthermore, concepts are shaped by beliefs and ones that have ethical implications as to "how self and the world should work" (Kennedy and Vansieleghem, 2011, p. 272). Thus, concepts have a potential opening or 'crack' in them. These 'cracks in the concept' create a contradiction which forces one to problematize these 'cracks' and raise questions.

Viewing the concept child through the different lenses of developmental psychology and philosophy of child, questions the contradictions that arise. Developmental psychology reinforces child as a non-participant in society and schooling contexts, creating a 'crack' between the normative view of child and the view of child through a P4C lens, which sees child as a competent thinker. These 'cracks' in the conceptions of child force educators and educationalists to examine assumptions and contradictions they hold about child's capabilities. The P4C programme advocates the oral nature of a dialogical

approach. Child is viewed as competent. I agree that there is a need for child to be given a voice to construct and deconstruct meanings, ask questions and engage critically with the world. However, I am also mindful of the complexities involved with dealing with these 'cracks' that question how we as adults view and treat children. It is no easy task, considering all the levels that underlie a notion of viewing child as competent. It is not only in a school context that 'cracks' become evident; they are inherent at all levels of society (socio-economic, political, moral and cultural).

4.4 Conclusion

In sum, P4C, since its inception in the 1970's, has not been left out of academic debate. It is through rigorous academic debate and sustained practises that Lipman's pioneering work (which stressed the need for and abilities of young children to reason together using their experiences) has evolved into the diverse practices of the second-generation P4C proponents, with an emphasis on dialogue and reflection. It is, in particular, this notion of dialogue and reflection that I argue has advantages for child's voice to be included in educational contexts.

Chapter Five

Child's Voice

5.1 Introduction

Within educational settings there is a growing concern about the need to encourage hearing of child's voice. (Haynes, 2009; Lewis, 2010; Lundy, 2007; Messiou, 2006; Moss, 2006). However, within policies and pedagogy, there is often minimal representation of child's agency. I agree with Jenks that theories of child development have constructed child as being deficient of adult characteristics (Jenks, 2010). Furthermore, implications the of different conceptions of childhood, which have been discussed in previous chapters, have yet to become part of a reconstruction of policies and pedagogies in many Western societies, which still perceive adult as decision-maker and which construct child as deficient. The complexities in hearing voice are often articulated by romanticism on the part of adult, who claims to be hearing what child says, yet he/she does nothing with this (Prout, 2002).

Historically, conceptions of child and childhood from a Western societal perspective have viewed child in terms of an "object of concern rather than persons with voice" (Hallet & Prout, 2003, p. 1). Thus voices were silenced by the dominant constructions of the nature of child as written about from various domains (sociology, developmental psychology). The concept of voice is therefore linked to how educators and researchers conceptualise child. If conceptions of child are dominated by adult authority, then schooling contexts will continue to be driven by this authority, where decisions and policies are drawn up by adults. However, recently a strong argument has begun to emerge amongst researchers and educators (Jenks, 2010; Prout, 2002) that there is a need to reconceptualise notions of childhood. This reconceptualisation includes child's voice in research contexts, as well as in contexts such as school, where their voices can shape policies and practice.

Including child's voice creates different perspectives about social policy. This move towards including child's voice has been written about in a number of recent research initiatives and publications on the discourse of childhood (Bain, 2010; Biesta, 2011; Jenks, 2010). There is a growing awareness that child's voice needs to be included in the development of policy on all levels. Nevertheless, there is

opposition to including child's voice and there are obstacles that still need critical interrogation. There is recognition that participation and inclusion of child's voice can be possible in deciding policy with the acknowledgement of child as capable of making decisions. Researchers (Bain, 2010; Burke, 2008; Jenks, 2010; Kennedy, 2006) with an interest in childhood have begun to examine the connections between assumptions and theories of childhood and how these assumptions and theories impact on social policy. Furthermore, working from the perspective that historically child was not perceived as a person with voice, the contemporary idea of child's voice is becoming more accepted. However, as will be argued, much like the different conceptions of child and childhood, the idea of child's voice remains a contested issue.

5.2 Child's Voice

The discourse of voice has been researched across disciplines such as critical pedagogy, literature and critical literacy. There is an increasing interest by researchers (Alderson, 2008; Burbules, 2003; Clark, 2005; Hadfield & Haw, 2001; Lundy, 2007) to link voice to young people in terms of rights discourse, participation and representation. Including child's voice has gained momentum in areas of social inclusion. Yet this notion of including voices of young people is open to critique, and questions have been raised about issues of power and ways in which educationalists and researchers listen and respond to child's voice. Hadfield and Haw (2007) discussed the concept of voice in terms of a study they conducted with young pupils who had been excluded from school. The study involved action research which focused on the expression of voice of young people and alerted Hadfield and Haw to the theoretical debates about voice and the practical difficulties in maintaining relationships with the young men. The study revealed that most of the voices 'voiced' and listened to, were those between educators, rather than between educators and pupils.

A further argument drawn from the work of Hadfield and Haw (2001) is their problematisation of the construct "voice". They argue that it has become such a broadly used term that is disconnected from theories and the 'critical praxis' where it originated. (Hadfield & Haw, 2001, p. 486). A fundamental aspect which they highlight the complexity of voice being an expression of an individual through his/her experiences, rather than based on theories.

When including child's voice, there may be a breakdown in the relationship between adult and child. Voice entails an expression of meaning and "The struggle for voice begins when a person attempts to communicate with someone else" (Britzman in Hadfield & Haw, 2001, p. 487). Furthermore, as Hadfield and Haw suggest, voice, especially of young people, may be excluded or marginalised by the dominant voices of adults. A complexity arises as to how adult can guide or facilitate the inclusion of child's voice without domination, especially in cases where child's voice has already been ignored or excluded. There are cultural issues that impact on the inclusion of child's voice, and Hadfield & Haw maintain that "It is culturally specific with its validity arising from who is speaking rather than being sanctioned by who is listening" (Hadfield & Haw, 2001, p. 487). The research conducted by Hadfield and Haw has attempted to convince adults (researchers, educators) of the need to look beyond theoretical notions of voice and critically to examine assumptions (we), as adults, hold when listening to child's voice. Their main concern has been that educators and researchers working with children in classrooms need to give consideration to the validity of child's voice, especially when one voice speaks against others. There is a tendency for adult to continue to dominate, rather than taking a step back to listen to child.

The concept of voice according, to Britzman (cited in Thomson, 2008, p. 4) is "taken to mean having a say". However, Britzman extends this meaning further and suggests that the concept spans literal, metaphorical and political terrains (Thomson, 2008, p.4). In a literal sense, voice signifies the speech and viewpoint of the speaker. In a metaphorical sense, it denotes articulation, tone, "accent, style and the qualities and feelings conveyed by the speaker's words" (Thomson, 2008, p. 4). Britzman describes voice in a political sense "as the right of speaking and of being represented" (in Thomson, 2008, p. 4).

Thomson (2008) suggests that what is crucial to hearing child's voice in research and other contexts is an obligation on the part of the adult to listen to the voice of child, so that adults do not censor views and opinions of child. Bogdan and Biklen (in Thomson, 2008, p. 204) describe giving voice as "empowering people to be heard who might otherwise remain silent" or who have been silenced by others. In other words, voice is the right and ability to make oneself heard and to make experiences and perspectives available to others. More importantly, it is a construction of the self and how we

represent this self to others. This idea of representing the self to others could be linked to Derrida's idea of having a quality of self-presence which is then found in the discourse of voice and the ownership of one's voice (Lee, 2001, p. 108). In many school contexts, child is often not allowed to enjoy a quality of "self-presence" or take ownership of voice, as current educational institutions tend to be dominated by adult voice, rather than child's.

Listening to and acknowledging voice may challenge beliefs and ideas. This takes on a more complex dimension as child (and adult) do not speak with one voice but as individuals who have different opinions, beliefs and ways of expression. Hadfield and Haw (in Thomson, 2008) draw on this complexity by stating that individuals use more than one voice. They propose three voices namely, *authoritative*, *critical* and *therapeutic*. Arnot and Reay (in Thomson, 2008) define another type of voice, the *pedagogi*c voice. It is through these four different types of voice that I hope to map an analysis of what child's voice means in school contexts.

Child's voice ought to be viewed as a critical component in educational contexts. This ideal is based on democratic principles, where an interest in equality, participation, and inclusion of child's voice is paramount. However, there are moral and ethical implications that come to the fore when educators and researchers[21] go about hearing the voice of child. I will discuss the different voices as stipulated above to argue that voice of both child and adult is a critical component in a school context.

Hadfield and Haw (in Thomson, 2008 p. 4) define voice as:

Authoritative: the voice that speaks on behalf of child. This is a pertinent conception of voice when building a strong argument for including child's voice, specifically as voice understood as authoritative is embedded in the policies that are representative of a collective body, namely, the Department of Education where, the *Authoritative voices* are the voices representing policy documents and curricula.

[21] The limitations of this research do not allow for a discussion of the problematisation of these ethical issues that have been exposed through research initiatives geared to acknowledging child's voice. A huge concern is the inclusion of the voices of children that are silenced, by disability. Adult's role is another important factor that is problematized in terms of listening to authentic voice. Lundy,(2007 p.17) suggests that "child's voice is a radical agenda" and that much of the work on 'child's voice' "falls short of what is needed" (Lundy,2007, p17) For further reading see Lundy, (2007)

On an institutional level, there are the educators', parents' and other adults' authoritative voices which are making decisions for child.

Critical: The voice that challenges the status quo. This is the voice that is heard in practice and in the implementation of policies. This is the voice that I, as researcher, use when critically examining what it means to include child's voice and to recognise the importance of listening to child's voice. However, it may still exclude and marginalise or silence child's voice. An interesting point that Hadfield and Haw (2001, p. 5) make is that this voice puts perspectives into the "public arena that are rarely, if ever, heard".

Therapeutic: this voice offers child a safe place to deal with traumatic events and experiences, and suggests that this is the voice used in research with vulnerable child or in therapeutic interventions. In these contexts, voice would deal with ethical considerations when working with child so that "no harm comes to child" (Hadfield & Haw, 2001, p. 5). Therapeutic voice links to my own professional practise. I deal with child in a supportive role through interventions with learning support. I have made a pivotal shift in thinking and practise through my own growing awareness of how my views of child and voice have been shaped by exposure to different pedagogies and conceptions of child. *Therapeutic voice* has also made me question the ways in which I listen to child's voice and whether I am, in fact, open to and respectful of child's concerns.

Pedagogic: This voice is one created by the schooling context. This links to Fricker's notion of power, where she describes power "as a capacity on the part of social agents (individuals, groups, or institutions) exercised in respect of other social agents" (Fricker, 2007, p. 10). In this instance, the power lies in the voices of the social agents: the individuals (parents and educators), groups (communities, school boards) and institutions (school, departments of education and wider political systems, such as politicians and policy makers who draw up policies and regulate schooling as a complex social structure). It is voice created by "experiences of being educated within particular kinds of pedagogic, curriculum and assessment regimes" (Thomson, 2008 p. 5). As a result, it may not always be "authentic and pure". *Pedagogic* voice has a significant impact on the central focus of this research

report, as it is discussed in terms of including child's voice in the schooling context as it highlights issues of what it means to include voice that has been absent.

