International Perspectives on
Early Childhood Education and Development 5

Eva Johansson
E. Jayne White *Editors*

Educational Research with Our Youngest

Voices of Infants and Toddlers

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International Perspectives on Early Childhood Education and Development

Volume 5

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Early childhood education in many countries has been built upon a strong tradition of a materially rich and active play-based pedagogy and environment. Yet what has become visible within the profession, is essentially a Western view of childhood preschool education and school education.
It is timely that a series of books be published which present a broader view of early childhood education. This series, seeks to provide an international perspective on early childhood education. In particular, the books published in this series will:

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The series will cover theoretical works, evidence-based pedagogical research, and international research studies. The series will also cover a broad range of countries, including poor majority countries. Classical areas of interest, such as play, the images of childhood, and family studies will also be examined. However the focus will be critical and international (not Western-centric).

Eva Johansson · E. Jayne White
Editors

Educational Research with Our Youngest

Voices of Infants and Toddlers

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Foreword

This book represents several years of research activity and scholarship for both ourselves and the contributors. It was first conceived by Jayne four years ago, following her unsuccessful quest for literature to guide her methodologically in her doctoral work with very young children. Joined by Eva two years later, the inspiration for the project is much grounded in an engagement in young children's lives and a shared devotion to defend and promote scholarly discussion and debate in research involving young children. This commitment is also evident in the chapters offered by all the contributors of this book who have given their knowledge, enthusiasm, and time for this project.

Being the editors of this book has been both an exciting and difficult challenge. Situated in different parts of the world, with different language constructions, in different educational contexts and universities, and living in different countries (New Zealand and Sweden) with different seasons and times, we have worked intensively together on this book over the past three years due to the wonders of Skype, e-mail, and, of course, our shared passion in the topic. This book is in no small way testimony to the belief and provocation of supportive, critical, and encouraging colleagues at the different universities each of us have had the privilege to work with during the past few years. Combined with the practical support offered by the University of Waikato, New Zealand, and the University of Stavanger, Norway, this book represents the efforts, commitment, and determination of many.

We invite readers to ask probing questions of the text as they read through the pages that follow. The questions below have been used by each of the authors of this book while writing their chapters and commentating on each other's text. We suspect that they may also be helpful for readers. We hope that the process of probing the text in this way will support readers to encounter the epistemological and ontological challenges faced by each of the researchers in their quest to gain insight into the lived worlds of our youngest.

How did this chapter "speak" to you?
What did you learn?
What surprises were there for you in this chapter?
What was interesting for you in this chapter? Any debates raised?

What dilemmas for infant-toddler research does this chapter illuminate?
What opportunities for future infant-toddler research does this chapter inspire?

We wish to dedicate this book to our children, Alexander, Courtney, Karin, Lars, and Mitchell – now (almost) all grown up – who, with all children across the globe, provide us with a rich landscape of inspiration and hope for the future.

Eva Johansson
E. Jayne White

Prologue

Jean Rockel

> "Who are you?" said the Caterpillar. This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation. Alice replied, rather shyly, "I hardly know, sir, just at present . . ." (Lewis Carroll, 1907, p. 49)

Within the pages of this book a new dialogue has begun in relation to an area of educational research that is often overlooked. It begins and ends with scholarly conversations about the dilemmas and tensions of educational research with very young children, not unlike those experienced by Alice during her encounter with the Caterpillar in Lewis Carroll's story. By raising important issues facing researchers who seek to explore the voices of infants and toddlers, this publication acts as a springboard for the examination of infants' lived experiences from a variety of research perspectives. In the search for voice, in all its complexity, further insights about the first years of life become evident and new debates are inevitably raised. The notion of voice is thus expanded and explored from multiple positions involving the theoretical, the moral and the physical, with a revised positioning of infants and toddlers as research subjects with opportunities to contribute to their own experience.

The fundamental question about knowing self and "other" is at the heart of these research journeys, and, in a deeper philosophical sense, life itself. The metaphor of *Alice in Wonderland* alludes to the complexities facing the researcher in this task. The researchers may have felt at times that they were, like Alice, helplessly chasing an elusive character—constantly querying their position or experiencing the frustration of how to cross the threshold and fit through a door that is too small for them to squeeze through. Yet, as this books reveals, each researcher sought alternate routes through summoning various philosophical approaches that, to some extent or other, satisfied his or her quest. The search for such routes opens up the opportunity for us to question, challenge the status quo and gain new ontological and epistemological insights.

In researching the life-world of a very young person that is outside the researcher's current understanding, consideration has been given by these researchers as to whether there is a "fit" with the methodology in gathering data. Drawing upon a range of theoretical paradigms the researchers in this book demonstrate the integrity and veracity of intent to investigate diverse and sometimes even new methodologies in order to explore dimensions of infant experience that

have been hitherto deemed ungraspable. It is interesting, in this regard, to note the prevalence of visual ethnographies used by the researchers throughout. In this sense alone, the book provides a range of alternative approaches to investigation by foregrounding the visual as well as the aural which is typically so privileged in notions of "voice".

The switch in vision from investigating what should be "done" to very young children to that of learning more about what the children are "doing" in a variety of contexts, represents a new paradigm of power relations between researcher and the researched. The researcher is alongside the child with the camera; in some cases the child herself bears the camera, recognising children as powerful and resourceful learners who exercise agency in their own learning, whilst at the same time paying attention to their vulnerabilities.

In the process of redefining this research platform, the book opens up interpretive space without being constrained and limited by the "adult" gaze for this arena of the unknown with such very young children. As these researchers are defining the landscape, the resolution of the various dilemmas they faced will be of great interest to the reader, in terms of both pedagogy and building on the research.

In conjunction with the literary metaphor of *Alice in Wonderland*, the researchers are encountering the strange (and yet strangely familiar) world in which very young children learn about themselves as "other". The notion of subjectivity and intersubjectivity, contributes to the complexities of researching voice as researchers venture into new philosophical and methodological territories which are uncertain and unfamiliar. While drawing on familiar theories and methods that are well understood, the researchers grapple with innovative measures and approaches to new research questions. This struggle indicates the significance of such a book in which the researchers foreground the tensions and issues that they have had to face and, in doing so, provide new insights into the way young children can be seen and heard. Ethical decisions are made in relation to when to avert the adult gaze; other decisions are involved in whether to continue interacting with the child as researcher, echoing images of both capability and vulnerability.

Research with very young children requires a range of ethical considerations in challenging stereotypical views of infants and toddlers. The contemporary global background to children's lives more often involves long hours outside the home, which provides additional challenges for researchers and teachers. The socio-political nature of service provision is a backdrop to these challenges. Therefore, reflexivity is a critical process for researchers and teachers in order to gain knowledge or interpretations of children's lived experience and to question assumptions and beliefs.

The researchers in this book are therefore exploring new ways of thinking about very young children. With that a new discourse is emerging which reflects the dynamic nature of how a young child approaches the world and those in it. It is indeed about seeing infants with "new eyes", recognising a different life-world and therefore seeing teachers and researchers afresh as well. This discourse brings new provocations forward and provides new and exciting research directions. In recognising the agency of the children in the data and information gathered by the

researchers here, there is evidence to debate as well as opportunities to explore the adults' relationship with those children.

Such recognition is significant not only for researchers but also for teachers who are concerned to engage in pedagogical practices that encounter the young child as agentic. The policy focus on care for young children who are identified as disadvantaged, or in non-parental care due to the effects of the labour market, or the knowledge economy, is evident in many places around the world. Tensions with market-led provision have been to the fore in many early childhood contexts, along with the focus on preparing children for academic tasks, school and, ultimately, work skills. As more research emerges based on diverse epistemological and ontological paradigms, there are implications and opportunities for new pedagogical practices in early childhood provision to support teachers to resist the drive towards more control that pays little or no attention to issues of participation.

Hence the need for a book such as this that enables conversations to take place in the context of critical pedagogy, philosophy and new research initiatives. This book invites the reader to consider these perspectives as dialogic opportunities to debate the new ideas rather than binary or polarised positions. Research of this nature is never undertaken in a vacuum since the contexts of early childhood care and education services offer varied and complex worlds for young children's lived experiences and those of their families. The introduction of varied theoretical perspectives and research paradigms therefore opens up dialogue in these spaces in relation to pedagogy and the ethics of care.

In order to go through the metaphorical small door to discover infant and toddler voice, researchers seek a range of strategies—not unlike the potions and cakes eaten by Alice in her search for the key—so that they may enter into a space which enables them to see more of that world. At heart, this book is about ways of reconceptualising and foregrounding voices that have been constrained or are typically unknown or unheard. The new knowledge that is revealed does not claim to speak on their behalf but, instead, raises significant insight and provocation that leaves the reader with further questions and provocation. The book is therefore an invitation for researchers, teachers and policymakers alike to dialogue about how they might seek to encounter the voices of children in their first years of life as a central means of understanding.

Reference

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Giving Words to Children's Voices in Research

Eva Johansson

This book concerns research with infants and toddlers—the youngest children in early education. The idea behind the book is to explore ways of engaging with voices of very young children as researchers in the field of early childhood education. The aim is to contribute to this field of knowledge by scrutinizing ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches that assist us in trying to understand and visualize, in a broad sense, the multiple voices of young persons. The book itself represents a chorus of voices (researchers, children, teachers and parents), all adding to a discussion about various circumstances, dilemmas and possibilities involved in doing research with our youngest. The authors offer, in various ways, their thoughts and experiences regarding how to approach, understand and interpret the multiple voices of toddlers and infants. Each explores the kinds of ethical considerations and dilemmas that may arise in this process. This is a complex and exciting journey!

A constant question asked in this book is, if and how the multiple voices of children can be captured and fully understood by the researcher. There are always parts of children's experiences that are impossible for them to express and/or for the researcher to understand. In addition children's voices are never pure and authentic in an essential way. They are always voices located in a specific time, society and culture. This is also true for the authors of this book—who speak to us from Australia, New Zealand, Sweden and Norway. The specific context of their investigations, however, is in one way or another similar in the respect that all the contributors are connected to early childhood education. The manners in which these contexts are created differ according to historical and economical circumstances as well as the prescribed purposes of education for young children. These taken-for-granted expectations and values are all associated with societal images of the child and childhood. The way children and childhood are conceptualised, as a result, impacts on the methodological and ethical considerations

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facing early childhood researchers in contemporary societies across the world (Berthelsen, 2010; Moss, 2008; Rau & Pearson, 2008).

The reasons for approaching voices of young children are several. First of all, infant and toddler research has been frequently overlooked and misappropriated over time (Christensen & James, 2000; Corsaro, 2005; Johansson, 2003; Løkken, 2000; White, 2009). When we look upon previous and recent research with the youngest citizens in early childhood education, the amount of research presented internationally is restricted and mainly related to psychology. During the last two decades, research within the field of education has significantly increased—yet there is still a deep need for research on the youngest children in early childhood education (Berthelsen, 2010; Johansson & Emilson, 2010; Spodek & Saracho, 2006). As a result, there remains little knowledge on methods and approaches available for researchers working with children of this age.

Of key importance in this book is also is the idea that infants and toddlers will contribute significantly to the knowledge formation in the field of early childhood education. Up till now we knew very little about young children's experiences in their everyday life in early childhood education and the impact that these institutions might have on children's development and well-being. In spite of a gradually growing amount of educational research with young children, their voices still appear to be marginalised (Greve & Solheim, 2010; also Johansson & Emilson, 2010). One can also ask whether infants' and toddlers' intersubjective implicit and embodied knowledge is appreciated compared to more measurable academic knowledge communicated by words—especially in a time when measurements seem to be a growing issue in several parts of the educational and political debate all over the world (Biesta, 2008; Greve & Solheim, 2010; Johansson, 2010). This marginalised position of young children appears challenging since, as recent research in neurology suggests, this is the most important age in the lifespan in relation to brain development, to learning and to emotional well-being (Bennett, 2008).

To conclude, the research tradition with an interest in voices of very young children is limited and the methodological knowledge from where researchers can learn and be inspired is also restricted. With this book we would like to support further research dialogue with a view to increased methodologically and ethically appropriate approaches in the future. As the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) reminds us, young citizens have a right to be heard and to participate in issues that concern them (UNCROC, 1989). This means that children have a right to participate in research and to do so on their own premises (Bogden & Bilklen, 2007; Christensen & James, 2000; Coffey, Renold, Dicks, Soyinka, & Mason, 2006; Corsaro, 2005; Greig, Taylor, & MacKay, 2007; Johansson, 2005; Lahman, 2008; Pramling Samuelsson & Pramling, 2009; Woodhead, 2005). This book is an opportunity to begin important dialogues to scrutinize if and how infants and toddlers can be constructed as "participators in research". This ambition is both complex and full of tensions that have been variously addressed by the authors of this book.

Discourses and Conceptualisations of Infants and Toddlers

Let us shortly have a look at some discourses and conceptualisations of infants and toddlers in previous research. Research involving this group of young children has previously and to a large extent been studied within the field of psychology (Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000), contributing to a discourse of the *universal and psychological child* (Berthelsen, 2009; Sommer, 2005). The cognitive child has been (and still is) an object of research and development has been described in "linear and universal stages", writes Donna Berthelsen (2009, p. 1). Ontology, epistemology and methodology within these traditions have been criticized as neglecting the perspectives of young children and ignoring children as persons and participants in their own life and in a culture (Greene, 1998). Martin Woodhead and Dorothy Faulkner (2000), for example, illustrate how research interest within this field has to a large extent focussed on measurements, experimental studies and methods related to animal research rather than taken into account the child's own voices and everyday life. The dominant paradigm in research of this nature has very much been related to an idea of objective science (Shaffer, 1993) where "reality" is investigated and captured by objective and universal methods. Associated ethical issues are concerned with the impacts research might have on children's well-being. Such impacts have been ignored and taken for granted in many studies, for example in those where children have been placed in strange situations (for example Belsky, 1988).

During more recent years, however, another discourse has emerged, which takes on a different position—that of *the participating contextual child*. In political, practical and educational contexts we can find a frequent tendency to refer to "children's perspectives" (Halldén, 2003) as well as UNCROCs emphasis on children's participatory rights (UNCROC, 1989). Sociologists, psychologists and pedagogues have highlighted the importance of doing research on the premises of children (Corsaro, 2005; James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; Sommer, 2005; Woodhead, 2005). There is an increasing interest in gaining knowledge about young children's life and learning in the educational institutions. Many researchers of today, within several disciplines, aspire to do research based on the children's premises and related to context and culture. Research of this nature focuses both on children's living conditions and on giving words to the children's voices (Bae, 2009; Berthelsen, Brownlee, & Johansson, 2009; Halldén, 2003; Smith, Taylor, & Gollop, 2000; Sommer, Pramling Samuelsson, & Hundeide, 2010). The child is now viewed as a subject and positioned by many as a participant in research (Dokket & Perry 2007; Farrell, 2005; Greene & Hogan, 2006; Nyland, 2009). The idea of the sociological contextual child has been placed in the forefront of many researchers' interest all over the world (Brownlee, 2009).

Ontology, epistemology and methodology now position the child and the researcher as subjects intertwined in time, history and culture. Epistemological understandings implied in metaphors such as "collecting data", for example, have been replaced by notions of subjectivity and metaphors such as "constructions of lived experiences" (see, for example, Greene & Hogan, 2006). Ontological

issues implied in the idea of doing research "on children" have been replaced by doing research "with children", indicating that conditions for children's voices and participation are constructed in sociocultural contexts by the researcher and the child together (see, for example, Einarsdottir, 2007). Reflexivity and proximity are viewed as important methodological resources. The cognitive child is also emotionally and bodily constituted and expressed through the child's very existence. Language is therefore viewed in a broad sense where intersubjectivity and communication are put forward as fundamental to understanding.

At the same time another discussion is also taking place, scrutinizing the conditions necessary for children to take part in investigations and how researchers might be able to represent children's perspectives, their development and learning (Kjørholt, 2001; also Johansson & Emilson, 2010; Sommer et al., 2010). Eva Johansson and Anette Emilson (2010), for example, ask if the discourse of children's perspectives and children's participation has become ideology and rhetoric. They argue that there is a risk that researchers and educators contribute to a new (western) universal construction of a strong active participating child where vulnerability, ambiguity and complexity are overlooked and developmental dimensions of a child's life are ignored. Without reflexivity researchers might "hide" behind the ideology of "involving children" without taking into account the complexity and contextual relatedness of this issue (also Penn, 2009).

There are lots of limitations for a researcher when claiming to speak in terms of children (Davis, 1998). As researchers we are both close to and far from children's life-worlds. Besides, children's perspectives are multiple simply because the child's worlds are multiple (Johansson, 2003). It is all too easy to underestimate various conflicts of interests in the voices of children. Paying attention to these complexities calls upon the representing voices of the researcher to ask whose voice is being represented and whose voice is being marginalized in research. Kjørholt (2011) maintains that represented voices of children are always part of the "adult discourses" of society. The voices of young children are therefore also voices of various interests, conflicts, values and political preferences. It is also a danger, says Kjørholt, that this discourse of children's voices might turn into hegemony of power and become a political and ideological strategy in research. Kjørholt (2011) calls researchers to respond to the provoking question, "do right discources have an unintended effect of contributing to and even accelerating processes of marginalisation, of making invisible children's many roles in social production and reproduction in the many different societies and localities of the world?" (p. 3).

These thoughts are both critical and challenging for researchers aiming to give room for children's voices in research. But what is our response? To be able to approach and understand the various perspectives of children, it seems critical for researchers to develop knowledge about the children's goals, meanings and experiences in various social and cultural contexts involving various ontological and methodological considerations (Dunn, 2006; Christensen & James, 2000; Sommer et al., 2010). The challenge to an approach that privileges children's perspectives also places onus on the researcher to question their own taken-for-granted values. Helen Penn (2009) reminds us how understandings about children are deeply rooted

in cultural contexts and that generalisations about rights and responsibilities for children can be conflicting. Penn describes how values developed in the "rich world" (p. 12) contribute to the idea of the active participating consuming child being able to make choices. From a perspective of "poor countries" (p. 12) these ideals and values are not at all self-evident, says the author. In certain African cultures, for example, divinity and passivity are values of importance in the upbringing of children. Consideration of such perspectives encourages researchers to step back and reflect on taken-for-granted ideas in the research and education of young children. Reflexivity is thus deemed crucial to protect research from turning the striving for children's voices and participation into a political entity and little more than empty words.

Parallel with the emphasis on giving voice to the contextual child, a new tendency of applying assessments and measurements to the field emerges from political and educational debate (Biesta, 2008). Requests for methods investigating "outcomes" of schooling or early childhood education (see, for example, NZ Ministry of Education, 2006; Norwegian Ministry of Education, 2006) are frequently expressed in educational and political agendas. Hence an academic discourse seems to be intruding also on early childhood education (OECD, 2006). The idea of investment in human capital is in accordance with the "rates of return curve", writes Jan Erik Johansson (2010, pp. 77–78). This implies that the task of early childhood education is to deliver returns that can be measured in terms of lifelong benefits and higher scholastic skills. It is therefore critical for researchers to reconstruct values in education and educational research, argues Gert Biesta (2008). Researchers need to raise questions such as, "what is good educational research within an era of measurement and accountability?" We must also ask ourselves, "Do we really measure what we value or do we value what we measure?" A language of economy seems also to be involved in new political documents and research announcements where, for example, effect studies are high up on the agenda in many countries (Biesta, 2008). One can ask if there is an emerging risk of turning back to previous discourses, where measurements and searching for effective learning and educational outcomes might force the idea of giving voice to children to the background again. Another risk is that the striving for children's voices and participation turns into hegemonic discourses rather than encouraging various voices of children to become visible in research.

This complex picture indicates a huge challenge for researchers with an interest in the youngest participants in the educational system to respond to the question—how and in what way can very young children's voices be heard and adequately interpreted in research?

Addressed Issues

This book addresses the scientific society and, in doing so, contributes new knowledge regarding challenges and possibilities for how very young children's voices can be heard in research. The book comprises a series of chapters by

researchers from different parts of the world who have grappled with various methodological issues around research with infants and toddlers, that is, young children under three years of age. Doing research of this nature is a huge ontological challenge for researchers and is addressed from different angles in this book. The researchers' conceptualisations of infancy and toddlerhood differ according to cultural and philosophical spheres from which these research findings derive. Yet, as we follow through the chapters in this book, common to these authors is an underlying ambition to address and problematize research questions through methodologies that seek to understand the perspectives of these young children and, in doing so, to give voice to their experiences in their worlds. The issues dealt with concern the following interrelated questions:

1. What kind of methodological perspectives will allow for (or hinder) research on the premises of the youngest children in early childhood education?
2. What kind of methodological and ethical dilemmas might come to the surface doing research with these young citizens?
3. Is it possible for a researcher to address the children's voices at all? How can researchers involve the voices of children unable to verbal communication?
4. How can researchers approach young children when trying to uncover their perspectives on different phenomena?
5. How can researchers show respect for the children while trying to understand and encounter their life-worlds?

Each chapter concludes with a commentary by one of the other contributors in response to the approaches taken by each author. The responses have been structured as a narrative that coherently links the chapter and continues the discussion. Each author was encouraged to frame his or her commentary around the following key questions:

(i) How did this chapter "speak" to you?
(ii) What did you learn?
(iii) What surprises were there for you in this chapter?
(iv) What was interesting for you in this chapter? Any debates raised?
(v) What dilemmas for infant-toddler research does this chapter illuminate?
(vi) What opportunities for future infant-toddler research does this chapter inspire?

The task was also to offer the reader some provocation around the ideas and highlight dilemmas, challenges and possibilities for doing research with the infants and toddlers in early childhood education. The commentaries displayed in this book reflect both personal, cultural and scientific issues and concerns based on the themes of the various chapters *and* the various cultural and disciplinary experiences and fields of belongings of these researchers.

The Chapters

> It is not just the research tools we use that determine what might be possible to capture as part of the research process, but importantly, it is the theoretical gaze we adopt that shape how researchers make sense of the data we capture and interpret and children themselves make meaning and sense of them.

This quotation comes from Chapter 6 by Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer, but is central to all authors in this book. Each author analyses theoretical and methodological issues and dilemmas in doing research with very young children. The authors address the primary philosophical/theoretical stance of their chapters and the methodologies that are employed in the research approaches discussed. The focus differs for each study, as does the content of their research.

The studies concern infants' and toddlers' voices in aesthetics, morality, learning, preschool curriculum and relationship formations, toddler culture and pedagogy. The studies take place in day-care centres, nurseries and families in, Australia, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and Sweden. Language is viewed in a broad sense and notions of both intersubjectivity and bodily communication are put forward as central to the nature of infant and toddler voice. Some chapters give more attention to philosophical assumptions and the influence these might have on possibilities and limitations in seeing and giving voice to the young child. Other chapters bring together methodological issues and the possibility to capture the complex relation between the child and the social environment. Literally allowing children to participate in research, on their own premises, by initiating encounters with the researcher as well as deciding when the camera should roll is suggested by some authors. From other chapters we learn about complex methods based on the idea of a chorus of voices of the child, the teacher, parents and the researcher. In Chapter 4, the child's horizon is literarily, and ironically, captured by a camera placed on the child's head.

Almost all chapters show, in one way or another, how reflexivity helps the researcher to be sensitive to the child's expressions and engage in negotiations with them on how and when to participate. The complexity of ethical issues when doing research with such young children are raised by several of the researchers in this book, and the dilemma of closeness and distance to children's life-world is drawn to the surface by some of the authors. The theoretical frameworks represents various thinkers—for example, Bakhtin, Bourdieu, Giroux, Merleau-Ponty and Vygotsky—and the traditions refer to hermeneutics, phenomenology, cultural-historical research, and sociology, to name a few. Central to all researchers is "totally being there", a mental and emotional presence in the life-worlds of these young children. The bodily experiences of being an observer, for example, is carefully described in one of the chapters illuminating observation as *lived* on at least four analytical levels throughout the research project. In the following text, a short introduction of each chapter is given.

Inspired by the central constructs of Pierre Bourdieu's "Theory of Practice", Sheila Degotardi argues for an analytical framework for developing a reflexive understanding of the interplay between the researcher, the young child and their

social contexts. In Chapter 2, Sheila displays her experience as an observer during a three-month observational case study of the relationship formation of three infants as they transitioned into a child-care nursery. This author illustrates how the analytic framework of "thinking tools" helped her to deepen her understanding of the observed events, of her own presence, identity and actions in relation to those of the infants within the nursery context. Sheila reveals how the young boy Ben challenges her to shift position from being an observer to being involved in a shared practice with him. From this shared event the boy gradually seems to trust her, allowing her to reconsider the observer position again. Sheila discusses how the concepts developed by Bourdieu strengthened her to a deeper reflexivity of the event by making her become more aware of the forces that underpin the decisions made in the field. From this chapter we learn "that professional and personal notions of caregiver sensitivity, responsiveness, human rights and dignity, and infant capabilities and vulnerabilities all had to be balanced with research agendas and methodological intentions".

Two investigations of morality among children (aged 1–3 years) in different day-care contexts in Sweden and Australia are the departure for discussion in Chapter 3. Of fundamental importance in these investigations is the interest in understanding the youngest children's perspectives on morality, writes the author. The ontological assumptions underlying the studies were inspired by the theory of the *life-world* developed by Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Alfred Schütz' theory about the *structure of the social world*. The proposition made in this chapter is that ontology, methodology, methods, interpretations and descriptions comprise a whole that should allow the researcher to approach young children's life-worlds and gain access to their perspectives. This is, however, a complex issue. Eva illuminates how concepts derived from the theories, for example "the life-world", "the lived body" and "the horizon", can be helpful when approaching very young children's voices. Yet there are lots of limitations and dilemmas to encounter as a researcher when claiming to speak in terms of children's voices and certainly when these voices are, to a large extent, expressed through the body.

"Is 'seeing' believing? What comprises the focus of seeing, how is it seen and who decides what is to be privileged in doing so?" These are the first challenging lines in Chapter 4. In this chapter the author visualizes (literarily and metaphorically) the idea of "seeing" as a dialogic endeavour and voice as a plural and deeply social event in the life of the child. Such seeing is, says Jayne, subjectively and ideologically located. As such it is an aesthetic act of bestowal—particularly when the subject is an infant or toddler who speaks a distinct corporeal language. The discussion is based on a study of an early childhood education teacher, Zoe, an 18-month-old toddler, her parents and the researcher, using dialogic methodology as a means of interpretation. The very young child can never be understood in isolation from others and their interpretive stance, claims Jayne. With reference to the theory of dialogism developed by Mikhail Bakhtin, she invites the reader to an exploration of multiple voices in "a polyphonic terrain of speculation, uncertainty and reflexivity". Taking this approach, argues Jayne, allow us to perceive the very young child as a competent yet vulnerable communicator of and with many voices capable of conveying meaning through genres that strategically orient them

towards or away from intersubjective harmony. To be seen is, according to this author, not only a research imperative but also a moral obligation for those who seek to understand more about the very youngest members of society and themselves.

Chapter 5 is written by Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson. These authors are particularly concerned with the relationship between non-verbal and verbal actions in bodily aesthetic activities in early childhood education. The theoretical framework for their study is developmental pedagogy, and the purpose is to visualize how young children can realise their right to be recognised as knowledgeable beings without them necessarily being able to communicate their understanding verbally. Two empirical illustrations of young children engaged in learning aesthetic movements are presented with interpretations based on this framework. The authors conclude that teachers can design situations to embrace aesthetic expression, where very young children are given opportunities to show their capabilities through body. The teacher's own verbal communication is, however, crucial in developing this kind of non-verbal, aesthetic bodily skill, enabling the children to discern and become aware of their own and each others' movements. Cecilia, Niklas and Ingrid argue that this theoretical and methodological approach supports dimensions of variation to become visible. These dimensions, they suggest, are of central importance in developing the child's skills further. These authors view aesthetical expressions as well as impressions as contingent upon the appropriation of "tools" and this mediation provided by tool use is important to the learner as well as to the researcher studying children's development.

In Chapter 6, Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer introduce the methodological tool of *"visual vivencias"* (unity of affect and cognition), which conceptualises both the theory and the tool of capturing young children's everyday life. Influenced by Lev Vygotsky, they draw attention to the dialectical relations between the unity of child and the social environment. The younger the child, the more complex it is to investigate these relations, write Gloria and Marilyn. In their chapter we can follow how the connection between the ontological and epistemological assumptions carefully being linked with methodology and the methods used. The authors offer a wholeness approach based on the recognition of the unity of intellect/cognition and affect, and consider the environment in relation to the social situation, the activity, and the relations in transition when doing research with young children. The whole research process focused on the dialectical relations between home and school. Step by step we get close to the young boy Cesar, interacting with mother, sibling and father, and the analyses reveal how cognitive and emotional processes are intertwined in these interactions. The methodological tool introduced by Gloria and Marilyn is a response to the cognitive divide in the early years where competences of children are being quantitatively measured rather than showing the complexities and interrelationships associated with children's development.

In Chapter 7, Alison Stephenson introduces an exciting and novel concept: generosity in research. The purpose of her study was to gain insight into young children's perspectives and their thinking about their "day-care centre lives" and their curriculum experiences. Inspired by critical theory, Alison recognises

that education is at heart political, in the way knowledge is defined, and the epistemological and ontological assumptions on which such definitions are grounded. The sociology of childhood was also influential in her study, both philosophically and methodologically. The distinction between positioning children as "being" or as "becoming" has, writes the author, been used to distinguish the concerns of sociology of childhood from more developmental approaches in which children tend to be positioned as immature adults in the making. The idea of generosity is systematically illuminated throughout the chapter. Critical in this idea of generosity, says the author, is being available to these young children, allowing each child to select how and when they interacted with the researcher, and letting them exercise some leadership within the shared interactions. Generosity means, according to Alison, listening in a way that extends beyond the framework of the research parameters to what a child might want to say.

"What I claim and want to discuss in this chapter is observation as *lived* on at least four analytical and time levels throughout the research project", writes Gunvor Løkken in Chapter 8. During the course of a year, this author followed the early morning greetings that took place between the nine children of a toddler group in a Norwegian *barnehage.* Her intention was to find out how the toddlers greeted each other, the meanings, intentions or themes in those greetings, and what they could inform about the children's relations. Cautiously the author explains and justifies her practising of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception and the role of the body. She also embraces these philosophical ideas to inform more in-depth current discourses on the role of the observing researcher. Gunvor writes: "The observations emerge as *lived* a) on the level of perception while recording, b) on the level of reflectively viewing what was recorded, c) on the level of analytical transcription and d) on the level of writing up the results of the study". A discussion of the observational study itself corresponding to the theoretical ground is also outlined in the chapter. The observations documented, says Gunvor, suggest that young children are habitual *conventional* greeters in congruence with the general knowledge of cultural as well as ethological studies of greetings. The analyses also indicated that toddlers are *original* greeters, by actions constructed on the spot in this particular study, as well as acting in ways that are congruent with peer interaction and routines found in several studies within the field of toddler peer research.

In the final chapter, Chapter 9, E. Jayne White brings together and highlights the significances and diversities derived from the different chapters dealing with the question, What kind of philosophical, methodological and ethical variations and dilemmas will be possible to discern according to various research questions, theoretical approaches, methodologies and methods? Her emphasis on visual methods, subjectivities and reflexivities offers a useful summary of the specific issues and dilemmas facing researchers who work with the very young child and builds on existing research methodology literature accordingly.

Working with this book has engaged researchers to explore ways of approaching voices of very young children in the field of early childhood education. This has been an exciting challenge, and we are most grateful to all the contributors who have given their experiences and time for this project. But without all children, their

educators and their parents, in families and education and care settings across the world, this book would not have been realised. Thanks to all of you!

Finally, this book is now delivered to readers, researchers and educators. We would like to invite you to inspirational readings of this many-faceted book. Please take part in the chapters and commentaries and continue the discussions initiated. We urge our readers to keep alive the provocations raised around the philosophical and methodological considerations and highlight dilemmas, challenges and possibilities for doing research with the infants and toddlers in early childhood education. Hopefully, you will be inspired to continue the research dialogue about the voices of our youngest and, in doing so, add to our understandings of very young children across the world.

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Chapter 2
Two Steps Back: Exploring Identity and Presence While Observing Infants in the Nursery

Sheila Degotardi

In this chapter, I employ the central constructs of Pierre Bourdieu's (1930–2002) Theory of Practice as an analytical framework for developing a reflexive understanding of the interplay between individuals (including researchers and the researched) and their social contexts. The backdrop for the presented discussion and analysis is my experience as an observer during a three-month naturalistic observational study of infants' relationships in an early childhood centre. In the chapter, I take the stance that observational researchers frequently become part of the context that they are studying. Accordingly, I focus on events that prompted a consideration of my own presence, identity and actions in relation to those of the infants within the nursery context.[1]

I begin by discussing the issue of researcher presence in observational research, before providing details of the study and methodological decisions that were made prior to and during its commencement. I then outline core elements of Bourdieu's theoretical position. In the latter sections of the chapter, Bourdieu's ideas are applied to selected research events with the aim of demonstrating how his constructs can provide insights into the situated actions and intentions of both researcher and infants. Finally, the applications and implications of his approach for the field of infant-toddler research are discussed.

Researcher Presence and Reflexivity

Many benefits have been attributed to the use of naturalistic observation methods when studying the experiences of young children (Dunn, 2005; Graue & Walsh, 1998; Pellegrini, 1996, Tudge & Hogan, 2005). Naturalistic observation strives to capture and document children's experiences and behaviours as they occur, without any attempt to separate the children and their actions from the social and cultural

[1] In Australia, the term "nursery" is often used to refer to a setting for 0- to 24-month-old children.

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contexts (Tudge & Hogan, 2005). As such, observers pay attention to children as they go about their everyday activities, both alone and in the company of others, taking note of where, when and how events occur. Naturalistic observation is a relational method that seeks to portray how children's actions are influenced by and influence features of their social and cultural contexts. With links to contextulist theories such as Vygotsky's (1978) cultural-historical and Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, those using naturalistic observational methods often contest that individuals, including their identities, actions and development, and the context in which they are situated are mutually constitutive (Greene & Hill, 2005; Tudge & Hogan, 2005). This being the case, the researcher's own understanding of her/his roles and actions and the responses of children to the researcher's presence are worthy topics of investigation.

It is the relational aspect of naturalistic observation that is the focus of this chapter. If it is accepted that there is interplay between children's actions and aspects of their social context, then the researcher, by virtue of his/her presence, is part of that context and will have a bearing on the actions of the people in that context and the experiences that are ultimately portrayed (Edwards, 2001; Emond, 2005; Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000). This relational position underscores Bourdieu's theoretical approach to social research (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Bourdieu argued that a key task of any researcher is to develop a reflexive understanding of the basis of their actions in relation to their own and others' subjectivities and aspects of their social context. A major tenet of the reflexive process is the need to think critically about oneself in terms of one's deep-seated beliefs and values and relate these to how the research is unfolding. Reflexive researchers are thus encouraged to take "two steps back" from research situations in order to enhance their understanding of what they do, perceive, experience and document. The first step back corresponds with the one regularly taken by researchers as they seek to gain an impression of what is occurring. This step corresponds with the task of constructing understandings about the research context and the events and behaviours of those within it—in essence, answering the question, "*what* do I know?" The second step represents researchers' attempts to redirect attention to the self, to explore the nature and origins of their subjective experiences and how these subjectivities are influencing their decisions and knowledge construction. In this way, researchers analyse their own perceptions, reactions and practices in order to understand how they are contributing to unfolding events—to explore "*how* and *why* do I know that?" (Connolly, 2008; Maton, 2003; Ryan, 2004). Reflexivity is thus a meta-representational process that requires researchers to think about their own thinking in order to make visible the role that they and others are playing in the generation and the construction of research knowledge.

By recognising that no research data or analysis is independent of the researcher, reflexivity requires researchers to metaphorically distance themselves from the research context in order to explore their own identities as well as the ways that these identities are perceived by the children (Emond, 2005). In this way, notions of Self and Other are deliberated as researchers seek to locate and understand their

position within the framework of their own perspectives as well as in relation to the children being observed. Instead of trying to minimise the impact of the researcher, "reflexivity acknowledges and gives it prominence" (Emond, 2005, p. 126) by embracing the fact that researchers share a social context with those they are researching.

The importance of researcher reflexivity is widely discussed by those advocating the use of naturalistic methods to study young children's lives and experiences, and different approaches are available to guide researchers in this process (Christensen & James, 2008; Connolly, 2008; Edwards, 2001; Emond, 2005). In this chapter, I apply Bourdieu's reflexive approach to analyse events that occurred as I conducted an observational study with infants and toddlers. My aim is to use Bourdieu's central theoretical ideas in order to explore individual, social, cultural and relational aspects that shaped my researcher presence and perceived identity as I conducted the research. In this way, Bourdieu's reflexive process goes beyond self-focus and exploration to incorporate an analysis of the ways in which the views and practices of individuals, societies and cultures intersect and interact to bring about human actions, motivations and understandings. Before I outline Bourdieu's constructs and approach though, I contextualise the focus of the chapter and subsequent analysis by detailing the theoretical and methodological basis of the study from which the chapter material was drawn.

Making Connections: The Study

The "Making Connections" study employed a multiple-case-study design with the aim of exploring the dynamics of the relationship formation of three infants as they transitioned into a child-care nursery. The project was grounded in the assumption that children's relationships with others comprise a crucial function in children's present and future learning, development and well-being (Dunn, 1993; Hinde, 1979; Lamb, 2005; Lewis, 2005; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). While a great deal of research about infants' relationships has been conducted in home contexts, the child-care nursery presents infants with context-specific opportunities to develop networks of relationships with multiple others (Degotardi & Pearson, 2008; Shpancer, 2002). As the quality of relationships is afforded a central place in contemporary approaches to early childhood pedagogy, my colleague and I were interested in investigating how the perspectives and capabilities of infants, their peers and adults contributed to the construction of interpersonal relationships in the nursery (Degotardi & Pearson, 2010).

The research took place in a child-care centre which was selected because of its strong philosophical commitment to a relationship-based pedagogy. On any given day, the room catered for 12 infants who, at the time of the study, were aged between 6 and 24 months. Four staff worked with the infants in an environment that consisted of an indoor playroom, a cot room, a toileting/nappy change area and an outdoor area. All spaces had been thoughtfully designed and furnished to create intimate, cosy and social spaces for the infants' play, explorations and routine experiences.

The relationship-based philosophy also led the centre to stipulate that infants must attend for at least 2 days per week so that infants, staff and families could maximise opportunities for developing strong and supportive relationships with one another.

From the planning stage, it was decided that naturalistic observation would provide the best means of capturing the infants' experiences as they adjusted to their new social setting. This decision was based on the argument that, by focusing on children's lived experiences, observational research contributes towards understandings of the dynamic culture of children's settings by highlighting the activities, perspectives and intentions of the individuals and groups that are invested therein (Fine & Kent, 1988; Greene & Hill, 2005; Langston, Abbott, Lewis, & Kellett, 2004). Green and Hill (2005) sum up this position when they state that naturalistic observational methods "reflect an interest in the study of children as persons ... as sentient beings who can act with intention and as agents in their own lives" (pp. 2–3). The result is a foregrounding of the "here and now", lived complexity of children's sociocultural worlds (Robinson & Kellett, 2004; Tudge & Hogan, 2005; Woodhead & Faulkner, 2000), which seemed well suited to the aims of the present study.

As the observing researcher, I attended the nursery for half-day sessions two or three times a week over the course of 3 months. This, I felt, would allow me to notice how the three infants made connections with others in the room, how others connected with them and the dynamics of these relationship-forming interactions over time. Written observation field notes were used to document some events, but the observations were largely captured on a small, handheld digital camcorder with an LCD screen. This camera was chosen because its size and portability, I thought, would allow me to hold it unobtrusively in front of me or on my lap while viewing the footage through the LCD screen. I knew that I would spend some considerable time in the nursery, so I was anxious to remain as unobtrusive as possible so that I would reduce the effect of my presence on the infants and staff that I was observing (Pellegrini, 1996). I also spent a number of sessions before commencing my recordings to familiarise myself with the daily nursery activities and routines and accustom infants and staff to my presence. Drawing on my early childhood teaching background, I sought to blend into the social environment in the room in the hope that I would become a familiar, and therefore, inconspicuous figure once I began my video-recorded observations (Shaffer, 1993; Smith, 1998). With these methodological decisions made, I began my observations with quiet confidence that I had taken appropriate steps to minimise any effect that I might have on the infants' experiences and actions.

It became quickly evident, however, that in my efforts to become a familiar part of the context, I had established a presence in the room and it was folly to expect that the infants would be impervious to this presence. Woodhead and Faulkner (2000) argue that observers who seek to be unobtrusive and unresponsive are "kidding themselves that they can appear like the metaphoric 'fly on the wall' " (p. 17). The amount of time that I was spending at the centre paired with the cosy, intimate nature of the surrounds made it difficult to establish physical or social distance. I usually had to get "close to the action" in order to capture children's experiences, so the

infants noticed my presence and began to approach and initiate interactions with me. Not able to ignore these approaches, I decided to balance a "bystander", non-participant role with the more proximal, participant observation stance (Mukherji & Albon, 2010), responding sensitively to the infants' approaches and interactions when they occurred but withdrawing to the background when I had the opportunity to do so.

The decision to adopt a flexible observer stance highlights an important aspect of observational research. Grieshaber (2001) and Lahman (2009) argue that observers are present as "Others" who are responded to and interacted with by those they seek to observe. While observers may enter any research site with particular agendas and methodological intentions, the identity and actions of the researcher "Other" are constructed, at least in part, through the actions and reactions of those being observed. Furthermore, all actions are located within wider social and cultural contexts, the beliefs, values and practices of which will affect the ways that researchers and children interact with one another (Christensen, 2004). An understanding of researcher identity therefore requires a reflexive consideration of one's own actions in relation to those being researched and the social-cultural context in which the research is being conducted. Bourdieu's theoretical approach provides researchers with a means to this end.

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

While a number of approaches to researcher reflexivity exist, Bourdieu's approach employs the constructs of his Theory of Practice (1977), which he developed to explain the relationships between human actions and the contexts in which they occurred. Bourdieu's central interest was to bridge the divide between individual and external explanations of human behaviour. He proposed that his approach provides a means of unifying the individual, subjective and structural, objective influences of human behaviour, holding that all human behaviour results from "the internalization of externality and the externalization of internality" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). In the following section, I outline Bourdieu's main constructs in order to explain how he proposes that these constructs provide a means of understanding how multiple perspectives and contextual elements intersect to give rise to social behaviours.

Social Fields, Habitus and Capital

Bourdieu claimed that all human action takes place within a *social field*. The field does not refer to a physical space or context, but instead is a metaphorical conceptualisation of a system of expectations, values, rules and conventions that combine to produce certain accepted discourses and practices (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Bourdieu argued that these values, conventions and rules have been generated over time and are often *doxic*, or taken for granted and accepted as "normal". While many would argue that beliefs, values and expectations are internal

structures, because of their collective, social genesis, Bourdieu conceptualises them and the associated practices as external, objective structures and forces (Bourdieu, 1977). Social fields can be broad, comprising, for instance, the values, beliefs and practices associated with a particular cultural group, an educational institution, a profession or a gender. Social fields can also be more idiosyncratic, examples of which could be a family or social group or a field of literary/artistic communication. Due to the abstract nature of the construct, multiple, overlapping fields exist in any one context. Individuals can therefore inhabit more than one field at any one time and thus experience tensions that are associated with the conflicting structures and practices associated with different fields (Maton, 2003).

Bourdieu (1977) contended that the doxic structures of any social field play a major role in determining social actions. These structures constrain individual action by delineating which actions are considered reasonable, logical and "normal" within that field. Bourdieu, however, rejected the deterministic notion that individuals simply reproduce the values and practices of one's social or cultural context. He argued instead that each individual brings a set of subjective understandings, perspectives and motives to any social situation, and developed the notion of *the habitus* to refer to these individual dispositions. The dispositions of the habitus underpin choice and provide impetus for the individual realisation of self-interest. These dispositions accompany individuals as they move between fields, causing them to adopt *positions* or stances within the field in order to respond in individual ways to the social situations and forces that they encounter (Webb et al., 2002). Yet the habitus is not independent of the social field. As a way of explaining the interrelatedness of subjective dispositions and the external structures, Bourdieu proposes that the habitus is socially constructed by virtue of an individual's participation in certain social fields. In this way, "social reality exists, so to speak twice, in things and in mind, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127).

Finally, the actions brought about by the interaction of objective elements of the social field and subjective elements of the habitus are constrained by *capital*, or an individual's status and power within a particular social field (Webb et al., 2002). The habitus can lead individuals to negotiate with and challenge the accepted practices of the field, but each person's willingness to contest the status quo is based on the social and cultural capital that he or she holds. Social capital is attained through group membership and relationship networks, whereas cultural capital refers to valued skills and forms of knowledge as well as to societal advantages associated with social class, position of authority or education. The amount of capital held by an individual in any social field affords a level of status that provides the individual with the capacity to operate effectively within that field. Capital is also supported or limited through relationships with the others in the social field as the interactions that occur within these relationships provide immediate feedback about what is and what is not regarded as acceptable.

Bourdieu's Theory of Practice is therefore a relational model in which individuals balance the confines of the logic and rules of a given field with their own intentions and perceptions of capital in order to achieve their objectives. Bourdieu likens

the logic of social behaviour to that of playing a game in which players have a shared understanding of the rules and skills involved. Operating in a practical sense, individuals draw on their understanding of the rules as well as the opportunities and limitations associated with their position in the team, to make intuitive and strategic decisions about how to act within the context of the game (Webb et al., 2002). Through the habitus, individuals act with agency and can transform the social field by challenging and digressing from its accepted practices. However, this agency can only be understood by contextualising it with reference to the structures of the field, which instil and reinforce notions of normal, reasonable practice (Webb et al, 2002).

The Reflexive Application of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice

As detailed earlier, Bourdieu's Theory of Practice constitutes a way of understanding social behaviour and relationships by providing a framework by which researchers can conceptualise the subjective and objective dynamics of human action and interaction. Bourdieu also claimed that his approach could be reflexively applied by individuals who would then benefit from becoming aware of the positions that they assume within the social fields that make up their social and cultural world. In his approach to researcher reflexivity, he proposed that the constructs of field, habitus and capital are "thinking tools" that can be used in a practical sense to heighten personal awareness of researcher subjectivity and ways that this subjectivity interacts with the forces of social fields in which they operate (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 160). It is through the analysis of the internal and external forces that drive research decisions that researchers have a chance of "knowing the game we play and minimizing the ways in which we are manipulated by the forces of the field" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 198).

Bourdieu's focus on the researcher self has been criticised for being a form of intellectual narcissism that can place more emphasis on the attitudes of the researcher than on the issue under investigation (Maton, 2003). Bourdieu counters this critique by stating that researcher reflexivity does not stand in place of the analysis of the subject of investigation, but instead constitutes a researcher disposition that accompanies and supports, rather than undermines, the scientific production of research knowledge (see also Løkken, Chapter 8, this volume). Through a self-reflexive investigation of the self and the social situatedness of their own subjectivities, researchers are able to critique the values and ideas that they could otherwise hold as "truths" (Webb et al., 2002). This meta-cognitive process assists researchers to "objectivize the objectivizing point of view" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 67), thus achieve the representational distance that allows both themselves and their readers to assess how and why their theoretical and personal biases have shaped the academic endeavour.

While some criticise Bourdieu's reflexivity for placing too great an emphasis on researcher subjectivity, his emphasis on doxic, field-related forces and practices leads others to claim that his approach is overly socially deterministic. In particular, the conceptualisation of the habitus as stemming from an individual's experience

in, and unconscious adoption of, the knowledge structures and rules of one's community can arguably downplay the role of individual agency in accounts of human action (King, 2000). This judgment, though, seems to stem from the construed separation of internal and external structures that Bourdieu strove to overcome. In essence, Bourdieu argues that the social is in the individual just as the individual is in the social, so the habitus "comes to life" when, and only when, it is activated within a particular social field. As Webb et al. (2002) explain, Bourdieu's social field is not concrete or and real space, but a relational space in which field and habitus interact as connected (as opposed to separate) constructs to delineate a set of possible modes of action (p. 68). Bourdieu's concepts can be used by researchers to reflexively critique their research identities and practices, not by privileging the self over the social or vice versa, but by providing a means of exploring the choices that they make in relation to the personal, academic and social/cultural fields that exist within the research context.

Although Bourdieu proposed that researchers should be reflexive throughout the entire research process, the notions of habitus, field and capital are best applied to particular social events or "moments of practice" (Webb et al., 2002, p. 57). It is during these moments that individuals gain first-hand experience of how the internal and external forces associated with overlapping social fields interact to shape their practices. To assist with the reflexive process, Bourdieu proposes that researchers employ his constructs in order to analyse (i) the forces of the field or fields in which they are operating, (ii) the positions and relationships between positions occupied by individuals in the fields, and (iii) the ways in which capital is played out and negotiated within these fields (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, pp. 104–105).

