

RECONCEPTUALISING TEACHER-CHILD DIALOGUE
IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION: A BAKHTINIAN
APPROACH

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Abstract

This thesis argues that a Bakhtinian dialogic approach holds possibilities for reconceptualising and re-enacting teacher–child dialogue interactions in early years education. It accepts education as open-ended, with children as active participants and frames teacher–child dialogues as unique encounters, which can go beyond children’s neoliberal enculturation in the world. Neoliberal discourses have exerted an important influence on early years education, emphasising universal “best evidence” strategies and narrowly defined learning “outcomes” which can lead to technicist approaches to teaching and learning.

The study explores the dialogic interactions between children aged from 3½ to 5 years and their teachers in two early childhood settings. In a dialogic methodological approach, two of the teachers and myself as a researcher critically engaged in collaborative discussions of selected video recordings of the teacher–child interactions.

A Bakhtinian concept of moral answerability applies to the collaborative dialogic approach between teachers and researcher. It goes beyond teaching as a technical approach with universal strategies, to provide guidance for teachers in the unique lived experiences with their students. A dialogic reflexivity, which is employed both pedagogically and as a methodological approach in the study, is aligned with Bakhtin’s philosophy of praxis in everyday life experiences. A second Bakhtinian notion of polyphony explains how each person accesses multiple voices in response, which are shaped simultaneously by unique previous experiences and the encounter itself. In educational dialogue, polyphony can open up a view of dialogue as open-ended and providing different possibilities; it can allow for more meaningful responses by students and more respectful listening from teachers. Furthermore, young children’s carnivalesque utterances are viewed as challenging authoritative, monologic discourses when analysed through a Bakhtinian lens. For Bakhtin,

subjectivity is not only shaped *in* and *through* dialogue; it also in turn shapes present and future dialogue. Dialogue is therefore inevitably intertwined with subjectivity.

Findings show that teaching in early childhood settings involves a complex mix of both monologic and dialogic acts. Dialogic processes can provide alternative understandings of children and teachers as agentic and unfinalised. At times, children were engaged in carnivalesque acts, resisting authoritative teaching through their play, chanting and non-verbal communication, thereby making visible the institutionalisation of children and teachers in early childhood settings. It is suggested that children who are active participants in their education need to be given opportunities for carnivalesque responses. Furthermore, when early childhood teachers have opportunities to critically reflect on children's utterances in a collaborative dialogue with colleagues, they can gain a more complex understanding of teacher-child dialogue, enabling them to answer morally to the children in their care. Ongoing dialogic encounters with the teachers provided multiple perspectives of the data, resulting in changes to their teaching practices and routines. The findings of the study hold important implications for teaching and for in-service and pre-service teacher education. I suggest that respectful dialogic approaches between teachers and researchers hold pedagogical and methodological potential and, when used thoughtfully, can counteract neoliberal, technicist interventions. In relation to both pre-service and in-service teacher education, the study speaks to the importance of teachers being equipped to engage in open-ended dialogue with children and collaborative dialogues with peers. Drawing on Bakhtin's concept of moral answerability, this thesis is an utterance asking for an active response not only in everyday teacher-child dialogues, but also in the ongoing, open-ended dialogue about early childhood education and, in particular, teacher-child dialogue. It leaves unfinalised not only children and adults, but also the subject of teacher-child dialogue. There is no first utterance and no last word; Bakhtinian dialogue views both children and adults as becoming.

Preface

The empirical research for this thesis was carried out in Christchurch, between 2009 and 2012. I will not only remember this period for the wonderful relationships with the participating teachers Gemma and Tracy and the friendships of the children in the participating childcare centres; that period is etched in my memory for the 10,000 or so earthquakes that we experienced in and around our city. For a while, the importance of my PhD study paled in comparison with basic survival and finding cover when there was yet another earthquake. Data collection stopped for a year or so; everyone's mind was on other things. In a Bakhtinian sense the earthquakes brought home carnivalesque elements of living: the grotesque shaking of the earth, the destruction of the city infrastructure, the ruins. The formal world stopped for a while; all public places closed and there only was an unofficial world, of neighbours supporting and hugging each other in the street. The earthquakes also had a huge impact on the early childhood centres and the teachers, especially Jacarinda Street centre, which lost many families, who moved away from the city. Many early childhood teachers became an even stronger support for families. As all lived experiences, the earthquakes and all its consequences greatly affected our subjectivities. They foregrounded the importance of relationships and support for each other and made it painfully obvious how we live in an uncertain, unfinalised and open-ended world.

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Dedication

For my grandchildren Louis and Felix and all children yet to be born.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Kia puāwai koe ki te ao

Ka kitea ō painga

So you shall blossom into the world

and the world in turn is transformed.

(Hirini Melbourne, Ministry of Education, 2004)

This thesis uses a Bakhtinian dialogic approach to rethink a more complex view of teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings. It accepts an open-ended curriculum with children as active participants and it frames teacher–child dialogues as unique encounters that can go beyond children’s neoliberal enculturation in the world. In this introduction, I start with explanations what is understood by dialogue and what is understood by teacher–child dialogue. Before we can study teacher–child dialogue, or any teaching/learning tools for that matter, it is important to define the purpose of education, as this determines what is important to talk about and thus informs what teacher–child dialogue might look like. A brief overview of the history of education and a similarly brief explanation of dominant neoliberal discourses lead into a discussion of current New Zealand education policy, which clarifies the policy context in which this project took place. Thereafter a section on my personal context in relation to the topic explains how I arrived at the topic of teacher–child dialogue and my interest in it. Lastly, the content of the following chapters is summarised.

What Is Dialogue?

According to the *Oxford English online dictionary*, the English term *dialogue* stems from the

old French *dialogue*, taken in turn from the Greek *dialogos*, which loosely translates as *converse with* or *speaking through* (Stevenson, 2014). A number of scholars have further defined dialogue. Although their definitions have similarities, they also differ depending on the author's view of dialogue and its purpose, as will be discussed in more detail in this chapter. Burbules (1993) and Kazepides (2012a) argue that dialogue is continuous with conversation or chatting, although it is more serious and challenging; it may also lead to new understandings. In addition, Burbules and Kazepides reinforce that dialogue does not have a predetermined destination; dialogue accepts that there are different views, but it expects a commitment to communicate. In contrast to problem-solving sessions, dialogue need not lead to consensus, but both parties may gain a deeper understanding. This view of dialogue perhaps has an ideal of dialogue in mind, with an emphasis on cognitive understandings.

For Wells (2007), the essence of the term dialogue is that the conversation is *with* someone; there has to be a relationship. Wells reasons that the motivation for interaction between an infant and his or her caregiver is the emotional bond between them. It is the relationship between them or their inter-subjectivity, driving the desire to interact, that is at the heart of all dialogic encounters.

Linell (2009) differentiates dialogue from monologue, which in its simplest form can be explained as a lengthy speech by a single speaker; dialogue can be verbal or non-verbal interaction, with turn-taking between two or more participants. Monologism has long been at the heart of Western thinking, foregrounding universal theories, rational subjects and stable cultures. Dialogue on the other hand is subjective, constantly evolving in a dynamic culture. Linell explains that in society at large there is a concept of true or ideal dialogue, which contains elements of harmony, openness, egalitarianism, empathy and consensus. This understanding of dialogue tends to be based on a dominant type of knowledge, without any consideration of power or multiple voices. Linell prefers a more complex, abstract view of

dialogue as any sense-making, semiotic practice, interaction or communication; this includes dialogue with the self, with text or with ideas. Philosophical approaches, including Bakhtinian studies, tend to follow the latter, more complex understanding of dialogue.

The related term *dialogism* refers to dialogical theory. Dialogism can be described as both an epistemology for the human sciences and an ontology for the human mind (Marková, cited in Linell, 2009). Linell (2009) names the following as essential parts of dialogue: an other-orientation, interactivity and contextuality, both in time and place and lastly mediation through language or other semiotic systems (pp. 13–14). Mediation is most often through language, but it can also be perceptive (through our bodies or senses). Linell argues that a message always has a context; without any information about the situation, we cannot understand what is happening. Lastly, Linell associates dialogue with values: perspectives or meanings we form as a result of dialogue are always biased or shaped by our ideas about good or bad.

The concept of dialogue is most often linked to the Greek classics. Plato viewed dialogue as the most important tool for teaching as it leads to rational knowledge (Burbules, 1993; Kazepides, 2012a). Plato makes the important distinction that *logos* or reason develops out of human activities: our thinking is not something we already hold in our mind; rather, it is obtained through language in dialogue, linking our thinking to the sociocultural and political conditions of dialogue (Kazepides, 2012b, p. 914). Dialogue can thus be seen as the fundamental link between philosophy and education. Dewey (cited in Burbules, 1993) views education as the laboratory in which philosophic directions become concrete and are tested (p. 1). The next section discusses dialogue in educational settings.

In trying to define dialogue, there is a risk that elements of the definition may become normative and definitive, implying that there is only one correct way or a particular standard

of dialogue. It needs to be noted that any attempt to fully define dialogue automatically turns the dialogue about dialogue into a monologic event, describing what dialogue ought to be and thereby finalising the definition, which is in direct contrast with what dialogue aims to do.

Teacher–Child Dialogue

Educationalists such as Alexander (2004), Burbules (1993), Claxton (2008) Kazepides (2012a) Lefstein (2006), Matusov (2009), Mercer and Littleton (2007) Wegerif (2006) and Wells (2007) see dialogic education as an important, if not the most important tool in education. British educationalist Claxton (2008) draws on sociocultural perspectives to emphasise the importance of teacher–child dialogue. He states that children’s ability to think critically can be related directly to the structure and content of their talk. In dialogue, children build relationships and develop their communication and social skills. Dialogue is holistic: it brings together all that one has learned before. Claxton argues that the skills and habits children develop in dialogue will provide them with better support to think for themselves in a future and uncertain world than a traditional style of teaching involving transmission of knowledge.

As Alexander (2004) and Mercer and Littleton (2007) see it, classroom talk is more than social action; it is also a social mode of thinking. Children should be not only supported to participate, but also scaffolded to build on ideas collectively. Currently, as the review of the literature of teacher–child dialogue in Chapter 3 shows, teacher–child conversations tend to follow a distinctive pattern in which teachers ask, children respond and teachers give feedback. Alexander (2004), whose large-scale comparative study in classroom dialogue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, believes that dialogue empowers young people to take charge of their own learning; it is respectful and it develops critical thinking skills. Classroom dialogue requires teachers to pay attention to what children say. Paley (1986) explains how initially she judged her teaching on whether the children gave the correct answers, but then

learned from children's actions that teachers must be curious about the child's words and listen carefully.

While agreeing with Alexander, Lefstein (2006) extends his approach to more open-ended dialogue that is critical of the educational situation, where participants identify and investigate open questions and points of contention within the group. Lefstein also argues that dialogue needs to be meaningful for participants, with topics that relate to their own world so they can co-construct new understandings. How teacher-child dialogues are defined, practised and analysed depends to a large extent not only on how children and teachers are constructed, but also on what is perceived to be the purpose of education. It can be argued that while most of the above educationalists favour dialogic teaching, their research is still mostly based on empirical studies situated in a Western scientific paradigm.

In Noddings' (2011) view, we cannot find the answer in empirical research; instead, we need a philosophical methodology to make valued education transparent. She argues that every society should define what they view as the aim of education, both for the wellbeing of the people in their communities and for the future of the earth. Similarly Farquhar and White (2014) ask researchers to pay attention to what is seen as important learning, whose knowledge counts and what it means to be a teacher; they believe that a philosophy-based pedagogy can counterbalance the increase in neoliberal and market-driven government policies. Education—including, as discussed in the following sections, early childhood education—is always a complex matter. As Peters (2012) reminds us, “Education, philosophy and politics are all interconnected; they are at the heart of Western tradition in its pursuit of the good life” (p. 1). Although early childhood education is not part of compulsory

schooling,¹ it will become clear in the following sections that it has been and continues to be influenced by what is viewed as the purpose of both educational and political contexts. Any discussion about dialogue in early years must therefore make its philosophical underpinnings transparent and must be viewed in the political context of its time. Before turning to how dominant global neoliberal discourses affect education both globally and in New Zealand, I briefly discuss the philosophy of childhood and the purpose of education. In a later section, I discuss philosophical approaches of dialogue.

A Brief History of the Philosophy of Childhood and Education

As Ariès (1962) argues, childhood in Western societies is not a natural concept, but a cultural and historical construction. Furthermore, it is an *adult* construction. Long before young children attended institutions set up to educate and care for young children and before early childhood education became a focus for research in itself, the young child was the object of

¹ Although early years education is not compulsory, the current government strongly endorses it: “...engagement in ECE helps to develop strong foundations for future learning success...[which] may be particularly important for building academic achievement in children from poorer communities and socio-economic backgrounds” (Mitchell et al., 2008, cited in Ministry of Education, 2014a).

The same website states, “ECE has been shown to positively impact literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills well into the teenage years, while other studies have shown that high quality ECE encourages the development of cognitive and attitudinal competencies, and leads to higher levels of achievement and better social outcomes” (Ministry of Education, 2014a).

The Ministry of Education closely monitors participation rates: 96% of children who started school had attended ECE in the year ending June 2013, up from 90% in 2000. Average hours spent per week is around 22 hours for both older (three- and four-year-olds) and younger (two years and under) age groups. New Zealand is ranked in the top third of countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for participation in early childhood education (Ministry of Education, 2014a).

study. Dunne (2006) briefly outlines the history of childhood in Europe. During the Middle Ages, adults and children alike were simply absorbed into adult life. At the time of the Renaissance, due to inhibitions about anything related to the body and new rules related to privacy, children had to be taught. Next, as a result of industrialisation, the importance of the nuclear family evolved. This concept emphasised that the mother stays at home with the children; it also helped define childhood differently, as children were delayed from starting adult tasks (Baker, 1998). From this notion of childhood, early childhood practices were developed, as will be discussed briefly.

From the 17th century onwards, a range of theorists such as Pestalozzi, Froebel and Rousseau saw in each child a potential for good, a view that liberated the child from external discipline and fostered the child's individual discipline. However, these theories were not often put into practice (Singer, 2005). As a result of pedagogical approaches of Froebel, Montessori and Isaacs, progressive play pedagogies were developed from the 19th century, opposing the stricter rote learning in nursery schools. Singer (2005) argues that practices needed to be developed to teach children about life skills and norms, as children were no longer learning these through participation in everyday adult life. The early childhood field largely emerged from Piaget's developmental psychology, based on empirical observations, which provided information on how to best teach young children (Farquhar & Fitzsimmons, 2008). However, the theory on the normalised stages of development towards becoming a competent adult also created discourses of deficit children, in particular where these children were "other" in race or in mental ability (Baker, 1998). In the 21st century, many young children spend longer hours than ever before in childcare centres because their parents are at work. Singer (2005) argues that childcare centres are cultural inventions, with norms of what is worthwhile learning, which shape interactions and discipline children. She advocates for children's active participation, which may overcome routines and mechanical practice; this

view of children as active participants is also supported by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations General Assembly, 1989). The academic field currently promotes a view of children as “beings not becomings”, taking children’s perspectives seriously (Clark, 2005, p. 489).²

To summarise this brief overview of the complex history of childhood, there are many culturally and historically shaped adult concepts of childhood; childhood is not neutral or objective, nor has it progressed in a linear fashion. These different views of childhood are relevant to this study, as they greatly affect how adults talk to children; when children are seen as beings rather than becomings, teachers are more likely to seek their perspectives, whereas practice aligned with a deficit discourse would lead to the use of a transmission model. It needs to be emphasised that Being, as further discussed in the section on subjectivity in Chapter 3, should not be seen in a fixed sense but as an ongoing formation of a dialogical self (Peers & Fleer, 2014).

Historically, formal education has been conceptualised around the idea of the cultivation of the individual through discipline, socialisation and moral training. This view of education stems from the Greek ideal of an educated person who has acquired clearly defined knowledge and who has been trained to think in a certain way for a particular profession (Biesta, 2006; Gilbert, 2005; Kennedy, 2002; Popkewitz, 1998; Tobin, 1997; Wells & Arauz, 2006). At the end of the 18th century, after Kant’s call for rational autonomy, education was seen as the means to achieve universal reason through the cultivation of “free thinking” individuals. In modern education, the ability to think became known as the process of

² Clark’s becoming should not be confused with a Bakhtinian *becoming*, which is seen as desirable in this study. Clark’s becoming depicts a deficit view of children still developing towards adulthood and therefore unable to contribute. A Bakhtinian becoming refers to both adults and children, who are always unfinalised.

knowledge acquisition, coupled with understanding, which developed in the mind (Vanderstraeten & Biesta, 2006). Education was mostly monologic in a transmission model in which the teacher is the expert who passes on knowledge to the student (Gilbert, 2005; Wegerif, 2006).

During the 20th century, critical theories, and in particular poststructuralist and postmodern thinking, initiated a process that, according to Gilbert (2005), is shifting educational philosophy towards sociocultural theories of multiple pathways and contextualised learning where students are active participants in the production of knowledge. The New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* (Ministry of Education, 1996) is widely accepted as a sociocultural document, with its strong emphasis on learning in context and its foundation principles of empowering students in their learning and of learning in reciprocal relationships (Education Review Office, 2007).

Influence of Global Neoliberal Discourses in Education

However, as stated above, education is a complex and also a highly political matter. Popkewitz (1998) argues, and Bakhtin would agree, that pedagogy and pedagogical research are governing practices, not overtly in classrooms, but through their principles that order, divide and distinguish the actions of teaching and childhood. Furthermore, pedagogical research privileges a particular idea of progress. The role of science is still seen as saving the child and society. It is assumed that social science serves ideals of empowerment and emancipation but, as Popkewitz argues, power relations and power imbalances are often concealed.

It can be argued that currently most of the world is in the grips of (economic) neoliberal ideology, which originates from capitalist thinking. The term *neoliberal* was widely used to describe the economic policy of Margaret Thatcher in the United Kingdom

and Ronald Reagan in the United States of America in the 1980s. At the heart of this discourse is economic rationality, largely based on efficiency and cost-cutting analyses by privileging private business, a minimal role for the state, fewer rules, and free trade. Underlying neoliberal policies is faith in the fairness and justice of the market: the free market rules.

Although neoliberalism is a global phenomenon, it is manifested in different forms, depending on local contexts. Neoliberalism was accepted more or less uncritically in New Zealand. After New Zealand's largely state-run economy lost a substantial part of its British market to Europe, reducing welfare and following a free market approach were seen as a solution, particularly after the interventionist strategies of the Muldoon governments in the 1970s and 1980s (Kelsey, cited in Duhn, 2006). New Zealand gave up on the ideal of the welfare state and wholeheartedly embarked on a radical reform as a neoliberal state in less than 10 years, much faster than other countries (Roberts, 2004). As a result, both the Labour and National governments since the 1980s made major structural changes to the education system to bring it in line with neoliberal ideals.

The neoliberal political context has greatly affected and continues to affect education, promoting a vision of students as human capital in a global and competitive economy (Apple, 2006; Davies, 2009). As Peters (2013) notes, since the end of the 20th century, hallmarks of the economy such as marketisation, privatisation and commercialisation have become firmly established in educational institutions around the world. Another significant change that Davies (2009) observes is that three decades of neoliberalism have led governments to require standards-based performance and to tie this to funding. Neoliberal education is obsessed with narrowly defined outcomes and defined strategies to achieve those outcomes in order to produce workers. For example, schools receive (higher) funding if they literally buy into educational programmes and strategies that focus on future employment. In summary, as

Apple (2006) puts it, education is a “vast supermarket” (p. 10) where consumers buy the education they want. The result is a widening division between rich and poor: between those who can afford to pay have access to better schooling and those who cannot.

Further, Biesta (2006), an educational philosopher who engages with the works of Dewey, Derrida and Arendt among others, explains how education is currently influenced by three main political trends, largely driven by neoliberal politics and economic goals. One, education is seen as an economic transaction in which the learner is a consumer with particular needs and the educator is the provider. Two, education is seen as a commodity to be delivered flexibly to the learner’s needs, with value for money and perhaps the view that the customer is always right (student-initiated learning). Three, educational institutions become more accountable for the funding they receive. Perhaps this view of education has become so normalised (Foucault, 1980) that at first sight all of the above trends may be perceived as common sense. However, Biesta (2006) warns against comparing education with the economy. Learners cannot be seen as economic customers who always know what they want. This view denies education as a means to find out who you are and what you want to do, with teachers as the professionals who support students in this aim.

The idea of meeting predefined learners’ needs suggests there is a framework with technical questions about process and effectiveness, leaving out important questions about purpose and content. Arendt (1958) questions if it is possible for a human being to be the object of its own knowledge; she argues that, while we can know all the things that surround us, we cannot know ourselves in that way, which would be like jumping over one’s own shadow (p. 10). When teachers only provide what is asked for, education that supports learners to go beyond themselves becomes impossible. Education is thus limited to a socialisation into an existing society, denying children the opportunity to transform the

world—the opportunity that Hirini Melbourne wished for his son in the oriori (lullaby) at the start of this chapter.

As discussed above, education worldwide is affected by the pressure of neoliberal discourses to improve performance, informed by predetermined outcomes which are generally economically defined (Nuthall, 2007). Clear examples of this influence are league tables and international student monitoring systems. In 2010 the New Zealand government imposed standardised testing in numeracy and literacy in primary schools for the first time (despite unprecedented opposition from teachers). As reported in the section on New Zealand policy above, the Ministry of Education website explains to parents that learning in early childhood education is linked to these standards.

Technicist education is seen in its widest sense as a means to bring about certain ends. Parents are encouraged to see themselves as consumers, expecting schools to deliver educational outcomes. Standardisation and the view of students as consumers assume that education achieves certain outcomes. This assumption may be fine for students who meet these set outcomes. However, there are many students who fail and, when they do, evidence-based research is called for to find the right technical strategies to overcome these difficulties (Todd, 2009), as empirical research on teacher–child dialogue in early years education shows (see Chapter 3). It is not surprising that governments fund mostly evidence-based research (see Carr, 2011; Cullen et al., 2009 in Chapter 3). Yet, as Farquhar and Fitzsimmons (2008) argue, a regulated, outcomes-based model does not provide for students' critical reflection. Educational programmes that prioritise these standards and constant monitoring have a narrow approach to education, leave no room for open-ended education and do not suit all learners. There are too many other disadvantages to a narrow economic approach to discuss in detail in this thesis. They may be summarised in Roberts' (2004) observation that the

market model falls short of providing equal opportunities for all students; he concludes that questions as to whether it is the only game or even the best game are not often asked (p. 361).

Not only governments but also international organisations such as the World Bank (Moss, 2008a) have an agenda for early childhood education alongside economic and social goals. The dominant discourse of informing the agendas of these organisations is based on Western values; most of the research is in English and from English-speaking countries. It draws mostly on child development theories that favour technical practices based on what is seen as a universal scientific truth. Similar to governments, it is driven by economic outcomes, taking linear progress and certainty for granted, and using terminology such as *best practice*, *quality*, *benchmark* and *school readiness* (Moss, 2008a). Its dominance is directly related to neoliberal trends. As discussed in the next section, the early childhood sector in New Zealand reflects these global political influences. These in turn influence early childhood practices such as teacher–child dialogue. For example, a recent Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report, cited on the Ministry of Education website, outlines the positive outcomes of early childhood education “well into the teenage years” (OECD report, 2011, cited in Ministry of Education, 2014a).

New Zealand Policy Framework in Relation to Teacher–Child Dialogue

The child that played is replaced by regulated learning-to-learn learners, an automaton to fit the industrial system. (Alcock, 2013, p. 29)

The eyes of the New Zealand politician are now firmly focused on the early childhood education sector. Until recently, the early childhood sector, as a non-compulsory education sector, was largely left alone. However, due to the rising demand for childcare as a result of the growth in the number of mothers of young children who are in paid employment, coupled with

a concern for what is perceived to be “quality” early childhood education that leads to future economic growth, policies related to early childhood have proliferated in the last two decades.

The New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* (Ministry of Education, 1996) (hereafter generally referred to as TW), was the first early childhood curriculum in the world. It has been widely praised and has inspired the development of similar early childhood curricula around the world. As discussed above, curriculum frameworks are generally presented to reflect current thinking that is related to the purpose of education. During the 20th century, constructivist theories prompted a shift in educational philosophy towards sociocultural practices of multiple pathways and contextualised learning, where students are seen as active participants in the production of knowledge (Gilbert, 2005). In early childhood education, sociocultural theories led to a focus on teachers supporting children’s dispositional learning and child-initiated activities.

TW can be seen as an attempt to move education beyond passive transmission of learning to education that enables a more active role for the students. The document has clearly been influenced by emerging sociocultural theories of empowering students to be active participants in their learning, a view of learning as holistic, and a view that ascribes importance to both the relationships established in the learning process and the context in which students learn (Carr & May, 1993). Writing the early childhood curriculum entailed extensive collaboration with the early childhood community, resulting in a document that reflects the vision of early childhood academics, educators and families. Local educational values were also included; for example, participation by Māori and Pacific families was a clear focus (Farquhar and Gibbons, 2010). Although these principles aim high, Duhn (2006) points out that educational theories do not exist in a vacuum; the global neoliberal reform discussed above links education to the economy and influences how TW is interpreted. For

its part, TW, as discussed by one of its authors, also reflects neoliberal discourses with an image of the entrepreneurial and global child (May, 2001).

Because society and education are complex concepts, the TW curriculum cannot be seen solely as a neoliberal government tool. Blaise and Nuttall (2011) unpack some of the complexities of children's learning; they explain how the curriculum is influenced by what teachers want students to learn (the intended curriculum), which is not necessarily the same as what actually happens in the enacted curriculum. At the same time, children learn things without the teacher realising (the hidden curriculum); Stephenson (2009) explains that the null curriculum is about what teachers do not want children to learn; and the lived curriculum is what children experience. In later chapters, the discussions of the teacher–child interactions in this study reflect these different perspectives of the curriculum, in that what the children learn and experience is quite different from what the teachers intend. Teachers in this study saw themselves as implementing the TW curriculum, without realising that their structured, teacher-led programme did not leave much room for children's initiatives.

While TW does not prescribe specific practice, it provides some guidance in relation to teacher–child dialogue. Several suggested practices endorse the active participation of students in dialogue (de Vocht, 2011). For example, TW offers the following suggestion to support the development of language skills: “Adults provide opportunities for young children to have sustained conversations, to ask questions and to take the initiative in conversations” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 77). Adults are called on to challenge young people and to support them in contexts that are increasingly wide-ranging and complex. TW's non-prescriptive design for practice is seen by teachers and academics as both a strength and a weakness. While it allows for reflective teaching, teachers need to make their own choices about content (Avestad, Duncan & Berge, 2009). However, Duhn (2006) believes that TW's highly flexible structure and non-prescriptive approach do not support teachers to develop

critical perspectives because teachers can easily defend any practice as being aligned with TW. Recently, when I asked student teachers if they could give an example of practices that supported children to be empowered in their own learning, one of the students offered an example of a teacher, in the centre where she did her practicum, who allowed the children to choose which colour bib they would like.

Looking at TW, it seems that government policy has the child's interest and wellbeing at heart. However, Alcock (2013) points out that more recent policy documents for early childhood education rarely mention the word *play*. This word, she argues, along with the words *care* and *development*, have been replaced by narrowly defined learning outcomes. Apart from advocacy for play, Alcock believes that the term *development* is a more holistic term than the current term of *education*; development is more embodied, as it pays more attention to physical bodies, as well as to emotion and spirituality. I recall that, at the end of the 20th century, the term development was used more often in early childhood contexts, but there was a shift to replace it with the term education. For example, where previously the name Individual Development Plan was used for the specific learning plan for each child with a special need, it has since been renamed as an Individual Education Plan.

The main shift in New Zealand policy stemmed from the *Before Five Report* (Lange, 1988), which emphasised the holistic nature of education and care and moved the early childhood sector from social welfare into the educational realm. Perhaps in its desire to receive equal status to the compulsory sector and to emphasise education more strongly, the early childhood sector may have lost some of its embodiedness, which—as discussion of the data in later chapters shows—is very much at the heart of children's lived curriculum.

Current documentation on the Ministry of Education website (2014b) links TW to National Standards as follows:

How do the National Standards relate to early childhood education? National standards aim to lift achievement in literacy and numeracy by helping teachers, students and families be clear about what students should achieve and by when. They come into effect in 2010 for English-medium schools with pupils in Years 1 to 8. National Standards in reading, writing and mathematics will be used to assess children's learning progress after the first 12 months of attendance at school. The development of National Standards in schooling has not changed *Te Whāriki the early childhood education* (ECE) curriculum links to the NZ curriculum in schools. Parents can expect children to develop early skills in literacy and numeracy while their children are enrolled in ECE.

Although currently the Ministry of Education website endorses TW, it seems that TW's non-prescriptive nature is (mis)used to prescribe and prioritise standards-based outcomes, thereby ignoring TW's intentions of having a holistic curriculum and fostering agentic, actively participating children. The above discussion not only illustrates the highly contested nature of the curriculum, but also shows how policy documents cannot be taken at face value. Instead, the nature of these documents emphasises that educators and researchers must be alert and bring different lenses to the fore (McGee, 1997), as the following New Zealand researchers have done in critiquing New Zealand early childhood policy.

Duhn (2006) argues that the vision of the ideal child as a lifelong learner, a future flexible worker and autonomous decision maker makes TW more of a "technology of government" (p. 195), with adult projections of a neoliberal citizen, than a democratic tool that works for all children. A recent New Zealand government report shows the economic benefit of funding interventions in early childhood education:

However, where cost-benefit analyses were performed on these interventions, the findings showed that for every dollar invested, the resulting returns fell within the range of \$3 to \$16. In percentage terms, those are massive returns on investment. (Ministry of Education, 2011, p. 21)

Cederman (2008) also notes how documentation of New Zealand government policy, such as TW, promotes a neoliberal style of education in which the ideal child must be understood as a

consumerist child, relentlessly shaped through technology, the media and the global market place (p. 121). These views are further confirmed by White's (2011b) doctoral study, which found that teachers had to comply with the rigid assessment documentation as outlined by the management of the service while alternative perspectives that oppose the authoritative discourse were silenced.

Although there is much talk about early childhood services providing educational programmes for all young children, Mitchell (2010) argues that early childhood education policy predominantly focuses on the provision of early childhood education so that parents can go to work or support disadvantaged children and engage with families whose children are not participating in early childhood education. Aligned with neoliberal ideology, the state is reluctant to increase its involvement and provide public childcare centres. More than half of all early childhood services are now privately owned (Farquhar & Gibbons, 2010). Mitchell suggests New Zealand early childhood settings need to have policy that views children as citizens within a social community. It is therefore up to researchers and educators to counterbalance the neoliberal discourse of narrow outcomes serving economic agendas and to provide research illustrating the complexity of education in order to open up possibilities that are more respectful of children and that allow children to be themselves in a more socially just education system. Looking at early childhood teaching practice with fresh eyes, through a philosophical lens, may be a starting point for a more open-ended curriculum, as suggested in TW and as discussed in the next section, where children are empowered in their learning and where relationships and holistic learning are valued. It is an approach that fits with the aim of this study to align teacher–child dialogue with this view, thereby accepting children as co-authors in open-ended and unfinalised dialogue.

Open-ended Education

Many educationalists (see, for example, Davies & Gannon, 2009; Freire, 1972; Gilbert, 2005; Lobok, 2012; Matusov & Marjanović-Shane, 2012; Osberg, Biesta & Cilliers, 2008; Sidorkin, 2002) note that for the most part education is still concerned with an enculturation or training into an existing world. While learning happens everywhere, schools are directing a particular kind of learning, purposely shaping those being educated, as Foucault would argue, in particular kinds of subjects (Falzon, 1998). The curriculum shapes the desired type of learning with particular outcomes in mind and, when these outcomes are not met, students (and educators) are deemed to have failed. It can be argued that, by creating curricula with set outcomes, the “subjectivity” of learners is directed only in “legitimate” ways, in predetermined outcomes, and that education remains a planned enculturation or training (Freire, 1972). Davies and Gannon (2009), Biesta (2001, 2006), Peters (2013) and Todd (2009) all suggest more open-ended education. As Peters (2013) argues, the best hope for reviving education based on the development of a global civil society is the promise of openness (p. vii). The different nuances these authors lend to openness are discussed next.

Davies and Gannon (2009) maintain that the task of education is not to order and contain, but to give permission for open, creative engagement with ideas and the crossing of boundaries (p. 5). They suggest a shift to a relational pedagogy and a practice of becoming. Moss (2010) warns that, if the human species is to survive, education needs to change to an “ethics of care and encounter” (p. 8); it needs to be more democratic and open-ended and accept multiplicity.

Presenting a more challenging concept of education, Biesta (2001) and Todd (2009) suggest that educators should see the difficulty of education as normal and use this as a starting point. Biesta (2001) emphasises that the most urgent question of society today is how to find ways of living in a diverse and plural world, which we need to respond to by creating

space for the difficulty of human interaction. Biesta (2006) and Todd (2009) suggest that educators should accept the difficulty of plurality and uncertainty and that we should treat education and what it means to be human as a radically open question. For Biesta, the question of the purpose of education “can only be answered by engaging in education rather than a question that is answered before education begins” (Biesta, 2006, p. ix.). As will be explained in Chapter 2, Biesta’s notion of education as a radically open question is aligned with a Bakhtinian dialogic approach to education and teacher–child dialogue that goes beyond predefined outcomes in education. In the following section, educationalists explain how they view educational dialogue; most of them suggest a form of open-ended dialogue, with a role for children as active participants and education as open-ended.

The prime aim of education, Mercer (2002) argues, is for children to learn to use language as a tool to think collectively. Dialogic education is more respectful of children as it allows them to be themselves as unique individuals. It makes a more active role for children possible and accepts that adults as well as children gain new knowledge. As others have also acknowledged, the challenge will be to remain open to this type of education, as it is difficult to escape the dominant discourse after being shaped into conforming subjects.

What children become is to a large extent what adults enable or allow them to become (Dunne, 2008). Dunne (2008) argues that children must be supported to be active participants in an education programme that engages children and that allows space for children’s already established informal theories. He asks that children are given voice and agency in what he calls genuine speech:

...speech only partly as declaration and so also as probe, experimental, play—our meaning always slightly beyond us as we are stretched out in language toward it. It is the kind of speech that young children latch on to early on—when they are not answering ritual questions, repeating mind numbing formulae. (Dunne, 2008, p. 268)

In a similar vein, Kennedy (2002) maintains that current educational institutions resist adult–child dialogue as they are captured, both in form and spirit, in an adult-child binary in order to reproduce the classical adult subject (p. 166). Kennedy asks for schools to be places of adult–child dialogue, which leads to a rethinking of what it means to be a child and what it means to be an adult. Schools are, he suggests, “laboratories of transitional space” (p. 166). Along with Kennedy, Mercer (2002) and Dunne (2008) also suggest dialogue as genuine speech, which is congruent with Bakhtin’s open-ended and unfinalised dialogue, as will be explained further in Chapter 2.

However, Osberg et al. (2008) warn that creating open-ended education with a space for children to emerge is not easy. Unexpected things can happen and teachers can put themselves at risk of having to take a position. For example, as a follow-up to telling the story of the *Three Little Pigs*, a discussion with a group of children about whether it is fair that one animal eats another animal may lead to the question of whether it is fair that humans eat animals. Education as a radically open question thus goes beyond a thin, ideal or moral conception of dialogue as reciprocal interaction, which is difficult work for teachers. However, collaborative dialogic reflections may support this work, as explained below.

In arguing that teachers should reflect on their practice in order to make meaning of this, Moss (2008b) believes that reflection has to be a dialogic process. It can be a dialogue with the self, but should be mostly with others, so there is a possibility of transformation and new possibilities:

We can choose to see early childhood institutions as a public space, a forum, a place of encounter in which children and adults participate together in projects of social, cultural, political and economic significance...not only as a meeting place or a forum, but as a laboratory or workshop capable of creating the unexpected, the new, the amazing and of challenging our preconceptions, our norms, all of which govern us and constrict what we expect of ourselves and others. (Moss, 2008b, p. xii)

As Moss (2014) defines it, transformative is ongoing and constant change; rather than being a planned progress, it is open-ended and constantly becoming. He offers glimpses of a transformative shift in early childhood education from a discourse largely concerned with political economy, control and technical practice to early years education as democratic experimentation, with agreed values and purposes as a core, but with space for experimentation and Utopian thinking that, while not perfect, requires creativity and ongoing critical thinking (Moss, 2014, p. 10).

As a last note, I raise the point made by Burbules (2004b) that good-quality education implies one is better off to have received an education and reiterate his question about what it means to be educated. In other words, what *are* the aims of education? Burbules outlines different perspectives of educational aims. For some, education is about sociocultural reproduction. For others, it may be about critical reflection and free choices but, as Burbules points out, even these values are culturally bounded; for example, “‘free choice’ may be defined...in terms of an individualistic, market-based ideology” (Burbules, 2004b, p. 5). Burbules explains how education is teleological or outcome-based when educational knowledge can be measured through standardised testing.

Postmodern critique rejects teleological approaches in education with particular outcomes as these may not benefit all learners. A slightly different approach, and one favoured in New Zealand curriculum policy, is based on a model of dispositional learning that still has outcomes in mind, although these are less specific than outcomes in a knowledge-based curriculum. As Burbules notes, set outcomes mean that some will fail. It is difficult to think of education as non-teleological or with no educational aims or ideals; that in itself could be seen as an educational goal. Similar to Moss (2014), Burbules suggests therefore that ongoing critical reflection on education itself is one of the aims of open-ended education, which should be continually scrutinised by both learners and teachers.

In conclusion, in an increasingly diverse and plural global world, educational practice can no longer only be about knowledge transmission and understanding a finished world; it must include participation in an unfinished world (Osberg et al., 2008). An open-ended curriculum is suggested, which is emerging from dialogues with children and the educational context itself, rather than a curriculum that only serves for children to replicate an existing world. Todd (2011) warns that this open-ended curriculum cannot be *teaching for open-ended* education, as such an approach may foreclose possibilities of open-endedness. Instead, Todd (2011) suggests, teachers (and researchers) should pay attention to the unique student in their own context, “engaging with the who of education and not simply the what” (p. 9) In a similar vein, Vanderstraeten and Biesta (2006) suggest that teachers need to be prepared to use the potentialities of situations that might arise in classrooms. The same could be argued for research. As Wyness (2012) sees it, children cannot be autonomous, but researchers can enter into an intersubjective dialogue with children, thereby opening up possibilities for professionals to reflect critically and adapt teaching subjectivities.

The above overview of the purpose of education illustrates some of the complexities of education and explains how it is always political and inter-related with dominant societal and institutional discourses. As shown, an increasing body of research is problematising assumptions and understandings of the dominant neoliberal early childhood discourse and critiquing child development theories as a normalising practice. Quality, a key word in the regulatory policy documentation, has been deconstructed as a modernist example of one narrow truth. The suggestion here favours ethical practice, as opposed to technical and instrumental practices, which focuses on the unique child and his or her context and the idea of open-ended education. I now briefly introduce Bakhtinian approaches to education, which use dialogue as a tool for an open-ended curriculum. Bakhtin’s ideas will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 2.

A Bakhtinian Approach to Education

Matusov and Marjanović-Shane (2012), Lobok (2012) and Sidorkin (2002) apply Bakhtinian theories to express their view of education; all have a Russian or East-European background and all favour a dialogic approach. Matusov and Marjanović-Shane (2012) note that there are many different ways of learning and that there is currently no consensus on what kind of learning is involved in education (p. 159). Similar to Biesta, they critique learning, which is determined by the teacher in a transmission model. They discuss alternative models: one in which students more actively participate in a curriculum based on their interests but with particular outcomes in mind; or a model of education where students are members of a community of learners in an emergent curriculum. Matusov and Marjanović-Shane suggest moving to a more critical dialogic approach of education, based on Bakhtin's theories, which they call a "praxis of praxis" (p. 162). Generally, they note, definitions of culture include agreement and things that people have in common, but culture should not be viewed as being static, with values and rules set in concrete for newcomers to slot into. Instead, Matusov and Marjanović-Shane propose a dialogic view of culture, aligned with Bakhtinian concepts, whereby students can investigate culture, including their education. Others with suggestions for future schooling are Lobok (2012) and Sidorkin (2002), as I will discuss next.

Similar to Matusov and Marjanović-Shane, Lobok (2012) rejects predetermined universalist learning outcomes; he advocates for a dialogic, agency-based education. In a tentative sketch of future schooling in Russia, he proposes a school with an open curriculum that values students' questioning and imagination and where a student's emotional life is seen as more important than cognitive knowledge (p. 80). Lobok's future school is aligned with the real world, with substantive meaningful activities; he does not believe in Utopian schools,

but urges support for existing schools that are already promoting students' agency and their participation in critical dialogue.

Comparable to Lobok (2012), Sidorkin (2002) sees education as a form of labour. He believes that in the traditional education system, student work is useless; the work that students produce as homework or assignments is not needed by society and therefore it is hard to motivate students. His argument is that the education system does not have to be set up in such a way that the production of unnecessary things is necessary. Sidorkin (2002) suggests ongoing dialogue about the aims of education, with a pedagogy of relationships, as opposed to an education system with predetermined outcomes. He also promotes a curriculum where learning happens in the real world; "...to make learning a lot closer to non-educational activity-labor" (p. 21).

From an early childhood context, White (2011c) challenges a developmental deficit view that young children cannot fully participate in dialogue. She sees great potential in dialogic pedagogy in early years education, whereby both the content and the practice of teaching are viewed as part of the dialogic encounter. As well as discussing how teachers can respect and support children dialogically, she asks how teachers can work dialogically with parents so that children are not completely consumed by institutional discourses (White, 2011c, p. 79). Another of White's suggestions is for further research to explore how teachers can support a dialogic approach in play-based programmes in early years education. It can be argued that this thesis contributes to this suggested area of research.

In conclusion, it is argued that it is important to go beyond the dominant technical or instrumental approaches to education and to open up alternative views of dialogue in order to reveal a more complex view of education (Burbules, 1993; Farquhar & White, 2014; Roberts, 2012). It needs to be noted that current educational approaches are not completely rejected, but problematised; the aim of this thesis is not to fall into the authoritative trap of defining

once and for all what education should be, but to open possibilities for seeing education differently in the ongoing dialogue about the aims of education. An open-ended curriculum holds a promise of being prepared to change or experiment and to listen to all who have an interest in education, including children themselves.

Having established that a more open-ended curriculum is a promising alternative to a regulated, technicist education in early childhood, I now continue the discussion of dialogue in education from different philosophical perspectives.

Philosophical Perspectives on Dialogue in Education

In *Dialogue in teaching*, Burbules (1993) explains some of the complexities of dialogue in educational settings, based on philosophical perspectives of Gadamer, Habermas, Vygotsky, Wittgenstein and Bakhtin. At the same time, Burbules exposes some of the difficulties of dialogue in educational contexts. Following Dewey's concept of education *as and for* democracy, he views dialogue not as an abstract ideal, but as everyday teaching and learning, guided by the values we hold as a society, aligned with philosophical, ethical aspirations. Dialogue is in the first instance relational, between particular people in a particular situation, and it is open-ended.

Sullivan and McCarthy (2005) and Fisher (2007) point to the often monologic nature of Socratic dialogue. As an alternative, they offer another Greek classic concept of Menippean dialogue, which is more open-ended and creative than Socratic dialogue. Menippean dialogue has some similarities with Bakhtin's carnivalesque, which is explained in Chapter 2.

Educational dialogue is defined by Burbules (1993) as "the continuous developmental communicative interchange through which we get a fuller appreciation of the world, ourselves and one another" (p. xii. Language, reason, morality and social organisation are all important elements of dialogue. Furthermore, educational dialogue is holistic; it takes into

account not only cognitive forms, but also the emotional, the body and the senses. Burbules recognises four types of educational dialogue: as inquiry, conversation, debate or instruction. He also distinguishes between dialogue as teleological or convergent, when there is only one (correct) answer, and non-teleological or divergent, which assumes that there are multiple answers, such as in Bakhtin’s polyphony (see Chapter 2 for further explanation of this term). Lastly, dialogue can be viewed as either inclusive, where participants believe what is being said, or exclusive, which is critical of what is being said.

Table 1 below sets out a simplified comparison between some of the main philosophical approaches to dialogue in education.

Table 1 Comparison of philosophical approaches to dialogue in education

A comparison of philosophical approaches to dialogue in education

Philosopher	Key points	Form of dialogue	Type of dialogue	Convergent/ divergent
Socrates	Induces a state of aporia before reconstructing a new, more accurate understanding	Instruction	Critical	Convergent
Menippus	Uses humour for a moral purpose. Creative play on ideas	Satire	Creative, speculative	Divergent
Gadamer	Hermeneutic approach of lived experience together with dialogue to study meaning	Conversation	Believing	Divergent
Vygotsky	Interactive process of questioning, modelling and scaffolding. Zone of proximal development as the highest level of understanding a person can operate in, as a result of skilful facilitation	Instruction	Believing	Convergent

Freire	Critical collaborative dialogue towards a resolution	Inquiry	Critical	Convergent
Bakhtin	Open-ended dialogue contains multiple layers of meaning, through polyphony of utterances	Not specified	Critical	Divergent

Burbules (1993) offers an ideal dialogue-process, requiring mutual respect, trust and concern, which can lead to dialogic selves; even when participants are using their own voices, they are mutually constituting. This process does not mean that they have to become the same; participants can acknowledge differences and, according to Burbules, any such differences can become opportunities to gain new perspectives as long as one of the parties is not forced into consensus, which unfortunately often happens in monological educational settings. It is important that all participants have a say, which can be problematic when there are dominant political or normative discourses.

Likewise, Kazepides (2012b) believes that most of the philosophers listed in Table 1 pay insufficient attention to the prerequisites of dialogue such as dispositions towards honesty and cooperation, but also intellectual skills. His recommendation is for an apprenticeship for the very young to learn social behaviours, which are modelled by educators. Kazepides does not present a dialogue as an ideal form; he accepts that dialogue will always be imperfect to some extent (p. 922).

An argument from Benhabib (cited in Burbules, 1993, p. 27) is that contexts of power imbalances allow possibilities for identifying and making public ideological and institutional barriers, although it is not guaranteed that such possibilities will be realised. In educational settings it is vital that teachers critically examine their practice in relation to institutional, social and historical authority. Burbules (1993) does not view dialogue as a fail-proof method for classrooms. Success in dialogue, as already explained, is not about having one correct answer, but about the quality of the dialogue. Burbules acknowledges structural societal and

institutional barriers in dialogue in monological schools, which privilege certain voices and limit classroom dialogues by determining what is appropriate knowledge and who can speak. However, he believes that there are always opportunities for dialogue in spite of dominant discourses.

Balancing education as introducing children to the existing world, while at the same time allowing them to bring themselves as unique individuals into the world, is a dilemma for all teachers, according to Todd (2009). She argues this balance can nonetheless be achieved if teachers do not consign children to a “destiny”, but rather see their task as to “preserve newness in an old world” (p. 5).

Not all agree that dialogue is always helpful or beneficial. From the New Zealand context of her university class of White, Māori and Pasifika students, Jones (2004) disagrees that democratic classrooms can be a training ground for cross-cultural dialogue between students of different racial background. On separating her non-White university students from the White students, she found that the Māori and Pasifika students revelled in an environment where they could speak the same language (their language) and where Māori controlled the information, while White students expressed anger and they demanded to know the Other. Jones argues that dialogue expects minority students to teach their White peers, but that these minority students often use silence and the Māori and Pasifika students in her class resisted satisfying their peers’ curiosity. The White students, Jones asserts, felt threatened in their power in education and their right to know, in an education system that is based on a Western desire for coherence, authorisation and control (pp. 61–62).

Bhabha (cited in A. Jones, 2004) explains that, at its heart, dialogue is not about the dominant group wanting to include others, but about the coloniser gaining knowledge in order to control and exploit:

Asking the Other what happened is not for the subordinate to express themselves and become empowered, but a strategy of surveillance and exploitation, reinsuring the authority of the colonizer. (p. 65)

The members of the marginalised group thus still speak for the benefit of the dominant group. In Jones' (2004) view, it might be better for the marginalised to strengthen their own internal communication and knowledge. However, she remains reasonably optimistic that an awareness of the complexities and contradictions of dialogue in education will lead to more realistic expectations of what can be achieved through classroom dialogues.

Burbules (2004b) agrees that issues of racism and homophobia and dilemmas of privileging or silencing are difficult and that some of the problems may never be resolved. It is his belief that some who reject dialogue may be thinking of *rational* dialogue, which is built on (Western) scientific paradigms. Observing that students often surprise us with what they are capable of, he wonders if a teacher's scepticism may intentionally or inadvertently discourage students from participating in classroom dialogue. This concern is echoed by Bishop, Richardson, Tiakiwai and Berryman (2003) (see below for further discussion of their research). Burbules (2004b) emphasises the importance of listening in a way that encourages others to speak, which will require more than finding out how to listen—in the first instance, people must want to listen (p. xxiii).

In their research, Bishop et al. (2003) found that many teachers of Māori students in New Zealand had a deficit view of the capability of their students. The students themselves, their parents and the principals reported that this view affected their relationships with their teachers and the classroom interactions. On the basis of suggestions from the students and their families, Bishop et al. developed a professional development programme for teachers that aimed to change the teachers' attitudes towards Māori students and to help create a

learning relationship in which students can actively participate; where they can “bring what they know and who they are into the relationship” (p. 33).

Bishop (2003) argues that creating classrooms where (Māori) students’ knowledges are accepted and where teachers allow dialogue that opens up new knowledge may redress power imbalances that have been part of the New Zealand education system since the arrival of Europeans. The only way to achieve this outcome, Bishop asserts, is through *kaupapa Māori*, which can be translated as Māori aspirations, preferences and practices (p. 223). (For further discussion on subjectivities of Māori students, see also the section on subjectivities in Chapter 3.)

This thesis does not specifically investigate teacher–child dialogue involving Māori children. However, it is argued that a Bakhtinian approach, which encourages teachers to have a moral answerability towards students in their unique encounters, is aligned with Bishop et al.’s (2003) suggestions for teachers to improve classroom interactions for Māori.

To finish this general overview of philosophy of classroom dialogue, I turn to Burbules (2004a), who asks us to consider what the aims of classroom dialogue are:

Is it to create dialogue, wherever it may lead or to foster dialogues oriented only to specific desired ends? Is it to challenge and change views of dominant groups or to strengthen solidarity and promote transformation? Or is it to educate towards states of greater knowledge and understanding (including the good, the bad, the politically progressive and retrograde) or to promulgate specific values and attitudes, which the educator believes will make society a better and more just place? (p. xxiii)

Another necessary question here is: who should decide? It is argued that it is not just adults, such as educators and policy makers, who make the decisions on what the aims of schooling are. The perspectives of young children, as the people who spend in many cases the majority of their day in early childhood institutions, also need to be considered. There is no final answer to what the aims of dialogue are; perhaps the answer depends on the context, who is

involved and under what circumstances. The different aims may overlap somewhat. In Chapter 7, one of the teachers observes how her colleague changed a violent ending of a story that had been written collectively by the children. She questions whether stories for young children should always have a good ending, which points to one of Burbules' aims of promulgating specific values and attitudes. Following a discussion, the teachers in this case decide that children should be able to write what they want, even if it has a violent ending, which links to another one of Burbules' aims that dialogue should go wherever it leads.

For Freire, the answer would be that education must strengthen solidarity and promote transformation, whereas Foucault wants us to challenge views of dominant groups (see Chapter 2 for a more detailed comparisons between Bakhtin and Freire, and Bakhtin and Foucault). Bakhtin, I think, would accept the authorship of the child, but his moral answerability would lead to an (at this point) unknown response. As explained in Chapter 2, Bakhtin promotes open-ended and unfinalised dialogue, which depends on the polyphony of participants, coupled with a moral answerability. Teachers and researchers in education need to answer ethically in the unique situation in which they find themselves and be prepared to live with the uncertainty and openness of not knowing in advance where the dialogue may lead. This brings me to a point where I declare why I am interested in the topic and what has led me to undertake this thesis.