5.3 Voice in Research: Different perspectives

Researchers committed to finding ways of including child's voice, have suggested that listening to young voices enables child to articulate their experiences. A shift in opinions of how adult views child has resulted in more being written in literature about finding ways of bringing these unheard voices into "professional and scholarly conversations" (Thomson, 2008, p. 3). This research has opened up the potential to allow previously disadvantaged or marginalised voices to be included. However, there are still many issues that colour this notion. An important aspect of researchers and practitioners has been to acknowledge the power relationships integral to listening to child's voice. What has worked against this notion is a question as to whether child's voice is being truthfully represented and acknowledged, or wether adult voice is still dominating the process.

The act of giving voice voice can emphasise the very systems of marginalisiation that it seeks to restore. This is evident in Burman's critique of the idea of power relationships. Burman suggests "that developmental work [fieldwork] when conducting research, in terms of the act of giving voice, runs the risk of simultaneous exposure and surveillance" (Burman, 2008, p. 12). This risk of exposure and surveillance assumes that the person or persons (child) being heard has no voice and therefore needs someone (adult) to report on their experiences. Burman cautions that empowering communities that are already marginalised may result in these communities falling into a further cycle of disempowerment and manipulation. Her concern is that practices of giving voice may fail to take into consideration the power struggles within these communities and the entrenchment of political, cultural and spatial complexities of the processes of translation and interpretation.

Thus, Burman (2008) suggests that giving voice, may hamper actually representation. It would be difficult to assertain whether this act of voice is merely superficial and in fact still represents a dominant voice. Linking the above notion to child and how child, as part of a community, is given representation within school contexts, there is often talk of representation and participation. However,

this is often ignored by the policies and systems already in place regarding matters that affect child. Child develops new knowledge as he/she interacts through the different social interactions via relationships, identities and social contexts. Talk is an important element of everyday experiences. In a school context, I have observed a number of incidents where child can be engaged in collaborative talk, such as in the classroom, on the playground and with the educator. If educators view child as not being capable of making decisions or offering opinions, then child's voice is absent, or silenced, rather than heard. It is often the voice of the educator or adult [voice of authority], that dominates social interactions in educational contexts. I agree with Burman (2008) that this domination of adult voice denies that child has his/her own voice as there is no acknowledgement that child does in fact have a voice which he/she is able to exercise and use. I cannot make the assumption that by attempting to give voice to child, that this voice will be free from my own perceptions and interpretations. In many encounters with children in my own classroom practice, I too was guilty of not creating enough opportunities for child to have a voice. It was often far easier for me as adult to dominate the interactions, as the adult knower.

Critics of traditional education argue that the practices outlined above fail to recognise that children are regarded as powerful people, rather than people in the making. John (2003) argues that child must become a contributor to debates on social accountability and freedom, as the voice of the child is under-acknowledged through normative practices that are dominated by adult voice. I realise that critiquing the traditional notions of child's voice has implications for myself in terms of thinking about my 'own' voice and identity, and how I hold power and represent, or speak on behalf of, child.

From a critical pedagogical[22] perspective, McLaren (2007) draws on the argument that there needs to be a shift in how educators and students produce and reconstruct meaning in classroom contexts. He suggests that the theory of learning and teaching evolves around the concept of voice. His work focuses on the concept of voice as made explicit by the writings of Giroux, who defines voice as a set of

[22] Critical pedagogy is a theory based on how education can provide students with tools to better themselves and strengthen democracy. (Giroux & McLaren, 1994 p.30) claim that "critical pedagogy signals how questions of audience, power and evaluation actively work to construct particular relations between teachers and students, institutions and classrooms and communities…. Pedagogy in the critical sense illuminates the relationship between knowledge, authority and power"(Giroux & McLaren, 1994,p31)

meanings that are interconnected and multi-layered through the act of dialogue between student and teacher. McLaren (2007, p. 243) develops this argument further by suggesting that voice must be viewed as an important pedagogical concept as it is embedded in a discourse that is "historically and culturally mediated". Voice can thus be defined as an internal discourse that is private. However, McLaren (2007, p. 243) argues that this discourse cannot be understood "without situating it in a universe of shared meanings". It is at this point that I situate my own questioning of child's voice, within an educational context. If voice mediates and shapes experience and reality, due to its situated cultural and historical contexts, then how do schools allow child to affirm their own individual and collective voices, when there are power-relations and policies that do not allow individual voice to be heard?

One of the most influential works on language and thought that has impacted on my professional practice was the work of the Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934). He believed that children learn through dialogue via a 'social other', the 'social other' being an educator or in a broader context through social interactions with other individuals who are able to mediate this knowledge. This social interaction via dialogue influences the conceptual development of child. Vygotsky believed that social interaction and conceptual development are interdependent on one another. If social interaction and the process of conceptual development are important for constructing knowledge (in both a social and school context), then the importance of voice, and in my analysis, child's voice, should play a central role in decisions and the conceptual development of child.

Vygotsky (1986) agreed with Dewey's notion (1930) that teaching as a means merely of transferring knowledge was pedagogically useless. Vygotsky believed that there was a strong relationship between human activity and consciousness. The central focus of his theory stated that the mental activities of a human being are adapted through social interaction into his cultural historical environment. Vygotsky rejected Piaget's idea (chapter 3) that child is gradually socialised in such a way that consciousness arises through disequilibrium (conflicts and failures) with the assumed more mature thinking of an adult. In contrast to this view, Vygotsky believed that the child is a social being who is able to interact with adult through action. Through this social interaction, individualization takes place.

Vygotsky believed that speech and action are part of a complex psychological function, aimed at problem-solving. This supports my argument about child's voice. Furthermore, he posited that in child's actions to solve problems, speech is crucial, as at the same time it starts to control child's behaviour. Vygotsky maintains that once child begins to use language as a tool, problem-solving takes place at the time when the socialised speech directed at adults becomes internal (Vygotsky, 1986). If opportunities to listen to child's voice are neglected, then how can effective learning take place or child's voice be considered?

In sum, for Dewey (1930) and Vygotsky (1986), child is able to build his/her identity in the process of interaction with other members of a community or context. Crucial is the need to include child's voice in the process. However, this in itself is problematic, as there are many instances where adult remains the dominant force that drives policy, practice and conceptions of child. How then do adults open up real possibilities for including child's voice?

5.4 Voice as a critical component

Voice is a critical component on the agenda of researchers and practitioners who maintain that historically, social and cultural practices disregard child's voice, and this leads to marginalization. Haynes suggests that there has been a recent move by researchers and practitioners "to find ways of working and consulting with children, so as to ensure that children's voices are heard in all matters that affect them" (Haynes, 2009, p. 28).

From a sociological perspective, sociologists agree that voice and agency are children's rights. Pufall and Unsworth (2004) interpret "voice" as conveying intent, and furthermore this expression of intent leads to a sense of self-agency. Voice refers to "that cluster of intentions, hopes and grievances and expectations that children guard as their own [and] to the fact that children are much more self-determining actors than we think" (Pufall and Unsworth, 2004). This notion is reflected in the work of Haynes (2009), (Haynes & Murris, 2011) and Kennedy (2009). They all agree that in educational contexts child is often seen as less competent and thus unable to make decisions on their own, without adult domination of policy and practice in school contexts.

However, a complexity arises when finding ways to hear child. Haynes (2009, p. 28) claims that there is a need to problematize what is meant by "listening to children's voices" especially when dealing with issues such as how children can be included as contributors to their learning and school context. If child is viewed as being incompetent, the effect is that child is socialised into viewing himself/herself in this manner and, as a consequence, his/her learning will be muted.

In drawing on an analysis of the different types of voice that may come into play when hearing child's voice in a school context, different perspectives as to how adult and child relate emerge. Adult voice assumes an agenda that suggests adult is always right and may thus judge child from this perspective. Child's voice is thus made to fit into adult's agenda and through this agenda adult justifies decisions and reasons for not including child's voice. However, if the authoritative voice is child's, it may denote an 'authentic' voice that shares a common interest. Hadfield and Haw's research (2001) gave authority to young voices in that they were able to share their experiences about matters that affected them in their school contexts.

If adult voice is critical, it may challenge the way in which child's voice is heard and attempt to influence the power relationships between adult and child. An educator expressing a critical voice may challenge policies in place regarding inclusion of child's voice and encourage dialogue and more interaction between adult's voice and child's voice. A critical voice needs to have a clear purpose that sets out to challenge views and prejudices. A critical voice will, as Haynes (2009) suggests, problematize what is meant by listening to child's voice.

In order to begin to problematize this notion of listening to child's voice, Lundy (2007) suggests that listening to children can be understood in terms of a framework that may provide guidance in the cultivation of child's voice. Her framework suggests that four concepts namely; space, voice, audience and influence are a basis from which to listen to child's voice. 'Space' suggests that child must be given an opportunity to express a view. Here, challenges may arise as to which views are acknowledged and what opportunities are created to include child's voice. 'Voice', according to Lundy (2007), suggests that children must be facilitated to express their views. This may have a positive or negative impact. If facilitation is based on a more consultative basis, where the domination of power between adult and

child is equal and child is able to openly express views, then this will have a positive impact on a child's notion of self as an individual who is capable of voicing. Conversely, if facilitation involves adult domination, then child's voice may not be authentic, as views may be altered or shaped by adult. In a sense, adult would be in danger of performing an epistemic injustice, as referred to in chapter four. 'Influence' denotes that child's view should be acted upon appropriately, and herein lies a danger; adult needs to be careful about how he/she goes about listening to and hearing child's voice. Listening to child's voice needs to be reflexive so as not to influence the view voiced by child. 'Audience' suggests that child's view must be listened to and that complexities may arise in terms of how adult conceptualises child and interprets child's view. An important issue here is that throughout the process of hearing child's voice, there may be limitations with regard to ethical issues when including child's voice and, more importantly, in working with children who are disabled or whose communication is impeded. This may cause uneasiness in adults and therefore child's voice may be silenced. On a more positive note, this framework grounds a concept of dialogue that encourages and informs an understanding of child's voice. Furthermore, Lundy (2007) argues that 'space' and 'voice' tend to focus on a more participatory approach when acknowledging child's voice. A rights-based approach chapter six will focus on ensuring that 'audience' and 'influence' are given due weight when consulting with children.

This view is supported by the writings of Haynes (2009), Kennedy and Kennedy (2011), and Kohan (2011), who propose that hearing child's voice is essential to educational change. Although there are mechanisms in policy to include child's voice, there is often a gap between policy and practice. Including child's voice links to a pedagogy of listening where there is a legitimisation that an individual's experiences are essential. Critics argue that a pedagogy of listening is a difficult notion to achieve, given that in order to include child's voice, there is a need to understand how a school system is structured and organised. It is through these organising principles and structures that decisions and dominant powers directly impact on including child's voice.

Haynes (2009), Kennedy and Kennedy (2011), Kohan (2011), Lundy (2007) present an opportunity for including and listening to child's voice, and suggest that opportunities for listening and including child's voice are critical. Classroom practice needs to be carefully constructed to allow for dialogue and

meaningful engagement. Dialogue, according to Burbules (2003) is a democratic activity that should fundamentally give participants an opportunity for voice. In creating these opportunities, it is also important to consider that not all children are willing to engage or able to engage with opportunities. In many instances, as with Lundy's suggested framework, adult may need to empower child to use his/her voice. Through programmes such as P4C that encourage meaningful dialogue, these opportunities can be fostered and developed to include child's voice.