In sections below I use three research events that were experienced as I conducted my observations to discuss Bourdieu's Theory of Practice further. These three events are chosen to illustrate how the three analytical processes listed above can be used to reflect on how interactions between the subjective and objective elements of any social research situation shape the roles, identity and presence that the researcher ultimately adopts within the field.

Exploring Forces of the Field: Feelings of Intrusion

Central to Bourdieu's approach to researcher reflexivity is the call for researchers to make explicit the theoretical basis of their project intentions. In this way, those conducting and reading the research can identify the affordances and constraints related to the particular theoretical field adopted by the researcher (Webb et al., 2002). As the project aimed to document the dynamics of relationship formation in the nursery, my intent was to be as comprehensive as possible in the types of interactions and events that I recorded in the nursery. This decision was founded on the principle that a range of experiences, including play, routine times, transitions and conversations, make up the infant-toddler curriculum and that any of these contexts could present rich relationship-forming opportunities for the individuals

involved (Gonzalez-Mena & Widmeyer Eyer, 2007; Greenman, Stonehouse, & Schweikert, 2008). Observing across many relationship contexts increases the opportunities to document the variety of functions that relationships play in infants' lives and learning and investigate how different types of relationships including peer, infant–teacher, infant–parent and teacher–parent feature in their relationship formation (Lamb, 2005; Lewis, 2005).

Despite my original intent to observe broadly, I became aware very early in the study that certain events were accompanied by a sense of personal discomfort. The events that triggered this uneasiness were characterised by high levels of emotion or personal intimacy, such as when infants became upset on separation, when they were being rocked closely and quietly to sleep and when their nappy was being changed. While I found that I could observe these moments discretely from a distance, my unease caused me to turn off the camera. Bourdieu claims that when social fields overlap, the interaction creates subjective tensions that cause individuals to adapt their behaviour to accept or challenge dominant forces. While my theoretical aims and chosen method were appropriate, given the academic field in which I was situated when planning the research, it seemed that other fields were at play in the nursery context that challenged these research agendas.

Later reflection suggested that the camera was a catalyst for feelings of intrusion. While the use of camcorders has become commonplace in observational research, available literature tends to focus on the practicalities of using the camera (Fletcher, Price, & Branen, 2010) and the benefits and limitations of the data it captures (Graue & Walsh, 1998; Walsh, Bakir, Lee, Chung, & Chung, 2007) rather than any social pressures and ethical issues that are triggered by its use. However, the wider cultural connotations of using cameras in research were discussed some 20 years ago as follows:

> In an age of electronic eavesdropping (licit as well as illicit), videotaping inevitably carries with it an unsavoury whiff of videotapping, intrusion, surveillance, and expanding technologies of social control. (Tobin & Davidson, 1990, p. 276)

Tobin and Davidson's concerns are reflected in recent research by Aarsand and Forsberg (2010), who report that the video recording of emotionally charged or intimate events can create tensions because of different expectations associated with the spheres of public and private lives. Reflecting Bourdieu's notion of overlapping social fields, Aarsand and Forsberg state that these "ethical dilemmas are connected to general cultural norms, to one's relationship to the participants in the study, and to expectations from the research community" (p. 250).

While human ethics guidelines require researchers to consider ethical issues before commencing their study, Aarsand and Forsberg (2010) claim that it is often only during practice that ethical constructs become a living reality for researchers, forcing them to make momentary ethical choices. In the context of conducting observations in the close, intimate surrounds of this nursery, cultural notions of privacy were particularly salient for me, especially given the fact that I was new to the nursery and was still getting to know the children, staff and parents. As found by Aarsand and Forsberg, one such tension related to bodily privacy, in

particular, widespread concerns about video-capturing nakedness and episodes of physical intimacy. Such issues are also discussed by Duncan (1999), who describes the dilemmas faced by teachers of young children who have to balance professional responsibilities with societal concerns about children's sexuality and protection. Professional beliefs related to children's rights were also evoked as I sought to respect the integrity of the infants and their caregivers during these emotionally intimate moments (see Johansson, 2005, for a useful discussion on children's integrity). As a consequence, while my theoretical orientation recognised the relationship significance of intimate events, professional and cultural notions including those identified earlier suggested to me that they were private moments and that video recording these moments intruded on the infants' and adults' right to privacy.

My "in the moment" decision to cease recording highlights an important aspect of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice. Bourdieu argues that human behaviour is geared towards the practical, towards the ability to negotiate one's way through any given situation in accordance with the doxic imperatives and practices considered appropriate within that particular field (Webb et al., 2002). Decisions are made, but these decisions generally arise from an unconscious subscription of the individual to the "rules" related to that situation within the social field. For Bourdieu, this practical logic poses a risk to research processes as it can lead the researcher to overlook the forces that shape and constrain the production of research knowledge. Looking back, while I was aware at the time that I was experiencing a conflict of interest, my decision to stop recording lacked the deeper reflexive awareness of my own situated practice that Bourdieu argues is necessary if researchers are to understand and therefore overcome the field-related forces that operate in any given context.

In order to become more strategic, Bourdieu argues that researchers need to explore "the unthought categories of thought which delimit the thinkable and predetermine the thought" (Bourdieu, 1982, cited in Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 40). This task requires reflexive thinking as opposed to the practical mode of thinking described earlier. The next aspect of Bourdieu's reflexive approach involves examining the positions that individuals adopt within their social fields as a means of identifying the different interests and agendas that exist (Webb et al., 2002). Bourdieu proposes that position taking is a relational process that occurs through reference to one's own and others' ideas about acceptable action in a given context. A reflexive understanding of position is developed through the researchers' deliberation of his or her own agendas and intentions *in relation to* the accepted practices within the field *and* the practices and perceptions of others operating within that field. In the context of the present study, the infants' reactions and responses to my presence with the camera provides one illustration of how this notion of positioning played out during the early stages of the study.

Exploring Positions: Becoming the "Camera Lady"

As detailed earlier, during my familiarisation period in the nursery, the infants began to approach me and interact with me in a way similar to the how they interacted with other adults in the room. Their actions towards me changed, however, once I began to use the camcorder. Issues of identity came to the fore as I considered how I was being perceived by the infants. I engaged and interacted with them like a caring adult, akin to a new, but relatively competent, teacher in the nursery. I also stood back and recorded for extended periods of time. To the children, I seemed to be an "unusual type of adult" (Christensen, 2004, p. 174) and was treated and responded to accordingly. My early field notes record the typical nature of these early engagements:

> A routine has developed with three or four of the children. As soon as I take the camera out of its case, I am approached by at least one who tries to look into the viewing screen. It is no use discouraging this, as the children simply persist until I let them look. Mind you, I don't actually want to discourage them because it's becoming interesting data in its own right. Now, for the first few minutes of each visit, I have one or more children sitting on my lap, looking through the screen and naming children that they see. When I am interested in how children are connecting with others in the nursery, the camera has become an interesting tool that is capturing (and maybe) facilitating those connections. (Reflection notes, 4-3-08)

Although it was chosen for its small size and portability, the camcorder appeared to be an identifying feature of my position in the eyes of some nursery children (see also Løkken, Chapter 8, this volume). The significance of my newly formed identity was reinforced by 18-month-old Kyle,[2] who, on entering the room with his mother, ran up to me and pointed excitedly at the camera. His mother exclaimed "Oh—this is the 'camera lady'!" and proceeded to tell me how Kyle had talked frequently about "cam-a lady" when she talked with him about his day at the nursery.

In order to understand the positions that individuals assume, Bourdieu asks researchers to explore connections between the dispositional and the field-related basis of the actions of those being researched as well as their own researcher behaviours (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). The actions of Kyle and others illustrate the knowledge that very young children often have about technological devices such as camcorders. With the prevalence of technology in today's society, children are used to seeing adults use this equipment and are often proficient users themselves from a very young age (Marsh et al., 2005; Willett, Robinson, & Marsh, 2009). Accordingly, Walsh and colleagues (2007) report that children can be fascinated by the research camera and want to engage with it when it is brought in to their educational settings (Walsh et al., 2007). While it is impossible to be conclusive about the motivations of these children, I considered that the interests and intentions that these infants sought to realise through interacting with me may have stemmed from a knowledge of digital media that they brought from their home-life experiences. I also thought that their expectations could have been linked to

[2] All children's names have been changed for confidentiality reasons.

regular nursery experiences with teachers who, due to a pedagogical commitment to extending interests and inquiries, generally encouraged and allowed the infants to handle and explore novel items.

While subjective and tentative, these interpretations of the internal and social origins of the infants' actions were important because the sense that I made of the infants' positions informed the stance that I assumed towards them in these situations. My acceptance of their advances, though, was not only linked to my interpretations of their positions but also emanated from the dispositions that I bought to the situation. My response could be linked to an awareness of promoted values, understandings and practices within the immediate nursery context, but, as documented in my reflection notes, my research agenda remained in my mind as I was conscious of how these interactions could contribute towards my understanding of the nature of the infants' relationships with others. When discussing participant observation approaches, Emond (2005) contends that multiple subjectivities and social forces intersect to produce reactions and responses in the research context. Likewise, Bourdieu would argue that the position I adopted during these research moments resulted from balancing my own and the infants' perspectives that had links to multiple social fields including the fields of technology, teaching, research and the nursery curriculum.

According to Bourdieu, position taking directly relates to the construct of capital. The positions that individuals assume not only derive from the capital that they have within that field but also underscore an ability to operate successfully within social fields in order to realise individual agendas (Webb et al., 2002). Bourdieu proposes that capital is often related to social or professional status within a specific field, an idea that is reflected in claims that, by virtue of their adult status, researchers of young children are in positions of power in the research context (Fine & Kent, 1988; Langston et al., 2004). Christensen (2004), however, suggests that power does not necessarily reside in individuals per se, but rather in the ways that social positions are understood and constructed by those with whom we interact with in our social lives. Her perspective is consistent with Bourdieu's contention that social fields always consist of "struggles for position" (Mahar, Harker, & Wilkes, 1990, p. 13) as individuals negotiate control and authority within that field. Accordingly, Bourdieu's claims that capital is never static, but can be raised or transferred through the choices that individuals make and the negotiations that take place as self-interests clash (Webb et al., 2002). As illustrated in the next example, these negotiations result in the shifting of positions as different intentions and agendas are promoted and relegated during the process of data generation.

Exploring Capital: Leading and Following

One of the case-study infants, 17-month-old Ben, had been absent from the nursery for a couple of weeks. As he had been attending the centre for less than 2 months, I was keen to observe how he settled back in on his return. Watching him separate from his father on arrival and wander outside towards the other children, I

enthusiastically reached for the camera, sat a short distance away and waited for any social events to occur. Ben moved inside and sat on a cushion in the book area. He watched as I followed as discretely as possible and then simply sat there, watching me as I watched him. After a few awkward moments, I put the camera down and asked Ben, “What would you like me to do?” He maintained his gaze a few seconds longer and then shifted slightly to reach a book from the shelf. He opened the pages and looked back up at me with a slight smile. Taking this as an invitation, I joined him on the cushion and we looked at the book together.

When describing Bourdieu’s concept of field, Wacquant (1992) draws attention to social agency when he writes, “A field is . . . a *space of play* which exists as such only to the extent that players enter into it who believe in and actively pursue the prizes it offers” (p. 19, original italics). In the above-mentioned example, while I sought to take advantage of the opportunity that Ben’s return to the centre afforded for research, his apparent discomfort with my presence indicated to me that he had a different intention in mind. Any capital that I held due to my adult or researcher status was transferred to him as I followed his lead, shifting my position from “observer” to “responsive adult”. Ben continued this leading role when, a short time later, he stood up and went to a far wall in the classroom. This wall held a large picture frame in which had been placed many family photographs of children in the room. Ben looked back at me and appeared to be waiting for me to follow. I picked up the camera and, reassuming my observer stance, turned it on and approached. The notes below describe what occurred:

> Ben is by the photo wall and he points out his mother and father to me, looking, smiling as he labels them; “mama”, “papa”. He also points to himself in the photo and says “Ben”, to which I respond “and Ben, yes!”. He looks back and points to some of the other photos, labeling “baby” and checking back to look at me when he points to a photo of Matthew (the youngest case-study infant). (Observation notes 5-5-08)

For Bourdieu, successful practice in any field is contingent on (i) an individual’s responsiveness to relative positions in the field, (ii) knowledge of the accepted values and practices within that field, and (iii) the ability to use these understandings to manoeuvre within the conditions of the field in order to realise one’s goals (Webb et al., 2002). The assumptions that I made about Ben’s resistance to my initial approach and my willingness to shift positions in response to this resistance seemed to pay off, as he soon after permitted me to resume recording. For the rest of that day, Ben allowed me to accompany him as he played and interacted with others. He generally appeared comfortable with my observer stance, but he also asserted his presence by initiating simple games, requesting assistance and sharing his achievements and interests with me. These initiations required a flexible response on my part; sometimes I withdrew to the background, sometimes I chatted with him while the camera remained on and sometimes I put the camera down so that I could more closely attend to his requests and invitations.

My experience with Ben that day suggested that he was willing to accept my observer presence *as long as* I fulfilled the role of responsive, attentive caregiver that he had come to expect from the teachers in the room. While Bourdieu likens the ability to negotiate roles and positions to strategic moves in a game, Christensen

(2004) labels field-based data collection as a “dialogic enterprise” (p. 170), which is shaped by the willingness of the researcher and researched to engage with the communication and activity cultures that exist in specific contexts. Like Bourdieu, Christensen stresses the importance of engaging in “cultural practices of communication . . . [of] . . . getting to know about different codes of conduct and communication, contexts and timing” (p. 170) so that field-based researchers can gain the trust and acceptance of the children that they are observing. The experience with Ben, and others like it, emphasised the relationship aspect of my observational work with the children, and suggested that a careful consideration of researcher and child positions can bring about a level of mutual acceptance.

When established, this mutual acceptance can help to alleviate ethical issues that emerge when prolonged presence at a research site allows relationships to be forged between the children and the researcher. Relationships bring with them expectations of interactivity and responsiveness (Hinde, 1979), so the question of when and how to reciprocate children’s social advances is frequently problematic for researchers. Events such as the one described above require researchers to consider the level of social and cultural capital that is afforded to infants who are being observed. Although literature exists about older children’s decision making during their participation in research, little is available to provide guidance to researchers of infants. Accepting that infants have the right to lead interactions, as Ben did, involves acknowledging that they also have the right to exercise choice and agency in the research context (Greene & Hill, 2005). As Clark and Moss (2001) state, this not only requires an openness towards children’s perspectives but also involves “acknowledging their rights to express their point of view or to remain silent” (p. 7). I decided that my “following” response to children’s play initiations was authentic and reasonable, given my participatory role in the nursery and the expectations that both the infants and I had in relation to my adopted role. Similarly, in her longitudinal observational study, Stephenson (2009) writes that the affordance of time enabled her to put her camera down and respond to requests to “play with me” (p. 137). In both cases, through a flexible negotiation of capital and power, the ethical issue of when to lead and when to follow was able to be addressed.

My experience was consistent with Bourdieu’s contention that social fields and individual dispositions are mutually transformative. Lahman (2009) refers to this process as a “dance of reciprocity between adult and child as they negotiate their research relationship” (p. 289). Not only did my interactions with Ben prompt me to be flexible with my researcher stance, but our reciprocal adaptations transformed the social field in which we were operating, giving rise to relationship-based interactions that became data to be documented and analysed in their own right. In my experience, the roles that I adopted and my presence within the nursery made it impossible to divorce myself from much of the data that was constructed. In many instances, my lived experience of emerging relationships between myself and the infants, and their willingness to accept and include me in their social spaces, contributed towards the ultimate understanding of relationship dynamics that arose during the study.

Infant Social Agency and Relationships

While the focus of this chapter has been on the methodological aspects of the study, in this final section I explore some of the broader implications of Bourdieu's Theory of Practice for understanding the social lives of infants and toddlers in early childhood centres. Webb et al. (2002) sum up Bourdieu's theoretical approach as a way to "look at the whole social world, and investigate how it is put together, and for whom it works" (p. 66). In the context of infant-toddler research, his framework raises questions about who makes social calls and why. Who answers and who challenges these calls? Whose interests are being served? And how does this occur in the context of social and cultural practices? As an analytical framework, Bourdieu's Theory of Practice affords new possibilities to researchers who are interested in exploring the individual and sociocultural dynamics of infants' and toddlers' social worlds.

The relational aspect of Bourdieu's approach can foreground the agency of infants within their educational contexts. On the one hand, an exploration of capital can be used to draw attention to the competence with which infants negotiate positions with others in their social world and demonstrate how they are able to work towards the realisation of their own and shared interests and goals. Furthermore, by calling for a consideration of ways in which the social and individual intersect, Bourdieu's approach offers an extension to the way in which agency is often understood. Agency, and the related concept of autonomy, has traditionally been associated with promotion of individual perspectives, self-efficacy and self-control, and has therefore been contrasted with external forces that are thought to constrain individual volition (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Bourdieu, though, claims that agency is realised through the attainment of capital, which is linked to an individual's ability to operate successfully *within* the forces and accepted practices of the social field. From this point of view, agency and autonomy are situated constructs that embody the execution of both individual and social forces. When discussing the issue of individual perspectives, Bourdieu writes:

> It is knowledge of the field itself in which they evolve that allows us best to grasp the roots of their singularity, their *point of view* or position (in a field) from which their particular vision of the world (and of the field itself) is constructed. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 107, italics in original)

In other words, agency and individual perspective finds existence through, and are supported by, shared social and cultural practices that provide opportunities for intentions to be pursued and voices to be heard (Helwig, 2006). In this way, social agency is no longer construed as residing wholly within an individual, but instead is negotiated and realised collectively through engagement with one's community practices and expectations.

This point is linked to perhaps one of Bourdieu's most significant contributions to social research, which is that his Theory of Practice is geared towards understanding individuals who are "embedded in complex, constantly negotiated networks of

relations with other individuals" (King, 2000, p. 421). In the context of infant-toddler research, his approach can be applied to investigate the dynamics of infants' social worlds and explore how interpersonal relationships are formed and transformed as these young children interact with others. Current research on infants' social relationships has tended to concentrate on the caregiver's role in the formation of attachment relationships and has been criticised for downplaying the active contributing role of infants and cultural practices (e.g., Cortazar & Herreros, 2010; Degotardi & Pearson, 2008; Weisner, 2005). While this chapter has focused on processes contributing to researcher self-awareness, the discussed research events have provided indications about how infants employ agency and social understandings within conventional social practices in order to initiate and maintain connections with adults. Bourdieu's ideas about positions and position taking are also consistent with some recent analyses of infant peer relationships. Work by Løkken (2000), for example, describes how a child-care centre "toddler culture" consisting of play routines that were generated, understood and shared by toddler peers provided a rich context for the development of peer relatedness and relationships. The significance of "knowing the game" is similarly emphasised by Degotardi and Pearson (2010), who detail how a nursery teacher skilfully used a singing game that was a family favourite of one focus infant and popular among other nursery infants to bring the infants together. This teacher drew on her awareness of the individual and shared significance and knowledge of the game to encourage peer–peer social interactions and facilitate the focus infants' entry into the peer culture of the nursery.

There are potentials, therefore, for Bourdieu's approach to be used to enhance current knowledge about the complex, multifaceted nature of infants' and toddlers' social lives. In many cultures, the care and education of young children is shared by different family and community members or between home and centre-based contexts (Lamb, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Shpancer, 2002). Infants and toddlers form relationships with multiple caregivers and peers, all of whom bring their own perspectives, experiences and expectations about how relationships should be formed and maintained (Degotardi & Pearson, 2008; Kagitcibasi, 2007; Weisner, 2005). Explorations of the ways in which cultural beliefs, expectations and practices interact with individual perspectives and capabilities are needed if the field is to develop comprehensive and culturally inclusive models of relationship formation. Bourdieu's Theory of Practice provides one analytical framework that could move understandings forward in this area.

Concluding Thoughts

Bourdieu argued that the strength of his reflexive approach lies in its potential to provide researchers with a level of professional insight that enables them to break from the practical logic that underpins much of human action. As "thinking tools" his central constructs can be used by researchers who wish to analyse their own practice and researcher presence in terms of understandings of self, other and relatedness within their research fields. His approach is particularly relevant for

studies using prolonged and participatory contact with those being observed as such as the one described in this chapter, as researchers often need to respond to "in the moment" issues that arise as they interact with the children. Reflexivity is argued to render impulses less active as researchers become more aware of the forces that underpin the decisions that they make in the field (Grenfell, 2004). Because of my proximity to the infants, I was subjected to many "in the moment" dilemmas associated with the different interests and values linked to overlapping social fields within the nursery context. Professional and personal notions of caregiver sensitivity, responsiveness, human rights and dignity, and infant capabilities and vulnerabilities all had to be balanced with research agendas and methodological intentions. In some cases, such as my decision not to video record emotionally charged, intimate moments, decisions are made in the absence of a sound realisation of the personal, social and cultural forces at work and thus, in Bourdieu's terms, were more practical than reflexive. In contrast, my experience with Ben illustrates how a more conscious deliberation of different perspectives can result in the ability to establish a valuable compromise between infant and researcher intentions and agendas.

The "in the moment" negotiations that frequently feature in naturalistic observation research could be argued to limit the applicability of Bourdieu's approach to this type of research because of his contention that practical decisions are often made instinctively and subconsciously. Bourdieu, however, recognised the need to be realistic about the extent to which researchers can exercise the representation distance needed to operate reflexively. He saw reflexive thinking as a disposition of the habitus that is developed over time through experience with research dilemmas (Mahar et al., 1990). When applying this principle to himself and his own research practice, Bourdieu wrote:

> One knows the world better and better as one knows oneself better, scientific knowledge and knowledge of oneself and one's own social unconscious advances hand in hand, and that primary experience transformed by scientific practice transforms scientific practice and vice versa. (Bourdieu, 2001, cited in Grenfell, 2004, p. 189)

His approach to reflexivity thus becomes a conduit for researcher development and change as experiences in the field strengthens the reflexive disposition that can be transported and applied to future research projects in order to enhance research transparency and rigor.

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Commentary to Sheila Degotardi: Two Steps Back: Exploring Identity and Presence While Observing Infants in the Nursery

Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson

In this chapter, Sheila Degotardi raises a number of important principal issues. In this commentary chapter, we will, albeit briefly, elaborate on some of these. More specifically, we will discuss (i) changing notions of knowing and skills and what these imply for research on infants, (ii) a critical revolution in human ontogeny taking place in infancy that we suggest is important to relate discussions about studying infants to, and (iii) some ethical considerations.

Changing Notions of Knowing and Skills

With sociocultural theory (Vygotsky, 1930/2004, 1987; cf. Mead, 1934/1967; and more recently, Fleer, 2010; Kozulin, 1998), the idea of knowledge and competence as private matters that the individual has or has not got is challenged. Instead, a notion of competences as contingent not only upon others but also upon the availability of cultural tools (including speech as well as physical artefacts) is proposed. If viewed from this perspective, the fact that the observed child responds to the observer need not be seen as "noise" disturbing the "transmission" of knowing but rather as an invitation to children to come to know. For example, what the researcher observes, directs his or her camera towards, in a sense communicates to the child what to consider of interest (an expectation, conventional knowledge; cf. Bruner, 1993). In this way, to simultaneously make the child pay attention to and notice what would otherwise perhaps pass him or her by unnoticed provides an incentive for the child's development, which is the very matter at the heart of child studies. Simply observing children may thus work as an incentive to the child's development. Already discovering the fact that someone (an adult) is willing to share one's (the infant's) attention (cf. Tomasello, 1999) is important to the young child's development and evolving notion of self (cf. Tomasello, Kruger, & Ratner, 1993), which, as we understand it, are the issues raised by Sheila Degotardi in this chapter. On a more overarching level, this reasoning could be seen as an example of a notion in Vygotsky (1987), to study something, set it in motion.

Noticing and Developing: From a Dyadic to a Triadic Relationship in Infancy

The basic implicit premise for Sheila Degotardi's reasoning may be phrased thus: It makes a difference to a person whether another person is present; that is, already in infants is visible a basic human responsiveness (Stern, 1985).

This premise/realization has important consequences for research, also with infants who are already mindful of “the other” (for the present discussion, the observer). However, while this responsiveness is present from birth, the kinds of relationships children develop with others and their surrounding world take a revolutionary change in infancy (at around 9 months of age; Tomasello et al., 1993). This change, we argue, has important implications for studying infants in research. Tomasello (1999) has argued that around 9 months of age an important change appears in the human ontogeny. Observations of children 6 months old who are engaged with an object when another person enters the situation, have shown how the young child tends to ignore the person, alternatively focus on the person and ignore the object. In contrast, when observing children 12 months old in similar arrangements, the child is able to focus on both the object and the other person. Hence, between these two periods in time, the child has gone from being engaged in dyadic relationships (to another person or to an object) to being able to participate in a triadic relationship. This fundamentally changes the child’s developmental disposition. In a sense, for two (or more) people to share attention on something “third” (e.g., an object) is fundamental to what can be referred to as an education (Pramling & Pramling Samuelsson, 2010).

This developmental revolution (Vygotsky, 1987), we argue, also has important implications for studying infants, that is, the issue discussed in this chapter (the infants participating in Sheila Degotardi’s study were ages 6–24 months at the time). Our reasoning goes like this. Children who have not yet developed this ability to engage in triadic relationships can be expected to either (a) focus on the observer, rather than on what he or she was engaged with before noticing being observed, or, alternatively, (b) continue to be engaged with the object and not pay attention to the observer. Hence, with these young children, the observer may be what the child focuses upon (allowing research on how children relate to other persons) or not be noticed at all (meaning the observer does not really make a difference to the child’s activity). These possibilities springing from Tomasello’s observations, in our view, constitute interesting tools for thinking about the relationship between the observer and the observed infant child in research. When the child is able to participate with another person in an activity around something “third”, the observer possibly enters a new role in generating data. The interplay between the observer and the child around something (a shared focus of attention) will be possible to study as a research interest in its own right. In more general terms, this reasoning testifies to the importance of researchers to simultaneously keep in mind *what* they know and *how* we know this, that is, one’s own role in the knowledge production (cf. Pramling, 2006). Empirical data is not collected or gathered, but generated and produced.

Ethics: In the Short and the Long Term

Due to them being dependent upon caregivers to cater for their needs, young children (infants and toddlers) appear particularly exposed to the researcher's ethical considerations, as emphasized in this chapter by Sheila Degotardi. Studying young children, it is important to take on this responsibility, taking care that the child will not experience being studied negatively. This is an important consideration on the spot, in the here and now of observing. Particularly, using the video format in making observations raises the need for motivation. A principle here is to only use this method of generating data if it is motivated in terms of the research questions. In some cases, this means that it is motivated to use this method even if the interest of a study is solely on speech among children and teachers, since it is often difficult or even impossible to differentiate between all the different voices of the children if only having access to an audio recording. Hence, the interest need not be on visual aspects (e.g., what children do with toys) in order for it to be motivated to video record the children. But in some cases, it is of particular importance to question the choice of video. To give an imaginary example, pretend that you are interested in studying what is sometimes referred to as proto-musical conversations (Trevarthen, 1993). Whether caregiver and child have eye contact with one another may (or may not) be a critical feature for such "conversations" to take place. This would suggest the use of video recordings to generate data. However, one type of situation in which these "conversations" between infant and caregiver take place may be in routine caregiving situations, such as changing the child's diaper. If this were the case, video recording this situation would not appear motivated. An audio recording would suffice, since there are only two voices, and these are distinct from each other, the caregiver's and the child's. Hence, deciding whether to video record is important to consider in the here and now, as discussed by Sheila Degotardi. But it is also important to consider this issue in the long-term perspective, that is, how the child may respond to having been filmed, as he or she gets older. Would the child feel exposed if he or she, say, 20 years later studies to become a preschool teacher and sees herself on film in the classroom for educational purposes? This is, of course, impossible to know in advance. But keeping such considerations in mind is an important part of making responsible research with infants.

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Chapter 3
Investigating Morality in Toddler's Life-Worlds

Eva Johansson

The following interaction between toddlers took place in a Swedish preschool.[1] This particular toddler group involved 16 children aged between one and three years. The children and their teachers were gathered in a large playroom. Here they could sit or jump on the two sofas, or do jigsaw puzzles or other creative activities at the tables:

> Anna (16 months) is sitting at the low table in the large playroom. She has a comforter in her mouth. Olle (18 months) comes along, looks at her and smiles. He takes the comforter out of her mouth, holds it in his hand and looks at it—still smiling. Olle's movements are gentle. Now he puts the comforter in his own mouth and takes it out again (as if he is having a taste). Anna looks at him. Then she stretches her arm out trying to capture the comforter. Olle takes a step backwards. He sucks the pacifier again for a short while. Then he takes the comforter out of his mouth, looks at it and stretches it towards Anna. A teachers come along, takes the dummy from Olle.

This excerpt raised many questions for me as a researcher, such as: How do these children experience their "wordless" interplay? What might be of importance for Olle when he takes the comforter from Anna? He uses gentle movements and he is smiling, why is it so? And what might be Anna's experiences of this kind of interaction? Is she all right with Olle using her comforter and how does she interpret Olle's intention when he stretches out the comforter after sucking it a second time? Is it possible for me as a researcher to interpret this interaction in terms of morality from the children's point of view?

What then is morality? In general terms morality deals with values and norms concerning a good life as well as how to treat others (Løgstrup, 1994). Morality

[1] This chapter involves day-care settings in Sweden and Australia. In a Swedish context, early childhood education in general is called preschool and involves children from one to five years. In an Australian context, preschool involves children from four years and early childhood education for the youngest children is often labelled "toddler group". In this text "preschool" refers to early childhood education for young children in general and involves children between one and three years in both countries.

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also involves power. According to the theory of ethics proposed by Knud Løgstrup (1994), we are given to each other, implying that power is always present in human relations. We are always locked in this relation of dependence and responsibility for the other. Moral values are here considered as qualities in social acts that children, in their relations, communicate as positive and negative, good and bad, right and wrong. The word "and" is here used to indicate that the qualities of positive and negative are not always exclusive or experienced as dichotomies. Nevertheless, values can come into conflict, which often make them visible, forcing judgments and preferences. Such values are, according to Schütz (1972), embedded in a sociocultural situation of history as a result of layers of intersubjective human experiences, of knowledge and interpretations, organized as the individual's taken-for-granted knowledge.

Two investigations of morality among children (aged 1–3 years) in different day-care contexts in Sweden and Australia are the departure for discussion. The intention was to find out values for interplay experienced and expressed by the children as intentions, meanings, judgements, wishes, desires, objections, and so on for how to act towards each other. Nineteen children in a Swedish toddler group, 10 boys and 9 girls, aged from one to three years of age, participated in one of the studies (Johansson, 1999). The daily interactions of children were video recorded across a period of 7 months. The other investigation took place in two day-care groups in Queensland, Australia (Johansson, 2009a, 2011a), and involved 19 children, 8 boys and 11 girls, 2–3 years of age. The everyday encounters between these children were video recorded for a period of 3 months. The ontological assumptions underlying these investigations were inspired by the theory of the *life-world* developed by the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) and the theory about the *structure of the social world* developed by the Austrian sociologist Alfred Schütz' theory (1972). Of fundamental importance in these investigations has been the interest in understanding the youngest children's perspectives on morality.

The results from the referred investigations indicate that these young children, in very different contexts, value and protect their own and others rights (Johansson, 1999, 2009a). Furthermore, they show concern for each others' well-being. Conventional values, for example following the rules for order implemented by teachers, also became emergent in the investigations. In addition, power was given a moral value; for example, the power to assert the children's own rights but also the rights of others. Positions of power were related to age as well as physical and psychological strength.

What kind of processes and considerations lead to these conclusions and in what ways can they be said to be legitimate expressions of children's perspectives of morality? The proposition is that ontology, methodology, methods, interpretations and descriptions comprise a whole that should allow the researcher to approach young children's life-worlds and gain access to their perspectives. This is, however, a complex issue. There are lots of limitations and dilemmas to encounter as a researcher when claiming to speak in terms of children's voices, as has been the theme of this book, and certainly when these voices are, to a large extent, expressed through the body.

Life-World Theory

The theoretical framework that has influenced the investigations referred to in this discussion is, as already indicated, based on phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Schütz, 1972; Gadamer, 1996). The reason for this choice is that research within the phenomenological movement (Bengtsson, 1998) aims to understand how various phenomena in the world appear for human beings. The core idea is that objects in the world (things, events, interactions, people, culture, etc.) do not exist in themselves, but that they are phenomena and as such always appearing in some way(s) *for* someone (Husserl, 1989). Although such objects or phenomena always transcend the subject, they are present when we are born and when we die. Doing research within this tradition therefore means to try to understand how various phenomena appear for people (Bengtsson, 2007). From these thoughts we learn that getting access to the child's perspectives is a core idea in this theory. The child's perspectives can be described in terms of "that which appears" for the child, i.e., the child's experiences and expressions for meaning. Of specific interest in this discussion are following concepts drawn from the above theories: *the life-world*, *the lived body*, *intersubjectivity*, *the horizon* and *stock of knowledge*. These concepts and their relation to the actual investigations will be outlined in the following parts.

The Life-World

Two relevant questions to ask, then, are, "How can research get access to children's perspectives?" and "How can "that what appears" to the toddler appear also to the researcher?"

One precondition for getting close to the children's perspectives is our beliefs about how to understand the other. First of all, the ontological basis of *the life-world* is based on the idea that the child is a perceiving subject who is inseparable from, and in constant interaction with, the world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes about the life-world as "that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always *speaks* ..." (1962, p. ix). The life-world is characterized by ambiguity and is both subjective and objective at the same time. The life-world is lived and experienced, but is also taken for granted by the subject. The life-world is within us. Simultaneously it is that world towards which the subject's life is directed.

Preschool is seen here as a vital part of children's daily life and is, as such, part of the child's life-world. In preschool, children (and teachers) create a social and cultural world of taken-for-granted expectations, meanings and values that are of significance to their common life. These expectations, meanings and values are intertwined not only with society but also with children's (and teachers') various experiences in their life-worlds outside preschool.

Intersubjectivity and the Lived Body

Merleau-Ponty (1962) describes human life as intersubjective. We are intertwined in relations with other people, with culture, history and society. We are directed

towards other people, and it is through the concrete interaction with others that we are able to understand each other. According to Merleau-Ponty, we are condemned to meaning. From the beginning of life we experience and give meaning to the world. We communicate by encountering each other's worlds, by confirming or questioning each other's being. With inspiration from Schütz (1972) we learn that (inter)actions have a character of a project directed towards a goal and they are related to both past and future. The individual interprets the actions against a background of a previous stock of knowledge, i.e., layers of intersubjective human experiences, of knowledge and interpretations, organized as the individual's taken for granted knowledge. The stock of knowledge develops and changes through interactions with others (Schütz, 1972). Therefore, children's actions are understood as meaningful, and directed towards a project with a goal or goals. It is, however, important to bear in mind that even though children's (inter)actions always have a direction, this does not mean that they are necessarily consciously planned. New meanings evolve in (inter)actions, which can lead to new ways of acting, and actions might become habits since knowledge is internalised through our body, writes Merleau-Ponty (1962, pp. 142–147).

Significant in the theory of the life-world is the lived body, which is regarded as central for understanding and communication (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The other's bodily expressions, his or her gestures, emotions and words, create a whole that is possible for us to understand. This is not a question of feeling like the other; it is rather about openness towards the other's existence in the world. Still there are always parts of the other that we can neither reach nor understand, says Merleau-Ponty, since we cannot step out of our body and be the other.

> Just as the spoken word is significant not only through the medium of individual words, but also through that of accent, intonation, gesture and facial expression, and as these additional meanings no longer reveal the speaker's thoughts but the source of his thoughts and his fundamental manner of being . . . (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 151)

As per Merleau-Ponty, researchers are always part of the world they are studying, involving their various experiences, understandings and limitations. According to Schütz (1972), researchers are not only situated in the physical world of the present but also within a sociocultural history. This situation is a result of layers of intersubjective human experiences, of knowledge and interpretations, organized as the individual's taken for granted knowledge. The sociocultural situation is in one sense also the individual's disposable property since it is defined and interpreted by the individual.

The Ambiguity of Horizons

The metaphor of *the horizon* can help to visualise the complexity that is embedded in perceptions of the child's bodily being-in-the-world.[2] Hans Georg Gadamer (1996) sees the horizon as intertwined with a position from where we look:

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[2] The hyphens between the words indicate that our existence in the world is impossible to reduce or to overcome (Heidegger, 1981).

> The horizon is the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point. . . . we speak of narrowness of horizon, of the possible expansion of horizon, of the opening up of new horizons, and so forth. (Gadamer, 1996, p. 302)

The horizon is open and continually in process—yet it is related to time (history, presence and future), space (where we are) and lived body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Edmund Husserl (1989) regards the horizon as an expression of lived experience. The ways we experience the world do always have an implicit horizon, which in turn is based on our previous experiences. When experiencing horizons change, new horizons might appear, which permits new experiences and again changing horizons. What does this mean for a researcher trying to investigate young children's moral intentions?

This idea of the horizon helps us as researchers to become aware of our possibilities and limitations when searching for the young child's perspective of various phenomena in the world. In gaining insight into toddlers' perspectives of morality, the researchers' gaze and focus need to be close to the child's "horizon". This means to place oneself, literally and mentally, beside the child trying to gaze at the (same) horizon (Gadamer, 1996). Nevertheless, there will always be a distance between the child and the researcher, not least because of different lived bodies (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). First of all, it is impossible for us to stand on exactly the same place. In addition, the researcher and the child are of different sizes. The researcher needs to kneel down beside the child to be able to come close to the child's viewpoint. Second, what we can distinguish in the horizon is intertwined with our various (both similar and different) experiences. White (2009) has argued that such a gaze is always elusive since it is influenced by the ideologies at play within the research experience. Our gaze is embedded in previous experiences, which opens up possibilities for new horizons to emerge but can also reduce the possible viewpoint (Husserl, 1989; Schütz, 1972). As time passes, new horizons will appear (Gadamer, 1996). In addition, the horizon is not static. It changes in relation to our movements and towards where we look. The horizon is always in the distance and in front of us regardless of where we head (van Peursen, 1977).

How then can horizons meet? According to Gadamer (1996), there is no such thing as one distinct horizon, since the horizon of the present is always in the process of being formed. The horizon is not only about the past and present but also about the future, representing that beyond what we can see. The horizon is embedded in layers of intersubjective human experiences, of knowledge and interpretations, organized as the individual's taken-for-granted knowledge (Schütz, 1972). This gives rise to encounters between the researcher and the young child, of both shared and disparate horizons.

Being an observer of children's interactions means per se that our horizons will always differ in one way or another. While the researcher's gaze is towards the children, the children's focus is mainly on each other. The challenge is to be bodily and mentally close to children, trying to see what they see, striving to understand their manifold communication as expressions of their life-worlds in which the researcher also takes part. Yet it is essential to be aware of the never-ending movements of our horizons and the possibilities and limitations that follow.

Application of Life-World Theory

In sum, the theory of the life-world presented here enfolds ideas about human beings and the world that informs and guides the study and the researcher's gaze. According to this theory, there are limitations in our possibilities to understand the toddler's various perspectives, intentions and expressions of meanings. The possible knowledge to reach is both complex and incomplete. We also learn from the theory that the child from the beginning of life is in communication with the world and with other people. The child experiences meaning and is able to understand other people through his or her bodily communication. Meanings are also conveyed to the child; people, places and things make references to the use and purpose of various phenomena in the world. "That which appears" (in this case moral values) for the young child is possible to be expressed (and interpreted) through the child's being, through the lived body as gestures, facial expressions, in carriage, words and emotional expressions, in a sociocultural situation and in a context in which the researcher also takes part. Yet there are always experiences impossible for children to express and for the researcher to understand. As such I argue in this chapter that it is essential for the researcher to found his or her understanding on the child's bodily being-in-the-world, when searching for children's expressions of meaning of the phenomenon at hand.

Life-world theory is therefore explorative regarding what the children may express in their interplay. Even if we search for moral aspects such as values and norms, neither content nor form of morality is given in advance. Of fundamental importance is for the researcher to create knowledge about the children's *lived* experiences of values and norms for interacting with their peers in the everyday world of preschool. The word *lived* is a metaphor to emphasize that morality is not mainly a question of critical reflection or rationality—it is lived. This relational perspective of morality is closely connected with life-world ontology. The origins of morality are considered as a result of concrete human relations experienced, expressed and negotiated in a certain time and space (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Seen in this light morality develops in concrete relations between teachers and children in their everyday life. Furthermore, children's morality is not supposed to become liberated from the context, from their own subjectivity or from the influence from adults and peers (Johansson, 1999, 2001). Although the researcher defines the goals of the study, still the studied phenomena and the meaning for the child must remain an open question.

Methodological Considerations: Creating Encounters

The philosophical perspective inspired by the life-world theory (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) creates the foundation for how to methodologically approach the studied phenomenon. The notion of the life-world helps the researcher to understand children's interactions as continuing and *lived worlds*—shared with others. In addition *the body* is pointed out as the foundation for our being in the world.

In contrast to cognitive approaches, focusing on verbal language communication now becomes broad and opens up for holistic understandings of the young child's lived and bodily expressions. This makes the theory suitable for understanding very young children since their experiences are very much expressed through body. It is also of vital importance for researchers to create lived *encounters* with children.

A Shared Life-Room

What does it mean to create *lived encounters* with children? One precondition for encounters to take place is *bodily* (where physical and mental dimensions are intertwined) *closeness* to children's interaction and their communication (Johansson, 2004). Gadamer (1996) describes this as an *intersubjective* process in which the researcher engages in dialogues with the worlds that he or she is investigating. This means moving towards the kind of perspectives that open up for the other's meaning (Gadamer, 1996). At the same time we must remember the ambiguity in our striving to come close to a child's horizon and that communication is fragile and can easily break down (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).

Ton Beekman (1984) challenges the researcher to create a "life room" in the settings of the study. Here the researcher must strive to create a mental and physical intersubjective space allowing for interplay between children and the researcher. With inspiration from Løgstrup (1994), we learn that people spontaneously turn to each other with trust, which imposes a demand, a moral responsibility for the other. Seen in this light, inviting children to share life-worlds and horizons with the researcher is a fragile and moral enterprise that must be built on trust and confidence. This demands both emotional and mental openness towards children's interplay and their communication (Bae, 2004; Blum, 1994; Emilson, 2008; also Stern, 2004). A mental state of totally "being there" is critical. It is fundamental to get to know the children and become accepted and involved in order to get access to the children's life-worlds. Children's (inter)actions will be interpreted but not judged by the researcher. Dialogues with children must be rooted in the children's prerequisites, experiences and understandings. In addition it is vital that the shared life-room permits children to express and defend their integrity as well as the researcher to respect to children's integrity (Johansson, 2005). The responsibility for creating this particular relation is on the researcher.

What kind of shared life-room was created in my research projects? Most often I took the position of an *interested observer* in the children's interplay (Hundeide, 2006). I would also describe my encounters with the toddlers in the various research projects in terms of being an interested and friendly—yet "different" and perhaps also a strange adult. I will come back to this.

Initially I spent time becoming familiar with what was going on in the groups. The attempt was to find out traditions for interactions, what the children (and teachers) preferred to do and spaces that they favoured. I always tried to place myself mentally and literally close to children's horizons. I usually sat on the floor, or on a small chair, close by to the children's interplay. I endeavoured to communicate my

interest in their activities, by asking for permission to be there, by watching quietly and/or enquiring the children about their ongoing activities. In this process I tried not to disturb their interaction and to be sensitive to if they wanted my presence or not. The children seemed to both acknowledge and appreciate my interest in their everyday life experiences; they approached me and invited me to look and sometimes also to take part in their activities. Some of the children extended our relation and "adopted" me. They showed that they wanted me as a friend or someone to help or play with. One of the boys in the Swedish group of children, for example, expressed his interest in different ways. He wanted to hold hands on walks and to sit beside me and he often invited me to interplay. Similar exchanges took place across in the two studies.

Communicative Artefacts—the Camera and the Chair

I video recorded interplay between children in different groups of toddlers in Sweden and Australia in order to gain insight into their perspectives of moral values. Gradually the children became more familiar with my presence. Most of the children showed interest in the camera, wanting to have a look through the lens and try the buttons. This interest was more or less frequent during different phases of the study. Some children were more concerned with what I was doing, and others expressed a certain distanced curiosity, for example, by looking at me intensively. Now and then I used a specific low chair to sit on. This chair became a focal point of shared interest between the children and me. Several times I found a girl sitting on the chair holding her hands in front of her face. I realised that she was inspired by my video recordings. Sometimes conflicts emerged between children about who had a right to sit on the chair. Both younger and older children seemed concerned with "my" chair and defended my right to sit on it, sometimes carrying it over to me. At other times a child would place a chair beside me, leaning forwards and holding toy bricks in front of her/his eyes. I used a notebook for field notes, which the children took interest in and sometimes wanted to use. They also wanted to know what I was writing. It is interesting to reflect on these moments as sharing of horizons. The artefacts became important for communication and for shared worlds.

Proximity to children's life-worlds is a matter of presence, closeness, sensitivity and respect—and this requires time. Spending and sharing time with children is fundamental to create a life-room with children, get to know them and become worthy of their confidence. Encountering children's life-worlds is not only about trust and closeness but also about sharing the researcher's own life-world with them (Beekman, 1984).

Closeness and Distance

I have described my encounters with the toddlers in terms of being an interested and friendly—yet "different" and perhaps also a strange—adult. The reason for this description is that both closeness and distance are dimensions of importance in

research with young children. I was both close to and distanced from the children's lives. What does this mean?

First of all, closeness and trust between the researcher and children are gifts to respect and care for and preconditions for doing this research. Nevertheless, it is a dilemma encountering children's life-worlds with your own, trying to understand the ongoing communication *and* to uphold a certain necessary distance as a researcher. Encounters with children should allow possibilities both "to understand" and "to explain" (Ricoeur, 1971, 1988). This implies being close to children but also a reflexive distance to be able "to see". Gadamer (1996) describes this as play between strangeness and familiarity in a hermeneutic research process. Temporal distance is a productive condition, enabling understanding. It is a constant movement and extension that will make conscious the prejudices governing our own understanding.

Second, the dilemma of closeness and distance is even more complex, particularly in a study where the interest is on events characterized by conflict and sometimes also by humiliations. The balance between approaching the children and respecting their communication and reactions to my presence is also delicate. It is important that children have the ability to possess power and also to resist the researcher's presence. This happened rather seldom during my investigations, yet there were situations when the children refused or avoided my presence by, for example, moving to another room. It is important to reflect on how the children might experience the researcher (Christensen, 2004). The shared life-room between the children and me seemed to be slightly different in relation to the different children and the interplay that we created together but also the various phases of the research project. Let us now have a look at children's ideas about the researcher and how to present themselves for the researcher.

Children's Awareness of the Researcher

An interesting discovery for me was the fact that the children reflected on what I might want from them and that I was observing them. This refers to what Hundeide (1989, p. 115; also Schütz, 1972) talks about as "the why of the situation". This means that children, regardless of their young age, give meaning to the situation, what is expected from them and how to present themselves in relation to the researcher. The children in my investigations showed their awareness of my presence as an observer and of their own behaviour. The following example is collected from the Australian study (Johansson, 2009a):

> Some of the boys in the toddler-group are playing on the slide. They climb on the slide, slide down and climb up again. They laugh while climbing. One of the girls comes along and climbs up. The boys protest loudly, they want her to go away: "It's only boys. Go!" they shout in chorus. They reiterate their message several times. "It's only boys. Go away!" One of the boys continues to shout at the girl with his face close to hers: "Go!" His tone of voice is accusing. "No," says the girl firmly and remain sitting on the top of the slide. Suddenly the boy changes his attitude. He stretches his hand towards her face and gently he caresses her cheek: "I am using gentle hands. I am using gentle hands," he says softly.

> The he climbs down goes up to me the observer and says: "I am using gentle hands. I am using gentle hands." He sounds satisfied and climbs up the slide again. Meanwhile the girl has left the slide.

From this example it is striking that this two-year-old boy certainly was concerned with my presence and that he wanted to present himself in best possible ways for me. He even bothers to climb down from the slide and describe his actions—seemingly assuring himself that I have understood his intentions correctly.

It has often been claimed in research that children quickly forget about the camera and the researchers gaze (see, for example, Johansson, 1999; Heikkilä and Sahlström, 2003). This idea needs to be nuanced. The above-mentioned example implies that on the one hand children are aware of themselves being observed and that they also relate to this kind of situation. This illustrates that children possess power *and* make choices for how to approach the researcher. On the other hand, children seem to be more open minded and relaxed in relation to being observed as compared to adults. Sometimes they also seemed to both ignore and forget my presence.

