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Exceptional Creators to the World of Children:
Investigating Children's Authors

ABSTRACT

Exceptional creators develop existing domains or create new domains through their contribution of products that are highly valued by society in a particular domain. Typically, adults make these value judgments. This study explored whether Gardner's (1997) model of an Exceptional Creator [EC], which was developed from a cross-domain analysis and adult judgments of quality, would also hold true in a domain in which children made value judgments. The analyses confirmed that outstanding children's authors also demonstrated the key traits of an EC, namely, their use of childhood experiences and their tendencies to question assumptions and strike out on their own, and to explore their domains exhaustively. Additionally, four unique traits of outstanding children's authors were identified. These were extended links to childhood; the creation of "new worlds" for children that differed from their everyday world; a reliance on pictures and conversation; and demonstrations of strong visual-spatial intelligence through illustrations and descriptions.

INTRODUCTION

The study of “extraordinary” individuals includes child prodigies, idiot savants and exceptional creators. The latter are of particular interest because exceptional creators develop existing domains or create new domains through their contribution of ideas and products, highly valued by society. The diversity amongst exceptional creators in various domains forms the basis of Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 1993b). The similarity amongst these exceptional creators led Gardner (1994, 1997) to suggest that there is an exceptional creator [EC] who has distinct traits, which are independent of intelligences or domains. Gardner (1994) argues that the creative work of an EC is marked by two traits related to their childhoods and domain of exceptionality. Firstly, “creative individuals make some kind of raid upon their childhood preserving certain aspects of their own earlier life in a way that advances their work and makes sense to their peers” (p. 156). Secondly, creative individuals have “a tendency to question every assumption and to attempt to strike out on one’s own as much as possible, and a countervailing tendency to exhaust a domain, to probe more systematically, deeply, and comprehensively than anyone has every probed before” (Gardner, 1994, p. 156).

Gardner’s (1994, 1997) identification of the Childhood Trait and the Field Trait among exceptional creators is based on the ideas and products that are valued in the adult world. Consequently, the traits of Exceptional Creators to the World of Children require identification because in domains such as children’s literature, children rather than adults judge the value of the creative work. Thus, the purpose of this paper is two-fold. Firstly, children’s authors, who have made a creative contribution to children’s worlds rather

than the adult world, will be used to test Gardner's (1997) model of an EC. Secondly, similarities in the traits of outstanding children's authors will be identified in order to develop a profile of an Exceptional Creator to the World of Children [ECWC]. The hypotheses were that (1) Outstanding children's authors would demonstrate the traits of an EC and (2) Outstanding children's authors' would collectively display unique traits.

This paper commences with a brief overview of creativity and extraordinariness, and children's literature. This is followed by a description of the methods used to test Gardner's EC model and to establish the traits of an ECWC. The paper concludes with a suggestion for nurturing ECWC and for future research on ECWC.

CREATIVITY AND EXTRAORDINARINESS

Gifted individuals contribute to knowledge through their creativity, which is "any act, idea or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 28). The impact of an individual's creative contributions results in either *evolutionary* or *revolutionary* progress of knowledge (Gardner, 1997). Those gifted individuals who revolutionise knowledge are "the extraordinary". Examples of extraordinarily gifted individuals include Albert Einstein (Theory of Relativity) and Martha Graham (Modern Dance) (Gardner, 1983). According to Gardner (1994), an EC is characterised by two general phenomenon, namely, *their ability to draw on childhood experiences* and *domain knowledge*. An EC's childhood influences his or her creative work by capitalising on childhood experiences (Gardner, 1994). The EC develops extensive domain knowledge by questioning assumptions and through exhaustive exploration of the domain (Gardner, 1994).