5.5 Connections between listening and voice

In highlighting what is problematic in normative practices and education communities, specifically when addressing the notion of listening to child's voice, it is important to consider the relationship between the concepts of voice and listening and the links to the relationship between categories of voice discussed above. These different types of voice (*authoritative, critical, therapeutic and pedagogical)* are viewed by people in different ways. To some, 'voice' is merely an expression of thought. To others, it is an act of meaningful participation and it is through participation where child engages with institutions (school), structures (policies and curricula, classroom pedagogies) and communities (families, friends, school communities) that this act of participation may shape his/her life. Through these different types of voice, specific meanings, specific arguments and issues around voice need to be unravelled. It is important to be aware of the issues that arise, specifically when listening to child's voice. Messiou (2006) suggests that child's voice needs to be acknowledged as an expression of being inclusive rather than just as an approach to understanding and developing practices to include child's voice.

The primary role of listening to child's voice is to attempt to facilitate a kind of listening that, specifically in my role as a learning support specialist, leads to a powerful exchange with children. Unfortunately, in many instances, child's expression of voice is absent from issues and decisions that affect their experiences at school. The voices of children that I have previously worked with are often not heard in the sense that I, as adult, ignore the 'therapeutic and authorative' voice of the child. If there was an acknowledgement of voice I often did not often take it seriously, nor did the other adults

involved in decision-making process. In retrospect, I realise that often I spoke with an authoritative or pedagogic voice that did not listen to child, or I merely downplayed the seriousness of their contributions because of my own professional judgment, or in some cases, because of the system that abstracted the child from the process. I, as the social actor, was in many instances committing what Fricker (2007) would refer to as an epistemic injustice. Using my credibility as Learning Support Specialist (knower), I had wronged many of the children (hearers) I worked with, by undermining their capacities as knower. Furthermore, the parents and children assumed that I was in the position to provide the intervention needed to attain academic success or competence of the child.

Another challenge when listening to child is to balance the power between adult and child. Educationalists shouldn't ignore that these issues of power exist and that, in listening to child, these issues are exposed. It is also important to be mindful of the dangers of power relationships in which adults may exploit the information that children give to adult. Another complexity is the disengagement of adults and children, where adults come from a position of an adult world rather than a child's world.

To illustrate this positioning of the adult-child relationship, Fricker refers to power as discussed earlier as 'identity power'. She develops this further by making a distinction between power that can operate 'actively' and 'passively' (Fricker, 2007, p. 9). Relating this to the challenges of listening to child, active power would prevail when the adult (educator) uses power to reward a child with a sticker or punish a child by hitting. Passive power is the belief that, because I am adult (educator) in a school, my position has institutional force. I may not reward or punish; however, the mere fact that I can punish or reward will have an influence on the way in which child behaves and responds.

In sum, relationships are multifaceted. They can take many forms in terms of an action, reflection, a better understanding, disengagement, or the moral aspects of such an encounter. Coupled with this are the strong links mentioned in this research between how we conceptualize childhood and how we view ourselves [adult]. When interacting with child, different views regarding the relationship between adult and child are shaped by the way in which we conceptualise childhood.

5.6 Developing a culture of Listening

Recent research conducted by Clark (2004, 2007) and Moss (Clark & Moss, 2001) has referred to the principles behind the pedagogy of listening to child's voice. Their writing advocates that there needs to be a respectful culture of listening between adults and children, when consulting with children on matters of research. Furthermore, listening is vital for practitioners and adults who work with children, as researchers argue that this develops opportunities for decision-making by both adult and children. Listening is defined as the "active process of communication involving hearing, interpreting and constructing meanings; not limited to the spoken word; and a necessary stage in participation in a) a daily routine, as well as b) wider decision –making" (Clark & Moss, 2005, p. 491). This resonates with the notion of including child's voice, as it challenges previous dominant approaches that see child as passive recipients in their own learning and development. It would be naïve to suggest that listening to child's voice is not problematic. There are a number of complex issues that still provide spaces for debate. Research on child and childhood, as previously argued, is embedded in different perceptions and social and cultural practices that differ across different research domains. Educational institutions develop policies and practices based on adult's voice rather than child's voice.

A dominant force that hampers child's voice in terms of decision-making and policy development is the assumption that child is not competent enough to have a say in decisions about their schooling and learning. If listening to child is an acknowledgement of child being capable of expression of his/her own, I agree with Hallet and Prout (2003) that hearing child's voice is crucial in all institutions at all levels of society. It is these encounters between adult and child that enable child to express a voice and, with this in mind, policies and procedures can be redesigned and formulated. Adult is therefore 'entering' child's world, rather than fitting child into adult's world. Kennedy (2006b) suggests that if children do know the world differently from adults, then the notion of child's voice is often marginalised and excluded from adult voice. He argues that adults need to enquire about what it is like to be children as they (adults) were once children who experienced childhood. This argument suggests an investigation of similarities and differences between "the ways children and adults know the world" (Kennedy, 2006b). Simms (2008) would agree with Kennedy as she claims that even though

we (adults) are surrounded by children, we are not always able to enter child's world. Her argument rests on the premise that adults view the world via a mature perspective and that adults tend to rationalise about child. She questions how much an adult can actually experience what is means to be the child in the world.

This polarising of the concepts adult and child leads to the assumption that hearing child's voice is often not authentic. Many concerns are raised when unpacking the notion of authenticity. Are researchers and practitioners able to know child's perspectives and experiences fully? The critique directed at developmental psychology is that it sees child as a becoming and not a being. This raises issues of whether a child can express self-agency in matters concerning his/her experiences and choices. Haynes (2009) grapples with this notion when she mentions that, as a practitioner, she began to question her own practise of listening to child's voice in an open and respectful manner, rather than making assumptions about what child is going to say. Adult participation with child is affected by his/her own childhood experiences, by his/her constructions of child and childhood, and whether child is recognized as having power and agency.

5.7 The Complexities of child's voice in education

As discussed previously, I referred to Thomson's discussion of research on voice, conducted by Arnot and Reay (2007) and Hadfield and Haw (2001). They also suggest that voice is a critical component when interacting with child. They highlight the complexity involved in hearing child's voice and situate these complexities within differences in social contexts and the responses of child to adult when communicating. Furthermore, as argued throughout this research report, the responses of adult when listening to child are often determined by how adult conceptualises child. It is through the lenses of the different conceptions and diverse cultural backgrounds that adult may base his/her assumptions as to which aspects of child's voice can be included or acknowledged. Moreover, if there is a need to view child's voice as a critical component of an educational context, then with this comes the difficulty of ascertaining whether child's voice is genuine or merely represented by adult. Child's responses are limited by adult's intimidation or child may feel obliged to answer what adult wants. Therefore including voice of child is not an easy task. Thomson (2008) suggests that a particular voice is shaped

by responses to specific situations, periods, and questions. This highlights the complexities involved in including child's voice.

A number of assumptions regarding the worth of child's voice are central to the argument Hadfield and Haw (2001) present. They alert professionals to examine these assumptions when working with young voices. Firstly, they argue that the way in which child is conceptualised by society has a major impact on how voices are acknowledged. The assumption that child is best able to talk about their experiences of being child, may be viewed through different lenses by adult. From a developmental position, child may be viewed as 'immature' and therefore not able to express a view or opinion because of a lack of cognitive ability. Professionals and educators working from a developmental paradigm may thus ignore child's voice, as the assumption is that child is too young to form an opinion or to express a view. This has wide-ranging consequences for including child's voice in a classroom context. Hadfield and Haw (2001) suggest that the extreme of this view is that a tension arises between recognising that young people have a voice, as well as viewing them as lacking experience or maturity. This relates to the previous chapters which discussed conceptions of childhood and capabilities of child. Once again, there is a power struggle between adult and child; adult may listen to voice, but to what extent does adult then take cognisance of child's voice and take action when listening to child's views? Researchers such as Bain (2010), Clark (2007) and Lewis (2007) question the extent to which child's voice is critically included in and whether child has the opportunity to voice their own perspectives.

Another assumption, drawing on Hadfield and Haw (2001) is the problematisation of meaning. These authors discuss adult's assumptions that if child voices their views it is seen as something worthwhile to child and through this voicing of views child will learn from what they are saying. Hadfield and Haw (2001) link this argument to the notion that professionals influence child's voice by engaging with child and expecting child to respond to what they (adult) want or expect to hear. They challenge the assumption that child needs guidance or help from adult to find his/her voice because adult fails to recognise that child is already able to express him/herself. An important argument raised by Hadfield and Haw is that "research and policy development tends to fall back on those who are verbally articulate and self-confident" (Hadfield & Haw, 2001, p. 494). This has huge consequences for child

who is not articulate and who is therefore excluded from voicing an opinion or labelled as not competent.

Expanding on the above assumptions, there is literature for example Lewis (2007), Lundy (2007) and Moss (2006) that has suggested that professionals are often distanced from young voices. In the research field, researching child and listening to child's voice may be for a limited period or may provide little opportunity for expression of voice. Once again, there is a strong argument that the adult voice dominates and a critique lies with the fact that child may not know who the audience for his/her voice is. Hadfield and Haw (2001, p. 488) claim that, in practice, when listening to child's voice, there is no kind of voice "most likely to get a reaction". They claim that researchers and educators tend to concentrate on the practicalities of hearing voice rather than concentrating on the moral issues, such as undervaluing child's views. It is thus crucial that researchers and practitioners take heed of the importance of interactions with children, carefully considering these interactions so that child's voice acknowledged. They envisage complexities with how child's voice is framed within existing structures in educational contexts "by what and how they are asked" (Hadfield & Haw, 2001, p. 488). This may, in fact, marginalise child and possibly impacting on the effect child's voice may have on policies and matters where he/she has a right to be heard.

A strong argument linking to the assumptions already noted is Hadfield and Haw's critique of the many research projects that have sprung up in recent years to attempt to get the voices of young children heard. Their concern is that, although there have been research endeavours using different methodologies and ideas for working with child and specifically, reaching out to child who has been previously excluded, they argue that none of these endeavours has been able to change policy or wider social issues. There is still an absence of child's voice making a difference to policies or curricula and they appeal to professionals working with child to question why these endeavours have failed to have an impact. A plausible claim is that there is a tension between participation and representation (Hadfield & Haw, 2001). I find it equally disturbing that often child's voice may be represented, but this voice is diluted through the structures and systems that are created by the dominant voice of adult.

There is a need to think beyond these dualisms of adult and child that excludes voice of child. My focus has been to argue that including child's voice is an important aspect for education as these voices may influence the way in which educators and researchers view child and acknowledge child's capabilities. It is important too, to be mindful of the difficulties and challenges involved in including child's voice. Questions are raised as to how adult listens to voice. Is there legitimacy and acknowledgement or do adults acknowledge a voice but undervalue its significance in the process? As an educator I would suggest that a way of including child's voice could lie in the arguments tabled by proponents of the P4C/PwC movement. Using P4C/PwC as a vehicle for moving towards striking a balance between representation and participation, is the claim made by Vansiegeleghem & Kennedy (2011, p. 177) that philosophy can be used as a means of developing child in terms of acknowledging that he/she has a potential of power. In this regard, philosophy aims to "neutralise unequal power relations" and strengthens child through a process of communication and cooperation. The unpacking of the concept voice is essential in exploring how child's voice ought to be heard or how and why it should be included is absent from educational contexts. It is also important to consider that it is through an individual's multiple voices, that a child's voice is considered as a valuable component in reshaping policies and practice. Thus, neutralising unequal power relations may link to Cook & Cook's (2009), John's (2003) and Kennedy's (2006b) notions that adult/ child relationships need to be questioned in terms of child's position in schools and the wider society.

