Chapter 2
Methodology and Methods

This chapter describes the epistemological rationale behind and the choice of methods used to analyse material in Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 that take us toward a conclusion to the original question regarding the *realism* or *romanticism* of the notion of children's citizenship. Stress is placed on examination of the past where evidence of a time when the status of adult and child was one and the same and takes account of the present to not only conclude but project a possible future.

Methodology

The original research was carried out on the basis of a quite short and in itself quite simple question: *Is the notion of children's citizenship a reality or romanticism?* This question looks at the status and extent of our knowledge of the position of children over a period of about 2,500 years in the past and toward an as yet unpredictable point of time in the future. In so doing, it looks at not only 'ourselves' but other cultures, traditions and beliefs that broaden the base of the question. It also considers particular branches of knowledge such as the social sciences, theology and philosophy. They have occupied the attention of those examining humanity with any amount of reference to children or childhood for at least as long as any of the disciplines included and philosophy most particularly have existed. The question, its parts and examination of those parts are subjected to the rigours of epistemological scrutiny. However, it is acknowledged that to consider only the theory of knowledge to the exclusion of practice gives little indication of what is at issue in seeking conclusions.

As the introductory paragraphs of this chapter have already shown, the fact that one of the answers this book must conclude with is what the differences between a romantic and real view are. This places a great deal of weight on the essential difference between the romantic or 'thought' against real or 'evident' use of data which makes my own point of view an important part of analysis. This suggests a potential for a pretentious or uninformative research that makes only disingenuous

assumptions rather than reach scholastically proven conclusions. However, it has been accepted that human beings have very particular general capacities that are used in the acquisition of knowledge. Some of them are my own prejudices, perceptions and wish to achieve a particular end, thus must be parts of the epistemology that are employed positively and objectively in the choice of method.

Much of this is dependent on a rhetorical stance which reminds me of the Sophist philosopher Gorgias' extant rhetorical work *On Non-Existence* (McComiskey 2002: 32ff). It was a topic taken up by my school debating society in the 1960s. I recall he claimed three things. Firstly, nothing exists; secondly, if it did we could not know of it; and thirdly, even if we did know of it then we could not communicate that knowledge to others. Naturally this research does not reflect Gorgias in the strictest sense. It is reflective on the point that rhetoric itself has the weakness of being the root of more inconclusive debate such as 'nothing exists' than of a conclusive thought such as 'everything exists'. Use of rhetoric is intended to stimulate the potential for the development of this thesis into a wider discourse. That is to say, instead of attempting to be conclusive to the point of being definitive and in any sense irrefutable. However, the parallel with Gorgias for me is that we do not know whether or not children are citizens. We often assume they are citizens because they (usually) have a nationality. Despite assuming they are citizens because they have nationality, the lack of substantive rights such as electoral franchise to give them full citizenship shows they are not. So, as Gorgias might have asked: what are they?

Thus, a key part of the rhetorical course is the possibility of looking at children as 'citizen becomings' or 'potential citizens'.[1] That bears a remarkable degree of similarity to ideas expressed long ago by Aristotle and more recently by Qvortrup that that children are 'human becomings' which will be visited several times in this work.

Both questions seek to make sense of childhood. We have sought to construct a view of what the 'child' is throughout the long history of thought. Moral, political and social theorists have looked at the adults they will become through the lens of particular social environments and their concept of the future of their society. This appears to have lasted from the early Socratic dialogues through to more recent examinations with an occasional very clear statement of what little we do in fact know. In his Preface to *Émile* Rousseau (1979: i) stated that:

> We know nothing of childhood; and with our mistaken notions the further we advance the further we go astray. The wisest writers devote themselves to what a man ought to know, without asking what a child is capable of learning. They are always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man.

Thus, in the longer term and particularly bearing policy making and the eventual inclusion of young citizens in governance, the hypothesis out of which this research has developed its aims and objectives is as follows. The question of whether or not children are citizens or not and whether it is at all possible normally has its

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[1] 'Potential citizens' assumes that children will survive to be adults and also overcome any possible barriers to them assuming full citizenship such as not having nationality of the country they live in.

origins in only a very small set of bases. That is to say that it is usually based on a Western neo-liberal understanding of citizenship. Whilst there are influences from civic republican and feminist perspectives, they are still firmly based in Western discourse. Furthermore, part of this perception makes assumptions around an idealised version of democracy to the exclusion of other forms of social organisation. Subequently, it has hitherto been culturally very narrow sighted and dismissive of what appears not to contribute to the argument.