Whilst the extraordinary differ substantively from each other, Gardner (1997) proposes that there are four “building blocks” of extraordinariness that can provide an insight into the achievement of these individuals. These are (1) *persons* themselves and their relationships with others; (2) *objects* that the individuals interact with; (3) *symbolic entities* that are associated with particular domains; and (4) *developmental processes* from birth to adulthood. After using the “building blocks” of extraordinariness as the units of analysis in case studies of extraordinary individuals, Gardner identified three features associated with extraordinary individuals. Firstly, extraordinary individuals are noted for their high *reflectivity*. They regularly reflect on the large and small events of their lives and consider these events in relation to longer-term aspirations (Gardner, 1997). Secondly, extraordinary individuals employ *leveraging* successfully. Leveraging is the capacity “to ignore areas of weakness ... (and) use strengths in order to gain a competitive advantage in the domain” (Gardner, 1997, p. 148). Thus, an individual’s “raw powers” are of lesser importance than capitalising on “his” or “her” strengths. Thirdly, extraordinary individuals are adept at *framing* their experiences in order to learn from both positive and negative experiences (Gardner, 1997). Thus, a setback that may cause another to give up becomes a learning experience for the EC. Gardner’s suggestions for how the general populace can engage in the processes of reflectivity, leveraging, and framing provides some insight into the synergistic impact of these three processes in extraordinary individuals:

Discover your difference — the asynchrony with which you have been blessed or cursed — and make the most of it. Make your asynchronies fruitful, blissful. Take stock of your experiences — both those you cherish and those that make you quake — and try to frame them in positive ways. *Positive* here does not mean self-congratulatory; rather, it means that you will try to understand what has happened or what you have done in a way that is most likely to work in your favor in the future [emphasis in original]. (p. 154)

Implicit in definitions of extraordinariness, such as “very unusual” or “remarkable” or “unusually great” (Pearsall, 1998, p. 652), is a value judgement about creativity that involves an individual, a domain of work, and a field of judges (Gardner, 1997). As shown in FIGURE 1, the individual is influenced by their family and community; the domain is subject to cultural influences; and the field of judges is part of the larger society.

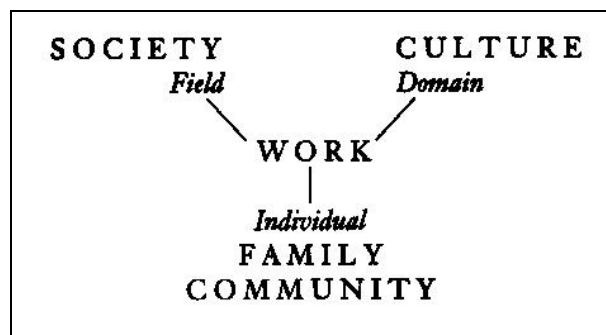


FIGURE 1. Interactions that result in extraordinariness (Gardner, 1997, p. 126).

The five criteria in Sternberg’s (1993) implicit theory of giftedness provides further insight into the interaction between the individual, the domain, and the field. He proposes

an *excellence criterion*, which recognises that an individual will be judged as highly skilled relative to their peers in a particular field. A *rarity criterion* supplements the excellence criterion because it is necessary for the gifted person to possess an attribute that is rare relative to his or her peers. The individual also needs to be able to *demonstrate* through success on valid assessments that he or she is gifted. Finally, a *value* criterion assigned by society reinforces these four criteria.

Although Gardner's EC (1997) was based on case studies of a range of exceptional creators, the judges of these individuals' extraordinariness were adults. What has yet to be established is if Gardner's profile of an EC holds true in domains where the judges of creative contributions are children.

Field: Children as Judges

Adults are the judges in most domains of achievement. However, in the field of children's literature, in addition to adults, children's value judgments are also significant. Both children and adults purchase and borrow books; reread books that they enjoy; and seek books of authors they have previously enjoyed or have been recommended. They also act as book judges and reviewers. Additionally, for many individuals, childhood memories of special books and authors last a lifetime (Stoney, 1974). Although adults do make judgements on children's literature, children's viewpoints are particularly valued. For example, Stoney (1974) reports that Yorkshire Post specifically sought the viewpoints of children to review one of Enid Blyton's books, *Real Fairies*: "To get a just estimate we left the judgement of Miss Blyton's work to a parliament of children. The children loved her work and asked for more" (p. 48). Hence, children's literature provides

an ideal domain for assessing the traits of exceptional creators where the judges are children.