My Interest in Teacher–Child Dialogue

As Bruner (1996) states, the purpose of school is school itself. My earliest interest in children's voices and teacher–child dialogue can perhaps be traced back to the following anecdote:

The blackboard is filled with French sentences in the even curvy handwriting of our French teacher, who is also the principal of my high school. Several rows of first year students in front of me, boys

on the left, girls on the right are copying the sentences into their exercise books. I am too. I notice an error on the blackboard and I raise my hand to let the teacher know, so the other students don't copy the mistake. The teacher does not seem to appreciate my helpfulness. He asks if I want to take over the class, since I know it better. He calls me *Juffertje Eigenwijs*, which loosely translates as *Miss Know-it-all*. From then on that is how he addresses me. At times he turns to me and asks if *Juffertje Eigenwijs* agrees or whether I have a different opinion. I don't remember much else of my high school years with such detail. After this principal had a heart attack and left, my high school years became much happier times; the new principal was interested in our opinions and he encouraged my ideas.

Several decades later, in 2001, I undertook a small mixed-methods action research project, as part of a Master of Education research paper, to support a group of adults, in a Playcentre to engage with young children. (Playcentre is a licensed early childhood service, led by a parent cooperative, in New Zealand.) Two training sessions with the two Playcentre supervisors focused on adult interactive strategies during book readings (for example, how to ask questions and invite responses). Reflecting on this training, the supervisors said they had learned to be more aware of more philosophical questions they could ask, to leave more pauses and to have more complex discussions about the book before and after reading. As another measure of the training outcomes, children's comments were counted during reading sessions with the supervisors before and after the training, which showed the mean number of statements made by the children in one-to-one book reading sessions rose from 6.75 to 27 (De Vocht, cited in Mitchell & Cubey, 2003). In addition, transcripts showed the supervisors asked more meaningful questions and sought children's opinions, as in the following example:

The supervisor finished reading the book about taniwha [Māori mythical monster, comparable to a dragon] to Simon [pseudonym], a four-year-old boy who has a long fascination with dragons.

Supervisor: Do you know what a taniwha is?

Simon: A taniwha is a monster, it could be a dragon...

Supervisor: Do taniwhas talk?

Simon: They eat you... (brief pause). In your imagination they can talk to you.

Supervisor: Do you think this is a true story?

Simon: Yes.

(Playcentre supervisor and Simon, aged 4 years, researcher observation notes, Playcentre X, 22 June 2001)

As may be observed, the research design was based on a technical intervention programme, with training sessions on how to support more meaningful teacher–child dialogue. Over the years, I have become more critically reflective, questioning technical programmes that are based on universal strategies. Ongoing engagement in critical thinking through readings and dialogues over the years has influenced my thinking to be open to new possibilities in education, underpinned by philosophical theories that are more socially just. In 2005 I completed a Master of Education dissertation (De Vocht-van Alphen, 2005), which explored secondary students as co-researchers. This work has increased my understanding of children’s meaningful participation in their own education.

I was introduced to Bakhtin’s writings during one of my Master’s papers. Bakhtin’s ideas of language as utterance and polyphony of different genres that each person possesses as a result of life experiences and previous dialogues made more sense than communication models of sender, receiver and message that I had learned about previously. Last but not least, my lived experience of carnival when I grew up provided a connection to Bakhtin’s analysis of carnivalesque. During the first 20 years of my life, I had accepted the yearly carnival festivals unquestioningly as a normal (but fun) part of life. That acceptance changed when I read Bakhtin. My lived experiences of carnival, which are difficult to explain to someone who has not been part of it, strongly reflect Bakhtin’s carnivalesque “market square”. Carnival still takes place in southern parts of the Netherlands, although it has become more commercialised; it now also attracts many visitors from outside the region. The

following is a reflection of some aspects of carnival in my home village of Oud-Gastel in the 1960s–1970s, as I remember it now:

Carnaval (carnival) was mostly celebrated in one's own town or village; it took place in the four days before the start of Lent. It was not only condoned by authorities, but sanctioned; Monday and Tuesday prior to Ash Wednesday were school holidays. Everyone was dressed up, in a Maoist-type dark-blue cotton overshirt, a red kerchief and a black cotton cap, which you could buy in the village store. At the start of the festival, the mayor handed over the reins in the form of the village key to Prins Carnaval (Prince Carnival), dressed in a medieval prince costume at a special ceremony. During Carnaval, the prince was always accompanied by his board of eleven jesters. Although Carnaval usually takes place during the cold winter season, it was mostly celebrated in the streets, with much dancing and singing, often accompanied by street bands which played carnival songs, which must be at a speed that make them suitable for street dancing; they always contain carnivalesque humour and have simple refrains. Everyone talked to everyone and all were seen as equal. Most villages or towns had a parade, consisting of floats with carnivalesque themes, mocking the village authorities or the government. People taking part in the parade, including children were often dressed up as grotesque bodies, made from papier-mâché. During Carnaval the local dialect of our village became the dominant language; anything printed, such as local newspapers and shop brochures, were in the local dialect, written phonetically, as there are no rules for written dialects. After four days of carnival, the mayor took over again and everyone went back to work and school. Carnaval showed that resistance to the dominant discourse of authority was possible. Humour played a big part. Making fun publicly of certain decisions that a local council had made against the wishes of its ratepayers brought the issue out in the open. At times it helped reverse the decision or at least it kept councillors on their toes to try to avoid becoming the topic of public ridicule at the next year's carnival.

In a way, my lived experiences of carnival, although not addressing dominant institutional discourses permanently, confirm Bakhtin's (1984b) theory that carnival makes it possible to challenge (certain) authoritarian discourses and to temporarily overthrow these; having

experienced carnival provides an added understanding. It also shows that carnival was not only possible in medieval times: versions of it continue to be possible today.

As I have explained above, Bakhtin's description of monologic education systems and possibilities of open-ended dialogue provides a means to reflect on teacher-child dialogue more critically (see Chapter 2 for more in-depth discussion of my rationale for selecting Bakhtin as the theoretical framework of this thesis). When I started this study, which has dialogue as its main topic, it seemed therefore logical to turn to Bakhtin, who spent a lifetime studying dialogue and for whom all meaning of life is situated in dialogue:

To be means to communicate. Absolute death (nonbeing) is the state of being unheard, unrecognized, unremembered. (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 287)

While writing this thesis, my understanding of Bakhtin changed. As explained in other chapters, my emphasis in Bakhtin's work is now on moral responsibility; dialogue and carnivalesque are viewed from an overarching theory of ethical response to children's authoring subjectivities. During the writing of this thesis and my own "becoming", actual teacher-child dialogue has been extended to incorporate the importance of subjectivities, as each utterance is shaped by these and vice versa.

Having established a context for this thesis, I finish this chapter with a brief outline of the remaining chapters.

Brief Overview of Chapters

In this first chapter, I have explained teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education, why is it important and the underlying epistemology, concluding that teacher-child dialogue plays an important role in education. Arguments have been presented that dominant neoliberal and economic discourses, with predefined, narrow outcomes for students as future workers in a global economy as a technicist, outcome-based curriculum, underestimate the

complexity of teaching and learning. The chapter has outlined the concerns of a number of educationalists about the dominant technicist discourse of policy makers. Different philosophical perspectives of dialogue in education have been presented, which has led to a rationale for a philosophical framework. Bakhtinian concepts of moral responsibility, dialogue and carnivalesque within an overarching theory of ethical response to children's authoring subjectivities have been introduced. It is argued his thesis does not reject current practice, but rather aims to engage in an alternative philosophical inquiry in order to look at early childhood education and teacher–child dialogue in a new light, in an open-ended curriculum. The chapter has explained my personal interest in the topic and how over the years my interest in the dialogue between teachers/adults and children has moved from an interventionist approach to a philosophically based inquiry, using Bakhtin to frame the project in regard to both the content and the research approach.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of Bakhtinian theories. It discusses in more detail those of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts that are most relevant to this research project of teacher–child dialogues in early childhood settings: dialogism, carnivalesque and moral answerability. It starts with the difficulties and complexities related to using a Bakhtinian framework, which include Bakhtin's Russian context and critiques of his work. It is followed by a comparison of Bakhtin with Foucault and, separately, Freire. It also explains how and why Bakhtin's understandings are instrumental to this study for both the analysis of teacher–child dialogue and the research process itself. First, Bakhtin's theories help draw attention to the complexities in the constructions of teacher–child dialogue. Second, in order to avoid a tokenistic application of Bakhtin's thinking, his dialogic theories were used to shape how the research was carried out. An explanation of Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism, carnivalesque and moral answerability leads into a discussion of his perspectives of polyphony and subjectivity as shaped in and through dialogue and, in turn, as they shape dialogue. Lastly,

the chapter discusses the application of Bakhtin's dialogic concepts in educational settings and in educational research.

In Part A of Chapter 3, literature related to empirical studies of teacher-child dialogue is reviewed in order to collate what has already been said and to draw out issues that, in my view, may not yet have been addressed sufficiently in research related to teacher-child dialogues. A number of both theoretical and empirical studies highlighting the importance of the topic reinforce that teacher-child dialogue is a worthwhile topic. Next, the review of literature related to teacher-child dialogue based on different philosophical frameworks shows a more complex view of teacher-child dialogue. The review is then narrowed down to research studies in early childhood education that are based on Bakhtinian concepts.

Part B of the same chapter starts with an equally important discussion on how teacher-child dialogue is influenced by subjectivities and in turn influences subjectivities of teachers, children and researchers. After a brief historical overview explaining what subjectivities are, it discusses child subjectivities. How children view themselves and how they view their teachers determine who they will be as learners. Through teachers' interactions with children and particularly when they reflect critically on their interactions with children, the teachers' subjectivities will also be affected by these interactions. Teacher-child dialogues and teachers' and children's subjectivities are thus intertwined. Most of the research related to subjectivities is based on Western perspectives. A short section reviews related research in a New Zealand context, particularly from Māori perspectives. A review of research from poststructural perspectives is followed by a discussion on subjectivity from Bakhtinian perspectives. This leads to a focus on research projects that have applied Bakhtinian concepts of subjectivity shaped through dialogue. Then I turn to specific teacher and researcher subjectivities. Ultimately, as the author of this thesis, authoring the identities of its characters, I need to investigate and make transparent my own subjectivity. This section

explains how I am, in turn, authored by the teachers and the children. In a brief conclusion, I reflect on how a review of the literature, together with a deeper understanding of Bakhtin's theories in Chapter 2, is sharpening the focus of this thesis and shaping the methodology.

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology of the thesis; it is best described as the chapter of the theory in practice. It starts with a brief discussion on how philosophical underpinnings of Bakhtin's dialogism inform the methodology and in particular the main Bakhtinian concepts that are related to a dialogic research approach. A review of literature related to dialogic research explains how these studies are relevant to this thesis and, in particular, how they guide the methodology of the thesis. Attention is given to the analysis of video-recorded data and the dialogic research methodology. Furthermore, this chapter explains procedures of participant selection, consent, research design and data collection. In a dialogic research project, attention needs to be given to the treatment of participants. Ethical considerations and literature related to ethical research are therefore discussed in detail. A discussion about the relationships between the participating teachers and myself, as well as between children and myself, illustrates the contexts in which the data were collected. The chapter closes with reflections on the difficulty of obtaining children's voices through informal interviews.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 together form the analysis of the thesis. In beginning this analysis, Chapter 5 juxtaposes more traditional monologic teacher-child dialogue with dialogic encounters of teacher-child dialogue, highlighting both historical power relations and more equal dialogic interactions between children and teachers. Everyday experiences between teachers and children and between children themselves illustrate how these interactions shape subjectivities of children and teachers. In Chapter 6, the analysis moves to an investigation of opportunities for more open-ended dialogue through Bakhtinian notions of the carnivalesque. Discussions of the transcripts show children as agentic, challenging authoritative, monologic discourses, when viewed through a carnivalesque lens. Concluding the analysis, Chapter 7

discusses teachers' moral answerability through an analysis of the dialogic research process, which provides insights into identity forming of teachers *through* and *in* dialogue. Each of these three chapters discusses and analyses a number of transcripts of utterances and dialogues between teachers and children. Literature related to the events is also discussed and, in a sense, enters into a dialogue with the quotations within the text. Each of these chapters ends with a summary of the findings and their implications for early childhood education and for research.

Finally, Chapter 8 returns to the research question as I reflect on if and how this question has been answered. The Bakhtinian framework for this thesis is also considered. I reflect on my role as a researcher, how my thinking has changed and the process of this research project. Findings and implications, both for early childhood education and future research, are discussed.

Chapter 2:

Toward an Understanding of Bakhtin

I live in a world of others' words. And my entire life is an orientation in this world, a reaction to others' words... (Bakhtin, 1986d, p. 143)

Why Bakhtin?

As discussed in the previous chapter, current early childhood pedagogy tends to favour psychological and empirical approaches, which standardise early childhood education through the prescription of best practice with universal strategies (see, for example, Farquhar & White, 2014). It is argued that Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas provide a critical stance from which to look at the everyday life of teacher–child interactions in a new light and that they hold possibilities for a more complex view of teacher–child dialogue in an open-ended curriculum. This chapter explains why and how Bakhtin's ideas are a valid alternative to explore teacher–child dialogue, in an open-ended curriculum, as a counterbalance to dominant neoliberal discourses.

Particular attention is given to what are considered Bakhtin's major concepts: moral answerability, dialogism and carnival. These three concepts are closely connected. Both carnival and dialogue are about unmasking universal truths; moral answerability points to an ethical responsivity, which is made possible when the authoritarian word is questioned, as Bakhtin (1984b) does in his discussions of dialogue and in carnival. Although researchers tend to favour Bakhtin's writings on dialogue, his analysis of the carnivalesque—with possibilities of developing one's view of the world or, in Bakhtinian terms, one's ideological becoming (Ball & Freedman, 2004)—can be seen as a way forward, going beyond dialogue. It is argued in this thesis that Bakhtin's theories of subjectivities as becoming and his

explanations of the marginal and the un-official provide new openings to understand the everyday interactions between teachers and children. The section on dialogue therefore includes Bakhtin's view of the self; on this basis, subjectivities of children, teachers and researchers are theorised. Across this chapter, Bakhtin's ideas are linked to educational contexts and, more specifically, to early childhood settings and this project.

Because of the importance of Bakhtin's overarching notion of moral responsibility and the possibilities of carnival to this study, a relatively large part of this chapter explains Bakhtin's early works and his analysis of *Rabelais and his world* (Bakhtin, 1984b). Bakhtin's ideas related to dialogue are highly relevant both for the analysis of the data in this study and to guide the research process, as will be explained in more detail in Chapter 4.

Criticism from most Bakhtinians about his originality and the initially easy adaptability of Bakhtin's ideas to a wide range of discourses has somewhat dented his reputation. Although Bakhtinian concepts became very popular, particularly in the West from the 1980s onwards (Bell & Gardiner, 1998; Emerson, 1997; White & Peters, 2011; Zbinden, 2006), they were often applied in a superficial, tokenistic sense, as explained in more detail in this chapter. To avoid a faddish approach to Bakhtin, this chapter builds a grounded (but certainly not complete) understanding of his work, which guides the analysis as well as the research process of this thesis and rationalises why and how Bakhtin's work is applied in this thesis.

To grasp Bakhtin's writings, which use Russian terminology and which are from an era and a society vastly different from my own, it is not sufficient to read texts written by Bakhtin. His popularity has generated a wealth of writing to provide additional information. However, the following scholars are singled out here as the main sources to guide interpretations of Bakhtin's translated texts. Russian culturalists Michael Holquist, Craig Brandist and Caryl Emerson provide, among others, the necessary context of Bakhtin, both in time and place. Bakhtinian interpretations by Western Marxist thinker Michael Gardiner add

a more philosophical understanding of Bakhtin, whereas native Russian speakers and educationalists Eugene Matusov and Alexander Sidorkin show educational applications of Bakhtin. More recently, Jayne White and Paul Sullivan have been pioneers in relation to the application of Bakhtin's ideas in a dialogic research methodology in educational settings.

This chapter starts by examining what could be called the difficulty of Bakhtin: his context, critique of his work and some of the complexities in relation to his work in a sense clear the path for this study of everyday teacher–child dialogue, within a dialogic research approach. Bakhtin has been criticised for ignoring power imbalances; a comparison of Bakhtin and Foucault explains how Bakhtin addresses power issues in the unique event. Bakhtin is not the only philosopher whose ideas can be applied to dialogue in education. A brief discussion of the long and deep history of dialogic ideas in the field of philosophy of education in Chapter 1 has already shown that Bakhtin was not the first philosopher to discuss dialogue. This chapter extends this work with a discussion of similarities and differences between Bakhtin and Freire, whose ideas are often applied in philosophical perspectives of dialogue in education.

Thereafter, a general overview of what can be seen as Bakhtin's contributions explains how to situate Bakhtin philosophically. His writing that has been translated in English is then outlined chronologically. The final section, which forms the main part of this chapter, discusses Bakhtin's main ideas and contributions to philosophy; interwoven are explanations of how these ideas are applicable in education in general and in particular how these ideas support an alternative analysis of everyday teacher–child dialogue within a dialogic research approach in this thesis.

The Difficulty of Bakhtin: Context, Critiques, Complexities

To better understand Bakhtin, we must declare what is not worth our seeing into it.

(Emerson, 1997, p. 122)

Understanding Bakhtin's context. As will be discussed further in later sections of this chapter, previous life experiences—both personal and historical experiences within a cultural community—as well as what is happening currently shape who we are and what we say. In order to understand Bakhtin, it is therefore important to briefly explain his context in space and time. Mikhail Bakhtin lived in Russia from 1895–1975 during tumultuous times; he managed to survive the Bolshevik revolution, the Stalin era and the Second World War, spending most of this time in exile (Bell & Gardiner, 1998; Bocharov & Liapunov, 1994; Emerson, 1997). For most of his adult life he suffered from osteomyelitis, which caused him a lot of pain and led to the amputation of his right leg.

Bakhtin's writings were not always valued, either by Bakhtin himself or his publishers, as it was difficult to get work published that was not aligned with the current political regime (Emerson, 1997; Shields, 2007). Some of his writings have been published as notes after his death (Emerson, 1997; Shields, 2007). Although he never gained official academic status, Bakhtin always had a group of followers around him, with whom he was in dialogue, and he was a popular lecturer. In the 1960s a group of young scholars discovered Bakhtin was still alive and they were instrumental in getting Bakhtin's work published (Bocharov & Liapunov, 1994; Emerson, 1997).

Bakhtin gained popularity in Russia in the 1960s and then, once his work started to be published in English, he also became popular in the West in the 1980s. Bakhtin's original professional career as literary critic was quite a common academic pathway in Russia. In contrast to the West, literature and literary criticism played an important role in Russian society, where literary texts were often seen as reflective of the world (Emerson, 1997).

During the Stalinist and Soviet era, it was dangerous to openly express your point of view: you could be arrested, sent to a labour camp or even killed. In many of their critiques of classical literature, literary critics in Russia, in an Aesopian sense, included hidden references to real life at the time of their writing (Emerson, 1997).

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the mid 1990s came freedom of speech, although arguably this change seems to have lasted for only a short period. In 2012 members of a feminist punk band called Pussy Riot were arrested and sent to a prison not dissimilar to a Gulag camp, on the grounds that they had performed a carnivalesque protest song against Putin on the altar of a Russian church. The incident shows that Russians are once again losing the freedom to express themselves. Pussy Riot members Nadya Tolokonnikova and Masha Aloykina, who were recently released because Putin wanted to make a good impression internationally before the Winter Olympics were held in Russia, told the members of the European Parliament that Putin intends to create a new iron curtain. They said:

Putin and his team live by Hegel's maxim: "If facts contradict my theory, so much the worse for the facts." This is the underlying principle of all the Russian media seized by Putin's team. (*The Worldpost*, Tolokonnikova & Aloykina, 2014)

The hardship these women experienced when they ended up in Russian prisons as a result of their critique on Russian authority can perhaps give a modern-day sample of the experience of life under an authoritarian regime in which there are restrictions on what can be said, which may help to understand Bakhtin's Russian context; for most of us in the West, this lack of freedom to express oneself is difficult to comprehend. An autocratic society stifles open dialogue, but we can look for ways to respond from our unique position; Bakhtin's "ought" in response had to be veiled in philosophical discussions of polyphony and carnivalesque. In relation to this study, it can be argued that a neoliberal climate is not an excuse for an alibi; each of us can take action.

Complexities of Bakhtinistics and Bakhtinologists. In the post-war world, tensions existed between scholars who claimed Bakhtin for different disciplines, based on different cultural ideologies: Slavists in the socialist East often had a more conservative view of Bakhtin's writing, whereas in the more liberal, capitalist West, readers tended to use Bakhtin in a more philosophical sense, relating his work to poststructuralist and Marxist thinking (Bell & Gardiner, 1998). Ivanov (cited in Emerson, 1997, p. 67) distinguishes between "Bakhtinistics", within the realm of philology, as the study of historical literature and "Bakhtinologists" who have a more abstract, philosophical interpretation of Bakhtin.

However, there is a growing consensus that Bakhtin should be seen foremost as an interdisciplinary philosopher who uses literary texts to philosophise and make meaning of life (Brandist, 2011; Emerson, 1997; Gardiner, 2000a; Holquist, 2009; Matusov, 2007; Sidorkin, 2004). When asked by Bocharov to define himself, Bakhtin stated that he was an interdisciplinary philosopher (Bocharov & Liapunov, 1994, p. 1009). Bakhtin also explained that his book on Dostoevsky was "morally flawed" and that it was no more than that of a literary critic, because he could not express himself freely at that time (Bocharov & Liapunov, 1994, p. 1012). As could be expected, this thesis follows a Bakhtinologic interpretation to philosophise teacher-child dialogue.

Critiques of Bakhtin's lack of references and lack of coherence. Initially Bakhtin was highly regarded as an innovative social linguist with new ideas. However, during the last two decades, a number of scholars noticed that many of the ideas he raised were not new. As Brandist (2010) explains, Bakhtin adopted ideas from neo-Kantian German philosophers, which others around him also used. Many have argued that what was initially seen as Bakhtin's original thinking are ideas paraphrased or copied from other philosophers, without acknowledgement or references (see, for example, Brandist & Lähteenmäki, 2010; Emerson, 2004; Steinby & Klapuri, 2013). There are at least two possible reasons for this lack of

referencing. First, as noted above, authors were not free to say what they liked in the Stalinist and Soviet era and sources not aligned with the Stalinist or Soviet regime, which could prove dangerous for the author, were often removed (Emerson, 1997). In addition, it is known that Bakhtin had a casual approach to referencing, even before the publisher edited references out for safety reasons (Brandist & Lähteenmäki, 2010).

Interestingly, Sandler (2015) has recently added another layer of complexity in the discussion of the originality of Bakhtin's ideas. Sandler argues that although Bakhtin was impressed by Neo-Kantians such as Cohen and Cassirer and in particular by Immanuel Kant and that he was familiar with the work of Neo-Kantians, through his friend Kagan, his main philosophy differed markedly from that of Neo-Kantians (see also elsewhere in this chapter for further discussion of influences on Bakhtin). Sandler argues that parts of their ideas have been used by Bakhtin to reconceptualise these in his own context, but from a different philosophy. Sandler argues his case with an example of how Bakhtin uses the word uniqueness to refer to the unique individual, whereas Cohen uses the term 'the only' or unique to refer to God, when he discusses the one-ness of God as opposed to the uniqueness of God (Monotheism). Although Bakhtin uses the same term that was used by Cohen, he gives it a different philosophical meaning. Sandler concludes that while Bakhtin uses some of the words of the Neo-Kantians, he is an original thinker as the words he borrowed have a different meaning; Sandler therefore considers Bakhtin as a *new* kind of Neo-Kantian.

Bakhtin has also been criticised for the lack of continuity and coherence of his thinking. When Bakhtin introduces new terminology, such as *chronotope* or *heteroglossia*, he does not give clear definitions but he uses them in a number of texts. His writings do not necessarily build on what he has written previously in a logical and structured manner; instead, he returns to earlier mentioned concepts and then discusses them from a slightly different angle. From the different contexts in which he uses them, we can piece together an

understanding of what he meant (Emerson & Holquist, 1986; Shields, 2007). Many of his concepts are inextricably linked to each other. Bakhtin's texts can perhaps be best explained both as his inner dialogue and as an utterance, addressed to an audience and expecting a response. For Bakhtin, the purpose is always the dialogic process itself, rather than a journey with an end goal or conclusion. There is no end; the process is ongoing. Many of his literary texts about Rabelais's and Dostoevsky's writing have been described by philologists as non-methodical (see discussion of Bakhtin and his literary texts in the final section of this chapter). Emerson (1997) also points out that many of his manuscripts were in unfinished form, presented as notes rather than work prepared for publication.

Disputed authorship, incomplete texts, others' work not acknowledged. As mentioned before, Bakhtin was influenced by those around him. The following section discusses the 'Bakhtin Circle'; a group that Bakhtin belonged to; other members of the group are Voloshinov, Medvev and Pumpjanskii. The Bakhtin Circle and in particular the disputed ownership of some of the texts by members of the circle has been given much attention in Bakhtinian scholarly discussions in previous decades. The issue of disputed ownership of texts by members of the group has still not been completely resolved and it may never be. Brandist (2015) has suggested not to take Bakhtin's word that he authored under his friends' names for granted but he concludes that the authorship has become a non-question. Considering the importance granted to the Bakhtin Circle in relation to Bakhtin, the next section discusses some of the most recent discussions of the Bakhtin Circle and the comments that Bakhtin himself made about this group.

The Bakhtin Circle. Brandist (2015) but also Shepherd (2004) state that the importance of the Bakhtin Circle may have been overrated; it is also becoming clear that the meetings of the Bakhtin Circle were rather informal. Shepherd analyses Bakhtin's comment about the group: "A lot is being written about it (the circle) of late" (p.1). He questions how

much we should read into the meaning of this circle; although taking into account that Bakhtin made this comment in conversation as it could be a careless comment without much meaning. Shepherd notes how Medvevev, amongst others also used the Russian term 'kruzhok' for the period in Nevel, to indicate the informal, embryonic existence (p. 4) of the "Bakhtin Circle". Shepherd further explains how Bakhtin describes the Circle as a 'lightheartedly critical attitude to all aspects of life and contemporary culture', noting that Bakhtin "recalled the life of the circle with laughter" (p. 6). The above comments point more to a university circle rather than a philosophical school: Shepherd argues that the meetings of the circle, held in each others' houses, lacked the necessary public articulation in institutionalised spaces and as the members of the circle thought themselves, would not have impacted much on their maturing intellectual project (p11). Shepherd further argues that while Bakhtin was the leader, as the one constant member, all members of the circle held great intellectual credentials. All members were 'borrowers and lenders' (p. 11), but membership changed and they were also influenced by others. Shepherd also notes that is becoming apparent that others apart from Voloshinov, Medvevev and Pumpjanskii should be included: Members of the circle engaged with a wide variety of institutions (p.15). Brandist (2015) adds that Bakhtin was mainly influenced by institutionalised projects on sociological poetics. Furthermore, while Bakhtin's literary work focused on Europe, Brandist suggests that since Bakhtin was appointed professor of World History in Leningrad, ideas of orientologists should also be considered. Shepherd argues for critical analysis of the Bakhtin Circle and the limitation of it, stating that members should be credited as thinkers in their own right.

Difficulties related to translations of Bakhtin's work. Adding to the complexity of understanding Bakhtin are the different interpretations of his work in the socialist East and the liberal, capitalist West. Most Western readers have had to rely on translations of

Bakhtin's creative and incomplete texts (Bell & Gardiner, 1998). Emerson (2002), who translated some of Bakhtin's work in the 1980s, and Zbinden (2006) explain that the earlier translations of Bakhtin's work could have led to misinterpretations because the translators were unfamiliar with Bakhtin's work; Zbinden offers examples that illustrate some of these areas of confusion.

Lastly, and most importantly, the delay in publishing his earlier, more philosophical work in English until the 1990s led to a lack of understanding of Bakhtin's ideas in the West. Bakhtin was often interpreted on the basis of his essays on the novel and metalinguistics and his literary reviews of Rabelais's and Dostoevsky's work, which meant his ideas could be applied widely. Similar to shallow interpretations in education of Freire's ideas, which ignored Freire's ethical stance (Roberts, 1996), the first wave of Bakhtinian readers in the West applied Bakhtin's ideas about carnival enthusiastically but without taking into account Bakhtin's overriding philosophy of the ethical decision making of the individual in the unique event. As Emerson (2000) states, Bakhtin's ideas had appeal in the 1980s in the West because they fitted postmodernist agendas of disruption of the fixed order. Bakhtin's ideas about dialogue could easily be aligned with Dewey's pedagogical ideas and they were often applied to affirm what was already known and quoted in a rather faddish and tokenistic sense.

As a result of the more recent publication in English of *Author and the hero* (Bakhtin, 1990) and *Towards a philosophy of the act* (Bakhtin, 1993), the concept of a responsible moral self has been added to Bakhtin's ideas of carnival in scholarly literature (Emerson, 2000). That is not to say that all superficial applications of Bakhtin's ideas in education have now disappeared. For example, in Wegerif's (2011) educational text, a classroom discussion about a solution to a mathematical problem is explained as dialogism. Wegerif compares two groups of children to see who used dialogue successfully to "get it right" (p. 185). After a collaborative thinking lesson, the children succeed. It is argued here that Wegerif uses a

narrow, technical application of Bakhtin's dialogism, which leaves authoritative teaching unchallenged.

As a last note in relation to the unfinalisability of Bakhtin's writing, I refer to Brandist's (2015) most recent comments on translations of Bakhtin's work that *Discourse in the novel* in the latest combined works by Bakhtin which were published in Russian in 2012 are substantially different from the older versions.

Critique of Bakhtin's lack of political discussion. Further criticism has targeted Bakhtin's perceived lack of interest in political hierarchy. For example, Holquist (1990) maintains that Bakhtin ignores considerations of conflict and power relations in his discussions of the self and other, as well as those pertaining to gender and class. It is interesting to note that, living during the dictatorship of Stalin and later under a totalist communist regime, Bakhtin avoided discussing power relations specifically. Following a brief discussion of a similar critique by Taylor and Robinson (2009), I will go deeper into Bakhtinian perspectives on issues of power and authoritative discourses in early childhood institutions and in the teacher-child relationships.

In a comparison of theoretical notions of power, Taylor and Robinson (2009) are critical, similar to Holquist above, that Bakhtin leaves power dimensions unquestioned and intact. While exploring what postmodern/poststructural analyses of power can offer, Taylor and Robinson suggest a subject who is constantly "coming-into presence" and that teachers accept "the difference that different students make" (p. 170). It can be argued that Bakhtin's view of subjectivity, coupled with the heteroglossia of carnival and moral responsibility, does exactly that. Although the article is recent, it seems from its reference list that Taylor and Robinson have not taken Bakhtin's early philosophical work into account and that they base their opinion on Bakhtin's later texts which mainly focused on dialogue.

Power/knowledge is synchronously linked to the French philosopher Foucault. A brief comparison of Bakhtin and Foucault in the next section details differences and similarities between the two philosophers; it shows how Bakhtin addresses power imbalances in the unique event, rather than political action on a grand, universal scale. Further discussions of Bakhtin's ideas of carnival and heteroglossia (in the final section of this chapter) explain not only Bakhtin's ideas in relation to power issues in more detail, but also how Bakhtinian concepts provide tools to analyse power imbalances and guidance on how to address these.

Comparison of Bakhtin and Foucault. When I started this thesis, Bakhtin, who spent his whole life philosophising about dialogue and dialogism and for whom dialogue is the meaning of all life, seemed a good match for a thesis about dialogue. Being aware of power imbalances in educational institutions and criticism that Bakhtin does not address power issues, I included Foucault whose writings in relation to power have dominated discourses related to power over the last decades as one of the theorists for this thesis. Foucault's discussion of normalising truth in traditional monologic classroom has supported my understanding of Bakhtin's authoritarian monologic dialogue. Similarly, I could see how Bakhtin's chronotope is linked to Foucault's emphasis how history normalizes truth. As I will discuss in more detail in the next section, Foucauldian theory also supported my understanding of Bakhtin's analysis of Carnival in Rabelais and his world. It clarified how Bakhtin rejects universal truth and postmodern perspectives of the human being as an instrument of power/knowledge and how he addresses power in the unique lived event, rather than encouraging political action on a grand universal scale. Most importantly however, it became clearer how Bakhtin provides new possibilities (Gardiner, 2003).

Comparison of Bakhtin and Foucault. Bakhtin and Foucault share a focus on discourse and both also take into account social and historical systems that create or prohibit possibilities for dialogue (Hicks, 2009). However, Bakhtin does not theorise the forces of

historical becoming with the same attention as Foucault. Foucault has also written more explicitly about classrooms and institutions, in particular in his text *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison* (Foucault, 1979). Foucault (1980) encourages us to address questions such as whose knowledge is represented and whose interests are served in classroom practice. He argues that each discipline has its own set of rules or norms, which produces relations of domination. In educational settings, for example, teachers may ask all the questions in traditional monologic classroom talk. Power is also exercised over children (and teachers) by excluding alternative ways of understanding: Foucault (1977) argues that schooling disciplines both the student and the teacher; that schooling is about controls, ranking and normalisation.

Foucault (1980) rejects a normalising truth, which allows only one right way of knowing. In its place, he proposes a complexity and diversity of ways of knowing for freeing our thinking about educational practices. It is, he suggests, less about who has power than about *how power is exercised*. Foucault believes that we are active agents who are forming ourselves, but who are also constituted and constructed by normalising discourses. As he sees it, rather than being a thing that is held and used by an individual or a group, power is a complex flow and set of relations between different groups of society, which change with circumstances and time. Foucault's normalising discourses are similar to Bakhtin's authoritative or monologic voice and centrifugal forces (Bakhtin, 1981). Foucault's view of dialogue is that no social order can ever be absolute or eternal and that there will always be resistance, renewed dialogue and the transformation of social form (Falzon, 1998, p. 8). In an interview with Rabinow, Foucault (1984) defined dialogue as follows:

Questions and answers depend on a game—a game that is at once pleasant and difficult—in which each of the two partners takes pains to use only the rights given him by the other and by the accepted form of the dialogue. (p. 381)

It is argued here that Foucault's definition of dialogue is compatible with Bakhtin's concepts of heteroglossia and speech genres.

In his comparison between Bakhtin and Foucault, Gardiner (2003) found that the most important link between Foucault and Bakhtin was the discussion of ethics. He notes how Foucault is one of the few poststructuralists who discusses ethics in his later works on sexuality (Foucault, cited in Gardiner, 2003). As discussed in Chapter 4 by Canella & Lincoln (2007), and also discussed by Gardiner (2003): Foucault's view of ethics is not about adopting universal moral codes but "an intensification of the relation to oneself by which one constitutes oneself as the subject of one's acts" (Foucault, cited in Canella & Lincoln, 2007, p. 322). According to Gardiner (2003), There is common ground between Bakhtin and Foucault, in challenging Kant's universal 'ought', each resisting universal, general theories which reduce complexity and particularity of the world. Furthermore, according to Gardiner, Foucault and Bakhtin in a sense complement each other: Foucault problematised, but it was Bakhtin who offered new possibilities; lastly Gardiner further suggests that Bakhtin's sometimes naively optimistic writings, can perhaps be levelled by Foucauldian realism.

The final section of the comparison between Bakhtin and Foucault helps explain how Bakhtin takes into account structures of power and hierarchy, determining dialogic reaction between spaces. Hierarchy is reflected in a special way in everyday utterances and formal speech:

The utterance is shaped by what the subject is talking about, and who the subject is talking to, but also to the image in which they model the belief they will be understood. (Holquist, 1986, p. xviii)

Bakhtin uses the term *chronotope* to express inseparability and intersection of time and space and to explain that we cannot understand what is said now without knowing the history.

Although history does shape what is said in the present, the response is also influenced by the utterance it addresses and the context in which it is happening (Shields, 2007). Again this can

be seen as a link to Foucault's view of the importance of history and how discourses are open to change. Bakhtin (1986b) states that:

Our speech...is filled with others' words, varying degrees of otherness or varying degrees of "our own-ness", varying degrees of awareness and detachment. These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, re-work and re-accentuate. (p. 89)

Lastly and more importantly, however, Bakhtin's analysis of carnival in *Rabelais and his world* (1984b) illustrates his strong awareness of power relations and the necessity for a second world of the carnivalesque to oppose the formal world; he sees this as a requisite for life. His historical accounts detail the increasing power of the monarchy and the church in the 16th century, concluding that after the Renaissance the meaning of Carnival was degraded to either mere fun or negative satire. Bakhtin (1984b) writes that since the Renaissance the world has lost its ability to oppose officialdom and renew itself; it shows that Bakhtin does not assume that dialogue in itself will address power issues. However, as explained in the final section of this chapter, through carnival Bakhtin opens up possibilities to challenge hierarchical discourses. For Bakhtin, dialogue that does not address existing hierarchies is monologue, not dialogue, and he resoundingly endorses a dialogical stance.

The view of the self is advanced by Bakhtin. Bell and Gardiner (1998) argue that Bakhtin rejects postmodern perspectives of the human being as an instrument of power/knowledge. Instead, Bakhtin believes that human beings relate to the world as embodied, from a unique place/time, shaped by all their events in the world, including (but not exclusively) authoritative and dominant discourses. A voice always expresses a particular worldview. Bakhtin offers new possibilities through human creativity, responsibility and agency. As Emerson (1997, p. 26) explains, Bakhtin's idea of ethical response includes not

political consciousness but the need to act morally, where I consults with another I and then returns to its place changed:

Carnival does not and cannot hope to change the world; it can only change our inner relationship to that world. (Emerson, 1997, p. 103)

Although access to speech genres depends on one's previous historical experiences, Bakhtin (1990) warns against forming a single, universal, epistemological consciousness and instead offers an aesthetic consciousness: "...as a loving and value-positing consciousness; a consciousness of a consciousness" (p. 88). It is argued therefore that Bakhtin expects participants to think critically and act morally for themselves in each unique event. If and how this is possible is determined by the chronotope of each encounter and by the different speech genres available to participants. Bakhtin does not dwell on investigations of traditional or institutional power imbalance; he believes that we determine who we are, not in a memory of the past but in what he calls "a memory of the future" (p. 125), as our actions and possibilities for future actions give meaning to who we are:

To be for myself means—to be present to myself as someone yet-to-be (and to cease being present to myself as someone yet-to-be, to turn out to be all I can be already here and now means to die as an intelligent being). (Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 123–124; original emphasis)

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, Bakhtin was subjected to a range of authoritarian regimes; perhaps he preferred to explore contextual dialogic situations, rather than openly analysing historical power relations. Although his analyses of Rabelais (Bakhtin, 1984b) and Dostoevsky (Bakhtin, 1984a) show his awareness of hierarchy of the state or church and the life of ordinary citizens, they also show resistance against these and new opportunities. Living in Russia at the time of suppression of intellectuals, this was perhaps the only opposing genre open to Bakhtin in which he could express himself.

To conclude this discussion on whether Bakhtin addresses power imbalances, Bakhtin does not specifically mention the word *power*, but he challenges the authoritative official

word and looks for possibilities for addressing it in each concrete event. While Bakhtin does not call on people to organise themselves in a unified universal response, each response is open-ended and *therefore does not exclude organised political action*. Bakhtin does not dictate what to do; he leaves it to the individual in the unique situation. Bocharov and Liapunov (1994) recount how Bakhtin liked to comment that truth and power are incompatible, that truth is always humble and that any power or dominance (as in authoritative) causes harm. Foucault argues that knowledge/ truth cannot be dissociated from power (Foucault & Kitzman, 1988). As Bakhtin rejects universal truth in favour of truth for each individual in the dialogic moment, his versions of truth and power cannot be combined.

Bakhtin and Freire. As already discussed in this chapter, Bakhtin is not the only philosopher who has spoken about classroom dialogue or whose ideas about dialogue have been applied to classrooms. As discussed elsewhere, I was not very familiar with Bakhtin's writings at the start of this thesis. Aware of the need for a critical analysis, I also included Freire, whose work I was more familiar with and who (as Matusov 2009 argues) can be seen as the first educationalist who engaged in critical classroom dialogue. Familiarity with Freire's writings was in a sense a theoretical preparation to engage with Bakhtin's theories about dialogue.

Insofar as we can determine, Bakhtin and Freire did not communicate, but there are many similarities between them and Freire's ideas are also often applied to counterbalance a dominant neoliberal discourse of education. An in-depth discussion of Freire's work lies outside the scope of this thesis; a brief outline serves to indicate possibilities of multiple alternative discourses.

Paulo Freire, widely known for his sociopolitical views in relation to adult learners, did more than theorise about learning. He also put his ideas into practice in formal education programmes, first by supporting people to be active participants in their own education

through critical reflection on the issues they faced and second by encouraging political action. Although Freire developed his ideas to combat the social injustices in third world countries, he maintains that his thinking can also be applied in educational institutions in the first world (Freire, 1998). His ideas about classroom dialogue are in many ways congruent with Bakhtin's open-ended dialogue. As Freire (1972) describes it, educators need to reflect on their teaching as a result of the dialogue with their students: "Through dialogue the teacher-of-students changes to teacher-with-students" (p. 53). In addition, dialogue re-creates knowledge, not only for students, but also for the teacher: "Knowledge only emerges through invention and re-invention, through restless, continuous hopeful inquiry with the world and with each other" (p. 46). Freire's critique of a transmission model of education has often been quoted: "Teaching is not about depositing packages in the vacant consciousness of the learner" (Freire, 1998, p. 5).

Classroom dialogue, within a Freirean framework, serves more than cognitive purposes; Freire suggests a transformative change to a collaborative process, where both students and teachers learn, re-creating knowledge (Shor & Freire, 1987):

Dialogue is the sealing together of the teacher and the students in the joint act of knowing and re-knowing the subject of study. Then instead of transferring the knowledge statically as a fixed possession of the teacher, dialogue demands a dynamic approximation towards the object. (Freire, cited in Shor & Freire, 1987, p. 14).

Although Freire is often criticised for taking an anthropocentric stance in his work, in that he understands the world in terms of human values and lived experience, his dialogical method of teaching can be seen as making an important contribution to a view of pedagogy as an ethical and political process (Roberts, 2003, p.11) in which students are supported as critical thinkers and active participants in their learning, and new knowledge is created for both students and teachers. Especially in his later years, Freire expressed his deep concern about

neoliberal discourses and the marketisation of education. Just as Bakhtin's work has been applied in tokenistic ways, Roberts (1996) observes that educators who have limited knowledge about his writings have superficially applied Freire's ideas of problem-posing education. Yet Freire's theories cannot be used as a simple classroom strategy and without taking his overriding ethical and political stance into account. Postmodern scholars such as Taylor and Robinson (2009) critique Freire's assumption that power sits with one (dominant) group and that it can be given away, which does not take the complexities of power relations into account.

There are many other similarities between Freirean and Bakhtinian thinking. Both oppose monological education, whereby students receive information through a transmission model, or what Freire (1972) calls the "banking model" (p. 48). Both approaches reject a technocratic education approach and they require an ethical stance from teachers (Rule, 2011). Again similar to Bakhtin, Freire uses the everyday language in lived experience to philosophise; his philosophy became a way of life (Roberts, 2008); Freire's dialogue is also a holistic process, encompassing one's senses, emotion and intuition (Roberts, 2008). Lastly, Freire believes in dialogue as the process of becoming more fully human, albeit any such process is unfinished (Roberts, 2008), which once again relates closely to Bakhtin's open-endedness and becoming (see the final section of this chapter for more detail).

Where Freire differs from Bakhtin is that, first, Freirean dialogue is perhaps more purposeful, with an expected outcome of transformative learning in mind, whereas Bakhtin does not want to foreclose the outcome; for Bakhtin, dialogue itself is the outcome. Roberts (2005) points out that Freirean dialogue has more rules than Dostoevskian ones, on which Bakhtin based his ideas of polyphony. While Freire argues for full and active participation by students, he also stresses the teacher's role to ensure structure, direction and rigour in educational dialogue (Roberts, 2005, p. 132). We must not forget that Freire is in the first

instance an educationalist, whereas Bakhtin did not write specifically for an educational context. Lastly, unlike Freire, Bakhtin does not refer to his personal life and he avoids explicit comments about his political context (Rule, 2011).

It needs to be pointed out that, again similar to Bakhtin's situation, Freire's context differs markedly from readers in English-speaking countries, which has two major implications. First, as can be expected, Freire's context greatly influenced his work, just as it did for Bakhtin. His own political experiences in Brazil led him to focus on critical education for a more democratic society. Second, South American culture and Portuguese language both are essential parts of Freire, as a person and in his writings (Roberts, 2008), just as Bakhtin's Russian context shaped Bakhtin.

Comparisons between Bakhtin and both Foucault and Freire above reflect the process of finding a fitting philosophical framework and aim at making the journey of this thesis more transparent. When I became more familiar with Bakhtin's work, I realised that my understanding of students who actively participate in open-ended dialogue in unfinalised education, was more closely aligned with Bakhtin than both Freire and Foucault. From this point on, I focused on Bakhtin in order to provide a strong theoretical framework, although I have continued to use some of Foucault's ideas to analyse power imbalance and to both clarify and affirm how Bakhtin addresses power relationships, albeit from a different perspective. As mentioned earlier, these comparisons make transparent how the theoretical framework for this thesis was developed, in my view they also add to a greater understanding of Bakhtin's theories.

What, then, are Bakhtin's contributions? Following on from the explanation of difficulties in relation to Bakhtinian applications and the comparison of his ideas with those of Foucault and Freire, what can be seen as Bakhtin's contributions? Bakhtin is now increasingly referred to as a philosophical thinker and cultural theorist across disciplines

(Emerson & Holquist, 1986; Morris, 1994; Pechey, 2007; Pomorska, 1984; Rule, 2011; Shields, 2007). As discussed earlier, there is some dispute if Bakhtin was the original thinker he was claimed to be when his work first became known.

Brandist and Lähteenmäki (2011), Emerson (2000), Holquist (1990, 2009), Gardiner (2000a) and Steinby and Klapuri (2013) all proclaim that Bakhtin was influenced by Kant and neo-Kantians such as Lukács and Cohen from the Marburg school, who were concerned with ethics from a universal perspective. Bakhtin, however, subscribes not to a universal values system but to what he terms a “concrete value-governed architectonic” (1993, p. 61). He theorises the unique subject and leaves the subject unfinished, for example, through speech genres and heteroglossia. For Bakhtin, the ethical aspect of a person’s being in the world is the focus while, for the German philosophers from Marburg, it is the cognitive or epistemological aspect. Steinby and Klapuri (2013) conclude that Bakhtin’s insistence on ethics as an ethically acting subject at the actual activity is at the core of Bakhtin’s thinking of intersubjectivity (p. xiv). In other words, Bakhtin talks about personal ethics as a deed or action in a real-life event, rather than as an abstract thought or as an action we ought to take in general.

Holquist (1990) argues that Bakhtin, Sartre and Heidegger were all affected by the cruelties of war and that each in their different way was redefining the human subject, with a focus on self/other relations. Bakhtin is, Emerson (1997) and Bell and Gardiner (1998) note, often wrongly labelled a poststructuralist or postmodernist. As already discussed, despite some similarities, Bakhtin cannot merely be described as a postmodernist or poststructuralist. At the risk of simplifying the latter approaches, Sidorkin (1999) explains that Bakhtin rejects monologic assumptions in critical theory and postmodernism (p. 143). Critical theory, with its one consciousness or one truth, does not align with Bakhtin’s ethics of the unique being. Postmodernists and critical theorists assert that defining truths across discourses is

impossible. This implies, according to Sidorkin “that finding the truth is possible in principle, or at least within one particular discourse. The postmodern writers substitute the impossibility of universal truths for an impossibility of any shared truths among different discourses, cultures, or language groups. For Bakhtin, truth is not a statement, a sentence or a phrase. Instead, truth is a number of mutually addressed albeit contradictory and logically inconsistent statements” (Sidorkin, 1999, p. 150). Postmodernists (such as Ellsworth, cited in Burbules, 1993; A. Jones, 2004) argue dialogue is impossible, whereas Bakhtin sees it as the essence of life.

As well as contributing to deconstructions of the traditional universal worldview, Bakhtin provides a solution for adding alternative views (Emerson, 1997). His writing in the first half of the 20th century can be seen as ahead of its time in relation to critical theory or postmodernism. As Epstein (2010) argues, any theory with *post* as a prefix, such as postmodernism or poststructuralism, in a sense binds itself to the theoretical position that it wants to distance itself from, such as modernism or structuralism. At the start of the 21st century, one trend in thinking has been to reject theory that is based on the past; Epstein announces the start of a new epoch that looks to the future. This change in perspective is expressed in the use of the prefix of *proto*; for example, *proto-global* indicates a society that has the potential to regulate its climate (Epstein, 2010, p. 174). Everything that was considered post-something can be considered proto-something; Epstein’s concept of proto-something may align better with Bakhtin’s ideas of possibilities and unfinalisability, although it may be difficult to come up with a suitable word with this prefix, as any term invariably limits a Bakhtinian open-endedness.

Bernard-Donals (1994) argues that the difficulty with trying to capture Bakhtinian philosophy is that in order to do so, there is always something that does not fit. Bernard-

Donals therefore suggests two dominant strains, which are not compatible: Husserlian phenomenology, developed from Neo-Kantian theories versus ideological Marxist thinking.

In the field of philosophy, as defined by a number of scholars (for example, Gardiner, 2000a; Holquist, 1990; Sidorkin, 2004; Steinby & Klapuri, 2013), Bakhtin's main contribution has been to radically change philosophy by connecting it to real, everyday life. Bakhtin (1993) sees the unique ethical act of the individual human subject involved in a concrete event of "Being" as at the heart of philosophy (p. 18). As discussed above, Bakhtin insists that ethical action has to be in the unique event: the deed is a result of the specific concrete encounter; it becomes a personal answerability. Throughout his life, Bakhtin objected to a separation of subjectivity developed from one's lived experiences and the abstract world of scientific knowledge. Although the two are opposing each other as a two-faced Janus, they can be united as one in the unique event, leading to a potential of becoming (Bakhtin, 1993). Steinby and Klapuri (2013) argue that "re-establishing philosophy as the study of the human act is not only new compared to Kant and neo-Kantians, but [is also new in] that Bakhtin transgresses limits of any philosophy" (p. xv) by changing the main characteristic of philosophy as abstract thinking to a personal ethics of an actual lived world (Bakhtin, 1993).

In Brandist's (2000) view, Bakhtin's eclectic range of philosophical ideas came only in part from German neo-Kantians; other influences were Marx and Russian populist thinking, to each of which he gave his own twist. Brandist (2000) notes that many of Bakhtin's writings have similarities with Marxists such as Gramsci. Yet Brandist believes that there are differences that set Bakhtin apart from other Marxists. He concludes that Bakhtin's theories are more derived from Russian populism eg championing local culture. Brandist argues that Russian populism was formed under influence of Marx and Engels, so while Bakhtin's work is not Marxist, it would not have been possible without it (p.71).

Not including the work that is disputed as being written by Bakhtin, (eg texts by Voloshinov and Medvevev, which are more Marxist, (see also discussion of the Bakhtin Circle in this chapter), Brandist and Tihanov (2000) argue that Bakhtin's' writings are more closely linked to the older tradition of Russian sociology. Looking at Marxism as ideology, they explain how populism and Marxism fertilised each other's ideas such as Capitalism means going backwards, belief in exceptional character of Russian economy and peasants and disregard of connection between intelligentsia and political institutions.

Brandist (2000) views Bakhtin's populist assimilation of the Russian tradition as distinctively Bakhtinian (p. 89). Russian populism is a form of anti-authority; it is anti-capitalist and contains a strong belief in the Russian way of doing things, particularly by the peasantry and the village communities (Lenin, cited in Brandist, 2000). Bakhtin's populist thinking can be observed in his emphasis on moral responsibility: "my answerable deed" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 42) and his aversion to "officialdom" (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 6). Brandist (2000) explains that Bakhtin admired ancient Greek society, when there was no division between the different spheres of the official and the popular: "Carnival, for Bakhtin, is the temporary and utopian resurrection of the ancient state from within divided class society on the basis of peasant culture" (p. 89).

Elsewhere Brandist (2011) argues that Bakhtin's originality lies in his use of the novel to illustrate the struggle between discourses. Bakhtin uses works of literature to explain how language is not a neutral, unified system, but a social phenomenon, shaped by different worldviews or genres (Brandist & Lähteenmäki, 2010). His explanations of Dostoevsky's multivoiced characters and Rabelais's carnivalesque highlight what might be possible in real-life situations. The terminology that Bakhtin uses, such as *dialogue*, *utterances*, *polyphony* and *carnivalesque*, provides tools that can make visible this struggle in dialogue between different ideologies.