Becoming Exposed

Emotional and mental presence has been proposed as perquisites for getting access to children's life-worlds (Emilson, 2008). It is, however, not obvious that the researcher will get access to children's life-worlds just because he or she is present, writes Davis (1998). As already suggested, there are lots of limitations for a researcher when claiming to present the voices of young children. Not least due to the fact that children's perspectives are multiple, and their lifeworlds are both ambiguous and full of nuances (Johansson, 2001, 2003, 2011b).

In addition, proximity to children's life-worlds is not always positive from a child's point of view. A camera can easily be experienced as a threat to integrity. Young children are in a subordinated position to adults. They have few possibilities to question the researcher's interpretations and maintain their own integrity. It is therefore essential that the researcher shows respect and consideration for the child's integrity. The dilemma is complex particularly in a study where the researcher's gaze is directed towards events characterized by conflict where humiliations sometimes are inevitable. Therefore, the presence of the researcher, from a child's viewpoint, is not always welcomed. Sensitivity for the child's integrity and how the methods used by the researcher might affect the child is fundamental when one is claiming to understand the child's perspectives. The dilemma is complex since transgressions of integrity often become visible for us only after they have happened (Johansson, 2005). Continuous reflexivity is critical in every phase of the study to help researcher to be more sensitive to situations where encounters are fraught with difficulty or humiliation, which is sometimes the case when groups of very young children are together in social settings (Larsson, 2005).

Doing research on moral issues in children's life-worlds is about experiences (the child's and the researcher's) of good and bad, positive and negative, right and

wrong. Children (just as adults) both support and humiliate each other (Johansson, 1999). Power is an important dimension in toddler's life-worlds and their morality (Johansson, 2006; Löfdahl & Hägglund, 2006). In order to gain insight into children's perspectives of moral values, I have video recorded events where children might have experienced a loss of dignity. I have observed children hurting and insulting each other (but also how they support and comfort each other). A central question to ask is when to stop the camera and to interfere in children's interplay. In some cases I did—in many others I did not. From the beginning I was very clear in encouraging the teachers to interact and interfere as they normally do. In certain situations I realised that a child needed support from adults. Therefore, I told the other children to get help from their teacher. My ambition was not to interfere. The bases for this decision were several: first of all, to be able to keep on the investigation, second, I wanted to avoid judging the children's interplay and third, I wanted to avoid being an "ordinary" teacher for the children. The decision was not easy, and I often reflected on my role as an adult in the group of children and what this role might have contributed to with respect for moral issues. Let us now look at one example from the Swedish group of toddlers (Johansson, 1999):

> Emma (32 months) closes the door to the doll room. Josefine (41 months), Lisa (32 months), Per (34 months) and Sebastian (19 months) are with her in the room. Per is sitting on the mattress. The girls are jumping around and singing. Per walks over to Sebastian who is standing by the door and taps him on the head saying nicely, "He can be in here," Per repeats, "He can be in here." But the girls object. Then Per taps Sebastian again and says (more determined now): "You can't be in here. Go out." Then Per's voice changes and he screams, "Pang! Pang! Pang!" Sebastian complains a few times, turning around, looking at the others and out the window in the door. Per sits down on the mattress and asks the girls: "Should we pang at him?" "Yes," answers Emma and follows Per to the door. They "pang" towards Sebastian and the children outside. Emma opens the door. "Go out," she says to Sebastian in a decided tone. He goes out. Per follows him. "Out!" he says, pushing Sebastian in front of him.

A multiple set of values and dimensions occur in this interaction. On the one hand, Per seems to understand and consider Sebastian's perspective. Per shows sympathy and concern for his younger friend. The value of care is expressed in Per's whole bodily being, in gestures, tone of voice and words. On the other hand, the relation with his friends of same playgroup and same age seems more important. Per does not get approval from the others for his idea to let Sebastian remain in the room. This seems to lead Per to change his mind and his attitude towards Sebastian. A possible interpretation is that it is more attractive to play with friends of similar age group than to play with younger children. From approaching Sebastian with a friendly tone of voice and gentle gestures, Per now adopts a more distant and powerful attitude. He participates with the others in defending the right to the play and to keep the younger ones outside. Sebastian is pushed out of the room. The value of rights seems now to be prevailing.

The value of power also comes into sight in this interaction. Per (and later Emma) push and scream at Sebastian. First of all, the strength in Per's actions towards Sebastian might be inspired by the others' presence. The studies referred to earlier showed in various ways that sharing of worlds seemed to give children

strength. Second, children seem to prefer to play with children with more influence than others or themselves. Children can give up an agreement to play if this wins them permission to share worlds with friends in a more powerful position. These dimensions of power are probably also involved in this interaction. It seems important for Per to get approval from the others on how to act.

The children in these investigations show, in various ways, that their relations do not always build on equality in position (Johansson, 1999, 2009b). Being quick, strong and older provide power and can also result in certain privileges and rights. The children seem to possess a lived awareness that their rights are related to power. Hierarchical positions restrain negotiations of rights between children because the agreements are already settled. Towards some friends there is no use in defending or negotiating for asserting rights. Sometimes rights and sharing worlds with others belong to certain children because of their position.

Dimensions of Good and Bad

The interaction above is about dimensions of good and bad in children's life-worlds. First of all, Sebastian (but also Per) is in a vulnerable situation. Because of his position as younger, smaller and powerless compared with the others, it seems difficult for Sebastian to assert any rights. His possible choices of actions seem restricted. His existence in the group relies on the benevolence and decisions by the others. Second, Per also appears to be in a dilemma and his possible choices of action seem limited. Because of his desire to share worlds with others, he is constrained by their decision. This is essential knowledge about young children's moral lives and preconditions for their very existence. If the existential wish to share worlds with others means that children first of all adapt to others, it is easy to imagine that this might be a serious impending moral dilemma. We can also notice that Lisa and Josephine remain in the background and their intentions are difficult to interpret. Nevertheless, this encounter implies that there is a risk that some children from a very young age become a tool for others' wishes. Do we as researchers (and teachers) dare to see this and to relate to this dilemma? Exclusion of such information, in my understanding, is to reduce the complexity of young children's lived worlds. Describing ambiguities such as both positive and negative dimensions in the life-worlds of children is the responsibility of the researcher and is therefore a different role from the teacher who possesses a (normative) responsibility to interfere in children's encounters.

All the same, the dilemma is complex. When situations where young children are in a vulnerable position are being observed and described, the researcher needs to carefully reflect on the extent to which this event might contribute in important ways to knowledge about children. Constituting closeness with children's life-worlds also means letting oneself become exposed. This implies scrutinizing what you take for granted and the encounters with children that you are contributing to or hindering as a researcher. "Hiding" behind a camera without interfering in children's interplay contributes in one way or another to the interaction going on. The ambiguity in

creating encounters with children is both fundamental and delicate. The dilemma is that research is also a matter of (analytical) distance from children in order to be able to see and understand. There is constant need for a dialectical shift between closeness and distance throughout the research process. I tried to capture both good and bad in children's life-worlds at the same time as reflecting about my responsibility as a researcher and showing respect for the participants in the investigation. This is a difficult position—being an interested and friendly, yet "different" and perhaps also a strange, adult.

My proposition is, however, that ambiguity and complexity, involving dimensions of good and bad in children's life-worlds are important to observe and describe. If not, important knowledge will be lost, and the complexity in children's life-worlds is reduced. The ethical responsibility to respect children's integrity, in this regard, relies heavily on the researcher.

Analysing Life-Worlds: Hermeneutic Interpretations of Moral Interactions

The methodology is inspired by hermeneutics where understanding is thought to be reached through interpretation (Heidegger, 1981). The assumption is that understanding rests upon the historical situation where the person is situated in and her/his previous understanding, including knowledge, as well as her/his pre-judgments (Gadamer, 1996; Heidegger, 1981). Understanding involves creating and recreating the studied phenomenon, which also means that the researcher describes something *as* something: "To understand a text is to follow its movement from sense to reference, from what it says, to what it talks about" (Ricoeur, 1971, p. 558). This dialectic relation between "to understand" and "to explain" has been described by Ricoeur (1988, pp. 29–77). In the process of *understanding*, the aim is to recreate and interpret *children's actions* in terms of their meanings and intentions for interactions in the context of preschool (van Manen, 1990). These meanings are related to a situation and a lived world. The children's interactions are interpreted as their voices and their perspectives of positive and negative, good and bad, right and wrong regarding their own and others actions. In the process of *explaining*, it is essential to try to *clarify relations*, similarities and differences in the children's interplay and to do this in a way that makes moral values visible in a holistic way. The "whole" possesses a potential (power) of meanings beyond the parts but is closely related to them. Meanings are interpreted in a given context, and they are interconnected with preschool as a cultural and social world. Through this the researcher is able to say something about a moral world created by the children where their actions are *explained* as *moral values* and *norms*. This means that children's actions encompass a meaning beyond their intention with the action. The researcher is trying to recreate what children's actions can inform about moral values. Ricoeur also labels this phase as innovative. This creative phase demands both distance and critical analyses (Ricoeur, 1988, p. 59).

Initially all encounters in data were examined to identify *ethical situations*. An ethical situation always involves interplay, which supported or opposed the child's own or the other's interest, wishes or well-being. Ethical situations often involved value conflicts and negotiations about values or norms for behaviour. The analysis involved finding structures and relations within and between all the ethical situations. The children's actions were interpreted against the background of the situation and the entire data material, in other words all ethical situations. Themes were generated that represented meanings of children's actions towards each other, as *moral values*. Finally the themes were analysed with respect to ethical theories, earlier research within the field, and to theoretical concepts. This dialectical movement between "to understand" and "to explain", as the hermeneutic circle, worked together during the whole process of interpretation. To understand the whole you need to consider the parts; yet there could be little understanding of the parts without considering the whole.

Recreating Ethical Situations

Let us now look at an example of an interaction in the Swedish group of toddlers. What is characterizing the descriptions of interplay? How can this interplay be fruitfully interpreted as expressions for moral meanings?

First of all, the description below is not a pure description—it is an interpretation and a recreation of an (frozen) interaction at a certain time involving young children, their teacher and a researcher in the context of a certain preschool (Ricoeur, 1971). The following example is presented with a *short introduction* of the central issues, followed by the description (ethical situation) and a more detailed *interpretation*:

When a friend acts in a way distinct from what he or she usually does, the children seem to understand that something might be wrong (Johansson, 1999). In these situations the children can show concern and interest, eagerly looking at the other seemingly trying to understand what has happened:

> Emma (32 months), Olle (22 months) and Björn (22 months) are bathing in the plastic tub in the washroom. The children are playing vigorously in the water. Björn puts his face in the water, sits up, and puts his hands up to his eyes. "Did you get some water in your eyes, Björn?" asks the adult. Olle and Emma stop their play and watch Björn. Emma pulls Björn's hands away from his face. "Peek," she says with a light and encouraging tone of voice. The adult rebukes her. Björn puts his hands up to his face again. He sits still and quiet. Then Olle leans towards Björn with his head to one side, saying "Peek, peek-a-boo," and laughing. Emma starts to play with the water again and Olle joins her. Björn sits for a while with his hands to his face. Eventually he drops his hands, but continues to sit still, looking serious. Olle looks at him again, leans forward with his head to one side and says with an eager voice: "Peek."

The teacher announces that Björn might have water in his eyes. Maybe she inspires Emma and Olle to become interested in Björn's predicaments. Nevertheless, the children seem to be captured by a lived experience of their friend's abrupt and existential change. Suddenly Björn becomes motionless and quiet, covering his eyes with his hands. The minute before he was joyfully playing in the water and now his whole body being seems transformed. He remains still and silent. The other children

gaze intensively at him, seemingly trying to understand what has happened. The children's bodily communication implies that they realise that something in this situation (with Björn) is wrong.

The interplay seems to challenge children's involvement in the other's situation. Through this we can learn that unexpected and surprising events can inspire children to strategies aiming to change the situation and the other's experience. Emma tries to communicate with Björn: "Peek" she says with an enthusiastic tone of voice. She pulls his hands from his face. Emma's interaction implies that she experiences that something is wrong with Björn. She tries in a playful manner to create contact and cheer him up. Olle also communicates with Björn. "Peek, peek-a-boo," he says. He sounds eager, and he laughs. Olle's intention seems to be to change the situation, to make Björn happy and become involved in the play all over again. With his bodily being (leaning his head, closely gazing at Björn and a happy tone of voice), Olle communicates concern for Björn.

The example allows for important insights in young children's moral life. Values of concern for others' well-being seem to be communicated between the children. It might be the very existence of their peer that captures the children and inspires them to act in order to support their friend. Both children show responsiveness to Björn's situation. They communicate that they want to change the situation and make their friend happy and "as usual" again. Trying to create contact and involve the other in play is such a strategy.

Consideration When Recreating the Interactions

What is important to consider when recreating the interactions? To begin with respect for children's integrity is fundamental in all phases of the investigations. The descriptions need to be carefully worked through and children respectfully described. My claim is that these situations should be and can be interpreted from the perspectives of all children involved in the interactions. The concepts drawn from the theory of the life-world served as tools for descriptions and analyses, for example, the *complexity of the lifeworld*, *the lived body*, *intersubjectivity*, *meanings* and *horizons.*

I have tried to look upon and describe the interactions as a whole—as a *lived meaningful world* (van Manen, 1990). This makes the descriptions more or less look like narratives. The example above is a short narrative illustrating an ethical event, trying to capture the essential meaning expressed by the children from the beginning to the end. Children's interplay is described in a straightforward manner without valuing their interaction. (This does not hinder a critical discussion of moral intentions and meanings in the context of preschool and in relation to previous research and theories of moral development.)

Moreover, these descriptions of events need to take into account the *children's bodily being* and communication. In the above-mentioned example, several references are made to children's bodily being, their gestures, tone of voice and gaze. This demands multiple reconstructions of the events. The choices of words to

describe this event needs to be both *rich* and *solid* to recreate what is going on (van Manen, 1990). The researcher makes these choices. This is an extremely delicate process that takes a lot of time and effort. Becoming familiar with the totality of data as well as the parts was critical to be able to recognize similarities and differences of the situations and the children's various experiences and expressions. The researcher has to repeatedly look at the videos, trying to find meaning (van Manen, 1990) and discover what the situation is all about from the perspectives of the involved children, listening to the children's voices, looking at gestures, words, emotional expressions, and so on. I tried as much as possible to quote children's expressions. This was a decision based on two motives. On the one hand, the choice was ethical and aimed to show respect and give room for these young children's particular ways of communicating. On the other hand, it was also a choice to allow for meanings based on the children's premises where content and ways of expressions are regarded as a whole. I also aimed to try to recreate emotional expressions and shifts in the interactions. This was certainly of interest in the earlier example since the emotional shift seemed to be of specific importance to these children. I struggled a lot in how to describe gestures, movements, etc. The issue was to capture lived interactions and not to fall into a trap of behaviouristic descriptions. This meant to give voice to young children involving the wholeness of their interaction and their existence. Constantly I reminded myself that all *intentions are not possible for children to express* nor are they possible to interpret.

In the process of interpretation, recapturing the lived experience of sharing a *lived room* with the toddlers is important (Beekman, 1984). Looking at the videos took me back again to the interactions and gave me a sense of "being there" (Emilson, 2008). The ability to return to the field notes is also supportive. In field notes the researcher's lived experiences of the situation is described, using key words documenting experiences of significance, etc. In my field book I described the above-mentioned situation as surprising, and the emotional character shifted from joy to seriousness. In the above-mentioned example it was essential to try to capture and describe the emotional shift in the children's interactions.

During the whole analytic process I have used *alternative interpretations* (Ödman, 1979). This means that the researcher tries to offset their own interpretations by asking counter questions. This strategy helped me to new interpretations. Repeatedly looking at the videos led to new insights. Nevertheless, I have left some interactions without asserting one single interpretation. We can notice this in the interpretations in the earlier statement: "Maybe she inspires Emma and Olle to become interested in Björn's predicaments." Such reservations allows for alternative interpretations of children's interactions. As a researcher you have to come to reasonable (reliable) conclusions about the research phenomenon and you also need to argue for the relevance of those conclusions (Larsson, 2005). This means that the interpretations must be justified through coherence and logic between the parts and the whole of the data. Internal logic means that interpretations are not allowed to be in disagreement. External logic means that interpretations and data are related, well founded and supported in the totality of the empirical data (Ödman, 1979). It is also critical that the interpretations seem logic to the

reader. The importance in hermeneutics is, however, to admit that *research is about interpretations* and not about the truth (Heidegger, 1981). Accepting interpretation as way to understand also means to approve to the idea that a phenomenon can be interpreted differently. There is always someone behind the interpretations.

Initially the descriptions were extremely long and detailed narratives that covered several pages. To make these narratives readable, it was necessary to *condense the text without reducing the complexity of life-worlds*. This complex step was taken later in the process of analyses, when the conclusions were more or less settled. The description presented above was recreated over and over again with the aim to show important and lived moral dimensions in these children's life-worlds. It was also important that the narratives could say something about relations, differences and similarities on moral dimensions beyond the children's intentions. In this process, references to ethical theories, previous research and implications for practice were of importance.

Getting Close to Children's Horizons—Knowledge, Power and Responsibilities

In this chapter I have discussed conditions for doing research with the youngest children in preschool. The life-world ontology has been proposed as useful when creating knowledge about the lives of very young children and in claiming to speak in terms of children's voices. Certain concepts described in this ontology (the life-world, the lived body, the horizons and intersubjectivity) have been suggested as helpful perceptual tools for the researcher's gaze and for the methodology as well as for the descriptions and interpretations of young children's interplay. Through the life-world theory it can be established that morality *may* be seen as a part of young children's lives and also that children possess ability to experience and express moral values in their interaction and through their bodies. It is, however, important to remember the ambiguity, complexity and learning aspects of these experiences. Getting close to children's horizons is a complex issue, surrounded with ambiguities to encounter. This is certainly the case when children's voices are, to a large extent, expressed through body and the phenomenon is about toddlers' views on morality.

Doing research with the youngest children in early childhood settings demands from the researcher both specific knowledge and specific ethical responsibility. Conditional to research of this nature is knowledge about children, how to communicate with children and how the research process might open up for or hinder encounters with children. This is also a matter of power. Davis (1998; also Farrell, 2005) proposes that it is the researcher's responsibility to empower children in research. In line with Løgstrup (1994) I suggest that power is communicated in all intersubjective processes but is certainly more complicated in research with toddlers. First of all, young children have limited opportunity to insight in the consequences of investigations and their participation. They have limited (although not infinite) admission (possibility) to claim their own integrity and their own interpretations in relation to the researcher. Even though young children possess

power, they may refuse to participate and claim their integrity. In such cases it is up to the researcher to be open to and respect this kind of communication. Notwithstanding can the issue of (sharing) power be taken for granted. It is not evident that research involving children's perspectives asserts power to children. This demands a critical discussion about what power is and what kind of power children can have in the research process.

Through a life-world phenomenology, the complexity of young children's perspectives grounded in their various life-worlds is important to describe. On the one hand, the life-world is related to the experiencing subject. On the other hand, the life-world is social and shared with others. The life-world is in process—we are simultaneously situated in history, in the present and in the future. The research presented here indicates that morality is an important part of these young children's life-worlds; they seem deeply engaged in moral issues, show concern for each other, defend their own and others rights and use power to both support and humiliate each other. We must also remember the complexity of the child's (and the researcher's) morality and that all moral dimensions are neither possible for children to express nor possible for the researcher to understand. It is a huge challenge for researchers with an interest in the youngest participants in the educational system to carefully scrutinize how and in what way very young children's voice can be heard and adequately interpreted in research.

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Commentary to Eva Johansson: "Investigating Morality in Toddler's Life-Worlds"

Gloria Quiñones

The philosophical underpinnings of this chapter are based on moral dimensions: how they are experienced and expressed by young children and how Eva investigated these with young children. Morality is portrayed in the chapter in terms of the values and norms associated with how we treat others—our acts, relationships and communication. This chapter provides an opportunity to consider the researcher role accordingly.

Eva uses the ontological concepts inspired by Maurice Merleau-Ponty of *lifeworlds* and Alfred Schütz's theory of *the social world* in everyday encounters with young children while video recording them. The theoretical concept that I found very interesting and that appears throughout the chapter was *the child's perspective*. According to Eva this was understood through an interpretation of the child's lived experience and expressions, which gives meaning to the idea of morality.

As Eva defines it, the life world is concerned with the ways in which the young child perceives the world and how the life-world is both subjective and objective. As such, the world overrides the subject—yet is lived and experienced *by* the child. I found this idea relevant to my own work on *vivencia*s since the subjective lived emotional experiences of the child were also central to my inquiry. It seems that, regardless of what philosophical stand we take, ideas of the researcher and the researched *merge* when we are committed to finding ways of giving meaning, understanding and interpretation to the young child's experience.

Eva comments that the ontology of life-world relates to how we develop knowledge about the world as such about things, events, interactions and people. In her research emphasis is placed on the child's perspective, including the child's experiences and expressions of meaning, and how this is understood through philosophical interpretations of *the lifeworld*, lived body, *intersubjectivity* and *horizon*.

According to Eva the life-world is therefore subjective and ambiguous. Through intersubjectivity the "other" is always present in how we, as researchers, make meaning of the young child's world through the child's expression, gestures, emotions and communication. Eva reminds us that it is not just that these experiences and expressions are visible in the physical world but that they are also evident in the intersubjective human experience. Paying attention to experience reveals the ways in which the individual makes sense of and interprets his or her world.

The philosophical orientation towards notions of being and interpreting the life-world bears synergy with the dialectical relationships found

in *perezhivanie—vivencia*. The lived, ongoing emotional experiences in cultural-historical theory are also central to inquiry. The child and the researcher and those around them are seen in both approaches as offering important clues about how the child is experiencing aspects of life. In our research these were focussed on homework, while in Eva's study episodes of right or wrong are under scrutiny. The way to understand the child, it seems then, is how we as researchers understand him or her subjectively by interpreting these lived experiences that we have the privilege to be part of through the research encounter.

Another philosophical idea that I found important when researching with young children was the idea of the *horizon*—what a beautiful word to express the child and the researcher "being-in-the-world". This is a strong position for theorising and unites the child and researcher's world while, at the same time, signalling difference. As the child gets closer to the researcher, the researcher gets closer to the child. This closeness creates familiarity yet the researcher is, at the same time, a stranger.

The idea of body size in the *horizon* is inspiring for researchers of very young children to think about, as it introduces the idea that the child and the researcher "share a life-room", which brings this intersubjective interplay between the researcher and the child. This is important in understanding the child while observing or filming because the researcher is encouraged to recognise the fact that they and their research subjects are being together in the world of the toddler. This idea of how *horizons* meet, theorized by Eva, encourages researchers to consider how "both shared and disparate horizons" are present in the process of researching with toddlers.

I think there is a lot of potential in the idea Eva introduces related to the concept of *manifold*. Here she seems to suggest that the child's perspective is simultaneously concerned with mind, body and life-worlds. In accepting this notion the researcher needs to find ways of increasing her awareness of the young child's communication as expressions of meanings and life-worlds. Eva suggests, and indeed demonstrates, that this manifold process needs to be taken into account at all the phases of the researcher process—during, in and after the researcher leaves the field:

> It is essential for the researcher to found his or her understanding on the child's bodily being-in-the-world, when searching for children's expressions of meaning of the phenomenon at hand.

For Eva, then, it is critical to consider the child's body as a means of expression, particularly when researching the young child. This tenet echoes with the research described by Marilyn and myself, but for Eva the researcher is invited to consider their activity a *moral* enterprise rather than merely a means of gathering data. The researcher therefore relies on his/her own interpretations of the "child's bodily being-in-the-world"—not as truth, but

as an intersubjective phenomenon. Thus to study "morality" also relies on the meaning the researcher gives to what the child is communicating and expressing through "lived body as gestures, facial expressions, words and emotional expressions".

The concept of *shared life-room* unites the idea of creating an "intersubjective space" between children and the researcher, emotionally, mentally and physical. This is important when being with the young child as it becomes an integral and moral endeavour! As this evolves, it unfolds throughout all the phases of the research design. I think Eva has strongly demonstrated her research directions in the "shared a life-room" with young children through being interested not only in her research intentions but also with those of the children. Being present in the everyday lives of children demands the researcher consider all these interrelationships.

A question that came to my mind on reading this chapter was how we might resolve the dilemma of the researcher's power and influence in research. Eva draws on an example in which the researcher's presence and his awareness of the researcher caused a toddler to change his attitude to another child playing with him on the slide. At first, the toddler didn't want the girl to climb the slide, but when he is aware of the researcher's interest, he changes his attitude. I wonder how we are able to interpret those meanings and how we sense this change of attitude? This and other similar examples are discussed in light of the importance of the researcher's intervention (intentionally or otherwise) in the life-world of the young child, and the implications of this. These are moments when the researcher needs to be sensitive both with the child and with the research goals. As Eva explains, being *sensitive* is essential and the field decisions that are taken, as a result of such insights, are important. For example, the researcher needs to choose when to stop the camera or indeed if stopping the camera is desirable. I find this very important for researchers to take into account when they are "new" to or not familiar with video-observing methodologies.

Overall, I felt that Eva was able to show the complexities in understanding the young child and the researcher being together with children throughout all the phases of the research process—being in the field, leaving the field and making meaning of the interactions between children. When recreating the interactions I could imagine the situation because Eva's descriptions of events were detailed. Being familiar with the data is essential to understanding the child. Eva reminds us of this:

> Becoming familiar with the totality of data as well as the parts was critical to be able to recognize similarities and differences of the situations and the children's various experiences and expressions.

Familiarity with the data is essential for any researcher. However, the reporting of bodily expressions is always constructed by the researcher and

then by the reader who imagines these situations. Eva's careful and detailed recreation of the events and the interactions offers an example of how this might be possible in ways that respond to her moral entreaty.

There are commonalities throughout our research with young children—such as remaining close to what we lived and trying to understand the young child both ethically and respectfully while being sensitive to interpretations of expression and communication. I think Eva has portrayed this complexity not only from the child's perspective but also from that of the researcher both in the field and after the field. This is especially true when understanding and analysing data while remaining morally responsible and maintaining the "lived approval" from the children while observing them.

I enjoyed and learnt from this chapter. As a result I am inspired to be morally responsive and astutely aware of myself as influential when video observing when relating with children and, most importantly, in maintaining a respectful stance towards the young child in research.

Chapter 4
'Seeing' the Toddler: Voices or Voiceless?

E. Jayne White

Is 'seeing' believing? What comprises the focus of seeing, how is it seen and who decides what is to be privileged in doing so? Such is the dilemma facing all observational investigations since what can be 'seen' is always impaired or enhanced by what each person brings to their gaze—be it frameworks or ideologies that limit or create potential. How much more challenging is such seeing when the subject of our gaze is an infant or toddler who speaks a distinct corporeal language that has long been forgotten by the adult, and who draws from a sociocultural domain that is only partially glimpsed by the early childhood teacher or researcher? In this chapter I expand on the idea of 'seeing' as a dialogic endeavour—thus calling for an exploration of voice that goes beyond singular monologic parameters, into the polyphonic terrain of speculation, uncertainty and reflexivity. Taking this approach, I argue that there is potential to re-vision the very young child as a competent yet vulnerable communicator of and with many voices, one who is capable of conveying complex meaning through genres that strategically orient them towards or away from intersubjective harmony.

The genesis for this chapter draws from my doctoral study, which sought to interrogate how adults noticed, recognised and responded to very young children using dialogic methodology (White, 2009a). In this study the central tenets of dialogism based on the works of Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin (Bakhtin, 1968, 1981, 1984, 1986, 1990; Medvedev & Bakhtin, 1978; Voloshinov, 1973), when operationalised, offered a legitimate means of 'seeing' the 'voices' of infants and toddlers. Drawing on Goethe's notion of visibility—'the seeing eye' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 27)—Bakhtin develops the principle that the only ethical role of an author in evaluative activity is to 'give way to the work of the eye that contemplates the need for performance and creativity in a particular place and at a particular time' (p. 38). This concept is further developed in his earlier works which highlight the essential surplus of seeing that an author offers her subject and which compels them towards an ethical evaluation of an act, as well as the surplus the subject retains in

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any analysis (Bakhtin, 1990). In dialogic research, therefore, this visual surplus is central to investigation because it enables a focus on the interpreted experience of 'other' rather than consummated truth claims by the lone researcher:

> For one cannot ever really see one's own exterior and comprehend it as a whole, and no mirrors or photographs can help; our real exterior can be seen and understood only by other people, because they are located outside of us in space and because they are *others*. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7)

'Seeing', and its authorial surplus, then, refers to interpretative activity that considers the visual act that can be seen *and* its bestowed or imbued meaning by others as well as the toddler's perceived intention. Both, it is argued, are necessary if adults are to enter into such interpretative domains with very young children. Such an approach does not dismiss the significance of listening but embraces the eye and its orientation as central to meaning making. Seen in this light, apprehension is only possible through participative thought and action—both central tenets of dialogism.

In a dialogic approach 'voice' is located within the broader domain of *utterance*, since attention is paid to the interpretative nature of language for participants and its potential for meaning in a particular context. The efforts involved in interpreting such acts, *as well as* the acts themselves, do not escape the attention of the dialogic researcher. Indeed, they invite the researcher to explore 'voice' as an answerable act that is interanimated by the voices of others who may or may not be present at the time. As utterance, 'voice' can include any sound, gesture, movement or word that has the potential to be recognized by other in social exchange. In this chapter, 'voice' is therefore presented as a plural concept that denotes both a consideration of the detailed forms of language, their strategic orientation on the part of the child and the ideologies brought to the experience by the adult.

Such an expanded notion of 'voice'—beyond speech to visual acts of social engagement with others—creates opportunities for the researcher to glimpse the complex personality of an individual within the world. For Bakhtin, personality is not an isolated construct and refers to both the spirit (bestowed) and soul (performed acts) of a person (Sullivan, 2007). I suggest that in its current pedagogical location, interpretations of 'voice' by teachers or researchers that focus exclusively on only spirit (e.g., dispositions, theories of mind) or soul (e.g., activity, skill, verbal speech) in an exclusive manner can promote, ignore or even silence the very young child—rendering them voiceless objects in both pedagogy and research activity. In this chapter I suggest that dialogism provides an antidote to such a dilemma since both are central to investigation and research takes place between subjects and the multiple voices each bring to interpretation.

Dialogism is now a recognised research methodology in fields of psychology, linguistics and education. While dialogism is now also considered to be a legitimate pedagogical orientation (Matusov, 2009; White & Peters, in press), its application in early childhood education is still tentative. As Bakhtin saw the world in terms of socially situated semantic orientations rather than an ordered system of monologic thought, dialogic methodology has typically been employed to explore language as a social entity. Dialogism begins and ends with the everyday

exchange and is embedded in reality, that is, what can be literally 'seen' with the eye as artistic or aesthetic contemplation. As a result, dialogism rejects abstract scientific approaches—instead highlighting the detail of language interaction and its evaluative meaning in social exchange (Hicks, 2002).

Dialogism therefore assumes that all language (verbal and non-verbal, written or spoken) is social. Indeed, for Bakhtin, language *is* meaning. Rather than delivering random linguistic messages, Bakhtin argues that one is *always* deliberately provoking a response from another out of a genuine desire to communicate even when they are not heard by other since, for Bakhtin, there is always an assumption of an invisible 'thou'. Seen in this light, the purpose of communication is not to reach an end point, or necessarily to reach a point of agreement, but ultimately to negotiate or even reject what is being offered in a dialogic interplay of form-shaping ideology.[1] Hence the act is constantly being shaped by the receiver as well as the speaker in a dialogic 'dance' of meaning making because, as Holquist (1998) points out, there can never be a single unitary plane that is interpreted identically. Language is always situated in a specific time and space.

Based on the central tenets of dialogism, I devised an approach that allowed me to 'see' dialogically by employing video and interview methods to approach everyday acts. Examining the interpretations of a teacher, parents and myself in scrutinising language acts of toddlers, *while ensuring that the toddlers themselves contributed authentically to the research process*, provided a means of developing insights into both the toddlers and those who sought to understand them. Through the employment of *utterance* as a central unit of analysis and *genre* as a framework for analysis, I was able to 'see' more through the eyes of others in dialogue since each of us added different insights that were not previously accessible to us as individuals. Of particular significance, and in response to the challenges in the field for research with toddlers, dialogic methodology enabled toddler voices, in their many and varied genres, to actively contribute to the investigation. As such I make the claim that dialogic methodology enables those who are potentially voiceless to have their complex and multiplicitous voice(s) 'seen' in research activity.

In this chapter I describe a study of an early childhood education teacher, 18- to 20-month-old toddler, her parents and myself as researcher using dialogic methodology as a means of interpretation. I provide an overview of the purpose, research questions, innovative methods and their alignment to the philosophy underpinning the study. Presenting brief examples from the point of view of four dialogic partners—toddler, teacher, parent and myself—I explain how we exploited genre as a potential portal to intersubjectivity. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the relevance of this methodology to early childhood education research in dialogic relationship with (instead of *for*, *on* or *about*) toddlers. In

[1] By ideology Bakhtin means the dialogic nature of language and its intentions between subjects. Bakhtinian ideology is concerned with systems of ideas in communication: "Every word/discourse betrays the ideology of its speaker; every speaker is thus as ideologue and every utterance an ideologeme" (1984, p. 101). It was for this reason that Bakhtin's later work focused on genre as a central means of investigating language and its intentions.

doing so, I present an alternative means of entering into the semiotic sphere of the toddler. I argue that the dialogic approach employed offered a means of accessing multiple voices as genres—some that could be seen and/or heard and others that, due to the dialogic intent of either the adult and their ideologies or the toddler and their orientations, could not. ‘Seeing’ is therefore recast as a dialogic quest that offers significant insights into the personality of the toddler that are seldom afforded through dominant research and assessment methodologies in the field.

The Investigative Context

The study was conducted in Aotearoa, New Zealand, where a focus on ‘noticing, recognising and responding’ to young children (Education Review Office, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2004, 2007, 2009a, 2009b) is a particularly significant phenomenon in the contemporary context. In this location, early childhood education teachers are required to engage in assessment *for,* not of, the learning of children in formal educational settings—birth to five years of age. Such assessment practice is framed around dispositional theory that seeks to promote and profile important habits of mind as determined by the interpretive teacher in consultation with the child’s family (Carr, 2009).

Assessment endeavour had proven to be elusive for some teachers of infants and toddlers (Stuart, 2008) since in order to notice significant dispositions, teachers must be able to ‘see’ the very young child. This task is especially challenging when the semiotic modes of communication are not shared and the child moves between the diverse semiotic spaces of home and early childhood education institution. Since infants and toddlers are the fastest growing population in early childhood education settings within wealthy countries (UNICEF, 2008) and are spending increasingly long periods of time with teachers as opposed to family members, interpreting children’s acts through assessment activity is now viewed as central to their learning and development (Education Review Office, 2007). A primary means of gaining insight currently resides in the notion of ‘voice’ which, in contemporary early childhood education ideology, is considered to be graspable through a listening pedagogy comprising observed (or photographed) activity, dialogue with parents and written narrative (see, for example, Perkins, 2009; Sands & Weston, 2010). As such, ‘voice’ is unproblematically positioned as a deliverable, observable, authored statement about the child’s learning progress, which claims to speak for and with the child (for a further discussion of this concept, see White & Peters, 2011).

The broader phenomenon of ‘seeing’ important aspects of learning or development is also a task for researchers who seek to situate their work within the field of early childhood education. Researchers across multiple domains have employed a variety of observational techniques and methodologies to try to understand ‘other’ for a range of purposes. Dalli et al. (2011) suggest that a majority of studies of under-two-year-olds, internationally, take place between mothers and infants in the home or between infants and toddlers as peers. More recently, observational approaches in research have sought to capture ‘voice’ of

very young children by generating data through what has been conceptualized as a mosaic approach (Clark, 2004), and in Reggio Emilia early childhood education pedagogy has been reframed as research activity on this basis (Millikan, 2003). In these locations claims are made about children based on multi-modal forms of communication ranging from photographs, to artwork, to verbal language records—all of which claim to constitute 'voice'.

While the notion of seeing 'voice', in its expanded interpretation, is a legitimate means of accessing and observing the language of children within early childhood education, its application in both teaching and research domains is elusive. Løkken (1999) suggests that a rationale for the prolonged dearth of research about toddlers is associated with the unique challenge they present for adult interpretation. It is highly likely that this challenge is an important reason for the small number of empirical research studies that focus specifically on this age group, in particular under-one-year-olds. The few claims that have typically been made about infants and toddlers in education are based on developmental or psychological epistemologies that emphasise their teleologic journey into adult domains or take a scientific view (Berthelsen, 2010). Such a stance ignores the social, corporeal, and potentially discursive nature of very young children's *interpreted* communication enabled by dialogic methodology. As Broström and Hansen (2010) point out, research with very young children in educational contexts should address four key points:

(1) the dynamic of the pedagogue-child relation (care, empathy, acknowledgement, etc.);
(2) the pedagogue-content relation: how the pedagogue presents the content to the child;
(3) the child's relation to other children; and
(4) the pedagogue's relation to a group of children (p. 97)

Paying attention to an expanded view of voice(s) through dialogic means goes some way towards addressing these points by exploring the point of view of each participant, not least of whom is the teacher, rather than an isolated analysis on the part of the researcher. As such, important insights can be offered to adults in their quest to interpret meaning and gain a deep appreciation of the toddler.

Investigation took place in a high-quality mixed-age Education and Care centre, located in Wellington, New Zealand. In keeping with the suggestions of Markova and Linell (1986), I chose to work with the same participants over different activity contexts with the aim of affording dialogic depth, rather than breadth, of inquiry. Like other dialogic educational researchers, my focus was on an individual within the social context of the group so that I could investigate acts from multiple points of view, rather than an established standpoint. To this end I worked closely with one toddler, Zoe, a European New Zealand female, aged 18 months, at the beginning of the project, who spent 40 hours a week in the centre context and had attended the centre from age 6 months. Her teacher, Alicia, was a fully qualified early childhood education teacher, of Māori descent, who had several years' experience in the field. Alicia spent in excess of 17 hours in video recorded dialogue with me about what she had 'seen' in Zoe's acts—some during her paid non-contact time and some in the early evening. Zoe's parents were actively involved in the study and brought their own interpretations, sharing over seven hours of recorded dialogue

about their daughter. Together, Zoe, Alicia and her parents contributed much to the interpretative arena in which this study was located. Coupled with my attendance at staff meetings and less formal events at the centre during this four-month period, these dialogues enabled me to enter into what Bakhtin refers to as the *heteroglossic* domain of inquiry that comprised Zoe's world.[2]

The researcher's participation in the study should not be underestimated in dialogic methodology. My role expanded well beyond the hours described above. Over the four-month period of fieldwork, I entered the site almost daily to attend meetings, share transcripts, talk with staff and/or parents about the footage, share findings and generally become part of the early childhood education context. Since my interpretations were to be juxtaposed with those of the other participants, I maintained a constant vigil on my authoritative position as 'researcher' and 'expert', as opposed to a visitor (or outsider) to the centre and in the life of the toddler. It was at these 'sites of struggle' (Frank, 2005, p. 971) that I lingered in my interpretations. I contend that these challenges keenly represent Bakhtin's entreaty that authorship is a moral activity as well as an evaluative one. My constant attention to this domain was reflected in the research journal notes I took, which explored my relationships with participants (including the other children and adults in the early childhood education setting), my ethical role as researcher, my ultimate research quest and what all of this meant in a dialogic investigation of this nature. Several dilemmas were faced in this regard, not least of which was the constant challenge to avoid speaking on behalf of others—a polyphonic entreaty endorsed by Bakhtin (1984) sometimes described as 'ventriloquising', but previously unexplored in research with the very young child. I do not claim to have avoided this inevitable trap altogether, but the moral tenets of dialogism constantly reminded me of the need to allow participants to speak for themselves whenever possible.

Conceptual Tools for Dialogic Investigation

Dialogic methodology, then, allowed me to enter into the interpretative spaces that reveal or conceal what can and cannot be seen by adults when very young children are engaged in language acts. Bakhtin (1986) describes this emphasis as 'utterance', a concept I adopted as the unit of analysis for the investigation. Utterance can be described as a reflection of the conditions and goals of communication, that is, its orientations and ideologies, as well as the communication itself. As Bakhtin explains, an utterance is only achieved when it is answerable. I interpreted this to mean that language should be interrogated inside and outside of direct social relationships, by individuals and in dialogue with others. I selected language acts that were therefore noticed by some or all participants (including myself) and which

[2] Heteroglossia refers to the living utterance at play within time and space dimensions that expose forces pulling away and pushing towards shared meaning. As such, zones of difference can be exposed, and their associated ideologies explored.

constituted some sense of meaning accordingly. Recognition of meanings expressed as surprise or wonderment were considered especially relevant to interpretation because the act and its perceived meaning could be said to have 'str[uc]k the same key in each other's spiritual instrument' (Cassirer, 1953, p. 160)—a feat that Bakhtin (see also, Voloshinov, 1973) suggests is necessary in order to engage in meaning making.

The point of view of each participant on the language acts of the toddler was therefore central to inquiry. According to Holquist (in Bakhtin, 1981), 'point of view is always situated. It must first of all be situated in a physical body that occupies time and space, but time and space as embodied in a particular human at a particular time and in a particular place' (p. xxviii). I accessed each participant's *point of view* in a variety of ways since each employed different styles of communication. For example, the teacher preferred to record her ideas prior to discussion, the parents favoured informal dialogue, and the toddlers employed a style of communication closely aligned to eavesdropping—providing 'language crumbs' for adults to pick up on a trail of discovery. These contributions, as form, contributed to the overall point of view each participant brought to the interpretative experience.

Utterance provided an important way of accessing such points of view. Central to my quest was to draw on the interpretive presence of the teacher, tasked with noticing, recognising and responding to the very young child. However, I also wanted to find ways of examining the point of view of the young child *herself*, as central protagonist in her own learning experience, as well as the views of her parents, who know her intimately, and my own researcher interpretations, as an outsider with keen observation skills. As such, I was deeply concerned with 'voice' and its manifestation in this investigation.

Genre is described by Bakhtin (1986) as the means by which an individual can orient meaning to another through the selection of relevant form and content in utterance. It was through genre that I was able to access the language crumbs offered by toddlers in their everyday acts and recognise them as genres of social exchange. As 'the drive belts from the history of society to the history of language' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 65), genres represent the *strategic orientation* of a particular communicative form to convey (or perhaps even frustrate) meaning. Bakhtin (1986) describes genres as a combination of both form (that is the language form in which communication is presented) and content (that is, its interpreted meaning). By approaching language in this way in my research, a finely tuned analysis of the nature of its delivery was promoted—and its composition excavated—for possible clues to meaning. Together, these comprised an analysis of genre, which was achieved through the combination of form (what could be seen) and content (interpretation). For a fuller discussion of these concepts, see White (2009a).

While significant clues are provided in his later work (Bakhtin, 1984, 1986), I struggled to reconcile the interpretive aspect of my quest with Bakhtin's dual emphasis on *utterance* as the answerable language act and *genre* as the strategy through which the act could be answered. A pilot study proved to be invaluable in resolving the issue (White, 2009b), particularly as there were few research precedents for such an approach to the study of toddlers. While I agreed with Matusov (2007), who suggests that the unit(s) of analysis should be selected in

relation to its purpose within the wider study and therefore develop out of the context of data generation, I was also aware of the fact that I had brought Bakhtinian views strongly to bear on this research. In doing so, I argue that the Janus-like features of utterance (that is, in focussing on both the language act *and* its answerability) embody the very essence of dialogism, while genre is the means by which language may be recognised (or not). While holding important clues to meaning, genre was a means to an analytical end, but not an end in itself. Indeed, given the contestable nature of toddler communication and its interpretation, I concluded that recognition would never provide the complete picture, only partial glimpses that, taken together, provide an enhanced *appreciation* rather than collective 'truth'.

As already explained, I was keen to interrogate the nature of interpretation as well as any claims made by each participant through observation and dialogue. My ultimate quest was to find a way to understand the toddler as a dynamic personality in her own right with much to contribute rather than merely as learner with much to receive from more knowledgeable others. In doing so I concur with Sullivan (2007), who suggests learning is a received act whereas personality represents both soul and spirit and is accessible only through interpretations of observed language acts. Bakhtin (1986) suggests that, despite being an essential feature of authorship, attempts to understand personality are fraught. Though never isolated, neither is personality always collective, since while the individual is part of a culture, they should never be fully consumed by it. His research imperative is therefore to access both the whole *and* parts of a personality as enacted and interpreted by other.

In accordance with this argument, I determined ways of examining language from both the individual view point, through genre, as well as its interpretations in dialogue with others. Bakhtin's attention to the polyphonic novel provided inspiration in this regard. As an artistic device, *polyphony* structures manipulate events in order to portray their complexity. Considered alongside *visual surplus*, which prioritises 'the work of the eye that contemplates the need for performance and creativity in a particular place and at a particular time' (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 38) polyphony offered scope for exploring the visual field of research participants while suspending any monologic claims of certainty about what could or could not be seen or interpreted about the toddler. Taken together, attention to genre, polyphony and visual surplus provided an entry point to the dialogic study of an expanded version of voice and its interpretations. They provided not only a means of 'seeing' language acts and their orientations through multiple points of view but also the potential of accessing voice without privileging one interpretation over another. I operationalised these concepts by developing a polyphonic visual ethnographic approach to investigation, as a means of affording visual surplus and responding to Bakhtin's seeing entreaty, which is described in the section that follows.

Operationalisation of Dialogism

Out of this conceptual understanding and in accordance with my research priorities, I developed two key approaches that supported a dialogic research approach in the early childhood education context with very young children. These I call

polyphonic video and *re-probing interview*. The first, polyphonic video, involved the collation and timed synchronisation of video footage focusing on the toddler in the everyday centre context and taken from the multiple vantage points of a teacher, a toddler, and myself, which were not dissected in any way prior to participant interpretation.[3] I did this in order to facilitate opportunities for participants (including myself) to engage in detailed, unabridged encounters with toddler language acts in communication with others in the local early childhood education setting context. I wanted to understand what language genres were more likely to be noticed, recognised and responded to, by whom and for what reason and the impact of such recognition or non-recognition on the way the toddler could be seen. Located within the New Zealand assessment context described earlier, this focus was of great significance to the teacher in this study as well as my own research agenda. As such, the emphasis of the study responds to dialogic forms of validity that draw inspiration from the local community in which the investigation is set, and the extent to which the study creates 'capacity for continual response' within this space (Sullivan & McCarthy, 2005, p. 633). Generating dialogue between participants was central to the approaches I employed.

Participant interpretations were documented by visual and audio means through a series of re-probing interviews, which drew on the polyphonic footage to try to make sense of the toddler's language acts as genre. Through this second approach to data generation I was able to exploit Bakhtin's notion of *visual surplus* as a potential means of investigating the insights each participant brought to their interpretation (both in terms of what is literally seen on film and what could be noticed as worthy of discussing in interpretation). In other words, I sought to offer a 'view' of the toddler's experience, literally and metaphorically, from the visual field of each participant. In doing so, I considered the additional perspectives each person could bring to the assessment experience in trying to generate meaning. What I did not anticipate, and what featured highly in the data, was the visual surplus the toddler also brought to the authorship experience, and the potential of such authoring on the part of the toddler to contribute to, and challenge, adult perspectives, including my own. This insight was made possible because interviews were videoed, and in doing so, granted access to non-verbal as well as verbal forms of dialogue.

A visual means of capturing Zoe's language acts was achieved by attaching a small hat-cam to the teacher's head (on a hat that was attached to a backpack with a video camera inside), another small hat-cam on Zoe's head (on a head band that was remotely connected to a video camera elsewhere) and a third pan-camera held by the researcher. Placing a camera in the eye line of participants highlighted visual subjectivities in relation to where the head was looking as opposed to where the camera was strategically shot, as is typically the case with visual ethnography in education (see Fig. 4.1). I argue that, coupled with participant interpretation of

[3] By this I mean that one-hour episodes were filmed at various times during the day over several months and that these were not edited in any way prior to analysis. Exceptions were toileting scenes, which were deleted prior to analysis for privacy reasons.

Fig. 4.1 Split-screen polyphonic footage shot showing the same view from the child, teacher and researcher camera lens

what could be seen, polyphonic footage is an authentic representation of Bakhtinian authorial surplus. Emphasis is placed on the additional insights that can be gained through visual interpretation from different people since Bakhtin (1990) argues that each person 'knows and sees more in the direction in which the hero is looking and seeing, but also in the different direction, in a direction which is in principle inaccessible to the hero himself' (p. 13).

Individual videos were then combined in a time-synchronised split-screen representation that was offered to each participant for analysis. Participants were invited to identify 'noticed and recognised' language forms, as genre, based on a set of criteria developed in the pilot and their interpreted metaphoric[4] meanings from video-provided data that was entered into an analytic software programme available at the time (Webbsoft, 2007). I struggled to involve the toddler in this kind of interpretation (White, 2010), a point I return to in the sections that follow.