Domain: Children's Literature

Although children's literature is common-place today, it is a relatively new domain. The status quo in children's literature is the outcome of the confluence of a number of forces over the centuries (Russell, 1991). These forces included moveable print and inexpensive printing methods (15th century); the rise of the middle class, the distinction of childhood from adulthood and notions that childhood was important in the development of intellectual reasoning (17th century); and moralistic tales and the publication of old folk tales (18th and 19th centuries). Though tales, including Grimm's folk tales, were initially published for adults, they also had high appeal for children (Russell, 1991). The middle and late 19th centuries are regarded as the golden ages of children's literature (Russell, 1991). During this period many well-loved books were published including Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* (1865), Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1876 and 1884), L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* (1900) and Kenneth Graham's *The Wind in the Willows* (1908). Full colour printing that emerged in the latter half of the 19th century added to the appeal of books. In the early 20th century, authors, such as Beatrix Potter, began creating picture books specifically for young children. The scope of children's literature was further broadened by Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House in the Big Woods* (1932) and its sequels, which are recognised for their historical realism (Russell, 1991). Thus, by the 20th century, the

collection of children's literature had dramatically expanded and authors targeted children as a specific audience as distinct from an adult audience.

METHODOLOGY

It was hypothesised that while eminent children's authors would display some of the traits of Gardner's (1997) EC, they would also as a group, display unique traits. Biographical method (Smith, 1994) was employed to test this hypothesis within a case study. The data consisted of the biographies of children's authors which were used to explore the authors' life spans (Gardner, 1993a). These portraits provided critical tests of Gardner's (1997) EC. The sources used to develop the author portraits are acknowledged at the conclusion of relevant paragraphs. Biographical data were supplemented with the authors' books for children. The author portraits and their children's books were used to identify similarities amongst the authors to create a profile of an ECWC.

The selected children's authors were Enid Blyton, Lewis Carroll, May Gibbs, Beatrix Potter, P. L. Travers and Laura Ingalls Wilder. These authors were selected for five reasons. Firstly, the authors were contemporaries, who were born in English speaking countries within a sixty-year age span in the 19th century. Secondly, the authors' extraordinariness needed to be demonstrated by the quantity and sale of their publications and popularity polls. Thirdly, there has been sufficient time lapse since the publication of these authors' works for the field to make a valid judgement about the inter-generational value of their work. Due to the slowness of judgement within a field, an individual may die before his or her extraordinariness is recognised (Gardner, 1997). Fourthly, in order to

provide a rigorous test, the authors were selected for variance in their strengths of intelligence apart from their obvious linguistic intelligence. For example, Lewis Carroll was also renowned for his logico-mathematical intelligence and Enid Blyton for her visual-spatial intelligence. Thus, between them, the selected authors demonstrate many of Gardner's multiple intelligences (1983, 1993b). Finally, two Australian authors have been included in the group. May Gibbs is renowned for her children's writing about the Australian bush (Holden, 1992) and P. L. Travers' *Mary Poppins* became a highly acclaimed international film. Though lesser known internationally than the others, nevertheless, these authors have made a substantial contribution to children's literature in Australia and elsewhere. Table 1 provides an overview of this set of authors in birth order.

TABLE 1. 19th Century Children's Authors.

Author	Lifespan	Notable character and/or book
Lewis Carroll	1832-1898	<i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
Beatrix Potter	1866-1943	<i>Peter Rabbit</i>
Laura Ingalls Wilder	1867-1957	<i>Little House on the Prairie</i>
May Gibbs	1877-1969	<i>Snugglepot and Cuddlepie</i>
Enid Blyton	1897-1968	<i>Noddy</i>
P. L. Travers	1899-1996	<i>Mary Poppins</i>

CHILDREN'S AUTHORS

Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) (1832-1898) was famous for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which at the time of Carroll's death in 1898 was the most popular children's book in England. *Alice* was also an early movie (1903). Carroll was born the third of eleven children in Cheshire, England. He was a bright articulate boy who sometimes stammered and a precocious reader with an early interest in maths. He had an isolated childhood and invented games to amuse himself and his siblings. Carroll was unhappy at school and his early career in art failed. Although Carroll's father was a minister and despite being ordained, Carroll never entered the church. Instead Carroll became a photographer, logician and mathematician and was an Oxford mathematics lecturer for over sixty years. Carroll was a prolific writer, publishing over 300 works, including mathematics and nonsense books. He kept a diary and purportedly sent and received 98 721 letters in his last thirty-five years. Carroll created the story of *Alice* for a young friend, who persuaded him to write the story down. Carroll also illustrated the story and was approached by a friend to have it published. *Alice* is considered "the perfect creation of the logical and mathematical mind applied to the pure unadulterated amusement of children" (Green, 2000). (Sources: A Firm Foundation, n.d.; Cohen, 1995; Green, 2000; Hudson, 1976; ThinkQuest, n.d; Shaberman, 1995)