As Gardiner (2000a) explains, we come to understand the world not only cognitively, but in its widest holistic sense through the everyday life. Although it may be described phenomenologically, he argues, it is a sense that is often overlooked from a theoretical philosophical perspective or, if it is studied, it rarely goes beyond what is known, or what is outside the homogenous and consensual. Gardiner's claim is that, as a result of modernity with its emphasis on science, commodification and bureaucracy, the everyday lifeworld is undervalued and its complexity and richness are ignored. To see what is hidden, he suggests treating the "ordinary" as potentially "extraordinary" (p. 6). This includes an investigation into power relationships. Gardiner further argues (and it is clearly visible in young children for anyone who is looking) that the body is resistant to this hegemonic discourse of the current impoverished image of everyday life. To critique this image of everyday life, we must be attuned to *all* aspects of life, including poetic, irrational, corporeal, ethical and affective (p. 19); we must look for those moments when the everyday life is exposed and made to look unfamiliar and we must do so ethically.

Bakhtin is the philosopher par excellence in relation to everyday life; he reclaims the everyday life, particularly through the embodied body, and he does so by using medieval carnival. Bakhtin's answerability brings together the lived experience and the universal, bridging the gap between our unique moment in space/time and views of the world. As he suggests:

The world in which an act proceeds, is a unitary and unique world...that is seen, heard, touched, and thought...permeated with the affirmed validity of values. (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 56)

Bakhtin (1993) totally rejects scientific objectivity, acknowledging my unique role in the world, with what he famously phrases "my non-alibi" (p. 57) or active participation that only *I* am responsible for and I know I need to fulfil. There is no alibi to hide behind, as there can be in what ought to be done in a general or abstract sense. In the institutionalised world of

early childhood education, where many young children now often spend more hours each week than their teachers, it might be claimed that these young children live the impoverished lives described by Gardiner. It is argued here that the teaching act in teacher–child dialogue must be an ethical act that needs to be fulfilled in actual life; the moral answerability of a teacher to each child means it cannot be a theorising “ought”; each child has to be responded to. Nor can teaching be a general “ought”, as each response needs to be addressed to the unique child in the unique encounter.

Discussion of Bakhtin’s Ideas in Chronological Order

This section discusses Bakhtin’s main ideas. By briefly describing his main work in the chronological order in which Bakhtin wrote it, rather than in the order that his writing was published in English, this section illustrates a coherence and a certain progression in Bakhtin’s thinking. Steinby and Klapuri (2013) argue that Bakhtin shows a continuous commitment to his concept of ethical responsibility. Starting with Bakhtin’s earlier, more philosophical/ethical writing thus sets the scene for what was driving Bakhtin; it also helps to avoid an “everything goes” approach when applying Bakhtin. Interwoven into this section are explanations of how Bakhtin’s ideas apply to an educational context.

Morson and Emerson (1989) identify four periods in Bakhtin’s work, although Bakhtin revisited and finetuned his earlier themes throughout his life. In the first period, Bakhtin’s main concern is with ethics and aesthetics. In the second, his work evolves around dialogue. Bakhtin moved on to write about the novel and he discussed his concepts of chronotope and carnival in the third period. Finally, at the end of his life he returned to the philosophical concerns of his first writings to finetune his ideas and to reiterate their importance.

Although Bakhtin often returns to the same ideas, the following is a brief sketch of the main topic of each of his books, before his work is drawn together to discuss the concepts

in more detail. *Toward a philosophy of the act* (Bakhtin, 1993, orig. 1919–1921) presents the importance of our embodied existence in the world and the moral deed as an ethical response. Following up on this, “Author and hero” (in Bakhtin, 1990, orig. 1919–1924) has subjectivity as the main theme; this is always expressed as the relation between I and the other, directed towards a becoming “self”. It is only when Bakhtin writes *Problems of Dostoevsky’s poetics* (1984a, orig. 1929) that he discusses how language and dialogue are at the very heart of intersubjective understanding. In his texts about the novel, published in English in *The dialogic imagination* (1981, orig. 1934–1935), Bakhtin builds on his earlier review of Dostoevsky through the discussion of different social languages of speech genres and utterances, reflecting ideological struggles and heteroglossia, with the multitude of these in everyday interactions. In *Rabelais and his world*, Bakhtin (1984b, orig. 1947) extends the idea of heteroglossia and uses medieval carnival as portrayed by Rabelais to reject monologic languages of officialdom.

A philosophy of life can only be a moral philosophy. (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 56)

Bakhtin’s moral answerability. Bocharov (1993), Gardiner (2000a) and Emerson (1997), among others, agree that Bakhtin’s ethical answerability must be regarded as the underlying message in all of his writings. However, Bakhtin continually reminds us that this can never be viewed from a universal perspective: “An answerable act is precisely an act performed as acknowledgement of my obligative ought-to-be uniqueness” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 42). In *Toward philosophy of the act* (1993), as well as in his other texts, Bakhtin strongly objects to a universal and objective Kantian morality, or *ought* as he often terms it:

On the whole, no theoretical determination and proposition can include within itself the moment of the ought-to-be, nor is this moment derivable from it. There is no aesthetic ought, scientific ought and beside them an ethical ought; there is only that which is aesthetically, theoretically, socially

valid and these validities may be joined by the ought...the ought gains its validity within the unit of my once-occurrent answerable life. (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 3)

This aversion to universal truth does not imply that Bakhtin rejects theory, as is evident from the following statement:

An answerable deed must not oppose itself to theory and thought but must incorporate them into itself as necessary moments that are wholly answerable. (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 56)

For Bakhtin, the self is not in the subject, but between subjects; it is dialogical and therefore unfinalisable. Rather than being something that is in the mind, the self should be seen as a joint production between I and the other (de Peuter, 1998). Both I and the other come to consciousness through dialogue; dialogue can be seen as a way of being, through which an individual learns about himself or herself. Bakhtin regards language from the standpoint, not of the speaker, but of the relationship with the other participants.

For Todorov (1984), Bakhtin's identity forming is transgression: a reaching over/across. It is a highly complex process: at each of our encounters with the other, each of us forms a response shaped both by that moment and by previous utterances and our responses to these. We adopt a genre, consciously or unconsciously, that relates to that situation and who we are. Each response is different and therefore each dialogue is different and holds different possibilities. Each response is a holistic response: we look backwards and forwards, as well as in the moment; we may speak, act and feel, but remaining silent is also a response. Any communicative verb applies.

Any utterance is thus individual and reflects the individuality of the speaker. A person's various speech genres can reveal several layers and facts of the individual personality (Bakhtin, 1986b). Speech genres provide some freedom—the more genres we can appropriate, the more freedom we have—but there is no pure spontaneity. Existence is more than being conscious because, if consciousness was all we had, we would merely replicate what has already been

said (Bakhtin, 1986d), which brings us back to a key argument that dialogue is ongoing and open-ended and that, therefore, there is also no final meaning of self. This study is in itself a form of dialogism, unfinalised inner speech of internalised voices; however, as with any dialogue, it is saturated with social and ideological values (McKnight, 2004).

Bakhtin has much to say about the unique person and the “other” as being different. Steinby and Klapuri’s clarification about the other is useful here. For Bakhtin, the other is not produced by “Othering”, as opposite us, in contrast to Said’s orientalism; it is also not a Levinian “other” we have to recognise; rather, this “other” compels us or ought to compel us to recognise his or her human dignity and our ethical obligations to him or her (Steinby and Klapuri, 2013, p. xxi). Because we can never fully know the “other”, Bakhtin asks us to try to understand and then respond to and know the other in relation to his or her words and the understanding of the world as expressed in his or her words, as a co-participant. We only need to know the other in relation to his or her utterance.

Once again, Bakhtin critiques the universality of what he calls the epistemology of the 19th and 20th centuries. In his view, it requires a complete merging in one consensual consciousness: “If all I do is merge with the other’s life...I only duplicate his life numerically” (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 87). As explained in the previous section, Bakhtin has been criticised for failing to address inequalities. Certainly he does not offer a universal solution, but he emphasises the importance of each individual’s difference as an enrichment, as opposed to a merging into one consciousness or voice, and thereby offers potential for an individual to change.

Bakhtin’s epistemology helps bridge the gap between authoritative discourses and the internally persuasive discourse in education. (Sullivan, Smith and Matusov, 2009, p. 326)

Self in education. How, then, does the dialogical self apply to children and teachers in early childhood settings? Bakhtin uses the term *ideological becoming* to represent the development of our ideas system and how we view the world. According to Ball and Freedman (2004), this becoming also includes the development of a political idea system. They argue that the choice of speech genre or type of language made by learners and teachers and teachers' choice of what to accept are political choices, a quality that is more noticeable in some cases than in others (Ball & Freedman, 2004, p. 5).

Ideological becoming is never about the individual in isolation; Bakhtin always considers the individual and his or her ideas holistically and within a social context. Bakhtin makes the distinction between two categories: "the authoritative discourse of the father, teacher...authority of scientific truth or a fashionable book, the rules and the norms" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342) and the internally persuasive discourse, which is the everyday discourse. Bakhtin's authoritative word in an educational setting may depend on institutional or recognised universal knowledge, on shared, unquestioned traditions or on the status of the adult. The struggle between the two discourses, where the authoritative word demands authority, is what Bakhtin calls the "contact zone" (p. 342). In this contact zone we develop our own ideologies; each of us chooses consciously or unconsciously which genre to take up.

Bakhtin offers possibilities here for teachers to reflect on their dialogues or acts with young children and the type of ideological environment they offer young children (and themselves), for children's and their own ideological becoming. This ideological becoming is not hidden, in someone's mind; it is found in what is said: "It is not in the word of the soul, but in the world of word, sound, gesture" (Bakhtin/Medvedev in Ball & Freedman, 2004, p. 29). Ball and Freedman (2004) therefore conclude that ideology is observable and accessible for research. While ideology belongs to the individual, the creation and comprehension of it always happen in social interaction.

It must also be remembered that true dialogical activity is unfinalisable and open-ended; it cannot have narrowly defined predetermined outcomes because, if it does, it is a transmission model of a monological system. Bakhtin's thinking therefore offers a self-emerging for teachers: "I-teacher does not use language of *what* (monological), but of *how* a word means" (McKnight, 2004, p. 286, original emphasis). Hicks (2009) understands Bakhtin's moral response as a respectful and caring attitude with an openness or a willingness to take action.

Polyphony and *The problem of Dostoevsky's poetics*. Bakhtin is also widely known for his conceptualisation of polyphony. Polyphony or heteroglossia (Bakhtin, 1981) can be described as the presence of two or more voices or discourses, or genres as Bakhtin calls them, which generally express alternative or conflicting perspectives or discourses. Again, while Bakhtin discusses the concept in a number of places, it is most closely linked to his reading of Dostoevsky (Bakhtin, 1984a). Bakhtin writes that, as well as being in a dialogic relationship with his characters, Dostoevsky in his polyphonic novels makes the reader a participant in the dialogue. In *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, Bakhtin (1984a) perceives Dostoevsky as the only author who could create characters as autonomous subjects. Dostoevsky creates his hero or character, Bakhtin (1984a) claims, "in such a way that it can develop to the full of its inner logic and independence as *someone else's discourse*, the word of *the character himself*" (p. 65, original emphasis).

In addition to creating polyphony between his characters, it can be argued that Dostoevsky is a master at presenting and making visible different, at times opposing genres within one character, with unexpected turns in character descriptions. This skill can be seen in the following monologue by Dimitri:

For I'm a Karamazov. For when I do leap into the pit, I go headlong with my heels up, and am pleased to be falling in that degrading attitude, and pride myself upon it. And in the very depth I

begin a hymn of praise. Let me be accursed, let me be vile and base, only let me kiss the hem of the veil in which my God is shrouded. Though I may be following the devil, I am also Thy son, O Land, I love thee, and I feel the joy without which the world cannot stand. (Dostoevsky, 2007, p. 113)

Dostoevsky illustrates the struggles within Dimitri, who is torn between the authoritative discourse of the church or society around him prescribing what one ought to think or do, on the one hand, and his internal persuasive discourse when he starts a relationship with a woman of disrepute, on the other.

In a critical review of Dostoevsky's work, Watts (2000) challenges Bakhtin's view that Dostoevsky was the only author capable of creating autonomous characters, naming Shakespeare and Conrad as equally, if not more dialogic. Also disputing the claim that Dostoevsky has no biases, Watts (2000) points to anti-Semitic and anti-Polish comments in Dostoevsky's writing and he questions how Bakhtin can use Dostoevsky's novels as exemplars of dialogue that should give validity to all voices. Although Roberts (2005) acknowledges Dostoevsky's anti-Polish and anti-Semitic tendencies are shortcomings and that Dostoevsky ultimately favoured a Christian ideal, he argues that Dostoevsky still has a lot to offer (p. 137). Roberts believes that Dostoevsky "radically decenters himself as an author, leaving the characters to live out the drama that is their lives, and leaving it to readers, similarly to reflect on, work with, and be moved by the events, dialogues and ideas" (p. 131). As Bakhtin (1984a) argues, Dostoevsky's characters are free, are capable of disagreeing with the author and can even rebel against him (p. 6).

Classical literature as a vehicle to philosophise humanity. As noted in the previous section, Bakhtin is increasingly referred to as a philosophical thinker and cultural theorist across disciplines. Throughout his life, Bakhtin used classical literature from Goethe, Dostoevsky and Rabelais as a springboard for his thinking about human development and interactions. In Pechey's (2007) view, Bakhtin is someone who understands (classic)

literature as a form of knowledge; as explained above, using literature to understand the human mind was common practice among Bakhtin's peers in Russia.

Using Dostoevsky's *Notes from underground* to critique rational egoism in education, Roberts (2012) clarifies how fictional literature can help us see aspects of human life through the characters in a novel or a play and how they can provide a platform for reflecting on educational policy and practice. As discussed in Chapter 1, teachers cannot rely on a set of strategies to teach; instead they must use their own judgement, based on their philosophy of teaching and learning. The following discussion explains how fictional literature such as Dostoevsky's texts can, or according to Siegel, ought to be used in education.

Siegel (1997) argues that an ability to reason should be at the heart of teaching and learning. In his view, teachers need not present "truth"; they can present different positions, with a rationale for these. For example, we can learn about atheism and theism and each of us needs to evaluate which view holds true for us. Siegel therefore accepts that fiction can be used as a tool for teaching. He further argues that literature such as Dostoevsky's *The Karamazov brothers* (2007) allows students to understand different rationalities better than philosophical arguments, as students are moved by the characters and learn to distinguish and reason between good and bad. This sensitivity to what Siegel (1997) refers to as "felt reason" (p. 49) helps students to develop their own beliefs and actions. The encounters between Dostoevsky's characters should be seen as encounters of ideas, not in a theoretical sense, but in life situations (Steinby & Klapuri, 2013). Siegel (1997) believes that philosophical novels such as *The Karamazov brothers* make philosophy questions come alive; they make visible how philosophy itself lives in the everyday experiences and how it matters.

In regard to works from other cultures and eras such as the works of the ancient Greeks, Shakespeare and Goethe, Bakhtin (1986a) states that these continue to offer many semantic possibilities that have not yet been disclosed or used. He asserts that:

Shakespeare has grown because of that which actually has been and continues to be found in his work, but which neither Shakespeare himself, nor his contemporaries could consciously perceive and evaluate in the context of the culture of their epoch. (p. 4)

Similarly, in *Rabelais and his world*, Bakhtin (1984b) considers that, although Rabelais's contemporaries understood his writing style, their reactions to his work were naïve and impulsive and "they could not have answered our own questions, because for them these questions did not exist" (p. 62). Once again, Bakhtin returns to the openness and unfinishedness of his own writings and those of others. Scholarly analysis must always continue; seeing the world through the eyes of the original author, I repeat, would only be duplication. In Bakhtin's explanations of his applications of classic literature as previously undisclosed and unrecognised, we find support for applying his writings in educational research. In the same way as Bakhtin uses classic literature, it can be argued that we can read his own texts as an invitation to a dialogic response to his writing.

Pragmatics of dialogue and language. Having established Bakhtin's overarching philosophical ideas, we can turn to his more pragmatic ideas of dialogue and language to carry (out) his ethical philosophy. In his text "The problem of speech genres", Bakhtin (1986b) puts dialogue at the heart of all meaning. Some of Bakhtin's now widely known statements about elements of dialogue follow (in a nutshell).

Bakhtin (1986c) focuses on everyday language. The utterance is the basic unit for speech. Each utterance needs to be understood as a link in a highly complex, organised chain of utterances; any speaker is in effect a respondent himself or herself. Each utterance is oriented towards an actively responsive understanding, which may be a silent response for the time being: "Any utterance always has an addressee, whose responsive understanding the author of the speech work seeks and surpasses" (Bakhtin, 1986c, p. 126). Bakhtin (1986b) requires the listener to be an active participant in the communication:

The role of the others for whom the utterance is constructed is extremely great. The role of these others for whom my thought becomes actual for the first time (and thus also for myself as well), is not of passive listeners, but of active participants in speech communication. (p. 94)

Speech genres are typical forms of utterances (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 63). As White (2009b) argues, Bakhtin's genre refers to language, both as form or composition and as its content or, in other words, its meaning. Genre thus represents a holistic view of language. Each of us has appropriated a number of speech genres as our own, although, as Bakhtin (1986b) says, it is possible for us not to suspect their existence in theory (p. 78). Speech genres are highly diverse; they depend on the situation, one's social position, personal relationship and so forth. They give us a relative freedom; the more genres we know, the more choices we have to respond in a particular situation (Holquist, 1986).

However, speech genres also impose an order and form on everyday speech; structures of power and hierarchy often determine the dialogic reaction between speakers (Morris, 1994). Bakhtin's (1986b) comment that genres need to be fully mastered before they can be manipulated freely (p. 79) makes sense. Context is important; Bakhtin uses the term *chronotope* to express inseparability and intersection of time and space: we cannot understand the present without knowing the history, yet history does not determine the present—everything is seen as open to change (Shields, 2007). Bakhtin (1986d) repeats that each utterance is a link in a chain and no one utterance can be the first or the last (p. 136), highlighting the unfinalisability of dialogue. An utterance can be as short as one word or it can be a whole text or event.

There is more than just the word in a dialogical relationship. Bakhtin also includes connections to feelings and values and his earlier works especially are more about the act than the word (Hicks, 2009; Linell, 2009; White, 2009b). For example, as Hicks (2009) explains, for Bakhtin meaning is not just in language, but also in a social relationship. The

utterances achieve their full meaning only because of a wider metalanguage, such as through intonations and gestures. To help us understand this complex thinking, Creswell (2011) gives an example of a child who, through his or her lived experience of hearing adults laugh, learns when to laugh and exactly what kind of laugh to make. This kind of learning happens not in a deliberate dialogue, but through subtle acts of socialisation.

As well as varying in words in a text, genres differ in intonation and form; they are wholly embodied. For example, a military person expresses a particular speech genre using military jargon and voice, military body stance and marching style. Without a word being uttered, members of our society would immediately be able to identify a military person, or to differentiate between the actions of a soldier and a punk rocker. Yet both these speech genres could be used by the same person, in a different time or space. Within a cultured society, a single gesture can be seen as an utterance and be understood. Even a simple expression through wearing clothing such as a blue or red bandana is as clear as any verbal utterance about allegiance to a particular gang in some parts of our cities; wearing the wrong one in the opposite gang's territory may lead to a violent response.

Bakhtinian affordances in educational settings. Bakhtin's explanation of genres and the authoritative monologic voice is highly useful in reflections on teacher–child dialogue. It opens up possibilities for children as active respondents. White (2011c) suggests:

the teacher as an ontologist who has permission to genuinely (and authentically) ponder with her students and encourage dialogue, consensus and dissensus as equally valuable means of understanding, signals a relational pedagogy that is based on real issues and problems to be solved rather than those predetermined or even avoided. (p. 78)

Bakhtin's writings challenge teachers (and researchers) to see their early childhood community as a site of constant struggle between the authoritative word of education—or what Bakhtin calls centripetal or unifying forces—and centrifugal forces, which problematise

a unified society (Bakhtin, 1981). As Duncan and Turulli (2003) show, play situations afford children the distance of otherness. Children's dialogue is no less characterised by the many different social languages than adult communication is. Traditional education is often monologic; however, Bakhtin provides opportunities for learners to take on a more active role in their education.

Bakhtin's descriptions of the dialogic process allow a metalinguistic analysis of the dialogues between the teacher and the children in early childhood settings. Teacher-child dialogue cannot be analysed purely from a semantic perspective; meaning making is more than language, requiring a metalinguistic view. It is emphasised, as stated above, that dialogue is not limited to verbal language; a physical action can also be dialogic. Teachers can and should reflect on how otherness from the authoritative voice can be created in teacher-child dialogue.

Bakhtin's emphasis on the importance of context aligns with a sociocultural approach to teacher-child dialogue; the context of both time and space needs to be taken into account in an analysis. Speech genres give insight into the order of the early childhood institution and make power structures and hierarchy visible. Polyphony and heteroglossia may capture some of the complexity of the dialogues.

Similar to the teacher-child dialogues, Bakhtin's dialogic elements described above support the analysis of the dialogues between teachers and myself as the researcher in the research process. Bakhtin regards each participant as an autonomous, ethical being. He values open dialogue, where each tries to understand the other's viewpoint and each offers his or her own truth (as in *pravda*, a Russian term for what is right in the lived experience of this moment). Consent is not required, each is responsible for his or her own worldview and acts.

Bakhtinian affordances in research. As stated above, Bakhtin's concepts of unfinishedness and open-endedness also apply to research when interpreting his texts. In

traditional research, interpreting someone's work from another era and another culture would inevitably raise the question as to whether the interpretation is an accurate account of what the author meant. Bakhtin expects an ethical response; he requires us to listen carefully to try to grasp what the other is telling us, and would reject a superficial application of his ideas (as discussed above). On the other hand, Bakhtin does not expect complete understanding, as that would mean duplication. More than dispelling any fears I may have of unwittingly misunderstanding his work, Bakhtin (1986a) argues that scholarly analysis can only proceed by seeing the work through eyes located outside its culture:

Writing cannot be enclosed within itself as something readymade and finalized and irrevocably departed, deceased; if this was the only aspect of understanding it would merely be duplication.

(p. 6)

His words are congruent with Derrida's deconstruction theory of understanding and misunderstanding (Biesta, 2009). As Biesta explains it, conceptions of understanding and misunderstanding are usually represented as a binary opposition; understanding is considered normal and misunderstanding is seen as a negative or wrong. Yet Derrida challenges this binary opposition, arguing that misunderstanding must be seen as being as much a part of language as understanding is (Biesta, 2009). A message is not received in pure understanding, nor in complete misunderstanding, but somewhere in between (Biesta, 2009). This interpretation of mis/understanding affirms a possibility of new understandings.

Shepherd (1991) explains as follows:

Misunderstanding plays a positive part in Bakhtin's thinking about understanding: a certain misunderstanding is combined with a new deepened understanding. Bakhtin calls this re-accentuating and he sees that this is unavoidable, legitimate and even productive (1984b).

(Shepherd, 1991, p. xxi)

Every speech act needs to be interpreted by others if it is to be meaningful; dissemination of speech acts is therefore completely unpredictable and each is affected by the speech act.

Bakhtin stresses the need to move to the place of the other in order to see the world through his or her eyes but to then return to my own place permanently changed: “It is immensely important to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture” (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 7, original emphasis).

Laughter removes false seriousness, it allows us to see seriousness in a playful way and to see a different meaning. (Sullivan, 2010, p. 369)

Carnival, grotesque realism and folk culture. Bakhtin originally wrote *Rabelais and his world* (1984b) as his doctoral thesis; it remains his most controversial book. The thesis is an in-depth analysis of the work of Rabelais, a French author during the Renaissance, whose novel *Gargantua and Pantagruel* is one of the great classics of world literature; it describes in detail the folk humour of the market place in medieval times.

As well as being a text about Rabelais and his contemporaries, interwoven with historical explanations of medieval and Renaissance eras, Bakhtin’s book is, as Holquist (1984) argues, an attempt for Bakhtin to make sense of his own society during revolutionary times. His discussions of the power of officialdom, in terms of both the monarchy and the church, can be seen as veiled criticism of the authoritarian regimes in Bakhtin’s own country. Perhaps more importantly for Western readers, Bakhtin’s analysis of the carnivalesque offers a hope for a democratic future (Holquist, 1984). My interest is not in Bakhtin’s in-depth analysis of Rabelais’s writing style per se, but rather in his generalisations of human life, which underpin all his writings. Shepherd (1991) explains how “Bakhtin’s Rabelais must be seen from within Russian religious culture where laughter is inappropriate and from where Bakhtin sees the West as a Utopian space” (p. xxii).

Carnival has changed its meaning over time. Bakhtin (1984b) describes Rabelais’s novel as a treasury of folk humour. According to Bakhtin, people lived simultaneously in two

worlds: the culture of folk carnival in medieval times and the official and formal world of the state and class structure. This second world of carnival, in which all people were participants, existed next to but was opposed to the official and serious medieval ecclesiastical and feudal culture (p. 6.). “It is the people’s second life, organized on the basis of laughter” (p. 7) that Bakhtin sees as the reality of life itself.

Characteristic of carnival is its suspension of all hierarchy and privileges; all people are seen to be equal. Bakhtin shows how carnival required a special form of communication of free and frank market square speech: “Carnival laughter is firstly festive, it is directed at all and everyone, including those who laugh. It is gay, triumphant but also mocking, deriding, asserts and denies, it buries and revives” (Bakhtin, 1984b, pp. 11–12). Interestingly, it differs from present-day laughter which is seen as either purely negative satire or a merely superficial and banal laughter without any deeper philosophical meaning (Bakhtin, 1984b).

Grotesque realism in all its forms is an essential principle of medieval folk culture. This complex concept cannot be defined as gross naturalism alone; it is the opposite of the finished, completed man, with an emphasis on those parts of the body that are open to the world. The body here is seen not as separate from the world, but as blended with it and ever creating (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 26). Essentially, grotesque realism brings all that is spiritual, ideal and abstract (the classical canon) down to the material of earth and lower body (p. 19). Earth means birth and death and renewal here, “always fruitful, always conceiving” (p. 21) and the lower body represents the bodily pleasures—sexual pleasures, eating—and functions such as copulating, defecating, giving birth, dying. The grotesque image reflects the transformation of growth and becoming. It must be emphasised once again that medieval folk humour was fully accepted by society at that time.

As Bakhtin (1984b) argues it, during the Renaissance all signs of the unfinished nature of the body were deleted and kept secret as a result of the growing power of the

monarchy and the church. Conception, child birth, death and anything else related to the grotesque were seen as hideous and not fitting the aesthetics of what was defined as beautiful in that era. As Bakhtin (1984b) states, in present times we continue to live according to the classical canon, but we have ceased to understand the grotesque or carnivalesque canon: “It is necessary to understand the nature of folk humour in bygone eras to grasp it, its philosophy, its universalism, its ambivalence and its link with time, all of these have been almost entirely lost in modern humour” (p. 133).

In his historical overview of carnival and the grotesque realism of folk humour, Bakhtin (1984b) describes how, from the 17th century onwards, the grotesque of folk humour was degraded to low comics or gross naturalism. The spirit of carnival in the market place became restricted to a mere holiday mood and ceased to be people’s second life (p. 33). Carnival remained in the literature: the Romantics of the 17th and 18th centuries described carnival as a liberation of the prevailing view of the world and from what was universally accepted, allowing freedom (p. 36). After this period, interest in the grotesque waned or existed only in “vulgar comic genres” or satire (p. 45).

However, Bakhtin (1984b) argues that the principle of laughter and carnival is necessary to destroy the limited seriousness of officialdom and that it sets free human consciousness and imagination, thereby opening new possibilities (p. 49). Although laughter can be serious, it must be seen as opposing the limited seriousness of the formal world; it is deeply philosophical and fresh, opening up possibilities of a new world. It is a side of humour not known in present times.

Bakhtin uses Rabelais’s work to show how we need to return to the understandings of the grotesque and its aesthetic nature in medieval folk culture and Renaissance literature on this topic. He reiterates the dynamic nature of the grotesque as grasping “becoming and growth” and the eternal unfinished nature of being. It is his assertion that the second life of

the carnival spirit in the Middle Ages, with its striving for a new youth, prepared the thinking of the Renaissance: “Medieval laughter became at the renaissance stage the expression of a free and critical historical consciousness” (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 73).

Philologists have criticised Bakhtin for his one-sided presentation of medieval carnival in Rabelais’s work as a joyful and carefree festival for the masses, when it was known that those representing officialdom also participated. Other grounds for criticism were his presentation of the grotesque body as a new canon and his apparent notion of carnival as joyful and carefree, when carnival included violence and conflicts (Emerson, 1997; Gardiner, 2003; Sullivan et al., 2009). It needs to be noted that Bakhtin’s ideas about carnival do not necessarily accurately reflect historical detail; they are his interpretation of cultural practices in medieval French market squares. Emerson’s (1997) argument is that Bakhtin’s carnival was his Utopia, which he used creatively as a springboard for his ideas about new possibilities. Furthermore, Emerson wants it to be understood that Bakhtin did not intend to change the world through carnival; Bakhtin only ever writes about the intersubjectivity of the self and the world.

However, Gardiner (1992) and Shepherd (1991) present more political views. For Shepherd, carnival has the capacity to challenge hierarchy and power structures (p. xxiii). For Gardiner (1992), Bakhtin presents a critical Utopia in his book on Rabelais; one that differs from a generally negatively received, totalising Utopia, which views the world as a fantasy of an ideal land. Gardiner (1992, 2000) further clarifies that Bakhtin’s Utopia is not the usual model of an ideal world in harmony, but is instead ongoing human agency, opposing monologic, dominant social order (p. 33). In Gardiner’s (1992) view, Bakhtin used carnival as a metaphor and as a promise for a better world, breaking down class systems. Similar to Shepherd, he suggests that a Bakhtinian critical Utopia, which opposes the authoritative discourse, can perhaps help create less monologic institutions. As Gardiner argues,

poststructural deconstruction of hegemonic discourses in itself is insufficient; an alternative needs to be offered, which he maintains is one of the main features of Bakhtin's discussion in *Rabelais and his world*. Gardiner (2003) notes the irony that Bakhtin looked through Russian eyes at medieval Europe for his Utopia, and in turn readers in the West are looking at Bakhtin's ideas for theirs (p. 33).

Through carnival the familiar looks strange, carnival is a means of otherness.

(Holquist, 1990, p. 89)

Carnival in early childhood education. Siding with Gardiner, Sidorkin (1997) confirms that Bakhtin presents carnival as a Utopian world, which “creates a parallel reality of a folk festivity of a utopian human community without hunger, hatred, opposition, social hierarchy or rigid taboos, it does not mean total escapism...but rests an understanding how far reality can change” (p. 234) in an educational context. It is Sidorkin's (1997) belief that educational researchers tend to put aside carnival-type moments in educational settings. He does not suggest that carnival is about rebellion or immediate abolition of educational conventions, but maintains that laughter may allow us to see things differently.

The medieval folk culture and the concept of living in both the formal or classical world and the grotesque world, with its aspects of becoming, freeing of imagination and new possibilities, may open new ways of thinking about education and early childhood education settings in particular. As White (2014) argues, carnivalesque has the potential to make forbidden commentary, “to exceed social boundaries and conventions in order to stand in opposition to authorial positioning” in educational settings (p. 899). White proposes a dialogic role for early childhood teachers: on the one hand, appreciating the child's humour while, on the other hand, accepting that teachers must remain outside the child's carnivalesque.

Moreover, Sullivan (2012) connects carnival to a child's consciousness, when his or her (inappropriate) word temporarily subverts the authority of teachers. Sidorkin (1997) argues that "there needs to be a first word, authoritative word of the official, monologic, to laugh at. A certain stability in schools is important" (p. 234). Echoing this view, White (2014) suggests that early childhood teachers must support children in their carnivalesque moments, not by intervening or even engaging in the carnivalesque act, but by offering the serious role of officialdom as a platform for children to launch into agentic, heteroglossic, carnivalesque acts.

How the two worlds of folk humour of the medieval market place and the formal feudal and church culture can be applied to play situations of young children within the institution of early childhood education is illustrated by Duncan and Tarulli (2003) (see Part A of Chapter 3 for more detail). Children's expressions in play can be seen in the same way as folk humour in medieval market places. Folk humour was part of people's everyday world for more than 1,000 years until it was driven out during the Renaissance; perhaps children still have this natural, unsquashed ability to participate in the carnivalesque.

As discussed in the review of empirical studies (Chapter 3), Bakhtin's concepts have been used to analyse play in early childhood in a few studies (for example, Cohen, 2009; Duncan & Tarulli, 2003). White's doctoral study (2009a) applied Bakhtin's concepts to analyse assessment of young children's learning. It is argued in this thesis that Bakhtin's explanations of carnival, grotesque realism and folk culture can be used effectively to guide and interpret teacher-child dialogue within the context of early childhood education settings.

Bakhtin's reflections on Rabelais's writings on carnival, grotesque realism and laughter open up a perspective of carnivalisation as an opposition to the classical or formal world. Bakhtin suggests this dualisation as a condition for the ultimate structure of life. Both carnival and dialogue are about revealing or unmasking the truth, with dialogue opposing the

authoritarian word and carnival being opposed to officialdom (Pomorska, 1984). Carnival in education thus addresses power indirectly, temporarily overthrowing authoritative discourses, and in this way provides possibilities to work out new ways for teachers to respond and for teachers and children to relate to one another.

Open-endedness. Chapter 1 has presented a rationale for an open-ended curriculum. In his later life, Bakhtin (1986d) speaks about open-endedness as a central theme in his work. The following quote not only illustrates the open-endedness of his writing but also gives a glimpse of his writing style:

The unity of the emerging (developing) idea: Hence a certain *internal* open-endedness of many of my ideas. But I do not wish to turn shortcomings into virtues: in these works there is much external open-endedness, that is, an open-endedness not of the thought itself but of the expression and the exposition. Sometimes it is difficult to separate one open-endedness from another. It cannot be assigned to a particular trend (Structuralism). My love for variations and for a diversity of terms for a single phenomenon. The multiplicity of focuses. Bringing distant things closer without indicating the intermediate links. (Bakhtin, 1986d, p. 155, original emphasis)

In the unfinished structure of his notes, Bakhtin is opening up possibilities for his readers without spelling things out. He indicates that there are many variations and possibilities and he leaves it open to us to respond. Bakhtin's open-endedness thus raises an expectation to respond, not only in writing but also through a moral answerability to act. A study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings may be seen, in an open-ended sense, as a response to Bakhtin's utterances.

Dialogic research. Although Bakhtin favoured the unique event of everyday life, this should not be seen in the purely phenomenological sense; theory is still important (Gardiner, 2000a). I am using theory as a "tool for thinking", as applied by Taylor and Robinson (2009, p. 163) in their study of student voices. However, this theory as thinking tool is different from applying theoretical statements as an overlay; moreover, it does not happen *after* empirical

investigation. In addition to being the means to open up thinking about teacher–child dialogue, the theory informs and guides the research process itself; the theoretical framework of dialogue is applied to a dialogic relationship between the researcher and the teachers.

In his emphasis on an open-endedness and unfinishedness of dialogue, Bakhtin (1986d) does more than allow an active response to his writing: he demands it. In other words, his writing not only provides information about the topic, but also guides the way in which the research is carried out.

In relation to pedagogy, both Shields (2007) and Sidorkin (2004) argue that Bakhtin's concepts can challenge us with complex and original thinking about pedagogy. They take us beyond educational research, which looks for simple answers to binary questions, and beyond an acceptance of education based on best practice, which Bakhtin (1986c) would see as monologicistic and authoritative.

In relation to the research process, both Frank (2005) and White (2009b) believe that dialogic research, which builds on Bakhtin's dialogic philosophy, supports research into complex research theory as opposed to investigations into scientific truths. They strongly endorse dialogical research as an approach to research that is more appropriate and ethical than what Frank (2005) calls monological research, where qualitative researchers adopt quantitative researchers' reference to raw data, which are then refined, finished or even civilised (p. 970). As White (2009b) defines it, dialogical research is a research model that is built on the dialogic philosophy of Bakhtin and that is fundamentally concerned with the social discursive nature of language (p. 299). Dialogical research is more about *how* truth presents itself than about defining truth in itself.

Frank (2005) argues that, in traditional, monologicistic research, the roles of the researcher and participants are predetermined: the researcher acts as a researcher and the participants as participants, giving information that the researcher requires. Particularly in

Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics (1984a), Bakhtin describes how Devushkin, one of Dostoevsky's characters, feels being spied on and measured by the author. He applies Dostoevsky's relationship between himself and his characters to the relation of I and the other. Bakhtin argues that Dostoevsky approaches his characters and relates to them as subjects to talk *with* rather than to talk *about*. Extending this open-ended relationship and unfinalisability to the research process itself, Frank (2005) concludes that research tends to be monologicistic, with one human being "determining all that another is and can be" (p. 966). He suggests a dialogic alternative for researchers by emphasising participants' engagements as their own struggles of becoming, as opposed to representing participants with static themes or lists of characteristics that permanently fix participants (p. 968).

To remain true to Bakhtin's philosophy of understanding as dialogue, it seems therefore fitting to use Bakhtin's theories also for the design of this study in the form of dialogic research, whereby the researcher becomes a participant in the dialogue:

Understanding itself enters as a dialogic element and somehow changes its whole sense. The person who understands inevitably becomes a third party in the dialogue. (Bakhtin, 1986c, p. 126)

(The dialogic research design is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.)

Conclusion

The ultimate word of the world and about the world has not yet been spoken, the world is open and free, everything is still in the future and will always be in the future. (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 166)

The above quote could be seen as a possible mantra for ethical educational institutions. Bakhtin links abstract philosophical thinking to a personal ethics of everyday interactions between teachers and children in early childhood settings. In a way, Bakhtin prefigures poststructural and postmodern thinking when he privileges the marginal and the un-official.

As a theorist, his focus is on intersubjective experiences, not subjects. These lived relationships are at the heart of everyday teacher–child dialogues. Bakhtin’s polyphony and carnival offer a position from which to problematise authoritative institutional discourses, showing possibilities to break out of the confines of hierarchical educational organisations. Furthermore, educators can use the ethical component, which has been shown to be so significant in Bakhtin’s thinking, to guide them in their responsibilities towards young children, thereby providing a *post*-poststructural perspective. Despite his limitations and the complexities associated with his work, Bakhtin therefore is a paramount theorist, whose work opens up an ethical pedagogy that is open to diversity, difference and multiple ways of thinking about and acting on.

Bakhtin’s theories are also highly relevant for researchers who do not want to finalise their participants by talking about them and instead wish to talk with them. In his work is the potential for a new outlook on truth as something that is constituted dialogically. He offers Utopian alternatives for new possibilities in his writings on carnival and provides us with a form of “practical postmodernism” through his writings on ethics, responsibility and participative thinking (Bell & Gardiner, 1998, p. 6). Also through Bakhtin we gain a research mechanism through dialogic research that opens up new possibilities for how we can do research (Frank, 2005; White, 2009a). Dialogic research situates the researcher as a participant; it is less concerned with finding a universal truth than with representing the polyphony in the dialogue between participants.

My interpretations of Bakhtin are continuing as an unfinalisable dialogue. A dialogical way of thinking does not quite fit the format of a theoretical chapter with an introduction, a discussion and a conclusion because, in a Bakhtinian sense, there never is a conclusion, only further dialogue.

With a theoretical foundation for this study established, the next chapter pays attention to the research literature related to teacher–child dialogue and subjectivities in early years education. As well as providing a historical context, it will show how understandings have been shaped and continue to be shaped by cultural knowledge.

Chapter 3:

Situating Teacher–Child Dialogue

In this chapter, I discuss two areas of the research literature: teacher–child dialogue and child and adult subjectivities in early years settings. The first part of this chapter (Part A) starts with educational theory related to dialogue between teachers and children in educational settings, which situates the topic of empirical research related to teacher–child dialogue historically, before focusing more specifically on empirical research related to teacher–child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Most of the early research tends to have a deficit view of teachers and initially most, if not all, of the research on teacher–child interaction is based on a technical approach. The following section reviews more recent teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings, based on philosophical frameworks; most of these studies are from poststructural perspectives and show a more complex view of the topic. Next, the discussion turns to studies of teacher–child dialogue that have used Bakhtinian theories for their analysis. To provide further insight into Bakhtinian applications in early childhood contexts, research projects in early childhood settings that do not focus on teacher–child dialogue but have used Bakhtinian concepts such as carnivalesque are also described. These studies most often observe children in play situations.

The empirical studies in Part A illustrate that teacher–child dialogue has been a topic for research for more than three decades. Most research studies based on interventionist strategies paint a deficit picture of children and teachers; generally, they have not led to sustained and more complex teacher–child dialogue. Studies grounded in philosophical theories show more respect for children and present a more complex picture of teacher–child dialogue. Furthermore, they may open up possibilities of a more open-ended curriculum, as

argued for in Chapter 1 and as understood in a Bakhtinian ideology of open-endedness of dialogue in Chapter 2.

The second half of this chapter (Part B) covers subjectivities. As discussed in Chapter 2, Bakhtinian teacher–child dialogues both depend on and ultimately lead to constructions of self and others for teachers, children and researchers. Any utterance represents one or more particular genres that have been selected, knowingly or unknowingly, as part of the speaker’s subjectivity. Any encounter in turn affects the subjectivities of those involved, either reinforcing the authoritative discourse or shaping an internally persuasive alternative discourse.

Part B starts with a brief historical overview of research related to identity and subjectivity. This is followed by a discussion of child subjectivities. Although most of this research is based on Western perspectives, a short section reviews related research in a New Zealand context, particularly from Māori perspectives. After a review of research from poststructural perspectives, subjectivity from Bakhtinian perspectives is discussed. This, in turn, leads to research projects that have applied Bakhtinian concepts of subjectivity shaped through dialogue. I then discuss specific teacher and researcher subjectivities before a brief conclusion on how a review of the literature, together with a deeper understanding of Bakhtin’s theories gained from Chapter 2, is sharpening the focus of this thesis and shaping the dialogic research methodology.

Part A: Empirical Studies of Teacher–Child Dialogue in Education

After conducting more than 40 years of research on New Zealand classrooms, Nuthall (2004) concludes that social relationships are the most important in children’s school lives, but that teachers still know very little of what is really going on in classrooms. He strongly believes in research that provides ongoing and detailed data on classroom experiences of individual

students, allowing in-depth analysis of the changes in students' knowledge, beliefs and skills (Nuthall, 2004, p. 273). In his view, ideas and models about how to teach contain a potential problem in that many do not explain underlying learning principles. Declaring his deep suspicion of research on different methods of teaching, he asserts that: "The result of studies of best practice tends to be what experts currently deem best... whatever is fashionable at the time determines what researchers look for and what they see" (Nuthall, 2007, p. 29).

Classroom conversation, Nuthall (2007) notes, tends to be started by the teacher; the usual sequence is that the teacher asks a question, the student responds and the teacher comments on the response. From his experience at the beginning of the 21st century, he believes that this pattern of teacher–student exchange has remained the same since he started his observations in 1959. He argues there is no guarantee that classroom activities will engage students in the way the teacher intends they will learn. According to his findings, many of the quality assurance systems used to evaluate teachers on effective teaching methods are based on fashion trends and on assumptions that a particular teaching strategy can predict and guarantee learning. The particular sequence of teacher–child conversation Nuthall describes has been observed in a number of studies, some of which are discussed in this chapter. In the context of this study, Nuthall's work is useful in developing understanding of how teaching strategies may not be the most useful tool for effective teaching.

Using individual microphones, video cameras in classrooms and extensive interviews with students in primary school settings, Nuthall found that students build their understanding on previous experiences and that peer culture is a major factor in learning. Another significant finding is that sitting in lectures teaches student teachers that knowledge is something that is given whether they like it or not, creating a passive attitude in student teachers that may be reproduced in classrooms. Nuthall provides a strong rationale for avoiding universal fads. While he advocates for teachers and researchers to be open to what

students say, Nuthall does not question what should be learned, how it should be learned or if and how teachers' privileged positions and/or institutional discourses affect learning. In Chapter 1, I addressed these questions and provided the rationale that underpins this study of an open-ended curriculum and students as active participants. I also paid attention to how neoliberal ideals are dominating a narrowly defined curriculum. Adult views of childhood have shaped who and what children can be.

Two studies that could be considered to be classics in the field of teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings, given that they continue to be referred to in much current research, are discussed next. Cazden (1988), who is an applied linguist, psychologist and educational anthropologist, draws on all three disciplines for her ethnographical analyses of classroom discourse across educational settings. Her observation is that teachers tend to ask questions to which they almost always know the answer. Similar to Nuthall, Cazden found that classroom conversations usually follow a pattern in which the teacher initiates the conversation, a student responds and the teacher evaluates this response—a trend that has become known as Initiate–Respond–Evaluate or IRE. Cazden (1988) also notices power imbalances in classroom dialogues: teachers have the right to speak to anyone at any time, fill in any silence or interrupt any speaker (p. 54). Concluding that the rules for speaking are determined by the context of the classroom and the school as an institution, she points out teachers have a responsibility to ensure the classroom community supports the learner. Although Cazden carried out her research in the 1980s, many of her observations still hold true in the 21st century, as will become evident from recent empirical studies discussed below. Her research, which has been used for decades as a guide for teachers in their interactions with children, is useful for this study as a way of gaining an understanding of how an IRE approach could become, and in many cases still is, the dominant discourse for teacher–child interactions. It made me realise how the IRE approach, which on the surface

aims to invite students to participate, in effect creates a monologic discourse. Decades of modelling this approach to (student) teachers has led to the institutionalisation of both children and teachers, as is evident in the transcript of Maddy in her role play of the teacher at mat time (see Chapter 7).

Another study that could be considered as a classic is the comparison study by Tizard and Hughes (2002) in the 1980s on the interactions of four-year-old girls with their mother at home and with early childhood teachers. Tizard and Hughes notice that teachers ask much narrower questions than mothers, which often require a cognitive response. Conversations with teachers tend to be shorter and children rarely initiate them, in contrast to the conversations with their parent. At home, children ask on average 26 questions per hour; at the nursery school they only ask an average of two questions per hour. Tizard and Hughes (2002) contradict the Piagetian thinking, which was prevalent at the time of their research, that the young child is illogical or whimsical (p. xiv). Instead, they conclude that children have an intense need to understand the world, which is reflected in the many “why” questions they ask at home. The conversations at home also show that children ask questions in a persistent and logical way in order to extend their understanding. As Tizard and Hughes point out, not many studies on adult–child dialogue have been carried out in the home situation. Society has changed markedly since the 1980s; most parents with children of preschool age are now working and children spend on average many more hours in early childhood settings. In New Zealand, teachers in early childhood settings are also more likely to be qualified teachers. However, current research, which is discussed next, shows that most interactions between children and teachers are still initiated by the teacher and still tend to be brief conversations.

In a comparative, large-scale study of pedagogical cultures in primary school settings in five countries, Alexander (2004) observes how teachers in Russian and French classrooms react very differently to their peers in English-speaking education systems of England, the United

States of America and India (p. 19). Alexander argues that, particularly in English and American classrooms, talk has considerably less status than writing and that learning is mostly assessed on written work. Parents and school inspectors ask for written work to look for evidence of progress in learning. Alexander concludes that an educational culture has evolved where writing is seen as the only “real school work” (p. 9). Based on large-scale intervention programmes in England, Alexander defines the following essential features for dialogic classrooms: it is collective, reciprocal, supportive, cumulative and purposeful (p. 38).

Yet Alexander (2004) notes that current classroom practice in English-speaking countries continues to offer only limited opportunities for students to actively participate in dialogue by drawing on their own experiences or to build on these experiences. Teachers may ask open-ended questions to elicit more meaningful answers from students, but Alexander rates most of these questions as pseudo-enquiry; many are unfocused, unchallenging and undemanding and they are not cumulative. In addition, children usually receive habitual praise rather than meaningful feedback. Furthermore, teachers still mostly decide the structure of the class, who may speak and when; they determine the content and often guide students towards predetermined outcomes, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Alexander, 2004; Claxton, 2008; Gilbert, 2005). Alexander is critical of a technical approach to teaching; he believes pedagogy is based on the ideas, values and collective histories of a society (Alexander, 2005, p. 2). He uses Bakhtin’s ideas to argue for extended conversations. Alexander’s pragmatic approach involves the development of “repertoires” of teaching talk, learning talk and organisational contexts in conjunction with the teachers and students involved in his programmes. Is extended talk dialogic teaching, he asks, and what is the role of teachers in making dialogue genuinely cumulative and purposeful?

Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2008) explain how the mixed-method longitudinal study of the Effective Provision of Preschool Project (EPPE) was extended into a second project:

Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY). This large-scale, qualitative research project in the United Kingdom follows on from similar projects in primary settings that stemmed from the findings of Alexander (2005). It involves early childhood settings with a total of 3,000 children. The REPEY project investigates the types of questions that teachers asked. The study uses environmental quality scales in order to determine “best” practice. The purpose of the research was to “identify strategies being applied by more effective pre-school settings” (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2008, p. 5). Findings show that only five percent of questions asked were open-ended, defined as questions that cannot be answered by a yes or no answer; they require children to give more elaborate responses, encouraging children to have a go and/or leading to further shared thinking. During the investigation, however, the ambiguity of the definition was noticed and open-ended questions were redefined as questions where the adult accepted more than one right answer.

As Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2008) explain, a theory of “sustained shared thinking” was first formulated as a result of the analysis of data related to effective preschool environments (p. 6). Sustained shared thinking is defined as adults building on children’s interests, and teachers supporting and challenging children’s thinking. It is based on trusting relationships between teachers and children and on teachers showing genuine interest (p. 14). Also of note is that early childhood teachers’ performance in asking open-ended questions was a “poor result” compared with that of teachers in primary settings, whose score of nearly 10% Siraj-Blatchford and Manni rated as “already disappointingly low” (p. 14). The authors conclude that teachers need further training with an emphasis on questioning skills. In their view, sustained shared thinking strategies now need to be implemented by all registered early childhood services in England. Similar to Alexander’s (2004) research, the project is based on teaching approaches that use universal, technical, interventionist strategies.

Apart from the large research projects mentioned above, many other small-scale empirical studies highlight the importance of teacher–child dialogue for high-quality early childhood teaching in the 21st century (for example, Askeland & Maager, 2010; Carr, 2011; Dickinson, Darrow & Tinubu, 2008; Durden & Rainer Dangel, 2008; Gjems, 2010; Harris & Williams, 2007; Kontos, 1999; Lobman, 2006; Massey, 2004; Zucker, Justice, Piasta & Kaderavek, 2010). As indicated above, most of the studies find that teacher–child dialogues tend to illustrate a relationship that is far from equitable: Teachers ask most of the questions and they tend to ask questions to which they already know the answer (Carr, 2011; Dickinson et al., 2008; Durden & Rainer Dangel, 2008; Gjems, 2010; Harris & Williams, 2007; Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2008). Several of these studies provide evidence that there is room for improvement in teachers’ dialogues with children (Carr, 2011; Dickinson et al., 2008; Durden & Rainer Dangel, 2008; Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2008).

The discussion now turns to studies of teacher–child dialogue that are based on a technical approach to teaching in order to improve cognitive and language outcomes for children. Most of these studies conclude that a range of strategies is available to teachers and that teachers need to have further professional development in this area. It seems not much has been learned in practice since Cazden’s research in the 1980s.

A study of early childhood teachers’ talk during play by Kontos (1999) is often referred to in discussions of teacher–child dialogue. This research involved 40 teachers in 22 Head Start centres in the USA. Head Start is a large-scale, government-funded programme for children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, which was set up in 1965; it includes health services and parent involvement. Kontos audio-recorded teacher–child interactions during free play time in order to investigate what roles teachers take on during these sessions and what kind of talk they use (p. 366). Transcripts were coded according to the type of

verbalisation, role of the teacher and the child's activity (p. 368) and descriptive statistics were calculated. Results showed that teachers most often took on the role of stage manager and their language was mostly practical, to support the play with objects and to guide behaviour. Kontos concludes that, although teachers spend a great deal of their time with children, they are mostly managing rather than engaging in rich, stimulating interactions. In a meta-analysis of research on children who attended Head Start centres, Barnett and Hustedt (2005) conclude that across all domains, benefits of the programme seem modest. In addition, although children's IQ and vocabulary increase as a result of the interventions, over time such gains fade.