[4] By metaphoric, I mean any language act that generated some degree of surprise, slippage or jarring between the form of the act and its perceived or potential meaning. For a fuller description of this approach, see White (2009a).

Dialogic Analysis

In order to fully exploit utterance as the central unit of analysis, a four-staged approach was taken to data analysis, as follows:

1. Independent participant coding of genres based on one-hour excerpts of polyphonic video footage.
2. Participant dialogue with researcher during videoed re-probing interviews.
3. Researcher enters generated codes into the software programme 'Snapper' (Webbsoft, 2007) alongside coded analysis of participant discussion styles.
4. Analysis of genres, discussion styles and associated footage that represents some form of noticing, recognising and/or responding for one or more participant. Initial selections made on this basis.

Of significance was not only *what* was identified (that is, its form), and by whom, but *how* it was identified in dialogue (that is, its interpretation), since dialogic methodology foregrounds the nature of dialogue as much as its content. Coding was considered as an appropriate means of analysing dialogic interactions—both in the toddler acts and during their analysis by participants—in order to consider both the acts and their interpretations as a dialogic unit. The various recognised language forms and their descriptions were employed as a means of coding. These included biting, clapping, facial gesture, use of fist, laughter, hitting, hugging, pointing, outstretched hand, sound and a range of other forms that involved the employment of various resources. Of particular note was the high proportion of communication forms that were not verbal and that employed body parts in their delivery. Although pointing has now been recognised as a strategic means of communication for infants and toddlers (Tomasello, Carpenter, & Liszkowski, 2007), many other non-verbal language forms are often overlooked in research activity, considered as mere body functioning and therefore interpreted literally for this age group (McNeill, 2005; Roth, 2001). When seen within a dialogic framework, however, these language forms, as genres, can be viewed as symbolic strategic orientations worthy of communicative consideration.

The interpretations given to each of these acts, as a second set of codes, varied greatly between participants and ranged from demonstrating, explaining and naming, to resisting, mimicking, pleasing and tricking. There were several acts that escaped adult interpretation—remaining curious and ungraspable acts in the interpretive process. These were typically those that took place in moments that were not shared visually by the teacher on camera, and which were characterised by body movements such as running across spaces with arms extended outwards and squealing sounds. I described these acts as *free-form genres* (White, 2009a) that eluded adult interpretation. Those that the teacher could not explain were described as 'routine' because they appeared to be commonplace acts that bore no significance. Still others that both teacher and parent clearly saw but, without my prompting, did not choose to interpret were associated with what I have described as *intimacy genres* (White, 2009a). These involved the toddler touching or probing

the teacher, such as pointing to her breast and saying 'milk' or touching her facial mole repeatedly over months. I speculate that my ability to bring such acts to the interpretive domain were due to my outsider's perspective, a point Bakhtin (1990) highlights is necessary for evaluative activity.

Others, which were repeated over time, could be viewed as important cues to meaning. For example, upturned palms in the presence of an adult came to be seen as a quest for meaning, like saying, 'I don't know, do you? ' On another occasion, we noticed the toddler closely scrutinising a peer crying and receiving cuddles from the teacher, then repeating the same noise and facial expression in order to receive similar attention. Acts such as these were only graspable to me with the benefit of a researcher gaze over an extended period of time and the insights of other adults who knew the toddler well, an intimacy that Bakhtin (1990) suggests is also necessary. His stance is that both insider and outsider perspectives are important, and that one should never subsume the other, lest the subject becomes lost as a personality in his or her own right.

A third set of codes that provided the framework for understanding genres, their orientations and their interpretations was based on the styles of discussion that adults used when engaged in interpretive dialogue with one another. Together with the previous two coding criteria, I was able to examine footage in relation to what was noticed, by whom as well as what was not noticed, and some insights in relation to why this was the case. Codes ranged from acquiescence, agreement, inquiry and embellishment to blocking, disagreement and uncertainty. Drawing from the work of Matusov and Smith (2005, p. 706) I added a further set of criteria as finalise, objectivise and subjectivise—three concepts that were featured in much of the dialogue.

The software provided a means of bringing to bear three different coding sets on the split-screen polyphonic footage. I was able to code what was seen, by whom and the nature of dialogue during the interpretations against specific pieces of footage. Not only did this approach enable detailed and complex analysis, but it also provided a means of visiting and revisiting the footage from multiple standpoints.

What Could Be Seen and by Whom

The interpretive moments generated out of dialogic investigation represent what Bakhtin describes as 'the fire of aesthetic value' (1990, p. 91). Analysis revealed that such fire was profoundly kindled by the authorial surplus each participant brought to the interpretive domain. The resulting differences in what could be 'seen' drew from the ideologies each brought to the experience. For instance, the parent frequently saw the acts of her child as a reflection of herself or simply did not see the significance of the acts at all; the teacher viewed those same acts in light of her public accountability to the state and family (a stance I argue is influenced by the authoritative discourses at play within the education setting) or chose not to foreground them in dialogue because they revealed aspects of herself; whilst I straddled an outside–inside stance based on my academic responsibilities and

professional background (a dual position Bakhtin, 1990, describes as essential to dialogic authorship). My ability to see anything at all was interdependent on the dialogue I shared with the parent, teacher and toddler herself, since I relied on their insights to influence my own.

The toddler, who seemed to become increasingly and astutely aware of her central location in our gaze, provided remarkable insights through the research process. Much to my surprise, these insights occurred as much as in the interpretive aftermath of the videoed acts as in initial viewing of the acts themselves. As I had invited Zoe to participate in interviews that took place between her parents and myself, her presence during these dialogues enabled her to contribute in the interpretative process in subtle ways. I did not always appreciate these contributions at the time of the interview, only afterwards in watching the footage beyond verbal dialogue exchanges and drawing together the threads of each research encounter as a greater whole. It was here I noticed Zoe employing strategies such as eavesdropping, gesturing and offering artefacts as clues to the adult participants during interviews, and re-enacting aspects of our dialogue in subsequent filming sessions. These contributions provided important insights into both the genres employed by the toddler to generate meaning and her strategic orientations towards (or away from) authorship by others. Such strategies were therefore by no means the exclusive domain of the adults and, in my view, represent 'aesthetic fire' and its ignition through an expanded appreciation of voice in work with toddlers.

An example of such appreciation is illustrated in a language act that I have called 'Baby Rock' (White, 2009b). The genesis of this act lay in an early piece of film entitled 'Rosters Rule' in which the toddler's mother (Lynette) noticed the toddler (Zoe) rocking a doll (White, 2009b). During this earlier sequence, it was my interpretation that the toddler was attempting to attract the attention of her teacher (Alicia) through a variety of mediating strategies. Alicia, at the time, was engaged with setting up the environment for children transitioning from group time, and then in settling the smallest babies on the floor. After several attempts to draw the teacher's eye towards her, using a range of strategies such as offering toys, moving to different parts of the room or calling out, Zoe selects a doll from the shelf and holds it to her chest in the same rocking motion as her teacher. At this, the teacher responds both visually and verbally, and Zoe engages in a sustained period of nurturing activity with the doll as Alicia cares for the 'real' babies alongside her. Their mutual gaze is evident when seen polyphonically through split-screens.

During re-probing interviews Alicia expressed her absolute horror at this episode, describing it as a negative reflection of her teaching practice. This positioning made it difficult for Alicia to 'see' anything about Zoe at all since her view was shrouded by disappointment in her own practice, which, in her view, was characterised by chaos. When I suggested to her that perhaps Zoe could be seeking her attention through strategic acts, Alicia changed the subject, turning the dialogue back to herself, saying things like, 'I wasn't doing my job' or 'I kept thinking "Oh what am I missing, what am I missing?" ... I know I should have been out there' *[Teacher Interview 5].* Alicia's anxiety revealed not only her disappointment in herself, but also the enormous pressure she felt to meet what she perceived as authorial accountabilities.

In an interview based on the same episode noticed by Lynette, however, the dialogue took a different turn. Lynette focussed on links between Zoe's interest in rocking the baby and her recent experience at home with a friend's baby. Zoe's keen interest was described, and Lynette demonstrated the way the baby was fed and rocked in the car seat, including the positioning of a blanket over the car seat when the baby went to sleep. Lynette explained how fascinated Zoe had been with these events. Zoe was present during this interview. When dialogue focussed on the baby and doll, Zoe retrieved two very different dolls from the shelves and passed them to her mother and me. Lynette was given the new doll with blonde hair (Lynette is blonde) and I was given a weathered doll (presumably due to my status as the 'senior' member of the group). Together we sang the nursery rhyme 'rock-a-bye-baby' and talked about the dolls and their sleeping habits.

Hours after this re-probing interview I re-entered the Education and Care setting to commence a filming episode. Zoe brought the same weathered doll over to me immediately, retrieving it from another child to do so. As I was preparing the cameras Zoe ran around the room calling 'Yay yay' and eagerly embraced the cam-hat that she was invited to wear. From my point of view it seemed that as soon as filming began, Zoe adopted a performative stance. Immediately she retrieved another doll from the shelves—this time a dark-skinned doll—and took it outside to Alicia. With the addition of a basket (similar in shape to a baby car seat), she proceeded to rock the baby, sing 'Rock rock' and place a blanket over the basket *in the exact same way as her mother had described in the earlier interview*. In the face of adversity, that is, two other toddlers attempting to take the doll from her, Zoe persisted in her possession of this doll. She consistently returned to her teacher with verbal language prompts about its 'eyes', 'nose' and 'bottom' as she demonstrated cleaning the baby *in the same way as she has seen Alicia do* with the babies in the centre. During this entire film sequence, both Alicia and Zoe shared the same visual fields, suggesting a high degree of intersubjectivity, which was borne out in the subsequent interview with Alicia.

Re-probing interview dialogue with Alicia following this act was lively. Alicia was keenly attuned to the features of the act that she perceived were based on her own practice, laughing and declaring 'That's what we *do* in the sleep room—exactly that ... when she [Zoe] is in the sleep room she is the baby ... she *is* the doll .... And the teachers stroke her back for her to go to sleep' *[Teacher Interview 6].* Through this dialogue, Alicia began to recognise the use of the doll as a means of engaging her teacher, which she described as grabbing her attention—'hook, line and sinker'[5] *[Teacher Interview 6].* Her interpretations were reinforced by an analysis of the shared visual gaze on the doll, captured across all three camera views. Here it seemed that, if Zoe's goal was to achieve intersubjectivity, she had been successful through this intentional act, which both flattered and amazed her teacher.

The act also struck a chord with Lynette, who exclaimed, 'She does it with dolls but she's also starting to try to do it with adults [laughs].... It's quite funny really'

[5] This is a colloquial term that draws on a fishing metaphor to denote the way someone can be caught or captured in an absolute sense.

[Parent Interview 5], and she proceeded to describe Zoe's recent attempts to nurture adults at home by pretending to change their nappy. I suggested to Lynette that Zoe may also be acting on things she had seen in the centre setting. Lynette's response was resolute: 'She remembers it herself—you know—with *us* changing her' *[Parent Interview 5].* Again, there was a keen sense that this act could be attributed to the adult, and to remembered experiences—this time very explicitly claimed from the home and not the centre.

Two weeks later, in a focus group interview between Alicia, me, Lynette, Zoe and Zoe's father Mark, dolls featured heavily again. Again, it seemed as if Zoe called on the dolls as a means of strategic orientation. As adults were seated around a table, Zoe carefully selected the same set of dark-skinned, blond and weathered dolls for Alicia, Lynette and me. During this interview session, Zoe focussed a great deal on Alicia—touching her, sitting on her knee and repeatedly returning to the dark-skinned doll with blankets and spoons for feeding. In the teacher interview that followed, Alicia speculated: 'I'm thinking, "Are you making that connection between the doll and me?". I mean, it's got black hair, it's got brown skin like me and I'm thinking . . . maybe . . .. It crossed my mind and then I thought "naaaaah"' *[Teacher Interview 6].* Alicia confessed her discomfort with the levels of intimacy offered by Zoe during the interview and her association with the 'little brown baby'—an act that rekindled negative memories of a similar doll Alicia had been identified with by others when she was a child.[6] Alicia's dialogue reveals a subjectivity that Zoe may not have had access to but which appeared to have a strong impact on the way Alicia responded to Zoe's repeated suggestion that Alicia claim this doll in what I interpret as an intersubjective attempt. Of significance to Alicia was her developing consideration that this 18-month-old toddler might be capable of such strategic intent, and the provocations that Zoe's acts held for her own subjectivity. This, despite her preconceived professional knowledge base of 'developmentally appropriate practice', based on a three-year programme of study preparing her for teaching, that suggested to her that a toddler simply does not have such capabilities.

This example of the doll represents one of many language acts and their interpretation by participants based on subjectivities that each brought to the arena. Through dialogic investigation, Zoe is represented as dynamic, sophisticated and deeply attuned to the subjectivities of the adults around her when adults opened themselves up to 'seeing' more. The centre supervisor declared that, as a result of Alicia's in-depth authorship experience, *all staff* came to appreciate 'the Zoe that's deeper' too since Alicia was able to share her interpretations with others as a result of these insights. 'Seen' through dialogic eyes none of the acts that were filmed could be interpreted as (or by) singular voice but rather the complex interplay of multiple subjectivities, performed for dynamic purposes, and constantly in a state of flux rather than as a finalised feat. While the interpretations are, in the final analysis, the researcher's, in dialogic research they must be valid for the community

[6] Alicia refers to the Māori doll called 'Manu' that featured on a New Zealand television programme called *Playschool* in the 1990s.

in which they are located. As Bakhtin (1990) explains, what can be seen is always influenced by the 'other's possible emotional-volitional reaction to my outward manifestation—his possible enthusiasm, love, astonishment, or compassion for me' (p. 31). In this location, authentic interpretations that generate personality (as opposed to narrow assessments of 'learning' or 'development') hold great potential for discovery and rediscovery, but they do not make claims about all toddlers in all settings or even for this toddler in a finalised manner. Zoe retains the right to exercise her dialogic loophole[7] in this regard.

Revealing Alternatives

Seen through dialogic eyes, Zoe's manipulative engagement(s) with the dolls provides useful insights into the nature of her acts as genres that are employed for strategic purposes, in the same way as adults use genres to convey meaning. Although a small number of researchers have reported on early childhood education activities or experiences as specific genre that very young children must come to understand if they are to be successful in that environment (see, for example, Cohen & Uhry, 2007; Gillen, 2000), little emphasis has been placed on those genres the toddler brings to bear on social experience as dialogic exchange. Through an exploration of genres there is potential to enter into an experience of toddler 'voice(s)' as an intentional and sustained act of meaning making that takes place within, between and beyond the early childhood education and other settings in which the young child resides. In the case of 'Baby Rock', for example, the genre of dramatic play through mimicry was employed with great strategic skill.

Entry into the complex arena of dialogic voice, however, means that the researcher has to maintain a dual focus on the acts of the toddler and the interpretations of those around her. Utterance, as the unit of analysis, provided a way of accessing both. Of equal significance to a deeper understanding of very young children are the important insights generated about adult subjectivities and their location in the wider ideologic spaces that surround and profoundly author the toddler's life. These insights not only consider the toddler as a personality, a peer and member of a culture but also pay attention to the discourses that construct the way the toddler can (or cannot) be seen by others and the various cultures in which she finds herself. Since this study has suggested that the toddler is altered by and simultaneously altering those views, there is ample scope in dialogic research methodology to consider the toddler as authored and authoring—in other words, as both a research subject and collaborator in her own right.

Over recent years there has been a shift to seeking out ways of using video authentically in work with very young children and the subjectivities that inevitably

[7] A dialogic loophole refers to the right of each and every individual to be otherwise to the way they have been interpreted, and recognizes that acts exist within an ongoing, lifelong, journey of becoming.

exist when film is shot, or interpreted by another (see, for example, Tobin & Hsueh, 2008). Polyphonic video provides a means of engaging with these subjectivities. Indeed, I came to appreciate Zoe's joy in participating in her own authorship experience as a claim she was able to make on the research through her interactions. Accessing the subjectivities of children under two years of age requires visual modes of investigation and invites the researcher to work sensitively alongside others in engaging with very young children and their voice(s). Taking a dialogic stance, then, *not* to support authentic use of footage, is unethical where under-two-year-olds are concerned.

Regardless of any argument I can make to the contrary, there will be those with concerns about the practice of putting a camera on the head of a very young child. Some will argue against the singling out of one small child in a group, or the potential power relationships held by adults in the Education and Care context. Others will focus on the technical aspects, suggesting that there may be some danger in using electronic equipment so close to the body. These and other ethical concerns were part of an organic and collective process I employed in working with all participants to ensure that toddler preferences were upheld over my research priorities. Aside from the obvious issues like safety—an aspect I took very seriously—such consideration required a great deal of risk on my part since I was committed to responding to the cues offered by the toddler. If Zoe (or the other children who acted as pilot participants or back-up) did not wish to wear the hat-cam, filming would cease. If her parents, teacher or I felt that her engagement with the project was negatively impacting on Zoe in any way, the project would have ended. However, this was not the case, from our point of view at least, and may, in part, be an outcome of our careful introduction of the camera to the early childhood centre context. Through such means, Zoe was acutely aware of the impact of the cameras on her experience and her central role in our interpretations. Her responses suggest that it is naïve to think that research can ever be done without altering the event and/or children involved. Indeed, the interpretation that such realisation affords provides further scope for involving very young children more fully in research activity, recognising the performative nature of their lives and providing avenues through which they can contribute to greater insights on the part of adults whom they rely on to understand them better.

Dialogic methodology has only begun to reveal its potential for understanding more about the way we are able to see infants and toddlers. Polyphonic video holds great promise for entering into the interpretive spaces that locate, frame and, at times, limit the way young children can be seen. Taken together, these approaches provide a means of celebrating the unique personality of the individual within and between groups. Furthermore, dialogic methodology supports the view that all language holds meaning and, in doing so, invites researchers and teachers to engage with multiple modes of communication—many of which are visual. As technology improves, we can only imagine the possibilities for future research with this age group when visual research methods are further exploited and shared with the research community as 'boundary objects allowing us to become an adaptive, distributed, collaborative, expert community' (Derry et al., 2010).

Concluding Remarks

Dialogic methodology when invoked to 'see' the very young child demonstrates that she can never be understood in isolation from others and their interpretive stance. Moreover, any 'seeing' is located within a moment of time. I have argued that this is an ethical, pedagogical and empirical imperative for early childhood education practice and research. This finding is supported in ethnographic research, which suggests no image or imaging can be viewed as truth in itself. The subjectivities of those who take the photographs, shoot the film or employ other means of observing the child not only influence but actually shape what can or cannot be seen. With this understanding it becomes of central importance for researchers to recognise the ways in which interpretations of voice are limited or expanded through the methodologies employed. I have argued that dialogic methodology, through detailed scrutiny and dialogue with others presents a means of expanding and appreciating voice as a multiple construct within, between and beyond the 'self'.

These results represent only a small sample of the findings generated out of this study. Others, associated with assessment ideologies and an emphasis on toddler language, are presented elsewhere (White, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; White & Peters, 2011). Combined, they suggest that dialogic methodology has a legitimate place in infant and toddler research since it can yield insights that are not so easily generated through traditional approaches. In doing so, toddlers, and perhaps other potentially marginalised voices, can be seen and heard in research activity and pedagogical assessment activity alike. As such, their unending potential can be revealed as multiple voices authentically emerge and challenge theoretical strongholds that limit possibility. The alternative is voicelessness, or as Bakhtin (1984) more dramatically suggests, 'absolute death (non-being)' (p. 284) when one is utterly 'known' by another. To be 'seen' is therefore not only a research imperative, but it is also a moral obligation for those who seek to understand more about the very youngest members of society and, if they are open to it, about themselves.

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Commentary to E. Jayne White: 'Seeing' the Toddler: Voices or Voiceless?

Gunvor Løkken

Starting out reading this chapter, I spent some time puzzling over its title. What does it say? Of course 'seeing the toddler' means literally seeing the toddler and by that, what we *believe* we see from what comprises the focus of our seeing. What can be seen is always impaired by what each person brings to their gaze, as E. Jayne White puts it.

I ended up with the understanding of the second part of the title—'voices or voiceless'—to be about whether what is brought to our gaze in observation is given voice to or not. Rather than the monologue of the scientist, E. Jayne White calls for polyphonic voices here, like those of speculation, uncertainty and reflexivity. She believes such polyphony will enhance the very young *child* envisioned with many voices.

This is the stance of Bakhtin's dialogism, beautifully described as giving way to the work of the eye that contemplates the need for performance and creativity in a particular place and at a particular time. It is all about the essential surplus of seeing that an author offers her subject. This authorial surplus refers to interpretative activity that considers both what can be seen and the meaning bestowed or imbued into it by others who participate through the central dialogic tenets of thought and action. Within the broader domain of utterance, 'voice' can include any sound, gesture, movement or word that has the potential to be recognized by others in social exchange. Therefore, 'voice' is a plural and expanded concept.

'Methodology—who needs it?' is the provoking question in the title of Martyn Hammersley's recent book (2011), in which Freud is cited as follows: 'Methodologists remind me of people who clean their glasses so thoroughly that they never have time to look through them' (p. 17). In our dedication to different ways of giving voice to children who are too young to express themselves in verbal language, many of us have dug deep into philosophical writing and methodology to legitimize our stance of inquiry. I think this is reflected in the chapters of this book indeed.

Jayne has dug deep into Bakhtin's dialogism. Although she spends quite some time 'cleaning the glasses' of Bakhtin's methodology, she has had time to look through them also. The polyphony of her observational study ensured that the toddlers themselves contributed authentically to the research process, in addition to the points of view of the other three dialogic partners involved, namely the teacher, the parents and herself. Through polyphonic video and re-probing interview, she analysed the *genre* of the many participants as the means by which an individual can orient meaning to another through the selection of relevant form and content in utterance. Working closely with *one*

toddler—Zoe—through re-probing interviews which drew on the polyphonic footage, White's study, in my opinion, has generated an analysis of amazingly high degree of general interest. Her thorough cleaning of the Bakhtinian glasses has contributed to this level of generalisation, I think.

White's brave choice to focus on *one* child, combined with advanced technology, is impressive. A visual means of capturing Zoe's language acts was achieved through a small hat-cam attached to the teacher's head (on a hat that was attached to a backpack with a video camera inside), another small hat-cam on Zoe's head (on a headband that was remotely connected to a video camera elsewhere) and a third pan-camera held by the researcher. To me this is *avant garde* collection of empirical material. In this light, my own experience following seven toddlers around with a handheld camera 16 years ago now seems 160 years ago. Technologically advanced is also the combining of individual videos in a time-synchronized split-screen representation that was offered to each participant for analysis.

Impressive as well is the use of software providing a means of bringing to bear three different coding sets on the split-screen polyphonic footage. Doing this, Jayne was able to code what was seen, by whom and the nature of dialogue during the interpretations against specific pieces of footage. Not only did this approach enable detailed and complex analysis, she says, it also provided a means of visiting and revisiting the footage from multiple standpoints. By that she was practicing and methodising Bakhtinian dialogism, indeed. This is innovative inquiry with very young children.

However, when her claim is that her ability to see *anything at all* was interdependent on the dialogue she shared with the parent, teacher and toddler herself, I think she downplays the researcher role too much. Although she relied on their insights to influence her own, the *voice* of her own insight certainly should be spoken out louder. This is what she does in her comment to the fact that Zoe, who seemed to become increasingly and astutely aware of her central location in the gazes of the others, provided remarkable insights through the research process. Much to Jayne's surprise, these insights occurred as much in *the interpretive aftermath* of the videoed acts as in initial viewing of the acts themselves. In other words, insight occurred through the voice of her own insight, as I see it.

The author claims that little emphasis has been placed on those genres the toddler brings to bear on social experience as dialogic exchange. Given my Norwegian cultural background, I suggest that Zoe's performance with dolls, as described thoroughly and vividly by White, can be argued as aspiring to an original toddler version of 'A doll's house'. (I think Ibsen would have loved it.)

I find that through her description of Zoe's performance with dolls, Jayne shows that she, as the researcher, managed to maintain a dual focus on the acts of the toddler and the interpretations of those around her. Utterance, as the unit of analysis, provided a way of accessing both, she concludes. Such

analysis considers the toddler as authored and authoring—in other words, as a research subject and collaborator in her own right. Dialogic methodology when employed to 'see' the very young child demonstrates that she can never be understood in isolation from others and their interpretive stance.

As discussed by Jayne, there will be those with concerns about the practice of putting a camera on the head of a very young child. Some will argue against the singling out of one small child in a group (or the other children who acted as pilot participants or back-up). If Zoe did not wish to wear the hat-cam, filming would cease, the author says. If her parents, teacher or researcher felt that her engagement with the project was negatively impacting on Zoe in any way, the project would have ended.

This I do trust, having read White's chapter.

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Chapter 5
Embodied Voices and Voicing Embodied Knowing: Accessing and Developing Young Children's Aesthetic Movement Skills

Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling, and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson

Eleven-month-old Matilda is with her parents in the laundry room where they are hanging out the washing. All the washed and wet clothes are in a pile on the floor. Matilda sits down amidst the clothes while her parents hang shirts and sweaters on hangers. Matilda roots about among the clothes and finds two socks of the same kind, pink with white dots on. She holds one sock in each hand, looks up at her parents, laughs and waves the two socks in the air. Through her actions, Matilda displays some of her many skills. She has noticed symmetry, something that is central to aesthetic knowing as well as to mathematics. However, for her skills to develop into, for example, skills in mathematics (principles such as pairs, number, etc.) or aesthetics (understanding how the beautiful patterns of the fabric and the colours are "constructed", etc.), we suggest that it will be necessary for her to be introduced into and engaged in speech mediation by another (an adult). The role of developmental pedagogy as a means of revealing the importance of mediation in relation to very young children's non-verbal knowing, facilitation of the development of bodily aesthetic form in children and the relationships between non-verbal and the verbal actions are what the present chapter seeks to explain. In doing so we suggest that the principles of developmental pedagogy, such as providing patterns of variation and introducing verbal tools (speech), are important even to the development of skills that as such are non-verbal (e.g., bodily gestalting skills). This interest in learning is focused on a "content", that is, what is in this perspective referred to as an object of learning. Developmental pedagogy, as we refer to it in this text, is a framework for understanding—and promoting—children's understanding, developed on the basis of empirical research and the theoretical work (as will be clarified below) of, particularly, Marton (1981; Marton & Booth, 1997; Marton & Tsui, 2004) and Pramling (1983, 1990, 1996; Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2007, 2008) and, to lesser extent, Vygotsky (1978, 1981).

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As is evident in the brief introductory example of Matilda sorting socks, even very young children are able to show their understanding of, for example, as in this particular case, symmetry, before they can express this understanding in speech if we provide situations for them that allow their knowing to come to the fore. This is important to remember when conducting researching into young children's development and learning. But in relation to developmental pedagogy we go further to examine the pedagogical relationship between children and the adults in their immediate lives.

Knowing within a developmental framework refers to discernment and sense-making. In taking this stance we recognise that some forms of knowing are in themselves non-verbal. One example of such knowing is dancing and other kinds of aesthetic (*gestalting*, i.e., representational) movements (e.g., moving like a tiger; Pramling Samuelsson, Asplund Carlsson, Olsson, Pramling, & Wallerstedt, 2009). So a related question we ask is, "How might we gain access to children's skills of this kind?" In asking this question, we can then consider how we can promote it further in early childhood education.

The purpose of this chapter is to illuminate how we let young children realise their right to be recognised seriously as knowledgeable beings without them necessarily being able to communicate their understanding verbally. This issue concerns young children's skills as a whole, as we have already mentioned. However, in the present case this issue is studied with regard to what we will refer to as children's "aesthetic movement skills". Some examples of such skills would be dancing to music and representational movements (e.g., pretending to be a cat or walking on the spot). The aesthetic domains (music, drawing, dancing) are important and highly valued parts of young children's life in preschool and other early childhood settings (Pramling, 2010). For example, children and teachers dance, sing songs and play with language (e.g., rhyming, nonsense verse). While the importance of the arts in early childhood education is hardly a controversial claim, the question of how children's learning (and the role of their understanding) is viewed in regard to these domains of knowing appears to be more problematic.

The data for this chapter comes from a larger set of data, consisting of video recordings made by our research group over a three-year period, investigating children's learning in the arts in early childhood education (for an overview of the project, see Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2009). Through some excerpts from the larger body of data, we will illustrate and discuss how we can gain access to (which is also argued to be a prerequisite for further developing) young children's embodied knowing. The theoretical framework of developmental pedagogy (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2007, 2008) is presented in terms of its constituent concepts. We then use these concepts to discuss examples of young children's aesthetic movements. An overarching issue in our chapter will concern the relation between verbal and non-verbal communication and how children, through the latter (through their responding actions), can appear on the scene as competent knowers well before they have a verbal language in which to communicate their understanding. This issue is accentuated in aesthetic/arts learning, since several art forms as such are non-verbal (dance, music, visual art).

The chapter is structured in the following way. First, we present the wider research project on children's learning in the arts, from which the empirical data for this study was obtained. Second, we introduce the theoretical framework for this study, developmental pedagogy and its distinctive conceptual features. Third, we discuss how to conceive of aesthetic knowing with the help of theoretical accounts, primarily the classic work of Rudolf Laban. Fourth, we analyse two empirical illustrations of young children and their teachers engaged in aesthetic movements in a preschool. Finally, we discuss the issues of aesthetic knowing with young children, how to promote children's skills in this domain in early childhood education and, employing developmental pedagogy, how to research the development of these skills.

A Research and Development Project

In our project we wanted to study how teachers and children engage in activities in the domains of music (Pramling, 2009a; Pramling & Wallerstedt, 2009; Wallerstedt, 2011), dancing/aesthetic movements (Pramling & Wallerstedt, 2011) and poetry (Pramling, 2009b, 2010; Pramling & Asplund Carlsson, 2008). We invited practising teachers to attend regular in-service meetings at the university over a period of two years. They attended inspiration lectures by, among others, a composer, a dance teacher and a scholar specialised in children's literature and poetry. The teachers also read literature on educational theories, particularly work on the theoretical framework of developmental pedagogy (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2007, 2008) and empirical research based on that framework. This literature was discussed with the research team at the in-service meetings. An important premise for the project was to study children's learning in these three domains of art in practices that were not specialised in these arts and/or that did not have practising musicians, etc. available. The reason for this was that we were interested in studying children's learning in the kinds of early childhood education practices that most children attend, in order to see if all children are given ample opportunities and support in developing their knowing in the arts. Otherwise, research on children's learning in the arts tends to be done in specialised music schools, etc., with skilled artists coming into the preschool or school (Nyland, Ferris, & Dunn, 2008; Saar, 2005).

We also followed the teachers and the children when they took part in activities in the domains of art. At times, we gave the teachers specific tasks we wanted them to try out with the children (e.g., to try opposite movements/postures or to make drawings of music listened to). At other times, the teachers themselves chose activities that they would like to get our feedback on. We recorded the activities with video cameras. This method of generating data is important in order for children's communicative skills to become accessible to the researchers. In addition, we collected poems and drawings made by the children and interviewed the teachers at the start and the end of the project. The teachers regularly received feedback by us on their work. On several occasions, one of the researchers and

the teachers met at the preschool to view video data from their own practice in order to discuss what happened in these films and how the teachers' intentions met with the children's perspectives. We also looked at films when all the teachers and researchers met at the in-service meetings at the university. The ethical guidelines of the Swedish Research Council were followed throughout the study. This means that all participation was voluntary. The children's caregivers and the teachers had to sign an informed consent form, agreeing to let the children and the teachers participate in the study. All participating children, teachers, preschools and schools were given pseudonyms in the data material.

Nine work teams of teachers participated in the study. Each work team consisted of about three teachers. The teachers work in preschools, the preschool class (which is an intermediate form of schooling for the six-year-olds, between preschool and school) and the first years of primary school. The children participating in the larger study were between one and eight years old. In the present chapter, we will use video data of a teacher and very young children (1–2 years) from a preschool as an illustration of the issues we pointed out in the introduction to this chapter. We demonstrate the usefulness of the developmental pedagogy framework for research with very young children by building upon the principles of patterns of variation affording discernment and meta-level talk.

Developmental Pedagogy

Developmental pedagogy (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2007, 2008) is a theoretical framework for conceptualising—and developing, when put to use as pedagogical principles in early childhood education—children's learning. This framework is founded on empirical research in naturalistic settings, primarily preschools, conducted over some 30 years. The name "developmental pedagogy" denotes the fact that this theory emphasises the importance and role of the preschool teacher in the child's development. However, the focus of this perspective is children's *experience* (what sense children make and take with them from the activities they participate in). One of the recurring findings of this research has been that simply participating in various activities is not sufficient for developing the child's understanding of these activities. There is no one-to-one correspondence between the activities provided and what the child experiences of them. In other words, simply making different kinds of bodily movements need not result in the child developing a bodily awareness of the kind intended by the preschool teacher. This requires the child to discern certain features as significant in these activities and that he/she is able to make sense of these.

Another important feature of developmental pedagogy is *meta-level talk* (i.e., to talk about what and how one does what one does, cf. meta-cognition, meta-communication), since it is argued that the kind of communication a teacher is able to engage children in plays a decisive role in the type of competence they develop. However, teachers differ greatly in how they converse with children (Johansson, 2003). The notion of meta-level talk is related to the distinction we

make between participating in an activity and experiencing something. Meta-level talk, that is, speaking about what one does and how one does it, is an important means of making children aware of what they do and how this could be understood.

Meta-level talk is also one of the means (cf. below) of directing children's attention to what the teacher intends children to experience. This is the principle of *directedness* (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2007). Every situation the child (and this goes for the adult as well, of course) takes part in, whether as observer or participator, is never unambiguous, only possible to perceive and understand in one way. In a goal-directed practice such as Swedish preschool, teachers have the task (on the basis of the curriculum) of supporting children perceiving and grasping certain features of various situations. Hence, directing children's attention to significant features of various situations and domains of knowing (cf. our presentation of Laban's work, below) is a key task for the preschool teacher. What the preschool teacher intends children to notice and develop an understanding of is in this perspective referred to as an *object of learning* (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2007, 2008; Marton & Tsui, 2004). This concept denotes the answer to the question: What do I want to develop in children? A sub-concept is the *lived object of learning*, that is, how the object of learning appears to the child, how he or she understands it. The object of learning is distinguished from the *act of learning*, which refers to the way of learning about the "content", the "object" (cf. the distinction between activity and experience above). We have suggested that meta-level talk is one important means of directing children's attention towards certain important features of a domain of knowing.

Another important means to this end is the systematic use of *variation* (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2007). From this perspective, meaning springs from differences, not from similarities. For something to be noticed, it has to differ (vary) from something else. This variation can be simultaneous in a situation, for example, through contrasting colours or forms (triangle, circle, and square), or differ against the background of the learner's previous experiences (e.g., through travelling to another part of the country or meeting someone with a different way of speaking the same language, hence becoming aware of the phenomenon of dialect). This theoretical notion implies that one powerful pedagogical tool is to use patterns of variation and invariance in a more or less systematic manner. Studying learning in terms of patterns of variation and invariance is also an important analytical tool for the researcher.

Finally, since developmental pedagogy is a framework developed to account for children's development, the notion of play is important. Children are seen as *playing learning children* (Pramling Samuelsson & Asplund Carlsson, 2008), that is, as subjects that do not distinguish between play and learning. Rather, young children learn when playing and play when learning. Summing up, developmental pedagogy as presented here comprises all the following aspects: the relationships between the theoretical notions of experience, meta-level talk, directedness, the object and act of learning, variation, discernment and the playing learning child.

Aesthetic Knowing

In the in-service education of the teachers in the project, Rudolf Laban's classic book on dance pedagogy, *Modern Educational Dance* (1963), was introduced in order to give the teachers access to some important "tools of the domain" (Wallerstedt, in press). Laban's ideas became central to the teachers' subsequent dance/aesthetic movement activities with the children. In the book, Laban discusses "modern" or "free" dance in terms of education in schools. Central to his account of dancing is what he refers to as "dance patterns" and "dance qualities". The former denotes what kind of movement one does, for example, dancing/moving in a straight line, in a circle or zigzag. The latter denotes how these movements are made, for example, softly or heavily, fast or slowly, continuously or broken up. In terms of developmental pedagogy, these patterns and qualities are important dimensions of variation (Lindahl & Pramling Samuelsson, 2002; Marton & Tsui, 2004) making up dancing or aesthetic movements that children therefore may need support in discerning and becoming conscious of. Consequently, using contrast will be an important means of developing children's awareness of the patterns and qualities of movements. Some examples of contrasts could be: pull–push, sudden–gradual, narrow–wide movements. Other dimensions of variation could be spatial relationships such as high–low, left–right and diagonals. But repetition may also be used, for example, one child trying to repeat the movement of another child, or trying to build upon the first movement in achieving a collaborative continuous movement such as "the wave". Finally, one child could try to do the opposite movement of another child, along some dimension of variation. Central to Laban's (1963) dance pedagogy is to develop in the learner an awareness of patterns and qualities of movements. Hence, even if what he writes about is "free dance", the teacher has an important role in supporting children's discernment of patterns and qualities of movements. When the children have discerned these, they are, of course, free to use this knowing as they choose in dancing.

While still being a widely referred to canonical work on dance pedagogy, Laban's account of awareness of movements does not reflect how dancing (or for that matter, other fields of art/aesthetics) is often considered in relation to pedagogical practices. As Bannon and Sanderson (2000) point out, there are in such accounts "often-heard instructions to 'just move, don't think' or, 'feel, don't think'" (p. 11). In contrast to the latter and in line with Laban (1963), Bannon and Sanderson (2000) emphasise the importance of developing "aesthetic awareness" in the learner (cf. Arnold, 2005). Supporting such a conscious bodilyaesthetic knowing is also assumed to be a valuable goal in aesthetic movement/dance practices with young children in the present study.

Dance in Early Education

Aesthetics in Swedish preschools and schools is often activity orientated (Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2009), that is, the teacher plans for certain activities, such as having a singing circle time or playing shipwreck in the gymnastics hall, rather

than in terms of the abilities, skills, knowing he or she wants to support children in developing. In combination with the widespread notion of aesthetic skills being inborn (see, e.g., Howe, Davidson, & Sloboda, 1998, for a critical review), this assumption leaves little room for contributions made by the teacher to children's development. Such an assumption and practice thus are obstacles to having an early childhood education in which all children are given ample opportunities and scaffolding in developing aesthetic knowing and skills.

The aesthetic skill of being able to dance is often "reduced" to a notion about the importance of children moving their bodies (e.g., in order to combat obesity), that is, becoming a part of physical education. Saar (2005) introduces the distinction between "strong" and "weak" forms of aesthetics. "Weak" aesthetics refers to the use of aesthetic expressions such as dancing in order to learn about other domains of knowing, for example, dancing in order to learn a mathematical concept. "Strong" aesthetics, in contrast, refers to the artful/aesthetical as such being focused upon. According to Saar, the latter is characterised by gestalting, solving the same problem in different ways, managing the impossible and what does not have a (single) solution, for example, how to gestalt a peeled banana (cf. Pramling Samuelsson et al., 2009). In our larger research project, we have primarily focused our interest on "strong aesthetics".

How do we as teachers and researchers get hold of children's knowing in aesthetic domains in a goal-directed practice such as preschool? An interest in this question builds upon two premises. First, that the teacher intends to support the children in developing an aesthetic ability, that is, she presumes that there are abilities to develop, that dancing is not a skill the child has or has not got by nature. Second, that the teacher plans in the short term as well as in the longer term in relation to an object of learning of an aesthetic kind. She provides opportunities for the children to attain their rightful position concerning the object of learning, communication, but not for its own sake, rather as a means of learning about qualities of dancing (see Laban, above). With the pedagogical imperative of teachers to enhance aesthetic capabilities outlined above, the following examples are offered of very young children analysed from a developmental pedagogy standpoint.

Empirical Illustrations

In this section, we will present, analyse and discuss two empirical examples of young children and teachers engaged in aesthetic movements.

A First Illustration: Doing "The Rocket"

A fundamental challenge to a teacher in early childhood education is how to find ways of engaging the youngest children in a way that allows them to realise their potential as knowledgeable beings. This is of ethical importance since it strengthens

the child's evolving sense of self and ability. In our research we contend that it is also of importance to the pedagogical task of being able to provide children with support in order to develop their skills further.

In the theoretical section of this chapter we emphasised that there is no simple one-to-one correspondence between the kind of activity a child participates in and the experience he or she gains from taking part in this activity. For example, clapping in time to music cannot be presumed to result in the child developing an awareness of time (metre) in music. Ideally, and usually with older children, when we want to find out what children have experienced (discerned), we ask them. Our attempts at getting this insight into the experience of the very young child, who cannot yet speak, need to be different for obvious reasons. Other modes (Kress, 1997) of communication are required, for example, pointing or bodily enacting rather than verbally clarifying. How can the teacher provide situations where the very young child can express knowledge, which he/she has a right to do, before he or she is able to communicate this in speech? In this first example, we will illustrate how a teacher manages this task in a concrete manner when engaging children in a dancing/aesthetic movement activity.

A group of about 10 children between the ages of one and two years and their teacher have a song get-together. The teacher plays on a drum while she sings together with the children. The drum is also passed round among the children. They participate in different ways, some trying to sing while others sit in silence and observe. To end the activity, they play an action game. They sit in a circle on the floor and the following then takes place:

1. Teacher: (Draws her fingers over the drum skin in a circular movement to make a hissing noise.)
2. Children: (Some of them get the point immediately, get up and creep over the floor. One girl also imitates the teacher's movements on the drum with her hands.)
3. Teacher: (Raises the intensity of the game by beating the drum instead.)
4. Children: (The children who got up to take part change to stamping with their feet.)
5. Teacher: (Increases the speed of the game.)
6. Children: (Run on the spot, faster and faster, making a noise at the same time.) Oooh . . . .

This activity is, according to its cultural form, supposed to end with the teacher, having reached top speed, making a distinct beat on the drum. The children are then expected to throw themselves onto the floor. The accentuated final beat on the drum and the children throwing themselves on the floor are meant to occur at the same time. Some children throw themselves down before this final beat, while most of the children throw themselves down after the beat. All in all, the activity lasts approximately 20 seconds. After catching their breaths, the children play the game again:

7. Teacher: Oh, dear me ... once again then (beginning to draw her fingers over the drum skin.)
8. Children: (More and more get up and start creeping, mostly on the spot as there's not much space in the room.)
9. Teacher (Beating the drum and playing faster and faster.)
10. Children: (Shout and throw themselves down.)

The second time the activity lasts only about 10 seconds. Most of the children have thrown themselves on the floor before the teacher has made the final beat on the drum. The teacher exclaims that the children did well and repeats the task once more. All but one of the children participates. The activity ends by one boy falling over another. This concludes the activity, and the children are encouraged to sneak out into the entrance to get their warm clothes on to go outside and play.

When the activity was followed up during dialogue with the researchers immediately afterwards, one of the researchers asked the teacher (i) what her intentions had been when she introduced this activity, (ii) what could be discovered in the activity, and (iii) what the children could have been aware of. The teacher explained that she believed there was a relationship between the sound of the drum and the children's movements. She also described the way children quickly seemed to focus on the pleasurable ending, that is, throwing themselves onto the floor, rather than on the congruent accelerando. The teacher and the researcher wondered whether the children were even aware of the sound of the drum being intended as a signal for them to move in a certain way. How could this relationship between sound and movement be made apparent to the children, and how could we know whether they had discerned this relationship? Being able to discern this relationship and enact it bodily is what it means to master this activity.

A few months later, the researcher returned to the preschool to observe aesthetic activities. The teacher informed her that she had, among other things, continued with the activity from the previous visit. This time only two children took part in the activity. One of the boys (Alvin) wanted to do "The Rocket" again.

The following takes place:

11. Teacher: Now you have to listen (drawing her fingers across the drum skin.)
12. Alvin: (Sneaks round the teacher.)
13. Teacher: (Changes to beating the drum.)
14. Alvin: (Runs fast on the spot.)
15. Teacher: Listen! (Walks on the spot.)
16. Alvin: (Looks up at the teacher, stops himself, walks more slowly but a bit faster than the drum beat, is about to increase the pace again.)
17. Teacher: (Goes back to drawing her fingers across the drum skin.)
18. Alvin: (Gives a surprised look and starts sneaking again.)
19. Teacher: (Begins to beat the drum steadily.)
20. Alvin: (Follows her by stamping in time, soon begins to run instead.)
21. Teacher: (Changes to drawing her fingers across the drum skin.)

22. Alvin: (Immediately starts sneaking. Makes a circle with his hand in the air as if he is copying the teacher's drum movements, or as a wave. He looks into the camera.)
23. Teacher: (Begins to beat the drum again, this time increasing the tempo.)
24. Alvin: (Begins stamping, quickly changes to running, and presently throws himself onto the floor almost simultaneously with the teacher's final beat.)

On this occasion, Alvin appears to be clear about the sound of the drum as "directing" his movements. The drum "calls" and Alvin "responds" by moving in time to the sound of the drum. Here the teacher starting to play on the drum is not merely a signal for Alvin to throw himself onto the floor. He adjusts his movement to a sneaking pace when the teacher encourages him to listen (turns 15–16) and when she changes from beating with her fingers to making a hissing sound (turns 21–22). When the teacher subsequently once again starts to beat the drum (turn 23), Alvin shows that he notices the changes by stamping.

However, whether it is in fact the variation in tempo that the child attends to is still unclear. The two different ways that the teacher plays on the drum, that is, making a hissing sound or beating, may also be what makes a difference to the child. The scratching sound is embodied in a sneaking movement and the beats through stamping. Had the awareness of tempo been the intended object of learning, this could have been made clearer through keeping the way of playing invariant and only shifting between a slower and a faster tempo of the pulse.

On the first occasion (see above), the sound of the drum appears to be a signal for the children that it is (soon) time to throw themselves down. On the second occasion, a substantially longer joint activity is established (40 seconds as compared to 10–20 seconds on the first occasion) on the basis of the teacher's playing and the child's movements. Importantly, on this second occasion the teacher also verbalises what is a prerequisite for this coordinated activity, that is, that Alvin should listen (turns 11 and 15). Through Alvin's responding movements, the teacher—as well as the researcher—gets a hint about what the child experiences in the activity.

Also important in the last excerpt, in contrast to the previous ones, is that it illustrates speech as a tool affording (self) regulation (Rommetveit, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978). Verbalising for the child supports his awareness of and ability to regulate his behaviour, that is, wait for the right moment (sound) to act, rather than simply diving in head-on as soon as the impulse hits him. Appropriating this cultural tool (speech) allows the development of this higher-order psychological process from communication with others (other regulation) to a means of self-regulation (Rommetveit, 1985; Vygotsky, 1978).

By varying her playing (even if two dimensions of variation were at play simultaneously, see above) on the drum and her verbalisation, the teacher enables the child to make his understanding and knowing visible in action without needing to be able to communicate this knowing in speech. Creating situations for even very young children to be acknowledged as competent is an important challenge for teachers in early childhood education. It is also a challenge to researchers trying to

document the development of children's skills. While the activity described above allowed the child to appear on the scene as competent, it is important to realise that this does not diminish the importance of speech in pedagogical practices. As seen in the last excerpt (above), the teacher not only uses patterns of variation but also speech to direct the child's attention to the relationship she intends him to discern. We will return to the issue of speech in relation to the learning of non-verbal forms of knowing in the discussion.

A Second Illustration: Work-Related Movements

As we have already mentioned, when doing activities in the domain of dancing/aesthetical movements, the teachers were inspired by the dance theoretician Rudolf Laban. According to Laban (1963), one of the distinctive features of "modern" or "free dance" is that anything may be used in inspiring movements. For example, he suggests that the learner observe people working to see how people of different professions move.

This second illustration comes from the same preschool as the first example.

The teachers decided to spend a considerable time on developing an awareness of work movements in their children. The overarching theme in that term was the farm. The children (1–2 years) and teachers visited a farm, met a farmer and the animals on the farm, read about and looked at pictures of farms, etc. The intended object of learning chosen by the teachers was tied to the overarching theme through picking up movements from the daily life of a farmer. The teachers used a story bag, which contained a small figure of a farmer, a number of animals and pieces of a fence. In order to prevent the animals from escaping, the children had to build a fence. The teacher encouraged the children to make hand movements as if they were hammering, nailing the planks to the fence. While the children pretended to nail the fence, the teacher put together the pieces of the model fence and put the animals inside the enclosure. The children were photographed by the teacher while hammering, and these pictures were put into a book about the farmer that the children could take out and browse through when they wanted.

When they first listened to the story about the farm, some of the children looked uncertain, but after hearing it several times they were willing to put up the fence, too. What have the children experienced from listening to the story and putting up the imaginary fence? Does the fact that all the children participated in the activity mean that they were aware putting up a fence can be illustrated by making certain movements with their hands? This was a question that preoccupied the teachers. Then, one day, the teachers observed one of the boys in the group gathering pillows and mattresses. He informed the teachers, "jag spika koja" (literally "I hammer hut"), while making the characteristic hammering movement with his hand. The teachers took this event as evidence that the child had become aware of one of the farmer's work movements.