(Helen) Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) privately published 250 copies of her first book *Peter Rabbit* in 1901 and by 1903, 50 000 copies had been sold. There is still a thriving market for Potter's books today and various *Peter Rabbit* merchandise. Beatrix Potter was born in Kensington, London. Raised by governesses and experiencing little

interaction with her parents, her childhood was abnormally secluded and lonely. She developed an early interest in books, kept various animals and studied and sketched nature. Her younger brother Bertram was her only friend and he shared her interest in nature. At the age of eight, Potter's artistic talent was recognised and encouraged by her parents. She had private art classes but no other formal education. Potter holidayed in the Lakes District of England and gathered plants, specimens and fossils. At 15, she kept a journal in secret code for the next 15 years and read with a magnifying glass. In adulthood, Potter lived near museums in London and spent time drawing what she saw in microscopes. In 1890, she had a career as an artist and her sketches were issued in greeting cards and to illustrate children's verse. At 27, she wrote picture letters to young friends and years later decided to create a book of these. At 35, she began her career as an author and illustrator with the immortal *Peter Rabbit*. The *Peter Rabbit* series helped lay the foundation for the unified picture book for the very young, which integrated text and pictures (Russell, 1991). In 1905, Potter bought her first farm; and would eventually buy 14 farms and 4000 acres of land, which she left to the National Trust. In 1913, she married at age 47 and focused on being a Lakeland farmer and expert in Herdwick sheep. (Sources: Lane, 1978; VisitCumbria.com, 2005)

Laura Ingalls Wilder (1867-1957) is one of America's most popular children's authors. The American Library Association honoured her by establishing the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award in 1954 for an author or illustrator who has made a "substantial and lasting" contribution to children's literature. Wilder was the first recipient. She was born in Wisconsin (USA) the second of four daughters in a pioneering family. Wilder spent her

early life constantly moving and her only regular schooling was from 13 to 16 years. Her father's storytelling and violin playing was the family's main amusement. Ingalls became a seamstress and a farmer's wife. She also obtained a teacher's certificate and taught for three years. Between 1911 and 1924, she wrote for a rural magazine. In 1931, at the urging of her only child Rose, an established writer, biographer and novelist, she wrote an autobiographical (historical fiction) tale of her childhood memories. In 1932, aged 65, she published her first book, *Little House on the Prairie*. In 1974, *Little House on the Prairie* became a weekly TV series, which aired in the 1970s and 1980s. Wilder's works remain an outstanding example of historical realism in children's literature. (Sources: Irby & Greetham, 2004; Russell, 1991)

(Cecilia) May Gibbs (1877-1969) is renowned as the "Mother of the Gumnuts". Her most famous book, *Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie*, sold 17 000 copies on its first release in 1918 and is now regarded as an Australian children's classic. May Gibbs was honoured as a Member of the British Empire [MBE] for her services to children's literature. May Gibbs was born in England to artistic parents. She moved to Perth in Australia at the age of four. Gibbs published her first book *Gumnut Babies and Gum Blossom Babies* in 1916. This was followed in 1918 with *Tales of Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie*, which was published six weeks before Christmas. *Snugglepoot and Cuddlepie* was enormously successful with 5 000 copies selling out. It was reprinted in January and March and was one of the first Australian books to rival popular English books. Between 1920 and 1942, Gibbs published further books and postcards, calendars, fabrics, pottery, comic strips, and cartoons (e.g., *Bib and Bub*). The common theme in Gibbs' work was her deep love of

the Australian bush, which she delighted in sharing with children. (Sources: History Smiths, 1999; Walsh, 1985)

Enid (Mary) Blyton (1897-1968) is acclaimed as the “most widely read children’s author of all time” and has been nicknamed the “Boadicea of British Children’s Literature”. Blyton wrote more than 700 books and 10 000 short stories. Her works have been translated into over 70 languages and she has annual sales of 10 million books. However, she is rarely acknowledged in listings of children’s authors. Enid Blyton was born in London and had a less than happy childhood. She was schooled in the belief that she would be a musician. Blyton won a poetry competition at fourteen and published her first book *Child Whispers* in 1922. To escape a musical career, Blyton became a kindergarten teacher and taught for five years. She wrote stories, poems and songs for *Teachers’ World* and attracted a wider audience in the 1930s. Blyton wrote for hours every day and her writing included novels, plays, poetry, nature books and other non-fictional works. Amongst her notable series were *Noddy and Friends*, *The Famous Five*, and *The Secret Seven*. Her books were heavily criticised in the 1950s and 1960s for their limited vocabulary. Additionally, the *Noddy* books featuring Noddy, Mr Plod the policemen and the Golliwog were targeted for racism, sexism and snobbishness and were banned in libraries for many years. However, notwithstanding the negatives, the fantasy in Blyton’s books has enormous appeal for children according to Brian Patten, a poet:

God bless you Enid Blyton - I read your stories sitting on a cushion in a back alleyway in Liverpool. You helped me escape from a drab world. Hidden tunnels, lost passageways, the whole lichen-coated paraphernalia of forbidden places poured into my head and washed what seemed mundane reality aside. Your writing was repetitive and clumsy and bigoted, your villains were stereotyped, your characters all wooden, but so what? You transported a million children beyond the reach of the grown-up-thou-shalt-not-world. (Mzansi Afrika, 2004)

According to psychologist Michael Woods the secret of Blyton's books was her child-likeness (Stoney, 1974): "She was a child, she thought as a child and she wrote as a child" (p. 220). (Sources: Greensfield, 1998; Mzansi Afrika, 2004; Smallwood, 1989; Stoney, 1974).

P. L. Travers (Helen Lyndon Goff) (1899-1996) was an Australian who worked as a journalist, actress and writer. She published the famous *Mary Poppins* in 1934. The source of her inspiration for *Mary Poppins* is thought to be a combination of her desire for an extra mother and her experience of a punishing governess, who had a saying for every occasion. Travers acknowledged this inspired combination of reality and fantasy (Lawson, 1999):

Every Mary Poppins story has something out of my own experience ... several record my dreary childhood penance of going for a walk. But against that is set the blissful forgiving moment of going at bedtime when the fire was lit when I suddenly felt so very good. (p. 50)

Travers had an unsettled childhood. Her father died young leaving the family destitute, which forced them to move in with relatives. Throughout her life Travers continued searching for someone and somewhere to be happy. In all, there were four books in the *Mary Poppins* series and these books created a prototype for womanhood. *Mary Poppins* was Americanised and immortalised in the Disney movie of the same name, which was first released in 1964 and won five Oscars. The movie has been re-released and has been continuously available on video. (Sources: Disney Online, n.d.; Lawson, 1999)

FINDINGS

The findings of the analysis of the set of exceptional children's authors are reported for each hypothesis. Firstly, outstanding children's authors would demonstrate the traits of an EC. Secondly, outstanding children's authors' would collectively display unique traits.

Traits of Outstanding Children's Authors Compared to the Traits of an Exceptional Creator

The hypothesis that outstanding children's authors would share the characteristics of Gardner's EC was supported. Firstly, these authors recalled and exploited their childhood experiences. For example, P. L. Travers' Mr Banks shared many of the features of her banker father. This link between their childhood and fantasy is recognised by some of the authors. Blyton reports to recognising many things from her childhood in her stories, such as a child, a dog, and a castle. Secondly, the authors also developed substantive domain knowledge of children's literature. They invested time and were strategic in becoming experts in childhood through their relationships and their associations with

various experts in the domain. Additionally, the tendency to strike out on their own was noted in the diversity of authors' works, which were groundbreaking in various ways. For example, Lewis Carroll's *Alice* was the first significant publication that abandoned all pretence of instruction (Russell, 1991). The authors paid close attention to the quality of their groundbreaking work. They sought collegial advice from experts, and importantly, they also valued feedback from the field; that is children themselves (e.g., Stoney, 1974).

Unique Traits of Outstanding Children's Authors

The hypothesis that outstanding children's authors would demonstrate a common set of specific traits was also supported and four distinct traits were identified.

Firstly, the authors had extended links to childhood or children through friendships and career choices.

- Enid Blyton was regarded by a psychologist as a child.
- Lewis Carroll was perceived as a perpetual child; a dreamer of children; and had many child-friends.
- May Gibbs' writing focussed on fostering children's love of the Australian bush
- Beatrix Potter had many child friends and a delayed adulthood.
- P. L. Travers wished for an extra mother.
- Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote about her life as a child.