A decade after Kontos's (1999) research, Dickinson et al. (2008) also studied the pattern of teacher–child conversations in Head Start programmes in the USA to find out how often teachers use strategies to support children's language, how much variability there is between teachers and how the context of different activities impacts on teachers' conversations. Teachers were asked to interact with children in the block or drama area, as Dickinson et al. believe children tend to have more open conversations in these domains. After observing how four teachers talked with children over a four-week period, Dickinson et al. carried out a detailed linguistic analysis both quantitatively and qualitatively, using a software program to code the teachers' language. Results showed teachers responded to children's questions or initiatives on only rare occasions and did not encourage children to ask questions. After they had received feedback on their conversations with children, teachers extended those conversations. Dickinson et al. note four general strategies that enhance language learning: use of a wide vocabulary, extended talks on a topic, semantically contingent responses and cognitively rich topics of conversation.

In an intervention project in the USA involving 173 teachers, Pianta, Mashburn, Downer, Hamre and Justice (2008) describe a teacher professional development project that

used a web-based system to send video clips of teachers’ practice back to teachers. The teachers who also received online consultation and feedback about their video-recorded interactions with children showed higher ratings in good-quality interactions than those who only were shown video clips of their interactions. The study is a good example of a technical approach to teaching. Pianta et al. argue that it is of paramount importance to identify effective, relevant and scalable approaches to training the early education workforce (p. 431).

In conducting a micro-analysis of teacher–child interactions, Chappell et al. (2008) use the term *possibility thinking* for valued teacher–child interactions in an enabling context as (p. 268). Chappell et al. are influenced by Maslow’s concept of self-actualisation, linking this to dispositional behaviours such as persistence and being imaginative. The case study of two early childhood settings and one primary school, all of which had been identified by educational reviewers as excelling in supporting students’ creativity, explores how the teachers’ questioning leads to children’s “possibility thinking” (Chappell et al., 2008, p. 267). The authors coded the questions, with categories such as leading, service and follow-through questions, and the responses—responding, predicting, testing, rejecting, accepting and so on. As Chappell et al. describe it, teachers’ carefully framed leading questions provide a space for classroom episodes of possibility thinking, especially when children are given space to respond. Given the importance of how questions are posed, Chappell et al. conclude, their suggested framework of strategies may support teachers to recognise opportunities for possibility thinking. They recommend further research to better understand service and follow-through questions.

Rather than questioning power imbalances between teachers and children, Chappell et al. (2008) accept a universal framework of strategies for possibility thinking that, once teachers apply it correctly, will increase children’s creativity. While it is intended to make space for children and to improve the quality of dialogue beyond unchallenging questions, it

seems that the suggested framework of strategies for teachers resembles one of the educational fads discussed by Nuthall (2007), who, as described above, found that these did little to change teacher–child dialogue. Chapter 1 has already detailed how the study of possibility thinking carries an adult agenda of an existing education of universal truths and a Western dogma, where education is purely a matter of the mind.

Durden and Rainer Dangel (2008) examined two teachers in conversations with two- and three-year-old children during small-group activities, in a high-quality university childcare centre in the USA. From their coding and analysis of interviews, observations and video recordings of small-group activities, Durden and Rainer Dangel noticed little evidence of cognitively challenging talk. Teacher–child interactions were often found to be monologic and mostly focused on simple questions by the teacher. The authors conclude that both teachers and children initiated conversations, but that teachers controlled the direction of most of them. Much of the language was about managing, instruction and conveying information. The short exchanges and conversations were more about testing children’s knowledge than an intersubjective activity. Durden and Rainer Dangel suggest that teachers analyse their own language. They recommend further research with specific practical implications to support beginning teachers with conversational skills and instructional practices (Durden and Rainer Dangel, 2008, p. 263).

The above empirical studies generally paint a deficit view of teachers who do not engage in complex, sustained dialogues, teachers who determine the direction of the conversation and teachers who usually ask cognitive questions to which they already know the answer. In identifying what teachers are doing wrong and then providing interventions and/or strategies to address the problem, researchers seem to disrespect and disempower teachers. More questions could be asked, such as why teachers ask non-challenging questions, why many conversations are not sustained, what is taught in initial teacher

education, especially in relation to “school readiness”, and indeed what is seen as valued learning in our society (see Chapter 1 for further discussion on this last issue).

While most of the studies discussed above do not make their pedagogical stance explicit, it seems that most analyses are based on Western developmental discourses focused on cognitive skills: conclusions often refer to universalist strategies, aims are mostly intellectual and predetermined, and power dynamics of schools and classrooms are not taken into account. As discussed in Chapter 1, education, including early childhood education, is dominated by global neoliberal discourses with their goals of “effective teaching” and education, which lead to an improved economy and funding that is linked to accountability. It comes as no surprise therefore that much of the research and, in particular, government-funded projects on teacher–child dialogue are framed within this neoliberal discourse with a technical approach to teaching, which trains teachers in “effective” universal teaching strategies. While conversations between teachers and children may become longer and perhaps cognitively more challenging (for both children and teachers), this technical approach fails to take into account the context of the learner and the setting. It favours cognitive skills and it does not allow for teachers to reflect critically on inevitable power imbalances in teacher–child dialogue. Next, studies that show more open-ended teacher–child dialogue are discussed.

The following research projects by Askeland and Maager (2010), Carr (2011), Rasku-Puttonen, Lerkkanen, Poikkeus and Siekkinen (2012) and Lobman (2006) are more respectful towards teachers. They advocate for children as active participants, although they are uncritical of existing power imbalances. In a Norwegian study in early childhood settings with a focus on subject-oriented language, Askeland and Maager (2010) recorded and analysed teacher–child dialogues over six three-hour periods; they used micro-analysis to find out how children engage in “possibility thinking” (p. 267). Their research sits within a

government-funded project on children's developing language skills; Askeland and Maager focus on subject-oriented language, which links to one of the learning areas of the Norwegian curriculum. However, as Askeland and Maager note, the curriculum has met with some opposition as it is seen as formalising the programme and endangering the long-held Norwegian pedagogy of children learning through play.

From their observations during the study, Askeland and Maager identify different types of dialogues: associated, philosophical, technical, text-oriented and metalinguistic. Their recommendation is for a playful atmosphere where subject-oriented language is interwoven with playful dialogues. They discuss how the teachers supported the children to build their vocabulary in relation to a particular topic—for example, a cultural event—which they then link to the curriculum area of language development. In conclusion, Askeland and Maager assert that there are many situations that provide opportunities for subject-oriented language, play still seems to be at the heart of the programme, and precise and nuanced language can be used in everyday activities. Although the study describes more open-ended conversations than the studies previously covered, it does illustrate how teachers and researchers get drawn into more structured activities as a result of prescriptive policy.

A recent New Zealand study explores how teachers can support children to reflect on their learning (Carr, 2011). The study is framed within a sociocultural approach and was part of a government-funded research contract. Teachers in nine early childhood centres were asked to revisit learning stories (narratives by teachers that document a child's learning) with at least one child over one year. These events were audio- and video-recorded. Although Carr (2011) mentions that the teachers were supported by professional development facilitators, no further detail is provided on the nature of this support. The aim of the project was for teachers to invite and provoke children to become more authoritative and responsible for their own learning (Carr, 2011, p. 259).

When they listened back to audio recordings, the teachers were surprised to hear how many closed questions they used. Carr (2011) provides a table of conversational strategies for revisiting learning which, she argues, the teachers became more experienced at using over time. In her view, New Zealand teachers need to be convinced that sustained conversations are important. The study shows that there is still work to be done in relation to improving teacher–child dialogue in New Zealand early childhood services. It is difficult to see how children’s meaningful and authentic co-authoring is possible, within this technical approach that does not ask questions about power imbalances. Furthermore, White (2009a) problematises how New Zealand narrative assessments of children’s learning that are currently documented present adult views of children and what learning is favoured and fail to reflect the complexity of a child, who the child is and what he or she has to offer (as discussed in more detail elsewhere in this chapter).

Informed by Vygotsky, Rasku-Puttonen et al. (2012) examine dialogical educational interactions in a Finnish preschool, they note a tension between dialogue and institutional roles of teachers and students. Using a class assessment scoring system, Rasku-Puttonen et al. found that most interactions were brief, and were either transmissions of information from the teacher or closed questions. They list a number of strategies to improve dialogic interactions and they suggest pre-service and in-service professional development.

Lastly, a case study report by Lobman (2006) uses improvisation theory from outside the educational field to explore the use of improvisation in teacher–child interactions. The author analyses video-recorded teacher–child interactions in a play-based programme, using codes derived from improvisation theory. Improvisation is a drama activity in which players collectively work in an unscripted scene. The author argues that, if teacher–child dialogue is viewed as improvisation, the focus shifts from the teacher to what the teacher and child are doing collectively. In improvisation theory, teachers accept the conversation that the child

offers and they build on this; it requires teachers to react in the moment, rather than have pre-set goals. Responsive teaching using improvisation techniques offers the benefit of viewing teacher–child interactions with fresh eyes, with more equal interactions, although underlying power issues are still not addressed.

As noted above, these studies by Askeland and Maager (2010), Carr (2011), Lobman (2006) and Rasku-Puttonen et al. (2012) differ from those previously discussed in that they seem more respectful of both teachers and children. In all five studies, teachers and researchers want to support children to actively participate and want discussions to be more open-ended. However, the focus continues to be on particular strategies for teachers to learn about and apply and there is no critical reflection on power imbalances. Teachers and researchers conform to neoliberal agendas of children as autonomous choosers and lifelong learners, as discussed with reference to Duhn (2006) in Chapter 1. It could be argued that children are still viewed from unchallenged adult perspectives and that education is foremost about enculturation into an existing world. Realising how the IRE approach creates an a monologic discourse, this study aims to explore if there can be a more equitable power balance and how teacher–child dialogue can be more open-ended.

Teacher–child dialogue viewed from philosophical perspectives. As has been explained in Chapter 2, Bakhtin is not the only philosopher whose ideas have been applied to teacher–child dialogue. The following studies use other theoretical frameworks. The first two studies discussed are based on a Vygotskian framework. The next applies Dewey’s democratic education theories to reflect against classroom dialogue, which is followed by a research project by Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson (2009), who refer to Piaget and reflect against the United Nations Convention for the Rights of the Child (1989). The last study in this section reflects against a Deleuzian framework.

Gjems (2010) applies Vygotsky's notion that teachers and older children are key figures in children's language learning and meaning making, to investigate teacher–child dialogue, negotiation of meaning and how teachers can promote children's active participation (p. 140). As Gjems (2010) sees it, children's learning is inseparable from experiences shared with others and everyday conversations are the most frequent language interactions in Norwegian kindergartens (p. 140). She video-recorded small-group conversations during meals and play time over a period of four months. In coding conversations where children participated with least three utterances, Gjems differentiates between: teachers asking open-ended and prefaced questions for which the teacher does not know the answer; conversations where children are given time and opportunity to participate; and conversations where teachers invite children to share their thoughts and experiences.

Her findings showed that children were seldom asked about their beliefs and that time and opportunity for children to answer were critical aspects for their active participation in the conversation. Gjems concludes that, although children were eager to participate, the teachers found it challenging to support them in a more active role in conversations. In her view, children need time to reflect on past experiences and to search for the right words. Although Gjems gives the impression of valuing open-ended questions to which teachers do not have the answer, she seems to be equating such questions with questions where teachers ask children to recall what they did outside the early childhood setting. From her statement that through teacher–child conversations children will obtain knowledge about their environment and from her emphasis on the importance of teachers using a wide vocabulary, there is an indication of a pedagogy of dialogue of children's enculturation in an existing world.

In a New Zealand action research project, which was funded through a government contract, Cullen et al. (2009) focus on teachers supporting children's active engagement in

complex and sustained learning (p. 47). The research was carried out in an intercultural kindergarten that has a strong partnership with a Samoan playgroup. It was based on Vygotskian theories and a sociocultural “community of learners” approach, co-constructing knowledge and sharing funds of cultural knowledge with Samoan language and cultural learning embedded (Cullen et al., 2009, p. 47). Cullen et al. conclude that, while no specific linguistic outcomes were measured, the project built further understandings of bilingual communities of learning. They state that communities need to work with specific cultural practices of community members and find ways to increase participation by adults in the community.

Both Vygotskian-based studies discussed above highlight education as enculturation, which fits within a sociocultural discourse. A sociocultural paradigm places importance on the learner in his or her sociohistorical context. Vygotsky’s work has been widely adopted; he has become one of the most influential theorists in education, leading to a transformational shift from a developmental to a sociocultural approach (White, 2011a). Similar to Bakhtin, Vygotsky shifts the focus from what is happening inside people’s heads to what is happening in the interaction between them. However, Bakhtinians such as White (2011a) object to popular integration of Bakhtin’s theories into Vygotskian notions, or an acceptance of Bakhtin’s ideas as an extension of Vygotsky. As White argues it, Vygotskian outcomes of an educated person through dialectics do not open up education that values difference and diversity, in contrast to Bakhtin’s dialogue, which positions learners as active participants. Duncan and Turulli (2003) similarly state that Bakhtin’s notion of dialogically becoming takes him beyond Vygotsky; as discussed later in this chapter, according to this concept the individual not only internalises others’ discourse but resists fully coinciding with it.

The following studies, which use theoretical frameworks of Dewey and Piaget, show teachers who are more open to children’s ideas and who prioritise these interactions. Tholin

and Jansen (2012) in another Scandinavian research project, are inspired by Dewey's education as democracy and sociocultural aspects of children as active participants. In exploring how the language of teachers invites children to participate in democratic conversation, they observed how early childhood teachers in kindergarten asked questions and how they listened to children. Norwegian teachers are expected to work in a partnership with children that is based on equality; Norwegian legislation determines that children have a right to actively participate in their early childhood setting. Data in this study consist of eight planned teacher–child conversations. Similar to Gjems (2010), Tholin and Jansen found that teachers need to give children time to respond, need to be open to children's ideas and need to ask children what they are thinking about, rather than about what they remember. While Tholin and Jansen make suggestions about effective strategies, they also pay attention to how teachers can prioritise children's opinions and experiences as a focus for discussion.

Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson (2009) observed and video-recorded eight groups of young children over one year in Swedish early childhood centres and one primary school. Their focus was on children initiating conversations with their teachers, with the aim of finding out why children invite teachers to take part in their play. They refer to Piaget as the first researcher who was interested in children's perspectives, although they also acknowledge he was criticised for his methodologies. Their research question stems from children's rights to be respected and to be heard. Their findings show that children involve teachers if they want to get help, to be acknowledged or praised, to let teachers know someone has broken the rules, to find out how things work and, lastly, to involve teachers in play and playful communication (Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson, 2009, p. 82).

On the other hand, Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson (2009) note, children rarely make contact with teachers when they are playing. Possible reasons that the researchers put forward are that children may see their play as at risk when they involve an adult or that

teachers are too busy to play. From previous research projects, Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson know that teachers tend to keep themselves in the background of the play. As in many of the studies previously discussed, the teachers in this project do not challenge children in their interactions and often ignore children's playfulness. Arguing that teachers have been influenced by dominant institutional discourses, which separate play from learning, Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson conclude that teachers need to develop a goal-oriented strategy that involves play as well as learning (p. 92). The study is of interest as it shows that young children want teachers to joke and play with them as well as to help them.

Lastly, Mozère (2007) uses Deleuzian theories to explore how children's desire can become accessible and how the children's educators in a French childcare centre could escape from normalisation. She argues that children do not need to conform, but that they need to be surrounded by benevolent adults. It is Mozère's (2007) belief that, rather than interesting experiences per se, children need adults who consider the experiences differently—who “hear these whispering languages (of children)...and notice these tiny micro-events...that blur the conventional picture” (p. 295). She wants teachers to leave the cognitive path for an experimental one, in order to make space for children's desire. By way of illustration, she presents a vignette of a teacher who agrees to look after a child's pretend kitten. Although they use different theoretical backgrounds, both Pramling-Samuelsson and Johansson (2009) and Mozère (2007) advocate for teachers to be engaged in children's pretend play.

As has been mentioned above, Bakhtin is not the only philosopher whose concepts can be applied to teacher–child interactions. The studies outlined in this section illustrate how different philosophical frameworks can provide new perspectives of teacher–child dialogue. Under the range of theoretical frameworks, the teacher–child dialogue is differently viewed from sociocultural, democratic or poststructural principles; each allows a more complex view

of education and, in particular, teacher–child dialogue than the earlier reviewed technicist studies. I now turn to studies in early childhood and primary education settings that focus on teacher–child dialogue and use a Bakhtinian framework.

Empirical research that uses Bakhtin’s ideas in teacher–child dialogues.

To my knowledge, only a handful of studies (Buzzelli, 1996; Haworth, 1999; Hayes & Matusov, 2005; Junefelt, 2010, 2011; Ødegaard, 2007, 2011; Rosen, 2014; White, 2009a, 2009b; White, Peter & Redder, 2015, White, Redder & Peter, 2013) have used Bakhtinian theories in research related to teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings; these are discussed below. Junefelt (2010) argues that Bakhtin offers a different lens on dialogue in pedagogy. Junefelt (2011) maintains that dialogue has not been given sufficient attention by educational theorists, including Vygotsky and that the focus in language has been largely phonological, syntactical and semantic, which all are all based on pragmatics of language; and present scientific constructions of language (p. 159).

Junefelt (2010) used video-recorded data of American, Estonian and Swedish mothers interacting with their two year old children to analyse the mothers’ utterances from a Bakhtinian dialogic perspective. Junefelt classified the mothers’ verbal language into different types of utterances (for example regulatory, praise, questions). Junefelt noted that the mothers regulated and praised their children differently and that these differences were influenced by the different cultural contexts. American mothers seemed to socialise their children more towards independence, whereas Estonian children were encouraged to be quiet during mealtimes. Swedish mothers seemed to encourage good table manners and an appreciation of good food. Junefelt suggests that dialogue can not be generalised and that it needs to be studied in different contexts in order to understand speech and thought processes.

The doctoral studies of Ødegaard and White are of particular interest because of their in-depth explanations of their application of Bakhtinian concepts. Ødegaard’s writing is

further referred to in the discussion of literature on children’s subjectivity in Part B of this chapter. White’s work has been used in particular in Chapter 2, in relation to Bakhtin’s carnivalesque, and in Chapter 4 to provide guidance for a dialogic research methodology.

In her doctoral study, White (2009a) explores if and how adults notice and recognise metaphoricity in relation to the assessment of the learning of two toddlers in a New Zealand early childhood setting (p. 13). Although White does not include the data of the pilot in her thesis, it informs and shapes the main part of the study related to a second toddler. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, White applies a dialogic research methodology to investigate the unique communication of the toddler as a *metaphorical act* in a dialogic research process between herself, the toddler’s teacher and his parent(s). White defines metaphoricity as the “aesthetic, creative act of verbal and non-verbal gestural communication” (p. 7). White uses the Bakhtinian concept of genre as the framework of analysis and utterance as the unit of analysis. The study provides highly relevant information for the dialogic research methodology of this thesis, as detailed in Chapter 4. Applying Bakhtin’s polyphony, White analyses what was noticed about the metaphoric act of the toddler and how it was noticed (p. 305). She interprets Bakhtin’s notion of genre (Bakhtin, 1986b) as a combination of both the act or language *and* the context, which allows her to extend her analysis to include social contexts. White ameliorates the distance between researcher and participant, considering herself a co-participant. Both the toddler and his key teacher wore a cam-hat. A third video recorder was located in a corner of the room. The images of nine hour-long recordings of the three cameras were transformed into “split-screen time synchronised footage”, which White and the teacher analysed together (White, 2009b, p. 310).

The study is of interest because of White’s extensive theoretical explanations of Bakhtin’s concepts (see Chapter 2 for more detail) and the dialogic research methodology (see Chapter 4). Concentrating on the documented assessment of learning, White analyses the

toddler's utterances as metaphoric acts in a dialogic process with the teacher, which allows an alternative discourse of seeing what the toddler offers as opposed to what he needs to learn. She concludes that the current narrative assessment practice of teachers in New Zealand, searching for the child's interest or what has been learned, sits within an authoritative discourse; it cannot adequately assess the highly complex nature of the toddler's acts. Moreover, she asserts, current assessment claims are not only problematic but potentially immoral (White, 2009a, p. 8). As well as suggesting that teachers accept uncertainty as an essential element, White recommends a plural dialogic pedagogy and an aesthetic approach to assessment that views toddlers as creative and social complex partners (p. 16). It could be argued that her recommendation for documented assessment, whereby young children are seen as creative and social complex partners, is equally valid for teachers' interactions with children; it is therefore highly relevant to this study.

Based on polyphonic data from White's doctoral study, White, Redder & Peter (2013), further examined interactions between two key teachers and two infants during play and routine activities. The authors used video recordings to count the frequency and type of interaction between teachers and infants; they compared the interactions in play versus those in routine care activities, such as eating or nappy changing. They also asked the teachers what they saw as significant pedagogical events. Non-verbal communication such as a gaze is viewed as a form of dialogue. The authors conclude that differences in dialogue between play and routine are subtle. The authors suggest that more attention should be given both in pedagogical events and in research to the active role of teachers to 'be' in play and in routine events (p.20).

The data from White's doctoral study were again analysed by White, Peter and Redder (2105) by coding the different forms of language in the dialogues between the teachers and the infants. White, Peter and Redder found that infants seemed to respond more

when teachers used both verbal and non-verbal communication. When non-verbal communication was used together with verbal communication, responses by teachers and infants were also more likely to be a combination of non-verbal and verbal language. The findings underscribe the complex nature of teacher- child dialogue.

In two case studies, Ødegaard (2007, 2011) analyses video-recorded co-narratives between teachers and children during meal times in an early childhood setting. Drawing on Bakhtinian concepts, she argues that dialogism offers an alternative to adult-centred conversation. The selected vignettes are part of an ethnographic doctoral study of co-narratives between teachers and children in a Norwegian early childhood setting, which have been analysed from Bakhtinian perspectives, such as teachers' addressivity (Ødegaard, 2007) and chronotope (Ødegaard, 2011).

The aim of the first study is to find out about teachers' agendas in co-narratives with children at meal times. The co-narratives illustrate how the teachers and the children negotiate topics worth talking about. The teachers use a range of strategies such as taking children's past experiences and likes or dislikes into account. One particular transcript about a duck-feeding session demonstrates the different experiences of the event for children and teachers. While for the teachers feeding the ducks was a positive experience, one of the children communicated that they were scared when the ducks came up close—information that surprised the adults. The child's utterances show that it is possible for children to take agency and to give direction to the narrative. Ødegaard concludes that co-narratives are possible when teachers are prepared to listen and adjust to what children consider to be worth talking about. In the narratives, it was the children who set the cultural agenda, in contrast to Vygotskian notion discussed above of children being encultured by teachers into an existing world, although Ødegaard notes that the same two boys influenced the direction of the

narratives. The discussion of open-ended narratives, initiated by teachers but directed by children, provides useful exemplars of what is possible in teacher–child dialogue.

In the second analysis, based on Bakhtinian chronotope, Ødegaard (2011) argues that co-narratives are a site for cultural practice, where children’s subjectivity shapes their utterance and, simultaneously, is affected by the co-narratives (p. 193). (For further detail see also the review of the literature related to subjectivity in Part B of this chapter.) Ødegaard illustrates contradictions and negotiations between children and teachers. For example, children wanted artefacts such as a pirate flag, whereas teachers were initially reluctant to give in to what they saw as marketed commercial stereotyping of pirates’ attributes. Teachers also had an agenda that they wanted the children to eat their food. Ødegaard’s theoretical discussions of Bakhtinian subjectivity and chronotope, her observation that very young children are vulnerable to adult-defined perspectives and her exemplars of Bakhtinian analyses in both studies are all highly relevant to this thesis. They increased my understanding of what open-ended education might look like and how adults carry adult agendas, as well as of how children can resist such agendas.

Based on a recent ethnographic study in a London early childhood setting, Rosen (2014) argues that screams have meaning for children. Rosen explains children’s screams in a communicative sense; as a child’s expression about the world, rather than the more common disciplinary approach of viewing screams as disturbances. Using Bakhtin’s carnivalesque, Rosen suggests that researchers listens to children’s screams with answerability: “We must answer as best as we can, not simply interpreting screams and then impose and fix meanings on these” (p. 11). Rosen’s analysis of children’s screams as a carnivalesque act responding to adult imposed participation that is premised on verbal and rational, rather than embodied and affective interaction, was highly valuable for the analysis of data in this study.

Comparing transcripts of classroom dialogue in early childhood settings, Buzzelli (1996) discusses how control over classroom discourse patterns between teachers and children influences what is learned and how children come to see learning. Her main focus is on the moral implications of teaching, which she sees as a topic that has been insufficiently investigated. She argues that teaching must be guided by one's moral values because, first, teaching is based on relationships and, second, teachers make decisions about what children in their classrooms should know and who they should become. Furthermore, through classroom discourse, children develop understandings of themselves as learners and of teaching and learning. Buzzelli analyses vignettes of different types of classroom dialogue against Bakhtinian concepts such as utterance, speech genres and dialogic teaching. In one vignette illustrating dialogic teaching, the teacher asks children what a buddy is. Buzzelli considers the children's responses to the question reflect their multiple voices: for example, a buddy is someone you like or that you play math games with. While I agree with Buzzelli's argument that teaching is a moral act, I think this particular teacher–child dialogue is an example of children building their understanding of what a buddy is from other children, but the teacher still strongly directs the dialogue by introducing the topic and asking all the questions.

Hayes and Matusov (2005) investigate extended conversations between the teacher and the children in a dual language kindergarten in the USA. The study was part of a year-long ethnographic study of the official Spanish-language time-slot in the morning session of a bilingual kindergarten. In this period, children are expected to speak in Spanish in natural conversations. Using a Bakhtinian framework, Hayes and Matusov search for clues as to how the teacher and children were able to negotiate alternative ways of engaging each other in the conversation. Their findings reflected the trend discussed above: that teacher's questions tend to be those to which she already knows the answer and that the teacher tends to do most of the questioning. In contrast to their examples of the teacher's monologic teaching of Spanish

words, the authors present a vignette in which two boys involved in a dialogue with the teacher refuse to be finalised and unexpectedly volunteer information about a toy. Hayes and Matusov conclude that the teacher tends to finalise the children when she is teaching Spanish. While they describe the teacher from a deficit perspective, Hayes and Matusov's comparison of the monologic dialogue and a more intersubjective dialogue is a useful example for the analysis in this study. Of special interest is the authors' observation when one of the five-year-old children took the initiative to step out of the monologic dialogue; the teacher then followed and allowed a more sustainable dialogue.

Children, aged seven and eight years, were observed by Haworth (1999) in small-group interactions, one day per week, over one year. After recording small-group collaborative talk of consenting students, Haworth transcribed this in three columns of children's script, adult script and contextual comments. From a comparison of the scripts of the exchanges of two small groups, she found that the more compliant group used a limited range of voice types and she classified this group's dialogue as monologic. While at first glance, from a teaching perspective, the second group might have been seen as more playful and non-compliant, from a Bakhtinian perspective, it showed more agency; its members reaccented the task the teacher had given them in empowering ways and ultimately showed a capacity to reason, hypothesise and construct (Haworth, 1999, p. 114). Haworth identifies this second group as dialogic. Her conclusion is that small-group interaction offers more opportunities for dialogic talk than authoritative, whole-class discussion, as well as offering children the freedom of playground/intimate talk, which ultimately leads to more productive interaction in relation to the task. Haworth's Bakhtinian analysis provides a different lens, illustrating how children who seem playful and not "on task" ultimately show more capacity and agency than a more compliant group of students. The analysis is relevant to this study as

it shows how a Bakhtinian lens changes a traditionally deficit view of non-conforming children to a view of children as agentic.

Research on early years education that uses Bakhtin’s ideas. As stated above, to date few studies of teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings have used a Bakhtinian framework. Most of the studies in early years education that have applied Bakhtinian theories focus on children interacting with each other in pretend play. While teacher–child dialogue is not their main focus, these studies are included as they provide further insights into how Bakhtin’s concepts have been applied in research in early childhood settings; in particular they show how children’s pretend play can be seen as a response to monologic teaching discourses.

Marjanović-Shane & White (2014) use children’s play experiences to reconceptualise play, thereby shifting a prevailing view of play as children’s learning or development, to viewing play as an ontological dialogic act. Marjanović-Shane & White propose to see play as a Bakhtinian *postupok* or answerability. They believe that by viewing play as a dialogic act and describing the event from Bakhtin’s *chronotope* foregrounds the ‘richness, fullness, uniqueness and experience of unity’ (p. 121) found in the lives of the participants. Play is thus seen as being with others in dialogue, as opposed to the usual pedagogical perspective. Marjanović-Shane & White argue that play supports participants to enter in complex dialogic relationships, thereby shaping subjectivities.

Da Silva Iddings and McCafferty (2007) explore Bakhtin’s conceptualisation of carnivalesque in observations of second language learners in an early childhood education setting. The first author is the teacher in the early childhood centre; the study is part of a larger project to investigate interactions between bilingual children. Interactions between pairs or small groups of five-year-olds were both audio- and video-recorded two or three times per week. Three vignettes of interactions between two students were selected because

they demonstrate aspects of carnival. The authors concentrate on carnival “as a locus of general and language play in connection to creating contingent interaction, possibly supporting L2 (second language) acquisition” (Da Silva Iddings & McCafferty, 2007, p. 36). Using Bakhtin’s (1984b) theory of the carnivalesque, they analyse how the young children resisted and transformed assignments they did not want to do. While the children’s reaction was not an immediate response to the teacher’s request as it would be in a conversation, it can be argued that it was a response in a wider Bakhtinian notion of dialogue, which is always addressed to someone and always asks for a response. The authors conclude that teachers cannot simply induce carnival, but they ask that teachers try to create contexts where this may happen. When students are given tasks that they do not want to do, one of the options is to transform or re-create the context. Their conclusion is that Bakhtin’s notion of carnival can be used to analyse classroom behaviour. Their study is also of interest in providing an example of children’s ability to resist the hierarchical order.

In her study, Cohen (2009) applies Bakhtin’s concept of dialogue in pretend play. Over a three-month period, she observed children aged between three and four years, who attended half-day sessions in two preschools in the USA, in pretend play situations. Based on an interpretivist methodology, Cohen (2009) analysed 16 hours of video-recorded vignettes in order to “describe and develop an understanding of how Bakhtin’s dialogic process relates to early childhood play” (p. 333). After selecting play episodes that reflect Bakhtinian concepts, she adapted Bakhtin’s ideas of heteroglossia to the pretend play situations and his notion of centrifugal forces to the variety of roles and rules in pretend play. Cohen questions the view of a unified, cooperative society. Children, she argues, challenge the authoritative discourse of the adult through pretend play and thus can develop an “ideological becoming” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 341). Children are experimenting with and liberating themselves from another’s discourse in the pretend play context. Cohen (2009) concludes that:

children appropriated and assimilated others' words in play. ...[They] engaged in a heteroglossic world as they employed different ways of talking to enact play roles...Children engaged in a struggle between an authoritative voice and an internally persuasive discourse. (p. 331)

Although Cohen's research concerns children's pretend play, the study provides useful information for my study of teacher–child dialogue. Of particular value are her discussion of children's developing self through pretend play and her interpretation of children challenging authoritative adult discourses.

In an earlier qualitative and quantitative study, Cohen and Uhry (2007) also observed children during block play. They applied Bakhtin's theories of dialogism, heteroglossia and authoritative discourses to analyse five-year-old children's communicative strategies as they played. Using a wide-angled video camera on a tripod, which covered the whole block area the authors video-recorded children of a multicultural kindergarten during three weeks for half-day periods. They differentiated between individual, dyads and groups of children of three or more playing in the block corner, and categorised children's utterances in seven sub-codes, such as description, direction and paralinguistic cues. Their findings showed that groups of three or more children use more communication strategies than dyads or individual children. Children also use more language than expected because blocks require more explanation to establish shared meaning than props in sociodramatic play.

In the final study involving Bakhtinian analysis of pretend play, Duncan and Tarulli (2003) outline two vignettes between children in American early childhood settings. As they describe it, social communities, including early childhood settings, invariably are sites of unifying/centripetal and disrupting/centrifugal forces. Drawing on Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, they challenge the traditional cultural-historic view of society as being unified and cooperative and in its place pose a view of play as a site of struggle of opposing and multiple voices. In play, a child more than re-enacts a role: the child uses an unlimited

assembly of voices unique to him or her (Duncan & Tarulli, 2003, p. 282). While each role draws on existing rules, play also includes a new element. Duncan and Tarulli (2003) state Bakhtin moves beyond Vygotsky's perspective of internalisation to a notion of emergence, free from adult authority. In this, they are guided by Bakhtin's idea of ideological becoming, whereby a person establishes his or her own authority over others' words (Duncan & Tarulli, 2003, p. 282).

While Duncan and Tarulli (2003) use Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia, the child's behaviour in play could similarly be analysed from Bakhtin's carnivalesque perspective, whereby play for children functions as the medieval market place for the common. The authoritarian voice of the early childhood education setting represents officialdom and children's play can provide the second life as in Bakhtin's analysis of carnival. Play can and often does poke fun at adults; in play, children use caricature and parodies of adult behaviour. In addition, children often use language related to the lower stratum of the body, what adults today see as vulgar, but in medieval times was a perfectly accepted form of carnivalesque communication. In play, furthermore, children are autonomous and gain opportunities to question adult discourses and develop their own. Duncan and Tarulli (2003) recommend that teachers harness the central dynamics of play in diverse ways to help children practise, refine, elaborate and extend their semiotic abilities and their active integration into human social life (p. 289). The terms *harnessing* and *extending children's semiotic ability* may present a monologic view of play as a teacher-directed activity as opposed to a reciprocal, open-ended dialogic experience. Children will find an outlet to play, regardless of what adults do. Indeed, it could be argued that in many of today's structured day schedules of early childhood settings, children play *despite* adult intervention in their activities. Lastly, foregrounding semiotic ability restricts play to a cognitive learning activity as opposed to a complex, dialogic and open-ended exchange. Children's agency in pretend play requires an awareness

of adults for the possibilities and an openness to new becoming and beginnings. Duncan and Tarulli's examples of children's agency in pretend play and their view of pretend play as complex and open-ended are closely aligned with the view in this thesis of open-ended teacher child dialogue and a more equitable power balance between teachers and children.

In his application of Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque to understand scatological and vulgar humour and the place of this type of humour in children's books, McKenzie (2005) further builds an understanding of the carnivalesque in children's worlds. Although focusing on children's books rather than dialogue, McKenzie's reflections are useful as he discusses the role of the adult within the construct of Bakhtin's carnival in an early childhood context. Children's books on bodily functions have always been popular with children. Humour has been a primary criterion for children's enjoyment of books and humour around bowel functions is part of that. However, as McKenzie argues, these books have not always been valued by adults and he wonders if the reason is that many of these books challenge adult authority. Is this, he asks, a type of underground humour that adults should challenge or embrace? In his analysis of the books, he notices the storyline is often illogical and he describes it as theatre of the absurd. The illustrations are at times shockingly sexual or gross, but invariably children find the images immensely funny (McKenzie, 2005). Using Bakhtin's carnival laughter, McKenzie explains children's laughter as an emancipatory laughter, disrupting dominant discourses. It acts as a precursor to postmodernism, as the centre is decentred and playfulness erupts (McKenzie, 2005, p. 85). As he argues it, the institutionalisation of children in early childhood settings focuses on bringing children and their bodies under control: "The child is constructed to see the natural body in opposition to, and subject to adult pleasure and therefore suppress awareness of, and pleasure in, bodily function" (p. 86). He suggests that adults who are secure in themselves may enjoy the discomfort of being the fool and that, in a world ruled by adults, we must allow the child to

exist in children’s literature. By incorporating the carnivalesque into literature, teachers signify that the literature belongs to the child (p. 92). While not directly related to teacher–child dialogue, McKenzie’s Bakhtinian explanations of children’s pleasure and interest in scatological humour provide an alternative analysis to the usual adult reaction of either ignoring or forbidding children’s carnivalesque pleasure in bodily functions.

In conclusion, although many of the Bakhtinian studies outlined above relate to children engaged in pretend play, they illustrate how having a Bakhtinian framework to analyse research data accommodates a more complex view of classroom dialogue. Some, but not all, show how Bakhtin can open up possibilities to step outside the dominant discourse of monologic teaching and make power imbalances visible. Bakhtin’s concept of carnivalesque is used by some to disrupt adult hierarchies. Subjectivities have been explained as simultaneously shaping and being shaped by dialogue. Accepting that subjectivities and dialogue are inevitably intertwined, I continue on to Part B with a discussion of research related to subjectivities in order to explain what is meant by subjectivities and to provide a historical context. Thereafter I discuss how subjectivities are defined in a Bakhtinian framework.

Part B: Identity and Subjectivity

In answering the children, we are also composing ourselves. In their plurality, in their diversity, our children offer us the opportunity to widen our own worldview, to see aspects of experience that might otherwise remain invisible to us, to understand better ourselves as situated in a complex world of multiple perspectives. (Haas Dyson, 2010, p. 230)

Why look at subjectivity? Subjectivity can be defined as an individual’s continuously changing constructions of the self/subject. In other words, subjectivity is the relationship to oneself; how one sees oneself in relation to the world. The term in itself explains a

poststructural definition of self as subjective, as opposed to an objective universal self; from a poststructural perspective, self is constantly in flux. I always am in relationship to others and others are in relationship to me. As subjectivities are constantly renegotiated in our daily encounters with others, it is not so much a question of what they are, but what these do: what happens as a result in interactions with others?

Silseth and Arnseth (2011) argue that, in order to understand learning, one has to analyse how learners are constructed, by both themselves and others: learning selves are multi-voiced and they emerge through dialogical relationships (p. 69). First, teachers make decisions about what children in their classrooms should know and who they should become based on their view of what it means to be a teacher, what it means to be a learner and what should be learned. Such views naturally affect what teachers say to the children in their care and how they say it. Second, through classroom discourses, children develop understandings of themselves as learners and of teaching and learning through the actions of their teachers. Silseth and Arnseth's findings reinforce in the current study that it is important to analyse how teacher–child dialogue influences the children's subjectivities of themselves and how they view their teachers, as these factors determine who they will be as a learner.

It is equally important to scrutinise how the teachers in this study see themselves, how they see learners and how these perspectives are enacted in their dialogues. It is argued that when teachers reflect critically on their interactions with children in a dialogic research approach with others, trying to understand the child's meaning making, a shared meaning making will also affect the teachers' subjectivities. Teacher–child dialogues and teachers' and children's subjectivities are thus intertwined. Ultimately, as the author of this thesis, authoring the identities of its characters, I need to investigate and make transparent my own subjectivity. At the same time, I am in turn authored by the teachers and the children.

Historical shift from identity to subjectivity. When building our understandings of how people see themselves and how this relates to teacher–child dialogues, we must investigate underlying philosophies. A brief historical overview of the research on identity and subjectivity from a range of different philosophical perspectives is offered next. Before the 1970s, the two main discourses of identity were based on either universalist or cultural perspectives: the universalist discourse has a view of the self being shaped as a natural process, whereas the latter foregrounds cultural influences in the shaping of the self (Holland, Lachiotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998). Some 30 years ago and to a large extent influenced by Foucault’s writings about power/knowledge, these views came under scrutiny (Butler, 2005; Davies, 2006; Holland et al., 1998).

Postmodern and poststructural discourses began to critique Western, colonial discourses, which under the guise of science had become dominant. A more complex social construction of the self has since been introduced, as affected by both institutional discourses and social events. Feminist writers such as Butler and Davies have contributed much to the notion of the self as subjected to institutional discourses: “There is no ‘I’ that can fully stand apart from the social conditions of its emergence, no ‘I’ that is not implicated in a set of moral norms” (Butler, 2005, p. 7). At the same time, the subject is contributed with some self-determination or agency: “I am always reconstructing in the making of the story. I create myself in a new form, initiating a narrative ‘I’ that is superadded to the ‘I’ whose past life I seek to tell” (Butler, 2005, p. 39).

By exploring how agency and submission are balanced by the self, Butler extends Foucauldian institutionalised and dominant discourses; she offers a concept of ethical reflexivity (Davies, 2006). Instead of expecting to fully know the other, Butler argues, we must be aware of encounters as processes of emerging selves and of mutually forming. For her part, Davies (2005) explains how subjectivities are shaped through discourses, but the

external conditions that shape us at the same time provide possibilities for expressing our own voice. It is the poststructural view that is adopted in this thesis. In order to distinguish between the universalist theories and the adopted poststructural view, terms such as *subjectivity* and *self* will be preferred over *identity*.

The next section contains a brief review of academic literature of subjectivities, both theoretical and empirical, in relation to children, teachers and researchers. It leads into and sets the stage for a brief discussion of subjectivities from Bakhtinian perspectives, in order to clarify how subjectivities are understood in this study.

If teachers recognize that children contain unconscious knowledge and that this can be brought into conversation so that curiosity and desire are engendered in the child, this opens up possibilities for the construction of agentic narratives of their lives. (O’Loughlin, 2010, p. 220)

Childhood and child subjectivities. Much of what is written in the previous section on identity and subjectivity applies to children. Foucault (1984) explains how subjects were formed through the sciences; initially children were viewed universally and from biological perspectives. The term *childhood* refers to a stage of life; it is an adult abstraction, whereby children are represented as a homogenous group, based on biological terms such as gender or age (for example, girls, infants). Throughout history and as a result of constant changes in society, a range of perspectives of childhood have been taken, with children considered as anything from innocent to evil. Children were often represented as stereotypes. (See Chapter 1 for further historical discussion about childhood and education.) Current poststructuralist thinking also problematises that childhood is always seen from an adult perspective (Kennedy, 2002; Lahman, 2008; Wyness, 2012; Zhao, 2011). It is interesting to note that while adulthood could be seen as a similar cultural concept, there has not been the same

generalisation for adulthood as there has been for childhood. However, although many scholarly texts theorise childhood, there are far fewer empirical studies related to children's subjectivities. Below is an outline of some of the few such studies that have been undertaken.

Māori subjectivities. In a review related to subjectivities as part of a study that is located in Aotearoa New Zealand, it is important to explore indigenous subjectivities and to at least acknowledge the postcolonial tensions between the two partners in Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, which legitimises the relationship between Māori as the indigenous people of Aotearoa and the Pākehā or colonisers. Early records show that at the time of colonisation, Māori children were taken seriously by their parents and others in their community. They attended important hui (meetings) and their questions were answered fully (Hemara, 2000, p. 15). Hemara's description is relevant to this study because many of the children in early years settings are of Māori descent. It is also interesting to note for my study, which holds a view of children as active participants, that, in contrast to the Western educational discourses that tended to hold a deficit view of children, Māori historically engaged in dialogue with children.

Hemara discloses the Māori concept of whakapapa as a proclamation of an individual's or community's origins, naming historical and current relationships. Learners are both constructed by tohunga or signposts and enacted, using their own judgement in relation to waiata (songs) and their lyrics. It could be argued that whakapapa positions the Māori self, who the person is and how he or she is connected to others. These concepts show both a process of enculturation and one of active participation; the learning process is seen as reciprocal where both students and teacher are learning: in Māori teaching and learning both translate to ako. As Hemara explains, children's imaginative answers were valued by Māori, showing an appreciation for open-ended education.

In the 19th century, Pākehā assumed superiority and Māori individual and collective subjectivities were suppressed (Ritchie, 2010). Only recently, supported by the bicultural ideology of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa* (Ministry of Education, 1996), have early childhood educators started to allow spaces for Māori subjectivities. As Ritchie sees it, TW guides early childhood educators to relinquish positivist discourses and embrace more intuitive and holistic ways of knowing. While many educators are committed to a curriculum based on the Treaty of Waitangi, there remains much room for improvement. In exploring some of the possibilities of decolonised early childhood pedagogies that enable Māori children to have access to Māori subjectivities, Ritchie (2010) suggests that postcolonial deconstruction, whereby teachers give up certainty and control, can open up ethical possibilities, particularly at the level of respectful individual interactions with children and families (p. 34). It is argued that Māori paradigms not only are necessary for Māori, but also provide an alternative perspective to dominant Western scientific discourses for all learners. Outlined below are a number of studies, related to subjectivities, that are based on different global philosophical frameworks to further understandings of alternative perspectives for this study.

Children’s subjectivities from a range of philosophical discourses. Using a Deleuzo/Guattarian theoretical framework, Borgnon (2007) critiques both a developmental view of identity as a naturally developing child and a more recent view of the autonomous child. Borgnon considers current views of the participating and autonomous child, as well as the image of the naturally developing child, to be a type of governance. She believes it is difficult for adults to see children differently, as a result of psychological theories of development: “We see with eyes that are immersed in theories about a child’s development” (p. 266). To avoid predetermined images of children, she proposes instead that we accept that progress is not always linear; for example, swinging does not lead anywhere, but it can

provide liberation (Borgnon, 2007, p. 271). Borgnon describes a child who is learning to walk as a surfer, learning to walk is thus no longer viewed from a developmental perspective of a child who lacks skills and his or her progression. Borgnon’s alternative framework allows us to think afresh about children’s subjectivities.

In a similar vein, also applying a Deleuzian framework to open up different ways of thinking, Sellers (2010) accepts that young children are experts of their worlds as “they are embodied within *their* life-living experiences of (*their*) negotiated childhood(s) in a way that adults cannot be” (p. 357, original emphasis). In her view, both the curriculum and children are continuously becoming. Play situations thus change from traditional analyses of children developing particular skills to participate in the world, to rhizomatic views of different territories of imagination, storylines, relationships, physical action and the environment in the chaotically becoming complexity of the children’s play. Both Sellers and children video-recorded flows of play. Mapping these as rhizomatic avoids a deficit-based view of children and instead offers a rich milieu. Sellers describes a moment where children bump into each other. A more traditional developmental approach would require adult intervention to look after the injured and to reprimand the child who caused the collision. Sellers (2010) analyses it as a de-territorialising moment, with both children capable of recovering and resolving the situation themselves (p. 570). Her descriptions of the children’s activities show the richness and complexity of the play and children’s capability of adapting and enjoying the flow of the play. Sellers’ Deleuzian analysis, while complex, shows possibilities of children as powerful agents for this study.

In an ethnographic case study, where children in an early childhood education setting were asked about their views of childhood, Lowe (2010) analyses children’s comments. Themes she identified are that children see play as their main activity, and see themselves as unknowing, in need of adult help and having no authority. While acknowledging that her own

analysis is still an adult one, Lowe argues that more authentic children's perspectives than the usual interviews came from recording comments children made after viewing slides of children in childcare situations and their comments in play situations. Findings in my study (as discussed in later chapters) reinforce Lowe's argument that children's pretend play offers valuable insights into children's perspectives. Interestingly, children in Lowe's study did not see that adults could be involved in children's play, even when the adults were observed playing alongside children. The author seems to be respectful of children and has made efforts to capture their views, inviting them to tell her what it was like to be a child because she had forgotten. What may be problematic here is that the findings—based on comments of some of the children at that particular time and in that particular setting, with those particular adults—have been generalised as children's views. In Bakhtinian terms, it could be argued that children are finalised and childhood is again defined as a universalist term in that study.

In a New Zealand sociocultural case study of a young child transitioning from an early childhood setting to a new entrants' class in a primary school, Duncan (2007) analyses the different positions offered to the child by the school teachers and the early childhood teachers. The two groups of teachers differed in their discourses: while recognising the child's areas of strength, the teachers at school judged the child more in relation to cognitive knowledge, whereas the early childhood teachers praised the child's learning dispositions. Duncan concludes that teachers need to self-reflect critically. She acknowledges that her perspective may differ substantially from that of the child, the child's parent or the child's teachers. Although Duncan describes subjectivity as complex and made up of multiple voices, in her analysis and subsequent conclusion that the child's educational future is at risk, she ignores that subjectivities are influenced by many factors. By finalising the child's (and the teacher's) subjectivities, based on comments from one interview and one observation, and by polarising the positions of early childhood teachers and primary teachers, she minimises

the complexity of subjectivities, both of the child and the teacher. The study raised my awareness of the importance of accepting subjectivities as fluid and unfinalised.

Lastly, a poststructural Scandinavian study explores possible subject positions for toddlers during their introduction to preschool. Rather than focusing on what was said, Månsson (2011) looks for opportunities offered to children and for regulations that might limit them. Transcripts of practice portray different views of the child as needy or regulated and competent. The study also highlights that, in most events, teachers' actions and comments position children within traditional gender roles. Månsson concludes that teachers expect girls to follow the rules more than boys.

Having established subjectivities from a range of perspectives, I now turn to explain subjectivities through a Bakhtinian theoretical framework. Thereafter, I outline two empirical studies by Cohen (2009) and Edmiston (2010), which have also used Bakhtin to analyse subjectivities. In combination, this discussion builds understanding of subjectivities, which are aligned with the Bakhtinian foundation of this study.

Bakhtinian perspectives of subjectivities. Bakhtin expresses identity as the “authoring self”, both in the event of the present and over time, in relationship with others (Bakhtin, 1993; Holland et al., 1998). Bakhtin’s dialogical self is neither singular nor self-contained (Creswell & Baerveldt, 2011, p. 264). Drawing on notes from one of Bakhtin’s students who conscientiously wrote down some of his early lectures, Emerson (2002) explains that Bakhtin sees the self as consisting of two different structures: a consciousness of “how I look and feel from inside myself” exists in the self alongside a consciousness of “how I look from the outside to someone else” (p. 13). As Emerson notes, in the early years of his academic life Bakhtin’s lectures on Tolstoy already show his strong emphasis on self versus other and complexity and multiplicity or polyphony of personality.

In line with poststructuralist thinking, Bakhtin is fundamentally opposed to a modernist view of a fixed identity, arguing that the authoring self is unique as the self can only act from his or her own position, both in time and in place: “Everyone occupies a unique and never-repeatable place” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 40). “All heteroglossic responses are specific views of the world” (Holland et al., 1998, p. 170), and such responses represent a subjectivity for that moment, in that context. The self is shaped as a response to being addressed and in turn answers. Bakhtin’s (1981) “ideological becoming” (p. 341) can be explained as the way in which the self develops ideas of how the world works and how to respond in this world.

Grossen and Salazar Orvig (2011) argue that a Bakhtinian self can be understood as an interplay between dialogism of discourse and dialogicality of the mind. The self is developed not only through a person’s participation in social activities, but also through the different genres of the institutional and societal structures that one belongs to and that regulate one’s social actions. Social interactions in dialogue help shape the self and, in turn, the internal dialogic polyphony built up from one’s previous experiences contributes to the dialogue. The multiplicity of voices of the self creates the other within the self (Bakhtin, 1990).

Bakhtin’s dialogical self, Hermans (2001) explains, goes beyond the rational Kantian self, phrased as *I think*, which assumes not only one central self, but also the self as disembodied (p. 249); the self cannot be seen as a matter solely related to the mind. As discussed in Chapter 6, body language—gestures and facial expressions and emotions—plays an important role in communications, especially for young children. Furthermore, as Creswell and Baerveldt (2011) clarify, for Bakhtin a speech genre means much more than spoken language; it represents a “deeply pervasive way of being”, reflecting “an embodied expression of a community” (p. 267). Children, for example, are placed in particular positions by those around them and are addressed in a way that shows them what society approves of, with comments such as “Good boy” or “You are so clever”.

An argument from both Hermans (2001) and Creswell and Baerveldt (2011) is that Bakhtin’s dialogical self extends beyond knowledge of a social construction to a more holistic, lived experience of the self; it is lived in its embodied richness, going beyond intersubjectivity as socially constituted. The others’ views are therefore not just copied by the child; they become part of the child’s dialogical response, both in the present and as part of the child’s speech genres. In brief, we can say that the self is shaped by dialogue and shapes dialogue, and subjectivity is always in an embodied sense.

Again, in contrast to the rational self, dialogical subjectivities are always located in a particular place and a particular time, influenced by what went on before and what might happen in the future, as well as by the present. The space–time relationship or chronotope of each utterance is influenced by historical, institutional and cultural power imbalances. Certain speakers hold privileges; for example, they may be allowed to take the initiative or to ask questions, as the discussion of empirical research in this chapter shows. Linell, cited in Hermans (2001), notes four different power dimensions in dialogic interactions: dominance to initiate or respond; topic dominance; the amount that can be spoken; and certain strategic moves (p. 265). It is clear that traditionally teachers in educational institutions have extensively used and are often still using these strategies to dominate classroom dialogues.