This example draws our attention to at least two principal issues. First, the example has a bearing on the difference between having an overarching theme in preschool focused on certain activities (in this case, the story of a farmer), on the one hand, and thinking in terms of objects of learning, on the other, where the attainment of a certain capability or understanding is intended (in this case, awareness of working movements). One does not exclude the other, but the object of learning could make up one part of the theme. Second, the example can serve to emphasise playing as an opportunity for children to enact their experiences. Already from a very young age children need to be acknowledged and promoted in their knowing. Play is one such potential arena.

Embodied Voices and Voicing Embodied Knowing: Discussion and Conclusions

In this chapter, we have tried to illustrate, analyse and discuss how teachers can arrange situations where even the very young child can be acknowledged as competent and how we, in research, can study this in terms of developmental pedagogy. However, this emphasis on and alternative to conversations as generally used with older children does not suggest that speaking with these young children should be less important even when it comes to non-verbal embodied knowing such as aesthetic movements and dancing. It is through arranging situations with certain patterns of variation that we not only provide opportunities for the child to discern important aspects but also through his or her variation that we, as researchers, can discern his or her understanding.

That the children themselves are unable to speak does not make it any less important for the teacher to speak to and with them. In fact, the opposite could be argued. By speaking with and to the children, the teacher provides opportunities for children to start appropriating speech. They are also "invited" to enter into certain kinds of conversations, even if the teacher is initially the one both asking and responding to the questions (cf. Wertsch, 1979/2008). Eventually the child will become familiarised with this kind of conversational activity and begin to make contributions to it (cf. Tomasello, 1999). Based on the theory of developmental pedagogy, there is no need for the teacher to wait to speak to the children about the way they move until they can speak themselves in a developed manner; in fact it would appear counter-productive. Rather, from a developmental point of view, there is a point in the child being socialised into ways of conversing and carrying out pedagogical activities from an early age. Also, as we have already mentioned, what the teacher says when directing children's attention makes it possible for them to become aware of, discern and experience aspects and features of situations and activities that are difficult or even impossible for them to discover by themselves without this support. The teacher's spoken language is therefore an important means of facilitating children's development even of their bodily

(aesthetic-bodily/gestalting and dancing) knowing. In this chapter, we have referred to this notion as "voicing embodied knowing".

While we have emphasised the importance of speech in directing children's attention and affording the discernment of significant features of movements and coordination with sound (something that could be argued to be foundational to the skill of dancing), we have also mentioned, albeit briefly, the role of speech in the development of self-regulation of behaviour. This is cognate with Vygotskian theory (Vygotsky, 1978). In Rommetveit's words, "Linguistic structuring of attention and symbolic behaviour control are according to Vygotsky (1981, p. 194) complementary features of a 'cultural development of attention,' that is, of 'evolution and change in the means for directing and carrying out attentional processes, the mastery of these processes, and their subordination to human control'" (Rommetveit, 1985, p. 194, italics omitted). Hence, paradoxical as it may sound, speech is important not only when it comes to knowing *about*movements but also as regards the ability to execute these, that is, to the child's movements and dancing as such.

As hinted at in the empirical part of our chapter, it is clear that the teacher and the children have been practising the same activities over an extended period of time. Young children often appreciate doing the same thing over and over again. Since a point of developmental pedagogy is to focus on the evolvement of an object of learning over time, it is well suited for capturing this fact. At the same time, children (as do adults) often spontaneously move when listening to music. Taking care of these spontaneous movements is another important role for the teacher striving to develop children's bodily awareness and ability to coordinate movements, discern certain patterns and qualities of movements, etc. The frequent observation in various situations of young children enjoying repetition does not stand in opposition to the principle of variation as suggested in this chapter. Patterns of variation and invariance are powerful means of facilitating the discernment and experience of features of a domain of knowing. Having discerned these, the child will still have to and often visibly greatly enjoys doing this over and over. To master a movement or posture in a conscious manner, it is necessary but not sufficient to discern what constitutes a certain aesthetic-bodily form. The child's learning may of course also go in the opposite direction. That is, someone (a parent or a preschool teacher) can point out to the child bodily skills he/she is able to perform but is perhaps unaware of doing. In both variants, speech will be important in directing the child's attention even if the skills as such are of a non-verbal kind.

In context of the present discussion, it should also be pointed out that if seen from the perspective of developmental pedagogy and the concept of experience, the same activity repeated is in fact not the same activity the second time as the first time. To give an example, having heard a story once before and thus knowing what will happen in it, how it will end, etc., makes the experience of hearing it again different. Hence, through the learner's experience every repetition is simultaneously and necessarily a variation.

In this chapter we have argued that arranging for situations where very young children who do not necessarily communicate their insights through speech are acknowledged as knowledgeable is of utmost importance to children, teachers and researchers alike. Our work and theoretical perspective illustrate this in two ways: (i) in the object of learning and the teacher's verbalisation of this; and (ii) the important notion of variation, as (a) a way of providing for children's discernment and (b) a way for us as researchers to discern what children can through giving them opportunities to systematise their movements; for example, through walking to a drum varying in tempo so that they can vary their tempo accordingly and thus display this skill. We have also argued that even in these situations with knowing of a non-verbal kind, such as aesthetic (*gestalting*) movements, it is essential that the teacher use verbal communication to direct children's attention towards dimensions and relationships that are difficult, or sometimes even impossible, to discover on their own.

Hence, developmental activities with very young children need to be in a form that builds on children's possibilities of acting competently without the need to speak, but even in such situations, speech is an important means of developing their non-verbal knowing and of developing their knowing further. The results of our investigation have provided important clues about the pedagogy of aesthetic education for very young children.

First, in order to provide opportunities for young children to be able to display their capabilities, it is necessary to create situations where they can act competently in action (i.e., other than speech action). Second, in early childhood education, teachers can provide ample opportunities and support for the (further) development of children's bodily aesthetic skills (as focused on in this chapter) through (a) directing children's attention through speech (meta-level talk) and (b) providing patterns of variation and invariance in order to facilitate discernment of significant features of a domain of knowing/area of competence. Finally, we would like to remind our readers of a neglected pedagogical principle in research and in practice. Encourage the children to do the opposite (of course, presuming or making sure that the children understand this notion) as it helps the preschool teacher and the researcher and, provided that it is verbalised (through meta-level talk), the children themselves to see how much they understand of what they do in aesthetic (gestalting) movements.

From our reasoning in this chapter that the principles of developmental pedagogy are useful not only to early years teachers in practice but also to researchers studying children's learning, concepts such as patterns of variation and invariance, directedness, etc. are useful in analysing how teachers provide good opportunities (or fail to do so) for children's learning in naturalistic settings. In this chapter we have studied children's learning in the embodied aesthetic art of dancing/gestalting movements in these terms.

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Commentary to Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson: Embodied Voices and Voicing Embodied Knowing

Sheila Degotardi

In their chapter, Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson describe their approach to researching and facilitating the aesthetic movement development of very young children. They apply the theoretical constructs of *developmental pedagogy* in order to discuss how teachers and researchers can gain access to the knowledge of young children who demonstrate their conceptual understanding in pre-verbal ways. As identified in the chapter, this is a significant issue that poses challenges for both teachers and researchers. In this commentary, I contribute to the authors' ideas by discussing why research about infant-toddler conceptual understanding is welcome in the field of early childhood education, before suggesting ways in which researchers and teachers can work collaboratively to advance pedagogical understanding in practice-based and research-based contexts. I conclude by exploring further how researchers who focus on teacher talk can conceptualise how this talk might mediate infant-toddler learning.

Researching the Teaching of Conceptual Understanding

By focusing on the development of aesthetic movement skills and understandings, Cecilia, Niklas and Ingrid draw attention to the importance of research about curriculum concept learning and teaching in infant-toddler programmes. As more infants and toddlers attend early childhood education programmes, there is an increasing body of research that addresses issues of quality in these programmes. This evidence, however, has tended to focus on structural measures of quality or broad measures of caregiver sensitivity or responsiveness (e.g., NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1996, 2002) rather than addressing how early childhood teaching and learning can be conceptualised in a more pedagogical sense. Siraj-Blatchford (2009) has recently expressed a concern about childhood teachers' tendency to adopt a passive facilitative, rather than an active teaching role in respect to cognitive development and conceptual learning. Her criticism is reflected by Fleer (2010) who calls for early childhood teachers to become more conscious of the curriculum-based concepts that they wish to teach and thus adopt a more intentional, teaching stance.

The question of how to research changes in infant-toddler teachers' views about and teaching practices in relation to children's conceptual learning

is therefore brought to the fore. In their chapter, the authors describe a longitudinal approach in which specialised lectures in dance education were provided to teachers before they engaged in a period of observation of, and reflective conversations about, their teaching practices. This approach recognises and responds to the need for practitioners to have in-depth knowledge of the cognitive concepts that they intend to teach (Fleer, 2010). Of equal importance, though, is the inclusion of on-going professional, reflective dialogues during which teachers' pedagogical thinking is made explicit to both researcher and teacher. Not only does this dialogic process provide researchers with a valuable point of access to teachers' thinking, but it also assists teachers to establish the links between theory and practice that have been shown to enhance early childhood teaching (Degotardi, Semann, & Shepherd, in press; Goodfellow, 2005; Waniganayake et al., 2008). When such opportunities are provided by researchers, we see a strength-based, collaborative, practitioner inquiry-based research approach in which researchers and practitioners support one another to co-research ways of conceptualising, documenting and strengthening infant-toddler teaching practice (Goodfellow & Hedges, 2007).

Accessing and Understanding Infant Conceptual Learning

A second question raised by Cecilia, Niklas and Ingrid is how researchers and teachers can effectively access the conceptual understanding of very young children. The notion of embodied voices is offered as a useful means of understanding the perspectives and knowledge of pre-verbal children, as physical movements, responses and gestures that have long been considered infants' first ways of representing their understanding of the world. The challenge, then, is for researchers and teachers to find ways of accessing and understanding this knowledge. Due to the opaque nature of knowledge representations (Perner, 1991), particularly in pre-verbal children, this process is an interpretive, ascriptive one, which, as the authors acknowledge, can only ever be approached tentatively. Many would argue, however, that it is a vital process to consider if we are to understand the mediating role that adult communication and actions plays in infant learning.

To begin with, Bruner and others argue that adult talk is one of the main ways in which meaning is ascribed to infant actions (Bruner, 1983; Nelson, 1996; Snow, 1984). They argue that caregivers have a general tendency to attribute intentions, feelings and knowledge to the pre-verbal actions of infants, a process that draws infants' attention to salient aspects of their experience and thus facilitates infants' gradual understanding of their physical and mental experiences. As Cecilia, Niklas and Ingrid argue, this type of interpretive talk takes into consideration infants' experiences or their

subjective perspectives within the context of meaningful activity. Hence, it is not only the talk that matters but also the ability of the adult to use talk that reflects the infants' current ways of thinking and understanding their current experiences.

This position is advanced by Nelson (1996), who divides adult–infant interactions into two components. The discourse context refers to the actual talk that is taking place during the infant's current activity. Such talk exposes infants to words within the context of their current experience, providing them with a linguistic frame from which to extract meaning for their actions. The second component is the cognitive context, which Nelson defines as the infant's current ways of understanding their world and the experiences in which they participate (see also Sperber & Wilson, 1986). Nelson argues that "in order for the child to extract elements of meaning from the *discourse context*, the word must be made relevant to the child's *cognitive contexts*" (p. 139, italics in original). Within a teaching context, the interpretive, meta-communicative aspect of the talk is highlighted as Nelson's approach suggests that effective teacher talk only draws infants' attention to significant situational features and domains of knowing when there is a level of concordance between the talk and infants' current understanding of the concept in question. From this perspective, concept development is a collaborative process, which relies on the establishment of shared understanding between infant and teacher in relation to the concepts being taught and learned (see also Gauvain, 2001). As Fleer (2010) suggests, when teaching intentions and child understandings are aligned within an experiential framework, the resulting contextual and conceptual intersubjectivity allows teachers to transform young children's thinking by increasing their consciousness of the concepts under exploration.

Concluding Thoughts

The topic and approach described in this chapter propose a number of opportunities for infant-toddler researchers to increase the knowledge base about the teaching and learning of curriculum-based concepts during children's first years of life. At a fundamental level, the authors suggest that research is needed about infant-toddler teachers' understandings of curriculum concepts and the place that they assign to concept teaching and learning within their educational programs. Of equal importance is the need for research into how infant-toddler teachers perceive and interpret infant learning and the ways that this understanding is translated into their everyday practice. These gaps in the research stress the need for multi-method approaches that use both interview and observational measures to access and portray teacher understandings. Finally, if research is to acknowledge

the active role of the infant in their learning processes, methods need to be established that can provide fine-grained analyses of the concordance between teacher beliefs, practices and infant understandings. By illustrating how teachers and infants interact and respond to one another's verbal and non-verbal communication on a moment-to-moment basis, such methods have the potential to deepen current understandings of the complex ways in which perspectives of teachers and young children intersect to support teaching and learning processes.

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Chapter 6
"Visual Vivencias": A Cultural-Historical Tool for Understanding the Lived Experiences of Young Children's Everyday Lives

Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer

The aim of this chapter is to present a theorisation of "Visual *Vivencias*" as a method for studying children aged three years and younger and, through this, contribute to a new cultural-historical understanding of early childhood research. We specifically introduce a case example that took place in a Mexican family in Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, as part of a wider project reported elsewhere (Quiñones, 2011).

In this chapter we introduce a dynamic (Vygotsky, 1987) wholeness approach (Hedegaard & Fleer, 2008) to researching children's learning and development. We think mainstream research methodologies and methods that go beyond traditional quantitative techniques have neglected to address how to research this developmentally unique group of young human beings. Children in the birth to three-year-old period find themselves in a position of "maximum dependence on adults" with all of their behaviours and actions completely interwoven and intertwined within the adult world, with either no or limited capacity in human speech (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 216). As such, cultural-historical researchers interested in examining social practice and the social situation of development have a complex and challenging task (Bozhovich, 2009).

L. V. Vygotsky draws our attention to the dialectical relations between the unity of child and the social environment. The younger the child, the more complex it is to investigate these relations. It is not just the research tools we use that determine what might be possible to capture as part of the research process, but importantly, it is the theoretical gaze we adopt that shapes how researchers make sense and interpret the data. In conceptualising the subject of our research (young child) as intimately intertwined in social relations, we foreground a particular theoretical reading of how data can be generated and analysed. The data generated in the research reported here and the tools used to understand very young children were visually captured using digital video technologies. In a cultural-historical theorisation of researching with young children we created the methodological tool of *Visual Vivencias* which conceptualises both the theory and the tool of capturing young children's everyday life.

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A methodological reading of this research challenge has, as yet, not been sufficiently theorised. In this chapter we seek to highlight important theoretical and technical dimensions significant for undertaking cultural-historical research focussed on the birth to three years age group. We based our work on the methodology of cultural-historical theory formulated by Vygotsky (1987, 1993, 1994) in which the dynamic unity of intellect/cognition and affect were foundational (see Bozhovich, 2009; Gonzalez Rey, 2009a, 2009b; Veresov, 2006). Vygotsky (1987) in his theory explains how cognition should not be studied in isolation but rather should be conceptualised in unity with affect (Vygotsky, 1987) and, further, taking into account emotion in the child's lived experience—in Russian *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994). This concept of *perezhivanie* is translated as *vivencias*. We think the concept of *vivencias* captures closely the Russian term of *perezhivanie* and because the first author's mother tongue is Spanish we feel more comfortable with the concept. *Perezhivanie–vivencia* is what Vygotsky (1994) referred to as the unity of intellect and affect in the child's lived experience, and how the child is aware and understands his or her social environment, through what we think in a subjective form. The child's making sense and meaning is further analysed and interpreted according to how the child expresses and communicates. Later in this chapter we provide a more detailed theoretical discussion of this term.

We begin with a brief review of contemporary research methodologies adopted in Mexico for the study of young children.

Approaches to Studying Children in Mexico—the Cognitive Divide in the Early Years

Vygotsky (1998) has argued that in Western psychology researchers' attention has traditionally been directed to a single observable criterion for measuring development, such as the behavioural aspects of a child. Karpov (2005) argues that in this conception of child development researchers have overlooked the importance of having "a holistic view of child development because they do not describe interrelationships of different aspects of child development" (p. 8). But these criticisms should not just be directed to Western societies. This view of child development also dominates Mexican views of young children's development, where the focus is on the child's acquisition of social, affective and cognitive process in separation from one another rather than in unity. For instance, in the "Preschool Educational Program" (*Programa de Educación Preescolar*; SEP, 2004b) designed by the Secretary of Public Education (Secretaria de Educación Pública, SEP) early childhood curriculum learning goals were directed to a system based on competencies—*competencias*—where, for example, social competence is separate from physical competence.

As part of the Preschool Educational Program, there are two training books—referred to as the "Training and Professional Actualization of Preschool Teacher", *Formación y Actualización Profesional para el Personal Docente de Educación Preescolar* (SEP, 2004a)—which detail the theoretical underpinnings of the

program. These training books show the historical and philosophical underpinning of preschool education in Mexico. Moreno notes how, for example, Mexican kindergartens in 1903 were based on Pestalozzi’s idea of educating the child according to their physical, moral and intellectual environment (2005, cited in SEP, 2004a). This idea historically foregrounds the education of the child possessing cognitive and intellectual capabilities; this closely follows the preschool education of children in their program based on children’s acquiring competencies.

More recently in Mexico there have been several studies from ACUDE (*Hacia una Cultura Democractica, A.C.*), “Towards a More Democratic Culture”, a Mexican non-government organisation which has close partnerships with SEP and UNICEF (UNICEF Mexico & SEP, 2002). Some of their research is based on investigating the development of Mexican children related to the principle of *competencias*. In their project *Proyecto Intersectorial sobre Indicadores y Metodologías de Indicadores del Desarrollo, Calidad de Programas y Contextos Intersectoral* (“Project on Indicators and Methodologies about Development, Quality of Programs and Contexts”; Myers, Durán, Guerrero, González, & Meléndez, 2005; Durán & Myers, 2006), the aim is to know and follow the current situation of early childhood in Mexico in relation to how children acquire competencies and to indicate their level of development using quantitative measurements. This study analysed the *competencias* of children from the ages of one, three and six as measured on an *Escala de Competencia*, “Scale of Competencies” (Durán & Myers, 2006). In the age group of birth to three years, young children’s growth development and motor and social skills, such as development of gross development, language development and social development, were measured (Durán & Myers, 2006). These studies foreground quantitative methodological approaches for studying discreet components of young children’s development rather than showing the complexities and interrelationships associated with various aspects of children’s learning and development as well as their experiences with how these competencies *competencias* are researched as a whole.

Much of the published research related to SEP and UNICEF frames the development of young Mexican children through the acquisition of *competencias*. Details of the contexts that are important in the child’s life at home and in the community are separated from this analysis as it focuses on the “sole” child. For example, the evaluation measures how the child age three years and younger identifies her mother and his use of different forms of communication, such as gestures and corporal movement, used to express his likes and dislikes (Myers & Durán, 2006). Our argument is that these measurements are more complex to evaluate than quantitative measurements to analyse competencies would suggest.

This emphasis shows how competencies, such as motor skills (discussed later in this chapter), are valued in Mexican society and how children’s knowledge of academic and formal skills is important in the early years. A strong emphasis is made on factors such as survival, growth and psychomotor development as important for the young child’s development. These studies, as examples of the dominant research undertaken in Mexico, illustrate the maturational view of child development prevalent in Mexico today. In addition, these research studies show

Mexican societal values of intellectual and cognitive activities in young children's education that are specific for young children aged three years and under. However, what kinds of research methods are needed to visually document how such an academically oriented approach is possible for children aged birth to three years?

The Concept of Perezhivanie

> *An emotional experience [perezhivanie] is a unit where, on the hand, an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e.* that which is being experienced—an emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] . . . (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 341; emphasis in original)

When researching with young children we suggest that it is important to consider the environment in unity and in dialectical relationship with the child. The concept of *perezhivanie* captures such a dynamic system, emphasising the unity between thinking and emotion; individual and environment; and consisting of social relationships and the social situation within which the child is learning and developing as conceptualised by Vygotsky (1987, 1993).

Vygotsky (1998) extended his theorisation of experience through using the concept of *perezhivanie*, translated in his seminal work in English as "living emotional experience" (1994, p. 339). Vygotsky (1994) showed how *perezhivanie* meant the child's attitude and awareness to what he/she is experiencing from the environment and having an emotional component to this relationship. In this dialectical relationship the integration of environment into the child's awareness was essential—without environment there isn't a sense of awareness by the child. The concept of *perezhivanie*, therefore, goes beyond cognitive and mechanist ways of portraying development such as differentiation of external and internal relationships the child has with others.

In Vygotsky's (1994) cultural-historical theory, the individual and social environment is seen in *unity and is dialectically integrated*. As Vygotsky explains:

> The emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] arising from any situation or from any aspect of his [sic] environment determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have in the child. (emphasis in original; p. 339)

Vygotsky (1994) gives an example of three children from the same family whose mother has a problem with substance abuse (e.g., drinking). Vygotsky argues that each child's *perezhivanie* in the family will have a different influence on them, even though the situation is the same. This difference depends on the *attitude* the child has to the *situation* and the "awareness of the same event will have a different meaning for them" (p. 342). That is, *the child's attitude, understanding and awareness of an event will have a different meaning for each child in the family*.

> How can one explain why exactly the same environmental conditions exert three different types of influence on these three different children? It can be explained because each of the children has a different attitude to the situation. Or, as we might put it, each of the children experienced the situation in different way. It appears that, depending on the fact the same situation had been experienced by three children in three different ways, the influence which this situation exerted on their development. (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 340)

Vygotsky's notion of *perezhivanie* suggests that the environment is important when considering the child's development and has a direct influence on the child's personality development—as a unidirectional process.

> When we study the role the environment plays in the development of a child, an analysis from the point of view of the child's emotional experiences [*perezhivanija*] because, as I have said, all the child's personal characteristics which took part in determining his attitudes to the given situation have to be taken into account in his emotional experience. (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 341)

A methodological point of view when an analysis emphasises the role of the environment on the child is on how Vygotsky searched an "indivisible unit" (p. 341) between the environment and the child. Such units are unidirectional when studied together, this allowing the research process to investigate the child's emotion and cognition as a united whole. The way researchers study this unity together demands a complex methodology. How the child gives meaning to events that involve them is different from the interpretations of adults about the same events. As such, interpretations of these events "affect" the child in different ways. We think that sometimes the child is in "emotionally charged" situations when the adult place control on the child's actions and will through their meaning making unless it makes cognisance of both cognition and the emotional encounter.

The emotional experience of the child and the meaning, then, determines how the situation is managed by the child and will influence the child's intellectual and emotional development as a whole. Yet, how do researchers capture these unidirectional influences of emotion and thought through the child's actions and will? What methodological orientations and tools help researchers perceive these "emotionally charged" situations and how is the child able to express and communicate back to others? What kind of methodological means allows researchers to understand the child's emotional lived experience, *perezhivanie–vivencia*, and allows us to understand the young child's sense and meaning of everyday events in his/her life? This chapter examines how a child expresses himself—through non-verbal language—his thinking and emotion in relating back to his mother while doing school homework. The next section deals with the research into how unity of intellect and affect and *perezhivanie* has been investigated by cultural-historical researchers.

Research Orientations into *Perezhivanie*

Kravtsova and Kravtsov (2009) explain how Vygotsky's concept of the unity of affect and intellect brings together two processes that have traditionally been studied as separate entities. That is, the child's cognition has been seen at the centre of education and the affective process of the child at the centre of family's upbringing of the child (Kravtsova & Kravtsov, 2009). In our research we draw on the notion of *vivencias*—intellect and affect as unity in the centre of a young child's upbringing in the context of the family.

Researchers like John-Steiner, Connery and Marjanovic-Shane (2010) note that cultural-historical researchers are paying more attention to the concept of *perezhivanie* and the role it plays for parenting and teaching. Researchers like Ferholt (2010) note how the concept of *perezhivanie* is an elusive phenomenon. Ferholt puts forward the concept of "intensely-emotional-lived-through-experience" through what has been termed "film-play" (p. 164). Empirical research using film makes *perezhivanie* "alive" and because film itself is a form of *perezhivani*e, researchers are able to evoke the complexity by studying how it unfolds, is revealed and is experienced. Ferholt uses film-play to study *perezhivanie* where these experiences are captured as vivid, alive and emotional and can also be relived. This method of film-play is similar to our approach because it reveals the qualities of *perezhivanie*. For Ferholt "film-play makes perezhivanie the subject of empirical investigation both because it keeps perezhivanie 'alive' for study, and because it is itself, a form of perezhivanie (p. 176)". Film allows making empirical research a "researchable phenomena (p. 177)". Through film *perezhivanie* is revealed and experienced.

Contemporary researcher Gonzalez Rey (2009a), in expanding Vygotsky's conception, explains how *emotions* are elements of the child's psyche life and are determined by symbolic productions such as signs, images, imagination and even fantasy that are essential to a theory of subjectivity.

> Subjectivity as a continuous production of symbolic—emotional configurations, which would result from the complex alternatives generate in the interwoven movement between the dominant at the beginning of any system of relationships subjective configurations, and those new configurations appearing on the ongoing process of development. (2009a, p. 71)

In other words, the person has subjective symbolic-emotional configurations and their production occurs through the process of development and this is ongoing and complex. We would argue subjective configurations are complex to investigate. Gonzalez Rey (2002, 2009b) notes how Vygotsky wanted to capture the unity of consciousness through cognition and affect in what he called *perezhivanie*, stating that "perezhivanie is the integration of cognitive and affective elements which always presupposes the presence of emotions" (2002, p. 136). This leads us to our methodological problem of how researchers can study not only cognition or intellect but also affect in the context of *experienced emotions.*

We use the concept of *vivencias* instead of *perezhivanie*. The Spanish translations of Vygotsky's work employ the term *perezhivanie* to *vivencia*. Gonzalez Rey (2009a) was the author that used this concept in Spanish, explaining how Vygotsky used *vivencias* in the unity of intellect and affect. In his theory of subjectivity Gonzalez Rey went beyond unities and advanced to the concept of *vivencias* through subjectivity—such as emotions have a subjective component (for more, see Gonzalez Rey, 2009a, 2009b; Quiñones, 2011). These subjective components are found through imagination and fantasy and are associated in the cultural life of the subject. *Vivencia* enables the researcher to recognise processes that configure experiences and generate multiple collateral effects of the lived experience, even when we don't have control of these emotional productions (Gonzalez Rey, 2009a,

2011). The collateral effects are part of the child’s expressions of subjectivity in the social relations the child is part of in social scenarios. These emotional and symbolic productions have a subjective form of the child’s experience (Gonzalez Rey, 2011).

The work of Gonzalez Rey (2009a, 2009b, 2011) theorises the child’s lived experiences in the form of subjective expression. However, very little empirical research is available that applies the concept of *perezhivanie–vivencias* (Ferholt, 2009) in education and less still in parenting. We aim to show *perezhivanie–vivencias* for the first time in an empirical research with a young child in the context of his home, in a Mexican family and in a very formal homework activity. We think that *perezhivanie–vivencia* (singular use) in a visual form enables researchers to see “emotionally charged” situations and be able to read and make visible the emotional lived experiences of young children.

The next section explains how *petrezhivanija vivencias* (plural use) *a*s a concept is used as a methodological tool in the form of *snapshots*—photographs to represent the young child’s vivencias—as unity of emotional and thinking subjective productions of the child.

Research Method

A dialectical–interactive methodology was chosen for this research because it allowed the researcher to investigate the *vivencias* of an event in the life of a three-year-and–half young child, Cesar, and his family members. A wholeness perspective takes into account “different perspectives of the different people’s viewpoints” (Hedegaard, 2008, p. 34) in order “to research the conditions as well as how children participate in activities. This allows the conditions and the child’s development to be conceptualised as a whole” (Hedegaard, 2008, p. 35). The larger project (Quiñones, 2011) drew upon capturing dynamically children’s learning and development across institutions, family, community groups and preschool (Hedegaard, 2008; Fleer, 2008a, 2008b). This chapter only presents one event, home and meal times of the young child. Digital video observations make it possible to observe and study children in their everyday settings and allow for later discussions of these visual data with participants (Fleer, 2008a).

The role of the researcher was to point the camera at the everyday practices, focussing on the child and the child’s relationships with others—in this chapter, with his mother—in order to capture the wholeness of the situation. Using this approach the researcher can video-observe whole institutional practices and activities and closely obtain the child’s and adult’s perspective of the activity. It allows the researcher to revisit different moments in time from different and multiple perspectives, giving multiple but related interpretations (Fleer, 2008a).

The challenge was how to present data in a “static” form such as written text digital video recordings. Through visual forms of data generation and using the theoretical concept of *vivencias* as a methodology we have named *Visual Vivencias* as a means through which it is possible to understand the complexities that a young child expresses through communicating his thinking and emotion. In the next section, *Visual Vivencias* is discussed throughout this chapter in relation to

methodological problems in not only studying the “sole” child but also the *vivencias* in an alive moment of time that is relived.

“Visual Vivencias” as a Methodological Tool

In this research, the digital video observations focused on the relationship between the mother and the young child in order to capture visually their *vivencias*. This dynamic approach to data generation allows the researcher to present the data in a visual way and revisit the data many times in order to go further and in more depth with what was happening in the home from the mother’s and the child’s perspective. Because the video observations are a very dynamic approach to researching young children’s *vivencias*, allows the researcher and the reader to make multiple interpretations of the child’s and adult’s perspective of the institutional activity.

Through this form of *Visual Vivencias* as a methodological tool, the researchers can present the digital video observation—in a visual form and conversation transcript of what happened on an event of the child’s life. The creation of a *Visual Vivencias* in the study enabled the researchers to present, analyse, interpret and discuss the data together—and enable the researcher process to be collaborative, that is, discussing it with others. The interpretations are presented and discussed through visual forms, thus giving a wholeness perspective to the data set through not only portraying the one single view of the child but also different perspectives such as the mother’s view. The unit of analysis is the *vivencia,* the production of unity of intellect and affect through the thinking and emotion of the child in the actions that are displayed in the photographs of the child’s production and configurations from different perspectives—child’s, mother’s and researcher’s. Taking this approach we seek to understand the child’s expression and forms of communication through the method of capturing living and dynamic video recording of children’s *vivencias*.

The methodological tool of *Visual Vivencias* further enables the research process to create multiple readings of the material and revisit it several times. The child’s *vivencias* are part of important specific *momentitos* (little moments in time) of the research material generation process.

Through theorising the research as *Visual Vivencias*, the researcher can visually investigate, interpret and reinterpret an ongoing alive experience of the child in order to read what is behind the child’s thinking and emotion and how he or she makes sense of the events. It is an alive and lived moment as through digital video observations the event can be relived again.

In summary, through *Visual Vivencias* we sought to focus on:

- Dynamically visually documenting the “alive” experiences of the child and the social environment such as the relationships the child is living in those *momentitos* of time.
- Dynamically showing the young child’s united thinking and emotion through his social interactions towards others.

- The child’s making meaning and sense of events through subjective components, configurations and productions.
- Researcher’s subjectivity sense and interpretation of the events (scenarios, social life of the child).

The *momentitos* are captured through *snapshots* or photographs. In the next section this is discussed.

Snapshots

The data generated in this research shows a series of *snapshots* in order to analyse and interpret the *vivencias* of a young child on how he lived the academic task of doing homework. The data is visually represented in *snapshots* or photographs manually taken from the video recording of the event. Twenty-four *snapshots* were taken of the whole 7 min of verbal and non-verbal conversation between the child and the family member, the mother, father and sister.

The selections of the *snapshots* were taken in relation to the *expressions* of Cesar and his mother. This was to prove that in specific *momentitos*, *the child* had “emotionally charged” moments in the activity and the non-verbal communication the child had with his mother. This will be further analysed. It is important to mention that the *snapshots* allowed the researchers and the reader to make their own interpretations of *the child’s expressions and actions* during the lived emotional experience—*vivencia*—of the child.

However, because the activity itself focused on the relationship between the mother and young child, this is where the researcher pointed the video camera. The researcher pointed the camera in a non-intrusive fashion by not covering her face with the camera viewfinder because this enabled her to talk with family members if appropriate. For example, the researcher tried to interact as unobtrusively as possible and position herself at the end of the table to record the whole social situation. The conversation mainly took place at instances with the father around school themes. Ethical considerations while video-observing were considered through the researcher being non-intrusive and explaining to the family that at any moment the camera could be turned off and/or film deleted. This was reiterated at each session. Researchers who are video-observing or filming need to take into account the purpose of the visit but at the same time relate to the participants. Further, it is important that the researcher considers the multiple interactions occurring at the moment of observing. The role of the researchers is important in adopting and accounting a listening attitude towards participants while video observing.

When taking the *snapshots* manually, the researchers observed the video several times. The discussion that follows is framed around the importance of understanding children’s *vivencias* in valued practices at home *and* the “emotionally charged” activity of the practice seen. In the example below it is of the mother’s “high expectations” of Cesar. Of course, the manually taken *snapshots* are subjectively taken as it is the researcher who is taking important *momentitos* to demonstrate in a written form what is important to the research, which, for us, is the emotion.

Also, we invite the reader to make his/her own interpretations, which is possible because the research methodology represents the data visually.

Researcher's Subjective Role

The researcher's interpretation of the spaces of expression in the young child's sense making of this space or social environment is important in analysing the *vivencias* of the young child and the family. It is important to recognise these as subjectivities; therefore throughout the discussion we make assumptions and interpretations about what we think is representative of the reality of the child.

Gonzalez Rey (2000) explains:

> La subjetividad representa una realidad que no es asequible de forma directa al investigador, y que tampoco puede ser interpretada de forma fija por manifestaciones indirectas que sean susceptible de forma fija por manifestaciones indirectas que sean susceptibles de generalización, pues la expresiones de cada sujeto o espacio social conciernen a diversos sistemas de sentidos que expresan trayectorias propias . . . los sentidos subjetivos aparecen de forma gradual y diferente dentro del espacio de expresión del sujeto . . . cada configuración de sentidos referentes a diferentes espacios de la vida social. (pp. 233—234)

> Subjectivity represents a reality that is not directly accessible to the researcher, nor can it be interpreted as fixed forms of expressions of indirect manifestations which is capable of susceptible generalisations, as the expressions of each subject or of a social space that concerns various systems of senses that express their own paths . . . the subjective senses appear in a gradual form and are different within the space of expression of the subject . . . each configuration of senses relate to different spaces of social life. (pp. 233–234)

Following a cultural-historical view on how the role of the researcher is understood, the researcher forms part of the reality of the child in that moment of time. The researcher interprets the expressions of the subject in the social space and considers the child's configurations and production of these forms of expression.

The following section shows how in different communities non-verbal communication is important in young children's lives, such as the child in this study.

Non-verbal Communication

Rogoff (2003) explains how through guided participation cultural communities prefer to use "speech or silence", and "gesture" and "gaze" (observation) as part of their participation in adult or school activities. In non-Western communities such as Mayan communities, Rogoff states that "nonverbal communication" is important. Mayan mothers in Guatemala use "communicative gaze, touch, posture, and timing cues" (p. 314). Mothers and toddlers from this community use very sophisticated forms of "nonverbal communication" and "express more complex ideas nonverbally" (p. 315). People and children in these communities are also "keen observers" (p. 314). But this form of communication is thought to carry less information. However, keen observation encourages children to observe, and

children learn through watching. Adults also encourage this type of learning by "observation".

> Family and community expectations that children should be keenly observing and participating in ongoing activities are another form of support of this kind of learning. (Rogoff, 2003, p. 319)

More recently, Mejia-Arauz, Rogoff and Paradise (2005) state how in some communities "observation" plays a more important role than other communities. For example, in the United States and non-Western communities such as those of Mexican heritage, children whose mothers had little experience with school were more likely to learn by "observation", in comparison to US non-Mexican-heritage and European-heritage children, whose mothers have extensive experience with Western schooling. The researchers explain how "observation" is used for learning and how it is important to recognise this form of learning in school practices. Lopez, Correa-Chavez, Rogoff, and Gutierrez (2010) agree with Mejia-Arauz et al. (2005) that opportunities for learning through observation in schools should build on the children's skills, especially for those children living in rural Mexican families and communities. These sociocultural studies suggest that research in culturally diverse communities must pay attention to the forms of non-verbal communication and learning the way children learn by watching and observation (Lopez et al., 2010; Mejia-Arauz et al., 2005; Rogoff, 2003). Further, White's research, presented in this volume (Chapter 4), expands on the idea of word and gesture by suggesting they are not used discretely but instead in a relational dance which she suggests offers greater insights into the personality of the young child.

The next section deals with the institutional space where this research took place—in an intimate and private space in a young child's family home. In the following example we show how gestures, words, touch and silences are all part of the *vivencias* of the activity which, taken together, provide evidence of emotionally charged engagement.

Research Context

Although the *vivencias* reported in this chapter focus on the child at home, they could equally apply to early childhood settings or, in the case of the wider study, schools.

Cesar (three years and a half) and his family were part of this research. Their home is located in a middle-high socioeconomic community in the northern part of Mexico. The family was invited to participate in this study through their school—an early childhood centre. This community is one of the wealthiest communities in Mexico. The school was located in a city in the state of Nuevo Leon. This municipality is part of the metropolitan zone of Monterrey city in the state of Nuevo Leon, Mexico. The school sends homework twice a week for Cesar to complete.

The digital video recording took place in the family house. The researcher, Gloria, organised a research visit with the mother and after a day at the school

video-observing Cesar. Cesar's mother picked up her children and the researcher to video-observe the family's mealtime and afternoon family practices. This was the researcher's first visit to their home. The family consisted of Cesar, his sister aged five years old and his mother and the father. In these *vivencias* they all are sitting on the table while two maids are preparing lunch and serving the family. Cesar has finished having his lunch and decides to do his homework. The notebook is on the lunch table and Cesar does his homework using several coloured pencils. The activity takes place in a period of 7 min. The following abbreviations are shown in the transcription: D (dad), M (mum), S (sister), A and C (maid), Cs (Cesar, child). In the next section the activity of homework is discussed.

Analysis of Motor Skills Activity

A Focus on the Institutional Practice and Activity Tradition of Motor Skill

Hedegaard (2008) and Fleer (2008c) refer to practices and activities as interrelated concepts. Practice refers to the institution such as home and school and activity is related to the person. Taking into account a wholeness approach to understanding the conditions for child development, Hedegaard (2008) has outlined how the researcher must consider the institutional practices children participate in, the activity that dominates the institutional practices, the demands this places on children, what kind of conflicts occur in relation to these different demands and what crises the children meet in order to deal with these demands. She calls this a wholeness approach. We add to this approach the specific need for documenting and analysing the unity of intellect and affect in children's development. The institutional practice and activity of motor skill homework was chosen because it was an institutional tradition found at school and at home. We thought that the "emotionally intense and charged" relationship between the mother and the child would contribute to our discussion and that we needed a methodology that shows visually how emotions are subjectively produced by the child and the adult.

Through "Windows Live Movie Maker" (see Image 6.1) specific *snapshots* of the seven-minute video clip can be manually taken by the researcher. The specific moment is captured by pressing "snapshot" and the image is saved. The *snapshots* allow the researcher to select or manipulate specific moments of the research process. This allows the data to be presented in a dynamic visual way through photographs represented by *snapshots*.

In the discussion, frames show the wholeness of the family conversation and the *snapshot* specific verbal and non-verbal communication of the family, their *vivencias* and more important *vivencias* of the activity and practice. *Visual Vivencias* show moments of interaction between the child and the mother taken in the form of *snapshot* photographs. This will be later illustrated with examples.

The *snapshots* are defined as visual moments in time, *momentitos*, and they are matched to the conversation around the child's and family *vivencias* of the activity.

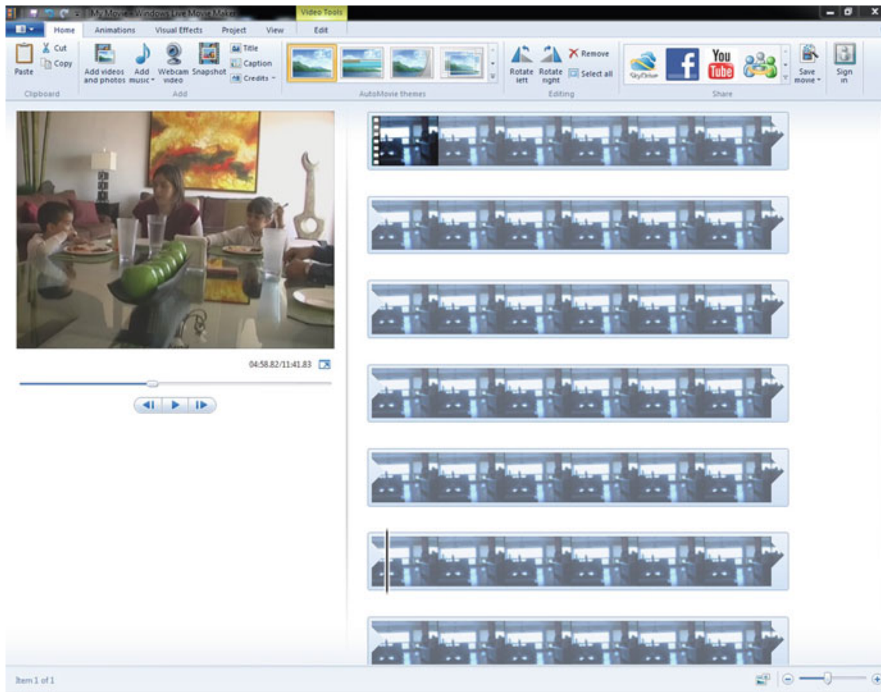

Image 6.1 “Windows Live Movie Maker”

In this chapter we show some examples of the full seven minutes of the “motor skill” activity, which focused on 24 *snapshots.*

Findings

Cesar’s Displays of “Emotionally Intense and Charged” Non-verbal Communication

Cesar is sitting at the dinner table with his family. His mother is coaching him as he does his homework. In this example, we see the dominant Mexican tradition of “motor skills” is contextualised within an academic activity of homework, as Cesar participates in a pre-writing activity:

> Cesar has school homework and decides to do it at lunch time. All the family, mother, father and sister are sitting in the table having lunch. He quickly finishes his lunch and continues with his school homework. The page of the booklet he is doing is about motor skill activity and the child has to follow the “arrows”, drawing onto the page directly, showing the movement associated with each symbol. The mother is sitting next to Cesar on her right side and Cesar’s sister sits on the mother’s left hand. The father is sitting on the left side of the sister, in front of Cesar. The mother is having lunch and is constantly paying attention

> to Cesar's homework. She constantly points to the notebook to show Cesar how to do the homework "right". The sister and dad support the mother and the homework becomes a collaborative exercise. At the end of the seven minute activity the mother asks Cesar to do another activity in the book and the child walks off to the kitchen and turns his back to his mum and does not follow her instructions. (Home video observation, November 3, 2009)

As video observations were made of this lunch-time homework routine, we began to unpack a *series of snapshots* on how the interaction between the mother and Cesar was taking place through "non-verbal communication". In this research, and in this Mexican community, Cesar prefers to use "silence" and "gestures" for communication and for participating in the homework activity. The child is able to communicate complex ideas "non-verbally" through gestures and the mother through touching him.

Cesar from a very young age is communicating *non-verbally* by *showing eye contact for approval* on the activity and *avoiding eye contact* when he *disagrees*. The mother, father, sister are "keen observers" too. All the family members are participating and keenly observing Cesar's practice of the activity. This is exemplified in the following example of data (Frame 6.1).

A cultural practice in Mexican families is close eye contact with parents when they are talking to you. This example shows how Cesar (Cs) *shows eye contact* with his mother (M) when following the rules of the homework (*snapshot* 10) and the expectations are met. Non-verbal communication is expressed by Cesar who is able to meet expectations. However he *avoids eye contact* as the intensity of the interaction between the mother and child becomes "emotionally charged" when the expectations of the mother are not met (*snapshot* 23).

Both the visual digital *snapshots* and the conversation transcribed support the importance for young children to practise "motor skills" development. Children's "keen observation" at the same time as adult responsiveness and assistance and guided participation in activities becomes evident. The *sequential snapshot* (Frame 6.1) as a method of data gathering and analysis clearly shows this important finding. The relations between the mother and the child through "non-verbal communication" are made visible through the methodology adopted. This series of snapshots of course doesn't show the moments of silence. First, in snapshot 9 Cesar is performing the homework activity and in snapshot 10 he is closely looking at the mother for eye contact approval. He eventually finishes the homework and in snapshot 23, after 4 min of doing the homework and intense checking from the mother, Cesar has finally finished the activity. Cesar avoids eye contact (see snapshot 23). Cesar doesn't respond to his mother by looking at her or speaking. He shows by his expression he has finally finished with his work. The mother's intention is to receive a response. She doesn't get a response from Cesar; she realizes this and then touches his hand, but what she gets is disapproval and rejection from Cesar as he moves away from the table. He doesn't fulfil the mother's expectation that he will do another activity.

The school practices are dominant in the family practice and these show how young children in Mexico are expected to do homework. This school practice is adopted by the mother who copies the homework instructions of following the arrow

Frame 6.1 “Sequential *Snapshot*”—non-verbal communication

S 9. Cs doing activity. M attends to HW.

M: Look this one it’s not very nice, little one.

S 10. Cs looking for approval.

Cesar continues to do it slowly and more delicately, then looks back to observe mother and seek approval.

and “pointing” with her fingers in order to emphasise how Cesar has to follow these directional symbols. Yet this vignette does not capture the intensity of the emotional interaction that is evident around the dinner table where the pointing by the mother towards the symbol is featured (see Frame 6.2). The snapshots show how young children express their subjective experiences of the activity and how the child configures and produces knowledge in an intense moment. The snapshots allow the researchers and the reader to make their own interpretations and capture the emotion in a visual form in parallel with the explanations made here.

In the following *snapshot* we can see visually the significance of the interaction. The intensity of the interaction is captured through this visual documentation. When the visual documentation and the family dialogue of both the child and the mother are paired we also notice that Miss Maya, the teacher, is included in the interaction, despite the fact that she is not physically present.

Frame 6.2
Snapshot—cognitive divide "Following the rules"

S 15. M pointing, having to do it several times.

Cs: But here no (meaning inside the circle).

M: Yes, it's because Miss Maya wants you to do it a lot of times with different colours, 10 times.
Cesar chooses a colour and keeps doing circles.

Frame 6.2 shows how the school practices and pedagogy are also dominant in the home activities. The very young child is following the school rules associated with the activity. The content is an academic activity and the dialogue shows how academic success is valued at home. Through this data-gathering technique, the dominance of cognition and academic activities is practised in both the school and the home. Through framing research in a holistic way, data generation is not isolated to just the home or school context. But rather, the research analysis is sensitive to how values are seen in the practices of both. This kind of research method makes it possible to capture and analyse how academic values are operationalised in the home between a mother and her three-year-old child, and also how the young child is able to demonstrate and configure emotionally these intense interactions and how the researchers make sense subjectively—in their own way —of the events in the young child's life.

Through this *snapshot* it is possible to notice also that the mother is concentrating on Cesar's physical capacity, moving the activity beyond the academic task. For Cesar to be able to be academically successful, he must also be physically successful. This physicality is shown by following the "right way", as the mother says: "Miss Maya [school rule] wants you to do it with different colours and several times", demonstrating that Cesar successfully follows both the school and home practices. This tradition of "motor skills" and physical development of the child has been an important practice in Mexican kindergartens, both historically and in contemporary times. As discussed previously, the Preschool Educational Program (*Programa de Educacion Preesscolar*; SEP, 2004b) has an emphasis on children acquiring the skill and competence of physicality. *Snapshots* and transcripts

of dialogue allow for a deeper and broader analysis than the more traditional quantitative approaches to research that are dominant in Mexico.

Family Practice "High Expectations"

Cesar's *vivencias* captured thinking and emotion behind an academic activity. Cesar was able to produce these *emotional configurations* through his mother's "high expectations" of the activity. Cesar's attitude was to follow the rules, and the awareness of his entire social environment was evident in his response of being compliant and following the rules of the activity. Frames 6.3, 6.4, and 6.5 show *subjectivity* through how the mother consistently expects Cesar to produce a very high quality of homework performance through detail of fine motor skills draws. Alongside Cesar's non-verbal communication and actions are presented in the snapshots of the activity.