History has provided a basis for much of the existing thought, however that often appears selective. Much the same can be said for philosophy, theology and social scientific theory. Law is also so widely open to interpretation that a rights-based examination using the CRC as a basis includes numerous possibilities. However, it is not only selection of what already exists, but also the narrow vision of what has thus far been used to project toward the future that is limited. Children's rights are a key component at the base of this work. However, that is used in a more substantial way than using a blossoming interest in 'children's participation' that is largely rationalised as a children's rights issue. This research placed emphasis on the fact that participation and citizenship is absolutely not one and the same thing.

The intended outcome foresaw analysis of data toward conclusions that direct the possibility of children enjoying the full benefits of the status of citizenship. Those have potential direct input into social policy development and indeed political discussion of the means to achieving that end. It examines and questions two and a half thousand years worth of focus on children to the widest possible geographical extent. It also aims to open the path for a prolonged and thorough discourse that will contribute to a resolution of the possibility of children's citizenship being realised.

Methods

Following on from the methodology described above, the choice of methods for the research included analytic induction, morphological analysis and also elements of content analysis with an eye toward symptomatic reading. The choice of methods was governed by the fact that the larger parts of all data used were in the form of printed texts. A very few of those texts are also my own work, some of which has been field based and other parts entirely theoretical. Those reflect my interest in this topic which emerged after an initial related piece of work in 1993. Thereby texts were used with a very small amount of previously unused field data where those sources are relevant to the aims and objectives, thus provide arguments and evidence for this examination.

Thus said, using a wide range of materials that set a very broad range over a relatively long period of time that concentrate on the collation of data that relate to *children* and *childhood* and *citizenship* eliminated the higher risk of subjective analysis that may have come with a smaller sample in every sense. The support the hypothesis provided for the conclusion was dependent on the number of constituent parts in and the careful selection of the sample. Here, if a more substantial library search had

been made for *all* possible data, the task would almost certainly have been unmanageable. The balance there was use of a wide range of sources chosen purposefully which was sustained by supporting materials that ensured even-handed analysis.

Analytic Induction

Analytic induction was used first because it is a systematic examination of similarities between various social phenomena out of which concepts can be developed. It is most frequently used to search for similarities across a number of data sources that can then be used to flesh out sub-classifications. One goal of this research is to make general statements chapter by chapter that may need to be modified later, especially in the event of exceptions being discovered. In due course it may reflect fairly exhaustive knowledge of what is being researched. However, this is mindful of the fact that no analysis should ever be considered final, since reality is 'infinite' and thus constantly changing. Classifications occurring as an outcome of this method are often theories in themselves rather than being groundwork for theory.

The intention was that it would draw together a fairly exhaustive knowledge of the question researched. An example of how that might be used is when a social scientist examines the category of 'people who ride bicycles'. He or she then develops subcategories such as 'uses a bike for pleasure', 'uses it to get to work', 'uses it for health reasons or getting fit' or 'other uses'. If no relevant similarities can be identified, then either the data need to be re-evaluated and the definition of similarities changed or the category is too wide and heterogeneous and should be narrowed down.

Within that knowledge classifications occurring as an outcome are often theoretical rather than being groundwork for theory. There are also superficial similarities between fields such as history and philosophy where phenomena and subjects described have common origins. Although philosophers are very good chroniclers of their time, there are also different points of view that produce different versions of same histories. Beside that there is the bias that comes with the desired outcome the author is searching for that conditions the interpretation of texts. Induction is a process of reasoning in which the basis of an argument is believed to support the conclusion without leading to it, in other words does not ensure its integrity. It is thus a form of analysis that makes generalisations based on individual examples.

However, this form of inductive work does not work alone in the case of a question such as this. Coaxing out data from similar types of source should generate a linear process in which, for instance, chronological progression should help to draw out conclusions. Then again, the research was cognisant of superficial similarities that exist between, for example, history and philosophy where phenomena and subjects described have common origins. Behind the apparent there will always be the extreme of position to which the author belonged and how that conditions interpretation of texts.