Another point that Hermans (2001) notes is that Bakhtin’s self as a polyphony challenges the unity and continuity of the self. There are many possible speech genres for each moment; in response, the self can go beyond expressing one speech genre and engage in an individual act by expressing multiple speech genres in one creative act. Different genres or positions of the self are often juxtaposed, heterogonous or even in opposition with each other, as portrayed in the Dostoevsky’s characters. However, these shifts do not mean that there is no constant part of self. Creswell (2011) argues that Bakhtinian authoring goes beyond interchange and that there is a “being true to oneself”; a faithfulness to oneself as well as a

faithfulness to others (p. 480). As he explains it, the difficulty of faithfulness, when there are multiple selves, is avoided when we accept that, rather than there being one core faithful self as a reflective choice, there are different faithfulnesses for different selves; faithfulness is thus explained as a deeply lived and embodied experience in the moment.

The above explanations of Bakhtinian subjectivities guide the analysis of speech genres—in particular, the analysis of the nature of the authoring self, shaped in and by dialogue, embodied and fluid. The complexities of polyphony and power differences in dialogical relationships, accepting that self is not a unity and that there are many possible genres at any one time, have implications for an analysis based on a Bakhtinian self. An understanding of Bakhtinian subjectivities may be further enhanced through the following discussion of a few empirical studies that have used a Bakhtinian framework.

Studies with a focus on child subjectivities, using a Bakhtinian framework.

Cohen (2009), Myers and Kroeger (2011) and Ødegaard (2011) present a small number of empirical studies that use a Bakhtinian framework in relation to young children's self (for more information about the studies by Cohen and Ødegaard, see Part A of this chapter). All argue that young children cannot access the same language that adults have. All also express concern about young children's vulnerability when dominant authoritative adult discourses shape children's subjectivities historically, institutionally, culturally and contextually through the dialogues of what is worth talking about. The points raised here are highly relevant to my study; they need to be taken into account in an analysis of children's active participation in dialogue.

Both Cohen (2009) and Myers and Kroeger (2011) argue that children's heteroglossic pretend play can support them in developing an ideological self (p. 333). As Cohen (2009) puts it, although children cannot challenge adults in a conversation, in heteroglossic pretend play "children use internal persuasive language to appropriate, redefine and make adults'

words their own” (p. 338). Moreover, pretend play makes visible children’s struggle between the authoritative adult voice and their internally persuasive voice. Cohen concludes that children’s play enables them to find strategies to express their voice, to see others’ perspectives and to make meaning from texts. Children’s pretend play has been applied as an expression of their voice in this study.

Myers and Kroeger (2011) use Bakhtin’s concept of chronotope in an ethnographic study of interactions between two children aged three years about their written language. They reiterate that children are often viewed from monologic developmental perspectives; for example, a Black American child from a low sociocultural background and with a speech impairment is seen as not competent and at risk. Transcripts from the study illustrate how the children see each other holistically and in non-deficit ways, as powerful and able, in regard to writing, listening and friendship. Myers and Kroeger argue that adults must be aware of dominant chronotopes and that they need to value children’s own purposes. They conclude that children need to have spaces to author their experiences.

Although these studies are not related to teacher–child dialogues and they did not extend the learning to include that of the adults, they are nonetheless relevant to this thesis which uses a Bakhtinian framework to analyse children’s subjectivities. The transcripts provide glimpses of children as capable and as powerful contributors in a dialogue about learning. Being aware of how our own chronotope has been and often still is influenced by developmental monologue is difficult work. Having examples of ways in which educational spaces can be more open-ended is therefore helpful in relation to my study.

From Ødegaard (2011) comes the argument that time and space are fundamental to our understanding of subjectivities. As another researcher who uses chronotope to analyse co-narratives between teachers and children, Ødegaard explains that co-narratives can be about books that have been read together, events at the childcare centre or outside it; rather than

providing a dialogue happening in real-life time, the narrators, through giving an account of an event, express a view of how an event was experienced. Co-narratives always have a chronotope, a time and place, from which meaning is made. Ødegaard (2011) defines chronotope as the place “where knots of narratives are tied and untied” (p. 183), making the event concrete. As discussed in Part A of this chapter, Ødegaard’s analysis of co-narratives at mealtimes shows contradictions and negotiations between what children wanted and what teachers wanted. Her conclusion is that children telling stories about a represented world, provides a medium in which they can express themselves and thus provide a complex dialogism where shaping of meaning emerges (Ødegaard, 2011, p. 193).

In his analysis of his observations related to his son’s dramatic play and his own interactions with his son, Edmiston (2010) discusses both the adult and child subjectivities:

How adults or children identify with others and act in present social encounters is interrelated with both how they have acted, been identified and identified themselves with others in the past as well as how they hope to act and identify with people in the future. (p. 200)

Edmiston rejects a Piagetian developmental view of universal moral development; instead, he uses Bakhtin’s authoring selves to explore his relationship with his son. Similar to Cohen (2009) above, Edmiston argues that in dramatic or pretend play children understand the world they re-enact and the play allows both the child and a respectful adult to co-author. He concludes that complex “ethical identities” are shaped not in one single shared pretend play or conversation but over time through the utterances of child and adult in their co-authoring (Edmiston, 2010, p. 204). Both Cohen’s and Edmiston’s studies illustrate how young children can voice their opinion through pretend play, which is of interest for this thesis. Edmiston’s reflections on his own subjectivity as well as that of his son lead in to the following section on teacher subjectivities.

I did however just in time get hold of one truth on my own, when trying to plot my route: that not just part of us becomes a teacher. It engages the whole self—the woman or man, wife or husband, mother or father, the lover, scholar or artist in you as well as the teacher earning money, so that a worthwhile teacher is one of the blooms from the worthwhile person, even though in my twenties and thirties I could neither isolate the different facets of the person nor balance them. (Ashton Warner, 1968, p. 10)

Empirical studies of teacher subjectivity. Ashton Warner's (1968) autobiographical reflections on her life as a teacher in New Zealand in the mid 20th century are a valuable source to guide a reflection on teaching subjectivities in this study. Ashton Warner's account of her teaching years, including her desires and anxieties, continues to offer opportunities to see teaching with fresh eyes in a holistic sense, nearly 50 years after it was written.

Although teacher subjectivity has been theorised in poststructural approaches, Vick and Martinez (2011) note that little attention has been given to the acts of teachers in their embodied teaching. They argue that subjectivity is not just in the mind and that even teachers who resist normative discourses re-enact performativity of the teaching act in their gestures and actions; for example, in the way they stand at the whiteboard. Teaching acts are mostly expressed in the way the voice is used, as the analysis of Maddy's re-enactment as the teacher at group time makes visible in Chapter 7. They are also visible in positioning (the teacher's chair at the front) and gestures, such as the teacher putting her index finger to her lips while speaking to gesture to children that they need to be quiet. These teaching acts continually shape us, starting from our earliest experiences in early childhood; they are endorsed by images in texts and movies, as well as by teacher preparation programmes and teacher appraisals. These normative teaching actions or gestures are not constant, however. For

example, many New Zealand adults can remember teachers caning children; in today's schools, sometimes even touching children is seen as inappropriate.

Lenz Taguchi (2005) investigates how early childhood teachers' subjectivities are shaped and reshaped by feminist poststructural thinking of the subject as becoming: "The subject is in a continuous process of being constituted, reconstituted and reconstituting herself/himself by and through discourse and discursive practices within education" (p. 245). Reflecting on herself as a feminist teacher educator, Lenz Taguchi wants to avoid subjecting her students to self-regulation to fit the dominant normalising discourse. However, she also realises that agency is more complex than a Foucauldian resistance to authoritarian discourses; feminist pedagogy can be another form of regulation that produces power. As she argues it, the subject is both subjected and subjecting herself or himself in a process of submission and mastery (Lenz Taguchi, 2005, p. 252), which in itself opens up possibilities to renegotiate knowledge.

From Vick and Martinez (2011) comes the suggestion to put subject and practice together; subjectivity is shaped by sociocultural processes, which form part of any interaction, including teaching practice, and both are open to change. They suggest that teachers must reflect on how to teach in alternative ways that do not use the teacher's body to assert authority. The above studies highlight the importance of going beyond verbal language and looking at dialogue holistically, along with the importance of critical reflection.

In a doctoral study that investigates the lived experiences of secondary teachers through teachers' narratives, Wiebe (2000) provides specific information about teacher subjectivity. As well as describing a Bakhtinian self as an ongoing dialogue of interanimating voices (Wiebe, 2000, p. 2), she specifies a teaching self as a dialogic construction and teaching as authoring polyphony. Although the five participating teachers in her project each recounted multiple realities of their teaching, Wiebe identifies a unifying voice among the participants in relation

to the following themes: resisting universal images of teachers, the polyphony in their classrooms, living with uncertainty and open-endedness, and teaching as a calling. The study is based on a researcher’s analysis of teachers’ narratives and in a sense finalises the teachers’ teaching self into unifying images, without further input from the teachers.

This study, which follows a dialogic approach, accepts that researchers are participants in the research and that they also have a moral answerability. Having established the importance of teacher dialogue to reflection on teaching in order to understand some of the complexities, I now briefly discuss specific moral responsibilities for researchers in relation to subjectivity.

The ethical stance is to continue to ask the question “Who are you” without any expectation of a full answer. If I know who you are, I cease to address you or to be addressed by you. (Butler, 2005, p. 43)

Subjectivity of the researcher. Rather than focusing only on the question of what it means to be a child, Lahman (2008) proposes that we should also ask, “What is an adult?” (p. 286). In her view, researchers should reflect on our own ideas of childhood, and consider what our own remembered experience of childhood and our own dispositions are. Warning at the same time against self-absorption, Lahman wants us to keep our focus on children, to examine our own culture in our relationships with the child, while realising that what we see is always through the lens of our own lived experiences. She advises avoiding generalisations: we cannot capture “childhood” (Lahman, 2008, p. 283). Instead, we must accept that we can only understand the child in and through our relationship and aspire towards an inter-subjective communication between researcher and children. As a starting point, Lahman suggests building a rapport with children, enjoying shared moments and having natural conversations. While stressing that there is no one right way of doing research with children, she endorses

the idea that we “simply be with children” (Lahman, 2009, p. 296). Lahman’s advice that researchers be with children and build relationships in an open-ended communication is helpful for the approach to data collection in this study.

Ever since the objectivity of research and the researcher started to be questioned, it has been important to reflect critically on how knowledge has been produced. It requires the researcher to critically analyse herself or himself continually throughout the research, asking “who I am, who I have been, who I think I am and how I feel” (Pillow, 2010, p. 176).

Influenced by feminist theory, Pillow warns against using reflexivity to self-indulge; instead, she explores how we can apply a necessary reflection on our own position and what we might achieve by doing this. In the first instance, the researcher needs to ask, How can I ensure the research does not exploit the participants? How can the research be empowering to those being researched?, and to reflect on each step of the process (Pillow, 2010, p. 178). Pillow (2010) questions how what is claimed in research truly represents another (p. 176). To legitimise the findings, she suggests, researchers should work in a reciprocal relationship with subjects and use reflexivity of the process.

Pillow (2010) discusses four different types of reflexivity within postmodernism, which accepts a subject as complex and unknowable: reflexivity as recognition of self, reflexivity as recognition of other, reflexivity as truth and reflexivity as transcendence (p. 181). In regard to the first type, authors must acknowledge who they are, but self recognition is not merely adding oneself to the text; Pillow warns that doing so reiterates a modernist-self as knowable. Reflexivity as recognition of the other, which gives voice to others, is still dependent on researchers giving research subjects power, determining what the other can be. Reflexivity as truth implies that the research reports what is true if reflexive questions have been asked. Lastly, reflexivity as transcendence creates a perception that researchers can go past their own subjectivity.

Although Pillow problematises each of the reflexive strategies, she believes all four are interdependent and necessary. She presents the term *reflexivities of discomfort* (Pillow, 2010, p. 188), a reflexive methodology that questions hegemonic structures, pushing towards the complexity of “the unfamiliar, the uncomfortable and...practices of confounding disruptions” (p. 192). Her suggestion is to do research as praxis, which “helps those being researched to understand and change their situation” (p. 187), while at the same time reflecting deeply on power imbalances. Pillow’s research as praxis aligns with a dialogic research approach and is therefore helpful for this study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teacher–child dialogue is an important educational tool in early years education; however, the research literature shows that there is room for improvement in this area. Most of the empirical literature reviewed in this thesis has involved research in a small group of Western countries. The Scandinavian countries are well represented in the research on teacher–child dialogue in the early years; generally these studies are respectful of teachers and children and tend to show a greater complexity in teacher–child dialogue, although some show teachers and researchers may be constrained by neoliberal policies.

Ødegaard (2011) argues that policy and practice in early education settings should be informed by and managed from the perspectives of the people who inhabit these institutions, namely the young children themselves (p. 180). Studies that use a philosophical framework, such as poststructural, Māori and Bakhtinian studies, may enable us to become more respectful of children and to view the child as a citizen of the present. They also may open up possibilities of seeing teacher–child dialogue with fresh eyes and addressing teacher–child power imbalances. These philosophically grounded studies show alternatives to dominant

neoliberal and technicist approaches, illustrating a pedagogy of education as unfinalised and open-ended.

With the notable exception of White's study (2009a), methodologies of the discussed Bakhtinian studies of teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings have applied Bakhtin in their analysis of the data, but have not used a dialogic approach in the methodology. The next chapter presents a strong case for a dialogic research methodology aligned with Bakhtinian theories of dialogism, whereby participants remain unfinalised. Bakhtinian concepts provide a rationale for research of teacher–child dialogue as dialogic research in which it is accepted not only that children's subjectivities are polyphonic, but also that teaching and researching are dialogic constructions of being and becoming.

Although teachers' and children's subjectivities are often theorised, apart from some Deleuzian studies there is a lack of empirical research data on this topic. In the few examples that have been discussed, subjectivities emerge in dialogue, both shaping dialogue and in turn being shaped by it. It is argued that Bakhtin's notion of authoring selves allows an analysis that takes into account adult and child subjectivities as complex, inter-related, in flux and unfinalisable. Bakhtinian understandings of subjectivities may also provide a platform for this study to analyse power imbalances and dialogue as embodied and holistic.

In summary, the review of research related to teacher–child dialogue leads to the following conclusions.

- Teacher–child dialogue is an important tool in education.
- There is room for improvement: technicist approaches may not capture the complexity and richness of teacher–child dialogue, nor do they adequately address institutional power imbalances.
- A review of a small number of philosophically grounded studies shows that these studies can assist us to see with fresh eyes, allowing a more complex view and a more critical

reflection on power imbalances in teacher–child dialogue, thereby opening opportunities for teachers to act differently.

- Some of the reviewed research studies show how subjectivity shapes dialogue and vice versa and how these are inevitably intertwined.
- Only a handful of studies have used a Bakhtinian framework to research teacher–child dialogue in early years education; it is therefore argued that this study will help fill the gap in the research literature related to this topic.
- All of the studies that apply Bakhtinian concepts used one or more of the following Bakhtinian concepts: dialogism, carnivalesque, subjectivity, chronotope and moral answerability, utterance, genre, metaphoricity. However, very few included adult subjectivities. Of the reviewed studies, only recent studies by Marjanović-Shane, White (2014) and Rosen (2014) applied both a carnivalesque lens and a lens of moral answerability, as I intend to do in this thesis.

Based on deeper understandings as a result of both Bakhtinian theories in Chapter 2 and the reviewed literature in this chapter, it is argued that further research will add to understandings of meaningful teacher–child dialogues in early childhood settings and that a Bakhtinian approach may be particularly suited to this task. Many of the research projects discussed in this chapter, and in particular those based on philosophical frameworks, have provided guidance for the methodology and data collection in this thesis. A Bakhtinian analysis on the basis of polyphony and carnivalesque, dialogic subjectivities of both children and adults and teachers' moral answerability is suggested in order to gain a deeper understanding of teacher–child dialogue. As explained in the next chapter, this study follows a dialogic research methodology as a praxis of a Bakhtinian lived philosophy for the second phase of the project.

The first three chapters have explained the focus of this study, the theoretical framework and the historical and current cultural knowledge context in which this study is taking place. The following chapter discusses the methodology and research design.

Chapter 4:

Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology of the thesis; it is best described as the chapter of the theory in practice. It starts by describing philosophical underpinnings of Bakhtin's dialogism that inform the methodology, before providing a brief literature review of qualitative research methodologies and, in particular, dialogic research methodologies grounded in Bakhtinian theory. Interwoven is a discussion of how the studies reviewed are relevant to this thesis and in particular how they guide its methodology. The next section explains how the main research question was developed and what changes were made to subquestions during this study as a result of deeper understandings of teacher-child dialogue. Attention is given to the analysis of video-recorded data and the dialogic research approach. Thereafter, a dialogic research analysis and how this has been applied to analyse the data are explained.

Furthermore, this chapter explains procedures of participant selection, consent, research design and data collection. Changes made to the collection of data after an evaluation of phase one are also discussed.

In a dialogic research project, attention needs to be given to how participants are treated. Bakhtin's moral answerability requires an ethical stance that goes beyond the usual academic consent procedures; ethical considerations and the research literature pertaining to ethical research are therefore discussed in detail. As a dialogic approach has to pay attention to children's voices, a brief review of relevant research literature related to children's voices is also included. Reflections on the difficulty of obtaining children's voices through informal interviews are informed by recent research literature with Bakhtinian interpretations of voice and they lead to alternative ways to listen to children in their everyday interactions. A discussion related to relationships between the participating teachers and myself, as well as

between children and myself, illustrates the contexts in which the data were collected. A brief conclusion draws together the different elements of this chapter.

Philosophical Underpinnings

What is dialogism? Chapter 2 has detailed how Bakhtin's view of dialogue goes far beyond the usual understanding of dialogue as a "tool of reason" (Schwandt, 2007, p. 5). According to Holquist's (1990) definition, dialogism is foremost an epistemology whereby "we make sense of existence by defining our special place in it" (p. 29). As previous chapters have established, Bakhtin argues that dialogue is the meaning of all life; true knowledge stems from active participation in dialogue. As subjectivities are formed in and through dialogue, it is not about a one-off event in isolation from its context. Dialogism is thus understood as a particular way of being; all who are engaged in the dialogue make sense of this and all are shaped by it.

Bakhtin's meaning of life expressed in dialogue shows a preference for truth/knowledge as lived experiences (*pravda* in Russian) over abstract truth/knowledge (*istina*) (Bakhtin 1993, p. 37). As will be explained in this chapter, Bakhtin's theory of praxis therefore lends itself well to a theoretical framework of the research methodology in this thesis.

As discussed in Chapter 3, a Bakhtinian view of self and other is shaped by their relationship: we see ourselves through the eyes of the other; the self is shaped in relationships and shapes others. In addition, Chapter 2 has detailed how Bakhtin sees the other as co-subject, who we respond to, and this other is only known to us through his or her utterance. Different dialogues with other(s) give us different views of self, complicating these views, and through our dialogues we can show different voices within the self. The self is in dialogue not only with the other, but also with the self, or as Bakhtin (1993) expresses it: "The dialogue is not only between I and the other and the other and I, but also I-for-myself" (p. 51). These multiple dialogues lead to different possibilities of how both we and the other

respond and they therefore lead to open-ended dialogues, which will always remain unfinished.

The above-mentioned philosophy of dialogue as the meaning of all life can also be applied in educational contexts, although traditionally classroom dialogue has been mostly about teachers passing on existing knowledge to their pupils (Bruner, 1996; Gilbert, 2005; Matusov, 2009; Osberg et al., 2008; Sidorkin, 2002) (see Chapter 1 for more detail). Matusov (2009) believes education is dialogic at heart, even in a monologic education system which is goal-directed and aimed at the transmission of information by the teacher: while student participation might be limited, students' meaning-making process and the teacher-child *relationship* are still dialogic (p. 3).

Neither truth/knowledge nor the self is once defined and final; instead, both need to be understood as being formed in the dialogic process and therefore as unique, unfinished and open-ended. It was only after reflecting on the process of a critical discourse analysis of phase one of this thesis, and after reading Dostoevsky, that I realised I had applied methodological tools that were not aligned with dialogism. For example, in *The Karamazov brothers* (Dostoevsky, 2007), the characters display a complex array of polyphonic genres, which it seems are not determined in advance by the author as he sets out to write the novel, but rather grow out of the story. By interviewing teachers about their beliefs about teacher-child dialogue in the first phase of the project, collecting observation data of teacher-child dialogues and asking teachers for feedback on the transcripts, I finalised teachers in this study. Although the teachers were invited to comment on the transcripts of the recorded teacher-child interactions, they had little or no say about the meaning making of the data during the process and, more importantly, they had no opportunity to act and to be seen responding as ideologically becoming within the research project. Bakhtin (1984a) argues that, in Dostoevsky's novels, characters are respected as full subjects who can never be

defined fully and who are ideologically authoritative. If all meaning of life is in dialogue, then research ought to be carried out as a dialogic process; my reading of Dostoevsky's and Bakhtin's work guided the shift to a dialogic approach.

Why Bakhtin for the theoretical framework of both content and process? Much of the research in early childhood education in New Zealand uses a sociocultural framework, mostly based on Vygotskian theories. Matusov (2011) and White (2011a) argue that an education system based on Vygotsky underestimates children and does not challenge largely monologic education. In White's (2011a) view, a Vygotskian dialectic approach in the current education system does not leave room for Bakhtinian dialogism, and dialogism is often subsumed under Vygotskian notions of dialogic teaching.

Furthermore, this thesis argues that a research process aligned with Bakhtinian theories opens up room for children's dialogue to be respected and to be analysed on the basis of Bakhtinian concepts such as genres, polyphony, open-ended dialogue, carnivalesque and unfinalised participants. A dialogic approach takes account of the different perspectives and the meaning making as a result of a dialogic discussion of the data. A Bakhtinian analysis allows reflections on what has traditionally been largely monologic teaching and opens up possibilities for education that values diversity and children as active participants. (For further explanation of this type of education and how it is relates to the personal pedagogy of the author, see Chapter 1.)

Dialogism applies to responses of students in an educational approach that values student participation, diversity and open-endedness. It applies simultaneously to teachers, who need to have an actively responsive understanding of their students. It needs to be noted that Bakhtin demands more than understanding; teachers also need to be active in the sense of undertaking an individually answerable deed or *postupok*, the term used by Bakhtin, which

can be loosely translated as “next step” (Holquist, 1993, p. ix). Bakhtin urges that action has to follow; it cannot just be talk.

Although Bakhtin is opposed to grand theories, favouring the uniqueness of each dialogue, he continually seeks to generalise and theorise this uniqueness (Holquist, 1990), for example, through concepts such as utterance and genres. It is this ability to balance the analysis of unique dialogues with general concepts such as the utterance that is particularly useful for the methodological framework of a thesis. Each and every one of the participants in this thesis, myself included, is part of once occurring events. Even with the same people, none of the dialogues could happen again in exactly the same way; they were unpredictable and open-ended. Viewing each of the transcripts, one can think of countless possibilities of different dialogues, different genres, different endings and different shaping of selves. However, even though each of the dialogues was a once occurring event in the context of this study, Bakhtinian concepts such as utterances, genre and polyphony make it possible to put what happens into words that can build further understandings of what happens now and what might be possible in dialogue in educational settings.

It is important to avoid shallow interpretations of Bakhtin’s ideas and to understand what is at the heart of his writings, when using his work for the theoretical framework in an educational research analysis; extensive use is therefore made of both his work and that of others who have applied Bakhtin’s theories. In addition, as mentioned above, it makes no sense to apply a theoretical framework when not walking the talk in the process; dialogic research, which builds on Bakhtin’s dialogic philosophy, supports complex research theory and challenges dominant scientific discourses (Sullivan, 2012; White, 2009a). In a review of qualitative research in education, Haywood Metz (2000) suggests finding the theory, methodology and method that provide the most appropriate match with the research question

and that best mirror the researcher's own assumptions. The following subsection explains how a Bakhtinian dialogic approach differs from other qualitative research.

Bakhtin (1984a) argues that meaning is in the dialogic process itself. For him, dialogue is more than a way of knowing; it is at the same time a way of being and doing. As discussed in Chapter 1, Bakhtin is not the only philosopher who has been used to analyse dialogue in education. Socrates in ancient Greece and more recently others such as Gadamer, Buber, Freire, Derrida and Foucault have also written about dialogue in philosophy. Bakhtin, however, is unique in providing us with social language tools through his discursive analyses of literary works by Dostoevsky and Rabelais. Bakhtin's key concepts, first, inform a dialogic research process and, second, make the polyphony of early childhood settings visible. Bakhtinian theory is thus used to guide both the data collection and the analysis.

How does a dialogic approach differ from other qualitative research? Different methodologies require different tools for the analysis of data. For example, a grounded theory approach may use coding of each line in the transcripts, whereas in a critical discourse analysis the transcribed data are searched for power relations in the language that has been used. Different methodologies prescribe to some extent how recordings need to be transcribed; for example, whether to include intonation or emphasis on a particular word or sentence and, if so, how. It needs to be noted that, no matter how detailed a transcript or which convention has been followed, transcription remains a subjective text. Tone of voice is always a judgement. Furthermore, we cannot record any internal response of participants but only that which is visible on the outside. For example, while we may outwardly agree with a speaker, we may keep our true feelings and/or disagreement hidden—and thus no such disagreement is recorded. Bakhtin (1990) explains that it is impossible to know fully: “We react valuationally to every self-manifestation of a human being and not to the whole that he [sic] is, not to *all* of him” (p. 4). Bakhtin does not see this as a hindrance, as he says: “In life

we are interested, not in the whole of a human being, but only in those particular actions on his part, with which we are compelled to deal in our living life and which are, in one way or another, of special interest to us” (p. 5). Our interest is in how the other presents himself or herself, not in fully knowing the other.

A number of different approaches in qualitative research explore subjectivity and lived experience, such as grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative analysis and critical discourse analysis (Sullivan, 2012, p. 1). As mentioned above, critical discourse analysis was initially considered for this thesis to analyse findings. While discourse analysis is often linked to Foucault, Locke (2004) and Fairclough and Wodak (1997) argue that Bakhtin has made a valuable contribution to its development. Texts, or utterances in Bakhtinian terms, shape identities and they can bring about changes in our knowledge.

Bakhtin’s dialogic approach is similar to an ethnomethodological approach in that both approaches study the construction of everyday language as a social activity. However, the focus for Bakhtin is on the interpretation and meaning making of the unique situation, whereas in ethnomethodology the emphasis is on structures that determine social order (Gee & Green, 1998). Mehan’s well-known Initiate–Respond–Evaluate (IRE) structure of teacher–child conversations (cited in Gee & Green, 1998) is an example of an ethnomethodological approach.

Discourse analysis can be used to examine how knowledge is constructed in a complex classroom context and how it shapes and is shaped by social interaction of its members (Gee & Green, 1998). Discourse can be defined as a combination of language and context: language in use, by real people in a real world; and context that includes not only our experiences, assumptions and expectations, but also institutional positions and relationships between speaker and hearer (Woods, 2006).

Critical discourse analysis goes beyond discourse analysis: as well as investigating key concerns in a linguistic sense, it is interested in the ways in which texts or discourses

reproduce power and inequalities in society. Wodak (cited in Kendall, 2007) explains the *critical* in critical discourse analysis as opening up complexity and having continuous reflexivity. However, as Pietikainen and Dufva (2006) argue, critical discourse analysis may give attention to power relations; it does not allow room for the position of the individual in a dialogic relationship.

Sullivan (2012) explains that the sometimes opposing approaches discussed above have used Bakhtin for their analysis of data and that they can do so because Bakhtin's work can be and has been interpreted differently by researchers following the above-mentioned methodologies. A simplified comparison between these approaches shows that critical discourse analysis focuses mostly on historical power relationships, whereas phenomenological research tends to start afresh and give attention to analysing the lived experience of participants. At the heart of critical discourse analysis lies a suspicion of the text and the aim is to reveal constructions of power. A phenomenological approach or grounded theory approach, on the other hand, is more trusting and open to the lived experience of participants. A critical narrative approach looks at lived experience through narratives, seeking to understand these from a phenomenological perspective, but at the same time with a critical lens on both the researcher herself or himself and the transcripts, with the aim of opening up new possibilities rather than of uncovering the past (Langdrige, 2008, p. 1138).

All these approaches have made and continue to make valuable contributions to the research related to lived experiences. As Sullivan (2012) argues, although they have similarities, analyses in the above-mentioned methodologies and Bakhtin's writings also have points of difference.

In my interpretation of Bakhtin's ideas, the researcher is no longer the only one who can and should interpret the data in a dialogic process; participants are also seen as knowers. The result may be multiple interpretations of data, requiring the researcher to make sense of

these rather than to build one interpretation of data. Bakhtin's view of dialogue, whereby the self addresses both the self and the other, is as much about making sense to oneself as to others. In a dialogic methodology, it is expected that those participating in the research (and that includes researchers as well as participants) may start to see things differently as a result of their involvement in the project. Bakhtin's interpretations of participants' lived experience accept that they can be uncertain and that there can be multiple truths.

This study particularly focuses on the open-endedness or unfinalisability of dialogue as a result of the different possibilities or genres that can be used in dialogue: in addition to guaranteeing open-endedness, they provide room for an anticipated response (super-addressee) due to a moral answerability. Dialogic research encapsulates the complexity of subjectivity, accepting that the possibilities of different genres in each experience have been built over each participant's lifetime and that these genres have undoubtedly been influenced historically by cultural norms and power relationships. Furthermore, subjectivities in dialogue are shaped by others and the self in the unique event and they continue to be shaped through each following encounter. Sullivan (2012) argues that, perhaps more than other approaches, "dialogue brings an intense focus to the transformative effect of genres on experience" (p. 15).

In summary, Bakhtin's view of discourse not only shapes how to collect data and the analysis of data, but also guides the process of continuous evaluation of data with the teachers in this thesis through collaborative dialogue. Implications of this are that opportunities must be created for the participating teachers to have ongoing access to the data and to listen to their interpretations of the data. Attention must be given, in particular, to identifying changes in the teachers and myself as the researcher as a result of our collaborative reflections on the teacher-child dialogues.

In the second phase of the data collection, the teachers and the researcher chose video clips that were of interest to them to study and discuss. Each week of data collection in the early childhood setting was followed by a meeting with the teachers. These meetings were held in the evenings at the university after work and food was provided, allowing for open-ended finish time. Each of these meetings lasted at least three hours, and was recorded and transcribed. The teachers were also given notebooks to write down field notes in between meetings so that they had opportunities to express what they were thinking outside the teacher meetings. It will be explained in Chapter 7 that a response does not need not to be immediate; these field notes can be seen as utterances in the ongoing dialogue between the teachers and me. Writing notes immediately after viewing the video clips helped us to recall the video clips and our initial interpretation of them at our meetings. Written field notes also helped us to formulate a reflection on all that had happened or was said before. At each following meeting, the teachers were invited to share as much or as little of their field notes as they preferred. Some of these reflections are described in transcripts in Chapter 7. At each meeting Gemma and Tracy gave me copies of their field notes so they could be used as data in this study.

How to analyse data in a dialogic research approach. Although Bakhtin is considered to oppose grand meta-theories and generalisations, favouring the uniqueness of each encounter (Holquist, 1990), he manages to generalise and theorise the unique event by breaking elements down into utterances. Voice and genres are the important indicators as opposed to symbols. Intonation and emphases on particular words are therefore included, as in a sense these could be seen as an expression of genres; the same words spoken in parody can sit within an opposite genre—for example, “War will bring peace; yeah right” on a beer company’s billboard. In a dialogic encounter, many genres are available for each participant to choose from, both consciously and subconsciously; an example of the latter could be when

a response has been influenced by dominant, monologic discourses. Genres can be combined and they can also change as a result of an interaction or, in other words, we can add our own intonation as a response. Body language is taken into account as well; a grimace can indicate that the opposite is meant from what is said. In summary, the analysis of data in this study is based on utterances, both verbal and non-verbal, and interpretations of genres, as opposed to a linguistic analysis.

Power relations exist between the author (speaker) and the hero (addressee), but as is evident in the transcripts in the three following analysis chapters, even in monologic interactions, power fluctuates. Utterances can be monologic or authoritarian, or they can be more dialogical, with multiple voices and more equality between participants. Each of us has a unique range of genres as a result of our unique lived experiences. Every encounter therefore has many open-ended possibilities. While identification of genres and voice is highly relevant, due to the many possibilities and the fact that genres cannot always be identified easily, the true meaning that was intended can be difficult to analyse and interpretations are always from one's subjective point of view, at that particular point in time, in that particular situation.

In this study, a large amount of data was screened for dialogues and utterances that seemed meaningful and related to the research questions. As part of the dialogic research process, the teachers and I identified dialogues on the basis that they were interesting to us or because they were seen to add to our understanding of teacher–child dialogue. Some of these dialogues in the early childhood centre were chosen because they were different from more traditional teacher–child dialogues or experiences; some were selected because they puzzled us.

As can be expected, each of us (teachers and researcher) had also our own reason or genre for selection at that particular time. For example, after the first week of observations,

Gemma chose a transcript of a book reading session because she was curious about how her voice sounded and which strategies she applied:

Gemma: Uhm, I kind of wanted to see what my interactions were with those children, like exactly, uhm what part was I playing, was I being too over domineering. You know, I am a teacher, over everyone else. I just wanted to see my strategies, like what strategies am I trying to use and keep acknowledging negative behaviours, but keep acknowledging those positive behaviours as well? Just in general, just to see how I was reading a story (chuckles).

Lia: Mm, what did you think when you saw it? [the video clip]

Gemma: It was better, than what I thought it was. I thought I was very boring, to be honest, I did, especially with the Pooh book. I felt there wasn't much that I could take from it. But then looking back, even with that there were a couple of questions that I *did* ask. And I brought some things back as well?

Lia: Mm, mm.

Gemma: And I was quite surprised in terms of that, like it wasn't so boring and my tone of voice was quite nice, and very clear and very good continuing with them, so yeah that was the reasons why. My big disappointment would only be that I did tell them to sit down. That's so, ooh, I don't like that. Children are so very engaged and then to tell them to sit down, these children, come back, so for me that was just one of the main things, to see what strategies that worked out that could be a lot more engaging for children and what could we do about the others and what could we do more.

(Gemma, teacher, and Lia, researcher, audio-recorded teacher meeting, 11 October 2012)

The selected texts were transcribed together with the video recordings and distributed to the teachers before the meetings. They were then discussed in the meetings with the teachers.

The dialogues in the teacher meetings were also transcribed. These meetings can be seen as a second layer of dialogues. Extensive use of transcripts, particularly in Chapter 7, aims to let the teachers speak for themselves. The analysis in this thesis—where I aim to make meaning of the combination of the data of the teacher–child interactions, the dialogues in the teacher

meetings and the theory—can be regarded as a third layer of (internal) dialogue between myself as the researcher and the text.

In this third dialogue of the thesis writing, utterances were transcribed and analysed for content, what was said and how it was said, including interpretations of non-verbal language in order to identify voice and genre. The context was taken into account, as the context of each encounter is an important factor in the choice of genre. For example, the selection of genre depends heavily on what happened before, who else is present and what his or her relationship is with the other. Rather than making a deliberate effort to leave out anything that did not make sense or to find matching data, the opposite approach has been taken as it is accepted that dialogue is complex and open-ended and has endless possibilities.

It needs to be emphasised here that although the participants' voices can be heard through quotations and some of the transcripts and although it is hoped that I have captured the philosophical essence of Bakhtin's work, the interpretations are an utterance from my chronotope and they are therefore subjective. Another person would undoubtedly have written a very different document. Furthermore, my interpretations are not a full account of the other; as Bakhtin argues, we never fully understand the other. The purpose is not as much to ask whether the interpretation of the data is the scientific or verifiable truth, as to explore a dialogic research process that makes meaning of teacher–child dialogue from different participants' perspectives.

Genres are related to Bakhtinian concepts such as carnivalesque, polyphony, monologicity, subjectivity and moral and ethical answerability. (For further discussion of these concepts, see Chapter 2.) Different genres identified in the data have been linked to related research literature. Parts of transcripts have been included to illustrate the points that are made. Given that each encounter is open-ended, genres even from the same participant could be opposing, illustrating different subjectivities and alternative truths. The aim is not to

find one truth or the right meaning, but to consider how truth presents itself to each of us; to become more aware of how teachers, children and myself as the researcher experience meaning differently and to make this more visible. At the heart of teacher–child dialogues are teachers’ and children’s subjectivities. How do children and teachers see themselves as learners and knowers? How do dialogues between teachers and researcher affect us? What changes as a result?

As Sullivan (2012) argues, a singular perspective of the analysis could be monologic. Particular attention needs to be given to opposing views in the data and the inclusion of the teachers’ utterances in the teacher meetings. Transcripts of teacher–child interactions where children’s utterances do not conform or where they are unexpected or puzzling to the teachers and me are therefore a focus, in particular in Chapter 6. A dialogic research approach and extended transcripts of the teachers’ utterances can be taken as an attempt to minimise a monologic analysis. Furthermore, the video clips that were discussed at the teacher meetings have been selected not only by me as the researcher, but also by the participating teachers.

Limitations. Limitations of a Bakhtinian theoretical framework have also been raised in Chapter 2. In particular, the perception that Bakhtin does not address power issues is relevant to research in educational institutions. For example, Holquist (1990) mentions that Bakhtin has avoided discussion of conflict, race and gender issues. Emerson’s (1997) criticism is that Bakhtinian dialogue takes an overly optimistic view of addressing power relationships in the encounter, for example, in a carnivalesque response. In Chapter 2, it is argued that Bakhtinian analysis addresses power imbalances differently; children can oppose authoritative dialogue opportunities by applying genres of self, which are internally persuasive in the unique encounter. Universal institutional or cultural power imbalances would not necessarily be addressed but, depending on the context of each unique experience and based on unique individual chronotopes, children may or may not use these opportunities

to respond in their unique encounters. Over time these genres could be strengthened in a dispositional sense for future encounters throughout children's lives. Furthermore, if and when children's utterances that oppose monologic teaching are made visible by critically reflective teachers and researchers, these moments may be used to address power imbalances. Examples of children's carnivalesque responses may be made public to advocate for children's agency.

A second limitation is that, even when a dialogic research methodology is applied, teachers and researchers may not always recognise children's internally persuasive discourses. As can be seen in Chapters 5–7, these discourses were not immediately apparent; it was only after re-viewing some of the video clips that we became aware of children's dialogic responses—for example, when Mariah insists that she will not turn the television off in her room or when Maddy re-enacts the teacher at mat time. It can be expected that many more such events either have not been recorded or have not been recognised. The examples highlight the need for teachers to reflect on video-recorded events in their practice in a collaborative dialogue.

A last and, for me, unresolved limitation of a Bakhtinian approach is that human interaction is always required; dialogue always involves a human other. As explained further in Chapter 6, children were at times deeply engaged and affected by material things, without any involvement of other human beings. While Bakhtinian theory of dialogue at least encompasses body language and carnivalesque bodily pleasures (Bakhtin, 1984b), in contrast to most Western epistemologies that focus purely on matters of the mind (Lenz Taguchi, 2011), it cannot be used to explain anything that does not involve human interaction. Lenz Taguchi (2011) illustrates how material things affect children; for example, a young girl becomes a confidently climbing girl only because she has been engaged with this climbing frame (p. 38).

Following this discussion of a rationale for a dialogic research methodology, the next section describes the literature related to different methodologies of dialogic inquiry that has deepened my understanding of how to shape this study.

Review of Literature Related to Dialogic Research Methodologies

As Kotsopoulos (2010) describes it, dialogic inquiry is an approach, based on Bakhtinian assertions, that “examines the active and responsive nature of language among participants in appropriating, constructing and reconstructing knowledge for self and other” (p. 297).

Language is seen as contextual and complex, multi-voiced and a continuous negotiation of power. The purpose of dialogic inquiry is not to generate theory but to come to a deeper understanding through research deeply embedded in theory (Kotsopoulos, 2010). A brief review of empirical research on dialogic research and dialogic inquiry follows.

Dialogic inquiry in relation to ethnomethodological perspectives. Educational researchers often use ethnographic approaches in combination with discourse analysis in order to capture the complex nature of the classroom environment. In a discussion of discourse analysis and ethnographic research, Gee and Green (1998) present the concept of *logic-in-inquiry*, whereby each decision about a particular methodology relates to particular theories and vice versa (p. 121). They examine different perspectives within discourse analysis in education to clarify how each theoretical language of these perspectives requires different phenomena, how the phenomena are conceptualised, how they can be analysed and what type of explanations can be constructed (p. 133). To illustrate this, they explain that ethnomethodology analyses particular patterns of action or *language* between participants and determines any claims that can be made from these.

In a Bakhtinian or dialogic approach, however, the emphasis is on making meaning and interpreting dialogic moments of *speech* in a speaker–hearer relationship. Although both

a dialogic approach and ethnomethodology see reflexivity of language as part of the speaker–hearer relationship, Gee and Green (1998) emphasise that a Bakhtinian perspective does not lead to an expected response. A dialogic methodology requires researchers to focus on what happens in the interplay between participants in whole utterances and speech genres: it is not about what was said, but about the interplay between participants and what happened before and after (Skukauskaite & Green, 2004, p. 60).

The Santa Barbara Classroom Discourse Group (SBCDG), which has been studying everyday discourses in classrooms for the last 20 years (Dixon & Green, 2009), is the first to come to mind when thinking about dialogic research. Dixon and Green (2009) describe the methodology of the group as ongoing dialogues, where all members negotiate for each analysis, drawing on the perspectives of the participants. Projects of SBCDG are always collaborative and roles of researchers and participating teachers are not fixed; they are also negotiated. The SBCDG project started from academics, teachers and students coming together with shared interests and the group developed from there.

What has been learned in the 20-year process? Dixon and Green (2009) conclude that it is important to have clear policies about observations in classrooms and that the teacher of the observed classroom must have the final say about what happens; at the heart is the principle that the research is a mutually constructed project. The experience of SBCDG in ethnographic classroom research, while not fully compatible with dialogic research (Gee & Green, 1998), nevertheless provides a wealth of information in relation to the methodology for this thesis. Apart from clarifying the importance of collaboration and the need to renegotiate, Dixon and Green (2009) ask two questions in their analysis of the SBCDG experience that are a useful guide for this study:

1. What principles will guide you in constructing the social contracts for membership, access, archiving, analyses?

2. What theoretical perspectives guide your work? (p. 280)

The following empirical studies all use Bakhtin as the main theorist to guide the methodology of their research. Educational research that uses dialogic research grounded in Bakhtinian theory for its methodology process is limited. Several of the studies that have been reviewed are therefore outside an educational discipline. The majority of the educational studies reviewed relate to classroom research in primary, secondary or tertiary education. White's (2009a) research is the only example here from an early childhood setting.

Hamston (2006) provides an example of a study guided by Bakhtinian conceptual and ethical theories of dialogue, which she applies pedagogically, as well as for the methodology and analysis. Her focus is on her students' struggle with discourses of ethnicity in a primary school setting. After giving out selected readings to her class, she video-recorded ensuing classroom discussions. Three students viewed video recordings of earlier classroom dialogues and commented on these. From her investigation of issues of power, privilege and what counts as knowledge, Hamston concludes that the dialogic research approach made visible how the participants spoke through different social voices and opened up possibilities of their ideological becoming. Hamston (2006) argues that dialogue encourages an ethical agency, which foregrounds the linguistic basis of *becoming* and of discursive change (p. 58). While this is a study in an Australian primary school setting, between a teacher/researcher and her students, Hamston provides useful information on her analysis of students as becoming for this project. She states that she situated issues of power and privilege at the centre of the research; however, she does not investigate her own position as the teacher and her influence in these classroom dialogues.

In her doctoral study, Sandretto (2009) warns that humanist discourses related to the value of practical experience, which she calls the "foundational authority of experience" (p. 94), tend to accept knowledge gained through experience at face value. From a

poststructural perspective, it is difficult to problematise the discursive construction of experience if we remain within the dominant humanist discourses (Sandretto, 2009, p. 96). Experience is not neutral or innocent and thus can reify inequity and prejudice (Han, 2010; Jones Diaz, Arthur, Beecher & MacNaughton, 2000; Sandretto, 2009). Sandretto advocates studying experience that both is critically reflective and legitimises that experience.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Bakhtin rarely relates his theories to education. From Bakhtin's dialogic inquiries in his only known article on pedagogy, Skukauskaite and Green (2004) draw examples as a "telling case" (p. 59). They view Bakhtin's text as his dialogue with teachers. Skukauskaite and Green argue that the article shows methodological insights into Bakhtin's inquiry approach and that Bakhtin's teaching can be seen as inquiry-based research, with a view of language as social to guide his practice. In each of the inquiries, Bakhtin describes how he responds to a perceived need of students for understanding or information on a range of contextual and pedagogical factors (p. 60). Skukauskaite and Green state that Bakhtin models dialogic pedagogy within interactive inquiries that not only inform his students but also Bakhtin himself. By way of illustration, Bakhtin turns clashes between his theory and the practice of his students into "rich points" to understand conditions of the programme (Skukauskaite & Green, 2004, p. 59). Furthermore, as Skukauskaite and Green explain, Bakhtin sees his students as authors and he blames any differences between his theory and their practice on the kind of educational opportunities that the students were given, by uncovering layers of the factors that constrained students. His inquiry method then allows him to develop new information. Although Bakhtin's article is dense, it provides examples of dialogic inquiry in a teacher–student relationship from Bakhtin himself.

Particularly Bakhtin's method of not laying blame with students may provide a useful guide in this thesis. Given that this telling case is the only example from Bakhtin where he applied his theory in practice in an educational situation, it is highly relevant to this thesis.

The analysis of Bakhtin's own practice by Skukauskaite and Green (2004) shows how language is viewed as meaningful action and that it is not the content but the relationship between the everyday interactions that counts. Bakhtin allows disagreement between him and the students and makes it visible, not blaming the students for the difference but seeing them as authors (Skukauskaite & Green, 2004, p. 69); looking for the conditions that have shaped them. The practical information about Bakhtin affirms an analysis of everyday interactions, which looks for differences between children and teachers, asking how and why teachers and children might apply different discourses.

Some studies use the terminology of dialogic inquiry or research when in reality they apply mostly technicist approaches. Henessy, Mercer and Warwick (2011) describe a research project involving three researchers and three teachers, which aimed to explore and reformulate definitions of classroom dialogues. Using a process of collaborative theory-building, they explore and reformulate definitions of classroom dialogue (Henessy et al., 2011, p. 1906). Henessy et al. caution against possible pitfalls, such as teachers being polite rather than expressing opinions, and they suggest that researchers spend time building teachers' sense of security and have guidelines on the process. Although the aim of the project is to make sense in reciprocal partnerships, the project seems more a teacher professional development programme, supported by university facilitators. The researchers' own subjectivities are invisible and the analysis is technicist rather than theoretical. However, the process researchers used in sharing theory with the teachers, before they video-recorded classroom practice, provides useful information for my study.

Henessy et al. (2011) distributed some short readings and gave a brief presentation of key ideas; they use some Bakhtinian ideas, but do not elaborate on Bakhtin's theoretical framework. They reiterate that this sharing of theory before the observations is critical. They also suggest that a smaller group of teachers is more likely to provide opportunities for in-

depth discussion. In the study, researchers and teachers watched vignettes in the video recordings, which were selected by the teachers themselves with one of the researchers, as stimuli for dialogues and analysis. The discussion as to whether dialogue needs to lead to consensus is of interest. The group agreed that disagreement is an important stimulus for dialogue and change. In a similar vein, in a comparison study between two groups of children engaged in the same small-group activity, Haworth (1999) concludes that the less compliant group showed more agency and more ability to reason and construct (see also Chapter 3).

In describing their approach, Hennessy et al. (2011) clarify that the research focus, design and methods were mutually accepted as research responsibilities and the co-inquiry started with the pilot filming, continuing through the data collection, analysis and development of the dialogue framework. On the other hand, responsibility for the lesson planning and design rested with the teachers, as did the selection of vignettes for the shared dialogues. Following the example of Hennessy et al., the participating teachers in my study received some reading in which they had expressed an interest. They also received information on the how and why of writing field notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Both the teachers and I chose vignettes to discuss. Planning of the programme at the childcare centres remained the teachers' responsibility.

Bakhtin (1984a) describes how Devushkin in Dostoevsky's (1982) novel *Poor folk* feels he is being spied on and measured by the author. It is this relationship between author and hero that Bakhtin applies to a dialogic situation of I and the other. In his analysis of research methodology, Frank (2005) argues that Bakhtin's concepts of dialogue have not often been applied to the research process or to reporting of research. Defining research as "one person's representation of another" (Frank, 2005, p. 966), he does not agree with traditional research methodologies in which the roles of the researcher and participants are predetermined: the researcher acts as a researcher and the participants act as participants,

giving information that the researcher requires. He believes that it is ethically wrong for researchers to measure or define participants, finalising them in a monologic report, with one human being “determining all that another is and can be” (Frank, 2005, p. 966). In a Bakhtinian ideal dialogue, the research report must always understand itself not as a final statement but as a continuing dialogue through which participants will continue to form themselves (Frank, 2005, p. 967).

Both Frank (2005) and White (2009a) therefore strongly endorse dialogic research as a more appropriate and ethical approach to traditional monologic research, where qualitative researchers adopt quantitative researchers’ reference to raw data, which are then refined, finished or even civilised (Frank, 2005, p. 970). Frank suggests a dialogic alternative for researchers by emphasising participants’ engagements as their own struggles of becoming, as opposed to representing participants with static themes or lists of characteristics that permanently fix them (p. 968). In dialogic research, participation must be an act of engagement with the researcher, whereby the research instigates self-reflection that leads to a report not merely on the participants but also on the changes in both participants and researcher as a result of their coming together in dialogue. Frank offers some possibilities for dialogic research: themes appear early in the text and thereby do not finalise the participants as they have further opportunities to voice another response; interrupting (monologic) traditional assumptions; and leaving the research open with unsettling questions. Dialogic research does not judge the participants. The researcher has his or her own place in the dialogue in the dialogic research project: “The researcher becomes more than the observer and becomes an engaged witness” (Frank, 2005, p. 972).

It needs to be noted that dialogic research in itself is not unique in giving participants a more active role; participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000) and discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2003) are other examples of research methodologies where power

dynamics are investigated and active participation of critically reflective participants is expected. In White's (2009b) definition, dialogic research is a research model that is built on the dialogic philosophy of Bakhtin and that is fundamentally concerned with the social discursive nature of language (p. 299). Dialogic research is more about *how* truth presents itself than about defining truth in itself.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, White's (2009a) doctoral study, which used a dialogic research methodology to investigate the acts of two toddlers in a New Zealand childcare centre, is a useful exemplar of this approach to research in educational settings. White invited a teacher who was open to new ideas and dialogue (p. 307) to participate. The actions of one 18-month-old toddler were video-recorded nine times, for one hour each time, over a period of five weeks. White used cam-hats for the child and the teacher and one static video camera; the three video clips were synchronised on one split screen. In a three-hour "re-probing interview", the participating teacher and White shared insights, which were then analysed and coded. Utterances were used as units of analysis. White confirms the role of the researcher as a co-participant; she concludes that dialogical research lends itself to research in early childhood settings because it honours the individuality of participants within a culture (p. 317).

White's research is highly relevant to this thesis: as well as using methodology based on a dialogic approach, it is situated in an early childhood setting. White's use of utterances as the unit of analysis is also informative. White describes how she and the teacher differed in what they noticed. For example, the teacher viewed more of the toddler's gestures as metaphoric than White did, which White attributes to the relationship the teacher has with the child. This experience reminds me to take into account and value the knowledge teachers have as a result of their intimate relationships with the children. The teacher and the researcher also had different interpretations of the significance of the observed behaviour of

the toddler. In addition, White explains that the ability to review the video footage helped them to note more subtle body language. These findings reinforce the need to video-record the teacher–child interactions in my study, in recognition of the importance of capturing body language, especially with young children. White reported how much more she noticed as a result of the dialogic discussion with the teacher. Lastly, White reports that a growing familiarity with the child led to a more complex understanding of his actions. I thus drew on White’s study design in designing my study to record four consecutive days each month, spread over a period of four months, with meetings with the teachers spaced in between.

In what they describe as a new genre of research reporting, Matusov and Brobst (2013) offer reflective discussion of an experiment in dialogic pedagogy with a class of postgraduate students. Apart from dialogues between Matusov and his students, the research includes imaginary dialogues between Matusov as the dialogic teacher and Matusov at the time of writing the research report. Although Matusov and Brobst do not define their research using a radical experiment as dialogic research, it still provides helpful information. One of the main points taken from their research is the necessity to “avoid agreement, therapeutic reconciliation, consistency, memory agreement and/or social peace as a proxy for truth” (Matusov and Brobst, 2013, p. ix). In my research no strong disagreement arose between the participants and me; nonetheless, Matusov’s inclusion of disagreements and contradictions between participants has allowed me to reflect more deeply on inconsistencies between the participants and me and inconsistencies in ourselves at different events and to accept these as a natural part of dialogic research.