Through the methodological tool of visually observing children's *vivencias* used in this chapter, described as *Visual Vivencias*, the reader can view the research process that captures the young child's *vivencias* emotionally experiencing and how Cesar is able to communicate his intentions to the mother. The young child, Cesar, is able to communicate his approval and avoiding of the mother's rules and expectations through close eye contact and raising his eyebrows and not facing her when disapproving. This shows visually through *Visual Vivencias* the "emotionally charged" experience in a seven-minute collaborative activity.

Through the form of documenting *vivencias* as a methodological tool, the researchers present video observation through the form of *snapshots* and conversation transcript of what happened in each event of the child's life. The documentation of *vivencias* enabled the researcher to present, analyse and discuss the data in a visual form. It also shows how the *vivencias* of the child and the unity of intellect-thinking and affect-emotion are subjectively displayed in the *snapshots*.

Conclusion—*Visual Vivencias* as an Analytical Tool

Vivencias of this event has been shown in this chapter to demonstrate their effectiveness in bringing together the young child's meaning making with what he is thinking and feeling through relationships which are framed by a "deep" sense of interrelation. *Visual Vivencias* serve as an analytical tool to further understand "visually" the child's emotional experience of the event.

In our research, we seek to move beyond a maturational view of development and adopt a cultural-historical approach to both child development and the study of very young children. We have argued that a cultural-historical approach to research will allow for more than single independent characteristics to be studied and a broader dynamic system of intellect and affect to be gained. In a cultural-historical dialectical approach that is dynamic and holistic *Visual Vivencias* serve as methodological tools for the analysis of complicated video data through *snapshots*.

Frame 6.3 "Sequential snapshot" mother's "high expectations" of activity

S 4. M: No, no. Remember that is with colour.

S 7. M: Wait.

S 12. M: look this one it's not very nice little one.

S 14. Very good … Stop, stop! only this circle, you don't trace only like this look (points at circles with finger).

Frame 6.4 "Sequential snapshot" Cesar's *perezhivanie vivencias* of mother's and attitude *"seeking approval"* towards "high expectations"

S 8. Showing colour to Dad.

S 18. Cesar smiles back to mother as he has finished activity, seeking eye contact.

In order to analyse and interpret the complexity of *perezhivanie vivencias* we have documented the lived experiences and the forms of *emotional expression* of Cesar. The snapshots have a subjective form as the researcher manually takes specific "alive" moments that are revisited several times to conclude to Cesar's *vivencias* (see Fig. 6.1).

A research methodology which makes central the approach of analysing *snapshots* as dialectic (that is in unity with both individual and social, affective and cognitive aspects), and as connected sequences, allows the researchers to illustrate the *vivencias* of very young children. Through the example of Cesar and his family, and the documenting *momentitos* of their intellectual orientation towards homework it was possible to see Cesar's *vivencias* of his activity and family practice of "high expectations".

The *snapshots* capture "alive" moments of the young child's symbolic and emotional production and configuration of the events and can be read through not only his expression on how he understands it and is aware of the academic demands,

Frame 6.5 "Sequential snapshot" Cesar's *perezhivanie vivencias* (emotional living) of mother's and "*avoiding*" attitude towards "high expectations"

S 21. D: Put red. Cs: It's because I don't want to.
M: No?

S 23.
C: I don't want to.
M: Just listen, show Dad, listen … look at me, look at me, look at me …

but also how we revisited them and present them for you, the reader, to make your own interpretations, which of course are subjective.

Photographs or *snapshots* that are portrayed here show the intensity of emotions. The moment was what it was and it can be relived here in order to provide an ongoing interpretation. The subject of our research (the child) is intertwined by very "deep" social relations. Taken together, visual methodologies being "visual", combined with the theoretical concept of *vivencias,* provides a new approach to generating data and analysing the young child's emotion and voice.

Throughout this chapter we considered the young child's meaning making of the relationship he has with his mother. The different forms of communication include non-verbal cues—for example a smile given to his mother after finishing a very academic and formal activity does not pass by un-noticed. This consideration

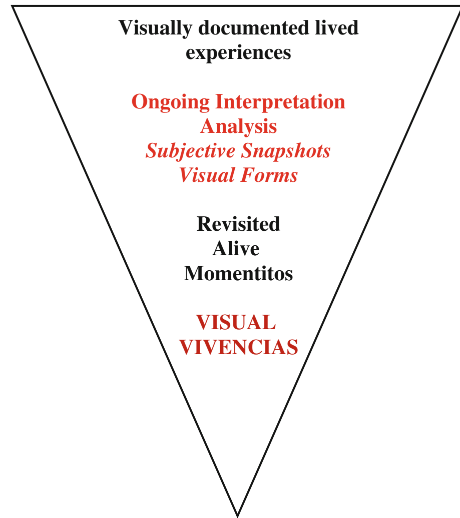

Fig. 6.1 Cultural-historical interpretation of “*Visual Vivencias*”

enables researchers and educators to not only consider verbal communication but also understand the child’s many different forms of expressing non-verbal emotions and meanings.

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Glossary

Dialectics: We refer to dialectics when there is a dynamical relationship between the individual and the social environment consisting of social relationships and the surrounding place. This concept usually reflects opposites and counterparts; we here refer to the unity and dynamics of the relationship of the individual and environment.

***Perezhivanie*:** Vygotsky (1994) referred to *perezhivanie* as emotional living experience. This concept reflects the methodological problem Vygotsky refers in his writing about environment.

Visual Vivencias: is a methodological tool that uses photographs of moments in time of the research. The program used was “Windows Live Movie Maker”, which captures in a photograph a *snapshot* of the whole activity of the child. This research aims to capture these moments visually for multiple interpretations and not just of the researchers.

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Commentary to Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer: "Visual Vivencias"

E. Jayne White

On my initial reading of this chapter I was struck by its clarity in relation to the research journey that unfolds about a young Mexican boy, Cesar, and his homework activity through the employment of analytical snapshots that are underpinned by carefully articulated methodological imperatives. The detailed description of the methodology that underpins this data provides the reader with a rare glimpse into what, I believe, constitutes a new and exciting operationalisation of sociocultural theory in the form of *Visual Vivencias*. I am in no doubt that, for this reason alone, the chapter will be inspirational for researchers grappling with meaningful ways of entering into the complex world of the very young child.

The interpretation of Russian *perezhivanie* in relation to Spanish *vivencias* is a particularly interesting and fruitful contribution to the research arena, especially when considered from a cultural-historical standpoint. In this location the authors seem to be suggesting, with Vygotsky (1994), that lived emotional experience of the individual learner is the central point of gestalt for the researcher; and that it is located in the dialectical relationship that takes place between the environment and the child's emotional engagement with that environment. I interpret this to mean that the environment, per se, holds relevance to the child's learning or experience only when it is imbued with meaning through interaction. This is an important claim for research with very young children, since, as the authors point out, so much research with this age group (including in a non-Western society such as Mexico) is heavily weighted by measures of competency against pre-determined measures that are located "in the environment" without consideration of emotional engagement, meaning and experience on the part of the learner.

The "wholeness approach" to research advocated by the authors in their research design represents considerable challenges when we consider affect and cognition as a dynamic system in unity. It is one that has perplexed researchers across the globe and, in early childhood research, led to the development of significant frameworks for analysis (see for example the work of Carr, 2009, and Clarke, 2007, among others). Several neo-Vygotskians have attempted to respond to the challenge drawing specifically from Vygotsky, including the foci of analysis model (Rogoff, 1995) and activity theory (Engeström, Miettinen, & Punamäki, 1999). In this chapter, the authors draw from Hedegaard's (2008) framework—a recent addition to the field which bears close allegiance to these models; and invites the researcher to view institutional practices and individual activities as interrelated concepts. However, Quiñones and Fleer go further to suggest that a wholeness approach

should also be concerned with intellect and affect, providing additional provocations to guide the researcher towards dialectic approaches in research activity. It is here they invoke *perezhavanie* as a unit of analysis.

If we take this idea seriously, as these authors most certainly have, the researcher must somehow search for meaning from the perspective of *this* child in *specific* contexts (that is, the life-world of this child), while recognising the prevailing influences of the wider world—a constant quest for researchers and teachers alike in claiming any interpretation of "voice"; and one that is at the very heart of this collection. With Hedegaard's inspiration, the authors of this chapter have a means of doing so. As many of the contributors have already pointed out, this is not an easy task when the very young child does not share the same semiotic language system as the adult, in particular the researcher. It was exciting, therefore, to read of the authors' cognisance of non-verbal forms of language in understanding the *vivencias* of Cesar, and the important part they play in meaning making for the very young learners. The sections which explore skills and non-verbal communication provide a particularly useful example of how interpretation might be possible using *Visual Vivencia* as a methodology. Given Vygotsky's (1987) claim that infants do not have the capacity for human speech, this section provides a very useful embellishment of the way a young child engages with human speech in subtle yet complex ways.

I was consistently drawn to the authors' interpretation of *perezhivanie* throughout this chapter. This is a Russian concept also employed by Voloshinov (1978), who suggests that meaning is always evaluative and therefore must have significance for the particular group in which acts take place (Liberali, 2009). Bakhtin's additional use of the Russian term *postupok* (Bakhtin, 1993)—an answerable act or deed—suggests that the gestalt of this lived experience is determined not so much by the environment in relation to the individual, but by the *people* in that environment and the strategic orientation of the individual toward them in the language acts they present (Marjanovic-Shane, 2011). Given that *vivencias* is also proposed as an extension of the term, and that it seems to take into particular account the strong influence of family and society, I wonder if further attention to these orientations would be valuable in studies of very young children across cultures. In making this suggestion it occurs to me that there is much scope for enriched interpretations of key theoretical constructs when language is shared across cultures and societies as a means of understanding complex ideas. Such an approach, however, requires reflexive positioning on the part of researchers if their ideas are to be taken seriously across cultural and conceptual borders, and offers less universal certainty than many researchers are accustomed to. The dialogues that take place around these concepts help us to clarify our meaning as well as those of others, and to recognise the interpretative (and cultural) nature of research in this domain.

In any case the authors' solution is sought in an approach they carefully describe as a "dialectical-interactive". This method, developed by Hedegaard and Fleer (2008), allows the researcher to study everyday activity, in this case homework, in complex ways that fulfil their promise of expanding on the notion of *competencia* to take account of the dialectics at play. Like others in this book, their route is through video, and the employment of stimulated dialogue using that video. Here the emphasis seems to shift from "*child vivencias*" to those of "*mother and child vivencias*" (although this is not explicitly expounded) as a unit whose members are assumed to share the same emotional experience or speak for one another—a notion I ponder since I concur with Linell (2010) that the infant needs to be treated as a research subject in their own right (however hard that is). Having said that, it is important to note that the examples provided in this chapter are part of a larger study involving home and school dialectics that are not discussed here, so the emphasis was less on the home as a sole institution than the home environment as an important part of the wider educational experience. Such is the value of research of this nature, since the authors are able to recognise a far more complex picture by investigating such systems.

On a more pragmatic level, it was surprising to learn that Mexican approaches to very young children are so heavily influenced by discrete competencies with such emphasis on skills and physical development. It caused me to reflect on the significant influence and power welded by educational institutions on what families see as important learning—an aspect of discussion that this research explores in the wider study. However, I would suggest that the researchers' choice to focus on homework as a leading activity for investigation lent itself more to this scholastic emphasis than other activities may have. It would be interesting to see this research repeated, in the home, with other cultural activities in mind, since it is likely that these hold significant emotional value to the child (indeed, it could be argued that they would hold *more* emotional value to Cesar). As one of very few sociocultural studies that has been conducted in this locale, this chapter provides a beacon of hope in research that is conducted in and between home and other locales; since it is clear that any cultural-historical interpretation cannot ignore this significant institution in the life and learning of a young child. In Cesar's case, the chosen *vivencia* raises important, but unexplored, questions concerning the emotional value of homework as an educational activity for the very young child despite its value to his family.

To conclude, not only does this chapter provide important incentives for researchers to consider the wider contexts of the child's life-world, but it also sets the scene for future research that investigates the *vivencias* of young children in an increasingly diasporic world (I make this claim for both the researcher and the researched). The inspirational examples outlined here, underpinned by a unique methodological framework, provide

a potential route to the emotional lived experience of the infant and toddler as a means of bringing cognition/competency and emotion into dialectic interplay. Moreover, the notion of *visual vivencia* provides researchers with inspiration to go beyond current frameworks to develop methodologically sound approaches that best suit their purpose. Theorising of how best to understand and appreciate young children through such exploration is a route we must inevitably take if we are serious about deepening our understandings of our youngest children, ourselves, and the societies in which we live.

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Chapter 7
Taking a "Generous" Approach in Research with Young Children

Alison Stephenson

The genesis for this research lay in the definition of curriculum in the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996). The curriculum is defined as the "sum total of the experiences, activities, and events, whether direct or indirect, which occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development" (p. 10). As a teacher and teacher educator, my focus had primarily been on direct aspects of curriculum, but the notion of the indirect intrigued me and provided the impetus for my doctoral research. The focus was broad: to explore the scope and boundaries of curriculum in one New Zealand early childhood education centre that catered for children 0 to 5 (Stephenson, 2009b). This involved exploring the influence of indirect (or "hidden") aspects of curriculum, identifying the process by which potential aspects of curriculum were excluded (i.e., the null curriculum), and describing the ways in which children participated in the processes of extending and proscribing curriculum. These intentions reflected the concern of critical pedagogy with understanding the processes by which curriculum is defined, the ways in which particular knowledge is prioritised/marginalised, and with how embedded assumptions can act to either privilege or silence. A prolonged period of ethnographic observations was used because this allowed for the collection of a wide range of data relating to the environment, programme and participants, and also meant there was time for ongoing analysis and thinking as successive research leads were followed up. The decision to include children's perspectives not only recognised their role as participants in the defining of curriculum but was also seen as a potential way of "jarring" my own adult-centric assumptions about curriculum issues in early childhood education.

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The Research Questions and the Setting

Challenges to established conceptions of curriculum have drawn on ideas from critical (e.g., Giroux, 2001; McLaren, 2007), feminist, and postmodern discourses. The role of curriculum in conveying and reinforcing society's hegemonic patterns has been challenged (e.g., Giroux, 1997; McLaren, 2007) and the notion of curriculum as a defined body of knowledge has been rejected as part of the wider critique of positivism. Increasingly curriculum is understood as the lived reality, reflected in descriptions such as Hill's (2005) "it is about life itself" (p. 26). It was in the context of such emerging understandings that the research described in this chapter was undertaken. Initially the research question focused on both the scope and boundaries of curriculum, but the process of data-gathering and initial analysis revealed the overall complexity of curriculum and the uniqueness of each child's curriculum experience. The focus was therefore narrowed to the boundaries of curriculum and the main research question was reworded:

> What are the boundaries of the curriculum that young children experience and enact within the early childhood education setting?

The subsidiary questions on the hidden aspects of the curriculum implicit in the structure, organisation, and teacher practices, and on the informal teaching and learning among children were similarly amended. The question on what potential aspects of learning and teaching were excluded did not need amending as it was already focused on the boundaries of curriculum.

"The centre" is the pseudonym for the site where I spent 5 months observing children's and teachers' lives together, and talking with children. The centre catered for children from zero to five years, but this chapter describes the participation of the youngest children—those aged 2 and younger.

Dual Framework: Critical Pedagogy and Sociology of Childhood

The fields of critical pedagogy and the sociology of childhood both influenced the framing and process of the research. Critical pedagogy (Giroux, 2001; Kincheloe, 2004, 2008; McLaren, 2007) was the dominant theoretical influence. A critical approach underpinned each of the research questions, the understanding of children as active participants in the process of defining curriculum, and was a continuing prompt to look "beneath of the surface" of events and responses for other possible meanings. Recognising that education is at heart political, the way in which "knowledge" is defined, and the epistemological and ontological assumptions on which such definitions are grounded are central concerns of critical pedagogy; these notions underpinned my focus on exploring the processes by which curriculum was defined in this one setting, and the ways in which particular kinds of knowledge were prioritised and/or marginalised. The notion of the hidden curriculum (McLaren, 2007) is a concept which arose outside of critical pedagogy, but has most frequently been used within this field. It underpinned my focus on exploring how implicit

"messages" embedded in the structure, organisation, and practices might influence the scope of curriculum.

But critical pedagogy has a far broader raft of concerns; Kincheloe (2008) identifies 14 basic concepts which include concern with issues of oppression and dominance and a commitment to equitable and just education. Initially I did not anticipate exploring issues of power but, as Kincheloe (2008) warns, critical pedagogy "involves exposing the cultural, epistemological, and ideological assumptions that shape the knowledge individuals produce and the oppressive actions justified by such information" (p. 176). Although ageism has not been a central focus for critical pedagogy, the constructions of "child" and "childhood" that are embedded within early childhood practices have been challenged by others working within a critical framework (Cannella, 1997; Cannella & Viruru, 2004; Dahlberg & Moss, 2005). The framework of critical pedagogy became increasingly significant within the research as I explored the ways in which the apparently benevolent child-centred discourses (Cannella, 1997) of early childhood education overlaid a deeper discourse which positioned children as other than adults, and it helped to reveal ways in which this influenced and restricted structures and practices. It was also useful in exploring the multiple ways in which both adults and children exercised power and/or reacted to others' exercise of power.

The second and intersecting framework, the sociology of childhood, was influential both philosophically and methodologically. The distinction between positioning children as "being" or as "becoming" has been used to distinguish the concerns of sociology of childhood from more developmental approaches (Prout, 2005) where children tend to be positioned as immature adults in the making. It was seen as a shift towards an ontological understanding of children "as participant agents in social relations, and [of] childhood as a social group fundamentally implicated in social relational processes" (Mayall, 2002, p. 1). Philosophically, this reflected my understanding of children as active participants in their centre lives. The sociology of childhood gained additional significance with the identification of the adult–child demarcation as a central theme, echoing others who had highlighted the importance of generational issues in understanding children's lives (e.g., Mayall, 2008). Methodologically it was influential; it was within this discipline I found models of ethnographic studies in young children's settings (e.g., Connolly, 1998; Corsaro, 2003) and descriptions of participatory research strategies used with young children (e.g., Clark, 2004; Clark & Moss, 2001).

Children's Perspectives

The intention was to foreground children's perspectives in order to gain insight into their thinking about their centre lives and their curriculum experiences. I also hoped that their perspectives might help to disrupt my own established assumptions about curriculum in early childhood settings. Recognising the benefits of a hybrid approach (Alldred, 1998), the term "children's perspectives" was used to cover

two elements (following Strandell, 1997, cited in Broström, 2006). The first was "taking the perspective of children" through a process of observing and interacting with them over a sustained period, and on that basis identifying with how they might think and feel. Ethnographic-style observations were used and copious field notes were produced, sometimes based on audio-taping and often supplemented by a photographic record. The second and subsidiary element was "children's knowledge" (Mayall, 2000), which involved listening to, and hearing, what children say, and involved the use of participatory research strategies (described below) designed to explore children's thoughts about their learning and their lives within the centre. Both approaches are committed to conveying how the world is for children, but they are based on different understandings. While children's own voices are increasingly gaining prominence in research, the use of ethnographic approaches has an established place in research which aims to provide detailed expositions of children's experiences (e.g., Corsaro, 2003; McCadden, 1998). The conventional absence of children's perspectives from ethnographies of children's settings (Levey, 2009) was avoided in this research by combining the two approaches. But I was mindful of the "fine line" between "presenting children's accounts of the world and the claim to be able to see the world from the child's perspective as a new kind of 'truth'" (James, 2007, p. 263).

In gathering ethnographic observations over 5 months, field notes and audio tapes recorded events relating to children's experience of and influence on the scope of curriculum. Photographs were used to capture details of the environment and events as an adjunct to field notes, and to record teachers' documentation. In observing I adopted a participatory research approach, similar to that Corsaro (2003) advocates and tried to avoid being identified as teacher by sitting among children for occasions like circle-times and mealtimes, and avoiding situations where it was likely I would need to monitor children's behaviour. However, over time, I found my role became somewhat "contradictory" (Connolly, 2008, p. 176), particularly because I decided I must intervene in more serious episodes of physical aggression when no other adult had observed them. While such incidents were rare, I was aware of an uneasy tension between such monitoring interventions, and the empowering co-constructive role I was attempting to adopt in my research interactions with children.

A series of participatory research strategies were progressively introduced. Methodologically, it was not easy to find meaningful ways to ask children about indirect and excluded aspects of curriculum or about their influence on the curriculum. Instead the strategies were focused on exploring children's thoughts about their own and others' learning, about their centre lives, and about what was significant to them in the centre; they were intended to "open up" discussions about curriculum issues. However, the strategies did not offer the same avenues for communication to less verbally proficient children. While some two- and three-year-olds engaged with each of the participatory methods, no data was recorded for children younger than 1, and very little for the one-year-olds. To convey the perspectives of those children, I found I had to rely largely on observational data. Even for two- and three-year-olds it seemed the combination of data from

observations and participatory strategies provided a richer picture than either could have in isolation.

The tension in ethnography between "how much to listen and how much to interpret" (James, 2007, p. 162) is widely acknowledged, and increasingly ethnographic accounts include the voice of the researcher, and acknowledge that the research process is "a product of the relationships forged between the researcher and the research participants, and will . . . reflect the decisions made and approaches taken by the researcher as well as the particular responses adopted by the participants to these" (Connolly, 2008, p. 174). More recently, similar critiques have been made of research which includes children's voices. Alldred (1998) suggests using the phrase "hearing the voices of children" (p. 160) to make clearer the researcher's acts of "hearing" and interpretation. Other critiques of participatory methods have emerged. Gallagher and Gallagher (2008) express concern that using participatory strategies "conscientiously and carefully" is in danger of being accepted as a way of achieving "ethical and epistemological validity", and warn that they are "no less problematic, or ethically ambiguous, than any other research method" (p. 513). Finally, James (2007) warns of the danger of assuming one child speaks for all and implying universality. Given these critiques, and given the understanding that any conclusions I might reach would be "a co-construction of knower and known" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 228), reflexivity was important. In order to be open about my own assumptions and biases, before beginning fieldwork I tried to identify these and shared this document with colleagues, whose comments deepened my awareness of habitual positionings. I also developed strategies to jar my habitual ways of thinking through the data-gathering and analysis. For example, I created a set of checking questions for myself. These included:

- What are my assumptions here?
- What are the power dynamics in this data-generating situation?
- How open am I to following the children's lead?

An ongoing journal was used for reflecting on the complexities and ethical difficulties in my researcher role. During the analysis, records were kept of coding decisions as a trail of evidence showing the categorisations and inferences, and the logic of the steps taken.

Data generation and analysis were guided by principles of the generic inductive qualitative model (Hood, 2007). Written notes, audio-tapes, and photographed teachers' planning documentation were all transcribed and entered in the qualitative data analysis programme NVivo QSR N6, which was used for the first rounds of analysis. The final levels of analysis occurred as part of the writing process, and coding decisions at this final stage were not added retrospectively into N6. The successive drafts of findings chapters (up to 15) record evolving analysis, and the 400 plus recorded text searches of data were indicative of this process.

The Findings

While the broader findings of this study are reported elsewhere (Stephenson, 2009b), in this chapter I focus on interpretations of findings relating to the 18 children aged under three years who were part of the wider mixed-age education and care setting.

Even the interests of these younger children appeared to influence the scope of curriculum. Some were well-established interests. Cassidy (two years) frequently introduced horses into his play interactions. Two-year-old Fleur's focus on nurturing play with dolls included showing Mulan how to lay the blanket flat and wrap it around her doll. Other interests were in-the-moment; when David (10 months) standing and stretching up discovered what a good sound the door latch made, Sunshine (10 months) was soon beside him reaching up for her turn. However, as for the older children, it seemed that the heart of curriculum was the widely shared collective interest in establishing relationships with others and becoming part of the community. For some children, and particularly the very youngest and/or newest, relationships with teachers seemed important. Amelia (9 months) came for two short days a week, and most of her interactions were with teachers. For others, relationships with peers appeared to be the focus; Fleur and Mulan (both two years) were almost always together; Thomas (two years) and Mele (22 months) often played with or near their respective older siblings. Other collective interests that appeared influential among older children—a concern with exercising power in relationships, with defining themselves by gender and with resisting adults—were seen, but less conspicuously, among these younger ones.

Overall, the assumed demarcation between adults and children, apparent in the structure, organisation, and provisioning of the centre, appeared to be the most significant source of curriculum boundaries, although the relative dependency-impulsiveness of these younger children suggested there might be more justification for some aspects of this demarcation. Just as teachers restricted the use of some play resources (e.g., play materials with small parts) to the older children and produced them only when most younger children were sleeping, so similar arguments could be mounted for not allowing the youngest children to have access to some of the teachers' resources and/or spaces. However, just as older children were seen to resist teachers at times, so some of the younger ones appeared to be also experimenting with resistance. Fleur (two years) copied older boys and briefly resisted the teacher's call to come into morning tea; Robert T. (two years) copied older children and held the door to the deck shut when a teacher wanted to come in. More broadly, however, the demarcation between adult and child appeared to be rarely questioned. Perhaps naively, I had not anticipated finding generational assumptions would be so influential within such a child-focused and child-friendly institution. Having identified them, the dual frameworks of critical pedagogy and sociology of childhood both contributed to my awareness of their significance. Mayall (2008) describes generation as "key to understanding childhood and children's lives" (p. 109); Kincheloe (2008) identifies ageism as an area of subjugated knowledge (p. 230).

The remainder of this chapter will describe the ways in which participatory research strategies were used. It was through pondering on how to answer the question, "which strategies were most useful in allowing the youngest children to share their thoughts?" that I came to the notion of generosity. Individuals had different preferences regardless of their age, and it seemed that features of the overall approach were more relevant than identifying particular strategies. What seemed important was that all children had the chance to be involved, that they were able to choose when and how they engaged, and that I tried to be open to hearing what they said, in whatever form they chose to say it. Examples of children's participation are woven through the following description of four dimensions of this approach of generosity—generosity of inclusion, of methods, of time, and of listening.

A Generosity of Inclusion

The research question concerned children's collective experiences of and influences on the boundaries of curriculum, and so required a whole-community focus. This approach fitted with the inclusive culture of the centre and reflected the ethnographic focus on understanding the social system. It also would allow every child to have access to whatever privileges they might consider the research process offered (e.g., use of the digital camera, a chance to share their learning portfolio) as the research unfolded. Critical pedagogy's concern with those on "the margins of society" (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 10) countered against selecting children, and thereby unwittingly excluding others. And yet, despite my commitment to those perspectives, initially age-related assumptions blinkered me. The original plan was to offer participation to every child aged 1 or older. After families with younger children asked for information letters, I recognised my original decision was based on age-related assumptions which were at odds with the tenor of the research, and so every child was invited to participate.

Discussion of the ethical dilemmas of research with young children (e.g., Cullen, Hedges, & Bone, 2005) highlights the need for informed consent before and during research, and these issues are even more crucial with the very youngest. My commitment from the outset was to respect children's rights so it was important children were part of the consent process. Following suggestions in the literature (Bone, 2005), assent forms for children as well as adults were designed. The parents' letter explained: "The white one is for an adult to complete and the cream one is for you to help your child/children fill in if you feel they are able to give an informed opinion". The child assent form and letter to parents stressed children could withdraw at any stage. This was taken to mean that any indication, verbal or non-verbal, that they did not want to be observed or participate would be respected. Families and teachers were asked to tell me if a child showed unease about the research or my presence, and I tried to be sensitive to children's moment-by-moment responses.

At the start of data generation there were 37 children aged 0–5 on the roll (17 girls and 20 boys) and 36 children participated in the research. The under-three-year-olds who participated included seven children aged 2 (two girls and five boys), seven children aged 1 (four girls and three boys), and four children under one year (two girls and two boys). Seven child assent forms were returned from these younger children. While the children were predominantly European New Zealanders, centre records showed their cultural backgrounds included Māori, Samoan, Tongan, Tokelauan, Fijian, Chinese, South African, and Greek. There were nine adults in the centre, seven teachers all of whom were either trained or in training, one manager and one cook.

Aware of the power imbalance and reluctant to impose myself, I waited for children to approach me. Unlike the three- and four-year-olds, who were often quick to ask questions and invite me to join them, younger children were often more reticent. During the first week I was aware of a young boy "circling" me, interested and observant, but at a distance. Days went by before Cassidy chose to approach, yet he was to become a key participant. Not all the youngest children contributed significantly to the research. For example, I never felt I established a rapport with Mele (22 months), who came only one day a week, or with Sunshine (10 months), who came 5 days a week but often appeared most comfortable with her favourite teacher. I recognised the voices of those who attended less frequently, who were less verbally proficient, or who felt less at ease with me were relatively silenced, and I tried to find ways to include their voices. I spent time alongside and observing two-year-old Robert T. when I realised he attended for two short days each week, spoke little, and interacted with few children. I regularly spent time with the very youngest children after lunch.

While it is easy to assert that children participating in research are entitled to the same protection, confidentiality, and anonymity as adults, in practice this was not simple. Grappling with the tensions between the rights of children to confidentiality, teachers' interest, and families' assumptions about access to information was challenging. While it is open to critique, it was decided data relating to individual children could be made available to teachers and families if the child agreed. Only one adult requested information, and while the child agreed, for me this remains an area of ethical unease; I still wonder if he felt refusal was an option. Families who had decided their child was not able to give informed assent could see data relating to their child on request—but none requested this. Children were given copies of photos of themselves, or taken by themselves—and almost every child chose to share these immediately with peers and/or teachers.

My starting point for engaging with children was respect. I invited children to participate in activities with me as and when they wanted, and equally, I tried to be sensitive to children hovering on the sidelines, and invited them to join in. I tried to be sensitive in timing requests, and children rarely chose not to participate. I asked for children's permission to observe or tape-record their play, when I considered they would understand my request. Occasionally the changing situation meant I recorded children without their permission, and then I later explained their voices had been taped, let them listen, and asked for permission to type it up. With children

who were not communicating verbally, I tried to be sensitive to their reactions, and did not observe if I sensed I was not welcome. For example, I did not observe when a child was sick or very upset. I carried two notebooks and pens, and the spare set were extensively used by younger children. Some of the very youngest children were intrigued by the camera, but I was reluctant to let them to explore it freely; it would have been good to have a second less valuable camera which they could handle at their leisure.

A Generosity of Methods

There were two dimensions to this aspect of generosity. The first was the methodological decision to use a combination of ethnographic and participatory research approaches. The second relates to those participatory research methods themselves, and the relatively open-ended ways in which they were used. But before elaborating on that, how were those strategies developed?

I discovered many children were keen to spend time with an interested adult and so it became a search for ways of talking with them that they would find engaging, and that would allow them to articulate their ideas about curriculum. The "mosaic approach" (Clark, 2004; Clark & Moss, 2001) and the work of others who built on this (e.g., Dockett & Perry, 2005) demonstrated the value of offering a range of strategies. There were useful descriptions in the literature of a variety of research approaches with young children, particularly interviews (Lewis, 2001; Ring, 2000), often with conversational prompts (e.g., Carr, 2000; Godfrey & Cemore, 2005; Smith, Duncan, & Marshall, 2005; Te One, 2007), and of children taking photographs (Clark & Moss, 2001; Cremin & Slatter, 2004; Einarsdottir, 2005; Greenfield, 2004). However, I found relatively few studies including the voices of children aged three years (e.g., Clark, 2004, 2010; Einarsdottir, 2007; Farrell, Tayler, & Tennent, 2002; Flewitt, 2005; Howard, 2002) and even fewer with children aged 2 or younger (e.g., Clark, 2004; Clark & Moss, 2001; Einarsdottir, 2007). From the start I suspected finding ways which enabled me to hear the voices of the youngest children might be challenging.

Drawing on ideas from the literature and my own ongoing experience with these children, a range of participatory strategies was devised. These were designed to be relatively open-ended tasks that were interesting to and meaningful for children and provided them with opportunities to share their thoughts about their learning, and their centre lives. Developing them on site meant they were sensitive to the responses of these children and could be adjusted in light of their responses. Having a variety of strategies meant children could choose those that appealed. While in each interaction, I explained the process and gave guidelines, I then allowed children considerable control in an effort to address the adult–child power imbalance, and work toward what Pascal and Bertram (2009) call a "symmetrical dialogue". While this sounds simple, the reality was often challenging. First, I felt constrained to keep largely to the centre's definitions of appropriate/inappropriate. For example, when Walter began peeling the stickers off his portfolio, I stopped him, realising a teacher

had added these as a way of valuing his work. Secondly, occasionally I needed to intervene to protect my own equipment; the digital camera was the source of greatest tension for me as I juggled giving children control, and yet ensuring it was not damaged. Finally, when children responded in entirely unexpected ways there was sometimes the feeling my research was "in tatters". I needed to remind myself to step back from my preconceptions, and to listen for the other messages they might be conveying. The research interactions described in the following sections show some of the challenges faced in trying to find a route that not only respected and empowered children but also allowed me to answer the research question.

Alongside observations and informal conversations with children seven participatory strategies were trialled. The five described below were ones that engaged the interest of the younger children and/or enabled me to hear some of their thoughts about their centre lives. (The two other strategies involved unfinished story books, for which children were encouraged to supply endings.) However, when I am asked to identify which were the most useful participatory strategies, I find that question difficult on two counts. How to define "useful"? The picture questionnaire was used with only one younger child yet it provided me with unexpected insights. While many children chose to show me their learning portfolios, I often gained more insights from reviewing children's collective responses than from individual interactions. Secondly, the question sidesteps the more fundamental recognition that even very young children will have preferences in how they express themselves; providing a range of strategies reflected my philosophical commitment to seeing children as agents rather than passive recipients. Verbally articulate children (e.g., Cassidy and Jeff) were drawn to interactions which involved talking with an interested adult; less articulate children tended to be attracted by a physical prop. All children seemed to relish the feeling of "being in charge"—whether it was in arranging counters or sharing their portfolio. However, I was always simultaneously aware meaning-making was a co-constructive process in which the child and I engaged: I chose the research focus, devised the strategies, "heard" their responses, and recorded, analysed, interpreted, edited, and selected. While I offered children choices these were inevitably bounded by the relationship *I* shared with *these* children.

The Participatory Research Strategies

Strategy 1: What do children call this place? Using a folder of photographs of sites within the centre was initially intended as a focus for getting-to-know-you conversations and to discover the names children called places. The photos included adult spaces like the kitchen, as well as play areas. Even children with little language delighted in recognising familiar places. Conversations not only showed which places children recognised and what they called them, but also suggested what might be important to them about those places, and provided early insight into some of the implicit messages that might be conveyed by the environment and resources. The names children used often indicated their understanding of a space's purpose.

When Jeff (two years) looked at the photo of the room where dress-ups and family play resources were kept he called it the “the girl room”, but then amended this to “the girl room and the boy room and the pretend babies”, which suggested he might be considering the different messages he had received about who dresses up, and perhaps even who plays with dolls/cares for babies. He labelled the photo of the laundry as “where they make the dough”, which suggested he might be unaware that for adults the room’s main purpose was washing and drying laundry. Finding how unfamiliar some spaces were to children provided early indications of the strength of the adult–child demarcation within the centre’s layout.

Strategy 2: Photos and stickers→ photo chart and counters. Photographs taken in the centre were used to explore children’s feelings about activities/events in centre life. These included events such as mat-time, as well activities such as puzzles, blocks, and sand play. At first these were presented as a set of photos, but this proved cumbersome so they were converted into a single chart of 30 small photos. Initially children were given five coloured dots to stick on those they liked, but their requests for more dots showed this limit was clearly unsatisfactory. The act of sticking on dots often seemed to surpass any decision-making about likes and dislikes so when the chart was developed, the dots were replaced with coloured counters, twenty with happy faces and five with sad faces, which required children to make choices. Children enjoyed the novelty of equipment, and being in charge of the process. Anakin (18 months) enjoyed shifting the counters in and out of the small metal container but had no interest in the photos. Mulan (two years) placed counters “slowly and thoughtfully”, often naming the places. Conversations with children during this activity were rare—the interaction with Cassidy described later was an exception. Perhaps this was because I typically used this in the playroom with others around. Perhaps also the task of selecting absorbed children’s attention, and when they had finished this they often lost interest. (I found photographing the completed chart was a quick way of recording a child’s choices.) Most of my insights were therefore drawn from reviewing their collective responses. For example, most younger children (like most older ones) made few “sad” selections. Fleur used one “sad” counter (on the photo of the digger) in her four selections while two of Mulan’s 13 selections were “sad” (the slide, and the dolls and dolls’ bed). While I had no insight into their reasons for those choices, the relative lack of “sad” choices reinforced my impression of children’s overall enjoyment of their centre lives. Again, although the photos were chosen to show activities/events, younger children often re-directed my attention back to the significance of people—looking for themselves, identifying others. Fleur and Mulan both put happy faces on the photos of a mat-time group, and of the four-year-olds sitting together having their lunch.

Strategy 3: Child-led photo tour of the centre. The strategy of children taking photographs with a digital camera was adopted to “open up” discussions with children and offer insights into their perspectives on the centre environment and resources in relation to the sub-question focused on how these might influence the boundaries of curriculum. Returning prints of their photos on my next visit provided a further chance for conversation, but often the tour and the interactions

during it seemed to have greater significance for children and provided the richest data. The format was that a child was invited, or offered, to show me the places they liked around the centre, and could photograph them, or be in the photo themselves. With the younger children, more ongoing encouragement—“Is there another place you especially like?”—was sometimes necessary. Children were not given a limit but at times impending centre events meant a child had to be encouraged to finish. Every child who expressed an interest had a chance to take a photo tour, and several took more than one. The youngest children who did tours were two-year-olds, and they all opted to be in the photos, but enjoyed pushing the “quick view” button to see themselves. While individual children’s responses varied, collective themes emerged. Most significantly, children’s choices emphasised the significance of people despite the opening prompt to photograph/show me places, which reinforced my sense of the importance of relationships. Cassidy’s first two photographs were of plastic horses, but he then moved outside and chose to include Jeff in two of his next photos. Some areas of the environment were more frequently photographed. Like many of the older children, the younger children’s photographs were predominantly of the outdoors, reinforcing the importance of that environment to them, perhaps because fewer adult restrictions were imposed there. Although older children seemed to relish the novelty of using a camera, a tool defined as “adult” in this setting, the younger children seemed more engaged by having my unswerving attention—the agenda of the camera and taking photographs appeared to be less significant to them.

Strategy 4: Sharing learning portfolios. Learning portfolios are records, in words and photographs, of episodes of children’s learning, and include samples of their artwork. I invited children to show me their portfolios because I wanted their permission to look at these documents, to find what aspects particularly interested them, and to talk with them about the episodes of learning. One of my research questions focused on the learning and teaching that occurs among children, and in pursuing this I had become aware of how rarely children talked about their own learning; sharing their learning portfolios seemed to be a way to initiate such conversations. I also hoped it might give me insight into what aspects of learning were prioritised/marginalised in the documented learning. The first children I asked were uncharacteristically reluctant; once the option of photographing favourite pages was introduced many children were keen to participate. The youngest of these were two. When Fleur (two years) showed me her portfolio, her use of the camera, which was a novelty for her, dominated much of our interaction. But as for others, it was the photographs of people—herself and others—that particularly interested her; she recognised herself as a baby saying “That’s Fleur”, pointed out her friend Mulan and a previous teacher to whom she had been very attached. Jeff was keen to show me the picture of his mother. But for Cassidy, who had already warned me, “There’s only one horse”, it was a picture of a horse his mother had drawn that he showed me first. Because children very rarely made any reference to the concepts of learning and/or teaching (in whatever words) in sharing their portfolios, it was tempting to discount this strategy—and yet that absence was itself illuminating. Moreover, every child possessed a portfolio, many were keen to share theirs and I found when I “stepped back” from the agenda of conversations about learning/teaching

and listened in an open way there were almost always other insights to be gained. With hindsight, I think photographing favourite pages often distracted children from talking about the contents. While children's use of the camera ensured it was a popular activity, and meant I had a photographic record of selected pages for later review, I would reconsider this dimension if I repeated the strategy.

Strategy 5: Picture questionnaire. Building on the ideas of others (Lewis, 2001; Ring, 2000) I developed a four-page questionnaire with eight statements to which children drew their responses. (With hindsight I recognise there were too many items—just one or two would have been appropriate for a two-year-old.) It was designed to explore children's thoughts about their own learning and included items such as "These are things that I am really good at doing" and "Things that I have learned while I have been at the centre are". It also included two statements about who they liked/disliked playing with, and perhaps because I felt sensitive about children openly expressing rejection of peers, this was the research strategy I felt most tentative using. Yet observations and conversations confirmed exclusion and rejection did occur, and it seemed important to explore children's feelings about this rarely acknowledged aspect of their experience. It was used in one-to-one withdrawal situations; I read out each statement and invited the child to draw his or her response in the space below. Because I invited only one younger child to complete it, and because he was not constantly engaged, it is tempting to exclude it, and yet, as the interaction with Cassidy described later shows, it provided insight into how he might be feeling about interactions with some of the older boys.

Informal Conversations

Informal conversations with children within the flow of centre life contributed significantly to my awareness of children's perspectives. Conversations were a constant feature of being with children and ran through all the above strategies. Mealtimes were opportunities for group conversations. Often it was the food itself; Fleur (two years) watched as Aidy (three years) ate the sausage skins he called "scraps", and they compared how many sausages each ate. Play contexts were more often the setting for one-to-one interactions. In a quiet moment, Jonathan (two years) showed me his small orange truck. While bringing toys was against centre rules, I chose to admire it and then advised him to keep it safely hidden. Jeff (two years) and I were alone when he told me, "Robert A. does lots of mean things to me". How to respond in-the-moment, and in the longer term, to such information was a continuing dilemma.

Observations

Observations were the matrix. A great deal of time was spent observing children, writing notes, sometimes taking photographs or audio-taping them, and this was the most significant source of data. Observations were the sole source of data for

the very youngest children, for those not verbally skilled, and for those who did not choose to engage in the participatory strategies—I did not find other ways of hearing their perspectives. I drew on observations in answering all the research questions. I did not find ways of asking children straightforward questions about the impact of "indirect" aspects of curriculum implicit in the structure and organisation of the centre, and in the teacher practices. Answering this depended primarily on observational data, although the process of "stepping back" from their responses to other questions sometimes gave insights. Observational data were central in "taking the perspective of children"; while observations lack the panache of participatory strategies they often provided a context which helped me understand children's responses. Because I had observed the struggles, physical and emotional, Angus (three years) had in the sleep room, I understood why he put a sad face on that photo but never knew why he also put one on the zoom slide. It was through observing that I was able to understand some of the things younger children could not put into words. For example, the multitude of observations of Macauley's (11 months) eagerness to be outside suggested his enthusiasm for that environment:

> When [the teacher] went outside, Sunshine and Macauley were over at the door in a trice, and when she came back in, they were both still waiting there. Macauley shouted his annoyance and when the door was finally opened . . . he was out like a shot, only to be picked up by a teacher saying "It's ok, you can go out" but putting his trousers on—he had been wandering around in nappies.

Observations showed others' enjoyment of Macauley:

> He and [a teacher] play with a tractor in the centre of the room. He holds it, she names it, she runs it through his hair, he holds his hand out for it, then runs it through his own hair. He sits snuggled in against her looking very comfortable. Later they play a game of alternately crawling towards and away from each other. He looks filled with delight.

James (four years) encouraged Macauley to ride alongside him on a truck, and asked after him when he was away. Such episodes reflected the responsive web of relationships even a very young child might engender and enjoy.

More disturbingly, observations revealed how difficult Robert T. (two years) was finding it to initiate positive interactions with others. He was big for his age, had limited language, and came only 2 days a week. At this stage he seemed poised on the cusp of being defined as "outsider". There *were* moments when he seemed accepted and engaged. When he was riding circuits on a bike, he responded with delight when a girl, following him, playfully crashed into him when he stopped. A watching teacher who pretended to block their route, stepping aside at the last moment, added to his joy. But there were many other moments which showed how difficult he found it to initiate contact. That same afternoon, when he was on the challenge course, Fleur leant forward and bit his arm. He stared at her silently. Then when his companion from the bikes joined him, he bit her arm. She pulled away, climbed down, and stood glaring at him. When he approached she ran away.

There were a myriad of such observations—some apparently minor, others more overt. When Robert approached the fort, where four children were playing:

> He calls "hello . . ." four times. No one answers, and he moves closer and calls "hello" ten times, pauses, and then repeats the sequence. No one answers him.

Inside, when he was running a train along the floor, Thomas (two years) took it from him. Robert tried to retrieve it, then broke Thomas's line of vehicles:

> James (four years) steps across and says very loudly "Robert, don't play with Thomas's things" and stares at him. Angus (three years) steps across and bends down and goes "grrr" in Robert's face. James says "you're very naughty" . . . . As he goes out through the door, Rex (four years) bends down and glares into his face.

It seemed Robert was still deciphering what was appropriate. He attempted to initiate interactions, using models he saw others use or had experienced, but because many of his efforts were judged inappropriate, his approaches were rarely reciprocated. Corsaro (2003) describes children's exclusion of others as "an attempt to keep control of their play, *to keep sharing what they are already sharing"* (p. 64, emphasis in original). Here children's reactions often seemed more aligned to positioning Robert as "other" than to protecting their play. While each incident seems minor, as Alison James (2005) notes:

> such moments . . . constitute swift lessons in the operation of power, mere glimpses of what friendship might entail, tiny gestures of disapproval or acclaim. This is how children come to understand their social world and it is this struggle for effective participation which makes the term "socialization" seem woefully inadequate (p. 328).

It was observing children such as Robert T. and Macauley that led me to reconsider the emphasis within research on children's perspectives for some of these youngest children. I could not find ways that would allow either child to express their thoughts directly, and yet it seemed both children's experiences were an important part of the group's curriculum experiences. In order to convey the perspectives of very young children, like Macauley, or of older children who were not verbally articulate, like Robert T., I have had to rely on observational data, while for other children observations were not the sole source. While my presence is embedded in every piece of data I present—in the acts of hearing, interpreting, selecting, editing, describing—the challenge of both understanding and conveying the experiences of non-verbalising children such as Robert T. and Macauley was much greater. In the final analysis I could only try to honour them by conveying their experiences, as I understood them, as honestly as possible.

A Generosity of Time

Personal experience suggested a prolonged time in the setting might be important in building trust and rapport, particularly with very young children. Also, others' ethnographic writing (Connolly, 1998; Corsaro, 2003; McCadden, 1998) demonstrated the kind of sensitive and nuanced understandings that might emerge with an extended relationship. While this may often be an unrealistic ideal, here having the luxury of 5 months in the setting meant children could dictate the pace at

which our relationship developed. It also meant children were able to ask to repeat particular activities (e.g., to show me their portfolio again) over the months—and whenever a child repeated a process, there were inevitably changes in their responses which I believe contributed additional depth and complexity—plus it was a useful reminder not to overestimate the significance of any individual response.

It was only through spending a prolonged time in the setting that some possible implications of children's comments and actions were recognised. An interaction with Cassidy, an articulate two-year-old, and the only younger child who I invited to do the picture questionnaire, provides an example. It was designed to explore children's thoughts about their own learning and included items such as "These are things that I am really good at doing" but also included two statements about who they liked/disliked playing with, and perhaps because I felt sensitive about children openly expressing rejection of peers, this was the research strategy I felt most tentative using. My intention was that children drew their responses but Cassidy's drawings appeared initially unrelated. When I asked, "Are there people that you don't usually play with?", he responded quickly, "No", but later, working on his drawing, told me, "That's a pirate … and a monster". I reminded him he had mentioned monsters a few days earlier when Angus (three years), wearing a dragon mask, had approached him with clawed hands, growling. Cassidy, retreating behind me, had said, "I hate the monster". Cassidy now responded, with strong emotion: "I *hate* this; I *hate* monsters scaring me around." Wondering if was referring to that earlier incident I asked, "Do you hate monsters who chase you around?" Cassidy said, "Yeah". Again, attempting to check out his meaning, I asked, "Do monsters ever chase you around here?" and he replied, "No". His interest returned to his drawing and, judging he was not engaged in the questionnaire, I decided not to continue but stayed beside him. Minutes later he said, "There's no more monsters here. I *hate* monsters scaring me around." I agreed, and he added, "Outside". I elaborated, "Sometimes people put on the monster hat don't they. Is that a bit scary?" Cassidy said, "Yeah". His attention shifted to the Duplo and for several minutes we built alongside each other. Then unexpectedly again he said, "You know about monsters scaring me around outside." I asked, "What do you do, Cassidy, when the monsters scare you?" He replied, "I said they're scaring to me." I responded, "They're scaring you. And what can you do?" I only heard the word "teacher" so asked: "Teacher?" Cassidy said, "Yeah. They don't scaring me." After a pause I said, "I think going to the teachers if the monsters are scaring you is probably the best thing to do." The other children then emerged from their quiet time, and we rejoined them.