Children and childhood occupy a relatively small niche in most of the areas that were examined. History, philosophy and theology have most certainly seen children as marginal, although the work of historians of childhood is probably ascending the way to a more prominent place in their discipline. As yet the historical work is largely limited to the western world with Western Europe at the forefront. Likewise, within the social sciences there are a few economists, an increasing number of anthropologists, steadily growing number of sociologists and clearly many psychologists. With exception of the latter, much of the work looks primarily at the western world. However, anthropologists are gradually beginning to cast their net wider. Some of the data these disciplines offer are repetitive because they often come from relatively small pools of experience and knowledge in which individuals are not infrequently working within close proximity to each other intellectually. To some extent that reduced the scale of the inductive task.

History provided at least a relatively certain starting point since in the Hellenic world citizenship was well enough described by Aristotle in the *Politics* (1908), early childhood in *Nicomachean Ethics* (1999a), a notion similar to *tabula rasa* in *De Anima* (1987) and the transition from childhood (youth) to adulthood and citizenship in Plato's (2005, see also Stokes 2005) *Crito*. In contrast to the Athenians, Spartans and Stoics saw human beings as something less status bound although neither set children in a position equal to that of adults. They were clearly not full citizens. Socrates' contemporary K'ung Fu Tzu saw the primary relationship between adult and child as being the first link between individuals within the state. That is to say through the 'filial piety' of children toward parents which we can justifiably assume has been the norm for many generations. He was probably the first philosopher to record the expectation that individuals 'became' through study and practice of appropriate behaviour. They could then take their place within a distinct hierarchy in which one was treated with humanity. Fatherhood was the highest value in Chinese society and each person a subject of the father and the emperor was the father of all subjects. A child was said to be 'cut, carved, filed and polished', describing something comparable with the Aristotelian 'becoming' process.

The *tabula rasa* notion is a constant throughout history, reappearing very clearly in the writings of Aquinas (1981) and reaching its probable maturity in Locke's (1971) work. Of all themes it is the single most pervasive view of infants until recent work such as Alderson et al's. (2005a, b) research on premature neonates.

Philosophy has contributed much to the stage we are at in the present where children are seen as individuals with rights rather than as merely an extension of their parents or family. In the seventeenth century Hobbes (1651) regarded childhood a period of servitude comparable with slavery in the modern world whereby the children are absolutely subject of parents as servants are to masters. They were property until age and maturity delivered privileges and the freedom of adult citizenship. It was part of his view of the moral obligations of state towards *citizen*

members in which the notion of *best interests* is emergent. Locke challenged Hobbes' notion of property when he said that they are:

> …not born in (…) full state of equality, though (…) born to it. (…) parents have a sort of rule and jurisdiction over them when they come into the world, and for some time after, but it is but a temporary one. (Locke 1965:127)

About 120 years after Hobbes, Kant (1996) wrote that a child is not property of parents but instead argued having brought a child into the world they "…incur an obligation to make the child content with his condition so far as they can…" (*Ibid.*:64). Furthermore: "…this duty there must (…) arise the right (…) to manage and develop the child" (*Ibid.*:65). That describes *duty of care* comparable with present day obligations, but which stems from a child's satisfaction without the necessity of consent. Kant was also considering the child's *best interests*. He thought children were born without reason and were educated to become rational agents by parents. It is a view comparable with the human becomings thesis that also recognises the innate liberty each individual enjoys.

Hegel (2001) believed that there was a proper moral life achieved through absolute obedience to the laws of the state within which there are two subordinate levels of social activity to which people had to commit themselves: the family and economic contribution to civil society. He distinguished between individuals as 'economic man' (bourgeois) and 'political man' (citizen). However, children are potentially free and life was the quintessence of potential freedom. They were, he believed, not things and do not belong to anyone whether parents or others.

> As it is with children, so is it with nations under paternal government (…) not looked upon as self-dependent or of age (…) services required (…) must bear upon their education and promote their good. To ignore (…) would destroy the ethical element of the relation, and make the child a slave. (Hegel 2001:148)

We see the coming together of some of these ideas when compulsory education begins. As Corrigan (1979: 33ff) says, it was designed to provide bourgeois moral and religious standards for the working class through basic education of their children to offset potential revolutionary activity. That moral and religious code would shape their behaviour and contribute toward there being a disciplined, punctual labour force and establishment of social order based on education which the working class would respect although at the bottom of that order. It has been that type of moral order that has shaped modern views of the child as 'inferior' to the 'citizen adult' until duties and responsibilities required for full membership of civil society are attained.