Although their research is not based on Bakhtinian theories, Skukauskaite, Liu and Green (2007) provide food for thought regarding the use of video recordings in micro-ethnographic research. They warn that there is no perfect research tool—“video artefacts are not *the* reality, but *a* record “ (Skukauskaite et al., 2007, p. 132, original emphasis)—and that

video-enabled research must still be grounded in theory. Video recordings do not stand alone; they are one source of information about everyday life in educational contexts. Questions need to be asked as to how and what was recorded and how recordings can be used to interpret what happened. White's (2009a) use of video recordings and the dialogic interpretation between herself as co-participant and the participating teacher, as discussed above, is one example of how video-enabled research, framed by theoretical perspectives, can be used.

The following section describes the design for my thesis. Based on Bakhtinian philosophy and informed by the above empirical studies, the research design was adapted after the initial data collection at Jacarinda Street centre, based on my developing understanding of dialogic research as a result of both my experiences and reading.

Research Design

As indicated above, after reflecting on an initial critical discourse analysis in phase one of the thesis, I used a more Bakhtinian dialogic research method for the main and second phase. In this second phase, at meetings between the participating teachers and myself as the researcher, selected field data were analysed to reflect on our understandings and enactments of teacher–child dialogues against Bakhtin's theories of dialogue. Dialogic research describes the changes in participants' and the researcher's thinking as a result of their dialogues. The aim of the research is to find out how teacher–child discourses are constructed in early childhood settings and how they are or can be challenged. As stated above, Bakhtinian theories are used to both analyse the findings and guide the research process.

Shaping and refining the research questions. The focus of this thesis is to rethink a more complex view of teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings, using a Bakhtinian dialogic approach and accepting an open-ended curriculum with children as active

participants. As explained in more detail later in this chapter, in the early stages of this study I planned to use a critical discourse analysis but, following further engagement with Bakhtinian theories and Bakhtinian scholars' interpretations of these, I instead adopted a dialogic research approach. Over time, I realised that the initial research questions were more reflective of poststructural discourses and that the wording was influenced by critical theory of deconstruction rather than the dialogic research methodology that I had selected for the research design. The main research question was therefore adjusted in order to reflect Bakhtinian theories and to align with a dialogic research approach, so that it became: "How are teacher–child discourses understood and/or shaped in teacher–researcher dialogic reflections?"

The initial subquestions were worded in this way:

- a. To what extent does the early childhood setting shape teacher–child dialogue?
- b. How are teachers constructed and how are children constructed, by teachers and children?
- c. To what extent can or should these constructions of teachers and children be challenged through dialogic research?
- d. Is equitability between children and teachers possible in teacher–child dialogue?
- e. How can Bakhtinian theories be used to explore the above questions?

Following teacher meetings and after reading Bakhtin's *Art and answerability* (1990), it became apparent that dialogues shape teacher and child subjectivities and vice versa.

Therefore, although two subquestions remained the same, subquestions (b), (c) and (d) were adapted, as follows:

- a. To what extent does the early childhood setting shape teacher–child dialogue?
- b. How does teacher–child dialogue affect teacher and child subjectivities?
- c. How do teacher and/or child subjectivities influence teacher–child dialogue?

- d. What are the possibilities (polyphony) for young children? How open are teachers to children's internally persuasive voices?
- e. How can Bakhtinian theories be used to explore the above questions?

Recruitment of the participants. For phase one (the pilot phase) of the project, a colleague recommended Jacarinda Street childcare centre for its good teaching practice. I asked the owner/manager of the centre for permission to invite teachers to take part in the planned research project. After this pilot phase, one of the teachers from Jacarinda Street childcare centre moved to Wisteria Street childcare centre and she suggested continuing the second phase of the research there. Again I asked the manager of the Wisteria Street centre if I could invite teachers to participate. (For information and consent letters, see Appendices 1 and 2 for those provided to owners/managers of Jacarinda Street centre and Appendices 9 and 10 for those provided to managers at Wisteria Street centre.)

Participants. Participants in the study are the teachers who were observed and video-recorded and who took part in the teacher meetings. The children under their care in the two early childhood centres are also participants. Tracy and Gemma, the two teachers who took part in the dialogic meetings in phase two, preferred their real first names to be used. Each of them holds a Bachelor degree in Teaching and Learning (Early Childhood). Both have been teaching in early childhood settings for more than 10 years. Both are New Zealanders: Tracy is of Māori/European descent and Gemma is of European descent. The centres, the children who participated and other teachers in the study were given pseudonyms.

The context of Jacarinda Street centre. The childcare centre involved in the first phase of the study was given a pseudonym of Jacarinda Street centre (JSC). The privately owned centre has separate licences and adjoining buildings for children aged two years and over and for those younger than two years. The children aged between two and five years are again divided in year groups. In this study, I focus on the group of children aged between

four and five years. The teachers are valued and respected by management and parents. The service is in a high socioeconomic suburb of an urban centre in the South Island of New Zealand. The centre is well resourced. Its spacious outside area, with large decking, features many plants and trees and it has been landscaped with smaller garden spaces connected by paths. Natural materials such as shells and large boulders are used aesthetically. There are hilly areas, bush areas, playground equipment, a log playhouse and a guinea pig house with a fenced run. Inside are three separate “teaching rooms”, a staffroom, a toileting area and an area for reception, kitchen and dining. The inside area is also well resourced, especially in art materials.

At the time of the observations, the teaching staff in the building for children aged two years and over consisted of five qualified teachers and one student teacher. The centre provides morning tea, cooked lunch and afternoon tea. It uses a system known as primary caregiving: each of the five teachers has a particular group of eight or nine children who they teach each morning from 9am until lunchtime. The groups are determined by age and, every six months or so, children move on to the next group. Before 9am and after lunch children stay together as one large group, with several teachers looking after all children. Two groups are combined for lunches and morning and afternoon tea.

The context of Wisteria Street childcare centre. Wisteria Street childcare centre (WSC) is the pseudonym for the childcare centre that took part in the second phase of the study. The centre belongs to a large corporate chain of licensed early childhood services. It has separate rooms for children under two years, for those from two to three-and-a-half years of age, and for those aged between three-and-a-half and five years. In this study, I focus on the room with children in the oldest age group. The service is situated in the South Island, in an industrial suburb where many families with low socioeconomic status live. The teachers are valued and respected by parents. The centre is well resourced. It has a spacious outside

area, with a wide range of large-scale climbing equipment and a large sandpit. The outside area has been attractively landscaped. An iron fence provides a view over the footpath and the road for those at the centre and vice versa. The inside area for children over the age of three-and-a-half years consists of one large room, which has a wide range of equipment, including natural and art materials. Children bring their own lunches and snacks.

Phase One: Data Collection at Jacarinda Street Centre

I first spent a week in Jacarinda Street centre to build relationships, gather consent and be available to explain the research project to teachers, children and parents (see Appendices 3–8 for teacher and parent information and consent letters and the child information and consent forms at JSC). After the introduction week, I observed the teacher and children in the centre and teacher–child dialogues were audio- and video-recorded in the centre for one week on five consecutive days. The audio recorder with microphone was carried by the teacher, Karin, and all her interactions with children were audio-recorded. The video recorder was used at times when the children were together with the teacher in one area. All five teachers were interviewed in semi-structured interviews before the children were observed. The two participating teachers were given transcripts of the audio and video recordings and asked for their feedback on these.

Data from teacher interviews. In phase one, I conducted one-to-one interviews with the teachers at JSC about their beliefs and understanding of teacher–child dialogue and transcribed these interviews (see Appendix 19 for interview questions). Teachers saw teacher–child dialogue as conversations they had with children about everyday things. They talked about respecting the child and starting from the child’s interest; most teachers emphasised that they understood dialogue as a two-way system and that it was not about teachers giving instructions. When asked what their beliefs were, several teachers talked

about strategies instead, such as asking open-ended questions. Several teachers stressed the importance of language as a tool and of teachers listening to children:

Karin: I believe in listening, and being available to listen. Every child has a voice and it is important to be heard and to give them time to express themselves. (Karin, teacher, audio-recorded teacher interview at JSC, September 2010)

When asked how their beliefs were influenced, all talked about their experience from their own upbringing and childhood. For example, one teacher stated, “I was listened to as a child”. Another said humour was important to her, and that things need to be enjoyable for children. She mentioned how she and her sister were “quite jokey around home” and how everything in her family revolved around humour and not taking yourself too seriously. Several teachers talked about having experienced kindness as a child at home and how their beliefs were based on values they had from their family. One teacher mentioned that good manners were important to her, as this was the way she was brought up. Several teachers also pointed out that their teacher training had influenced their personal pedagogy. Two spontaneously said their beliefs were also shaped by TW. All interviews also included a specific question on if and how TW had influenced their beliefs, in response to which all teachers agreed TW is an important document and all but one agreed that they were influenced by it. As in Brennan’s study (2007), one teacher felt that TW was nothing new and that she was “already doing it”: “TW has always been this supporting thing; it’s justifying everything I have ever done” (Tracy, teacher, audio-recorded interview at JSC, September 2010).

Several teachers had difficulty articulating how they have been influenced. Teachers’ beliefs became most noticeable when they were asked to tell a story of a teacher–child dialogue that stood out for them. One teacher recalled how she had convinced a child to go to the toilet. Two teachers recalled stories where children had made links to the teachers’ personal lives, which is congruent with Brennan’s (2007) conclusion that children want to be

part of adults' lives. Several teachers recalled stories by children about their lives at home: one child talked about his dad nearly missing his plane and how he could have used a jet pack. A second child had told the teacher of her achievements at the ski field. In another story, a teacher told of her amazement at a child's scientific knowledge and how he had taught her a scientific concept.

When asked about their role in a teacher–child dialogue, the teachers listed a range of strategies. The main ones were listening to children, not taking over their conversations, scaffolding the conversations, giving them time, asking open-ended questions, following up on their interests, and making connections between home and preschool. Below is a transcript from one of the teachers:

I probably see it more as a facilitating, rather than being too directing. Sometimes you do feel like you're directing it when you are using open-ended questions, but then it's just a way that prompting to get that kind of information that you are seeking.

Sometimes, uhm, with the stories, I think they struggle to kind of look for where I can I take this next. So yeah, I think, open-ended questions are really just a prompt, just a way to facilitate that conversation. With a conversation, it should just almost really come from them. Sometimes you just need to just encourage it a little bit more, yeah.

(Tracy, teacher, audio-recorded interview at JSC, 23 September 2010)

I also asked teachers some practical questions about when there tended to be more meaningful dialogues, during which activities, and what triggered these dialogues. Their responses helped to guide me in deciding when and where to record conversations.

Analysis of teachers' interviews in phase one. All the teachers at JSC named the strategies that have been identified in empirical studies on more meaningful teacher–child dialogue (Dickinson et al., 2008; Durden & Rainer Dangel, 2008; Harris & Williams, 2007; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2008), such as open-ended questions, scaffolding and listening.

However, as mentioned in studies of teachers' beliefs (Avestad et al., 2009; Carr & May, 1993; Cullen, 2003; Han, 2010; Nuttall, 2002), the teachers had mostly non-critical understandings of teacher–child dialogue and were not critically reflecting on their practice and/or TW. In their responses on their understandings, all the teachers showed they were aware of the pedagogical shift in New Zealand contexts in favour of following children's interest and taking a holistic view of learning (Avestad et al., 2009; Nuttall & Edwards, 2007). Again as in previous studies, teachers found it challenging to articulate a personal pedagogy and tended to talk about strategies in their practice (Nuttall, 2002). As in Sandretto's (2009) study, the teachers mostly based their beliefs on their own experience as a child and values from home.

Analysing my own role in this phase, I have to say that I accepted what teachers said at face value and I did not challenge them on their beliefs in any way. My reasons for this approach were that, first, I was still mostly reasoning from a humanist perspective at the interviews (Sandretto, 2009) and, second, I felt torn between my role as a poststructural researcher and being a loyal friend of the centre. Having been welcomed into the centre and being trusted by the teachers to observe them and make their practice public, I did not want to portray their practice or beliefs in a negative way. Like Albon and Rosen (2014), I felt a certain loyalty towards the teachers. On many occasions, I admired their skills. In my observations I found they all listened to children and it was obvious from their knowledge of children's interests and home life that they had strong relationships with the children. I particularly noticed teachers using respectful strategies of pausing to allow children time to express themselves. I also could identify myself with the teachers as a (past) early years educator and, as such, it was difficult to analyse with fresh eyes (L. Jones, 2010).

As discussed in the literature review above, interviewing teachers in a sense finalises them; there is no further opportunity for them to show how they changed as a result of the

dialogues. For the second phase of the project, I therefore decided to follow a dialogic research methodology, where the teachers reflected on the video recordings in a series of teacher–researcher dialogues.

Observations and recordings of teacher–child interactions in phase one. After discussion with the head teacher and following up on teachers’ comments in the interviews that more meaningful conversations tended to happen when they were working with their focus group of children, it was decided to focus mainly on one group of children and their primary caregiving teacher, Karin (pseudonym). One important reason for selecting one group and one teacher was that it would be easier to focus on the context of one group of eight to nine children. In addition, Karin is a highly experienced teacher who felt confident about being observed; in this first week of observations she also seemed to have more extended conversations with the children than some of the other teachers. Karin often applied universal teaching strategies, which extend children’s conversations, as recommended in “best-evidence”, technicist research (Dickinson et al., 2008; Durden & Rainer Dangel, 2008; Harris & Williams, 2007; Siraj-Blatchford & Manni, 2008). She asked open-ended questions, left pauses for children to answer, followed up on children’s questions and scaffolded children’s conversations by recalling past events. Karin often linked conversations to children’s home situations and children’s interests.

Teacher–child dialogues of Karin and her group of children were mostly audio-recorded, over a period of one week. I also observed and took some notes. I used a video recorder on a tripod when the group of children stayed in one space for a while, for example, at mat time. At times I did not video-record or I did not shift the video recorder to avoid disrupting children’s experiences. I had lunch breaks and morning tea when Karin had her breaks. On Wednesday, when Karin did not work or during her or non-contact time with the children, I observed her group of children, with different teachers. At times when all children

were together as one group, I observed small groups of children where and when I could and took notes.

After transcribing the audio recordings, I sent electronic copies to Tracy and Karin to read. This was followed up with a discussion about the transcripts. I also interviewed a small group of children about their perspectives of teacher–child dialogue, what they liked to talk about and what the teachers talked about, which did not provide much information. Karin also attempted to interview another small group of children (see Appendix 20 for informal interview questions); again, few data were obtained in this way. The interviews with the children are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

While at the centre, I collected field notes about anything I noticed, both during and outside of the recorded sessions. I also noted comments that children, parents or teachers made to me and my impressions of what was happening around me. As Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) discuss, research participants can behave in unexpected ways that are outside your influence as a researcher. If we value children’s “voice” as active participants, we must be open to not only the research activities we have organised, but also the unforeseen events.

Teachers were sent transcripts of the research project at the end of the study and they were invited to evaluate the research process and comment on the data. At the evaluation meeting, I asked the teachers to comment on the transcript about the children chanting that they wanted a cup of tea in the dining room (see Chapter 6 for further detail). Karen commented that she tends to talk a lot and that there are many tangents. Tracy observed that many conversations were teacher initiated, but also that some of the conversations were started by the children. The teachers noted that many children are confident to speak and that there was a lot of physical activity in the afternoon, but not much dialogue. They discussed how news time was a relatively new centre routine, which had come about because many

children brought in toys from home and they needed a measure to control this so toys would not get lost. Karen explained that when children bring in their toys, even when Cameron brings in another train, children seem to be really interested (evaluation meeting notes, 17 January 2011).

Phase Two: Data Collection at Wisteria Street Childcare Centre

Data collection at Wisteria Street childcare centre was guided by an evaluation of the study in phase one. As discussed above, I felt that the process of interviews with teachers before and after data collection did not provide a critical reflection by the teachers and could possibly present teachers in a deficit-finalised view.

Data collection in the second phase started with an informal meeting with the participating teachers, whereby I explained my journey into teacher–child dialogue to date and discussed selected readings, and we shared our understandings of teacher–child dialogue. Some of the roles and rules related to the research of the teachers and myself were discussed with an understanding that these could be renegotiated by both the teachers and myself at any time. I also explained that I wanted to use a video recorder to capture children’s body language and context. The teachers agreed to participate and consent letters were obtained from the management of the centre (see Appendices 9–12). It can be expected that the presence of a researcher and the participation of two of the teachers of the centre in the research affected the teachers who are not directly involved in the research. I therefore explained to the non-participating staff at WSC what the research project was about, gave information letters to them and obtained consent from them (see Appendices 13–14).

I also spent a week at this centre before data collection in order to build relationships, obtain consent from parents and children and be available for anyone who wanted to know

more about the project (see Appendices 15–18 for information and consent letters and forms for parents and children).

Teacher–child dialogues were video-recorded in the centre on four occasions at monthly intervals. Each round of data collection in the centre was for four consecutive days, so in total there were 16 days of data recording over four months. It was decided to observe during consecutive days to provide some continuity for the children and teachers; it was also anticipated that, with this approach, it could be easier to follow any possible ongoing dialogues. Initially, only two days of observation were planned for each week. During the introduction week, however, it became evident that it would be difficult to observe after 4pm, as at those times the older children were often combined with the younger ones in the nursery. If I wanted to observe full days, additional consents of the parents, teachers and children in the toddler and infant groups needed to be obtained. As discussed in the next section, I also became more aware of ethical research, in which researchers do not simply follow their own agenda, but take children’s agendas into account. In consultation with the teachers and management, it was decided to observe children for four days each week from 9am until 4pm. Every day from 9–10am, I engaged with children in activities of their interest. During the day, if children wanted to engage with me, I responded to their requests as much as I could, explaining to the children that I needed to do my research work. The monthly intervals allowed me to transcribe, copy video clips for the teachers and organise the teacher meetings to discuss the selected video clips at a time that suited us all.

Initially both a static video recorder and a handheld iPad were used, in order to film from different positions, with the aim of capturing the children’s facial expressions when they are talking to the teacher, as well as the teacher’s expressions. As in JSC, I found that changing the position of the camera and tripod interrupted the children’s interactions and that it drew children’s attention away from what they were engaged in, so the hand-held iPad

became the main video-recording tool. With an improvised wooden stand that could hold the iPad, I could place it on a table or cupboard nearby and have my hands free to write field notes or, if required, to be engaged with children. At WSC the photo/video camera on a tripod then became a tool that helped build my relationship with the children. After noticing the children's interest in the camera and tripod, I agreed to let children take photos under my supervision each day before the video recordings started, as will be explained later. As in JSC, I observed and took notes while observing.

In between each of the periods of observation and video recording of teacher-child dialogue at WSC, the participating teachers Tracy and Gemma were invited to have dialogues that covered but were not limited to the transcripts of the selected observations, video-recorded sessions and child interviews. The teachers and I each chose a video-recorded event that we wanted to discuss at the meetings after each week of observations in the centre. Copies were made of the video-recorded events and sent to the teachers to analyse before the teacher meeting. These meetings between the teachers and myself were audio-recorded and transcribed. Transcriptions were sent to the teachers for feedback. Teachers were asked to keep a reflective journal and were invited to share these at the meetings. They were also invited to share at any time via email their evolving thoughts and questions as a result of their journal writing and the shared viewing of the video clips.

Informal interviews with children happened in any of the four weeks of data collection in the centres, as opportunities arose (see Appendix 20 for possible questions for informal interviews with children). At JSC, children were shown video clips of themselves, after which they were interviewed informally. At WSC, dialogues between the children and the researcher were also recorded.

Table 2 summarises the activities that took place during each phases of this study.

Table 2*Timeline of research activities*

Phase one				
July 2010	Ethics approval obtained	Approach JSC		
August 2010	Teacher interviews		Gain consents Build relationships	
September 2010			Collect data at JSC	Transcribe
	Teacher meeting to discuss transcripts			Transcribe
Phase two				
March – July 2012	Approach possible participants	Ethics approval obtained in July	Obtained consents from managers and teachers	
August 2012			Build relationships with children, parents and teachers Collect consent forms	
September 2012	First teacher meeting and sharing theoretical information	Transcribe data	First week of data collection at WSC	Transcribe data
October 2012	Second teacher meeting	Transcribe data	Second week of data collection at WSC	Transcribe data
November 2012	Third teacher meeting	Transcribe data	Third week of data collection at WSC	Transcribe data
December 2012	Fourth teacher meeting	Transcribe data	Fourth week of data collection at WSC	Transcribe data
March 2013	Final teacher meeting	Transcribe	Send transcripts to participants	

Analysis of data in phase 2

As discussed in Chapter 3, Junefelt (2010) argues that in order to understand speech and thought we can not merely analyse language from phonological, syntactical and semantic perspectives, which all are all based on pragmatics of language; presenting scientific constructions of language (p. 159), but that language must be studied in context, as different cultural values affect utterances. Bakhtin's utterance is therefore used in the analysis as a unit of speech communication (Bakhtin, 1986c).

Bakhtin provides the following guidance in the analysis of the utterance and speech genres (1986c):

- Analysis of utterances as opposed to sentences as unit of speech communication;
- An utterance has a clear beginning and end (p. 71).
- An utterance is preceded by utterances of others and followed by utterances of others (p.71).
- Utterances cannot be treated grammatically (p.72).
- The utterance has a special internal aspect of the speaking subject, manifesting his own individuality in his style, his world view, oriented towards an actively understanding response (p.75).
- The utterance has an expressive aspect, there is no such thing as an absolutely neutral utterance (p. 84).
- Intimate forms of communication require a certain tone and expressive intonation (p. 79).
- Speech genres are identified in the utterances: The choice of a particular speech genre is determined by the specific nature of the given sphere of communication, semantic considerations, the concrete situation, the personal composition of the participants and so on (p.78).

Dialogic research is in the first instance a meaning making process of participants. This thesis contains several layers of dialogue and meaning making. The first layer of the data are the transcripts of teacher-child or child-child dialogue or dialogue between child-researcher that were selected by teachers and myself. The transcripts show how the teachers and children are making meaning in the everyday events in the early childhood setting. They were used as utterances to which the teachers and I as the researcher responded at the teacher meetings. The second layer consists of the transcripts of the dialogues at the teachers and researcher meetings, which illustrate how the teachers and researcher were making meaning of the dialogic events with the children. A third layer of meaning making is the analysis in this thesis by me as the researcher of all utterances and events, whereby Bakhtinian theories, bring “our actual life into communion with a possible theoretical context”. (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 50).

Ethics

Appropriate consent procedures were carried out in line with requirements of the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury. Information letters or forms were given out to all teachers, management, parents and children at the participating centres. Copies of information and consent letters and forms are attached as Appendices 1–18. Consent was obtained from the management of the service, all the teaching staff and almost all parents and children. Where possible, I personally collected consent forms of management, teachers and parents and children; but consent forms that were brought in to the centre on days that I was not there were kept by the participating teachers and handed to me at the first opportunity. Conversations with children from non-consenting families have not been video-recorded and/or analysed. I explained to the participating teachers that they would receive a report of

my research. Draft copies of the analysis chapters were sent to the participating teachers for feedback before the thesis was submitted.

Confidentiality. The information letters explain that I will take all efforts to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of the centre, the children and the teachers. I also explained this further verbally when I was at the centres. It was made clear that I intend to video-record and that the data may be used in academic publications and presentations at educational conferences. Pseudonyms have been used throughout the thesis and I have taken care to avoid contextual information that could identify the service or any of the participants. The two teachers who took part in the teacher meetings, however, insisted that they wanted their real first name used. A copy of the chapters that include the teachers' names was sent to these teachers at the end of the study to ask again if they wanted their real name used. Both teachers reiterated that they wanted the use of their real name.

Children's consent. I asked parents to explain to their children what I wanted to do and to ask their children's permission for me to do this. Having experienced many times how having photos in young children's assessment portfolios or drawings and illustrations empowers children "to see for themselves", I had inserted a photograph of myself on the child's information form so the child could "read the image" of who I was (see Appendices 7 and 17).

I am aware that including children's voices in itself is insufficient (James, 2007) and that ideally participating children and their families should receive a report. However, by the time this study will have been finalised, children and families will have moved on from the childcare centre and unfortunately it would practically be impossible to provide a report to them. During my time at the centres, I made efforts to share "moments of wonder and delight" with parents when I had observed their child being particularly empathic, persisting

with difficulty or being creative; in short when I observed a child doing something that I would have liked to hear about as a parent.

Review of literature related to ethics. Ethical research is based on respectful and fair treatment of participants during (and after) the research process. Furthermore, researchers have a moral obligation to examine one's subjective understandings and position of power (Canella & Lincoln, 2007); a discussion of literature on these two general objectives of ethical practice follows. Thereafter, this review is divided into two more specific areas of literature: first, ethical considerations related to the young children who were involved in the study and, second, ethics in relation to the participating teachers.

Ethics as moral examination of self and own situation. Canella and Lincoln (2007) are critical of narrow, regulated ethical consent procedures, as they believe it can give a false sense that ethical issues have been addressed and that following these procedures is all that needs to be done to produce research that is just, protects participants and addresses power imbalances. Ethical practice is complex, dialogic research is polyphonic and open-ended and it cannot be defined in a universal sense (Foucault, cited in Canella & Lincoln, 2007). Bakhtin does not accept universal grand theories; it is up to each of us as individuals to work out our own ethical practice in our own lived experiences (Steinby & Klapuri, 2013). We cannot therefore rely on the legislated requirements of ethics committees alone.

Doctoral study must go beyond a translation of our social world into a "mere problem of coding" (Lee & Danby, 2012, p. xxi) to produce a research process that engages with the complexities and complications of the lived world. Challenging the structure of doctoral study as a solo journey, Lee and Danby (2012) assert that doctoral pedagogy is interactive and socially constructed. While a doctoral study is about one's capability as a researcher, a study of dialogue that is supportive of teacher-child dialogue must, by the very nature of the topic, reflect a dialogic approach. In addition to exploring how teacher-child dialogues can

be reframed, this study is therefore a vehicle for exploring if and how dialogic research is possible within the current framework of doctoral study. Roles and rules with both participants and supervisors were negotiated. Subjectivity of myself as a doctoral student is formed in the relationships and dialogues not only with the participants, but also with my supervisors (Lee & Danby, 2012). As Youdell (2005) argues, research is a process of ongoing subjectivation of the researcher and participants and reflexive scrutiny is required for each step in the research process.

Ethics in relation to the participating teachers. At first glance, dialogic research may present itself as equitable; however, even when participants and researchers are engaged in a dialogic situation, I acknowledge that as the researcher I am in a privileged position. Canella and Lincoln (2007) warn how:

Hearing the voices from Others can become another colonizing apparatus as the Western ear is constructed as having the power to listen and the intellect to create harmonious pluralisms. This colonizing apparatus thus denies the ways that that distinctions are manufactured through the imposition of disequity ultimately...and ultimately reinforces the language of those in power. (p. 320)

As discussed in the previous literature in this chapter, a study of teacher–child dialogue that focuses on a technicist approach of teacher–child dialogue seems disempowering of teachers as it renders participants into finalised objects. Wells (2009) believes that current informed consent procedures in classroom research are insufficient to guarantee that participants will benefit from the research. In a video clip of teaching practice that was part of a presentation of his research, children were being asked to guess what was in the teacher’s mind. Wells reflects on how this practice is an exploitation of participants and that it is unethical to criticise teachers in public, where they have no right of reply.

Presenting the transcript in which Mariah resists the teacher’s repeated requests to turn the television off (see Chapter 5) in a sense finalised the teacher as being monologic. As

several transcripts of the teacher meetings throughout this thesis show, Tracy and Gemma critically reflected on the transcripts and made changes to their practice as a result of analysing and discussing vignettes of their practice at the teacher meetings.

Furthermore, Wells (2009) notes that, given classrooms are complex communities, a researcher who observes occasionally cannot fully understand what happens. In his view, research should be designed in ways that benefit participants. Consistent with his suggestion that researchers become active participants, treating teachers and students as experts, Wells (2009) showed teachers video recordings of their practice and found that watching these together led to new insights for both the teachers and himself. In contrast to his earlier research where he evaluated teachers' practice, Wells now prefers research that reports on teachers' evaluations about their learning. He concludes that teachers need to be engaged in dialogic inquiry themselves, before they can model this to their students.

In this study, after phase one, deliberate efforts have been made to take a dialogic research approach as an ethical stance, accepting the teachers as active participants and the dialogue between myself and the participating teachers as open-ended. This approach can be justified, first, on the grounds that the teachers knew the children much better and they could provide extra contextual information. Second, as well as giving me insights into their own thinking, the teachers' perspectives shaped my thinking. Lastly, although it is difficult to point to when exactly this happened, both the teachers and I changed in and through our dialogues at the teacher meetings. (For a detailed discussion of the changes, see Chapter 7.) As has been in previous chapters, Bakhtin's answerability can and, in my view, should be applied to teaching and research. I know that, as a result of the dialogues at our meetings, I have become more open to embodied ways of knowing.

Ethics in relation to participating children. Academic disciplines such as applications to the ethics committees of a university may hinder young children's

participation in research, particularly in doctoral research and they may limit the involvement of children (Harwood, 2010). Many academic traditions of ethics applications view the child as needing protection from harm, which can undermine children's active participation in research. Similarly, in my Master's study of and with secondary students as co-researchers (de Vocht-van Alphen, 2005), I found that academic ethics procedures were mostly protective of the students, but that they hindered their active participation. For example, the university ethics application required a detailed research question before the research started, which I could not supply at that time, as I wanted the students to tell me what they wanted to do the research on. The research project was therefore started as a school project and, once the students decided that they wanted to research the rules at the school, it became a research project with ethics approval from the university.

As Harwood (2010) notes, almost all approval processes such as supervision, ethics committees' institutional approvals, and teachers' and parents' consents are controlled by adults and this hierarchy can restrict the input of children. For Conroy and Harcourt (2009), adult assumptions about what is in the best interest of the child place children as subordinates. They ask that researchers seek children's genuine consent, not in a hurried ethical consent procedure, but through ongoing, sustained social engagement (Conroy & Harcourt, 2009, p. 161). As discussed elsewhere in this chapter, I increased my time for observations in the second phase so that I could spend time with children and engage with them in areas of their interest. Children should be given opportunities to reaffirm their consent during the research process. They need to be given time, as it may be the first time in which they have been asked for their opinion. A suggestion by Clark (cited in Conroy & Harcourt, 2009) to have separate consent forms for children so they can mark their consent with a symbol was taken up in both phases one and two.

Several parents commented that the research and the children's consent form were meaningful for their child. One told me about her child's insistence to sign her own form; another said that her child had asked lots of questions and wanted to meet me; a third parent informed me that her child was very interested in the research and that he had told her about it (field notes at JSC, 31 August 2011).

Robson (2011) and Einarsdottir (2007) highlight the ethical issues in relation to video data of young children. Both discuss how researchers need to be aware that it can be difficult for children to feel free of pressure to comply when they are asked to consent. It is Robson's suggestion that researchers continually check body language and what children say in order to identify whether they are still consenting. As in Robson's case study, I tried to make clear to children that I would be spending time at the centre. I explained as well as I could what I was doing and I gave children ample opportunity to experiment with the video camera. I regularly answered questions about what I was doing and read out to children what I had been writing when they asked about it. Giving children opportunities to use the video camera had the added advantage of building relationships with children. (For more detailed discussion on my relationship with children, see below.)

Remaining attentive during data collection to children's ongoing verbal and physical indications that they are consenting to their participation in the research may somewhat address the power inequality. Deliberate efforts were made to note reactions from children to my presence and observations, as a means of identifying whether children knew what I was doing and checking if their behaviour signalled that they were (still) consenting and/or comfortable with my presence. It can be argued that children's references to my research in their conversations either with me or with each other, as shown in some transcripts below, confirmed their consent to and awareness of my research. Sometimes children explained it to each other:

Child 1: (looking back at me) She is here all week.

Child 2: She is writing about stuff what we do. When we went to PMP one day, she was writing what we do. (Unspecified children, researcher field notes at JSC, 21 September 2010)

It was obvious from children's reactions to me that they knew why I was there. Even though it was not completely clear what kind of information I was looking for, children were aware that the research involved finding out something about them. Several times children asked me what I am writing at JSC:

Bonnie: What did you write?

(I tell her that I have been writing what they have been doing.)

Bonnie: (holds up a slice of meat from her sandwich) Do you know what this is?

Lia: Luncheon?

Bonnie: (shakes her head) It's fat meat.

(I continue writing.)

Bonnie: What are you writing now?

(I tell her I am writing what she told me about the meat and ask her if that's okay. She nods.)

(Bonnie, aged 4 years, researcher field notes at JSC, 21 September 2010)

It seems children thought I was interested in a special skill or their experiences. Several children came up to me to offer me information about themselves. For example, two girls came up to me and said, "Look we can hop on one leg", demonstrating their skill; a third girl showed me her piggy tails. Another time when I was setting up the sandpit area in the morning, a young girl came up to me and announced to me, "I was asleep when the earthquake happened". Perhaps she thought I was writing about the recent earthquakes. Yet another child came up to me and said, "I know why you are here, you are doing lots of writing". A couple of times children dictated to me what to write. The voluntary offerings of information about themselves provided glimpses of what was important to children at that time:

Polly came running up to me when I arrived. She said, “Stop”, holding the palm of her hand up to me as a stop sign and she continued, “A girl had blood coming out of her nose”, poking into her nostril with her finger. (Polly, aged 3½ years, at WSC, researcher field notes, 20 December 2012).

In summary, I aimed to adhere to a dialogic ethics, *continually engaging with notions of ethics*, not from a universalist moral code, but as suggested by Foucault, as the subject of one’s acts (Foucault, 1985, see Chapter 2 for more detail), or in Bakhtinian terms, carrying out research as a Bakhtinian deed in a once-occurrent event of Being (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 41).

My Role as a Researcher from the Children’s Perspectives

Occasionally children asked my name; several times they referred to me as “she”:

One morning, when signing in, I had put my lunch bag down on top of the “news box” next to the visitor book. The big plastic box was used to collect children’s “news items”, such as a new toy that they may want to share with their group at news time. I forgot all about it, until my lunch bag was held up at news time by Karin, who asked, “Whose news is this?” The children thought it was hilarious that I had put my lunch in the news box. I showed them what I had packed for my lunch. A little later when Erik arrived, one of the boys told Erik, “She had news” (nodding his head in my direction). “She brought her lunch and put it in the news box”.

Erik rolled his eyes and laughed: “She brought her lunch?”

(Erik, aged 4 years and unidentified boy, researcher field notes at JSC, 23 September 2010)

Robson (2011) acknowledges that researchers have an impact on children when they enter the early childhood setting, both by entering into the children’s spaces and in their role of data collector. Similar to the way Robson (2011) was perceived, children saw me definitely as an adult; they often thought I was a teacher, but perhaps not as useful or knowledgeable as their teachers.

I cannot pretend that children were not affected by my presence or by having an audio and sometimes video recorder in the room. Occasionally children would glance back at me, when I was sitting behind the group, taking notes of what was happening. By and large, however, I think I was accepted as part of the furniture. Children were intrigued by my magnetic name clip and several times asked if they could play with it. One boy came and asked for it when I was not wearing it on one occasion. Sometimes children asked me if I could get something or if I knew something; I was asked to help fold countless paper aeroplanes in the first week at JSC and helped out occasionally when several children needed support during art activities. At times, children volunteered information:

Girl 1: What are you writing?

Lia: "I am writing what is happening and what the teachers do.

Girl 2: Can you write I am building a snake?

Girl 3: And I am making a castle?

Girl 1: And can you write I am going on the monkey bars?

(Unidentified girls, researcher field notes at WSC, 27 November 2012)

Lahman (2008) warns against adult concepts of childhood (see also Chapter 1 for a discussion of this topic), whereby children are invited into research with preconceived adult notions of what it means to be a child, with an expectation of capturing a once-and-for-all understanding of "the child". As in Dirk's critique of the research on the colonial native in India (Dirk, cited in Canella & Lincoln, 2007), questions need to be asked if giving children "voice", as is now a common strategy in research with children, leads to researchers knowing the other. As discussed in Chapter 2, Bakhtin (1990) sees the other as a co-subject; we only know the other in relation to his or her utterance in the unique event:

The productiveness of the event of a life does not consist of the merging of all into one. ... Let him [sic] rather remain outside me, for in that position he can see and know what I myself do not see and do not know from my own place and he can essentially enrich the event of my life. (pp. 87–88)

If we accept a Bakhtinian view of polyphony, we may become aware of one or more voices, but we will never be able to fully understand the other as we always reason from our own position (Bakhtin, 1990). Any utterance is a response to what is being said in that unique situation and it is never a final response. This thesis acknowledges that the responses cannot finalise the person speaking; children, teachers and myself as the researcher are unfinalised.

Secondly, the right to do research on others is deeply ingrained in the (Western) adult world; more than that, it is seen as a commendable goal to know the other. Even when children consent to taking part in research, does that automatically give researchers the right to know and to interpret the other and make this public? Researchers therefore need to accept a moral responsibility in their own research contexts and reflect whose knowledge is represented, who will benefit, what is the purpose, what are personal assumptions (Canella & Lincoln, 2007) and what will they do with it. Keeping these questions at the fore during and after the research may make research a more just and equitable process.

Awareness of the above critique of research may also lead to a greater acceptance of complexity and even of contradictions, as well as making evident that the research findings are those through our eyes, how I/the adult interprets the world. A dialogic research methodology with a focus on process and what happens may go some way to avoiding pitfalls of finalising the other. Foucault's view of ethics is not about adopting universal moral codes but "an intensification of the relation to oneself by which one constitutes oneself as the subject of one's acts" (Foucault, cited in Canella & Lincoln, 2007, p. 322). Ethical research requires reflexivity, a willingness to change and an acceptance that ultimately research first and foremost leads to a deeper understanding of oneself.

Steinby and Klapuri (2013) emphasise that Bakhtin focuses on the ethical subject; on accepting our ethical obligations to the other. This thesis needs to be ethical in that it respects children, accepting each child as the unique human being that he or she is. Simultaneously,

both during the research and as a result of the research, the question needs to be asked: What is in it for children? It is hoped that this thesis may build further understandings of teacher–child dialogues and, more importantly, open up further dialogue. Below is a reflection on how I came to realise that I could not just pursue my own research agenda or argue that the study would eventually benefit children, but that I needed to give time to what children wanted in the here and now, in the lived experiences with these children.

Building Relationships with Children

At JSC I played alongside children and helped at activities during my first week, before data collection began. Once I started data collection, I avoided eye contact and generally tried not to become engaged with children. On reflection, I felt that avoiding contact with children, while I was at the centre to collect data, was a disrespectful attitude towards them. I became aware from the analysis of my data collection at JSC that, as in Robson’s case study (2011), children saw me often as a teacher and certainly as an adult who has power. For the second phase of data collection at WSC, I took on what is best described as a role of “an unusual adult” (Christensen, cited in Robson, 2011, p.187). I did not take part in the general supervision of children, although I did support children’s turn taking when children were experimenting with the camera.

As mentioned above, allowing children access to the video camera helped strengthen my relationship with them. At WSC, once I noticed the children’s interest in the photo/video camera, I negotiated with them that they could have one hour of experimenting with the camera before I started my data collection. Children had to take turns and on most days the interest waned after an hour. Young children are very familiar with the practice of making electronic images (Robson, 2011). Early childhood centres all make extensive use of photo cameras to capture images for children’s portfolios and often the children make the photos

themselves. I think the attraction of my photo/film camera was the tripod. The camera also looked different from the digital cameras used in most early childhood centres. Children were keen to extend the legs of the tripod. The button of zooming in and out, another feature that children enjoyed, was quickly mastered.

On reflection, I consider that children exercised power in their expectations that I engage with them. Agreeing to give time to what the children wanted, either in conversations or when they sought my help or were experimenting with the camera, provided a more equal balance between providing what I wanted as a researcher (to collect data) and responding to what the children wanted. Taking into account what the children wanted to do was a more ethical stance, showing respect for their interests, rather than just pursuing my own agenda. Apart from making my data collection at WSC a highly enjoyable period, I unexpectedly gained another layer of data, during my interactions with the children. As White (2011d) notes, when children are given opportunities to contribute on their terms, it will affect researchers to see things differently as a result of their encounters with children. Lastly, through my engagement with the children I gained respect from the teachers.

Difficulty of Obtaining Children's Voices

A growing amount of research (Assuncao Folque, 2010; Clark, 2005; Einarsdottir, 2007; James, 2007; Lindgren, 2012; Pascal & Bertram, 2009; Stephenson, 2011) points to the importance of including children's voices. While all of the authors cited above have a view of children as competent and capable, each of the studies also emphasises the difficulty of obtaining children's perspectives. In a review of literature related to children's perspectives in research, Clark (2005) concludes that observation is still a particularly relevant method for obtaining young children's perspectives. Clark suggests that researchers ensure they create a comfortable environment for children. Acknowledging the difficulty of power dynamics

when interviewing young children, she warns that children may give the answers that adults want to hear. Another possible option she details for research that takes children's perspectives into account are studies that use props such as persona dolls or photographs, including those made by children themselves, and children's drawings. Lastly Clark discusses how role play is an important tool for young children to express themselves holistically.

Consistent with Clark's (2005) observation that young children tend to give monosyllabic answers in interview situations, one of the dilemmas in this study was the difficulty of gaining meaningful answers (or what was then thought to be meaningful) in informal interviews with children. (See also discussion of teacher-child interviews in Chapter 5 for more detail.) One day at JSC when Karin was not at the centre, I made an attempt to interview the children with questions about what they liked, what the teacher did and how teachers talked with children. Three children volunteered to be interviewed; however, they were more interested in a box of new books sitting in a corner of the room than in answering questions. Karin interviewed the children on another occasion, inviting them to answer some questions to help me find out about how they do things at JSC. Four children, all boys, volunteered. I showed Karin and the children the video of the children's role play of *Where the wild things are* (Sendak, 1963), to remind them of the time I had observed the children. The children were very interested in the video, they sat on the edge of their chairs, now and again commenting on what they saw on the screen. Despite Karen's skilful way of drawing children into the interview activity by framing questions so children might be interested (for example, "Ah, this'll be an interesting question, come and sit down, a *really* interesting question"), children tended to either not answer or answer with a response that did not seem related to the question, as in this transcript:

Karin: In what ways do I talk to you?

Alexander: (smiling) Nothing

Sam: ... and a octopus

(The children giggle, Karin smiles and looks up at me.)

Karin: What sort of things do I talk to you about?

Alexander: Mmm, chicken, and ...

Sam: ... and a fish and a pig.

(All children laugh.)

Karin: Oh you are soo funny. I must talk to you in funny ways.

(Karin, teacher, and Alexander, Sam and Cameron, all aged 4 years, audio-recorded informal interview at JSC, 28 January 2011)

The children's nonsensical replies can be seen as children being unfamiliar with this particular type of dialogue, which perhaps they have not yet established a suitable speech genre for. Interviews are adult activities on topics that adults want to talk about (Harwood, 2010). Either because they do not know how to respond or perhaps because they do not want to talk about it, the children do not conform in the interview and escape in "nonsensical" talk. I had noticed before how the children made nonsensical rhymes related to the word *chicken* on a few occasions, especially when they were lining up to go outside or during lunchtimes. While the children's behaviour was not obviously disobedient, the power shifted from Karin in the interview situation to the children (Foucault, 1980).

One of the few questions that the children answered more directly was when Karin asked them what teachers do. One child said teachers tell you what to do. A second said teachers tell you to tidy up. Number three said teachers tell stories. When prompted again as to what teachers do, children added that teachers give out lunch and that they work on the computer.

MacNaughton, Rolfe and Siraj-Blatchford (2010) argue that children can and should take an active part in research about teaching/learning processes. They are concerned that the lack of competence lies in the researcher, not the children. Furthermore, they argue that

interviews are traditionally seen as a particular research activity with set rules, roles, objects, goals and tools and that researchers need to find ways to minimise constraints that arise from adult–child power relations (MacNaughton et al., 2010, p. 242). Although initially I felt that the interviews did not provide meaningful information, on reflection I note that the power shifted from Karin, who set the agenda with her questions while the children were perhaps uncertain of what was expected from them, to the children with their nonsensical playful answers, which made Karin feel uncertain. Although the answers were brief and perhaps not what the teachers or I expected, they show that children, knowingly or not, took control of the situation (see Chapter 5 for further discussion of this transcript).

Likewise, Assuncao Folque (2010) and Einarsdottir (2007) found that formal interviews did not always work for children. In one of Assuncao's case study where children were taking part in formal interviews, they were interviewed in pairs where and when they wanted. Assuncao suggests useful approaches are to provide multiple opportunities and to take advantage of informal situations. Given that children may not always be able to express what they know, Einarsdottir (2007) suggests that researcher may find it helpful to use indirect methods. As discussed in Chapter 5, the children at WSC during the interviews in phase two seemed unusually shy; they spoke softly and gave minimal answers. I learned that informal conversations with children provided more meaningful information. The reluctance of the children to respond during interviews illustrates the power inequality of formal interviews with an adult agenda, along with the importance of having alternatives to dialogue with children.

As both Clark (2005) and Pascal and Bertram (2009) show, although including children's voices is challenging, it is possible. Some of the enablers to capture their voices are building meaningful and trusting relationships with children and providing metacognitive opportunities for children to express themselves. For this project, more meaningful

information about how children see themselves and their teachers came from listening carefully and critically to children when they are in informal play situations and in the video clips, with a view of children as capable and competent individuals. Clark (2005) also emphasises that listening is not limited to verbal language and that researchers need to find ways to listen holistically. It is argued that children's utterances in video recordings in which they are engaged in pretend play or in activities that interest them reflect children's perspectives, highlighting their priorities, interests and concerns, both through their spoken language and their non-verbal body language.

In addressing several difficulties in relation to research containing children's voices, James (2007) makes the most important point that having a space for children to speak is not sufficient for children to be heard (p. 262); what matters is how these voices are being used. Children's voices should not be viewed as definitive statements. Children may become further disempowered if their voices are merely used to confirm assumptions adults have. James (2007) demands that research goes beyond quoting children's words to critically reflect on how children's voices are shaped by society, the state and adult views of childhood: "Children as subjects are also structurally and culturally determined as social actors with specific roles to play, as children" (p. 270). It is argued that, by using a dialogic research process in which video clips of teacher-child dialogues are analysed through a Bakhtinian lens, a view of polyphonic voices is gained. When coupled with a moral responsibility for teachers and researchers to listen and take action, this process may also provide a respectful climate in which to hear children's voices.

Researchers must be respectful of children's needs for privacy. Lindgren (2012) asks how children may be affected by adult observations for pedagogical documentation. The same could be asked when documentation is gathered for research purposes. Apart from the interview situations, when children turned away from the camera or spoke in unusually quiet

voices, there were no other times when I observed any signs of children seeking privacy. White (2011d) argues that researchers should include moments of intimacy, for example, when children are upset, on the grounds that excluding these moments from the research denies young children a full representation of themselves (p. 192). It is argued here that our image of the child will always be partial. Although children in a childcare setting are constantly in the gaze of teachers and peers, I decided to not film and leave the immediate area on any occasion when a child was being reprimanded or when they wanted to have one-on-one attention from a teacher, for example, when they were upset.

Traditionally researchers have been pressed to provide evidence for their findings to prove these are “true” or valid statements (Schwandt, 2007). Qualitative research methodologies, however, accept that knowledge is always subjective and that therefore there cannot be one single truth (Lather, 2006). This view is echoed in Bakhtinian perspectives of unfinished utterances and interpretations. It is argued that the determining quality of dialogic research can be measured by the rigour of the account, by the process of collecting data and by the way the findings were established.

My Self as the Researcher

Scholarly analysis can only proceed from the writer’s own context; a classical text cannot be “enclosed within itself as something readymade and finalised and irrevocably departed, deceased” (Bakhtin, 1986b, p. 6). As detailed in Chapter 1, my actual lived experiences in relation to teacher–child dialogue, both as a child and teacher, raised my interest in the topic. This thesis is in effect my response as a loophole addressee, which can relate back to my earliest awareness of the authoritative voice of the teacher in my first year at high school, as narrated in Chapter 1.

In a sense, the superficial application of Bakhtin's ideas by many Western Bakhtin readers, as discussed in Chapter 2, also applies to my own early interpretations of Bakhtin when I interviewed the teachers in the first phase. This thesis, as it is presented here, is only one utterance in a series of utterances. A presentation of all previous drafts would show how initial application of Bakhtin's dialogical ideas have been expanded to a deeper analysis of moral responsibility and subjectivities, both as a response to my experiences of teacher-child dialogue in phase one and through my continued engagement with Bakhtin's and others' writings.

Conclusion

The first phase of the study at JSC provided practical information about which times and sessions to record in order to capture data of dialogue between teachers and children. From analysing the data, it became clear that the method used—merely interviewing teachers about their views on teacher-child dialogue before data of teacher-child interactions were collected and providing an opportunity for teachers to give feedback on transcripts at the end—painted a more or less finalised picture of the teachers.

For the second phase of this study a dialogic research methodology was applied and the emphasis of the project was no longer only on the content of the data, but on the dialogic process of meaning making of the teacher-child interactions. For a thesis about dialogues, it seems fitting that the dialogic research process is foregrounded. The fact that it was only during the project that I became more aware of the necessity of dialogic research and the importance of unfinalised participants shows the open-endedness of the process and how as a researcher I was becoming. Undertaking research whereby the theory guides the process makes this project research in praxis; making theory visible through the inclusion of transcripts and direct quotes also deepened my theoretical understanding. Collaborative

dialogic meetings, where both the teachers and I made meaning of transcripts of teacher–child dialogue, provided multiple perspectives of the data; this approach is also more respectful of participants, accepting teachers as unfinalised.

A review of literature related to dialogic research shows that, to my knowledge, only a handful of educational researchers, such as Matusov and Brobst (2013) and White (2009a), have illustrated dialogic research-in-action in educational settings. Following Bakhtin’s view of moral responsibility, it is argued that providing this dialogic research-in-action is a responsible response in the unfinalised dialogue of dialogic research in educational settings and particularly in early childhood educational settings.

Research related to children’s voices reveals that meaningful inclusion of children’s perspectives is difficult work. It requires researchers to listen to children on their terms, for example, in informal conversations that have been initiated by children or through careful observations of what children tell us through their play, rather than expecting children to give us information through interviews that carry adult agendas. Moreover, because children do not have access to the same language as adults, other forms of communication such as non-verbal language need to be taken into account.

Important limitations are noted. First, although the transcripts included in this thesis are snippets of what happened, these brief teacher–child encounters do not provide a final picture of the teacher–child interactions in the participating early childhood centres. Second, our understandings only provide a partial view of the other in relation to the utterances made in the encounters.

The next three chapters analyse the data that were gathered in JSC, in WSC and from the meetings with the participating teachers. To avoid repetition across these chapters, I start with a general introduction relevant to all three chapters, which provides information about

the analysis, selection of transcripts and conventions that have been used to transcribe data.

This general introduction also briefly outlines the content of each of the chapters.

General Introduction to Analysis Chapters 5, 6 and 7

The following three chapters discuss how teacher–child discourses are understood and/or shaped in teacher–researcher dialogic reflections. Teacher–child dialogue is discussed from a perspective of education that not only aims to enculture children into an existing world, but also allows for education to emerge from dialogues with children and the educative situation itself. (For more detail see the introduction chapter). Immediately following this statement we must take into account the situatedness of classroom talk. Dialogic polyphony always involves power relationships; a Bakhtinian analysis therefore has to address issues of power.

Gardiner (1992) asserts that operations and techniques of power should be analysed at the level of social interactions. Questions need to be asked about who can say or do, what can be said and what counts as knowledge (Green, Yeager & Castanheira, 2009). The analyses of everyday encounters between children and teachers aim to seek answers to these questions from the situatedness of each of the events through a dialogic process with the teachers. It needs to be understood that all participants have many voices and can access many genres. Bakhtin believes that human beings are neither entirely autonomously self-directed, nor completely powerless and at mercy of societal structures (Gardiner, 1992, p. 166). Human beings are seen as reflexive agents with a range of social capacities; subordinate groups have the possibility of resisting dominant discourses at the level of social interactions rather than at the larger political level. The answers are not always the same; they may even be contradictory. Situations are often complex; tone of voice and body language affect the meaning of any verbal language. Rather than generalising from it, each utterance needs to be analysed on its own account, in its own context, as words themselves can have many different meanings. It is argued here that teaching is not about creating universal truths, but about teachers making meaning of children's utterances in each unique encounter and then responding to these.