In sum, voice is often silenced by forces which dominate the reshaping of policies and practice. These dominant power relationships of adult and child, gender, disability, culture and race can have a lasting impact on silencing voice. There is a strong call for professionals working with children to challenge the criticisms involved in including child's voice and to question assumptions of how we think about child, as well as how we work with child in terms of the contributions he/she can make to educational policies and on decisions affecting his/her life.

5.8 Rights and Policies pertaining to Child's Voice

There is a need to be more critical of the way that the rights of child are framed in decision-making. There are two important, competing ideologies of how we understand the meaning of rights of child. The first ideology focuses on rights as an exercising of power. Written from a legal perspective, this situates the rights of a child according to the legislation and to the rights of the child in the context of inclusion or exclusion from school. The competing ideology is the rights of parental-authority which argues that parents or guardians hold power over children, in terms of protection. These two ideologies set up a debate between protection-based rights, which encompass viewing child from deficit position (vulnerable, weak) in need of adult power and authority, and viewing child from an autonomous rights position (recognition of personhood).

Both ideologies have an impact on child, and advocates of children's rights have acknowledged the need for changes in perceptions of how these rights are executed. This invites a critical perspective, specifically when referring to the notion of child's voice. Lundy (2007) provides a children's rights critique on the concept of child's voice, arguing that Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, UN, 1989) recognises that child is a full human being who has the right to participate freely in society. However she suggests that there is a gap between what is enshrined in the article as legally binding and what is interpreted in practice. Lundy (2007) develops this critique by claiming that Article 12 is controversial, as it has been misunderstood, in terms of hearing child's voice. Her research has attempted to highlight the controversial underpinnings in the phrasing of [23]Article 12 "right to be heard, right to be consulted and right to participate" (UN, 1989).

[23] Article 12 United Nations Conventions of the Rights of the Child (UN, 1989)
1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.

While Children's rights are widely recognised as being important in reconceptualising childhood, children's rights cannot be viewed as a universal construct, as its meanings are constantly changing across different cultures and discourses. (This argument will be developed in chapter 6). If a universal stance is taken by educationalists and researchers, then child becomes an object viewed through adult perceptions. Lundy (2007)[24] argues that this voice is dependent on the ability to form a view, whether this is 'mature' or not. This notion will be developed in the next chapter, where a link is made to the United National Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Archard (2010) would agree that there is a need to acknowledge a child's emerging capacity when listening to voice. He suggests that focussing on child's emerging competencies, rather than viewing child through the definitions of maturity or immaturity, is just. Furthermore, decisions based on this developmental bias would be unfair and unjust when adults make decisions dependent on age and maturity of child. Matthews terms this "evolutionary bias" (Matthews, 1996b, p. 17) and suggests that, children are "fresh and innovative thinkers," thus questioning adult's biased view that because child is a product of fixed developmental growth, maturity will only develop when the child reaches his/her teens.

5.9 Obstacles to hearing child's voice

Hearing child's voice is not without risks. Research undertaken by Cannella and Viruru (2006) suggest that "when voice is conferred upon the other without recognizing or attempting to alter the inequalities that created the original distinctions, the giving of voice or listening to, just becomes another colonizing apparatus" (cited in Moss, 2006, p. 28). Burman's work on developmentalism draws on an interesting parallel with Cannella and Viruru's notion of altering inequalities, where issues of power and inequality can undermine how adult views child as competent or qualifying in terms of

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2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

[24] Lundy carried out a research project on behalf of the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People. Her research findings reflect that the most important issue raised by the children she interviewed in Northern Ireland, was that children expressed that not having a say in decisions was problematic. The conclusions reached were that children's views were not sought or listened …. They were afforded only minimalist tokenistic opportunities to participate and engage with adults (Lundy, 2007 p.929)

meeting standards. Another risk that Moss (2006) and Lundy (2007) refer to is the issue of tokenism: they caution that often listening can become a reinforcer of power, rather than a resisting of power. A danger that also arises is that listening can become a regulator of behaviour by which adult can control child more effectively because child can listen to what adult says.

Moss (2006) claims that perspectives of children need to be accounted for when adults engage in listening. He regards this process as a way of being. He argues that children have a right to be listened to, and the right for child to be heard is only one basis to justify the importance of listening. He claims that in order to listen, there needs to be a culture of listening that extends beyond working environments. It should, however, infiltrate all aspects of living.

In his work in childhood development, Moss introduces the argument that there are tools and procedures involved in listening to others. However, important as these are, there needs to be an exploration of the following questions; "As a culture, as a society, do we want to listen to one another? Do we want to conduct democratic relationships?" (Moss, 2006, p. 30). He draws on the work of Ole Langsted, a Danish researcher whose definition of listening prompted him to question the influence adults hold over children "More important [than structures and tools] is a cultural climate that shapes the ideas that adults in a particular society hold about children. "The wish to listen to and involve children originates in this cultural climate" (Moss, 2006, p. 30).

Issues raised as to the inclusion of child's voice have been highlighted by Schiller and Einarsdottir (2009, p. 127), who question "whether the pendulum had swung too far with children's voices seen as the most important factor". This was raised in the context of doing research with children. However, I take this argument into other contexts, where child's voice ought to be heard. Another strong critique lies with the assumption that perhaps adults are asking too much of child, in research contexts, rather than addressing what it means to be child.

Mannion (2007) suggests that in order to acknowledge child's voice, participation needs to be re-framed as primarily about adult-child relations. Similarly, Burman suggests that the notions of space and time that children live in need to be taken into consideration. Herein lies the argument that there is a tension between the ways in which the adult-child dichotomy is conceptualised where adult is

dominant. As adult continues to view child through a dominant Western philosophical lens, (chapter four) acknowledgment of child's voice will continue to remain undervalued. If childhood continues to be identified by an essentialist view held by many, then notions of space and time will continue to be viewed as irrelevant. Questions need to be asked as to how childhood has changed over time and how these changes have affected the experiences of child. Taking experiences of children into account may threaten the childhood experience that adults have had. Consequently, adults may wish to defend this childhood they have come to know. In this regard, the adult may fear that by taking the child's experiences of his/her world into account may dismantle the power relationship between adult and child.

5.10 Conclusion

This chapter argued that the notion of child's voice reproduces power relations and the binary distinction between adult and child. These binary distinctions assume a power relationship where one term is privileged and this is usually adult. I have argued that the relationship between educator and child often reinforces the normative or conventional constructions we hold about child and childhood. The growing debate concerning including child's voice extends to developing a culture of listening and engagement with adult and child. Advocates of child's voice, arguing from a rights perspective, (which was touched on in this chapter and which will be explored further in the next) interrogate the power relations between adult and child and the idea that adult has a natural right to exert power over children.

Chapter Six

Child's Rights

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, children's rights were introduced in relation to the concept of giving child a voice. This chapter will build on the ideas previously discussed and offer a broader view of the complexities involved in acknowledging the rights of children. The concept 'rights' is difficult to define (Alderson, 2000). There are many different and conflicting understandings about what constitutes children's rights. Alderson (2000, p. 13) claims "the concept of children's rights is a slogan in search of a definition". Indeed, the rights discourse in general has been challenged, as well as the idea of children's rights. Debates continue to be held as to whether different nations view children's rights differently based on their established conceptions of child, and many critics have argued that rights can be misleading in matters concerning children. The on-going debates and the establishment of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)[25] have prompted questions about the concept of children's rights and their meaning in theory and educational practice (UNCRC, 1989).

Researchers and practitioners with an interest in childhood have continued to problematize the interpretation of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child and its implementation on a global level. For the purpose of this research I will focus on its implementation in educational contexts.

A central debate surrounding rights emerges when considering whether children should have rights and whose obligation it is to meet those rights. To promote rights effectively requires practitioners to move beyond the theoretical underpinnings and recognise that children are entitled to participate in education. Yet, in many real instances, children have no real role to play in educational decisions concerning them.

6.2 Background

[25] I will use the acronym UNCRC throughout the chapter to refer to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. In 1990 these rights were entered into International Law. The Convention is a broad internationally binding agreement of the rights of children. It contains 54 Articles outlining children's rights in terms of civil and political rights, social, economic, and cultural rights, and the protection rights. The Convention, defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. The Convention contains four sections namely:

- the Preamble: the major underlying principles are contextualised in this section
- the Substantive articles: (Part I Articles 1-41). These Articles define the obligations of governments with regard to children's rights
- the Implementation of provisions (Part II Articles 42-45) defines how compliance with the UNCRC is to be monitored and fostered
- the conditions under which the UNCRC comes into force (Part III, Articles 46-54) United Nations Organisation (1989).

The Convention affords children a number of rights, but central to this research report are: Article 3, the right to have their [the child's] "best interests" to be a "primary consideration" in all actions concerning them; Article 6, "the inherent right to life"; and Article 12, the right of a "child who is capable of forming his or her own views… to express these views freely in all matters affecting the child" (UNCRC, 1989). The Convention pledges to uphold the view that child is an independent bearer of rights and undertakes that children will be given a more active role in decision-making processes. It calls upon states to provide opportunities for youth to participate in the public sphere.

6.3 Children's Rights Discourse: Participation and Voice

6.3.1 Traditional View

Mary John's work (2003) on *Children's Rights and Power*, critiques the domain of developmental psychology as being related to "an epistemological framework". She describes this as the "cult of the expert, emphasizing that psychological procedures distance the subject matter under investigation"

(John, 2003, p. 59). It is at this junction that a need arises to deepen our understandings of what rights mean and to examine critically how they ought to be afforded. John (2003) critiques the historical conceptualization of children's rights as distancing child from a rights discourse. She suggests that a rights discourse ought to give agency to child rather than distance child from his/her rights. The notion of a discourse of children's rights has thus become a central component of the rights discourse, and this has raised awareness and debate, specifically relating to how we conceptualise child. Lundy (2007) and Moss (2006) argue that the rights discourse of the past few decades, and specifically in the twentieth century, focused on rules and legislation made about children, exclusively in terms of their interests, through the lens of the adult. There was an unarticulated and sometimes explicit understanding that children were subordinate to adults and, consequently, the focus was on legal rules pertaining to children's lives, in particular pertaining to children's rights.

Moving, into the 21st century the rights discourse has changed with a number of advocates, such as John (2003) and Archard (2010) who have proposed that there is a need to examine children's rights from a democratic perspective. This perspective views child in terms of adult acknowledging that child has autonomy and agency to recognize and realize that they have rights. More importantly in this view, child experiences power, rather than being viewed as a powerless minority under the control of adult. John suggests that "Children's rights and power in the 21st century's focus should embrace their aspirations, dreams and untrammelled imaginations, not their needs and deficits" (John, 2003, p. 49). This quote recognizes child as a person with rights and with the power to make decisions; this is in direct contrast to the view of child in the traditional schooling system, which is based on developmental theories and perpetuates deficit models of practice (as discussed in Chapter 3).

6.3.2 Liberal View

In light of the above, as a liberal discourse, children's rights are often framed with an awareness that child is a future adult, adult being the source of legitimacy. Thus, a rights discourse articulates and subscribes to the recognition that children are future adults, and therefore, citizens in the making. John, (2003, p. 17) would question this notion that suggests that children's rights are enshrined as being legitimate, only because they serve the purpose of [children] on the path towards adulthood.

Her work interrogates whether there is a "contemporary crisis in childhood or whether an acknowledgement of children as powerful individuals has precipitated a crisis in power relationships in a contemporary world". John (2003) draws attention to the need to re-examine children's rights in relation to a new body of thought, which centres the argument on the nature of power and presents child with new challenges for recognizing and realising his/her own agency and autonomy. Roche (1999) advocated that children are taking responsibilities in a range of contexts. However, he argues, similarly to John (2003), that they are often rendered silent and invisible through attitudes and practices of adult society.