Zelizer's (1985) view of the sacralisation of childhood in the transition from the nineteenth to twentieth century and birth of child sciences along with progressively changing standards in child care, protection and other provisions such as education and health has seen childhood fully emerging as separated from adulthood. It is now well defined and anchored in legislation and whilst there have been liberal positions from as far back as Winstanley (1649b) and Spence (1793), they are far and few between. Likewise attempts to 'democratise' childhood the way Korczak (1992) attempted early in the twentieth century or children in organisations like *Hitler Jugend* in national socialist Germany or *Pioneers* in socialist states (that ostensibly offered direct contributions to society and nation) are generally short lived or more tokenistic than *bona fide* full membership.

Morphology

Morphological analysis is a method that enables examination across different sources of data, especially where the content of the sources in this research appear either similar or even repeated. It is a reliable method to use where there are several prevalent factors, most of which cannot be expressed as numerical time series data with which one might construct a mathematical or statistical model. The orthodox approach would be to break sources down into parts. One would then isolate key parts (whilst dropping minor or inconsequential ones) for their input into a wider picture of the generally disaggregated topics *children* and *citizenship*. One disadvantage in using this approach is that real world situations rarely behave rationally. It then becomes possible that analysis will fail if the input of less consequential components becomes too significant. This will be taken into account in the careful choice of what to include or exclude from analysis.

It is particularly used for the identification, analysis and description of the structure of words. While words are generally accepted as being the smallest units of syntax, it is clear that in most languages words can be related to other words by rules. For example, English speakers recognise that the words *student* and *student union* are closely related. English speakers recognise these relations from a tacit knowledge of rules of word formation in English. They infer intuitively that *student* is to *students* as *lecturer* is to *lecturers* and similarly, *student* is to *student union* as *lecturer* is to *lecture room*. Rules understood by authors or speakers reflect specific patterns (or regularities) in the way words are formed from smaller units and how those smaller units interact in speech and the written word. Thus morphology is the branch of linguistics that studies patterns of word formation within and across languages and attempts to formulate rules that model the knowledge of the messages of users of those languages. For a study crossing time, culture and language it offers a complementary but also contrasting approach to analytic induction.

This method has most commonly been used by modern linguists since the term *morphology* was first used by August Schleicher (1859). However, it appears to have existed in one form or another for around 3,000[2] years. A recent use has been to analyse folklore. Vladímir Propp (1968) analysed folk tales for the function each character and action carried out. He concluded that they were composed of 31 elements and eight character types. Although elements were not all required for all stories, when they did appear, it was in invariant order. The exception was that each element may be negated twice. The elements or 'functions' are assembled as the morphology. Theoretically, variant forms of the elements could be used to reconstruct an almost infinite number of new tales. Here some of this 'folkloristic' approach supports the linguistic analysis.

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[2]See George Cardona's work (1998:260–267) on Pāṇini, the fourth century BC Indian linguist who is thought to have formulated 3,959 rules of Sanskrit morphology in the text of the Aṣṭādhyāyī (the eight chapters) of Classical Sanskrit by using a constituency grammar.

Using the morphology of a number of elements that will be sought in this research, a 'model child' across time and space could be constructed or reconstructed. It can also be used to take different components for different routes to analysis so that more than a single morphology is available for what Propp classified as *character* and *actions*.

Those taxonomies will especially well show what time and thought tell us a child was and, perhaps, still is. The second will look especially at recent observations on the development of individuals. It that respect, it is probably the most significant of the methods chosen. As a problem structuring and solving method, morphological analysis was originally designed for intricate, often unquantifiable problems where causal modelling and simulation do not operate especially well or at all. However, for the purposes of this research it requires a further supporting method for induction and morphology to gain greater substance.

Morphological analysis was used in my research to examine different sources of data, especially where their content appeared either similar or repeated. It was used to examine recurrent motifs rather than events that could be catalogued taxonomically in order to identify the simplest irreducible narrative elements or 'functions' that construct *child citizenship*.

The requirement is that these functions occur in a standard, constant sequence that can be reassembled as a wider picture of the generally disaggregated topics *children* and *citizenship*. By using narrative units, or *narratemes*, from texts it will be possible to arrive at a typology of narrative structures and also sentence structures that have been deconstructed into analysable elements or *morphemes*. Analysis of motif and event types will reveal how many generic narratemes can be found.

However, since the real world seldom behaves rationally, these analyses take no account of exceptional motifs that are narratemes and morphemes that do not repeat thus have no place in a taxonomy. For this reason, a further method that supports analytic induction and morphology was chosen to attempt to gain greater substance if and where it was available.