This interaction underlined the importance of prolonged contact. On one level, spending 20 uninterrupted minutes with Cassidy allowed him to dip in and out of his thinking about monsters, which was perhaps a response to my asking who he did not usually play with. If I had abandoned the process because Cassidy was not drawing his responses, or had moved away when he apparently lost interest, I would have missed his repeated re-introduction of the topic. And if I had not had contact with him over several weeks, I would not have known of his earlier interaction with a "monster". Singer (1996) believes the value of children's peer relationships is

often underestimated; I wonder if the challenges of forming and sustaining those relationships might also be underestimated. This episode was one of many that suggested relationships with peers might be at the very heart of curriculum for children.

It was only over time that I recognised how attuned Anakin (one year) was to the older boys, observing them from a distance, and increasingly experimenting with the roles they took. Outside in the playground he heard one of the boys chanting "Da, di de da da", and a second later he said "da da". I wrote:

> He is clearly turned in to them—ignoring the two girls . . . in his vicinity. Anakin comes up and sits beside me on the seat. Even here he shouts 'da, da'.

Over time, I saw how he and Emjay (3 months younger) increasingly gained confidence in displays of shared resistance to teachers that older boys delighted in. When James (four years) was sent from mat-time to sit on a chair, he put a tissue box on his foot like a shoe:

> Towards the end of mat-time, Anakin and Emjay got up and wandered over there. A teacher called their names—she was holding [a baby]—but they did not show any sign of responding. They wandered on past James . . . Anakin picked out a cardboard box, similar in size to James's.

While the long period of observing enabled me to recognise such changing patterns, I was always aware how many more I must be missing.

The luxury of time also made it possible for me to offer children some reciprocation day by day for their willingness to share themselves. While I hoped my research might have long-term positive implications for children, responding to requests to "play with me" during each visit seemed the most effective way to express my gratitude to these particular children. When a child invited me to join them, I tried to ensure I spent time with them before I left that day. However, I could never cease entirely to be the researcher and retrospective notes were sometimes made of those interactions. There were also ethical issues that came with prolonged engagement. For example, alongside the efforts to establish rapport with children, there was also a need to maintain detachment, particularly as the time for my withdrawal approached, as I wanted to ensure I did not become too significant a figure for any child. When I realised Jeff (two years) was habitually seeking me out I explained I needed to watch other children, but made sure I interacted with him at least briefly if he was not involved with others. I also invited other children into our shared interactions as a way of extending his circle of companions.

A Generosity of Listening

Underpinning all else was the importance of finding ways of "hearing" what children were saying. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) describe the significance of listening within the pedagogy of the Reggio Emilia schools as involving "an ethical relationship of openness to the Other, trying to listen to the Other from his or her own

position and experience and not treating the Other as the same" (p. 15). In listening to children, I consciously attempted to put aside expectations and assumptions of what it was to be adult or child, "expert" or "novice", researcher or researched, and to listen in a spirit of generosity, with openness and respect. For me, generosity in listening was also involved in my efforts to "step back" from my research agenda and let children share the control, yet always with the knowledge that any understandings I might reach would be imbued with my researcher lens. However, being prepared to step back, to be open to children and new insights did sometimes allow other messages to be "heard", messages that were often not answers to the questions I had been considering as the following two examples show.

When I invited Jeff (two years) to do a photo-tour and show me his favourite places, he seemed keen (Stephenson, 2009c). He led off outdoors, but paused to play with stamps and pads set up on a table, and agreed I take a photo of him there. After a few minutes he led me to the sandpit, but decided we would build together rather than take a photo. We began making a "sandcastle" which he later called a "mountain". He excavated one side making a "waterfall", before stamping the mountain down. I twice suggested a photo, and he agreed both times. When he began another sand mountain, he invited a three-year-old girl to help, and commented when she later left. He introduced "rabbit holes"—he dug one and I was instructed to dig another until our holes joined. Jeff invited an older boy to join in, and found two buckets—one for "dinner" and the other for "cake". Jeff sprinkled dried sand—"eggs"—into the "dinner". He told me his grandma was picking him up, he had a new booster seat, and that he ate scrambled eggs and bacon last night. On leaving the sandpit, he paused by a group gathered around a large switchboard, but moved to a wooden ride-on truck before I could ask if he wanted a photo. He climbed on and drove off "to get a load", returning with bark chips in the tray which he described as "books from the library". I reminded him about taking photos of favourite places, and he agreed I take one. Explaining I needed to leave soon, I asked if there were more photographs he wanted—and he said, "no".

If I had considered this hour in terms of generating data on Jeff's favourite places, I could have dismissed it as largely wasted research time. But "stepping back" from my agenda of the photo tour and thinking more comprehensively allowed other messages to be "heard". I understood Jeff's motivation was not to take photos, or be photographed, or even to show me favourite places. Rather it seemed he wanted to spend time with an interested adult, suggesting for him it was the company rather than the place that was significant. While he accepted my agenda, it was an aside to his own play agenda. Sharing this time with him allowed me a glimpse into the wealth of experiences he drew on. Not only did this reinforce for me the way in which children seamlessly incorporate their out-of-centre experiences into their in-centre interactions, but it was also a salutary reminder not to make age-based assumptions about the range of a two-year-old's experiences. This hour also challenged my observations showing Jeff as solitary; here I saw his interest in drawing me, and other children, into his play.

The second example of what might be learned by "stepping back" relates to Cassidy (two years), who had an abiding passion for horses. When he joined me to look at the set of photographs of centre events and activities (Stephenson, 2009a),

he quickly discovered there were no photos of horses. To overcome this we agreed to use a small plastic horse. He laid it on a photo of the sandpit, placed a sticker on that photo, and asked to "do more". Each time he took a sticker I encouraged him to think about what else he enjoyed doing. When he had five stickers on the sandpit photo I said, "Are there other things you like to do . . . do you like to have lunch, or dress up, or play with the dough?" Cassidy replied, "I play with the horses". Finally, I heard what he was telling me; for him playing with horses was the most important aspect of centre life. I was grateful to him; his search for a photo of a horse highlighted how my assumptions could constrain the scope of children's responses. Moreover, had I been wedded to my research technique and not allowed the plastic horse to be added, or insisted he comply with my intention of one sticker per photo I would have missed his message. I was always aware, however, of how much I did not hear, or understand, even of children's spoken words. After a conversation with Fleur (two years), I wrote: "pink rabbit . . . lollies . . . mummy and daddy" and added: "How am I going to get data if this is all I understand of her substantial answer?"

Conclusion

The dual framework of critical pedagogy and the sociology of childhood proved valuable. Taking a critical approach, and consciously attempting to sidestep my own expectations and assumptions, assisted me in understanding the processes by which curriculum was defined in this setting, the roles children and teachers played within these, and in identifying some of the kinds of knowledge that were included/excluded. It also heightened my awareness of implicit curriculum "messages" conveyed by the structure, organisation, and teacher practices. In particular it helped me to understand the way in which wider social assumptions about adults and children appeared to influence the boundaries of curriculum, and it provided a framework for exploring the dimension of power observed within many interactions. Sociology of childhood, which underpinned my understanding of children as actively involved in defining and shaping of curriculum, and with their own thoughts about their centre lives, also contributed to my understanding of the impact of the adult–child demarcation. Combining the two elements of children's perspectives—identifying with how they might think and feel based on observations, as well as including their voices—was also useful. The observational data not only often provided contextual information which illuminated children's responses, but was the only avenue I found for including the perspectives of children who had little or no spoken language. During the process of the research, taking a generous approach meant being available to children, allowing each child to select how and when they interacted with me, and letting them exercise some leadership within our shared interactions. More fundamentally, it meant listening in an open way that went beyond the framework of the research parameters to what a child might want to say. Among the many things I learnt from the process of this research, was that every child will choose to communicate in their own way—and for some children, I know I did not find that way.

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Commentary to Alison Stephenson: "Taking a Generous Approach in Research with Young Children"

Eva Johansson

This chapter elucidates the tension between finding ways to respect and empowering young children in research *and* to allow the researcher to raise questions, taking an analytic position and being responsible for generating new understandings. In Alison's study, as in this book, listening to children's voices and allowing for young children's participation is critical. Yet an important question to ask is how and to what extent this is possible with very young children. Alison describes in detail her reflexivity theoretically and methodologically and it is exciting to learn how she struggles (succeeds and fails) to involve the children in the research process. There are a lot of dilemmas doing research with young children as participants. Alison outlines beautifully several of these. For example, one important concern is how to identify participatory methods appropriate for children who are mainly communicating non-verbally. It is refreshing to learn from Alison how she acknowledges the limitations of her study in reaching this goal by illuminating the difficulties that researchers encounter in the ambition of being generous and involve infants and toddlers to take part also in participatory research.

A critical approach underpins the study. In critical theory there is a concern for issues of oppression and dominance and a commitment to equitable and just education, says Alison. Critical theory calls for the researcher to investigate how and what kind of processes and structures, hidden or explicit, define curriculum. Another concern is to analyse in what ways particular kinds of knowledge are being prioritised or marginalised and how embedded assumptions can act to either privilege or silence. This is a commitment shared in Alison's project. It is both inspiring and thought-provoking to learn from this study that very young children are regarded as active participants—not only in the defining of the curriculum, but also in the research methodology. What are the boundaries of the curriculum that young children experience and enact within the early childhood setting, asks the author. Exploring the perspectives of young children is not a mainstream approach in curriculum studies so the idea of children as participants in research processes deserves a careful and critical analysis. How much responsibility for participation is it possible to put on the very young child and what about the child who does not participate? The methodological considerations and strategies presented in the chapter aim to involve all children to participate and to give them opportunities to choose when to engage in the study. The various participatory strategies used are meant to give children real choices, according to the author, and she lives these assumptions throughout her study. Rather than approaching the

children, for example, Alison waited for them to approach her. She invited children to choose what kind of method they prefer to become involved in. These are all challenging thoughts: How can such young children decide when to involve in research? Is this a matter of rhetoric rather than a real lived opportunity for children? What kind of choices can a young child make and under what conditions? It is the researcher that outlines the study, raises the questions and has the power and responsibility to take the final decisions. The rhetoric of participation is strong (and of course important) in education of today. Yet there is a risk that researchers' eagerness to involve children in investigations unconsciously contributes to silencing some children, quite the opposite to ambitions of equitable and just education. This is also a concern for Alison in her research. In spite of strong ambitions to being generous, Alison points to the difficulties of finding methods suitable for the youngest children, both for those children mainly communicating by body and for those children who do not choose to engage in participatory strategies.

Apart from critical theory, inspiration from sociology of childhood provided philosophical support to the idea of children as participant agents in social relations, and to view children as participants also in the research process. Alison claims to foreground children's perspectives in order to gain insight into their curriculum experiences. To include children's perspectives also creates potential for questioning adult-centric assumptions about curriculum issues in early childhood education, says the author. This is both an interesting and demanding thought. But what are children's perspectives and in what ways does this study move towards these young children's perspectives on curriculum? In this matter reflexivity is once again critical for Alison, who illuminates how apparently child-centred discourses of early childhood education seem to cover a deeper discourse which positions children as "other" than adults, and how this positioning can restrict structures and practices. The term "children's perspectives" holds, according to Alison, two elements. The first element, *taking the perspectives of children*, relates to observing and interacting with them over a period of time and identifying how they think and feel. The second element is *children's knowledge* and involved listening to and hearing what children say; this involved participatory strategies designed to explore children's thoughts about their learning and their lives within the centre.

To me the concepts of (taking) children's perspectives and children's knowledge seems to be taken for granted; there is no extended theoretical reasoning in the chapter on the ontology behind this idea, and the kinds of understandings covered in these concepts and how to gain insights in children's perspectives. I would have liked to learn more on this kind of ontological assumptions from Alison and the dilemmas that might follow. For example, when do we as researchers know that we grasped the child's perspectives? Indeed, is it possible to reach another person's perspectives

at all? From the position of Merleau-Ponty (1962), for example, the answer would be that we are always limited in our understandings of each other and we can never fully understand another person. Yet Alison touches upon these questions when maintaining that the voice of the researcher is always included in the ethnographic research and that the research process is a product of the relationships forged between the researcher and the participants. This implies that there are no pure children's perspectives or pure children's voices to be identified by the researcher. Children's voices are, with reference to Schütz (1972), always part of a chorus of voices situated in a certain society, being part of a certain time, space, and history.

A generous approach meant being available for children, says Alison, and letting them exercise some leadership within the shared interactions. It meant trying to find ways of talking to children that they would find engaging and using open-ended methods. For this purpose Alison combined ethnographic and participatory methods, using observations and conversations with children. Multiple methods were adopted; for example, conversations with children about their centre life, taking departure in photographs, and inviting children to show and take photos of places they liked in the centre. Alison created dialogues with children around their learning portfolios and used a questionnaire to gain knowledge about the children's perspectives of their own learning. Alison describes both the possibilities and limitations she confronts when trying to grasp children's perspectives and involving even the youngest child in these participant methods throughout the study. She explains how some of the two- and three-year-old children engaged with each of the participatory methods, whereas very little data was recorded for children around one-year-old. While generosity in methods allowed for combinations of various methods, which provided a richer picture than each could have separately, reliance was heavily placed on observational data at the end of the day.

On the one hand, generosity and closeness to the young child in the context of early education is central in the research outlined here. On the other hand, there is a refreshing critical position in the chapter which, to my mind, also challenges ideas such as generosity and openness. Why is that so? Alison clarifies that education is at heart political, in the way in which knowledge is defined and the kind of epistemological and ontological assumptions on which such definitions are grounded. The interesting and provoking issue that follows is, in my understanding, to admit that ideas such as generosity and openness (or whatever ontological and epistemological assumptions and concepts we adopt) are also at heart political. The political position of research indeed calls for reflexivity and for researchers to critically look upon the own taken-for-granted assumptions and positions and how these can act to either privilege or silence voices.

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Chapter 8
Lived Experience as an Observer Among Toddlers

Gunvor Løkken

In the empirical study referred to in this chapter (Løkken, 2000a), observation was carried out mostly using a handheld video camera, during a year in the everyday context of a Norwegian *barnehage*.[1] Focusing on early morning greetings between the nine children of a toddler group in this context, the questions were:

1. In what ways is the child greeted by his or her peers when arriving in the morning?
2. What kind of meanings, intentions or themes can be inferred from those greetings?
3. What do the greetings tell us about the children's relations?

What I claim and want to discuss in this chapter is observation as *lived* on at least four analytical and time levels throughout the research project. This discussion is inspired by the philosophic writings of Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964) which are recognized, even nowadays, as important contributions to the difficult topics of how things are presented in perception and of the role of the body in perception (Baldwin, 2004). On this basis, in addition to informing our understanding of the toddler as a situated body-subject, these contributions can also serve to inform more in-depth current discourses on the role of the researcher. The present chapter begins with an opening discussion explaining and justifying my practising of Merleau-Ponty's

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[1] The official term for skilled child pedagogy and care in Norway is *Barnehage*. Toddler peer studies in different European countries have used national terms for day care provisions. The terms indicate varying national standards and cultural traditions (see Cochran, 1993). The pedagogical field in question in the study referred to here was that of a toddler group of nine one- and two-year-old children, daily cared for and educated by a pedagogical leader and two caregivers. The pedagogical responsibility of the leader was based on three years in a Norwegian university college of early childhood education.

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phenomenology of perception, followed by a discussion of the observational study itself on this theoretical ground. The chapter ends by reviewing this approach.

On the first analytical level, observation was lived as perceived, experienced and interpreted while *doing* it as part of the actual context of the study. On the second level, observation was (re)lived the same way a few hours later the same day when reflectively viewing what was recorded. On the third level, observation was (re)lived when the videotapes were analytically transcribed six months after the year of data collection. Due to the (inevitably) intertwined interpretation and the systematic analysis evolving from the half year's work of transcription, the *analytic* part of transcription process is italicized. On the fourth level, observations also were reflexively and analytically (re)lived as part of writing up the results of the study. In other words, interpretation and analysis was in motion on several levels from the very first observation to the last sentence written from the project.

The Phenomenology of Perception

Subsequent to observation as lived on the two first analytical levels, the social phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1964) was studied extensively and in great depth, to explore its possible use for understanding the toddler (Løkken, 2000b). The interpretive basis read out of this was that the toddler could be viewed as a worldly situated and socially perceptive body-subject. As such, this body-subject is simultaneously in motion towards the world, and so already at work with intentional and meaning-giving operations, even on a prereflective level (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 142). Moreover, *as* human beings on an existential level, we share a certain resemblance, an invisible bond as "semblables" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 10). Being likewise situated as a body-subject-observer, this philosophy implies "... that I, in observing toddlers, feel my way into their manners, tone and accent, before I experience explicit reflections and formulate conclusions about them" (Løkken, 2000b, p. 15). This "feeling one's way", into what is perceived and experienced by an alert body-subject-observer, truly (and literally) is at the heart of observation as *lived*.

The primacy of perception always goes together with interpretation. Through our perceptive body, we understand in an immediate way (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 141). Accordingly, and by definition, corporeally lived perception, twined with immediate interpretation, provides for a kind of knowing of which more explicit knowledge always speaks (1962, p. ix). Certainly, this also applies to observational research. Further intellection, explicit reflection and analysis of situated observation, on all levels, go hand in hand with perceptive interpretation. The main reason for this is the lived body of the researcher. With the mind rooted in a worldly situated body, the body-subject-researcher is perceptively attentive on all levels of interpretative analysis throughout the research process.

Sensory Ethnography

In what is called sensory ethnography, Pink (2009) wants us to acknowledge more of the processes through which research participants' sensory knowing has become academic knowledge. The sensory ethnography advanced in Pink's work is based on an understanding of the human senses as interconnected and interrelated. According to Merleau-Ponty, human senses are embraced by the corpus of the body-subject as a whole, in which the human mind also is rooted. As situated in the world and in motion towards other body-subjects as well as the space and the objects of the world, the philosophy of the lived body indeed can be one way to shed light on the processes through which sensory knowing becomes academic knowledge.

Looking back after ten years on how I practised and "methodized" Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of perception in my study of toddler peer culture (Løkken, 2000a), the following example can serve to introduce my experience of lived observation, and in turn be seen retrospectively as part of the "sensorial turn" (Pink, 2009, p. 7) in social science:

> Upon Sandra's (20 months) arrival in the *barnehage*, when she looks into the playroom, Tom (28 months), Kari (25 months) and Heidi (21 months) spontaneously lie down on their backs on the floor, to propel their legs with squeals and laughter. Impatiently striving towards her peers and freed from her outdoor clothes, Sandra eagerly joins the propel game. After this quartet of greeting overture, the four children crawl over to a pink-covered mattress lying on the floor, to continue to play.

How can I, in observing this as a grown-up person, understand what is going on here? Can I know how it feels to take part in the doing of a game like that? And is this important in order to understand? Must I have done exactly the same to say I know? What brought me, for example, to the conclusion that Sandra on her side by joining into the propelling, actively showed that she appreciated the intention and the meaning of the welcome-message radiating from her body-subject-peers? How could I even claim to know that the other children, on their side by welcoming Sandra in these ways, demonstrated well-established relations they wanted to cultivate further?

Certainly, my conclusions were brought forward on the levels of reflective transcription and systematic analysis that were well informed by the philosophy of the body, as well as by theory about the social significance of greeting (Løkken, 2004). But simultaneous to these analytic levels, as well as to the level of re-presenting the results by writing them, the *sight* of the children's faces, the *sounds* of their squealing and the *felt* energy of their movement continued to live all through the project as they were embodied in my first perception of them. However, the initial perception was certainly not lived first by vision, second by sound and then by feelings. It was immediately lived and understood by my whole (observer) body drawing on all of these at once.

"When I begin to reflect, my reflection bears upon an unreflective experience," says Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. x). The reflective research process is informed by the

deeper layers of knowing that are rooted in the situated body of the researcher. Although my own (toddler) body has grown up, I nevertheless experience the children I am observing as my human "semblables". As such, although I can't remember ever having propelled legs with fellow toddlers in the observed ways, I know what it feels like to do it anyway. When aiming at academic knowledge in search for ways of understanding toddler interaction, I trust my perceptive knowing and subjective interpretation.

The knowledge brought forward by systematic analysis and theoretical perspectives, of course also is in dialogue with greeting as experienced in my own life. The written acknowledgement of what is found these ways*, in the writing,* continues to interact with what my incarnated mind made me see, hear, feel and think. As the advancing levels of worldly situated research are lived through, it remains there. These recognitions correspond to the statement that "analysis is not an activity that is itself isolated from 'experience' or from the researcher's embodied knowing" (Pink, 2009, p. 120).

The caution now should be made, that the sensory perceptive basis of research should neither be overlooked, nor turned into excesses. Disciplined (I hope) by Atkinson, Coffey, and Delamont's (2003) crisp and clear critique of postmodern excesses privileging the author, sensory ethnography is not about reflexivity *above* the need for ethnographers to represent analytic findings of their research, as also underlined by Pink (2009, p. 2). Rather it is a question of learning more about what underpins and forwards the processes of explicit understanding.

Practising the Phenomenology of Perception

In discussing the elusive body and carnal sociology, Crossley (1995, p. 60) argued that, although other writers like Goffman, Foucault and Bourdieu also identified corporeal reversibility among human beings, Merleau-Ponty provided the basic conceptual tools required for incorporating the perceiving, expressive body more fully into (sociological) theory and practice. As already said above, by describing a direct, prereflective communication of body subjects *sharing* a perceptual field, Merleau-Ponty "tried, first of all, to reestablish the roots of the mind in its body and in its world ..." (1964, p. 3). He viewed the perception of other people and the intersubjective world as problematical only for adults. Children, on the contrary, were held to live in a world which they unhesitatingly believe accessible to all around them. The child "has no awareness of himself or of others as private subjectivities, nor does he suspect that all of us, himself included, are limited to one certain point of view in the world" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 355). In describing how a 15-month-old girl opens her mouth when the adult playfully takes one of her fingers to "bite" it, Merleau-Ponty asserted that such "biting" immediately has an intersubjective significance for the child (p. 352). Through the "bite" of the adult, the child perceives the adult's body with her own body. Thereby the child perceives in her own body both her own intentions and the adult's (p. 352).

Following Merleau-Ponty's ideas when being a body-subject-observer of everyday morning encounters in a toddler group, I consider myself as part of the prereflective communication going on between the body-subjects sharing a perceptual field in the context. Moreover, I follow the idea that the world I am situated in (unhesitatingly) is accessible to me. When observed ways of toddler greeting "bites" me, the observations have an immediate intersubjective significance to me. Bitten by the observed action, I perceive the toddler bodies with my own (observer) body, and thereby my own intentions, as well as the children's, towards the world we are commonly situated in. My worldly emplaced body, in which my mind also is rooted, is the social ground for further intellection, analysis and representation of lived observations (Løkken, 2000b, p. 16).

In addition to underpinning the observational study (Løkken, 2004), Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of the body also was the basis on which I traced the characteristic social "style" of toddlers as read out of previous toddler studies (Løkken, 1999, 2000c). Likewise, I analyzed in depth the playful quality of the style (Løkken, 2000d). Note that *the* style referred to here is not to be (mis)understood as the one sole way of doing things. Rather *the* style refers to the marked corporeality running through otherwise-varied repertoire of toddler action. All through the study there was a consistent interplay between my effort of interpreting meaning into and out of toddler peer greetings as observed, and my chosen theoretical approach.

According to Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. viii), all knowledge of the world, even scientific knowledge, is gained from particular points of view or from some experience in the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. As inherently social, the human being knows himself only *in* the world (1962, p. xi). In claiming that we are "condemned to meaning" in sharing a world (1962, p. xviii), the view implies that, by social nature, the researching observer as well as the toddling child are at work with the meaning and intention of situated social action. According to Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 142), the urge and ability to move already possesses a basic power of giving meaning. He also held that the meaning of gestures does not lie in the elements that compose it, but in the common intention of these elements (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 8).

Doing research in the public world of a toddler group then, involves thematic analyses of a world which is there before reflection on it begins. The resulting knowledge in turn is grounded in the world preceding this knowledge. This knowledge is perspective, as seen from the point of view of the observer, and historically emplaced, as gained in a certain place at a certain time. In my approach, I took for granted that toddlers act by virtue of meaning and intention when trying to understand other selves and the world, by being open-mindedly attentive and active towards the world they are anchored in, according to Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 144). Although not all human action is deliberate and consciously acting towards the world, the act is nevertheless performed *in* the world and experienced prereflectively and prepersonally by the human beings present. The results of my study elaborated from what was experienced, interpreted and analyzed this way.

Seen in line with the question of the study that asked what themes and intentions might be inferred in toddler ways of greeting, intentional themes of greeting were

carefully described as *at a distance*: “Hey, I actively show that I see you!”; as *close*: “By patting, hugging and smiling at you I want to make sure that you know I have seen you and that I am glad to see you”; or as *welcoming*: “I want you to come well and want to pursue our relation by playing with you, tutoring or consoling you”; these categories emerging from the observation material. As a consequence, considered in the light of Merleau-Ponty’s view, the children’s interaction in greeting each other was understood as the appearance of basically meaningful human co-existence (Løkken, 2000b). According to Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 361), the transcendental human subjectivity revealed in taking for granted that the world is accessible, is human subjectivity revealed to the child himself as well as to others, and for that reason human *intersubjectivity*. As elaborated on by Crossley (1995), human beings have an intermundane space in which we share intercorporeality or carnal intersubjectivity (p. 57). Action-based intersubjectivity constitutes the social (p. 60). Accordingly, I allowed the toddlers of my study to step forward as intercorporeal collaborators for each other in consummate reciprocity, where their perspectives merge into each other as coexisting in a common world. However, although *and* because I am transported by the beauty and optimism of this view, at this point the objection can, of course, be made that there is a biased tendency here to emphasize the harmony of toddler interaction. The idea that we, at the same time as we are unique and different through all times, also share basic resemblance, poises for a challenge to current postmodern thinking.

Merleau-Ponty After the Postmodern Turn

According to Langer (1989) a sympathetic feature of Merleau-Ponty’s thinking is that the joy of life and love for the human world seem to be its source. This of course may appear as a naive belief in humanity, not least if deconstructed according to the “masters of suspicion” like Marx, Freud and Nietzsche (Baldwin, 2004, p. 5). Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty (1964, p. 10) insists that “there is a history of humanity or, more simply, *a* humanity”. This humanity, implied in the least social exchange, makes our life essentially universal. In toddler exchange, human universality is played over and over again. Although not the whole truth of toddler life, the joy of it can be easily found there.

Merleau-Ponty goes on to state that there is a permanent harmonious thought of a plurality of beings who recognize one another as “semblables”, even when some seek to enslave others (1964, p. 10.). Bad or good, human beings basically recognize each other. Although situated in different cultures, we still share a common and harmonious “natural light” (p. 10). Situated in worldly space and time, we are different and unique, and at the same time universal. But in spite of the differences, we know each other as human beings. Similarity and difference must shake hands. If not, we look away from a basic aspect of being human.

Although Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on situated social action, perspective knowledge and the historically emplaced human being can be argued to fit well the postmodern turn in social science, his view that human uniqueness is paralleled

with a basic universal resemblance may seem problematic. Nevertheless, I find that Merleau-Pontyan phenomenology still can both inform and even act as a corrective to certain postmodern ideas. In a causerie broadcast on French radio in 1948, read by Merleau-Ponty himself without interruption, his view of the "classical and the modern" world is "poised to move beyond 'modern' thought to postmodernism—but not quite taking the step", according to Baldwin (2004, p. 28). In "modernity", as related to modern painting in these lectures, the rational universe of the classical world is replaced by a kind of knowledge and art that is characterized by difficulty and reserve (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 77). In modernity we have a kind of action that is "unsure of itself" (p. 78). Moreover, modern thought displays the dual characteristics of being unfinished and ambiguous, leaving scientific work as provisional and approximate. "In modernity, it is not only works of art that are unfinished: the world they express is like a work which lacks a conclusion" (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 79). Human existence can never abstract from itself in order to get access to the naked truth (p. 80).

What is said about modernity here, exemplified with modern painting, applies to more recent postmodern discourses. For example, Grbich (2007, p. 9) states that postmodernism views the world as complex and chaotic. Reality is multiply constructed and transitional—unable to be explained solely by grand narratives. Postmodern inquiry is marked by individual interpretation and reflexive subjectivity. Throughout his radio talk, Merleau-Ponty consistently seems to be agreeing with such statements.

But in the same causerie Merleau-Ponty (2004, p. 83) also speaks about a "truth of all time" in the anticipation that past political situations, *when in the present*, also bore the traces of conflict and contradiction, even if not spoken of. This anticipation makes past political situations comparable with the present. I read into this the inevitable paradox that human, cultural and political uniqueness is understood on basis of resemblance. I also read into this that although one observational study of toddler peer interaction on the one hand is historically situated and subjectively perspective, toddler peer studies on the other hand still can be compared on the certain levels. Although Baldwin (2004) is attracted to Merleau-Ponty's conclusion on all time truth, he cannot help thinking (in a postmodern way) that Merleau-Ponty betrays himself by it. In postmodern belief, truth of all time does not fit with situated and ambiguous knowledge. Contrary to Baldwin's objection, what I think Merleau-Ponty really does here is to make the contradictive ambiguity of human life *the* point. Truth can be truth of all time, *and* subjectively situated. I find that this dialectical position can and should serve as a corrective to what appears as postmodern dogmas.

As pointed out by Langer (1989, p. 168), other critics of Merleau-Ponty have dismissed his concepts of conditional certainty, perspectival truth and prereflective bodily knowledge as being generally unclear, if not meaningless. But, as Langer (1989) argued, Merleau-Ponty's philosophy in turn is a critique of those critics' standpoints, as life is held to comprise much more than positively given objects. In opposition to the Platonic view of the perceptible as inferior to detached reflective ideas, Merleau-Ponty insisted on a return to the more material world of perception,

notably by viewing the world of the human body and the world of separated ideas as attached and united in *one* world.

Discourse as a Fleshy Process

According to Crossley (1995, p. 47) Merleau-Ponty offered a synthesis of the controversy over discursive and fleshy positions in the sociology of the body, by recognizing the duality of being both subject and objectified, and in seeing discourse itself as a fleshy process. The caution may still be called for in that the fleshy speaking of the body may leave behind an objectified taste of impersonality. The use of the term *body-subject* can serve to counteract such impersonalization, as the term is surrounded by the human light in which the notion of the incarnate *cogito* belongs. For example, as toddlers become objects of systematic observation, the expressed humanity is of special significance with regard to emphasizing the subjective character of the toddler and the intersubjective character of toddler coexistence.

Although Merleau-Ponty's reputation declined quickly after his death in 1961, as French philosophers turned to Heidegger and the above-mentioned German "masters of suspicion" like Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, Baldwin (2004, p. 5) points out that more recently, within the analytic tradition, there has been a growth of interest in Merleau-Ponty's writings. Especially recognized are his discussions of intentionality and the ways in which things are presented in perception, and of the role of the body in perception. I find that my research work on toddler peer culture links into this recent recognition in several ways. Based on the primacy of *lived* perception, I viewed stylish toddler action as intentional motion, by which the children realize themselves as human beings situated in the concrete world. On this ground, the main frame or "tool" for analysis was the toddling body-subject, who by virtue of toddling was viewed per se as transcending his or her subjectivity in expressive motion towards and in the world. The transcendent subjectivity in this view is also intersubjectivity, in which toddler-body-subject "radiates" to the world, and responds to other toddler-bodies' "call"—and vice versa (Løkken, 2000b, p. 22).

The application of these ideas does not seem out of date in postmodern times. On the contrary, the revival of Merleau-Ponty's works may serve to update the notion of the human consciousness materialized as a *body*-subject who at the same time transcends towards persons and things in the world. I also welcome this notion of materialized subjectivity as a counter-argument to poststructural positions that decentre the subject into a text that is entirely constructed by language. According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009), such attribution of omnipotent meaning to human language and discourse decays into a sort of language and text reductionism. These authors find it quite absurd that texts produced within this paradigm should not refer to an external reality (p. 440). It seems timely even as a researcher to return to the social world as inhabited by human bodies and materialized objects, which according to Taguchi (2010) are intra-active within an encompassing whole. However, this perspective is beyond the scope of the following return to my study as actually done.

Doing a Toddler Peer Study

The author van Manen (1997, p. xii) reminds us that the theme of uniqueness gives no guarantee that our subjectively felt experiences are identical to those of other people. At the same time, and although the quality of inner experience also may be beyond our linguistic reach, van Manen recommends that it is worthwhile to try to emulate prereflective life by means of life-world-sensitive text (p. xiii). That was what I tried to do in entering and experiencing the public world of a day care toddler group, trying to grasp and put words to my interpretation of some aspects of the children's prereflectively lived social life there.

The theme of language in a phenomenological study pays attention to the fact that experience is always more immediate, more enigmatic, more complex, more ambiguous than any description can do justice to (van Manen, 1997, p. xvii). On the other hand, it is recommended that one has faith in the power of language to make intelligible and understandable what always seems to be embraced by language (p. xiii). This also should be valid with regard to putting words to the preverbal social life of toddlers. In such a study, we raise questions, do observations, describe phenomena and construct textual interpretations. With reference to Merleau-Ponty, Bengtsson (1998, p. 48) stressed that anothers' action is understood through an enduring interaction of the researcher's previous stock of knowledge and of the *lived through* experiences of action in the world observed (p. 55). Based on Merleau-Ponty, toddler action in my study was seen as the construction of intersubjective meaning, resulting in a generative theorizing on the characteristic "style" marked with corporeality, through which such meaning is constructed (Løkken, 2000c, 2000d). On the same basis, my theorizing of the toddling style was also traced through the interpretive analysis of previously textualized toddler peer interaction (Løkken, 1999, 2000c), as well as through discursive and reflexive readings of more general literature, for example on the phenomenon of greeting (Løkken, 2000a, 2004). The embodied contextualism in line with Merleau-Ponty's view should be emphasized, though. As introduced above, the questions asked in the study were in what ways the child is greeted by his or her peers when arriving in the morning, what kind of the meanings, intentions or themes can be inferred from those greetings and what the greetings tell us about the children's relations.

By asking these questions I turned to a phenomenon that seriously interested me. My experience was investigated as *lived* by entering a public context where the phenomenon was in action. Here I lived close to the children's activities from time to time during one year. I reflected upon the characteristics of the phenomenon as found in the corporeal motion and playful ways of toddler action. Through the art of writing I brought possible meanings and constitutions of toddlers' preverbal experience into speech. I stuck to the exploration of the toddling style, as I read it out of previous studies and through my own original study of toddler greetings. Considering the research context by parts and whole, I neither pulverized action into minute-abstracted fragments nor sought ethnographic complexity. The study was something in between.

The Process of Observation

Having experienced mirthful greetings among the children of several toddler groups, and based on a theoretical understanding of the social significance of greeting in human life, greeting was chosen as the phenomenon to be systematically explored in order to attain new knowledge about the intersubjective relations of toddlers. As the children were too young to put words to their actions, observing and experiencing the children within their everyday world was necessary. Adler and Adler (1994, p. 378) held that traditional observation has been a stepchild to the more widely recognized participant observation, which means gathering data while interacting with the subjects. However, Corsaro (1982, p. 155) in his classic study of friendships and peer culture recommended a more reactive strategy of observation to avoid too much adult involvement. Knowing that the more fragile toddler peer relations are even more vulnerable with regard to possible distraction by adult intervention, a passive observer role seemed even more appropriate for the purpose of my study. Thus I ended up as a (mostly) mute person observing greetings behind a hand-held video camera*, while being the only person in the room who did not greet*. This fact gave rise to some interesting experiences of the arriving children's reactions, as well as of my own well-being (see below). Videotaping may include both a distance between the observer and those observed and trigger affected actions by the persons observed (Løkken & Søbstad, 2006). However, as noted in several studies, children often seem to lose interest in its presence when they get used to the camera and when absorbed in play and interaction (Løkken & Søbstad, 2006). Keeping the cautions in mind, and knowing that observational research may vary throughout the project, the doing of videotapes was as follows:

During the initial 3 days that I used to get acquainted with the actual *barnehage*, I was present in the morning without a camera, saying hello to the children and their parents, talking to the staff, considering arenas for recording, and taking notes. I expected the arriving child to be most frequently greeted inside the cloakroom and the playroom, sometimes in the outer corridor and a few times outdoors. In preparing to shoot the action where it was, I found that a mobile hand-held camera would be adequate.

The doorway between the outer corridor and the cloakroom was chosen as the main viewpoint for spotting new arrivals. A combination of sitting on the floor in the corridor or on the bench in the cloakroom, as well as squatting in the playroom doorway or sitting on the sofa inside the playroom, emerged as adequate viewpoints for videotaping. While writing retrospectively with reference to sensory ethnography, I vividly recall the coldness of the floor, the wooden "taste" of the bench, the woollen pleasantness of the sofa and not to mention the awkwardness accompanying enduring squatting. After several years of practice in toddler groups, squatting and sitting down on the floor to be on equal level with the children was part of my embodied stock of experienced knowledge. Furthermore, in knowing that toddlers are bodies of motion, a camera held by an observer-body capable of similar motion provided for the possibility of taping greeting sessions when performed from

room to room. Consequently, sensory ethnography of such life-worlds indeed offers the observer a busy time.

The one-week periods of observation were scheduled for the beginning of September, the end of October, the middle of December, the first week after Christmas, the end of February, the middle of April and the end of May. In September meetings with staff and parents, the staff wanted to know if they disturbed the recording. In considering it the observer's job to adjust to potential disturbance, I responded that I wanted them to feel free to do their jobs. In the information meeting with parents, some of the parents reported that they found the recording a bit awkward the first time, but that they got quickly used to it later. They did not consider that their children were affected much by the presence of the person behind the camera, except for the first time. However, the most interesting reactions of the children being recorded are further discussed below.

The focus of recording was selective, in turning the camera on when other children were present around the arriving child. Fortunately, most children arrived individually, to be taped one by one. When several children arrived simultaneously, they were usually undressed by their parents in the cloakroom, which was a small, narrow room allowing for a taping overview of the situation. Twenty-seven days of selective observation resulted in over 14 hours of videotapes, including 185 arrivals and 41 episodes of play in between arrivals. The afternoons within each period (usually one week) were spent watching tapes, and reflecting on the field notes in order to make new ones. After only two days of taping the planned week in May, I felt I had reached saturation point regarding the amount of information that I could acquire.

The Process of Analysis

The process of analysis followed eight chronological steps:

1. *Spontaneous analysis* while gathering data during the year, *living* the experiences through the eye of the video while recording, and (re)living the experiences when watching the recordings later the same day. In parallel, field notes taken each day were reviewed for associations, reflections and contextual information.
2. *Transcription analysis* (5 months of work in an English-speaking context) while *living* the process of transcribing in discourse with the emergent themes of the material.
3. *Summarizing reflections* retrospectively once transcription of the 543 pages of written text was completed.
4. *Revisiting ontological, epistemological and methodological readings* (a half year's study) in philosophy, theory of science, theory of communication, theories of greetings and of childhood. Revisiting and conducting new searches on toddler peer studies.
5. Fifteen months of *writing* four of the articles drawing on both literature and transcripts.
6. *Final analysis* (some would say main analysis) of the entire body of transcripts.

This analysis was done three years after video recording was completed. In this analysis, transcriptions were interrogated according to the three themes of *arrivals* (inattentive and attentive), of *greetings* (distant and close) and of *welcomes* (playful, tutoring and consoling). These were themes that emerged during transcription and noted for the first time after having transcribed about 75% of the entire material. The identified arrivals, greetings and welcomes were written out as short stories, under the respective headings.

Simultaneously, references to method were marked and further commented on in a separate document on methodical reflection. The notes on method included documented attention to the video camera, the observer role, the process of transcribing, the method design and practical and technical aspects influencing the recording. A separate document on the children's relations included their references to peers who were not present, children's corporeal self-presentation, upcoming peer relations, sympathy and conversational themes among the children and general comments on relations (see Løkken, 2000a).

As some greetings were complex, containing several strategies of distant and close greetings as well as of welcomes, I paid some attention to how to code these. I found *welcomes* to represent the most complex category of greeting among toddler peers, including a noteworthy variety of several greeting strategies in combination, performed in fascinating childlike ways, marked with intentionality.

The thematic analysis on arrivals, greetings and welcomes, paralleled with notes on method and relations, was conducted on the transcripts from the first five days of recording, leading to the conclusion that this way of analyzing appeared to be adequate for application to the entire material. Although I considered the PC-version of the NUDIST[2]-program for categorizing qualitative data, at the time I preferred more home-made strategies, giving a (mostly) reassuring experience of being personally or body-subjectively in charge of the material. Or, in some respects, more sensory ethnographical.

7. *Revisiting literature*. Before progressing from analysis of the first five days of recording to analyzing the whole material, I revisited the general literature on greetings and my article on using Merleau-Pontyan phenomenology to understand the toddler. In these ways the process of analysis on all levels was lived as more or less intertwined with theory.
8. *Writing an article draft for representation of results*. Having completed the final analysis, I wrote a draft of the article presenting what I had found on toddler ways of greeting, which included the intricate job of selecting short stories for presenting the results. The stringent format of the journal article presented a great challenge to working with the extensive material of 185 arrivals and 41 episodes of play. Therefore, in addition to the article (as published by Løkken, 2004), a section of the thesis was devoted to a discussion of the children's relations.

[2] Short for Non-numerical-Unstructured-Data-Indexing-Searching-Theorizing.

These eight steps of analysis, when seen in retrospect with reference to subsequent sensory ethnography as outlined by Pink (2009), certainly confirm Pink's statement (p. 120) of the misconception that after the fieldwork, the remaining task of the ethnographer is simply to analyze the *content* of the materials. I think my eight-step analysis can serve to exemplify the benefit of taking a broader and more flexible approach to how, where and when analysis occurs and what it involves. Analysis is implicit to the research process all the way. However, as also asserted by Pink, these uses do not preclude the rather more systematic analysis of the themes and content of research material, as shown above in step 6 in my process of analysis. At the same time, my Merleau-Pontyan-inspired *resonance of bodies* between viewer and those viewed in films as pointed out by Pink (2009, p. 122) remains.

Reviewing the Method

The selection of what to tape was not experienced as a big problem. In focusing on what happened around the arriving child, most arrivals were taped systematically and rarely missed. As social human beings, the children of course were attentive to the camera and the person behind it. Although there were a few episodes in which the children appeared to be a bit bothered or embarrassed, most of the episodes revealed the children's active interest in the camera-person, in trying to get in contact with me by greeting at a distance, by walking up to the camera, or by commenting on the camera-woman to parents or staff. These actions certainly highlighted the paradox mentioned above, that the only non-greeting person in the room was the one who actually studied greetings. The fact that the children (as well as the staff and the parents) had to adjust to seven periods of observation throughout the year is not considered to limit the results according to the questions asked. On the contrary, keeping in mind that the children in play with peers usually paid minor attention to me and the camera, I also offer several examples in the following section to illustrate the children's social responsiveness to a stranger as well as their efforts of including a stranger into the social context.

Attention to the Camera Lady

During my first days of presence, Randi (20 months), sitting by the breakfast table, turned around to greet me "Heia!", while Mary (30 months), sitting in the sofa, wondered "Du dame, vil de' komme hit?" (You lady you, would you like to come here?). As I was sitting in the cloakroom Harald (29 months) said, "hi" while jogging past me on his way to the breakfast table, while Mary, looking at me from the breakfast table, blew a kiss in the air blinking her eyes, saying "Dunol!" (probably meant to be my first name), while also pointing at me. On the first day of recording, Mary also commented, "do you see that lady over there" (pointing at the camera lady) to Lisa (21 months), who was present, and to Heidi (22 months), who

was arriving. However, the tapes show most children smiling into the camera upon arriving or just looking into it. Olav (10 months), for example, who was the most solemn explorer of me and the camera to begin with, smiled into the camera by the next period of observation.

As Anna (30 months) arrived on the second day of recording, she smiled brightly into the camera, before lifting her shoulders and then her arms, as though communicating uncertainty and confusion caused most likely by the fact that I did not respond to her smile. Similarly, Kari (26 months) appeared a bit puzzled too, looking at the camera and biting her finger while walking down the corridor. So did Willy (13 months) when putting one hand to his cheek, sighing and smiling faintly into the camera. Furthermore, Kari' s (28 months) apparent embarrassment after having participated in a "crowded" greeting of Kevin (with several children involved, see Løkken, 2004), was understood that way from her glimpse into the camera and then looking down, taking one step back, with her hand to her mouth.

Having been absent for a quite a while, Lisa (24 months) showed her shyness upon arriving by hiding away from the camera behind her mother's legs. Likewise, Kari (29 months) even put words to her uneasiness as perceived by saying, "I hide myself behind mama", when entering the *barnehage* after Christmas. Similarly, Heidi (22 months) also looked a bit shy, as she held tightly onto the bags carried by her mother upon entering the cloakroom, smiling faintly into the camera.

Recorded in January, Ethan (17 months) looked a bit disappointed after having spontaneously greeted me "hey" as he entered the room, getting no answer in return. He then pointed at the camera, saying "lys" (light), looking at his mother. Jane (22 months) also seemed to wonder as she walked closely up to the camera, seriously watching into it after having greeted the camera with a big smile upon entering the room. Nevertheless, she smiled again and waved into the camera as she left the cloakroom. Randi (22 months) probably put the right word to how the children often felt about the camera lady, smiling into the camera while being undressed by her father, saying "rar" (funny) repeatedly, until her father chuckled into the camera too, confirming "yes, funny". Watching the tape, I hear myself chuckling spontaneously too.

The fact that parents and staff responded to the children's attentive action towards me and the camera, compensated for my often strongly felt uneasiness in not responding to children sincerely greeting me, as when Kevin (16 months) in December toddled down the corridor toward the camera, stopped by me and leaned forward, saying "hey hey" in a playful low pitch with his face close to the camera. His father, instead of me, answered "hey hey" in the same low pitch. Getting undressed in the cloakroom, Kevin then also said "Doonay" while cocking his head. "Yes, that was Gunvor," his father answered. On his way further into the playroom, Kevin tried once more to greet the camera. Similarly, my experience of Olav's (16 months) flirting with the camera (or actually me) deliberately blinking several times, indeed was relieved by one of the staff saying, "Are you saying hello to Gunvor?", followed by his father's comment: "Then you are in the movie."

To me, my sensed uneasiness experienced by not greeting the children also emphasized the social significance of greeting as a phenomenon among human

beings, and the power of rejection involved for example when your neighbour decides not to greet you. Now writing in retrospect, really (although virtually) *being* there again without having to consult the tapes, I find myself intrigued by how I managed to stick to the consistent practice of what I thought was being non-responsive while recording. Perhaps for my own defence and comfort, I nevertheless think that this stance was the main reason why the children at most found the camera of little interest. However, the examples of attention to the camera lady lined up here require further ethical and in-depth discussion, which is beyond the scope of this chapter.

"Living" the Observations

As mentioned above, although I thought I was performing a non-responsive observer role behind the video camera, some episodes also revealed that I probably greeted the children in more unconscious ways. While watching the tape of Heidi's arrival in September, I notice that Mary (30 months) looks into the camera with a distinctly frowning, grimacing smile, making me wonder what this grimace meant. As Lisa (23 months) made the same face a couple of months later, I finally realized that this might be a reflection of my own (unconscious) frowning and/or smiling when behind the camera. Living the illusion that my body was "hidden" behind the camera, the frowning smile was my natural response to the children's presence, and as such an unconscious compensation for not saying hello to the children while recording. What a relief to see that I was *not* the only non-greeting person after all. During transcription I also observed my own laughing behind the camera several times. These findings told me that, as situated in and moving towards the world, we do communicate in prereflective ways, indeed. It turned out to be a lived communication between the children and me as body-subjects, not between the children and the camera.

On the fourth day of recording in September, one of the staff commented that the children sometimes appeared to be "especially performing" when I recorded. In one of those special performances of several children touring the corridor, Sandra said, "miler til meg" (smiles at me), as she ran by. There and then I became aware of my own big grin below the camera. Caught by Sandra in this act I felt that the two-year-old girl had just revealed the main topic of my study.

After several turns of the playfully welcoming "*vaah!*" upon Kari's (26 months) arrival, Harald (29 months) smiled into the camera, as if reassuring himself that I (or the camera) had seen him. Sandra (21 months) acted similarly, like saying, "did you see me?" after having greeted Olav (10 months) by offering him a toy, and also after having walked four circles around Willy (13 months) when greeting him. Moreover, the staff made a comment, as the children were touring the corridor with all their winter clothes on: "Dette like' a'Gunvor, skjø" (This is what Gunvor likes, you know).

At the initial meeting with the children's parents in September, one mother commented that she thought she had experienced more joyful greeting among

the children in the entrance corridor, than in the cloakroom. In fact, that mother recognized the corridor as an arena especially fit for the purpose of my study. Even Lisa (30 months) seemed to know well what I was looking for at the end of the year, as when told at the breakfast table to eat her food instead of shaking heads with Willy, she looked into the camera with the tip of her tongue in one corner of her mouth, as though communicating: “This was for you”. (Thank you, Lisa.)