Research undertaken by Ennew (1995) suggests that "modern childhood constructs the child *out* of the society, mutes their voices, denies their personhood and limits their potential" (Ennew, 1995, p. 25). I find this argument crucial to my research focus, as adult has in fact constructed child who does not have any power to be heard. The argument reinforces the assumption that adult needs to protect child in a world that is often a dangerous place for children. Child is therefore a vulnerable being who needs the protection of adult to navigate through this dangerous territory. Child is thus seen as powerless and unable to control or exercise power. Adult therefore constructs child through problematising discourses such as dysfunction and deficit, (which has been covered in the section on developmental psychology). This is also expressed in children's rights discourse, especially in the early evolution of children's rights, which focussed on protection, and viewed child according to adult bias. The UNCRC heralded a new paradigm in shaping rights that encouraged adult to move beyond scientific objectivity and rigid notions, and to move towards more innovative and relevant policy making with regards to acknowledgment of children's rights.

From a children's rights perspective, the value of acknowledging child as a person with power and agency is crucial to how we conceptualise childhood. On many levels- social, emotional, economic, political and historical- and throughout this research a common thread is drawn that child is often situated as powerless, marginalized, abstracted and silenced from debates.

Policies and Conventions (UNCRC, 1989; EWP6, 2001) suggest child should be included. However, in many instances there is a practice of exclusion of child's voice rather than inclusion, when matters of

legal and moral rights of child are often ignored or decided upon by adults who believe they are acting in the best interests of child. Child's voice is often excluded from the public world such as school and legal institutions in the name of protection or welfare of child. Feminist writers suggest that this is due to the structure of families which are dominated by males. They develop this argument further, stating that the subservient status of child is linked historically to that of women's status in society. As women were regarded as subservient, children too, were not afforded rights or equal status in society.

On the other hand, Coles, cited in Roche, (1999) argues that the moral and reasoning capacities of children are as sophisticated as those of many adults. Roche, (1999) argues that if modern society views child as not separate from adult based on cognitive ability, then on what basis do we deny children participation in the communities to which they belong? He suggests that in order to justify practices regarding child, an interrogation of the practices that exclude child from rights to participation needs to be on the agenda for rigorous debate. There needs to be a shift from traditional notions of how we deal with children in terms of rights "which are predicated on a denial of their intelligence and agency" (Roche, 1999, p. 482).

This call to acknowledge the rights of the child is made through an examination of literature, and through the evidence on the absence of acknowledgement of children's rights, in terms of the focus on voice, and situating this voice in school contexts. It provides a basis on which to examine assumptions as to how child is conceptualised, and provides arguments as to why including child's voice is crucial to policy-making and matters that have a direct influence on children's lives.

6.4 Philosophical Underpinnings of Children's Rights

Philosophers have continued to debate whether children should have rights at all and if so, what the nature and value of such rights is and how these rights intertwine with the moral status of children. The reason for this criticism is in the formation of rights, as in some instances rights drawn up by the United Nations Convention are legislated, whereas others are underpinned by moral theory.

Discussions of child's rights underpin debates around the autonomy of children. The issue of autonomy is referred to in Archard's discussion of two contrasting schools of thought that emerge, namely, child liberationist and liberal caretaking theories (Archard, 2010). From a child liberationist perspective, a stance is taken that a child should hold the same rights as adults. Supporters of this theory claim that the separating of child and adult is not a natural phenomenon, but it is formed by historical, social, and cultural factors. This notion would support the claim made by Aries (1960) that there was no conception of child during the Middle Ages (as discussed in Chapter2). It would seem that in the current educational landscape, questions are still raised as to whether child should have the same rights as adults(akin to liberationists), or whether child needs protection and guidance from adult when making decisions regarding matters that affect him/her (akin to liberal caretaking theorists).

6.4.1 Child Liberationist Views

Child Liberationists argue that basing conceptions of childhood on the assumption that it is socially constructed, categorizes or makes distinctions between adult and child, and suggests that it is child liberationist views child as capable of possessing two types of rights (Holt cited in Archard, 2010). The first type of right are those of protection "which guarantee[s] children certain forms of treatment, for instance, a minimum standard of health care, education and freedom from violence and cruelty" (Archard, 2010, p. 47; Article 3 UNCRC, 1989). Secondly, liberationists argue that it is important to afford children rights to make choices. They advocate that rights provide children with agency. However, this is rejected by rights advocates (akin to the Liberalist Caretaking theory) who suggest that children cannot be afforded the same rights as adult, as child is vulnerable and incapable of making choices or informed decisions without adult intervention. The liberalist ideology believes that giving children rights and agency and acknowledging their interests will lead to a society where the voice of child is represented. However, this ideology is open to critique.

The Liberalist Caretaking theorists reject the Liberalist view of children's rights which claims that child is in no position to make rational decisions in matters pertaining to his/her needs or choices. Added to this is the strong argument that one cannot grant the same rights afforded to adult to child, because child does not possess the ability to make such decisions. This paternalistic notion suggests that there

is a need for adult to be a caretaker as it is adult who possesses the cognitive capacities and he/she is thus able to guide the action and decisions of child. Adults are constructed as the deliverers of rational thought and sound judgement. Adults are in a position to know the child, and their interests and needs well and it is under their care then, that they are able to act on behalf of child. Archard (2010) claims that in this perspective, adults thus secure the conditions to enable protection of child, therefore child is viewed as possessing no self-agency.

6.4.2 Child Liberationist and Liberal Caretaking Theories: the debate

The complexity of these two arguments is more compelling when reviewed these theories through the lens of an educational context, in which it is important to consider areas where there is a strong need to encourage participation of child and to hear child's voice. Liberal caretakers will be of the opinion that children cannot make these decisions, as they are still developing the cognitive capabilities and rational thinking that adults possess (akin to Piaget's theory of child development). They would argue that very young children would find it difficult to obey rules and regulations in a social context that is new to them and, as they get older, they may have a better understanding of the notion of these rules and regulations. Liberal caretakers would still hold the conviction that it is only through adult guidance and engagement in dialogue with adult, that children will be able to make responsible decisions.

Child caretaking theorists do not consider avenues within the school context where there may already be opportunities for participation and hearing voice. In some instances, children may be part of the decision-making process concerning school rules or codes of conduct. Other areas where they may be represented is on school committees or they may be called upon to make decisions about issues such as uniforms or other areas where a school may be thinking of making changes.

In some areas, such as curriculum development and policy- making procedures, there is no space for including child's voice or participation. This is due to various constraints, one being that in many instances curricula and policies are drawn up by the dominant adults in positions of power and, in many instances, these policies and curricula are underpinned by political ideologies, as noted in the research, undertaken by Bickmore, (2001) and Howe & Covell, (2000) in various school contexts. The

recommendations from this research suggested that schools need to re-evaluate the hierarchical systems in place and focus on areas within the system that would enrich children's participation. In this example there are constraints that hamper participation and voice. Some policies and Conventions (EWP6, 2001; UNCRC, 1989) may suggest there is a need to listen to child's voice. However, in implementation there may not be follow-through. A child caretaking theory does not suggest that children should be given complete autonomy (as a liberationist will claim) as there is a belief that because children move through developmental stages which separate them from adult, they need adult protection because child is vulnerable and not yet competent to make decisions without guidance. The liberationist theory moves this to the extreme, where it advocates absolute autonomy with regard to allowing children freedom to make decisions and to share the same rights as adults. A liberationist theory would serve no function in a school context where there is domination by adult with regard to systems, rules, policies, and procedures.

There are 'cracks in the concepts' of both these theories. The liberationist theory suggests that child has equal rights to adults and this may pose problems concerning rights pertaining to adults. Another argument is that in order to protect child, adults may need to intervene or set boundaries around child's participation.

In light of the two opposing theories, it is difficult to decide as to which theory holds more value as a tool to enable children to exercise rights. A child liberationist would argue that children need to free themselves from the traditional conceptions of childhood. Through this liberationist movement it is believed that children need not only protection and welfare rights, but they should be afforded rights to self-agency. I agree with the liberationist perspective in terms of recognising that there is a move to shift beyond traditional conceptions of childhood that tend to view child as incapable of making decisions. "In essence, child liberationists sought to overturn the dominant ideology that equated children with incompetence and helplessness in order to help them realise their full potential and become more independent at an earlier stage in life." (Jonny, 2006, p.7)

Although the child liberationist argument has been considered and debated within scholarship it has been less successful in its implementation into practice in school contexts. There are still attitudes of

adults in schools that do not acknowledge that child is a rational decision maker. This conception of child as not being able to think rationally has excluded many children from decision-making or representation in matters that affect them in school. Schools continue to operate by means of traditional and authoritative structures. An area still in need of debate is the urgent call to examine the assumptions and conceptualization of child and his/her position in school contexts. Moreover, many schools are still functioning as the dominant role- players in shaping what they deem is in the best interests of children which from a rights advocate perspective is unjust. The UNCRC (1989) needs to be foregrounded as part of policy and curriculum development, to provide opportunities for the expression of child's voice and to create more opportunities to develop children's self-agency.

To develop this argument further O'Neill (1998) argues that there is a need to think about the moral obligations that adults owe to children. She draws the distinction between the perfect obligations, which specify that the rights given to all children or some specified set of children, and the moral obligations that adults hold with regard to upholding these rights. Rights suggest that it is the obligation or duty of parents or educators to care for child and not abuse him/her in any way. The argument raised by O'Neill is that in this regard all adults ought to acknowledge children's rights. However, these rights are not owed to all children, as they will depend on the child's circumstances. Perfect obligations are those that one person may demand of another; in this context, adult may demand child behave in such a way, or regard child as not being capable of understanding rights. In contrast to this, she discusses the notion of imperfect obligations, which she claims do not relate to children's rights. Her argument expresses scepticism about the moral reasoning adults make in terms or their relationship to child. Imperfect obligations are obligations that go beyond duty, as they oblige adult to exceed perfect obligations. In terms of child's voice, a duty or perfect obligation would be to include a child's opinions and views in matters that may affect that child in terms of his/her schooling. But clearly, as individuals, we cannot assume that child's voice is heard in all institutions by all stakeholders involved.

Moreover, what adult ought to do, in cases of acknowledging child's voice, may depend on circumstances, and also what is put in place by the particular institution and the laws, policies and

procedures upheld by the institution to acknowledge child's voice. It is apparent that the practice of speaking with children and listening to their voices is not widespread in educational contexts.

In recent years there has been strong opposition to child caretaking and liberationist theories by advocates of children's rights such as John (2003) and Archard (2010). A vast array of literature has suggested that there is a strong justification for providing child with opportunities which may influence important decisions about plans or actions. Modern conceptions of child regard them as citizens who have power and agency to safeguard their worlds and futures.

A summary of these two theories bring issues to the surface which need careful consideration. Excluding child from the process of decision-making, even at a young age, may deny any insights from child that adults may previously have ignored. Decision-making can be representational as adult may listen to child however, not take these matters into consideration when deciding on what is best for child in a situation (akin to Kate where I as adult made the decisions as regard to her intervention). Participation can thus include representation and decision-making, if child is given an opportunity to be heard and participate in decision-making then child's rights will be acknowledged. Adults, especially in school contexts should exercise the notion of deciding to what extent participation can occur and what opportunities can be provided to permit children to contribute, depending on their capabilities.