Secondly, the authors are united in their creation of "new worlds" for children that are apart from the everyday world. For example, Lewis Carroll created *Wonderland* as a tale

for a young friend, Alice. Other new worlds were created during the authors' childhoods to help them deal with social isolation. These worlds were varied.

- Enid Blyton's worlds were fantasy and fun.
- Lewis Carroll's world was Wonderland.
- May Gibbs' world was a fantasy of the Australian bush.
- Beatrix Potter's world was a fantasy of farm life.
- P. L. Travers' created the magical world of *Mary Poppins*.
- Laura Ingalls Wilder's world was a recreation of the world of a pioneering family.

In contrast to the real world, in the worlds created by these authors, the viewpoints of children, animals, and fantasy creatures dominated and much was possible. The animals talked, people shrank and grew, life was different, and there were new rules.

Thirdly, the authors' books contained pictures and conversation — a feature that appeals to children as noted by Carroll (1993) within *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

Alice was beginning to get very tired of sitting by her sister on the bank and of having nothing to do. Once or twice she had peeped into the book her sister was reading. But it had no pictures or conversations in it. "And what is the use of a book", thought Alice, "without pictures or conversation?".(p. 9)

The artwork in the picture books was particularly important because both the text and pictures contributed to the story. The settings in picture books are often described simply in the text. In contrast, the visual elements of the pictures that set the scene can be highly

detailed (Russell, 1991). However, in a good picture book, the drawings are neither too simplistic nor too sophisticated (Lobel, 1981).

Finally, each of these authors exhibited strong visual-spatial intelligence, which was used within their books in various forms such as water colours (Gibbs, Potter), illustrations (Potter, Gibbs, Blyton, Carroll), visual puzzles (Carroll), codes (Potter, Carroll), spatial sense of the three-dimensional world (Travers, Wilder) and by capitalising on imagery (Blyton). Blyton acknowledged the importance of imagery in a letter she wrote to Peter McKellar, a psychologist, in 1953 (Stoney, 1974):

In my case the imagery began as a young child. In bed I used to shut my eyes and 'let my mind go free' ... Because of this imagining I wanted to write ... I shut my eyes for a few minutes, with my portable typewriter on my knee —I make my mind a blank — and then, as clearly as I would see real children, my characters stand before me in my mind's eye ... The story is enacted in my mind's eye almost as if I had a private cinema screen there ... I don't know what is going to happen. I am in the happy position of being able to write a story and read it for the first time, at one and the same moment ... this imaginative creative work is quite different from thinking work. (pp. 205-206)

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Through a retrospective analysis, this study has confirmed that the selected outstanding children's authors share the traits of Gardner's Exceptional Creator [EC], namely their use of childhood experiences and their tendencies to question assumptions and strike out on their own, and to explore their domains exhaustively. Additionally, this study also

identified four unique traits of an Exceptional Creator to the World of Children [ECWC]. The selected authors had extended links to childhood; they were united in their creation of “new worlds”; their books contained pictures and conversation; and their books demonstrated various forms of visual-spatial intelligence. It should be noted however, that the results from the case study of these selected children’s authors should not be generalised to the broader population of children authors irrespective of any similarities, such as nationality or time period. Notwithstanding this limitation, the study constituted a critical test of Gardner’s (1997) EC and provided insight into the profile of an ECWC. The veracity of the ECWC could be the subject of future research.

The outcomes of this study also have methodological and pedagogical implications. Methodologically, the use of children as the field judges of a domain is uncommon in research studies. However, in addition to children’s literature, there are domains in which children’s voices need to be heard, for example video games. Children’s voices in decision making about the quality of products in particular fields add the authenticity of the end users’ perspective to the perspectives of parents and educators. At a broader level, the inclusion of children as active contributors to decision making processes about their lives mirrors legal and medical practices which are increasingly recognising the rights of children to have a say in decisions that affect them, such as parental custody and medical treatment. Pedagogically, there are also lessons about the importance of creative play with these ECWCs exhibiting extended links to childhood, imaginary friends, and fantasy worlds. Creative play is acknowledged as an important forum for cognitive and social development and also for its therapeutic value. Thus, just as it is important to identify and

nurture gifted individuals who may become valued contributors in the adult world, it is equally important to identify and nurture those who have the potential to contribute richly to the lives of children.

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Everyone is the age of their heart ~ Guatemalan Proverb

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