Bakhtinian theories and experiences in phase one of this study led to changes in my thinking in regard to the research process as well as content. Events of pretend play between children are viewed as an utterance for adults to respond to. As a dialogic approach also requires the researcher to be involved as a participant, dialogic encounters between children and myself have also been included in the analysis. Furthermore, the meetings between the teachers and myself are not merely intended to elicit information from the teachers for me as the researcher to analyse, but to function as dialogues, to which I as the researcher am also contributing. As Chapter 4 has discussed, there are some tensions between the academic requirements of a doctoral thesis process and a dialogic approach; this thesis can be seen as my utterance in response to the project, from my chronotope, as a result of my life experiences, my engagement with theory—in particular, Bakhtinian theory—and my involvement in the research.

Selection of Transcripts

The analysis chapters contain a number of transcripts of utterances and dialogues between teachers and children, children and children, children and myself and teachers and myself. The transcripts are presented with contextual information. Literature related to the event is discussed and in a sense enters into a dialogue with the quotations from the data within the text. The recorded dialogues show a wide range of genres, both for the adults and the children; only a small sample of these are discussed here. The discussions can never be a full account of what happened. There is no intention to present a universal truth; this thesis aims to explore teacher–child dialogue in order to open up opportunities to see teacher–child dialogue differently. Bakhtin (1984a) explains that there is no full or permanent truth; what is presented is always a subjective and partly obscured presentation.

Analysis

Dialogue can not be generalised; it needs to be studied in different contexts in order to understand speech and thought processes. Furthermore, as discussed in Chapter 4, the focus of analysis cannot be phonological, syntactical and semantic analysis, as these are all based on pragmatics of language and thereby presenting scientific constructions of language; Bakhtinian utterances are therefore used as the unit of analysis (see previous chapter for Bakhtin's detailed explanation of the utterance. As further discussed in Chapter 4, an analysis based on utterances and genres therefore does not concern itself with the stylistics of each linguistic element, but rather looks at the utterance in its totality. An utterance can be as short as one exclamation; it can also be a transcript of a whole event. Bakhtin (1981) views verbal discourse as a social phenomenon; utterances always express a view of the world. The analysis is subjective, based on the chronotopes of the people who make the interpretations. Emphasising the stylistics of everyday life experiences, Bakhtin (1981) describes them as "the discourse in the open spaces of public squares, streets, cities and villages, of social groups, generations and epochs" (p. 259). He looks at the:

internal stratification of any single national language into social dialects, characteristic group behavior, professional jargons, generic languages, languages of generations and age groups, tendentious languages, languages of the authorities, of various circles and of passing fashion languages, that serve the specific sociopolitical purposes of the day, even of the hour. (Bakhtin, 1981, pp. 262–263)

Any utterance reflects the unique character and circumstances of the speaker: it contains elements that reflect the unitary cultural world of the speaker, at the same time heteroglossic centrifugal forces are at work in a dynamic interplay (Bakhtin, 1981). Rather than seeing the utterance as a unit of language, Bakhtin views it as a unit of communication. The utterance does not have a universal meaning; it is always contextualised (Bakhtin, 1986b). The listener has an active role in Bakhtin's speech genres; the utterance is always in relation to the person

listening and it expects an actively responsive understanding (Bakhtin, 1986a).

Understanding of the utterance thus becomes a response in the dialogue: “The word wants to be heard, understood, responded to and again to respond to the response and so forth ad infinitum” (Bakhtin, 1986b, p. 127).

The analysis chapters discuss how teacher–child dialogue is shaped. It seeks answers to the following questions:

- How does teacher–child dialogue affect teacher and child subjectivities?
- How do teacher and/or child subjectivities influence teacher–child dialogue?
- What are the possibilities (polyphony) for young children? How open are teachers to children’s internally persuasive voices?
- How can Bakhtinian theories be used to explore the above questions?

Responses to these questions are interwoven in the three analysis chapters. During the analysis process 3 themes became apparent. Firstly: transcripts which presented themselves in varying degrees of monologicity/ dialogicity became apparent to me; they are discussed in chapter 5. (See Chapter 1 and 2 for detailed explanations of dialogue vs monologue). A number of transcripts did not easily fit in a monologic/ dialogic pattern. Some of these transcripts were unexpected or surprised or puzzled the teachers and the researcher. Some did not have much or any verbal language, others did not make much sense from a traditional educational perspective. These transcripts were analysed through a carnivalesque lens in Chapter 6. The last analysis chapter, Chapter 7 discusses the analysis of the utterances from the teachers and the researcher from a Bakhtinian perspective of moral answerability.

- Chapter 5: dialogic/ monologic nature of transcripts
- Chapter 6: children’s carnivalesque utterances
- Chapter 7: transcripts of the teachers as moral answerability

The transcripts in the next three chapters are not presented chronologically, nor are they necessarily representative of all that took place. The vignettes have been selected by the teachers and myself, as the researcher, from a large range of video recordings, because we were interested in them or because they surprised or puzzled us.

The transcripts describe what was recorded word for word as much as possible, with additional interpretive information about body language and context, which further explains why the utterance was interpreted in that way. It needs to be noted that transcription itself is not a neutral act; while the words that are spoken may be accurately recorded, descriptions of tone of voice and body language are already interpretations (Locke, 2004, p. 80); any interpretation of body language is subjective, seen from the chronotope of the observer. Again, selective inclusion of body language and tone of voice, where they were obvious and/or standing out to me, also makes any transcription an interpretive act.

The following examples show conventions that have been followed to include relevant information that was noticed:

- Italics express what was emphasised by the speaker: “I am going to turn the television *on*”.
- ...indicates a small section of a sentence has been excluded.
-indicates more than one sentence has been excluded.
- Square brackets describe paralinguistic features, such as tone of voice: [slowly] or to clarify a comment
- Parentheses describe the context: (two more children joined).
- Parentheses also describe body language: (smiles) or (with arms stretched up).

Overview of the Content of the Three Analysis Chapters

In Chapter 5, more traditional monologic teacher–child dialogue is juxtaposed with dialogic encounters of teacher–child dialogue in early years education, highlighting both historical

power relations and identity forming in everyday experiences between teachers and children and in those encounters that involve only children. Even within some examples of teacher-led conversations that can be defined as monologic, there are moments of children taking agency. The transcripts show that authoritative or monologic and dialogic discourses can and often do exist side by side. There are also examples of dialogues that are more open-ended and/or led by children.

Chapter 6 investigates opportunities for more open-ended dialogue through Bakhtinian notions of the carnivalesque. Particular attention is given to embodied and non-verbal dialogue; dialogue is not only about the spoken word, nor does it sit purely within the cognitive domain. Video recordings where children are engaged in pleasurable activities are “telling” us what they want; these show a more holistic view of dialogue and include the affective and emotional. Searching for a less familiar understanding of dialogue allows the new to reveal itself towards a new co-creative understanding (Bakhtin, 1986d) and a possibility of accepting a more dialogic epistemology of education as a world of polyphony or heteroglossia, depicting children’s subjectivities as agentic.

In Chapter 7, teaching in a Bakhtinian framework is established as a moral answerability to children; this last analysis chapter focuses largely on the role of teachers in a dialogic approach. It discusses teachers’ moral responsibility through an analysis of the teacher meetings in the dialogic research process, which provides insights into identity forming of teachers through and in dialogue.

Each chapter details implications of its findings for teachers and children. Although it is important to have a structure so the reader does not lose the thread, there is a considerable overlap between the chapters as dialogues are inevitably interconnected and ideas are interwoven. Dialogues are not linear—they may go back as well as move forward—and they are open-ended as they are always unpredictable and at times contradictory.

Chapter 5:

Polyphony in Monologic and Dialogic Events

Both monologic and more dialogic events were observed, although during the week of observations at JSC and in the first week at WSC more monologic teacher-led events occurred. While the research aims to explore how dialogues can be more meaningful, this is not a rejection of monologic teaching. As argued elsewhere, there is a place for both dialogic and monologic teaching. In this chapter the discussion of vignettes has been arranged to begin with interpretations of monologic teaching and gradually move to transcripts that are interpreted as more dialogic. Again, this should not be seen as a continuum to aspire to, but as a way of organising interpretations of monologic and dialogic events. All of these events were discussed at the teacher meetings and perspectives from the teachers have been included here.

The next section explores teacher–child dialogues in teacher-led structured activities such as group time or group book-reading sessions. It also discusses the interviews in which the teacher asked a small group of children about the role of the teacher and what children like about their childcare centre.

Monologic Teaching in Formal Teacher-led Activities: “What do teachers do?”

The following transcript is from Jacarinda Street childcare centre, when the teacher Karin interviewed three boys, Alexander, Sam and Cameron, who had volunteered to answer questions about what teachers do. Although children were asked to volunteer, the activity was highly adult-led and had an adult agenda, with a pre-set outcome of gaining children’s perspectives. (See Appendix 20 for the questions used in the informal interview.)

At first glance, the children’s responses to the questions seem minimal. They sometimes gave nonsensical answers, as can be seen in the excerpt discussed in Chapter 6.

One of the occasions when the children answered more directly at Jacarinda Street childcare centre was when Karin asked them what teachers do:

Karin (trying to get children's attention): Ah, this'll be an interesting question, come and sit down, a really interesting question.

(Sam, Alexander and Cameron pull at a curtain, which comes off the wall. They sit down again.)

Karin: What do you think a teacher does?

Alexander: Uhm, tells you what to do.

Sam: Tells you to tidy up.

Karin: Tells you to tidy up?

Alexander: Tells them when they have to play.

Karin: Ah, when it is playtime.

Alexander: And outside and when it is lunchtime.

Karin: When it is lunchtime and do we give you lunch sometimes?

Alexander: Yeah.

Karin: What else do teachers do?

[Unidentified child]: Teachers give you work.

Karin: Ah, teachers give you work, do they?

Alexander: When you go to school, you are on computers every day.

Alexander:(unintelligible)

Karin: Oh I didn't know that. So teachers do a lot of telling you what to do. Do teachers do anything else?

Cameron: Yeah.

Karin: What else do they do, Cameron?

Cameron: Go on the computer.

Karin: Yeah, teachers sometimes do, don't they, go on the computer.

Alexander: (standing up, swings his arms) Yep.

(Karin, teacher, and Alexander, Sam and Cameron, all aged 4 years, video-recorded observation at JSC, 17 January 2011)

Interestingly none of the children mentions that teachers provide opportunities for and support the unstructured play sessions or that teachers participate in play. I have observed many informal conversations between teachers and children and many instances where teachers support the unstructured play sessions at the centre, yet the children only mention the structured parts of the day. Their view is that the teachers are authoritative: the teacher is the knower and children are passive and obliging.

The interview is highly teacher-led. Children give minimal answers and the teacher continuously prompts the children to give her more information. The question arises: Do children seem unwilling to answer the questions most of the time, when they are asked for their opinion, because they view the teacher as authoritarian? While it was the teacher's intention to find out from the children what they think teachers do, the dialogue was monologic, with an adult agenda and structure. Were the children's responses perhaps limited because they are not used to being asked questions about what adults do?

When children were asked the same questions in a small-group mat time in Wisteria Street centre, they were unusually timid. Much of what the children said was unintelligible. The responses themselves were similar to the ones by the children at Jacarinda Street centre, about teachers telling children what to do. Again, it could be argued that the children were not familiar with these types of questions, but it is interesting to note Gemma's frustration with children's limited responses at the teacher meeting:

Lia: I did not give you clip of the small group interview, because you can't hear what they are saying, they are talking so quietly, and so then I bent forward to catch what they are saying and then I sat with my back in front of the camera.

Gemma and Tracy: (laugh)

Gemma: Oh can't you?

Lia: Luckily you are actually paraphrasing,

Gemma: Oh what they are saying, oh that's good.

Lia: I thought thank you Gemma for doing that.

Gemma and Tracy: (laugh)

Lia: You are very good with your strategies, I was so amazed, but I could see that you were getting quite annoyed, can't they just say?

Gemma: (laughs) So you can tell that I was getting quite annoyed.

Lia: You were surprised?

Gemma: I felt, come on, you know what teachers do.

(Gemma and Tracy, teachers and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

At the teacher meeting, Gemma compared the children's limited responses and Lori's reluctance to be filmed during the interview with an incident moments later when Lori purposely placed herself in front of the iPad lens, while she held elaborate negotiations with Joe about the sharing of a toy:

Is it because they are fearful they are giving the wrong answer [in the interview] or is it because they are not sure; they *do* know what we do. Like you said, we've seen it [their understanding of what teachers do] in play, seen in action [refers to Maddy re-enacting the teacher at group time, as discussed in Chapter 7]. It is just interesting. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012).

Both transcripts of the interviews with the children show the teacher as authoritative, although the intention of the interviews was to find out what children think. Their words and the way they act indicate that children see themselves as passive, having to oblige and/or not knowing. It almost seems as if Gemma is disappointed that the children lack the confidence to express their opinion. Karin also expected more information, applying different scaffolding

strategies to try to gain further information from the children. In Chapter 7, I will further discuss how the teachers expected that the children would also have a view of teachers as doing things together with children and wanted children to see teachers as their friends.

Clark (2005) and Kraftl (2013) argue that children's voices must be heard, but that adult verbal-participatory techniques make children's participation at least less meaningful and at most impossible. In comparison with transcripts of children's utterances of interviews in this study, transcripts of children's utterances in their pretend play indicate they are much more capable of communicating their view of teachers through this means (see the transcript of Maddy re-enacting the role of the teacher in Chapter 7). The next transcript details a dialogue that at first sight may seem open-ended.

From Monologic Teaching to Pedagogical Dialogue: "No, that is a spinosaurus"

When children have finished their lunch, they have to put their lunchboxes in their bags and go to the library corner. In the library corner, they have the option of sitting down and listening to a book that one of the teachers reads to a small group or choosing a book to read by themselves. The books the teacher reads have been selected by the children. The following event happened during the first week of video recordings at WSC. Gemma reads first a Winnie the Pooh book, then a book about dinosaurs. The teacher readily admits that she does not have all the answers and she accepts the authority of the child who has a particular interest in dinosaurs and knows a lot about them:

(Gemma is sitting on a child's chair, facing a group of five children, aged between 3½ and 5 years, who have already finished lunch. The children are sitting on the floor or on cushions.

Gemma reads a Winnie the Pooh book to the children. Rhys is standing by the book shelf, he seems very interested in a book about dinosaurs.)

Gemma: What is he wearing? (points to Winnie in the book)

Children: A hat.

Gemma: Very soon at Wisteria Street centre, we will be wearing our hat when we go outside, don't we, when it is October.

(Two boys are tumbling over each other.)

Gemma: (puts book on the shelf) Who has another story to read?

(Mark is rolling around, with his legs in the air. Gemma leans over to him.)

Gemma: Mark you need to read your book and sit quietly by yourself or you need to listen to mine quietly.

(Gemma takes the book from Rhys and starts reading, holding up the pages for the children to see. Another child has joined the group.)

Gemma: (reading from book, occasionally adding a comment) Dinosaurs lived for 180 million years. That's much, much longer than any animal that ever existed, so that's a very, very long time ago, ages.

Rhys: (standing up) And, and, and they are in the museum, the bones.

Gemma: Yes, some bones are in the museum, what they have been able to find.

Rhys: I found Tyrannosaurus rex in the museum (he holds up his arms and hands in claw position). And there are toys there and bumblebees, bzzzz and, and

Gemma: Have you been to the Discovery Centre?

Rhys: And there is even a Triceratops bone.

Gemma: I think it is a Triceratops head, isn't it? I can't remember, I haven't been for ages.

Rhys: Yeah.

(Several children talk at once. Two more children have joined.)

Gemma: Let's find out what dinosaurs they've got in here. They've got a Diplodocus, Triceratops.

Rhys: I can see an Aphaestephalis.

Gemma: A what sorry?

Rhys: Aphaestephalis.

Gemma: [slowly] A-pha?

Rhys: Aphastephalis.

Gemma: Aphastephalis.

Gemma: (reads names of dinosaurs in the book)

Rhys: No [in firm voice], that's a spinosaurus.

Gemma: Is that a spinosaurus? It's got a different name here. Maybe they can have different names.

(Gemma turns the page.)

(Gemma, teacher, Rhys, Mark and unidentified children, aged between 3½ and 5 years, video-recorded observation at WSC, 10 September 2012)

Gemma selected this clip to discuss in the first teacher meeting. In the teacher discussion, Gemma said that she chose this particular event because she wanted to find out how her voice sounded to the children. Gemma commented in the meeting that she was pleased with her intonation and voice, but that she was disappointed she had ignored the repeated requests of one child. In Chapter 7, I return to the teacher discussion related to this event, to consider different genres between the teachers. At the beginning of the session, the teacher asks questions related to the pictures in the book, questions that she already has the answer to, such as: "What is he [Winnie the Pooh] wearing?" The teacher also points out that children will soon have to wear their hat. The conversation follows the IRE pattern discussed in much of the empirical research (see, for example, Cazden, 1988; Gjems, 2010; Tizard & Hughes, 2002): the teacher initiates a question, the child responds and the teacher evaluates. Although children are invited to participate in a dialogue, the question is one to which the teacher already knows the answer. It can be argued that the aim of the question is to further enculturate children into the centre's rule of wearing a hat outside in summertime.

The structure of the activity (children have to sit in the library corner and they have to be quiet and sit up, so as not to disturb the reading and related conversation) puts the teacher

in a monologic teaching situation, with children who are mostly obliging. However, when Gemma starts to read a book about dinosaurs that Rhys has selected, he co-authors, bringing in a conversation about the museum and displaying his knowledge of dinosaurs with facts unrelated to the book. Towards the end of the above conversation, Rhys openly disagrees with the teacher about one of the names of the dinosaurs. The conversation, while still somewhat structured, at first sight seems to be more dialogic. However, it is argued here that the event is still mostly a monologic or pedagogical dialogue, where the teacher permits the child to add his knowledge to the conversation. Rhys, while knowledgeable about the subject of dinosaurs, plays the part of the young child participating in a teacher-led activity. Other children are more or less silent and, while there is some moving around on the mat, they oblige with the teacher's agenda.

In educational contexts, Wegerif (2008) notes, dialogue is often mistaken for a Vygotskian notion of dialectic. When classroom dialogue is analysed, it is still often with an outcome in mind, based on a dialogic discourse that supports learning, but still limiting dialogue to dialectic; foreclosing a dialogue with different perspectives. In other words, the teacher leads the children to a particular outcome that is known to the teacher. As Matusov (2009) describes it, this type of dialogue is pedagogical, which is monologic, as opposed to dialogical pedagogy, which is based on a view of education as open-ended. Wegerif (2008) explains that studies on educational dialogue often assume classroom dialogue is a tool to teach a particular kind of reasoning, or to help construct curriculum knowledge. Dialogue, on the other hand, accepts different perspectives; it makes no sense in dialogue for these to be overcome, because difference is at the heart of its existence (Wegerif, 2008, p. 347). However, even in monologic teacher-child dialogues, children can create agency, as shown in the next excerpt involving Mariah, who refuses to follow up on the teacher's suggestion to turn the television off for her dad on Father's Day, thwarting the teacher's intention.

From Monologic Teaching to a Dialogue: “I am going to turn the television on”

The next vignette details a small-group conversation initiated by the teacher, Karin, when she asks the children what they will do for their dad on Father’s Day. Teachers in JSC meet with their group once a day for group time. Often teachers include a conversation linked to a current event or topic, such as Father’s Day. Karin explained to me that she is aware of potential controversy in introducing Father’s Day activities, but that she has checked that each child in her group is living with his or her father.

Karin and the group of eight children sit in a circle on the floor. Karin discusses the upcoming Father’s Day and asks each child what they might do to make Father’s Day a special day. One child explains that her dad likes to sleep in so she will stay in her bed and leave her dad to have a sleep, and another child plans to make breakfast in bed for dad. Karin explains the danger of getting burnt by the hot water in the kettle and tells the children to ask an adult or older sibling to help. When a particular child does not know what to do, she reminds him that his dad likes bike rides and suggests the child’s family might all go for a bike ride. He nods in agreement. She then asks four-year old Mariah:

Karin: How about Mariah? What does your dad like to do?

Mariah (after a brief silence): He (pauses), he doesn’t like me watching TV in my bed and I always put the TV on.

Karin: Ohh, so perhaps on Sunday, you will leave the television—? (pauses)

Other children: Off.

Mariah [in firm voice]: No.

Karin: Does Daddy like you watching TV? No, so Mariah could leave the television (Karin pauses and then fills in the word herself) off.

Mariah: But I’m going to turn it *on*.

(Children giggle.)

Karin: Remember whose special day is it going to be?

Other children in chorus: Dad.

Karin: So we're going to do things that'll make Dad feel...(Karin pauses, no children reply this time)

Mariah [in a firm voice]: But I'm going to turn the TV *on*.

Karin: Poor Dad. Let's hope Jamie can find something to make Dad happy. [Jamie is Mariah's one-year-old brother.]

(Karin, teacher, and Mariah and other children in Karin's group, all aged 4 years, audio-recorded transcript at JSC, 31 August 2010)

In a Bakhtinian sense, both Mariah's and Karin's utterances are anticipating the response that might follow their own. Karin expects Mariah to comply with her suggestion, whereas Mariah anticipates that Karin will show her disapproval when Mariah defiantly states that she will still turn the television on. It is less about the words themselves than about the words in *this* context. It needs to be remembered that Bakhtin gives primacy to context over text (Hicks, 2009). If, for example, we placed Mariah's comment in another context, such as when Mariah might be watching television with a friend, her sentence "I am going to turn the television on" would have a very different intent; it could be an announcement that she wants to stop whatever they are doing to watch television. In the everyday dialogue nests an overarching truth that all discourses are responsive to social contexts and speech genres to construe common knowledge (Hicks, 2009). Mariah purposely uses these words in this particular context. Her firm voice also indicates that she does not intend to change her mind.

The conversation was selected by me to be discussed at one of the teacher meetings, as I had noticed the teacher's frustration and Mariah's non-compliance. I was also not sure what to make of this episode and I felt further analysis, both from a theoretical perspective and in dialogue with the teachers, might provide further insights.

The seemingly insignificant conversation illustrates *heteroglossia* (Bakhtin, 1981), which can be described as the presence of two or more genres or discourses that express alternative or conflicting perspectives. Bakhtin's heteroglossia is compatible with Foucauldian perspectives of power relationships; the vignette shows a flow of power between the traditional domination and normalising talk of the teacher ("we're going to do the things that'll make Dad feel..."). From a Bakhtinian perspective, the beginning of the conversation is an example of pedagogical monologue. The teacher offers the statement "so...you will turn the television—", followed by a pause, so a small chorus of the children can fill in the word "off". This illustrates an often-used (monologic) teaching strategy; it can be seen as a strategy that normalises children (and teachers who have been taught this strategy) to the teacher's right way of knowing and doing. Mariah's persistence in not giving in to the teacher's request pictures Mariah as an active agent, resisting this discourse.

Rejecting the truth of one right way, Foucault (1980) proposes a complexity and diversity of ways of knowing. With Foucault's view of dialogue that no social order can ever be absolute or eternal and that there will always be resistance, renewed dialogue and the transformation of social form (Falzon, 1998, p. 8), we are left uncertain as to what may happen next. As Bakhtin (1981) argues, each of us goes through a process of selectively assimilating the words of others to create our own ideologies, as these are created in social interaction rather than in isolation (p. 341).

The small chorus of children at first oblige and fill in the correct word that the teacher wants to hear to bring Mariah back on track and suggest something nice for her father on Father's Day. The teacher's strategy is a teaching practice under the guise of student participation but, interestingly, the other children giggle when Mariah persists that she will still turn the television on. The giggling of the other children is interpreted here as a shift in their ideology as a result of the social interaction between Mariah and the teacher. This shift

is an example of children changing the genre of complying, conforming children to silently resisting children, as a result of the dialogue. This shift is further confirmed, when the teacher tries the same strategy with another question: “So we’re all going to do things that make Dad feel...?”. This time there is *no* chorus of children obliging by filling in the word “happy”. In their silence, the children express, perhaps unconsciously, that they no longer want to follow the pedagogical monologue.

Mariah’s insistence that she will watch television, even on Father’s Day, when she knows her dad does not like her watching television in bed, in some way slightly disturbs. Her reaction does not fit the image of the loving child who conforms to the tradition of making Father’s Day a special day. The fact that I initially had dismissed this conversation shows how I, too, am normalised into what is right for children. It was only when I was re-reading transcripts to look for moments that jar (Rosen, 2014) that I realised the child’s agency and the dialogic nature of the conversation. While, at first sight, the teacher’s strategy of asking children to think of an act of kindness for their dads seems like a worthwhile activity, it normalises the act of being kind to their dads on Father’s Day and uncritically accepts the view that this is something children should all do. The teacher has set out, in the monologic conversation, to culturalise the children in an existing society, when she encourages children to perform an act of kindness for their fathers on a particular day of the year. At the end the teacher gives up on her mission to teach Mariah to do something nice; she shows her frustration, using a sarcastic genre, by saying that she hopes Mariah’s brother will do something nice for Mariah’s dad; her brother is only one year old.

As well as seeing the children’s and teacher’s views of themselves and each other, through this incident we witness how identities are being formed. It is interesting that Mariah, who stands up against being encultured into the practice of being a good girl on Father’s Day, leads and initiates the dialogic process. The children who at first are obligingly filling in the

words the teacher wants them to say, with perhaps some uncertainty, then follow Mariah and become silent when the teacher asks them to finish her sentence again. It was not until transcribing and discussing the script that the teachers and I became aware of the monologic practice of the teacher.

It needs to be noted that, while this excerpt shows monologic teaching practice, the fact that Mariah had the confidence to speak out against the teacher's suggestions and the fact that the children could align with Mariah shows that the teacher had built sufficiently strong relationships with the children for them to feel that they could express themselves. The teacher also allowed time for the dialogue to develop. It is important to emphasise that having an environment where children feel they can speak their mind and giving them time to do this are both important factors in making an open-ended dialogue possible. The dialogue illustrates how teachers and children co-author identities.

Forming of subjectivities is ongoing. Edmiston's (2010) suggestion is to apply Bakhtinian theories in relation to moral responsibility and dialogue as a lifelong process of co-authoring ethical identities (p. 198). As discussed in Chapter 3, Edmiston uses this approach to analyse his engagement in dramatic play with his son, which can be extended to all adult-child communication, including teacher-child dialogue. Mariah uses a genre of being an independent thinker; the dialogue and the support of the other children strengthen her mastery of this genre. At the same time, Mariah's actions raise the awareness among the other children that they can resist the teacher's suggestion, although it might be only an intuitive awareness. Only much later, after transcribing and discussing the activity, the teachers and myself as the researcher noticed the monologic teaching and the dialogic turn in this seemingly non-political activity. Furthermore, Mariah's opposition and the teacher's frustration when Mariah did not conform show how we, too are normalised into a particular way of being. Arguing that schooling

disciplines both the student and the teacher, Foucault (1977) encourages us to ask whose knowledge is represented and whose interests are being served.

The dialogue illustrates that children have agency to be active participants and that they can turn a monologic event into a dialogue. This dialogic turn provides an insight into what more open-ended education might look like. First, the dialogue obstructed the teacher's intention to mould children into a role expected of them in a dominant cultural activity of the existing (adult?) world and it led to an unexpected outcome for the children. Second, the teacher discussion of the more or less surprising direction of the dialogue led the teachers and myself as the researcher to a deeper understanding of how existing teaching strategies may result in children's conformity, as well as leading us to an insight into open-ended dialogue. Lastly, presenting the excerpt in this thesis may affect others to reflect on their practice.

Polyphony in Informal Dialogic Conversations: "No hands, never hands"

The three following transcripts, which were also selected from a range of informal teacher-child dialogues by the teachers and me for discussion at the teacher meetings, show a variety of children's dialogues and genres. All three dialogues were initiated by the children. They were selected from a variety of transcripts that show children's agency, their interest in ontological knowledge, their desire to link to their home world and their willingness to explain to the world. The children take on active leadership roles when they are more knowledgeable. Such occasions arise, for example, when younger children join the group, and also with me, the researcher as the newcomer, as can be seen in the transcript when children talk about my ignorance in putting my lunchbox in the box for items to share at news time (see Chapter 4 for more detail). Above all, however, the excerpts highlight children's desire for pleasurable activities, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

The excerpt that follows is part of a much longer conversation. It shows how Joe, a four-year-old boy, takes on the teacher's role in standing up for a child who complained to the teacher that a child spilled water over her. Gemma selected the video clip of the dialogue between Joe and herself to watch and discuss at the teacher meeting because it stood out for Gemma as an experience that she enjoyed. Gemma and Joe are both sitting on the decking around the sandpit.

Gemma (to Sonya): Just tell Ritchie he needs to be more careful not to spill water over you.

Sonya: I can't.

(Joe looks up and then walks over to Ritchie.)

Joe: You, you, you, you can't wet her.

Ritchie: [in quiet voice] (looking up at Joe) All right.

Joe: (walks back and sits down again, looking pleased)

Gemma: That is very, very kind, that's what we call sticking up for Sonya, helping Sonya.

Joe: So she can play with people.

Gemma: Yeah and it was very good that you were using words too.

Joe: (looking down at the sand slipping through his hands)

Gemma: Did you see how Ritchie listened to you, when you used your words?

Joe: Yeah.

Gemma: Much better when you use words isn't it?

Joe: [loudly] Not with hands.

Gemma: Not with hands, using words.

Joe: Using words that are *kind* words.

Gemma: That's right, using kind words, what are kind words?

Joe: (leaning over to Gemma) But *no hands, never hands*.

Gemma: (strokes Joe's arm) I can use gentle hands.

(Gemma, teacher, Joe and Sonya, both aged 4 years, and Ritchie, video-recorded observation at WSC, 29 October 2012)

In the teacher meeting, Gemma analyses Joe's cooperation when he walks over to Ritchie to tell him not to spill water over another child, gets a toy for Lori and tells Gemma that he is his baby brother's teacher. It seems to Gemma as if he aligns himself with her, seeing himself in a teaching role:

He went over to Ritchie, tried to solve that problem (laughs) and then he had in his mind that when he is at home, he is the teacher. Kind of, I am the teacher here, I support Sonya, and I support Lori, you know. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 3 November 2012)

At the teacher meeting, we also reflected on the curious incident earlier on in the conversation, when Joe first pretends not to hear Gemma when she asks him if he has any socks. When Gemma repeats the question, Joe denies that he had socks, although earlier that day he had proudly shown them to me. It seems that Joe wants to be with Gemma and does not want to leave her to find his socks. It is clear that there is a strong relationship between the teacher and the child and that they both enjoy each other's company.

At least part of Gemma's reason for selecting the clip was that she enjoyed her dialogue with Joe. I will discuss the teacher's subjectivity further in Chapter 7. Gemma compares the difficulty of getting a response from the timid children in the small-group interview, when she asked them what teachers do, with the enjoyable dialogue she had with Joe:

Gemma: It is interesting, because this [interviewing children what teachers do] is kind of like a forced action, asking the questions, the one with Joe I felt I was more natural.

Tracy: Mm.

Gemma: The tone of my voice changed completely, I was calmer, I was more engaged, wanting to listen to that, whereas there [in the interviews] I felt it was quite forced.

Tracy: Mm.

Lia: You were, yeah, with Joe you were much more relaxed, it was a relaxing spot, you sat there...

Gemma: And the thing just kept going. It was just amazing, it actually made me cry last night, watching that. I was just so impressed, when we do watch it, Joe is solving his problems and the fact that he was so...the whole time he is initiating that conversation and he is initiating the statements that he is saying about it. I helped him a wee bit.

(Gemma and Tracy, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 3 November 2012)

It is interesting to hear how Gemma was affected emotionally when watching the video clip of her interactions with Joe. She had told me on another occasion that when Joe first came to the centre, his behaviour was quite challenging for the teachers and yet in this video clip he uses a wide range of genres and he shows he can use a range of communication skills such as negotiation, humour, instruction, and reprimanding a boy in the sandpit not to wet another child. In the above episode, Gemma and Joe co-author; both want to be there, enjoying each other's company, and it could be argued that there is a shared power balance. Joe places himself next to Gemma and even takes on a teacher's role in reprimanding another child. In a sense, Joe reciprocates Gemma's caring for him; as Noddings (2003) argues, the contribution of the cared-for is often overlooked in traditional moral philosophy. Joe's agentic act as the teacher and Gemma's emotional reaction both can be seen as complicating the teaching-learning.

Gemma and Joe obviously have a deep, meaningful relationship that is perhaps difficult to articulate. In pointing to the special relationships between teachers and children, Todd (2014) argues that we need to take into account these liminal experiences in our pedagogical relationship, which offer depth to our teaching (p. 243). Being aware opens up possibilities that there is more to teaching than supporting children to learn socially and academically. Gemma could see how Joe wants to be with her, please her by taking on a teaching role and show her that he understands that you need to use words, but this is a pleasure that is perhaps difficult to talk about. Tobin (1997) believes that the avoidance of

pleasure and desire has led to a repression of teachers' emotions. Despite rhetoric in early childhood curricula about reciprocal relationships with children, teachers are expected to remain professional and avoid emotional attachment to children. However, good teaching is about having mutual and real relationships (McWilliam, 1999). On one of her last days at the centre, Gemma told me that Joe is one of the children that she will miss.

Open-ended Dialogue: "I was actually six"

Children do not have half-developed adult ideas. Rather, at times, they show their own working theories of the world, which are quite different from adult thinking but, on close examination, are as valid as adult thinking processes. The following event shows how Effie deduces that she is eight because there are eight candles on the image of a birthday cake on the page that the teacher has put in her portfolio for her third birthday:

(Renate, who has just turned five, is showing me the page of her fifth birthday in her portfolio, while Effie is listening and flicking through the pages of her book to find the page about her birthday.)

Effie: There's my one [referring to the page in her portfolio about her third birthday].

Lia: Your birthday one?

Effie: (looking at colourful images on her birthday page). There's lollies here and tate [cake], presents, and there's everything, there's even stuff on the floor (looks up at me, looking pleased) and a whistle [party whistle].

Lia: And balloons.

Effie: And balloons and a number three tate [cake] (looking down, she follows the candles in the image of the cake on her birthday page with her finger) and I was one, two three, four, five, six (she has her head down, looking closely at the page, concentrating on counting, keeps looking down), I was six.

Effie: (counts again) I was one, two, I was one, two three, four, five six (she looks up at me, with some surprise), I was actually six.

Lia: Maybe that's just a picture? Maybe they didn't have a picture of a cake with three candles?

Effie: (counts again, deeply concentrating) No, look, I was one, two three, four, five, six. I was six. Look,

Effie: (looks up at me, grabs my finger) Come here.

Lia: Okay then.

Effie : (holding my finger, she makes my finger follow the candles in the picture, while we are both counting slowly and deliberately)

Effie and Lia: One, two three, four, five six.

Effie: I was six [in a defiant voice].

Lia: Because you had six candles?

Effie: Yeah.

Lia: That's right.

Renate: (standing beside her) There are eight candles.

Effie: (looks up at Renate and counts again, following with her finger) One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. (She has lost count and starts again.)

Effie: One, two, (starts again) one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight. (She looks sideways at Renate, then looks up at me and exclaims with delight and surprise on her face.) I was eight!

Lia: You were eight. (laughs)

(Effie, aged 3½ years, Renate, aged 5 years, and Lia, researcher, video-recorded observation at WSC, 18 December 2012)

Initially I try to correct the child, suggesting that perhaps the teacher had not been able to find a picture with the right number of candles for her third birthday, but Effie's assertive actions, taking my index finger to follow the candles in the picture and making me count the candles together with her, illustrate how the child is teaching me that she is six. The child's genuine belief that she is first six and then, after a recount, that she is eight, made me realise that my

adult reasoning about someone's age is based on adult conceptions of calendars and documents such as birth certificates, whereas the child's reasoning in this event is based on the number of candles on her cake. In Effie's experience of birthday events, age is determined by the number of candles on your cake. The (Western) adult concept of a calendar is not easily understood by young children. This is also evident in the transcript of Maddy and Jonathan at group time, which is discussed in Chapter 7, when the children agree that the date is the 32nd.

Effie truly believes that she is first six and, a little later when five-year-old Renate corrects her by observing there are eight candles, that she is eight years old. Young children still have the ability to believe that there is more than one truth. Even though Effie knows that she is three years old when she first shows me her birthday page, "with the number three tate [cake]", Effie is delighted to find out she is eight when she counts eight candles.

Although I try to reason with Effie that perhaps the person who put the picture in the portfolio had not been able to find a picture with three candles, Effie's reasoning is firm: you know how old you are from the number of candles on your cake. For someone who does not understand the Western calendar (yet), the candles on your birthday cake determine your age and tell you how old you are.

How Do Children Reason?

As Robson (2012) argues it, both Piagetian and Vygotskian theories are presenting an oversimplification in maintaining that children structure knowledge differently from adults. Piaget and Vygotsky can be seen as the main theorists of Western pedagogy for decennia and, although sociocultural theories have been added, they continue to be seen as the foundation theorists of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum. In dividing children's thinking into different stages, Piaget argues that young children are in a stage of pre-operational thinking and that, for example, they lack the skill to categorise. Robson uses

Piaget's example of young children who put a cake in the same category as a table because children reasoned that the cake goes on the table. Similar to Piaget, Vygotsky argues that children do not form true concepts until adolescence.

Yet, as Robson (2012) elaborates, like adults, children reason and form concepts based on their knowledge and experience. This point brings to mind a colleague's research on children's mathematical thinking: when children were asked why they gave the answer in a maths exam that a particular animal was faster, the children answered that they had chosen the animal because they liked that particular animal better than the other one. They wanted to have their favourite animal as a winner, rather than the one that was faster according to the mathematical explanation. It could be argued that children categorise, but that they do so on their terms, not by established (Western) scientific classifications.

The example reminds me of Borge's Chinese classification system, made famous by Foucault (1970), which classifies all animals into the following 14 categories: (a) those that belong to the Emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble as if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel-hair brush; (l) others; (m) those that have just broken a flower vase; and (n) those that resemble flies from a distance. Youxiang (2007) explains how this partially true classification makes us rethink that every classification is arbitrary. Through a (partial) parody on Western classification systems, Foucault shows that Western classifications and categorisations are man-made rather than part of the natural world and that different systems may be possible. Young children can have taxonomic understandings in areas that they are interested in and have built knowledge about, as Rhys shows in an earlier transcript in this chapter, when the teacher reads a book about dinosaurs. Adult classification and ordering of days may seem as foreign to children as Borge's Chinese classification of animals does to us.

After initially trying to “correct” Effie and observing Effie’s firm belief and delight that she is eight, I came to the realisation that there are different ways of viewing the world. Effie’s response is delightfully refreshing and, to an extra-terrestrial who has not been exposed to Western systems and classifications, Effie’s reasoning might make just as much sense as the reasoning that it is your birthday on a particular calendar day.

Teacher Initiating a Dialogic Encounter: “Do you think it is fair that there is nothing in those boxes?”

The following transcript of one of the teacher meetings provides an example of Tracy supporting a dialogic encounter with children. Towards the end of the data collection period, Tracy reflects on the changes in the way she interacts with children as a result of her involvement in the project:

Tracy: I went into the prepschool [the room at JSC for the children aged between 3 1/2 and 5] this afternoon and they were all talking to me about Christmas. The Christmas tree was up and it was like oh look and then Maddy pipes up and says there are presents under the tree, but she goes, but there is nothing in them and I said, how do you know that? [And Maddy said,] Just cos and I said, but do you think it is fair that there is nothing in those boxes? [And Maddy said,] Nuh. But then it might have got her thinking.

Gemma: Yeah.

Tracy: Is it really fair that there is nothing in those and what is the purpose of those boxes, it should be a present so it is giving her two different ideas about presents: that presents can be a gift that you get but that presents can also be something that is decorative. So I don’t think I would have come up with that question if I hadn’t been here. It would never have occurred to me to say to the child, do you think it is fair that we put those empty presents underneath the Christmas tree?

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

The dialogue is noteworthy not only because Tracy supports a more dialogic conversation by asking Maddy if she thinks it is fair that the presents under the tree are fake, but also because Tracy recognises how her subjectivity of what it means to be a teacher has changed. Tracy's narrative is a good example of how dialogic research allows participants to be unfinished. Furthermore, Tracy shows her insight into what it means for children to be unfinalised in her comment that her question about fairness might have got Maddy thinking. In other words, Tracy accepts that this is not Maddy's last word.

The conversations in the last three transcripts were not planned for by the teachers: they were initiated by children themselves. In contrast to the interview discussed above and the IRE pattern in much of the literature related to teacher–child dialogue, all three contain more elaborate utterances by children, with questions to which teachers do not have the answers. They illustrate children's competence in dialogues that have a more equitable power balance. The dialogues are more complex than the previous conversations that were initiated by teachers; they are open-ended and they are enjoyable for children and teachers. The transcripts in this chapter show that unplanned conversations initiated by children tend to allow for more enjoyable and complex interactions with open-ended outcomes. It is suggested that teachers provide opportunities for informal conversations with children.

Conclusion and Implications

Summarising findings in this chapter, it can be argued that the dialogues discussed show a diverse range of genres, for both children and teachers. A Bakhtinian analysis provides insights that children can be and are agentic and can co-author in teacher–child dialogues. When children do so, it usually does not result from the teacher's support for their agency. At times, it is even despite the teacher's actions (for example, the teacher pressuring Mariah to conform). In the example of Mariah, we have seen that children can support each other to

become agentic. Transcripts that detail conversations initiated by children show that such conversations tend to be more complex and more enjoyable for children and teachers; they show children as competent co-authors and active participants in an open-ended curriculum.

In order to participate in the world, children need to find out about existing cultural knowledges. There is no one right way for teachers to engage in dialogue with children; it is argued that both monologic and dialogic encounters have a place in early childhood settings. Transcripts in this chapter illustrate how children can be agentic, even in monologic encounters. However, it is suggested that teachers critically reflect on their interactions with children, listen carefully to children's (embodied) utterances and look for dialogic opportunities.

The dialogic research process whereby the teachers and I selected video-recorded dialogues between teachers and children and then discussed these allowed a moral response, particularly when integrating related literature, using a Bakhtinian lens to make sense of puzzling or interesting dialogues. As a result of the discussion of the video-recorded teacher-child interactions at the teacher meetings, teachers changed their practice, as is evident in the last transcript of this chapter, by asking different questions to which the teacher did not know the answer.

It is difficult for teachers to change monologic teaching practices and to support children to be agentic. Implications of the findings are that dialogic research processes and/or dialogic discussions between teachers related to video recordings of their dialogues with children in their context may lead to a better understanding of dialogic teacher-child dialogues and, consequently, changes to more dialogic teaching practice.

In the following chapter, teacher-child interactions that are not easily explained, as well as children's utterances that puzzled or surprised the teachers and me, are explored through a Bakhtinian carnivalesque lens.

Chapter 6:

Carnavalesque

Teacher–child interactions ranging from monologic to dialogic have been discussed in Chapter 5; this chapter analyses dialogues and events that were unexpected and at times surprised the teachers and me. When I started this project, it was the talk between teachers and children that I wanted to investigate. However, during the collection of data and when viewing some of the video clips, it became clear that children’s dialogues with their peers, when listened to by adults, could be viewed as overarching utterances of children’s perspectives, directed at teachers.

A study of open-ended teacher–child dialogue in which children are active participants must take into account children’s perspectives. In Chapter 5 we saw how traditional teaching methods in which the teacher has an agenda—such as asking what the bear in the picture book is wearing or asking the children to finish a sentence—disempower children. Adult processes such as interviews again carry adult intentions. This chapter investigates what children want and how they express this. It observes what seems to be pleasurable for children and discusses how this relates to dialogue. As discussed in previous chapters, children do not have the same linguistic knowledge as adults, which is evident, for example, in the discussion of the data on the informal interviews (Chapter 5). It is therefore important to also listen to children’s perspectives in situations where children can be more agentic, such as in their pretend play, in encounters where children have taken the initiative and in non-verbal interactions.

Children's Nonsensical Responses through a Carnavalesque Lens

This chapter builds on Bakhtin's carnivalesque, as discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Bakhtin (1984b) suggests that a condition for the ultimate structure of life is the existence of the dual worlds of, on one hand, the formal, official world and, on the other, the carnivalesque world of laughter, the pleasurable and affectionate bodies and bodily functions. It is argued in this chapter that an acceptance of this dualism may allow us to see things differently from largely monologic teaching, moving us towards a more open-ended education. A carnivalesque analysis of the children's nonsensical play and their pleasure in bodies does not analyse oppression, but it may show us "how hierarchical power can be temporarily overthrown" (Shields, 2007, p. 98).

MacLure (2010) writes of theory that de-familiarises, complicates, obstructs, perverts; in short, theory that helps us see things differently. Rather than filling in the theory with examples of the expected, she suggests paying attention to data that for some reason stand out. To critique the familiar image of everyday life, we must be attuned to *all* aspects of life, including poetic, irrational, corporeal, ethical and affective (MacLure, 2010, p. 19), we must look for those moments when the everyday life is exposed and made to look unfamiliar and we must do so ethically. As discussed in Chapter 2, Gardiner (2000a) argues that the body is resistant to the hegemonic discourse of the current impoverished image of everyday life and that a Bakhtinian carnivalesque lens may help us to see the everyday moments in early childhood settings differently.

As Bakhtin (1986c) stresses, dialogue is directed towards an actively responsive understanding, but a response does not need to be immediate. The acts of children with other children can be seen as utterances in an overarching dialogue between children and teachers, in that the meeting between the teachers and me and the analysis, as well as any action following from this, form a response to the children's utterance. The review of literature

related to children's voices in Chapter 4 explains how children's pretend play can be a more meaningful and valid child voice about what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a child than the voice that comes from an adult-oriented interview with children. In their play children show how they make meaning of their world and, as transcripts of interviews and of children's pretend play show, children are often much better at expressing themselves in play than in interview contexts.

Further to defining dialogue as utterances in everyday language, Bakhtin believes in dialogism as a moral responsibility to respond, as Chapter 2 has discussed: the author aims his or her utterance towards not only a present addressee, but also a higher "super addressee, whose absolutely just understanding is presumed, either in some metaphysical distance or in distant historical time" (Bakhtin, 1986c, p. 126). Moral answerability is discussed in further detail in previous chapters and particularly in Chapter 2, as it must be regarded as the underlying message in all Bakhtin's writings (see Bocharov, 1993, Emerson, 1997 and Gardiner, 2000a in Chapter 2). Bakhtin's dialogism of moral responsibility may provide a way forward beyond a critical analysis. Moral answerability points to an ethical responsibility, which is made possible when the authoritarian word is questioned, as Bakhtin does in his discussions of dialogue and in carnival (Bakhtin, 1984b).

Bakhtin (1993) argues that "The actually performed act is more than rational, it is answerable" (p. 29). The response of the teachers and myself in our discussions and any ongoing acts that result from the dialogue can be viewed as moral answerability. Following Bakhtin's view (1993) that "The point of origin of the answerable deed is not a principle, but I occupy a place in a once-occurrent Being that is unique and never repeatable" (p. 40), teachers have to answer in their own unique situation. Children's interpretations of what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a child are responded to and can only be responded to by those who are there.

Some of the excerpts in this chapter are from children in non-verbal interactions. As Clark (2005), Matusov (2009) and White (2009a) among others point out, like verbal communications, non-verbal communications can be seen as dialogue. The excerpts show glimpses of monologic teachers, but also of children's "becoming"—their development of an internal persuasive voice. As discussed in Chapter 3, children's view of themselves is affected *in and as a result of* the dialogic situation, regardless of whether these are: (a) monologic encounters; (b) pedagogical dialogue, where communication is shaped as a dialogue, but where teachers still have an expected outcome in mind; or (c) open-ended pro-dialogic pedagogy. In the next chapter, I discuss how teachers' view of themselves and their practice changed as a result of their reflection on the teacher–child dialogues. As in Chapter 5, all quoted dialogues were selected by the teachers and me, copies of the video recordings of these were sent to the teachers and they were discussed at the teacher meetings.

An analysis through a Bakhtinian carnivalesque lens shows that what might seem inexplicable and easily dismissed as children being silly can be interpreted differently. Interpretations of the carnivalesque are not only children's voices about their world from a research point of view; they also illustrate possibilities of children's agency in a complex stratified society (Bakhtin, 1984b) from a pedagogical perspective.

Children's Agency through Nonsensical Carnavalesque

The following transcript is another attempt by Karin to elicit children's perspectives in the informal interview. It follows on from the transcript in Chapter 4 in which the teacher asked children what teachers do and the children gave minimal responses. Despite Karin's skilful approach to drawing children into the interview activity by framing questions in ways that might interest the children (for example, "Ah, this'll be an interesting question, come and sit

down, a really interesting question”), the children tended to either not answer or give a response that did not seem related to the question, as this transcript demonstrates:

Karin: In what ways do I talk to you?

Alexander: (smiling) Nothing.

Sam: ... And a octopus.

Children: (giggle)

(Karin smiles and looks up at me.)

Karin: What sort of things do I talk to you about?

Alexander: Mmm, chicken, and –

Sam: And a fish and a pig.

(All children laugh.)

Karin: Oh you are soo funny. I must talk to you in funny ways.

(Karin, teacher, and Alexander, Sam and Cameron, all aged 4 years, video-recorded informal interview at JSC, 11 January 2011)

Acknowledging the difficulty of seeing and hearing children in their everyday talk and making meaning from it, Haas Dyson (2010) suggests using a theoretical lens that “looks beyond institutional expectations to children’s expectations; dismantling epistemological hegemony, that has regarded children as merely in transition, as nothings and nobodies in the here and now” (p. 9). The transcript above and others following are analysed from Bakhtinian perspectives that allow space for children’s perspectives when working from their agenda.

The children’s answers do not have much meaning when looking at the data from a traditional adult research agenda. However, when viewed from a Bakhtinian perspective, they show an open-ended dialogic event. As Clark (2005) discusses, it is difficult to engage children in a meaningful conversation in interview situations. Clark notes how children’s responses often tend to be in monosyllables; similarly, the transcript above shows one-word replies, which seem to have no relevance to the questions the teacher asks. The children’s

nonsensical replies can be seen as due to their unfamiliarity with this particular type of dialogue, which perhaps they have not yet established a suitable speech genre for. Interviews are adult activities about topics that adults want to talk about (Clark, 2005; Harwood, 2010; Kraftl, 2013). Either because they do not know how to respond or perhaps because they do not want to talk about it, the children do not conform in the interview and they escape in playful, “nonsensical” talk. However, in doing so, they changed the power dynamics of the encounter as their response unnerved the adults.

On a number of occasions the children at Jacarinda Street centre made nonsensical rhymes around the word *chicken*, especially when they were lining up to go outside or during lunchtimes. De Haan and Singer (2001) find that children imitate (nonsense) words and “that repetition with some variation to and fro in a string of utterances appears a favourite way of expressing common ground” (p. 123). They see it as a form of language play and these simple expressions, which often can be “dirty” words, seem to be young children’s way of expressing membership. Interestingly, without any explanation to each other, the children became members of the nonsensical rhyming group by either giggling or offering seemingly irrelevant contributions. While in the above transcript the children’s responses were not obviously disobedient, the power shifted from Karin to the children.

A carnivalesque lens. In the above transcript, the children’s verbal responses can be seen as carnivalesque, as can the action of two of the children in getting up and making animal-like dance movements (Fecho & Botzakis, 2007); they are opposing adult authority. Do the children use the non-formal carnivalesque genre next to the teacher’s formal teaching to perhaps indicate that these interview questions hold no relevance for them? Carnival must not be confused with a free-for-all. Edmiston (2010) clarifies that both the adults and the children, while they both can have agency, are also constrained by institutional and social

rules, depending on the situation, the place and the time. Agency is seen here as a response that is affecting their position.

It could be argued that, while the interview process still sits largely within an adult humanist and authoritative discourse, the world of play affords power to the child. In adult discourses, adults set the rules and they know the roles or genres that fit with this discourse, whereas in play and/or playful dialogues, children can establish their own authority, independent from the adults. Through play children can begin to see themselves from a perspective other than the one they associate with the world of adults, one that they can use to dialogise adult forms of discourse, and children may begin to question the authoritative adult discourse and in the process explore its weaknesses and limitations (Duncan & Tarulli, 2003, p. 284). Looking at the above transcript in this way changes it from a failed interview in relation to the adult agenda to a dialogic event with a more even power balance. Along with her acceptance that the free, fanciful and nonsensical of the carnivalesque applies to educational settings, Shields (2007) believes that the carnivalesque and the formal can and should exist next to each other to assist us in working out new inter-relationships in which students can be agentic and voice their opinion without fear.