Globally, there has been a strong acknowledgement that children should contribute to the world they inhabit (James & Prout, 1997; Jenks, 2010; Hart, 1991; Haynes, 2009; Stabels, 2008; Vansieleghem & Kennedy, 2011). With the drawing up of international agreements, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, the move towards giving child voice and participation in matters that affect them has transformed the way in which schools practice. However, as will be discussed below, the UNCRC (1989) has met with criticism. The USA and Somalia are the only non-signatories of this Convention.

6.5 Rights and Schools

The UNCRC (1989) specifies social, cultural, economic and political rights. The Convention states that parents and other legal guardians, including the State, should meet the social and economic needs of

the child. However, the shift in positioning child's rights has come in the articles that provide child with the right to age-appropriate participation. This turning point recognises that child can possesses rational thought to make judgements and allows for some autonomy as to how child can participate in decision- making processes. In this respect, there is a link to the liberationist view, as it promotes the political role of child. Even though there are liberationist foundations in the UNCRC, such as Article 3[26], which discusses the consideration of best interests of child, adult still restrict child's rights. The best interest principle has been tabled in many debates as a critique that adults still hold power over child when, deciding upon what is in the best interests of the child. This raises a strong argument for adult interference over child autonomy. Researchers such as Covell and Howe (2007) have noted "there is good reason to believe from the wording of the articles of the Convention, and from documents and debates leading up to the Convention, that the framers intended participation as an integral part of the best interests' principle" (Covell and Howe, 2007 p.112). The Convention thus acknowledges that child has a voice with which to make choices and, more importantly, to be able to voice concerns in matters affecting them.

Research conducted by Alderson (2000) draws on opinions of conservative groups who claim that, despite the international ratification of the Convention, the participatory principle threatens the rights of adults because it is dangerous to acknowledge for child should be recognised as having too much autonomy. This is the main argument for the USA not becoming a signatory. It also influences the argument I have put forward strongly in this research, where child does not always have full participation of rights in institutions, such as schools, as educational policies and practices do not always reflect the statements made in the various articles that make up the (UNCRC,1989).

[26] Article 3 (UNCRC, 1990, p.1) www.2.ohchr.org

1. In all actions concerning children whether undertaken by public, or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his/her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other persons legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.
3. States parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform to all standards established by competent authorities, particularly in areas of safety, health, in the n umber and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

Schools are, in a sense, government institutions (private schools have to follow legislated Acts; for example, (The South African Schools Actn84 of 1996). South Africa is a signatory of the Convention and therefore ought to be developing policy and curricula based on these international principles. Raising questions as to how to utilize the Convention of rights in institutions, especially schools, is important. Incorporating these rights into policies (such as the new CAPS documents recently implemented in the Foundation Phase 2012 and to be implemented into the intermediate and senior phases in 2013) should be a priority of policy-makers, curriculum developers, and schools. Although, the UNCRC (1989) is acknowledged, it is not always legally binding. There is a strong argument from advocates to use the articles to inform educational policies and practices (Johnny, 2006; Lewis, 2007; Lundy, 2007; Mannion, 2007; Morrow, 1999; Moss, 2006).

In summary, it is important for schools to be aware that child possesses rights, especially concerning matters that affect them. The transformation in the South African schooling system since 1994 should be at the forefront of policies and practice. This transformation reflects a move from the segregation and marginalisation of children to a more democratically equitable system, underpinned by social justice and human rights that, legitimises the importance for children to be rights holders.

Policies, such as the White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: *Building an Inclusive Education and Training System* (DoE, 2001), have made efforts to uphold these rights within the documents and policies. However, schools and educational systems continue to perpetuate inequalities of the past system and to exclude rather than to include. The notion of including children's participatory rights in schools remains problematic and erratic. Researchers have highlighted that there are numerous challenges when implementing these UNCRC principles in practice. Howe & Covell,(2000) discuss the issues faced in schools when upholding participatory rights of children, especially in schools where rules and structures are dominated by adult decisions. Bickmore,(2001) draws on the issue of power relations in classrooms where children have no opportunities to express their views. Thus, a critical argument exists that if schools continue to operate according to hegemonic structures that produce rules and policies that are dominated by adult power, then the principles upheld in the UNCRC (1989) may not reach the intended goals of the Convention. How do schools develop practices that allow for meaningful participation? In doing so, how aware is child of his/her rights and responsibilities?

Pedagogies such as P4C and Critical pedagogies (footnote 22) where there are moves towards more democratic practices and where there is provision made to allow for child to voice opinions and share in decision-making concerning matters affecting their lives, need to be implemented.

Schools and stakeholders have to be accountable for upholding these rights and examine their own responsibilities in this regard. How do we integrate school practice and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child? These notions are too broad to discuss in this research report. I will be indicating this as an area to include in a further study.

Another important critique in the rights discourse points to the individual autonomy within many debates about children's rights, as the rights discourse has evolved with changing conceptions of childhood, whereby theories such as sociologies of childhood and philosophy of childhood are urging that child be viewed as an autonomous human being. The children's right movement has thus motivated for a propensity of individualisation. It is felt that individualisation would make society aware of children's worth rather than separating them as a marginalised group. This motivation is based on the premise that if child is viewed as an autonomous individual then more acknowledgement of child's capabilities will be executed in policies and practice.

The desirability of this motivation towards viewing child as autonomous has met with opposition. Writers such as Freeman (2007) and Aitken (2001) have warned of the potential risks involved if children's rights are based on autonomy and individualisation. Their arguments raise the issue that autonomy and participation rights may blur social conceptualisations of child. Morrow, (1999) argues that if rights are equated with individualism, a too-dichotomous representation of children's rights will be foregrounded, highlighting differences in children's cultural backgrounds.

Another criticism of individualistic rights is its link to universality. A universal notion of rights does not take different cultural beliefs into account, but assumes all children are equal. From a cultural relativist view, it would be seen that all cultures are of equal value and that conceptions of childhood would only make sense within the cultures to which they belong. An individualistic view grounds a person's rights in what it does for that person, independent of how rights serve or disserve the child's wider community and, in turn, this notion overlooks cultural diversity. Thus different people will hold

different biases which may be individualistically justified in that culture. Individualistic notions stifle child's exposure to the opinions and views of others. In terms of schooling, collaborative learning will be discouraged and individualistic goals such as competitiveness and social skills needed for interaction will not be viewed as central to learning.

The criticism that individualistic notions stifle child's exposure to the opinions and views of others has a profound effect upon inclusion of child's voice in matters that affect them. I suggest that one vehicle that could begin to expose child to different views and opinions is through a Philosophy for Kids(P4C) programme. The ethos of the P4C is based on Deweyian philosophical ideas that suggest education ought to be based on democracy autonomy, a rights capacity, and a willingness to engage with others. The collaborative ethos of doing philosophy with children is premised on an acknowledgement of rights and responsibility to engage with others in order for individuals (child) to grow. In this way, child realises that there must be mutual adaptation when working within a community of enquiry. In a community of enquiry child is encouraged to engage in dialogue, which often contains concepts that are philosophical in nature and linked to children's rights. Concepts such as human rights, respect, value, solidarity and inclusion are ideas that are often brought into the discussions based on the stimuli used in a community of enquiry. Throughout the process of engagement in a community of enquiry, issues are often discussed that lead child to engage with ideas, justifications and arguments for fostering citizenship and democratic values.

6.6 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have considered childhood and children's rights from an historical and philosophical perspective. I have presented an argument for child as active participant in society and for children's empowerment in the educational system. Who really does know what is best when it comes to the education of child? Liberationists claim that the autonomous child should have a say in matters with regard to their education. Protectionists argue that child is incompetent to make decisions and it is therefore up to the adult to make decisions. Children are often viewed through protectionist lenses, who argue that child needs protection as they develop the skills to become competent decision-makers learning to exercise sound judgement. Archard (2010) challenges this

protectionist notion claiming that it is often adults who are in a position to protect children who may, in fact, end up abusing them.

Pragmatists believe it is crucial to strike a balance between protection and self-determination when considering child's views Archard (2010). A pragmatist argument suggests that a balance should be created between liberationist and protectionist ideas. This view is supported by Hart (1991) who maintains that striking a balance between these two ideas recognises the protection needed for children, whilst at the same time allows for the acknowledgment of child's emerging knowledge.

The response to who knows what is best for the child is not the central issue. It rests more on the notion of giving a child a voice and considering the individual needs of the child. The ethical and legal implications of the concept of best interests of the child has become problematic, and many researchers have critiqued this concept as being vague and open to manipulation by adults who hold the power over decisions made with regard to child's best interests. Furthermore, if consultation with children disregards individuality, it may disempower and tokenise child, rather than respect or consider child's voice. Exclusion of child's voice in decision-making and participation may result in child feeling undervalued.

Providing children with opportunities to participate in decision-making, and encouraging their contributions will facilitate communication between adult and child, and allow child to be a participant in matters that affect him/her. Educators can become advocates in encouraging child's voice in educational contexts since they are in close contact with child on an everyday basis.

In conclusion, perceptions of the child as incompetent when it comes to matters that affect them need to be changed, especially in the domain of education. Children are not becomings or persons in the making that adults can treat how they like, but they are human beings with a voice. Adults need to respect children's views and facilitate the need for them to be given a right to express their voices. Through participation and consultation, a space is encouraged for child's voice to be heard without handing child the responsibility to make an autonomous decision, which they may not be ready to make. In respecting the notion that each child is an individual, with his/her own needs and voice,

adults need to collaborate and communicate to determine the individual child's competence, by listening to his/her views and respecting those views.

Thus, a rights-based framework shifts thinking in terms of moving away from the risk of essentialising childhood. A strong argument from advocates of children's rights is that a recognition and acknowledgement of a child's right to be heard may reflect the beginnings of a reconceptualization of childhood. The strongest critique has been the failure to interrogate the meaning of child and childhood. Rights, in many instances, still define the concept child as having universal meaning and still in a phase of developing. These universal accounts of development of child offer a plausible argument for acknowledging rights, but they also have limitations. They fail to consider the diversities of child's experiences, including ways in which child learns, communicate and understands his/her world. Cultural backgrounds and the diverse ways in which child is treated in different communities oppose the universal accounts of development. There is a need to look beyond these universal accounts that normalise child and childhood via a standardised notion of development.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion: Fragments of an endless conversation on childhood

7.1 Introduction

The title for my conclusion has been borrowed from the title of a paper penned by Kohan and Kennedy (2008). The reason for my choosing this title is that it describes the progression I have made and the challenges I have stumbled upon, whilst penning my own thoughts and arguments.

The title "Fragments of an endless conversation on childhood" epitomises my own trajectory as I was immersed in a topic that is so broad and which crosses over into so many domains. It was difficult, at times, to narrow down this "endless conversation on childhood" and the more I read, the more difficult it was to stay bounded in terms of my central focus: child's voice.

The concept “fragments” used in the paper’s title describes the number of ‘fragments’ I encountered in the scholarly literature, and the discomfort I experienced in deciding which fragments to discard and which ones to retain. At times, I was unable to discern which areas of childhood to include and where, in fact, I was heading with my research.

This endless conversation on childhood began to dominate this research report and, with some reservation, I had to make the decision to narrow the scope. I realise that I have only touched the surface of childhood, its complexities and its theoretical impact on education. I have also begun the conversation of including child’s voice in practice, and plan to take this into further research.