Content Analysis

Content analysis, here purely textual analysis, was chosen since it is a standard method for the study of content of communication used by social scientists. It is a scientific method that includes specific consideration of objectivity and subjectivity, consistency, validity, replication and testing the hypothesis but is not limited to variables measured or context in which communications are formed or presented.

It can be used for the study of recorded human communications including books, journals, websites, visual representation (film, paintings, photography, etc.) and other sources of communicable data. It is usually used as a summarising, quantitative analysis of communications. It relies on the scientific method that includes specific attention to objectivity and subjectivity, *a priori* research design, consistency, validity, replication and testing the hypothesis. For the purpose of my research, it was used

not as a quantitative method but instead as a qualitative one. In this respect, use of the method qualitatively and critically makes it more closely resemble symptomatic reading which is one of the most universally used critical methods in literary studies.

Louis Althusser and Fredric Jameson were both fervent advocates of symptomatic reading. It is a depth and surface model of interpretation that defines the precise meaning of texts as well as taking into account what they do not say. Thus breaks, silences, distractions and omissions become indicative of missing causes and formative structures in and behind a text. The critic or reader is left to reconstruct and bring to light the other side of a history, philosophy or other form of communication in which exclusions construct the untold parts of the story conveyed. The real purpose of this method is to suggest which other readings are necessary or possible and what forms of interpretation of the textual source are implied. One might use the metaphor that one is *seeking the virus that causes the undiagnosed disease* whereby one looks at all other and especially similar viruses that show both commonalities and contrasts. When one reads, he or she has to seek information and is confronted with different views which force them to consider their own position. In this process the reader is subsequently converted to a 'writer' whether or not he or she writes or publishes his or her own ideas.

However, since my research was governed by a regulated maximum length, the interpretive aspect was used and the suggestion of other readings left to those to take the intellectual course of this work forward in their turn. To some extent this version takes that task forward.

The purpose in the research was to look for breaks, diversions and omissions that suggested missing causes and formative structures in and behind the text. It thus made it possible to reconstruct and elucidate the other side of history, philosophy or other forms of communication where exclusions and incomplete accounts put together untold parts of the narrative. Here its real purpose was to suggest other readings that might have been indispensable or essential and in which forms of interpretation sources should be embedded. In this case the objective of this final point is not to infinitely extend the range of the research for myself. It suggests, without specifying exact authors or titles, a direction for further examination that might be taken up by others taking the intellectual direction of this work forward.

An example of the kind of extrapolation of unwritten central parts of a narrative is Disney's animated film *Snow White*. In the original story collected by the Grimms (Grimm and Grimm 1984:300–310), *Schneewittchen* is a princess whose own mother, the queen, hates her. The mother attempts to kill her daughter, the king finds out and is so angry he has his wife executed. Bolte and Polívka (1913) tell us that in the original version the King kills her because he is angry about her three attempts to kill Snow White. She is put into a pair of red hot shoes and perishes in agony. The Grimms did not include this in their version. It was the Grimms who changed the mother into a stepmother and then introduced the prince as her 'prince charming' rescuer. He rescued her with a cart. The jogging dislodged the poisoned apple going over a pothole, but there is no kiss. We can guess she is a young woman because they marry soon after. Disney took the story a step further in 1937.

In the original story and the Grimm version, the dwarfs do not really feature very much at all. We simply know that they are seven kindly, small men who look after her. Walt Disney and his team looked for central absences in the story that would embellish it. The animated film version explored the possibility of giving names and came up with Doc, Dopey, Grumpy, Happy, Sleepy, Sneezy and Bashful. Snow White is a girl, probably in early teens. The queen took on a witch 'alter-ego'. The dwarfs became a key part of the story and eventually chase the queen/witch to her death when she plunges into the wind and rain swept ravine. Absurdly, what appear to be white-backed vultures normally found in East and West Africa follow her down to the bottom of the abyss. After the kisses that revive her Snow White rides off into the world, and whilst there is a 'happy-ever-after' ending we are not told explicitly the couple marry. The point in using this example is that what is not in the original story can be found in the morphology of other folk tales, thus exploited to fill out and modify an otherwise attractive but not very exciting story. Disney induced a story for his film from what was not there, borrowed from other motifs in folklore and intuitively filled out the rest for the 'perfect' storyline. This is exactly the potential this method offered to my research and to the support of induction and morphology.

The original research and this somewhat further developed version both set out to draw together conclusions drawn from those three analytical methods to find evidence for there ever having been an equal or at least comparable status for adults and children in the past or present.