Nevertheless, with other children present, the focus of the arriving children’s attention usually shifted from looking into the camera to their peers’ actions. Even when I was mobile, shifting with the children as they moved around in play, they did not seem particularly disturbed by my persecution. Although a “no”-game between the children in the bathroom could have been interpreted as directed to the camera, conveying the message “we do not want any camera lady here”, I went on recording, since the children did not perpetuate what appeared as a rejection the first time. However, I deliberately switched off the camera on four occasions. Once in response to Heidi (28 months), who covered her eyes with her winter cap, saying, “vil ikke se meg” (won’t see me). She got no response from children and staff when looking into the playroom and seemed disturbed by my presence afterwards. As there were no other children present, I left Heidi and her father alone. I turned off the camera *once* as Jane (22 months) did not give in when trying to make me join the play I was taping. Furthermore, two exceptions were made from the non-greeting strategy while recording: When Heidi (24 months) and Olav (12 months) arrived on their respective birthdays with no staff or children to greet them, I put down the camera to comment on their birthdays. That is, the pedagogue in me took over.

After the video sessions were completed in May, I met with the parents and the staff to show some of the tapes. When Sandra’s mother told Sandra that she was going to the *barnehage* that night to watch Gunvor’s pictures, she asked if Sandra remembered who Gunvor was. “Ja, det er dama i gangen, det” (Oh sure, that’s the lady in the corridor), Sandra (30 months) answered promptly. Although I had been present mostly in the cloakroom and the playroom, several highlights of the material regarding the typical social style of toddlers no doubt were taped in the outer corridor. Sandra’s answer, situating me right there, also can indicate that the action performed was experienced as highlights by the children. The children rarely had the opportunity of touring the corridor on their own.

Accordingly, the very beginning of the later recurring “mattress reunion” of the children, meaning spontaneously gathering on the mattress to playfully celebrate their reconciliation after some days off, was observed during my first visit in August. By that time, the children were told by the staff *not* to crawl under the mattress-cover, to prevent potential damage. However, as the staff experienced my interest in taping the mattress play, they let the children have their own ways. To show my gratitude for having had the pleasure of experiencing the “stylish” community as constructed by the children playing upon as well as under the pink cover of the mattress, I gave them two new covers as my good bye-present when leaving the group in May. The staff’s good laugh when unwrapping it told me that they had taken the meaning of my unspoken message.

Representing and Writing

Although there are alternative ways of doing and re-presenting sensory ethnography, Pink (2009, p. 132) nevertheless holds scholarly writing as central and crucial to ethnographic description and theoretical debating. Yet she finds conventional scholarly practice limited in its capacity to communicate the directness of the sensory and affective elements of emplaced experience. Therefore, alternative routes of representation can be found, for example, in arts practice. Pondering how to represent the findings of my toddler study for different contexts, I have considered for example introducing music into the videotapes, to bring forward alternative understandings of the performed action. I also have wondered what kind of music a composer would come up with if asked to write music for such video presentation. However, for several reasons, my choice of representation so far has been the traditional writing of articles, monographs and textbooks. Even as I write this chapter to contribute to the present book about the *voices* of infants and toddlers in educational research with our youngest, I have tried to represent some of the embodied voices of "my" children, as they have been *lived* by myself as a body-subjective researcher through the processes of observation, analysis *and* writing. In this writing I have tried to connect sensory experience and theoretical discussion, as pleaded for by Pink (2009).

Initially I transformed all actions, vocalizations and verbal statements of the entire 14 hours of video material into concurrently written text. The experience of such transcribing left me with a feeling of being embodied in the material. This was noted spontaneously even during the early transcription of the first day of recording. This way of *living* the tapes also promoted the perception of a mute or secret alliance that can be interpreted as expressing the merging of the children's subjectivities. Furthermore, the experience of living the tapes also confirmed the need for little haste while doing the job. I concluded that the art of transcribing was about taking it easy when writing out the complexity of the visual as well as auditory information.

Because the transcripts were made in a second language, considerable attention was paid to the double interpretation implied in translating audio-visually captured information into written text, and at the same time translating this text into a second language. The English dictionary was used diligently to translate adequate descriptions of the children's characteristic ways of moving and vocalizing. For example, to pursue the latter exhaustively, to shout or *rope* in Norwegian might be transcribed as screaming, squealing and shrieking, as well as chirping, twittering and squeaking, or chattering, clucking and chuckling. When semantically clear, the verbal statements made in Norwegian were translated directly into English, also by means of a corresponding syntax with regard to English "baby talk". The Norwegian utterance "Det æ da plass til deg og", directly translated as "(Th)dere's (r)woom fo you too", follows this strategy. Sometimes it felt natural and advisable to write the Norwegian utterance followed by an English translation in brackets. Vocalizations were written as acoustically close as possible. Given the special concern with linguistics, the varying practices may be criticized as inconsistent. However, the transcriptions were worked out during a 6-month stay in an English-speaking

context, complemented by regular dialogues with an English-speaking colleague about the video tapes as well as the transcriptions. Thus, the native tongue was taken into consideration. At the same time, my American colleague had no problem with understanding what was going on in the videotape, although she could not understand the children's utterances in Norwegian. It was a nice experience indeed to reach common agreement on meaning in spite of our different mother tongues. This example confirms Merleau-Ponty's belief that on certain levels we *know* each other as human beings.

After having transcribed about one half of the material, a note connected to transcribing the recordings of December 13 showed that possible codes and categories were emerging. Episodes of dancing (individual and/or mutual dancing and dancing games) were differentiated from episodes of play (imitation, pretend, tumbling). Accordingly, welcomes were noted as pretending, tumbling and dancing interaction. Singing, painting, drawing and eating were also identified as community or table society activities, emerging now in the writing as material relevant for taking the study a step further if revisited for doing sensory ethnography.

Is the Resulting Toddler Story "True"?

In doing the toddler peer study referred to, van Manen's (1997) writing about the research of lived experience served to prolong the discussion of how to practise and "methodize" the phenomenological view of Merleau-Ponty (Løkken, 2000a). In discussing how to pursue hermeneutic phenomenological writing, van Manen (1997, p. 112) asserted that even in the most profound and eloquent poem, the deep truth of it lies just beyond the words, on the other side of language. Although toddler actions speak for themselves, they must be put into words by another person. Accordingly, the deep truth of being toddlers in the public *barnehage*, as well as of the words put together to describe parts of their public life there, can be argued to lie beyond the communicative acts. Silent truth can be literal with regard to things that are not said, epistemological in facing the unspeakable, and ontological concerning the silence of *Being* itself (van Manen, 1997, p. 114). When all is said and done as well as possible, what remains beyond one person's linguistic competence can be put into words by another person. Thus, the critical reader of the text becomes the hermeneutic phenomenological evaluator of the trustworthiness of the story. According to van Manen (1997, p. 115), the common rhetorical device in phenomenological writing is the anecdote or story; story meaning something depicted in a narrative form. With reference to Merleau-Ponty among others, van Manen (1997) made the point that anecdotes, in the sense they occur in phenomenological writing, are not to be understood as mere illustrations to make a difficult or boring text more easily digestible. Anecdotes can be understood as making something comprehensible that easily eludes us. Anecdotal writing is about showing something. To a large extent, the persuasiveness of the text will depend on whether or not the strategy of *vraisemblance* succeeds, meaning to what extent the reader is drawn into what is written.

My observations, as *lived* (1) on the level of perception while recording, (2) on the level of reflectively viewing what was recorded, (3) on the level of analytical transcription and (4) on the level of writing up the results of the study have documented that one- and two-year-olds are already habitual *conventional* greeters in congruence with the general knowledge of cultural as well as ethological studies of greetings. The observations also documented that toddlers to a considerable extent are *original* greeters, acting in specific childlike ways that are congruent with peer interaction and routines found in several studies within the field of toddler peer research (see Løkken, 1999, 2000c).

Reflexivity at the epistemological as well as the methodological level has long been held to be a central component in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Smith, 1996). Throughout the study of toddler greetings I aimed at being reflexive with regard to the observed participants as well as to my own presence in the project as an observer, as an analyst and as a communicating writer. Having *lived* my observational study retrospectively once more through the present writing, a fifth level of lived observation and analysis has been added to the four levels introduced at the outset of the chapter. On this fifth level, Merleau-Pontyan ideas have been rethought in relation to the postmodern turn. The observational study has also been re-*lived* in the light of recent sensory ethnography, to enlighten the emplaced embodiment of the *researcher's* voice as well as the voices of infants and toddlers.

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Commentary to Gunvor Løkken: Lived Experience as an Observer Among Toddlers

Alison Stephenson

The chapter provided a simulating account of Gunvor Løkken's research journey that began with the videotaping of toddlers' greetings more than a decade ago. The account engaged me in multiple ways, but in particular my comments concern the use of Merleau-Ponty's writings, the role Gunvor took as observer, and the processes of analysis and interpretation.

This chapter makes it clear just how influential Merleau-Ponty's social phenomenology has been on Gunvor's thinking. As I was not familiar with his work, I appreciated the succinct explanation of a number of his concepts. Because she has found Merleau-Ponty's ideas a very fruitful theoretical framework for her thinking and research with young children, it would be interesting to know what it was that first drew her to this particular theoretical approach, how it altered the way in which she "saw" these young children and (given that she only studied his work extensively after data-gathering was complete) how his ideas retrospectively influenced her thoughts about her methodology. Recognizing how a chosen theoretical approach "frames" one's thinking suggests a fundamental question we should all be asking at the start of research projects: "How will using this (or that) theoretical approach contribute to future benefits for young children?"

I found Gunvor's use of Merleau-Ponty's notion of the inseparability of mind and body and of the "body-subject" illuminating in reflecting on my own work. The understanding of a "toddler . . . as a worldly situated and socially perceptive body-subject . . . in motion towards the world and so already at work with intentional and meaning-giving operations" resonated with my own commitment to seeing even very young children as competent social agents and meaning makers. For this reason I try to avoid the word "toddler" because of its slightly pejorative and patronizing slant, and prefer "very young child" (although "very young person" might be even truer to my intent). Or am I the only one troubled by those connotations?

Løkken drew on notions from Merleau-Ponty in positioning herself as a "body-subject-observer". I was attracted in particular to her description of her *body*-subject response to the children, the role of her body in perceiving. For example, in the description of the multiple aspects of her response to Sandra joining in the propelling game, she describes perceiving "the toddler bodies with my own (observer) body, and thereby my own intentions, as well as the children's, towards the world we are commonly situated in". I found this discussion particularly interesting, because I have often struggled to find words to explain my sense at times of "knowing" with every fibre in my body what a child is experiencing. A small example: I recall observing a

very young girl at the lunch table who watched an older boy hold out his cup to an adult, ask for a drink, and have his filled cup returned. Moments later she held out her own cup, only to have an adult interpret her gesture as a sign she had finished and take the cup from her. On what grounds could I argue that I "knew" her gesture had been misinterpreted? Gunvor's words seemed to describe my experience—my time in the setting had allowed me to "feel my way into their manners, tone and accent", I experienced those children as my human "semblables" and her gesture was "immediately lived and understood by my whole (observer) body". And yet, how can I ever be sure that I have the "true" interpretation? My interpretation is framed by my own particular personal and cultural lenses and dependent on my "previous stock of knowledge and of the *lived through* experiences of action in the world observed" (using the words Gunvor quotes from Bengtsson, 1998, p. 48). This difficulty is exacerbated for all of us who choose to work with children who cannot yet articulate their thoughts. I see this as an insoluble tension that (at least for me) lies at the heart of research with the very youngest children. And here I want to question the assumptions implied in Gunvor's statement, "As the children were too young to put words to their actions, observation and experiencing the children within their everyday world was necessary". As the vignettes make clear, those young children were not without words. I agree that observing may appear the obvious way to gain an understanding of very young children's lives—but should we be content with that? Should we not all be struggling to find other ways in which we can more directly hear these children's thoughts?

A final comment on Løkken's role as a non-greeting observer; there is an underlying sense of discomfort threaded through the discussion of this role. She refers to it as a "paradox", describes her "often strongly felt uneasiness" and her "relief" in discovering she was unconsciously greeting children. I would love to have these issues teased out further, and to hear her current reflections on the role she adopted, and how that might have influenced their greeting behaviours. I am therefore looking forward to Gunvor's "further ethical and in-depth discussion".

While I want to comment on the successive layers of analysis, I must sidestep to say I was pleasantly startled by the unexpected statement that "the art of transcribing was about taking it easy". What a refreshing approach to a task that is usually described as laborious and tedious! The vignettes of the children as they explored how they might catch her attention were the most immediately engaging aspect of the chapter for me—and suggested how effectively Løkken had captured the detail, even in English translation!

I appreciated the discussion of the processes of observation as "lived" and "(re)lived" through a series of analytic levels. I empathized with the recognition that the initial sensory perception of the toddlers—the sights, the sounds, their activity—"continue to live all through the project as it was

embodied in [the] first impression of them" as I vividly recall moments from my own observations. But I have two comments. My first comment (perhaps more of an aside) is that I have become wary of such memories. Sometimes when I revisit my transcribed data I discover that in my remembered version small details have been forgotten or subtly altered. This has made me aware that the mind (or mine at least) continues to mould the memory and is a not entirely trustworthy repository. The second comment relates to the described intertwining of interpretation and analysis throughout the research process, "from the very first observation to the last sentence written from the project". Because the chapter describes revisiting the data multiple times, it would be interesting to know how the interpretations changed through those processes of "(re)living" the observation—but I will have to go to this author's other published work to answer that question, I suspect. And for me, that is one of the joys of a book like this. In bringing together an international smorgasbord of research, it provides an opportunity to sample how others are using unfamiliar methodologies and theoretical frameworks, and is an enticement to further follow-up reading.

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Chapter 9
Summary: Lessons Learnt and Future Provocations

E. Jayne White

This book has showcased a wide range of research projects, and their philosophical considerations and methodological foundations. The potential of each to contribute to a greater understanding of infant and toddler voice has been foregrounded throughout. Along the way, each author has offered significant provocation regarding the nature of voice, its location and associated ability to contribute to such understanding through research. As such, the authors have signalled that a "listening" approach to voice is insufficient in research with very young children because it privileges verbal forms of communication as the primary means of understanding experience and seldom takes into account the elusive nature of hermeneutic endeavour. Throughout this book and in varying ways they have extended the notion of "voice" to embrace wider subjectivities and ways of knowing, being and becoming through the strategic employment of a range of philosophical lenses. In doing so, the authors respond to Lewis's (2010) call for more explicit and transparent research regarding voice, and for greater attention to the reflexive encounter of researchers in this regard. We therefore conclude this book with an expanded view of "voice"—as plural, corporeal, dialogic, visual and aural; and as an intersubjective research quest with our youngest that is in constant flux. In doing so, we concur with Gratier and Trevarthen's (2007) expansion of voice as "a creative living organism" (p. 170) that exists in communication with others, aptly described by Booth (in Bakhtin, 1984) as "a function of where it is and what it can 'see', its orientation is measured by the field of responses it invokes" (p. xxxvi).

As we have seen, paying attention to "voice" is a growing trend in early childhood educational research and pedagogy, based on an identified need to involve children in the decisions that are made about them and their lives (Loveridge, 2010). Such a stance conveys a shifting image of the child during the last few years—from an object for adult intervention to one who is capable of engaging with others and contributing in their own right. In this sense Gratier and Trevarthen (2007) refer to voice plurally—as wide-ranging forms, patterns and rhythms of communication

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that contribute to meaning-making in social interplay. Despite this expanded view, the voices of children aged birth to three years continue to receive much less research attention than their older peers. Their contemporary stance within simultaneous discourses of vulnerability and capability—a point made by several of the authors in this volume—typically locates under-three-year-old children somewhere between interpretations that are invisible, unknown, indecipherable, ventriloquised, developing or, conversely known and therefore consummated. Any combination of these locations mean that investigations of infants and toddlers are frequently lodged in developmental domains that limit their potential to be seen and heard as competent and capable or, at the other extreme, get placed in the "too hard basket" of educational research and are altogether absent. While it is not our intention to create a standpoint of one or the other we recognise that it is risky to oversize the child's competence or undersize their vulnerability (or vice versa) in research activity since they are both present at the same time.

Complexity of this nature can be attributed to the unique challenges research with this age group offers, and the specialised nature of inquiry that researchers must therefore adopt. Yet never before has there been such a need to understand infant and toddler perspective—since increasing numbers of infants and toddlers across the world are experiencing formal early childhood education and care services outside of the home as a result of policy and social trend (see, for example, Dalli et al. 2011; Greve & Solheim, 2010; Musatti & Picchio, 2010). In these contexts there are educational, social and, as Eva Johansson reminds us, moral imperatives to understand more about this phenomenon. In this respect, the researchers who have contributed to this book are leaders in their field—seeking to develop ways of facilitating infant and toddler voice and bringing this to bear on complex issues with few precedents to guide them. As such, they begin to address a current lag in the field between policy, practice and research; and the associated marginalisation of infants and toddlers in research internationally.

At no point throughout this volume is there a suggestion that research attempting to encounter infant and toddler voice(s) is an unproblematic or straightforward process. Indeed, the reflexive nature of the methodological discussions in this book reveals many complex issues, responses and dilemma each of the authors faced in their research and offer for the reader's consideration. Their encounters with "voice" reveal the tentative, sometimes even trepidatious, nature of research activity that seeks to explore the perspective of other. In this we are reminded that the "horizon" of another is an expression of lived experience—emotional, physical and cognitive engagement—and is, of necessity, ambiguous. When language may not be shared, modes of communication differ and physical experiences in the world take a very different view, the researcher faces additional challenges. The authors in this volume share their research adventures in this regard, as they explore tensions and challenges in speaking *for* the young child as ventriloquist; speaking *about* the child as object; or speaking *with* the child as a dialogic partner; and their encounters with numerous ethical knots along the way.

However, there is also great cause for celebration in these pages since each chapter, in its own way, offers potential to re-vision infants and toddlers in

previously unimagined ways. We suggest that this is merely the tip of the iceberg, since much of the research reported here is in its infancy—both conceptually and operationally. It is therefore our greatest hope that the contents of this book will start important dialogues in early education and in research. We encourage others to go beyond what is offered by drawing on these authors, and the methodologies they bravely explore, as inspiration to do so. In so doing, we are in no doubt that infant and toddler voices will take their rightful place, alongside their older peers, in educational scholarship, research and policy. All are locations that need to pay attention to the perspectives of "other"—whether they focus on learners in the classroom, in the home or at the breast.

What Have We Learnt About Infants' and Toddlers' Voices?

The methodologies employed by the researchers in this book do not claim to produce hard-and-fast claims about infants and toddlers. Rather, their quest was to find ways to facilitate infant and toddler voices within the research landscape. In this regard each author has been successful, since they have developed ways of representing aspects of infant and toddler experience through hours upon hours of observation and video of the children during everyday events, such as in the investigations of Eva Johansson, Sheila Degotardi; activities and practices such as in Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer's research; pedagogical work with adults who know the children well as outlined by Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson; extensive dialogues and participatory strategies with the children, as shown by Alison Stephenson; secondary interpretations of analysis, such as in my study where I discovered the toddler's eavesdropping and performative capacities; and fine-tuned analysis using a variety of frameworks that each researcher carefully generated out of their philosophical and methodological orientations. Taken together, these forms of "voice" represent a cacophony of dialogues with and about infants and toddlers, described by Pascal and Bertram (2009) as "democratic encounters" (p. 258) in their fullest sense since they offer a means of altering the world through the agency afforded therein.

Treatment of "Other"

Although voices explored in each of the research projects are from diverse philosophical standpoints, from different countries and emphasising different aspects of experience, encounter and language, there has been surprisingly little overt attention paid to difference in voices across cultures in the chapters. The commentaries, however, provide an opportunity for researchers to talk to one another in this regard—pointing out the different treatment of "other" in research. Various considerations of the positioning of children as "other" to adults within culture underpin the approaches outlined in this book. For example Gloria Quiñones, as a Mexican researcher undertaking research in her home country, exemplifies the

cultural claim that the researcher ought to be familiar with the culture. My research, with a Māori teacher, highlights the potential of the researcher working outside of the culture, as *pakeha* (with associated contractual obligations in relation to the *Treaty of Waitangi—Te Tiriti o Waitangi*, New Zealand Government, 1840). Alison Stephenson argues for an exploration of child participation within the wider culture and, as such, positions herself as part of that milieu. However, where infant and toddler experience is seen as a unique culture in itself—a point ably made by Gunvor Løkken—there is reason to suggest that researchers are always strangers, to some extent or another. These necessary stances of familiarity and/or strangeness and their implications for participation are central to theories of "voice", since they remind the researcher of the importance of remaining alert to difference, diversity and their associated position of outsidedness—even in the most everyday of contexts—while attempting to engage with young children sufficiently so as to interpret nuances with some contextual understanding. In the case of these researchers, most of whom come from early childhood education backgrounds themselves, the familiarity of early childhood education settings, coupled with their strong analytical acumen, offered such scope for investigation, even though diverse approaches were taken that often deliberately sought a degree of outsidedness in order to make the familiar strange.

Robbins (2005) reminds us that the research agenda is established by the researcher. As such, it is always culturally embedded. The research agendas outlined in this book have been primarily focused on understanding relationships as central to learning, and what Eva Johansson has called "lived worlds". Such worlds have been conceptualised through analysis of conversations, interactions, body language and engagement with the environment. Some (see, for example, Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer) are working towards showing how data through visual material can reveal the emotional lived experiences of the child by exploring the dialectic interplay between emotion and cognition; others (see, for example, my study) have taken an architectronic approach which sought to encounter voice through discourse and genre; while others still (Eva Johansson and Gunvor Løkken) have taken an existential approach—seeking to encounter worlds in an holistic sense or through embodied encounters between teachers and infants as Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson have shown. The various approaches outlined in this book have pioneered ways of entering into various dimensions of these worlds—trying to recognise the complex whilst drawing important conclusions about infants and toddlers in order to facilitate greater understanding. In this way they have each sought to construct, in one way or another, the voice of the young child since, as Mannay (2010) states, "analysis provides the opportunity for the image to speak" (p. 100).

Involving the Young Child

Despite such constructions, the contributors to this book have demonstrated their awareness that it is no longer adequate or even acceptable for research to make

absolute claims about infants or their competencies. Their careful descriptions of methodological approaches highlight the point that interpretations and judgments based on logic, and consistency with the philosophical tenets they adopt, are constantly being made throughout the research process, and that these need to be reported alongside the results (Coyne, 2009). While Dalli and Stephenson (2010) describe examples of children taking the research focus in a different direction as "subverting the research agenda" (p. 6), several of the researchers in this volume embrace the subtle and often surprising contributions of infants and toddlers as a voice that contributes to the research agenda in its own right. Seen in this light such contributions are not seen as a distraction, deviation or addendum, but instead shape the hermeneutic direction of the research. The methodologies each of the researchers has employed, in this regard, are largely those that take an interpretive stance, and are not wed to one method. Instead, the methods are artfully selected in tandem with the individuals, contexts and questions that are being asked—not by the researcher alone, but in research relationship with participants, the wider community and scholarly societies.

For under three-year-olds there are unique challenges in this regard, too. As Alison Stephenson points out in her research, observational strategies became increasingly privileged methods with the younger age group; indeed I discovered alternative methods at my disposal by involving the toddler in analysis that took place around her and exploring subtle nuances accordingly. Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson explain how teachers' work with young children can be studied in terms of developmental pedagogy where non-verbal ways of communicating are seen in tandem with adult speech. Taken together, we see these approaches as part of a significant and fundamental shift in the way research methodology, and associated methods, can be approached with very young children, since these accounts suggest that both flexible and keenly astute responses are necessary at all stages of the process by multiple research participants in partnership with researchers.

Research Subjects Versus Objects

A fundamental shift, therefore, can be seen in the positioning of infants and toddlers as research subjects. Throughout the pages of this book there have been several examples of infants contributing to the research process on his or her terms, and these contributions being taken seriously by researchers. Taking control of the way their subjectivities might be constructed, several of the children described have exercised personal agency in making themselves known to the researcher or making the researcher "see" them differently as a result of an encounter. Seventeen-month-old Ben, for instance, highlights to Sheila Degotardi that he is aware of her activity and interest in his life. Eighteen-month-old Zoe shows me that she is keenly attuned to her authorship as researcher. While we cannot say for sure that these young children were aware of research agendas, it is evident that they were highly aware of the researcher's gaze upon them—a point Cecilia Wallerstedt, Niklas Pramling

and Ingrid Pramling Samuelsson argue is worthy of developmental consideration in research with infants. Moreover, as Gunvor Løkken points out, the researchers were equally attentive to such encounter. In no small way is this recognition due to the careful attention each researcher has paid to issues of power (especially their own) and voice beyond their own; and their ability to encounter, and reflexively account for, surprise and wonder in the potential of what can be seen and heard. These approaches are no accident, but driven by methodological tenets which align with the research agenda. Hannikainen (2010) suggests that this is an area frequently overlooked in the reporting of research in this domain. It seems that researchers overlook such accounts at their peril since, without taking account of such interest on the part of very young children, opportunities are missed for their voices to contribute to research and its outcomes. Without such consideration the researcher resides in the lofty heights as expert or on the periphery as onlooker outside of the experience.

Bringing Philosophical Frameworks to Investigation

Underpinned by a number of different theories—ranging from scientific to existential philosophies and associated approaches—the book highlights the relevance of Bakhtinian dialogism; Vygotskian cultural-historical theory; Merleau-Pontian phenomenology; Bourdieuian Theory of Practice; developmental pedagogy; critical pedagogy/sociology of childhood as useful frameworks for exploring infant and toddler voices. These are by no means exhaustive but they are nevertheless each responsive to key areas of inquiry, developmental domains of the child, context and assumptions brought to the study (and made explicit by the researcher). Each has been carefully developed by researchers seeking to enter into the domain of infant-toddler research in ways that are most likely to capture voice at its most poignant—socioculturally, linguistically, phenomenologically, corporeally, dialogically, dialectically—while laying bare the philosophical orientations they bring to bear on the task. Their efforts to represent voice (or, in many cases, voices) highlight the complexity of such endeavour. Each has generated data that, through careful analysis, offers new insights into the perspective and experience of very young children; and provides a platform for future researchers to consider in making decisions about how to approach the field, what questions might be asked and possible direction in terms of how they might be addressed.

The insights generated through these various means are not the focus of the text, since this is first and foremost a book about research methodologies. However, it is evident upon reading through the chapters that there is much yet to be understood about infant and toddler voices when methodologies are employed creatively. Throughout the book there are consistent messages about the complexities of young children's intersubjective lives that suggest there is much more to be seen and heard when adults are open to different ways of seeing and listening through diverse means. Alison Stephenson's discoveries that curriculum, from a two-year-old perspective, is intensely concerned with power relationships and participation

echoes the findings of my study, which highlight the strategic orientation of an 18-month-old towards intersubjective exchange through a sophisticated repertoire of strategies (as genre). Sheila Degotardi's study reveals some of the ways in which infants can and do contribute to their own experience and the potential for dialogue between adults and young children when encounters are open to exchange. Such potential is also explored by Cecilia, Niklas and Ingrid as they make the important discovery that young children are capable of greater embodied "knowing" through movement with the support of astute pedagogies.

Yet there are risks of encounter for very young children, too. Eva Johansson, for instance, explores the dangers for toddlers in becoming "a tool for others' wishes", while Alison Stephenson interprets a narrative surrounding a young child's painful efforts to become part of a peer group. Such discoveries highlight the vulnerable–competent dichotomy that underpins infant and toddler experience, since these children are smaller, younger and easily misinterpreted by others yet at the same time both powerful and agentic—as many of the chapters in this book have revealed. These dangers are examined by the contributors to this book as they grapple with their own subjectivities in order to ameliorate risk for young children as research partners. Their extensive considerations of the ethics of research encounter dominate the pages of this text.

The Ethics of Research Encounter

The desire in contemporary research to want to "crawl inside an infants' mind" (Stern, 1985, p. 5) in order to understand their experience or perspective as "voice" is one that has been confronted by the authors in this volume. In our efforts to comprehend a world that differs from our own, there remains a residual sense of familiarity—both in our shared position as human beings, but also as early childhood academics who have spent much of our lives with and around young children. For some authors the best that can be offered is a kind of hermeneutic encounter of uncertainty, while, for others, there is a strong sense of scientific accuracy and authenticity about their claims. Depending on the methodology employed, both approaches comprise forms of validity. In all cases research has taken place within and around relational spaces—people, places and things. Attention is therefore paid to the infant or toddler as a contributing member of a social community—regardless of his or her location within various early childhood settings. The question of what constitutes validity, for whom and by whom, underpins this positioning.

There are some useful discussions, from various theoretical standpoints, on the way an individual can be viewed as part of a collective whole (see, for example, Sheila Degotardi's discussion of Bourdieau, which positions *habitus* at the centre of interpretation; and Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer's interpretation of socio-historical theory, which endorses *perezhivanie* as a central unit of analysis). Eva Johansson, Gloria Quiñones, Marilyn Fleer and I suggest interpreting actions against their wider structural, relational, chronotopic or socio-historical contexts

so as not to reduce complexity whilst simultaneously engaging with “parts of the whole”. Each of the authors provide a clear positioning of the infant or toddler as part of a greater and more complex whole in wider cultural contexts and/or within the individual as a cognitive, emotional, social and communicative self in dialectical or dialogical relationship with other—whether research attention is overtly paid to their location in that whole or not. In all cases, the approaches are theorised in relation to philosophical concepts such as hermeneutics, dialectics and phenomenology—each signalling a different way of approaching the field, focus for analysis and means of exploring very different research questions and issues.

Subjectivities and Reflexivities

Regardless of their stance, the authors share a commitment towards taking responsibility for the ways in which children are involved in research, analysis and the reporting of findings. This is a daunting aspect of research methodology with this age group, since it seems impossible to guarantee safe passage through a process that, of necessity, relies heavily on interpretation and subjectivity. An awareness of ethics as a convention or code of practice that one can consult a textbook about in order to give assurances seems insufficient when such complexity is evident. Instead, the authors in this volume consistently report their need to go beyond initial agreements, and to maintain a conscientious and constant vigil over principles such as “do no harm” or “right of withdrawal” that are so fundamental to contemporary research protocol in the West. Authors in this volume have responded to this challenge in a variety of ways that range from extreme caution to an acceptance of risk. Alison Stephenson and Sheila Degotardi, for instance, described their sensitivities around observing young children during intimate moments (such as nappy changing or when they are upset), suggesting that these are private moments that exist beyond the researcher’s (and, more especially, the research audience’s) gaze. This raises a unique issue for this age group if we are to accept the suggestions of several early childhood researchers (see, for example Dalli, Kibble, Cairns-Cowan, Corrigan, & McBride, 2009; Deans & Bary, 2008) that such moments are central to infant and toddler experience. My inclusion of moments such as biting or intimacy that were captured and conveyed on film represents an alternative stance, since I have argued that by *not* including such moments the toddler is denied a fuller representation. Similarly, Eva Johansson argues for an inclusion of both the “good” and the “bad” in research—a position that brings with it additional ethical accountability on the part of the researcher. My decision to engage in deep analysis with one child challenges traditional notions of reliability, while Alison Stephenson sought to involve everyone in the centre through a repertoire of methods. Regardless of their approach, in all cases researchers were keenly attuned to their ethical obligations and were at pains to explain their position accordingly.

Even once a commitment is shared about how the research will be conducted and assurances are made, for each of the researchers in this volume there was more to be considered. Regardless of their efforts in trying to involve the very young

child in the research experience, in whatever capacity, decisions were ultimately made by the researchers. Several of the authors share some of the anguish they experienced and the painful extents they went to in order to try to involve children in the process. They describe their inability to resolve the dilemma they faced in working with infants or toddlers who cannot sign forms of consent, as is typically the case in research with older contemporaries in research. Loveridge (2010) suggests that consent, as given by the child or on behalf of the child prior to research intervention, also needs to be considered in terms of assent and dissent—both processes that feature heavily throughout this volume. Assent takes place in an ongoing manner throughout the research process and requires the researcher to continually monitor the infant or toddler's interactions in order for them to gauge levels of agreement, as Gunvor Løkken points out in her response to my chapter. Dissent, on the other hand, denotes a withdrawal from the research process—either by silence, withholding or declining to be involved. Awareness of consent, assent and dissent are clearly evident in the chapters of this book, such as Sheila Deogotardi's Bourdiean application to ethics, Eva Johansson's Merleau-Pontian interpretation of morality and the dialogic entreaties of Bakhtin that I bring to the early years research arena. The researchers' concern to address such issues is reflected in the attention they pay to their research subjects and their choices, in tandem with adults in the environment they locate and, in some cases, through building relationships with the infants and toddlers themselves.

Similar dilemmas have also been evident in the fieldwork itself, where the researcher must not only continually strive for awareness of levels of discomfort, silence or other forms of dissent, but also maintain an emphasis on their location within the environment. As each author conveys, it is nonsensical to think that an adult researcher can remain invisible in an early childhood setting or that their presence, and research activity, will leave no trace on participants. For most of the researchers in this book, this was an accepted stance. As such, the relational role that they played within the environment shifted the researcher role from any notions of themselves as independent onlooker to participant, collaborator and, in some cases, friend. Gloria Quiñones, for instance, videoing in the home of the child, deliberately seeks eye contact with the child during filming; while Alison Stephenson describes her commitment to "play" with the children at the end of each day if they invited her to do so. Yet at the same time the researchers discuss strategies that simultaneously enabled them to "step back" from the experience with an analytical eye in order to make strange that which they had so clearly sought to become familiar. Sheila carefully describes her experience of "stepping back" as the central framework for her research, a position also explored by Gunvor from the other side of the world.

Generating and Reporting on Data

The idea of making the familiar strange, though a Deleuze (2000) concept in itself, is one that has been discussed or inadvertently addressed by several of the contributors as an ethical tenet. Some made a consistent declaration of themselves

as an outsider working with insiders, while others saw their quest was to become insiders or pseudo-insiders. For them the task was to describe what could be seen themselves through participatory observation; while for others, such as myself, this was an intersubjective quest employing strategies such as re-probing/stimulated recall interviews that allowed the data to be interpreted and re-interpreted by research participants. In all cases the quest was to generate data that would shed light on the experience of infants and toddlers, rather than necessarily test hypotheses. Interestingly this insider-outside movement was essential to their interpretive quest *regardless of the methods they employed*, and, of necessity, required all researchers to bridge both domains at various points in the research process—a point Eva Johansson describes as “dialectical shifts”. The significance of taking such an interpretive stance is a point widely discussed by visual ethnographers (Mannay, 2010), who caution the use of visual data as “truth” and suggest that it is always a subjective and iterative endeavour. Informed by philosophical and methodological claims that support carefully constructed systematic analysis, the interpretive nature of scrutiny must always be considered in any research endeavour—for researcher and consumer alike.

At reporting phases of the research, the authors have offered varying ways of conveying the child’s voice(s)—ranging from descriptions of their actions by the researcher, to subjective accounts based on shared dialogue. The nature of such reporting is a source of great ethical concern in international studies with this age group. For example, Johansson and Emilson (2010) are highly critical of studies that speak for the child, as if the child herself were speaking. They take this position on the grounds that such activity could masquerade the researcher’s voice and manipulate the situation. They make the interesting point that such research risks becoming ideology if encountered in this manner. Yet in every example presented in this collection there are fragments of such risk—not only in the way the young child in involved or written about, but also in the philosophical orientations each researcher has brought to their investigation, each arguably ideologic in its own right. We suggest that such research cannot ignore this reality, but rather embrace it as yet another opportunity for reflexivity, and continue to explore alternative ways of presenting voice.

If we are to accept the bias and power imbalance that a researcher brings to infant and toddler research, there is an increased accountability towards fully describing the nature of that bias and declaring power issues. Again this is associated with reflexivity on the part of the researcher. In responding to this challenge it seems even more important to ensure that the methodologies each brings to their research are explicit and imbalances fully declared. The problem with not doing so, even though it takes up valuable researcher time, is that merely reporting findings as “fact” poses a significant ethical and moral risk (see Lewis, 2010). The chapters in this book highlight the fact that such an approach is simply not good enough in research that imposes an agenda on another who, despite best intentions on the part of the researcher, cannot always speak back regarding their involvement in the research agenda or refute the claims that are made.

Visual Means of Encountering "Voice"

Given a fuller consideration of voice(s) that embraces visual forms of communication, it is hardly surprising that in all cases researchers have employed some of the burgeoning array of technologies at their disposal, in particular visual means of data generation. The chapters substantiate the claim by Derry et al. (2010) that "new video technologies provide powerful ways of collecting, sharing, studying, presenting, and archiving detailed cases of practice to support teaching, learning, and intensive study of those practices" (p. 4). Seen in this way visual means of data generation are not useful merely because they present data as movement (although this is indeed a distinct advantage when working with the communicative styles of infants and toddlers), but because they have the potential to allow researchers, and sometimes participants, to counteract normalising claims that seek to limit the way infants and toddlers can be "known". Seen in this light video and photography can be described as collaborative art in its own right—making an important intersubjective contribution to research inquiry accordingly. There are several examples throughout the text, such as the boy in Eva's study who reassures her that he is using his "gentle voice" as he comes down the slide. Zoe's performative response during interviews and video work similarly portrays the very young child as active participant in this hermeneutic process.

Although in most cases a standard video or digital camera was employed, it is the *way* they are employed that is particularly interesting. As Cecilia Wallerstedt and her colleagues remind us, to use or not use video should be dependent on the questions being asked. It is evident that these framed the approaches used by the researchers in this book. Differences can be seen in the authors' use of the technology, ranging from photographs, to footage that is conveyed in snapshots or split-screens, or footage that never features at all in the presentation of research but is instead interpreted by the researcher and therefore remains "raw data". Mannay (2010) draws attention to the distinction between vision (i.e., what the eye can literally see) and visuality (i.e., the ways in which vision is constructed) as a central consideration in this regard, suggesting that images cannot of themselves constitute a method—a point I have been at pains to operationalise through dialogic investigation. In various ways, each of the authors in this book have attempted to respond to this distinction through the choices they have made in the way video records have been selected, analysed and treated, as well as their location within the wider research agenda. All comprise the nature of data that can be explored, and how it can be employed to build on what can be known about human experience.

Additional Ethical Issues in Camera Work

The visual nature of data generation presents additional ethical challenges that require reflexive responses on the part of the researcher. Gunvor Løkken and Sheila Deogatardi independently describe their experiences as "the camera lady", based on their efforts to remain present yet aloof; while Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer

draw the reader's attention to their deliberate attempts to ensure that the researcher could engage with participants. Alison Stephenson, on the other hand, goes to the extent of engaging fully with the children in her attempts to gain what she claims to be greater insight. I also discussed the efforts I went to and my ultimate discovery that the toddler's knowledge of my intentions generated a response based on a range of discursive strategies, such as eavesdropping, that I had not previously considered. The ways in which video/image has been used highlight the point that video is merely a tool that can be used across methodological domains for multiple purposes, even though the philosophical and methodological base of the investigation will steer the employment of that tool.

A key consideration in research that employs video is the way data is ultimately selected. As Pink (2007) explains, "The meanings of photographs are arbitrary and subjective, they depend on who is looking" (p. 67) and, on the basis of our discoveries, we would add that they also depend on who and how children are participating. Hence, regardless of how committed the researcher is to power sharing, collaboration and reflexivity, at some point decisions have to be made and declared about which footage to analyse and/or present in relation to their research quest. Each of the authors has described the various analytical frameworks they employed to achieve their goals—ranging from broad interpretations of "life-world" to specific moments of established "activity". These provided a means of narrowing down what can amount to vast amounts of footage, into shorter sequences/excerpts/events or sub-events. Those who began with a tightly constructed framework were able to focus directly on the unit of analysis they sought and approach the footage in a deductive manner; while those who started with broader constructs spent longer in the field and allowed a corpus to develop in a more reductive way. Derry et al. (2010) suggest that the choice between the two approaches is dependent on the research goal:

> One can ask whether one's goal is (a) systematically selecting representative clips to help develop or document some naturally occurring pattern; versus (b) selecting events that best show or illustrate key events in a researcher's evolving narrative (p. 12).

The authors in this book offer examples of both. For example, Gloria and Marilyn provide data clips that capture the "wholeness" of a specific homework activity by showing the emotional interplay that takes place between Cesar and his family; while Eva has selected events between peers as holistic "experiences over time" in order to portray moral exchange in her research quest. In some cases, both approaches were combined, as in my study where episodes over time were brought together to try to explain acts, as interpretation, and their interrelationships in making meaning, as illustration. From the perspective of developmental pedagogy, Cecilia, Niklas and Ingrid also explain "the same activity repeated is in fact not the same activity the second time as the first time". In taking this position we are introduced to an expanded view of hermeneutics by reviewing the same acts, events or activities as interpretative experiences rather than "truth"—a stance that is significantly afforded through visual methods. Each researcher's frameworks for analysis were thus determined by their methodological orientation and their identified focus, and led to the choices they made in terms of selecting, interpreting,

coding, transcribing, summarising, counting or other forms of analysis. In all cases these were made explicit and transparent to the reader.

Decisions have been made by the authors regarding the manner in which images are conveyed. Several of the researchers in this book chose to retain the images as raw data. But others have made them available to the research community. What is particularly interesting, in this regard, is not only how they have done so, but also what selections were made, by whom and why. Some have selected excerpts of video that convey key concepts—describing sequences as narrative or, as Gloria and Marilyn have done using innovative still image sequences they call "snapshots". Others have invited participants to select such as my description of split-screen synchronised video I call "polyphonic footage". Since research of this nature is accepted as interpretive there are, and will be, increasing demands upon researchers to make their data available for public scrutiny, as a form of validity and/or reliability. Seen in this light, video becomes a form of performance or art that corresponds to recent developments in ethnography that promote voice as a social phenomenon (Denzin, 1994, cited in Jeffrey & Troman, 2004). This is a far cry from traditional uses of video as a means of observation for the researcher alone and responds to Derry et al.'s (2010) directive for "creative ways to achieve compelling representations of complexity" (p. 24). Such a position establishes further ethical challenges and responses since, seen in this light, video is no longer simply a data source to be archived, but a hermeneutic means of data generation, accountability and validity in the public domain.

The myriad of challenges and considerations that a researcher brings to visual research are typically unknown to the reader in standard presentations of research reports that focus on findings. Hence the role of the researcher as videographer, artist and video editor often remain a mystery that takes place behind the scenes. The chapters in this book have demystified that process in the context of video work with very young children. We suggest that those who undertake such activity are not only familiar with the contexts and subjects with whom they work, but they have also developed significant technical competence. Taken together, research with video and young children is presented as a highly specialised and sophisticated cross-disciplinary process which is not for the faint hearted!

Beyond Video

The chapters in this volume herald new visual and aural ways of understanding infants and toddlers through scientific and artistic (or as I have described "aesthetic") endeavour. However, the visual methods employed never stand alone—they are determined by the theories that underpin them, which are in turn developed out of curious questions that the research (or, in the case of contracted research, governments and societies) determines will need to be addressed. Further, they are supported by a shared understanding that methods must be crafted to the developmental domain of the research participants. In the case of infants and toddlers this generally means an awareness of their bodily stance, capacity for movement, modes of communication, perceived apprehension, etc. However, as my

study highlights, it is all too easy to assume lack of capability in these domains and, despite best intentions, to underestimate the potential of the young child as research participant, partner and consumer. While we can never be sure that Zoe's performance was a deliberate act of research intervention on her part, nor can we be sure that it was not. This is a point it seems none of the researchers in this volume dismiss as potential and possible in their engagement with the infants and toddlers.

As such, this book contributes to the typical methods that are used to engage with three- and four-year-old children's "voice" such as those outlined in Clarke's mosaic approach (Clark, 2004), by adding a repertoire of methods that may be useful for infants and toddlers. Derry et al. (2010) describe such methods and their associated tools as "boundary objects" (p. 33) because they provide ways and means of engaging with the data for researchers, participants and research consumers alike. In the context of this book, such boundary objects include more subtle ways of generating data such as the use of computer analysis (see my use of "Snapper"); creating video files to share; researcher diaries (Eva Johansson) and keen observation by all—both on and off camera. Gloria Quiñones and Marilyn Fleer signal for greater attention to the role of family, and with Eva's attention to "things" as mediating devices, there is potential to pay more attention to the unique experience of the very young child. While a four-year-old can be "interviewed", invited to draw a picture in response to a theme or given a camera to take his or her own photographs, the studies reported here suggest that a toddler might be better understood as lurking within, performing or working with artefacts on the periphery of an activity that may on the surface seem unrelated. Alison Stephenson explains that she had to rely on observation more keenly in her research with younger children in a mixed-age education setting, and experienced great difficulty in generating data with under one-year-olds through the methods she employed. Løkken and I on the other hand, claim that these age groups require specialised research awareness; and sought to enter the field paying particular attention to embodied forms of communication. Similarly, Cecilia Wallerstedt and her colleagues suggest that the dyadic nature of under-eight-month-old infant communication needs to be taken into consideration in research activity—a point they highlight in relation to Sheila Degotardi's study. They claim that it is important to take cognizance of developmental knowledge when researching with the very young. These findings would suggest that there is worth in seeking subtlety, disjunction, surprise or shift as a means of encountering research—whatever "method" might be at play (or perhaps even outside of the method altogether). The iterative nature of such encounter, coupled with the need for a nuanced observational eye, makes research of this nature highly creative indeed.

What Are the Implications for Researchers Working in this Domain?

It was not by design that research with infants, as opposed to toddlers, barely feature in this book. While it is encouraging that attention is being paid to the unique developmental domain of toddlers, we are left asking, "but where are the

infants?" In this regard we join with Dalli et al. (2011) in identifying a "need for a more specialised focus on pedagogy with under-one and under-two year olds" (p. 7) and suggest that investigation that attempts to generate and interpret infant voice is therefore an important direction for future research. We go further to suggest that, as part of such endeavour, specialised research methodologies must be sought, or developed in order to respond to this "need". While we are aware of important work such as Trevarthen (1998; see also Stephen, Dunlop, & Trevarthen, 2003), we are hopeful that some of the philosophical orientations outlined in this book may also be brought to bear on interdisciplinary studies with infants and their subjectivities. We support the proposition by Meltzoff, Kuhl, Movellan and Sejnowski (2009) that cross-disciplinary, translational research has much potential, and watch keenly for these important dialogues to emerge as research. We recognise that there is little to be gained by staying within our methodological "silos" in moving forward—indeed there are compelling reasons to do otherwise in conversations with diverse methodological and philosophical fields. We know that there will be significant adjustments to be made, but look forward to further discoveries in this regard.

Indeed, since this book was conceived we have become aware of new and exciting studies either in progress or at early stages of conceptualisation. These respond to some of the issues raised in this volume by approaching the field from a methodological mosaic (Sumsion, 2008–2011); from a collaborative stance (see, for example, Norwegian City Council project reported by Greve & Solheim, 2010); through neuroscience (Shonkoff, 2010); and by employing alternative methodological directions (see, for example, Sandvik, 2009). Yet, despite such innovations and opportunities we are aware that a significant part of the researcher's challenge is to have research of this nature taken seriously by policy makers. Greve and Solheim (2010) report ongoing difficulties involved in getting research with very young children "heard" in such domains. They suggest that difficulties persist because "forms of expression such as body language, facial expression, glances, humour, joy and friendship are not referred to as important knowledge about the youngest" (p. 161). Yet, as more and more infants leave the home to attend institutional education and care services (now an international trend), there is an even greater need to interpret their experience, *from their experience*—an approach each of the researchers in this book has tried to address in one way or another.

The chapters in this volume have reinforced the importance of these experiential, embodied and highly social forms of "voice" and a range of investigative ways of exploring these if societies are serious about their commitment to infants and toddlers now and into the future. However, as we have also been at pains to highlight, the subjective nature of such endeavour draws attention to the necessary reflexive stance of the researcher, ethical vigilance of the role of the infant and toddler as subject in their own right, and the importance of transparent and flexible processes throughout. This is especially true for researchers working with new forms of representation, such as video, since these approaches are "still greeted with suspicion, even hostility, and questions are raised as to whether it constitutes legitimate or 'proper' research" (Sparkes, 2008, p. 661). As such, researchers need to be highly transparent about their processes, answerable to their research

participants and communities, and philosophically astute if research of this nature is to take its rightful place within early years' methodologies.

Taken together, the challenges and potentialities explored in this book position infant and toddler research as a complex, hermeneutic, philosophical, ethical and highly skilled activity that plays a significant role in the ways our youngest can be seen and heard. Such research provides opportunities for adults to discover the extreme capabilities and potential of very young children to contribute to new or revised understandings whilst simultaneously considering their unique vulnerabilities. As such, this volume establishes new benchmarks for research of this nature—suggesting that infants and toddlers are not mere objects for research activity; but instead research participants, subjects and contributors in their own right—a position that we believe holds great potential for generating "voice" and, ultimately, in gaining greater insights about our youngest across the world.

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