Unexpectedly, I was confronted with so much to read on childhood and child’s voice and was exposed to this multitude of different voices in my investigations of including child’s voice, that I was able, simply, to highlight the complexities involved in listening to child’s voice. In many instances policies, and school mission statements acknowledge that children have the right to express their ideas or concerns. However, many of these calls to include child’s voice are cosmetic or become tokenistic. Adult is still the knower, who in some instances dominates the inclusion of child’s voice. Once again, the argument is drawn to the ways in which we listen to child and how child is defined according to adult. Opportunities need to be fostered in order to listen to and to include child’s voice. This is the reason I argued that through pedagogical practices and programmes such as Philosophy for Children (P4C) spaces can be created through dialogue and democratic ideals that respect child as a citizen, able to negotiate and voice ideas and concerns. I have argued that there needs to be in a shift in power where adult’s role changes from that of the expert to the facilitator; however, this does not mean that adult does not play an important role - in fact, this role becomes crucial in order to empower child’s voice.

7.2 Adult-Child: Including Voice

The conceptual framework for empowering child’s voice suggested by Hadfield and Haw in Thomson, (2008) which defines voice as made of critical elements, namely, ‘authoritative ’, ‘critical’ ‘therapeutic’ and ‘pedagogic’ voice, allowed me to explore the concept of ‘voice’ in a much deeper way, as it opened

up another perspective on how we should relate to and engage with child. These different elements of voice allowed me draw on my own experiences in working with children and to examine critically how I positioned myself within this relationship. I acknowledge that much more work in terms of research would need to be done to determine how educators might consider child's multiple voices within a school context.

These voices with different slants and perspectives, made me take notice of the many unquestioned and contested notions of childhood. Moreover, it allowed me to examine the assumptions and problematic issues that are continually addressed in current literature and the growing number of different perspectives that have been published in this area. It also settled the discomfort I felt whilst writing, in the sense that I realised that the scope of my research was limited and I thus had to choose to map the relevant philosophies.

Returning to the paper which is structured as an interview between Kohan and Kennedy, they discuss the essence of questions such as "What is child?" and "What is childhood?" and I would not be able to sum up my trajectory without quoting Kohan's words.

Kohan in his discussion with Kennedy (2008, p. 10)[27] argues that "childhood might be, not just an activity of questioning but a specific kind of relationship to questions, that opens up the questioner to a movement that he or she cannot control or anticipate". He problematizes the distinction between adult-child, by suggesting that adult can be childlike in its exposure to questioning. I, as the questioner throughout this research, was positioned as the novice entering a domain that I could not always control or anticipate and it was in this experience, of ups and downs, reconstruction and revisions, that I gained so much as a researcher.

7.3 A summary of the arguments

A number of questions arose as I gathered my thoughts and arguments. I argued that developmental psychology has dominated current educational practice and claimed also, that as adults, we feel a

[27] The paper" Fragments of an endless conversation", is structured as a discussion between Walter Kohan and David Kennedy.

certain need to control or protect child as authorities or protectors. However, there are differences between adult and child. As adult, are we able to understand child's world? As adults we act, plan and negotiate a route through a child's life. Adults, too, were once children and in many instances still hold onto childhood memories and experiences. "Is childhood something we leave behind?" (Friquenon, 1997; Kennedy, 2000; Kohan, 1999). However, I have come to the realisation that even though childhood is a profound part of the human condition, it is largely unexamined or in many cases, taken for granted. If childhood is a biological fact, then why are there so many complexities and contradictions as one begins to think more deeply about its conceptions?

Developmental psychology and its notions of child development have been criticized widely for assumptions based on universal characteristics and stages of development. Nevertheless, these theories still remain dominant in our understandings of child development and the way in which we deal with child. This idea of fixed and rigid stages is questionable, as has been discussed in this research.

In schooling contexts and in areas of educator training, the emphasis on studies of childhood constitutes a normative discourse. Institutions such as universities, training educators, still accentuate studies of childhood based upon major theorists, such as Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, whose theories are infused in courses on childhood development and educational psychology. In this regard, child is viewed as a universal concept, standardised across the different discourses, whereas the study of child is far more complex. If there is a continued trend to work with child within this framework and conceptions of child remains uncontested, then there can be no opportunities created to listen to and include child's voice or rights, other than in a superficial or tokenistic manner.

The contradictions within theories of childhood have led me to challenge assumptions I held and I have shifted the way in which I view child. On the one hand, child is familiar and at the same time unknown. Incidents occur in which we as adults assume child to be just like us and similarly, we perceive them to be as living in a completely different world to adults.

Writers of childhood theories tend to write from which perspective informs their idea of what childhood is like, while psychologists tend to view child as limited, in that child knows less than adult.

Philosophers of childhood have argued that long before children can read or write they have extraordinary powers to engage in conversations that demand abstract thought and creativity. In a number of instances, as posited by writers in the domain of philosophy of childhood, child experiences the world in ways that are far more wide-ranging than adult. Through different scholarly lenses such as developmental psychology, these experiences may be viewed as being more limited yet concrete. As argued through the selected literature these ideas and conceptions we have of child spring up from hegemonic Western perspectives. Critiques from philosophers of childhood argue that this hegemony needs to be reconceptualised, and assumptions examined, in order to acknowledge child as a being, rather than to accept perceptions that socialise child as an object or a becoming.

We are left with a number of important questions such as adults were once children, how do these experiences of childhood position us as adults? The notion of change influences conceptions of child and childhood and how we imagine ourselves as part of this changing world. We can view child using ideas from psychology, philosophy, anthropology and sociology, yet are we able to answer questions adequately about the 'inner' lives of children, or is this a fragment of an endless conversation? Are we able to tap into the 'inner' lives of children, and acknowledge that children construct the world differently or see the world in different ways to adults? If we ignore child's voice and continue to implement policies that restrict participation or child's views on matters that affect them, are we respecting child as a being, or viewing child as a becoming?

An analogy described by Blommaert (2005) in his book entitled *Discourse*, describes a Coke can that is positioned in the centre of a table. Blommaert describes people positioning themselves at different places around the table. Each person sees the can from a different point of view, whether remaining in one position or moving around to another position. This Coke can, could be perceived as child, and the people viewing the can from different positions, the diverse and often conflicting conceptions that attempt to define child and childhood through the lenses of the different discourses, which are often conflicting, blurred and contested. The people positioned at the table, could be representative of the dissemination of different viewpoints. From each different position, there are different fragments of childhood that are problematic or unquestioned. Different conversations from multiple voices representing their concepts and conceptions of child and child's voice will emanate from each person's

unique view of the child or from the different domains of sociology of child, anthropology, history, developmental psychology and philosophy of child. A question that still remains unanswered: is it possible to make childhood the 'object' of study, as aren't we ourselves as adults in a profound sense also child?

Is it possible to invite children to sit around the table and explore the 'can' (child)? Would this be an implication of what it means to include child's voice? Mary John refers to this invitation by articulating the importance of child if considered as a 'powerful member of society' (John, 2003). Her work has attempted to demonstrate the importance of adult recognising child as a person. If child is invited to sit around the table, what questions would arise and how would adult react? John (2003) suggests that adult-child relationships have been composed around an 'as if' relationship. In this sense, child is thus not seen as a person who experiences power. If child was the Coke can in the analogy, linking this to what it means to include child's voice could be two-fold; firstly, if adult adopts the stance that child is powerless, then there is a need to ask why children are rarely included in debates on social accountability. Secondly, if we examine children's rights in relation to the nature of power, and how power is determined by adult-child relationships, and on a broader level, by culture and economics, then potential debates open up in presenting child in a different light. Child, in this sense will thus be recognised as having rightful agency and autonomy. If child was given a voice at this table, would this voice be acknowledged in terms of the child's "deficits and needs" or would it embrace his/her "hopes and aspirations" of child's dreams? (John, 2003, p.19).

7.4 Towards a definition of childhood

Pinning down a precise definition of childhood is impossible since children's experiences have varied, not only throughout history (Aires, 1962), but also in contemporary society. Childhood for an Aids orphan in Africa is a very different experience from that of a child growing up in a more 'developed' country. In a South African context, experiential differences can vary in the same area: growing up as a street child in Johannesburg is in stark contrast to a child growing up in a suburban JHB household.

Different notions of childhood bring different issues to the debates. In some instances, literature has shed light on the innocence and vulnerability of children. Other literature gives substance to the rights of children and affirmation that child's voice ought to be considered in matters that affect his/her life.

The rights discourse challenges adult as much as child. Respecting and acknowledging these rights changes the way in which adults think about themselves and child. As has been argued, the children's rights discourse is still a contested issue amongst many researchers and child rights activists. Conceptions of child and rights discourse cannot be seen in isolation. There are intersections on many levels such as the political, social, cultural, economic and historical. As has been discussed, the emphasis on autonomy in child rights discourse has raised concerns, especially in non-Western countries. Cultural conventions in these countries are based on inter-dependence, rather than the Western notion of individuality. A number of authors used in this research have indicated that different rights may foreground others, or be understood differently depending on the political, social and economic contexts of different societies. Rights also impact on the everyday lives of children, at home, school and in societies. Adult-child relationships are an important part of the rights discourse. How adult views child, through cultural and political ideologies, will affect the way with which child is dealt. The role of adult comes into question in terms of how child responds to adult and how adults treat child. Adults' own experiences of childhood may influence the way in which child may be listened to. Child's relationships with other children may also influence the way in which child engages with his/her world. Childhood and conceptions of child are relevant in engaging with the children's rights discourse. A central theme was therefore to explore ways in which including child's voice may or ought to change children's lives and the way in which adults deal with them. Rights discourse and debates are still emerging and there has been an important transition in problematizing attitudes and assumptions and moving towards linking children's rights to their lived experiences.

Burman (2008) emphasises that normative conceptualizations of children are differentiated from other children, according to development as being competent or not competent. I believe there is a strong argument for acknowledging child's voice. If there is no listening to voice then exclusionary practices, are continually perpetuated, rather than including of child's voice in decisions that affect

him/her. Indeed, the presence or absence of voice has led to numerous arguments and critiques from children's rights advocates.

7.5 My own voice in practice

In view of the literature with which I have engaged, I am beginning to realise that conceptions of child extend beyond my previous grounding in developmental psychology. The works of contemporary philosophers such as Archard (2010); Kennedy (2000); Matthews (1996); and Stables, (2008), argue for an urgent move to destabilise the domination of conceptions of child as powerless that is currently positioned in schooling.

Burman's work, in particular, has provided the springboard from which I have begun to interrogate and investigate my assumptions of how I view and work with child. It has derailed me from my previous stance and identity as a practitioner and has created an uncomfortable contradiction within my own practice. The question of how to include child provides a critical introduction as to how researchers and practitioners, like myself, have come to "understand mainstream accounts of developmental psychology in their contexts" (Burman, 2008). Burman suggests that there is a need to view developmental psychology critically and thereby force educators to think through and reflect on their assumptions about child and the consequences of "existing critiques" (Burman,2008, p.6)

In my experience of working with children, I relate to back to the critical incident with Kate, to which I referred in Chapter One. In many instances, I made decisions as according to what I expected from children during the interventions and, more importantly, in directing the conversations I had with them. Kate's voice, in particular, had a profound impact on my practice and deepened my realisation that I was not in fact hearing child's voice or acknowledging her as a person with power.

Reflecting on Hadfield and Haw's (in Thomson,2008) categories of voice, in this instance, I was speaking from a therapeutic voice, in that I was assuming that what I was doing with regards to this intervention was in Kate's best interests. I was also using my pedagogical voice to decide on which interventions were valid. In doing so, these voices did not open a space for acknowledging and listening to her voice. My authoritative voice suggests that I spoke on behalf of Kate by not involving

her in the intervention process. I was considering Kate's 'epistemological and practical voices' rather than acknowledging her own critical voice.

Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p.99), drawing on Rinaldi's work, claim that "Listening is a metaphor for having an openness and sensitivity to listen and be listened to… listening is not just with our ears, but with all our senses…listening does not just produce answers but formulates questions". In this example, I did not acknowledge that Kate had a voice of her own.

My assumption in working with Kate was that I thought I was being open and sensitive to her needs. In retrospect, I was ignoring her experience and had not acknowledged her own voice. This experience links to ideas posited by Dewey's creative democratic ideal, as he believed that democracy forces observation of the existence of common interests. I, as the adult, was not observing or considering Kate's voice in a democratic way, but rather ignoring this democratic ideal by not acknowledging the existence of common interests. Dewey's claim, which is similar to that of Vygotsky's, proposed that language is the most important tool in the process of creating meaning. In this regard, dialogue, talk and face-to face-interaction lies at the core of Dewey's idea of democracy. He argued that in order to obtain this social intelligence, which he believed was not innate in humans, education steps in to bridge this gap between social intelligence and democracy. This creative democratic ideal positions child's voice as a central component, as it encourages child to think for him/ herself in the process of enquiry. Dewey's principles of "open mindness" advocated that "free expression of thought and the experimental use of intelligence are secured" (Dewey, 1927, p. 365). Furthermore, he claimed that "each individual has an intrinsic worth and value" (Dewey, 1927, p. 365). Thus, Dewey's ideal aim of education centres on the idea of human self-realisation. He argued that education was vital for humans, as it was through conscious and free communication that intellectual ability was developed.

Education seen thus, implies a continuous transaction between self and the environment. Even if educational contexts and policies do not regard child's voice as important, the crucial point is that researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners need to challenge these ideas pertaining to including child's voice and more importantly, question whether educational contexts that set rules and policies

can apply exceptions to these, when it comes to including and listening to child's voice. Moreover, in a democratic schooling context, this notion of voice should be paramount.

Furthermore, in my work with children in small groups and individual contexts, I came to the realisation that in many ways, I as adult, was not 'entering' child's world. I dominated the relationship of adult-child, in that, the expectations I carried, were all interventions that measured set outcomes and progress. I designed the materials and taught the support strategies without considering how child was experiencing the process.

I am beginning to question whether how I listened hampered, rather than encouraged, expression of child's voice. By placing emphasis, on my power as an adult, I did not step back and provide for opportunities for child to be a social agent in this process. I am not certain if the way in which I operated in terms of listening to child's voice took into account child's rights and, more importantly, included child's voice. In this regard, I, as the audience, was not listening to the views of the child, nor was I creating space for Child to express a view. It was my influence that was shaping the outcome of my interventions.

7.6 My position now as I reflect on the shifts in my own thinking

Reflecting on my own practice and the literature on voice and listening, I have definitely broadened my knowledge in terms of situating the concept of listening into social and political spheres. Listening is a powerful key in a participatory democratic society. Alongside this is the current discourse on children's rights, which will be discussed below, that places child in a position to be heard and listened to. The impact of this rights discourse has been a foundation on which I have begun to explore how effectively adult could listen to child and consult with them. Listening to child may not be a comfortable process, given that assumptions of difference are visible and opinions and beliefs of adult may vary. From my experiences there have been times when uncomfortable situations lead to a resistance or shutdown rather than opening up responsive listening.

7.7 Reflections

This research has brought up many questions and assumptions in need of further investigation. The limitations of this research were that a number of issues covering this vast topic were not able to be included. I started this research considering how child and childhood is conceptualised and represented in sociology of childhood, philosophy of childhood and developmental psychology, and touched on some of the arguments and assumptions that have continued to be written about in literature.

This research has left many significant questions unanswered, questions that have been raised in various discourses such as children's rights, the adult-child dichotomy, the complex conceptualisations of child according to culture, social context and political ideology. In many instances, I have drawn the conclusion that in many aspects of child's life, child is still seen as vulnerable and as an adult-in-the making, rather than as an individual with capabilities and a 'voice'. There has been a move towards including child's voice, specifically with regards to the rights discourse, but there is still a long road to travel in acknowledging that child is capable of making decisions that affect his/her schooling and in actual representation in policies drawn up by educational institutions.

The tasks of reconceptualising child, deconstructing developmental psychology and the interwoven links with human biology, ethics, moral, political and social issues, remains an issue on the agenda of all who attempt to 'enter' a child's world.

The notion of entering a child's world is complex, as it is adult who has defined and created childhood. Adult defines child, as adults prefer to define themselves. Child is described with attributes which are 'childlike' or 'immature' as they are not regarded as adult. There is a difficulty in adult shifting perceptions and thinking in terms of the adult-child dichotomy. Entering a child's world may mean observing the daily practices of children in their school contexts and including their voices by acknowledging they are capable citizens of the world, rather than by abstracting child as a universal concept that is part and parcel of an adult dominated society and thus having to comply with adult in all aspects of their lives. Adult in dominant position may not always engage with realities of children's lives and contexts.

7.8 Limitations

The main limitation of this study has been the bounded space within the constructs of a Masters Research report. Given that I chose a very complex and vast topic, it was difficult to decide what to leave in and focus on for the development of an argument and what areas to exclude.

The literature involving children's rights discourse, children's voices, philosophy of childhood and developmental psychology is immense. I selected the key authors from each discourse that I felt would cement my argument; however, I acknowledge that there are a multitude of authors in the domains that I have referred to, whom I had to leave out. I therefore focussed on a few authors in depth and skimmed the surface of the many that could not be included.

This study was conceptual in structure and therefore I did not have data to analyse or discuss. Thus my argument was based on an analyses and critique of the concepts, child and childhood, child's voice and children's rights.

7.9 Further Research

In this research I have merely opened up the 'Coke can' and taken a small sip. I would consider furthering these ideas that I have worked with and would move from theory to praxis in completing an ethnographic study on how educators conceptualise child and childhood. From this I would be able to use these perceptions to broaden the assumptions adults bring into their educational contexts, as it is their perceptions and assumptions that create the child with which they deal in their classrooms and this impedes or facilitates the inclusion of child's voice. What has led me to envision this further study is the important notion that how a community constructs the notion of childhood and the child is fundamentally embodied in the practices and policies of that community. I have come to realise throughout my reading that if conceptions of child and childhood are left as uncontested notions, then educational contexts and policies will remain representational of normative values and views of child.

This research has shown there is a strong body of literature that is calling for alternative constructions of child and childhood. A repositioning of child and how child is defined in terms of legislation, policies and practices has the root of this research. In the words of Malaguzzi:

> *Our image of children no longer considers them as isolated or egocentric… does not belittle feelings or what is not logical…Instead our image of the child is rich in potential, strong, powerful, competent and most of all, connected to adults and other children.* (Malaguzzi, in Hall, 2010, p. 10)

The National Education Department in South Africa has been committed to reshaping and revising policies and practices in Early Childhood Development. As the South African government and education department are moving through this period of change, there are still many challenges to work through, touching on political, ethical and socio-economic dimensions. As part of this transformation process, many educators have been trained and are continuing to be trained so as to build a strong foundation for children entering the first phase of their education. A study that examines constructions of childhood and their impact on pedagogy and policy through the eyes of the educators involved at this level of education is a suggested follow-on from this study.

What has made me consider further research in the domain of Early Childhood Development, is the different and ever-changing views on the study of childhood that I was exposed to in reading for this research report. I have been drawn to the ideas that these views of childhood have an impact on the implications for early childhood practice, in considering is important for children to be exposed to in their early schooling contexts. More fascinating for me is how different models of child as a learner impact on pedagogic practice.

7.9.1 The broader significance of my research

In answering my research question “What does it mean to include child’s voice in educational contexts?” I am considering the potential implications of this conceptual research for others in relation

to conceptions of child, child's voice, deconstructing developmental psychology, philosophy of childhood and children's rights.

I will discuss the potential significance in these areas relating to my own practice, experiences and learning and how this shift extends to a broader arena, namely:

7.9.2 The potential implications for teachers who become Learning Support Specialists or educational psychologists

Throughout my own learning during this Masters Course I considered my own training as a learning support specialist. I critiqued my own stance in relation to the dominant theories of developmental psychology and how these theories influenced my practice as a learning support specialist. On a broader level, this new learning about my own practice has opened up questions as to how tertiary institutions develop courses to train educators to become Learning Support Specialists and educational psychologists. I believe that my research is significant in terms of demonstrating the potentials of new forms of practice, as well as new forms of theory that Learning Support Specialists, educators, educational psychologists and academics teaching courses may open up potential opportunities to develop new insights and practices.

Coursework and observations of child are still largely being taught through a lens that is dominated by a deficit model that underrates and undervalues the potential and capabilities of child. In many instances, in reading through specific manuals and from my own experience of lecturing pre-service educators, there is still a strong slant towards dominant ideas that conceptualise child as the object in need of fixing and the psychologist or Learning Support Specialist as the expert who has all the answers in order to fix the problem.

In viewing child through a different lens, I have attempted to argue that a redesign and reconceptualization of child and childhood is crucial to course design at institutions that still hold on to hegemonic discourses, without taking into account the changing roles of child in society and the diverse capacities of children. There is an urgent need to challenge these conventional discourses that

are rooted in the values of dominance and control. Through these conventional discourses, child has been devalued and prevented from participating in the process of learning and knowledge creation.

7.9.4 The potential implications for educators-in-training

This research has significance for educators-in-training, specifically on the grounds of teaching for social justice. It is through social justice that contributions can be made to stop the marginalisation of child who is disadvantaged by school contexts. I suggest that educators-in-training need to be exposed to examining their own practices by examining their own assumptions as to how they conceptualise child and how these assumptions may influence, as Stables (2008) suggests, the way in which we deal with child. The term 'marginalised' raises issues around empowerment and questions who the valid knowers are within educational contexts. If the valid knower is always the adult (educator) then policies and practices will continue to be shaped by adult domination of ideas of what is best for child.

I have touched on the importance of acknowledging child's voice within an education system that often disadvantages child. My emphasis on providing opportunities for child's voice to be included and valued lies in the potential of significant pedagogies, such as the P4C program that encourages an expression of child's voice through dialogue and reflection. Programmes such as P4C/PwC, encourage research projects, with children. One such project[28], undertaken by Kiki Messiou of Hull University, in schools in Hull, working with educators and children suggests, that by allowing child's voice to be included, educators have been urged to think of different approaches as to how they practise and more importantly, this research has highlighted how child's contribution may suggest new ways of implementing pedagogy.

In sum, it is pertinent to refer back to Kennedy and Kohan's (2008) views which suggest that as adults, we need to prepare ourselves to listen to a different voice. Both philosophers argue that in order to listen to a voice that has been historically silenced because of adult domination and by refusing to

[28] This three year project (2011-2014) is entitled "Investigating diversity in the classroom". It involves secondary schools in Lisbon, Madrid, Manchester and Hull. The project aims to develop new strategies for helping teachers make their lessons more inclusive by acknowledging children's voices. www2.hull.ac.uk/diversity-project.

acknowledge child as a person, new ways as to how adults prepare to listen to child's voice need urgent attention. Kohan argues that adults need to "listen to different forms of reason, a different theory of knowledge, different ethics and different politics" (Kohan, 1999, p.7). In moving towards analysing these differences and critically deconstructing dominant pedagogies and views of child that have centred around policies and practices in school contexts for decades, perhaps adult can move from the familiar into the unfamiliar by reconceptualising child. It is hoped that this will ultimately bridge the gap between education and child.

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