Making Sense of the Nonsensical: “I need a cup of tea”

MacLure (2010) explains that fragments of conversations that do not make much sense are often ignored in the analysis of field data, in the search for “hard evidence”. She urges us to pay more attention to those parts of our data that we cannot explain rationally; the mimicry and mockery, while disconcerting, could be seen as “possible openings on to wonder...as the proper business of philosophy” (p. 14).

The following vignette describes part of a morning tea session at Jacarinda Street centre that initially did not make any sense:

Cameron: [chanting loudly] I need a cup of tea, I need a cup of tea.

Karin: Right Karin is going to get some facecloths.

Cameron: [chants] I need a cup of tea, I need a cup of tea.

Other child: [also chanting] I need a cup of tea.

Chorus of several children: [chanting] I need a cup of tea.

Karin: Excuse me Cameron, Cameron, look at Karin and Karin says stop because it is too loud in the kitchen. We've got children working in the kitchen and our voices are too loud. I think I will give this table facecloths first.

(Many children's voices can be heard in background.)

Karin: Washing your faces please.

Karin: Shhhh. You just had your hands over your ears.

Cameron: Neil, Neil.....

(Children giggle and talk.)

Karin talks to other teacher: I don't know where it came from.

Karin: Shhhh.

Cameron: [in high-pitched voice] I need a cup of tea.

Several children in turns: I need a cup of tea, I need a cup of tea, I need a cup of tea.

Karin: *Some* children sitting beautifully. Thanks Mariah and Carlos and..., sitting beautifully and Daniel.

Karin: [talking loudly over children's talk] Thank you Daniel, sitting beautifully and Sophie.

Now I can see Jacob, ohhh, nice, now I can this whole table sitting nicely. I *am* pleased. Thank you.

(Karin talks to other teacher.)

Cameron: [chants slowly and emphasising each word] I need a cup of tea.

Others: [chant] I need a cup of tea, I need a cup of tea.

(Children talk.)

Karin: Right, now.....Shhhhhhhh. We will...Karin can't talk to you because she can't hear. I'll just have a drink while I am waiting and then I'll tell you where we are going and you may be able to hear.

(Children talk amongst themselves.)

(Karin, teacher, and Cameron and the other children in Karin's group, all aged 4 years, audio-recorded observation at JSC, 21 September 2011)

When I asked the JSC teachers, Karin and Tracy, what stood out from the transcript for them, Karin mentioned Cameron's chanting, but she had no explanation where it came from. She said, "It has been going a long time. It started out of the blue, it lasted about a month; trying to be funny." Our discussion moved to another subject then, but when I brought the conversation back to this episode on another occasion, Karin said that she does not say this phrase ("I need a cup of tea") herself and that the comment must have come from home; she wondered if perhaps his mother says it. When I asked her if it was like a protest, Karin said that she did not think it was malicious, but that Cameron wanted attention. She also noticed that Cameron only chanted, "I need a cup of tea" at morning tea times. Tracy, who had not been aware of the chanting, was surprised. She said, "He is such a quiet child" and confirmed with Karin that it was Cameron involved in this episode (Karin, teacher, meeting at JSC, author notes, 11 January 2011).

Why did the child chant and why was it picked up by other children? Rosen's (2014) analysis of children's screams in early childhood settings can be applied to the chants of the children in the transcript above. While children's voice in a metaphorical sense gets much attention in current research, Rosen notes, children's *actual* voice is neglected. Screams, or in this case chants, are often seen as a disturbance; teachers do not see these as appropriate and they may be irritated by them, yet the continued chanting of a group of children suggests it has meaning for them. As discussed in the previous section, De Haan and

Singer (2001) argue that children's repetition of imitated (nonsense) words may be children expressing common ground. Analysing children's vocalisations through a Bakhtinian lens provides possible explanations.

In Bakhtin's view, carnival is a metaphor of language undergoing opposing tensions (Fecho & Botzakis, 2007). In the above transcript, there is a clear power struggle between the teacher and a group of children, with the children opposing the normal language and structure of the morning tea event. Describing carnival as an institutionalised anarchy—a time for temporary liberation and for equity—Fecho and Botzakis (2007) warn that when normality and hierarchy returns, things are never exactly the same (p. 555). The repetitive chanting, taken up by a number of children, created an embodied and collective new space, pushing against the existing calm and order. The group of children who took part in the chanting were in a sense liberated, their voices were strong and loud and for a short period they were free from the usual conformity of the highly structured morning tea procedures in a cramped dining area, as Tracy reflects:

There were two long tables and I often found that the only way that you could control the noise was to be almost gamey about it, and actually ask a question, like what is your dad's name, get them to play a bit of a game...I think it was the food as well, and I think it was like factory sometimes, whereas with lunchboxes, it is like, more relaxed. I think too, we never had cloths on the table, we might have started it and yeah there was nothing cosy about it. I found it quite clinical and cool at times. (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2013)

As the teacher notes in the above transcript, the morning tea procedures at the centre were highly structured and "factory like". The chanting by Cameron and other children of the banal, nonsensical sentence "I need a cup of tea" was as an uprising against institutionalised (adult) hierarchies. Their chanting could therefore be seen as carnivalesque act.

Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) note that children will challenge adults' rules if they are limited by them. Cameron's chanting is tolerated temporarily; initially the teachers do not forbid the children to chant, but then Karin protests that the children are too loud and she tries to restore authority by exclaiming that she can see particular children "sitting nicely". She seems nervous and at times has difficulty making herself heard. In the end, she says that she'll just wait until it is over. It seems here that for a little while, when the chanting children are exercising power, the teachers become frustrated and they seem at a loss as to what to do. Eventually Karin plays on the children's curiosity when she says that she'll tell them where they are going when they are quiet. Order returns; the children stop chanting and the teacher leads the children away from the morning tea table to the next activity, but the experience may have built or at least have added to children's genres of opposing authority. While the claim that Bakhtinian carnival can create more equal power relationships has been criticised as overly optimistic, it can be argued that children's genres are built on their previous encounters and that agentic encounters such as the one described above give children further opportunities to apply genres opposing authority. Following a discussion of children's behaviour at this event, which raised teachers' awareness of what was happening, changes were made to the morning tea routines.

Rather than fearing children's unpredictable expressions, which are different from rational verbalisations, or wanting to control these, it is suggested that teachers view children's embodied and affective acts as a political and meaningful expression of their voices, drawing attention to adult routines and rules of early childhood settings. Rosen (2014) suggests that teachers and researchers listen and act with answerability by accepting both children's rational words and their other vocalisations as meaningful and unfinalised.

Carnavalesque through Bodily Pleasures

The children in this study often talked about hugging and freely gave hugs. Talking about hugging and the act of hugging itself were always initiated by the children. Below are three examples of brief comments on three different occasions by three different children, taken from my field notes:

Billy: Do you know it's Christmas and I am going to get a present. I am going to give you a kiss (gives me a big hug). Do you know my daddy is going to Auckland?

Maddy: I am hugging Jonathan because he is my boyfriend, I hug him so much.

Lori to me on her last day at WSC: You haven't hugged me yet for my last day. (Researcher field notes, WSC, 30 November 2012)

I was surprised when Billy commented to me, "That dress looks good on you" (researcher field notes, November 2012). The comment was a little unnerving, making me realise that this four-year-old had noticed what I was wearing (even though it was a shirt, not a dress). From my years working in early childhood education, I was used to children hugging me, sitting in my lap or leaning against me, often stroking my hair or twisting a lock around their fingers, and I cherished this kind of physical contact, perhaps as it was more in a caring, motherly capacity. This comment on my appearance was different. Yet, as McWilliam (1999) notes, it is only natural that how teachers look and dress gets noticed, but even the slightest thought of bodily attractiveness is unthinkable in schools and it is dangerous to express this in a legitimate curriculum.

According to Jones and Brown (2001), there is nostalgia for the purity and innocence of childhood, which has led to a desire to protect children. When this impulse combined with a risk anxiety, which developed in a rapidly changing society at the end of the 20th century, the result has been a new social taboo against teachers touching children and increased regulations to order the spaces between teacher and children. As a Playcentre parent in the

1990s, I recall having to spend many long hours with a group of other parents writing child protection policies for our local Playcentre, which was a requirement at the time in order to receive government funding. In the late 20th century, child protection courses were organised for early childhood educators on a large scale, even though, as Jones and Brown (2001) point out, there were very few cases of child abuse, particularly in a parent cooperative such as Playcentre where many parents are present during the sessions.

Highly publicised child abuse in early childhood settings has led to a raft of policies on child protection and has made teachers afraid to touch children, unless it is done to comfort them, for example, when a child is crying, or when caring for very young children. Scott, Jackson and Backett-Milbern (2001) explain the above-mentioned risk anxiety as a fear not only for children's safety, but also of children themselves: "what they might do if they are not kept within the boundaries of acceptable behaviour" (p. 17). Both Tracy and Gemma confirm that many teachers are reluctant to engage in affective conversations with young children:

Tracy: Some people are quite uncomfortable; when children say that, I love you, some teachers don't know how to take that.

(Pause.)

Gemma: No they don't.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March 2013)

The frequency of children hugging and/or asking for a hug, wanting to sit on my lap or touching me made me aware of how much children want bodily contact, with both adults and their peers. It made me realise that affective and non-verbal communication forms an important part of children's dialogue with us and their peers. Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) note that children's bodies are the most obvious feature about them, but these are often overlooked and, moreover, affection is not covered in detail in teacher education, apart from

in relation to how to keep safe as a teacher. Although aware that teachers' concepts of pleasure are often formed through dominant adult psychological discourses, McWilliam (1999) invites us to think of teaching as inquiry into the sorts of pleasure that are possible, for both children and teachers.

The above discussion leads in to the next transcript, which I selected to be discussed at the teacher meeting. It confirms that even when teachers say they are comfortable with children's loving, playful engagement in each other's bodies, they may still view this type of physical contact between the children as undesirable, as can be seen in the teacher's comment about body-slamming in the transcript below.

Affectionate Bodies

After watching the video clip of the compulsory book-reading session after lunch and the discussions in the second meeting with me about power relations in structured activities, the teachers decided at their staff meeting to replace the more structured book reading after lunch with an open-ended experiment of quiet time for children. Changing the structured book-reading session to an open-ended rest time can be seen as an example of replacing authoritarian or monologic teaching with dialogic teaching.

Both when filming and when reviewing a video clip of children at quiet time, I was surprised by children's non-verbal communication, which lasted for the whole period. I was also intrigued by the obvious pleasure of two of the boys, although initially I did not value the video clip as meaningful dialogue. Observing the children at quiet time in non-verbal interactions, which at first sight did not make sense, was in a way "a certain entry into a foreign culture", with the possibility of seeing the world through the children's eyes in order to listen to their view rather than to duplicate it (Bakhtin, 1986a, p. 6) and with a moral responsibility to respond (Bakhtin, 1986b).

Below is an excerpt from the episode when the two boys are interacting. All children who have had lunch are asked to lie down quietly and have a rest time. The children are lying down on their backs, tummies or sides; some are holding a toy, some are rocking their bodies. Some children are lying on a pillow. Children are clustered closely together in one corner of the centre, lying in all directions on the carpet. Bertie and Dennis are lying at the periphery of the group; they seem to have only eyes for each other and are generally unaware of other children. Bertie has his head on a pillow:

Bertie is lying on his back, with his knees up, looking up at Dennis. Dennis is sitting on his knees right beside Bertie, touching Bertie's side with his knees.

Dennis grabs Bertie's hand, leans with his hand on Bertie's tummy, his face close to Bertie.

Bertie laughs loudly, first briefly and then: "Ha, ha, ha". Bertie makes baby-like sounds and he reaches out to Dennis, both are smiling. Bertie grabs Dennis' arm. Dennis crawls around

Bertie's head, Bertie turns his head to follow Dennis with his eyes and he stretches out both

arms to Dennis. Both boys lie next to each other. Dennis puts his arm around Bertie's chest as in an embrace, he puts his right leg over Bertie's legs. Bertie rolls onto his side towards Dennis,

holding his arms up to Dennis, he smiles, giggles softly. Bertie gently pushes Dennis's arm

away. Dennis smiles and lifts his upper body up to look at the teacher and children nearby on

the floor. He leans on Bertie with his arm, Bertie also looks sideways to the teacher. Bertie

gently pushes Dennis's arm away, making soft baby-like sounds and rolls over to Dennis.

Bertie's and Dennis's faces are very close to each other. Bertie puts his arm around Dennis's

head, looks closely at him. Dennis has his mouth half open, both boys embrace each other.

Dennis leans over Bertie, Bertie gently pushes Dennis away and coughs a few times. Dennis

lies on his side, leans over Bertie again and embraces him. Bertie rubs his eyes. Dennis sits up

on his knees, Bertie looks at Dennis, smiles. Dennis rolls over to Bertie.

(Bertie and Dennis, aged 4 years, video-recorded observation at WSC, 29 November 2012)

The children's bodies are disorderly, spread out on the floor. The teachers give no direction as to what this quiet time is about and the children are not organised into neat rows. There does not seem to be any confusion; children all find a place to lie down on, some in close proximity to a friend. Some children are talking to each other in soft voices. Some children are sucking their thumb. Most children are lying on their back or their side. Some are lying on their stomach, leaning on their elbows and watching others. Many children are touching each other or holding toys; some are rocking themselves. The two boys, Dennis and Bertie in the above transcript, spend the 10-minute period touching each other with little or no verbal language but with obvious pleasure. Halfway through the quiet time the teacher puts on a tape with quiet classical music and the two teachers announce that they will also lie down, which they do, among the children.

It is disorderly, but not chaotic; children are not loud and inappropriate behaviour, such as pushing, is rare. I do not see any children who are upset or annoyed with someone. Generally children seem to enjoy themselves and if a child wants to lie down between other children, other children readjust to make room without much resistance. There seems to be no purpose other than to have the pleasure of bodily relaxation, either individually or by being aware of each other and exploring and interacting through their bodies.

It was only after the event, when watching the video clip, that I became aware of the body language between Bertie and Dennis, at the periphery of the iPad lens, who spent the whole 10-minute period stroking each other, embracing, leaning on each other and smiling at each other in a playful and loving way. Apart from brief glances at others, they hold eye contact for that whole period; their non-verbal interactions express a tender togetherness. The complete lack of aggression, the reciprocal seeking out to touch each other, the smiles and the eye contact struck me as unusual. Apart from sounds indicating obvious pleasure and baby-like sounds, there is no spoken language.

The above episode illustrates how dialogue can happen in non-verbal ways (Matusov, 2009; White, 2009a). Thinking and verbal language are privileged in education over the body and the senses (Holst, 2013; Lenz Taguchi, 2011; Springgay, 2008). Holst (2013) argues that it is not just that we have a body: we “are” a body (p. 963). Referring to Barad’s onto-epistemology or “knowing in being” (p. 40), Lenz Taguchi (2011) argues that unity of mind and body is required for students’ constructions of subjectivity. For her part, Springgay (2008) contends that body knowledge must be reconceptualised from a view of bodies as private to an awareness that a body is always with other bodies and, through touch, produces inter-body understandings. Subjectivities are not only affected by verbal dialogue; touch and other non-verbal dialogue also shape who we are.

Similar to other European languages, the Dutch language has two words for bodies. First, *lijf* is the more colloquial word, used mostly when body is referred to in an emotional or personal sense; for example, *Blijf van mijn lijf huis* is the widely used term for a women’s refuge and literally translated it means a “stay-away-from-my-body house”. Second, the more scientific and formal Dutch term for body is *lichaam*, which is used in medical conversations and also in schools; for example, physical education in Dutch is *lichamelijke oefening*, literally translating to “bodily exercises”. The two examples make it clear that in education the body is not seen as a *lijf* with emotional and personal connections but as *lichaam*, a body in relation to science-regulated exercises, which school children need to do in order to stay healthy or to support the important work of the mind. In explaining carnival, Bakhtin undoubtedly would have used the word *lijf* if he had been writing in Dutch.

Bakhtin’s (1984b) formal world can be found in the institutionalisation of children’s bodies in educational settings. Group time, when children have to sit with their arms folded, and lining up to go inside for lunchtime are two examples of such institutionalisation that were observed in both JSC and WSC. As McKenzie (2005) notes, children are constructed to

see the natural body in opposition to and subject to adult pleasure (p. 14). The above observation of the two boys' sheer bodily pleasure can be seen as a carnivalesque escape from the formal. Bakhtin's notion of the grotesque in carnival is "not just gross naturalism, but also extremely fanciful free and playful treatment" (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 31).

The teachers' evaluation of this event differed from my own highly positive evaluation; the teachers stated that they did not like the experiment of having an unstructured rest time and it was not repeated. Comments from both Gemma and Tracy are in contrast to my perceptions of the rest time:

Tracy: So that was the first time you were having rest time. Oh no wonder why children just thought that's odd. They are moving around so much for rest time.

Gemma: It was like uhm.....this week or the week before they liked to listen to the music, I thought we'll try it again but, yeah (laughs), making choices.

Tracy: Yeah, so it's probably just pretty much that they were looking around at each other what do we do for rest time.

Gemma: Mm.

Tracy: A couple of them weren't really buying into it. I notice Dennis was body-slamming. (laughs)

Gemma: Mmm, mmm, he was not interested the whole time.

Tracy: And a lot of children were distracted.

Gemma: Yeah.

Tracy: I don't mean to sound detrimental or anything.

Gemma: No no no no.

.....

Gemma: It was very distracted. I was filling out a report at that time. I've got to do this I've got to do that. It was like I wasn't even listening to the needs of the children because Vinnie even said to me I need you. Only, I remember that, because it wasn't clear on the tape, do you want to come and sit with me, do you want to lie with me. So I did it for a little bit then took off. And

I found it funny how the children needed something in their hand to keep them going. Like there was the ruler and there was a couple of other things I noticed, I can't quite remember but they needed something, they needed to touch another child, it was this very distracting. Uhm, it was so loud, and at times you couldn't hear the music.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

I asked Gemma to clarify further what she did not like and she responded:

I did like it, but also didn't. I do think it was important for the children to have a rest and revitalise, but it wasn't consistent and staff didn't seem to feel comfortable with what they were supposed to do. So it became messy and a chore for us and the children. (Gemma, teacher, personal email, 19 March 2013)

This video recording was discussed at the teacher meeting at my request. I was surprised to learn that Gemma and Tracy interpreted the episode in such a different way from me. While I only saw loving and playful touching between Dennis and Bertie, Tracy refers to Dennis body-slamming and Gemma said that Dennis was not interested the whole time. Perhaps the uncertainty of the event weighed heavier on Gemma, being the head teacher and bearing responsibility, whereas from my position as an observer it was a positive encounter. I was also unaware of the interactions Gemma talks about and of the stress involved for her in doing all the paperwork. The quiet time was a big change from the structured book reading that had been part of the centre routine for as long as Gemma had been teaching there and, as discussed further in Chapter 7, Gemma wanted to try out different things as a result of our discussions on the structured book-reading sessions.

For Tobin (1997) and McWilliam (1999), notions of pleasure and desire are largely missing in educational conversations and need to be brought to the fore. Tobin (1997) describes how ignorance, inattention, fear and hostility to pleasure and desire are diminishing the quality of education for both young children and teachers in early childhood settings (p. 2). While Tobin's book was published more than 15 years ago, I believe not much has

changed in this respect. In the current political climate of measurable outcomes in education, there is little room for play that is not aimed at preparing children for the future.

As McWilliam (1999) argues it, contrary to the belief that pleasure is a natural emotion, teachers are trained to recognise and experience only pleasure that is seen as proper, within a particular time and place. McWilliam draws on Foucault's view that experiences are constituted about how something can and must be thought. In current educational contexts, an example of "proper" pleasure for teachers is satisfaction when students achieve, whereas sarcasm, which was often used by teachers a generation ago, is seen as inappropriate in the current sociocultural context. Textbooks about teaching make little mention of pleasure (McWilliam, 1999); children too are institutionalised about what is proper in regard to their bodies (Tobin, 1997). Children are subjected and therefore made into subjects (Davies, 2005). Through the structure of the early childhood setting, the activities and experiences that are available to them as well as the talk in these settings, children are made into subjects. It was only through paying attention to children both in pleasurable play situations and the more structured teaching activities through the video recordings and the follow-up dialogues in the teacher meetings that the subjectification of the children became visible.

Children's pleasure in their bodies was obvious on many other occasions, as evidenced in the video clip of a small group of children in water play on a hot day. In a project exploring children's playful and humorous communication, Alcock (2010) notes children often enjoyed water play; it often led to loudness and excitement, but it was also soothing and calming. I likewise observed that the children at WSC enjoyed water activities. One time, on a hot day, teachers filled a number of troughs for the children to play with water and it immediately became a popular activity. One group of children were filling containers and tipping the water onto waterwheels; another group were mixing water in a trough in the sandpit with sand, using bowls. The video clips of the children's water play show how

children were highly engaged and they spent a long time in these activities. Their play did not seem to have an outcome in mind, apart from being in the moment and having pleasure. Their body language, laughing and squealing show they were enjoying the water play, particularly the children who danced or stomped with bare feet through the puddles that had formed on the cobbles. Some of the children lay down in one of the puddles, moved their arms and legs up and down and rolled around in the muddy water. As noted above, Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) maintain that children's bodies are the most noticeable feature of them and yet not much attention is given to these.

When asked what their favourite activity was, several children said they liked the monkey bars. This preference was confirmed in my observations; during freetime activities a group of four-year-old girls would often play on the monkey bars. I noticed some of them were very skilled at getting across these bars. One girl even had a row of blisters on the palms of her hands from hanging on the bars and she had to be stopped from using the monkey bars, so her blisters could heal.

Leavitt and Power (1997), Tobin (1997) and McWilliam (1999) argue that, at times, children's wellbeing in childcare settings is secondary to their management and that children have a right to their own body. Watching the video clips of children's body language in pleasurable activities, such as the body language by the two boys described above, has made me realise how important bodies are in forming a social identity. In their actions, the children's perspectives have widened my own view of the world and they have taught me an important lesson on how subjectivities are embodied.

What Is Pleasurable for Children (and How Can There Be Pleasure for Teachers)?

Pleasure is one of those words that are hard to define; it means different things for different people. Grace and Tobin (1997) differentiate between fun, which is more conservative and

conforming, and pleasure, which is more diffuse and more likely to be produced by and for children. Bakhtin challenges us to accept society which, I argue, includes educational settings, as sites of both unifying (centripetal) and disrupting (centrifugal) societal order, problematising that there has to be a goal of achieving a shared symbolic structure (Duncan & Tarulli, 2003). This is not to say that there is no place for teachers passing knowledge on to children. I agree with Matusov (2009) that part of teaching involves monologic dialogues, where children are exposed to cultural and traditional norms; teaching is about finding a balance between monologic and dialogic teaching in a morally responsive way (de Vocht, 2015). What Bakhtin asks us to do is to go beyond ignoring children's desires and, instead, to reflect on their utterances of pleasure and not just tolerate but make room for them.

In a study of children's naughtiness Jones, Holmes, MacRae and MacLure (2010) ask how researchers can escape customary habits of seeing and thinking that are trapped in dominant discourses of what it means to be a learner and what is important knowledge. The same could be argued for teachers. The video clips that were puzzling or surprising to the teachers and/or me were taken into account in an attempt to take a more open-minded approach to understand what children want, what they choose to do, what is significant to them and who they are; or, in other words, what is pleasurable for children. To accept carnivalesque play and children's pleasure in this play, teachers need to feel confident in supporting this; initial teacher education has a role in supporting teachers to go beyond seeing this type of play as fun and accept pleasure is an important part of children's life. Perhaps such acceptance may lead to pleasure for teachers as well. A section of Tracy's field notes may perhaps be seen as an example of a teacher who is confident to be engaged in children's carnivalesque play:

Recently two girls were engaged at a small table in the family corner. They had cups and plates neatly set out with four chairs and a doll in a highchair. Noticing me walk past they decide to

invite me to their tea party. They must have had already preconceived ideas about how this should go 'cos they quickly corrected me when I sat in the 'wrong' chair! To submit myself to the role play I ensured that we were all playing on an even playing field. I quickly let them know that they were the hosts and I was the guest who needed to be guided. They soon let me know what they were serving (cupcakes and tea) and made sure that I had what I needed to play my part. They picked up their cups and held their little fingers. After several cups it would appear that one of them decided to mock all the pretense and burped! I think that the burping within this context felt acceptable to the child because it was just pretend. Given a real situation I am sure that this child would see this as socially unacceptable. (Tracy, teacher, field notes by Tracy, March 2013)

Tracy is invited by the children to join them in their play and, as she said, she submits to the children's rules, asking the children to guide her. Rules can be seen as powerful knowledge and, particularly in their domain of fantasy play, the children in the above event are very aware of this and adept at applying rules. It could be argued that directing Tracy to sit in another chair and particularly the burping could be seen as children exercising power; testing the boundaries to see how far Tracy would go. The transcript shows how the children used their knowledge of rules strategically, thereby controlling the situation.

Bakhtin's (1981) notion of ideologically becoming for education means allowing children to establish their own authority. Educators must have a strong sense of self, challenge their assumptions, be open to the other and willing to change. In the above transcript, Tracy engages in the girls' role play and takes direction from the children. She assumes that the burping is part of the role play, but would the child have burped if Tracy had not been there? Is it a testing of boundaries to see how far Tracy will go? The answer is difficult to determine from the information that is available here. However, we can say that Tracy goes along with the role play, even when it goes in a direction that is not her choice. As

Shields (2007) argues, Bakhtin favours a way of life that does not fit neat definitions, but is open to others who are different, relating to people and ideas that are different.

Carnavalesque Bodily Functions

The teacher discussion below shows how Tracy has defined pleasure for herself as humour.

Tracy explains how she saw “the joke in the burping”:

Tracy: And I saw the joke in it and we kind of laughed about it and they laughed and laughed and laughed and the fact that I didn't take it seriously and I was on the same level, there was no power [im]balance, we were all the same, I was just one of the girls, I think they really enjoyed that and then we were disrupted by a teacher. (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March 2013)

The next transcript, which is also from our last teacher meeting, illustrates a frank and free discussion by Tracy about bodily excretions, in “market square” idiom such as *bogeys* and *snot*. In dialogic research, it is important to let the hero/participants speak in their voice; the dialogue is therefore presented in its totality. In her use of the word *gross*, Gemma shows that she is normalised into a society where bodily excretions such as bogeys and snot and what these consist of cannot be discussed openly. However, she also shows a glimpse of an internal struggle to free herself from this. Gemma's shift of genre, as a result of the dialogue, will be further analysed in Chapter 7.

Tracy: It started out why don't we pick our nose, because someone was picking their nose and someone says it might bleed and I said....(laughing), nothing, and I said you might put your finger up there. One of them is going, mm and it might get stuck, haha and then I asked what are bogeys made out of and they are going, I don't know and I said what's that green stuff coming out of your nose and one's going mine is this colour, (laughing) and one of the girls: there's water in there too and I said it was quite runny sometimes, there would be some water content in there.

Gemma: Gross!

Tracy: (laughs) But do you know what, there's three boys and they are all four and there's one girl and they thought it was hilarious. I don't think that anyone'd ever had a conversation with them about bogeys.

Gemma: I do it every day. (laughs)

(All laugh.)

Lia: You don't talk what bogeys are made of?

Gemma: Nooo.

Tracy: They know bogeys are made out of snot, water, dust.

(All laugh.)

Tracy: One of them likes to eat them too, we stopped him now. They found that quite refreshing that an adult had a conversation with them about bogeys.

Lia: In a way children, for children it is their world, isn't it, in Jacarinda Street it was.

Tracy: Mmm [confirming], because it is taking an adult out of their comfort zone.

Gemma: Mmm. [pensive]

Tracy: Because children have already talked about poos and wees and bogeys and it is a very significant thing if you have been sick the night before. It's the kind of conversations that we keep hidden, but that kind of conversation is like whispers: X in the bathroom did...

Gemma: As teachers though, that stuff has been opened up a bit more. I think, constantly in the nursery they are talking about it and I find (laughs) myself going home and talking about it quite openly. I've never been able to talk about like using those common words, like wees and stuff, but because you work in that age group, you constantly talk about it, you become more open about it.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March, 2013)

Bakhtin (1984b) describes how carnival is communication in which people do not hold back; speech and gesture are frank and free (p. 10). Carnival also contains elements of grotesque

realism; it brings us back to bodies, which are one with the natural world and, in particular, parts of the body that are open to the world (Bakhtin, 1984b). Yet, from the Renaissance onwards, talk about bodies and bodily functions became hidden: “All signs of unfinished body were eliminated, its apertures closed, kept secret...the grotesque was seen as hideous, it did not fit the aesthetics of the beautiful” (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 29).

Tracy does not avoid using carnivalesque language of the market square; she shows that she understands that talk in everyday words about bodily functions is both important and pleasurable for children. She also realises that children can exercise power by using scatological humour, as they know that it takes adults out of their comfort zone. In discussing in detail bodily excretions such as the colour of snot and extending the conversation to what bogeys are made of, Tracy crosses over to the carnivalesque world of the children.

Conclusion and Implications

Dominant, authoritative adult discourses have shaped children’s subjectivities historically, institutionally, culturally and contextually through the dialogues of what is worth talking about. Looking through a Bakhtinian lens validates the children’s interactions as carnivalesque and as opposing the traditional, institutionalised, sanitised world; making visible how both children and teachers are institutionalised. A Bakhtinian carnivalesque analysis of children’s “nonsensical” utterances, and closer attention to what is pleasurable for children, gave the teachers and me a fresh view of these interactions as children actively participating in an open-ended education. A carnivalesque view of children’s utterances makes their agency visible, thereby opening up possibilities for more equalising educational opportunities. Drawing on Bakhtin’s view requires adults to take note of children’s desires and to not simply tolerate them but make room for them.

As a result of our discussions in the teacher meetings and by linking our observations with Bakhtinian theory and other research literature related to the topics, the teachers and I became more aware of the importance of children's interactions *through* their bodies, *with* their bodies and *of* their bodies. Children's utterances thus enabled Gemma and Tracy to see their practice and routines with fresh eyes, leading to shifts in teaching practice and routines.

Implications of these findings are that in an open-ended education, teaching involves both monologic dialogues, where children are exposed to cultural and traditional norms, and dialogues that disrupt societal order. Teaching is about finding a balance between these two opposing genres; paying close attention to what children tell us about their pleasure, in their language about bodies, through bodies and of bodies and acting on this in a moral answerability. It is suggested that carnivalesque play goes beyond seeing this type of play as fun, to viewing children's pleasure in this play as their right and to accepting pleasure is an important part of children's life. Perhaps such acceptance may lead to pleasure for teachers as well. In an open-ended education, teaching can and should be an inquiry into what and how pleasures can be part of the curriculum for both children and teachers. There is a role here for initial teacher education and in-service programmes to explain alternative discourses such as carnivalesque so that teachers can become more confident in supporting children in pleasurable activities.

I now move to discuss the findings in relation to teachers' moral answerability in Chapter 7.

Chapter 7:

Teachers' Moral Answerability as Becoming

This last chapter concerned with data analysis focuses on Bakhtinian ideology of moral answerability (see previous chapters and in particular Chapter 2 for further discussion of this concept) and dialogic subjectivities (see Chapter 3 for further explanations of subjectivities and in particular Bakhtinian perspectives of subjectivities). As explained in Chapter 2, Bakhtin's unfinished and at times confusing notes of his manuscript *Toward a philosophy of the act* (Bakhtin, 1993) provide an insight into the importance he ascribed to the responsibility that we have as human beings. Bakhtin (1993) seeks truth (*pravda*) in the given moment, rather than universal truth. Answerability therefore must always be an individual act in a moment that is unique both in time and place: "that which can be done by me can never be done by anyone else" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 40). The concept of answerability is particularly useful in a pedagogical context, as it requires individual teachers (and researchers) to each act in her or his own context. This can be translated to teaching; putting responsibility with teachers for their answerability in their own context and in each encounter with students.

Similarly it is Noddings' (2003) view that teachers cannot hide behind a universal theory and that each one needs to take responsibility as a unique individual in a historically unique moment. As she describes it, a moral answerability of caring is a relation or encounter that must include a moral act, which includes the idea that the one who is cared for is not expected to do what the carer does. Answerability has to be more than claiming that we care; Noddings argues that if those at the receiving end of our care do not feel cared for, we have failed. It follows therefore that, in the case of young children, who cannot perhaps express in the same terms that adults might use their feeling that we do not care, we must listen

carefully—with all our senses—to what children are telling us. And we must act; moral answerability always leads to action.

Answerability is not only an immediate response; Marjanović-Shane (2011) defines Bakhtin's *postupok* or moral responsibility as a lifelong experience in dialogism, where members are encouraged to be themselves. Relating this to a teacher role, teachers need to continually reflect on how they can and should respond beyond the immediate experience—for example, by a critical evaluation of their interactions, routines and practices—and they need to act on their reflections and make changes where required. Answerability thus includes teachers critically reflecting. Following on from the Chapter 6 discussion of children's embodied presence and dialogue, this means that teachers not only take into account verbal dialogue but also are open to children's embodied communication and act on this.

While Bakhtin leaves it to teachers to take individual responsibility, this does not mean that they always will or that they have no choice in how they answer (Sidorkin, 2004). While there is always a response, the responses are open-ended and one of these responses could be to not take responsibility. Bakhtin explains that one cannot *not* actualise oneself, but there are different possibilities (genres) as to how one can do this, including a response that is inward and therefore not visible for the other:

I am actual and irreplaceable, and therefore must actualize my uniqueness. ...From this my unique ought rises from my unique place in Being. I, the one and only I can at no moment be indifferent, (stop participating), in my inescapably compellingly once-occurrent life, I must have my ought. ...I must act from my own unique place, even if I do so only inwardly. ...[O]f course...I can ignore my self activity and live by my passivity alone, I can try to improve my alibi in Being, I can pretend to be someone that I am not, I can abdicate from my obligative (ought-to-be) uniqueness. (Bakhtin, 1993, pp. 41–42, original emphasis)

Although some see Bakhtin's truth in the moment as related to phenomenology (Sullivan, 2012), it does not follow that teachers' answerability is only in or of the moment, devoid from theory.

Bakhtin (1993) warns that an answerable deed must not be taken in isolation from self-contained theory, to avoid ending up with a purely instrumental or biological act (p. 56) and he advises bringing our actual life together with theoretical context. During the project, the teachers were given information about dialogue, Bakhtin and research articles on topics in which they showed an interest. My ongoing review of Bakhtinian and other literature shaped me as a participant in the dialogic research and therefore shaped the dialogues in the teacher meetings.

Polyphony or multiplicity of genres, like most of Bakhtin's concepts, is complex; polyphony in itself allows for many pathways and contradictions. One of the dilemmas is how to analyse the characters' ideological relationship to the world; how to present the participants as a conception of themselves rather than as the object of my finalising vision. Transcripts of the teachers' dialogue in this chapter, particularly when they talk about themselves, may illustrate their self-consciousness and "becoming" in dialogue. Attempts have been made to listen respectfully; the analyses of the dialogues are adult interpretations that aim not to define the other, but to increase our understanding of the encounter and our role in it. Some of the transcripts in this chapter illustrate the teachers' wonderings about what the children might have done or said next or would perhaps do in the future. They provide some evidence about the teachers' ongoing interest in the children's utterances and a respectful attitude to leave the children and the dialogues as open-ended. Everything was and is still possible.

It could be argued that the time the teachers and myself as the researcher spent on listening to the children on the video recordings, the interactions we had with the children, the dialogic discussions the teachers and I, had and the changes the teachers made can be seen as acts from our own place. The teachers and I all used different genres, as a result of our unique selves. It is difficult to determine with certainty if and how genres changed or were adapted as a result of our dialogues. At times, the changes in genres could have been the

result of internalised dialogue. In Gemma's utterance below, it seems as if she is in dialogue with herself:

It is just thinking about, we have such a busy day. But thinking what is important? How can we change that, so for me, I've things to take back and think okay, what can we change and make more meaningful, in-depth conversation even, you know with story books, some people say: just read them that's it. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording at 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2012)

As discussed in Chapter 4, dialogic research allows participants to be unfinalised. This text should not be seen as an attempt to fully describe the teachers' subjectivity as it is accepted that such a description can never be achieved (Bakhtin, 1984a). The above utterance and others in this chapter illustrate how the teachers became increasingly aware of their own consciousness. They show a polyphony of what it means to be a teacher.

Bakhtin's explanations of how Dostoevsky uses polyphony and positions the author in relation to the hero (character) are helpful in guiding a dialogic analysis. In her awareness of her own subjectivity in her utterance to herself, Gemma reminds me of Dostoevsky's clerk (Dostoevsky, 1982). Bakhtin (1993) explains that Dostoevsky's characters are ideologically authoritative and that for Dostoevsky it is more important how the hero appears to himself or herself; in other words, rather than being about the hero's fixed image, it is concerned with how the hero is conscious of himself or herself. For example, Devushkin in *Poor folk* does not depict the poor clerk but Devushkin's self-consciousness:

I am aware myself that I achieve very little as a copyist, but all the same I'm proud of what I do, I work in the sweat of my brow. Anyway, if I am just a copyist, what of it? Is it a sin to be a copyist? (Dostoevsky, 1982, p.61)

It could be argued that both the teachers and myself, similar to Dostoevsky's clerk, became more conscious and perhaps less certain of defining children's utterances.

Teachers as Unfinalised in a Dialogic Research Process

Teachers' "becoming". In a sense, the discussion of the video clips in the teacher meetings problematised what were everyday experiences of teacher–child encounters and children's pretend play. Bakhtin argues it is only play viewed by a non-participating spectator that becomes an enriched event between author and beholder:

Play images nothing, it imagines. ...[P]laying begins to approach art—namely dramatic action—only when a new, nonparticipating participant makes his [sic] appearance, namely, a spectator who begins to admire the children's playing from the standpoint of the whole event of a life represented by their playing. ...[A]nd in part *creates* it ... [B]y transposing it to a new plane. (Bakhtin, 1990, pp. 74–75, emphasis in original).

In my view, the teacher meetings where we reflected on video-recorded episodes of children's play represent the spectator role above and the reflections on the episodes of children's imaginary play transpose the play, which for the children was no more than imaginary play, to a new level. The playing children are probably unaware of the aesthetic³ value of their play, and they could be much like Makar Devushkin when he finds out he is portrayed as an actor by Gogol in Dostoevsky's (1982) *Poor folk*.

If what children are telling us in their everyday dialogues with or without adults is part of an overarching dialogue, it follows that implications need to be drawn from this. On Bakhtin's terms and as argued by Edmiston (2008) and Matusov (2009), teachers face a moral responsibility, as the super-addressee, to take note of what children want. The transcript recording children's pleasure in free water play in Chapter 6 shows that the teacher provided an unlimited supply of water and children had free rein to do what they wanted, in

³ Aesthetic, in a Bakhtinian context, refers to wholeness.

contrast to an earlier water activity, which was discussed at the teacher meeting, where Gemma reflects on how she limited children's use of water in the sandpit:

Gemma: I am going on about the water, but it is so dry, like I am paranoid.

Tracy: You know you have to change them all.

Gemma: Yeah it is just before lunch too.

(Gemma and Tracy, teachers, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

Later in that same discussion, in response to Gemma's comments about limiting children's access to water, Tracy analyses why teachers may restrict this kind of play. In a way, she is finding excuses for Gemma:

Tracy:.....because in the clip you (Gemma) keep saying that you are going on about the water, children getting wet and sometimes it is like we are here for all the other things that we do, I probably get so caught up in those tasks that I like not wanting children to get wet because we don't want to change them, we're so caught up in what we need to do next that we block things.

(Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

It could be argued that the reflections by Gemma and Tracy above are a response to the children's utterances and show teachers' becoming as a result of the children's and teacher-researcher dialogues. Tracy questions what their role as teachers is and she recognises that, as a teacher, she has been institutionalised to believe that "all the other tasks" (administration etc.) are more important than supporting children in pleasurable activities. On several occasions, both Gemma and Tracy return to this point about teachers having to do tasks that management and/or existing policy have put on them. After watching the video clip of themselves limiting children's pleasurable activities such as water play, the teachers reflected on their role and on what was important learning and as a result made changes to the way they did things, such as allowing children free rein to wallow in the puddles, as described in Chapter 6.

Proper Pleasure

Interestingly one of the children also noticed the change to more boisterous water play. Pointing to the children at the water trough, Billy said, "They are not playing properly. They are smashing the water" (researcher field notes, 29 October 2012). McWilliam (1999) and Grace and Tobin (1997) explain that knowing what is the right pleasure is learned in the dominant discourse of society at a particular time and in a particular place. Billy's comment shows how children are indoctrinated from a very young age into what is "proper" pleasure and what is not.

The teachers also had views of what was "proper" for parents to see. As discussed in Chapter 4, my day at the centre would usually start with allowing the children supervised access to the video camera and tripod to take photos. As I have explained, it was a popular activity which allowed me to reciprocate their willingness to participate in the research and to be filmed. As a result, too, the camera contained thousands of photos. These were downloaded onto the computer that the children have access to but, before the children could see the photos, Gemma deleted all images of the teachers and me. A similar process was followed for the centre slideshow which presented photos children had taken with the centre camera:

Tracy: We did that at Jacarinda Street [centre]; we let them take photos of each other.

Gemma: Mm.

Tracy: Yeah and it's quite interesting, what they come up with.

Gemma: We had that today. All I had is photos of eyes. They took photos of my legs. (All laugh.)

Gemma: We didn't put them on the slideshow. We delete them for the parents.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2012)

Although Gemma is happy for children to take photos of body parts of their teachers or me, she is very self-conscious of these photos and she does not want parents to see them. As

Tobin (1997) explains, bodies (and in particular teachers' bodies) were erased from consciousness, as a result of fear of child abuse in early childhood settings, towards the end of the 20th century. Similar to the story-writing episode, when Gemma initially did not want the story to have a violent ending, by deleting the photos she may be intending to pre-empt real or perceived parental concerns about inappropriate activities.

Many early childhood centres now run daily slideshows of photos that have been taken during the activities of that day, on a computer screen, for parents to see when they come to pick up their children. It could be argued that the use of modern technology, on the one hand, allows parents glimpses of their child's day and, on the other hand, can be seen as a tool of surveillance akin to Foucault's (1979) interpretation of the Panopticon. Gemma may perhaps accept that her own subjectivity as a teacher is always an embodied subjectivity in her relationship with children but, by erasing any reference to the teachers' bodies in the slideshows for parents, she may not (yet) be confident about having her teaching body visible for parents. As discussed in Chapter 6, teaching bodies are often ignored (Blaise & Nuttall, 2011; McWilliam, 1999).

In an educational context, McWilliam (1999) observes, the main reason the body gains attention is to enhance mental activities, as illustrated in the slogan, "a healthy mind in a healthy body". Apart from bodytalk in relation to children's care, bodies are being denied attention, almost as if they are improper. There is little talk in early childhood education settings about how bodies are pleasurable. Although physical activities are encouraged, they often serve as a tool to use up some of the boundless energy that young children have. At JSC, teachers have a planned daily session based on a perceptual motor programme (PMP), consisting of a 15-minute block of physical activities, which, the teachers explained to me, helps children to concentrate and learn later in the day.

At group times, children are encouraged to keep their hands to themselves. In the teacher meetings, Gemma expressed her disapproval of the body contact between Dennis and Bertie (see also the discussion in Chapter 6): “A couple of them weren’t really buying into it [the experimental rest activity]. I noticed Dennis was body-slamming” (transcript of teacher meeting, 3 December 2012). Leavitt and Power (1997) note it is the teachers’ task to govern children’s bodies, as Maddy illustrates in her role play as the teacher at group time, when she tells Jonathan to sit up straight and fold his arms so that his arms cannot touch anyone else. More than being accepted by teachers, parents and children as the norm in early childhood, this practice is often uncritically implemented in many early childhood settings.

Teachers’ Genres of Teaching

After reflecting on the video clips described in this chapter, Tracy makes comments in her field notes that illustrate her increased understanding of dialogic teaching practice that has no set outcome in mind:

What is pleasurable for children is when there is no objective in mind. Role play seems the most opportune moment for sharing what they know about the world and flout the social rules. Shared dialogue is more natural and not forced because there is no right or wrong answer, just people exchanging until they reach a shared understanding. Being engaged in conversation obviously needs to be relaxed and natural to elicit what children really think, rather than having a hidden agenda (teacher interviews). Dialogue that is reciprocal is an exchange where there is no power imbalance. (Tracy, teacher, field notes by Tracy, March 2013)

Gemma’s genre is perhaps more monologic; her comments in her field notes show how the video clips have increased her understanding of children’s capabilities and the need to listen attentively to children:

The video clips have made me realise how important every word a child says and how their conversations represent them. What I really found so incredible for this experience is how children think, come up with questions. (Gemma, teacher, field notes by Gemma, March 2013)

Viewing and discussing the video clips has also led the teachers to change their teaching practice. When I asked them for any comments after discussing the video clips of the interviews and of Gemma and Joe were talking, Gemma responded:

I am just trying to think,.....for me personally, as a teacher, is to be sensitive around them and go to them, to their own agenda, sort of thing, rather than ask those straight questions, wait for them to tell us about things. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

The comments from the teachers show the importance of reflecting collaboratively on our practice, using video-recorded play experiences. What are children telling us, what do we take from that and what is our response? Dialogic teaching involves documenting children's activities, in particular when we are puzzled by what we see. Without the video recordings, the teachers and I would not have noticed to the same extent what is pleasurable for children and we certainly could not have discussed the pleasurable activities that took place without the video clips of children engaged in them. Listening to children gives insight into what is important for them. It opens up wider dialogue on the questions of: what is education, should what happens be educational and could/should education look different?

The analysis and discussion of experiences that are pleasurable for children opened up an understanding of how physical bodies add to educational experiences and that teaching can and must include pleasure as a part of pedagogical events. Until my observations of the children in physical pleasures, I had a view of a largely intellectual, verbal dialogic pedagogy. Given that the children's transcripts reflect the importance of children's embodied pleasures, teachers and researchers may benefit from reflecting on their own beliefs about what is proper pleasure and how their actions in regard to this will affect very young children.

Teachers must govern through a well-regulated liberty, but they must also allow children to find out what they want for themselves and how to get there (McWilliam, 2001, p. 34). Are the only play opportunities provided pleasing and fun but masking purposes of discipline and conformity and with underlying intentions to prepare the child for an existing world, or is play also allowed that provides pleasure in and of the moment, with a life of its own (Grace & Tobin, 1997)? Children's interactions have given the teachers and me an awareness of children's pleasures and made us think about if and how children have opportunities for pleasurable activities and if and how teachers support or can support them. It is suggested that teachers and researchers not only increase their understanding, but also critically reflect on their own emotions to consider if or where these are limiting children's pleasurable activities.

“Jonathan, you're sitting up nicely”. Bakhtin (1986c) stresses that, although dialogue is directed towards an actively responsive understanding, a response need not be immediate. As discussed above, beyond defining dialogue as utterances in everyday language, Bakhtin believes in dialogism as a moral responsibility to respond: the author aims his or her utterance towards not only a present addressee, but also a higher “super addressee, whose absolutely just understanding is presumed, either in some metaphysical distance or in distant historical time” (Bakhtin, 1986c, p. 126). Bakhtin's dialogism of moral responsibility may provide a way forward beyond a critical analysis. Moral answerability points to an ethical responsivity, which is made possible when the authoritarian word is questioned, as Bakhtin (1984b) does in discussing dialogue and carnival.

As already discussed in Chapter 6, the acts of the children with each other can be seen as utterances in an overarching dialogue between children and teachers, whereby my meetings with the teachers and this analysis form a response to the children's utterances. The response of the teachers and myself in our discussion and any ongoing acts as a result of the

dialogue can be viewed as moral answerability. In the following role play of group time, the children's utterances show us what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a child through the children's eyes; the children are holding up a mirror to us as teachers. Noticing these utterances and then discussing these in a teacher meeting and following up with a change in practice represent a response. This response affects us in one way or another in our next encounter.

The vignette is presented in a transcript of a video-recorded dialogue between two children, Maddy (3 years, 10 months) and Jonathan (4 years). Their role play of group time gives an insight into the order of the early childhood institution; in their re-enactment of the teacher and child at group time, the children make visible the power structures and hierarchy in these type of activities. In this dialogue, Maddy mimics the teacher at group time and Jonathan, or Jonno as teachers and children often call him, acts at the child:

Maddy: [in a firm voice] Put your hand up and cross your legs. (Maddy is sitting on the teacher's chair next to a children's paint easel with a chart depicting images of the weather, days of the week, dates etc. She crosses her own legs under her chair, watching Jonathan.)

Jonathan: (shuffles back on his bottom, all the way to the back wall)

Maddy: Put your hand up. (Maddy speaks in a firm voice and puts her own arm up.)

Maddy: [in a sweet voice] Jonathan would you like to come over here? (Again, as she did earlier, as if selecting him, she makes a beckoning motion with her hand.)

Jonathan: (walks slowly up to Maddy with big steps with his cap in his hand and pulling knees high up. He stops right in front of the chart.)

Maddy: (follows him with her eyes and she chuckles a few times)

Maddy: [in her sweet voice again] Jonathan, what number are we up to?

Jonathan: (points to a number in the section of the chart that has the dates of the month)

Maddy: [in a pleased, affirmative voice] I know, 32! (She motions him with her arm to go back again and sit down.)

Jonathan: (walks back and sits on his bottom)

Maddy: Which day is it?

Jonathan: (comes running forward to the chart and points)

Maddy: It starts with an m, pah...pah? (pointing to a word and mouthing the first letter p)

Jonathan: [calling out] Sunday! (hops from one foot to another a few times)

Maddy: [affirmative, in a pleased voice] Sunday! (She claps her hands a few times.)

Maddy: How about, do you want to read a book with me? (She is standing facing the chart and tries to take it out from under the board clips, but then puts it back up again. She briefly glances at the teacher and the child who are discussing where the centre rabbit has gone. Maddy sits down on the stool next to the easel again.)

Maddy: No, you go over there. (She points Jonathan to where he has to sit down and she waits until Jonathan has gone there.)

Maddy: Put your hand up...[again in the sweet voice she used earlier] Jonno, would you like to come over here? (She cocks her head and watches Jonathan. Jonathan runs towards the chart.)

Maddy: It is... (pointing to pictures with different types of weather and pausing)

Jonathan: [in a high-pitched, funny voice] It is snowing! I love snow. (spreads out his arms wide, turns around)

Maddy: Nooo. [stretching the word out] (She smiles and cocks her head.)

(Maddy, aged 3years, 10 months, and Jonathan, aged 4 years, video-recorded observation at WSC, 12 September 2012)

Marjanović-Shane (2011) argues that children's play is often viewed as a developmental or social learning tool, rather than a "self-valued way of being in the world itself" (p. 202). As can be seen in the above transcript, play is both shaped by and shapes subjectivities. For Marjanović-Shane, play is a Bakhtinian actorial authoring of children, giving them authority or voice, while simultaneously accepting them as unfinalised. A Bakhtinian lens provides insights into how the children's role play problematises the authoritative voice of teachers at group time. The early childhood community is shown here as a site of struggle between the

centripetal force of authoritative teaching at group time and the centrifugal force of children's voices. As Duncan and Tarulli (2003) note, in play children can use a number of voices that are uniquely related to the child's world. The actions of Maddy and Jonathan show that they have completely mastered the genre of the authoritarian teacher and the child at group time, which is necessary before the speaker can manipulate the genre (Bakhtin, 1986b, p. 79).

Although Jonathan is the only child on the mat, Maddy pretends to select him from an invisible group of children, awarding the selection to him because he is "sitting up nicely". Maddy gives firm and direct instructions for Jonathan to "put his hand up and cross his legs".

The children's utterances cover a number of speech genres. Maddy acts as the teacher, as the child (when she is asked a question by the teacher) and as Jonathan's play friend, which are all unique to her and her life experience. It is difficult to ascertain whether Maddy uses the teacher's voice as a critique of the authoritarian, monologic voice of teachers at group time. It is certain from the transcript above, however, that Maddy has appropriated the speech genre of the teacher in intonation and form as well as in the words she chooses (Bakhtin, 1986b). Interestingly, although one of the teachers pointed out that Maddy herself often does not show the expected desirable behaviour at group time, she demands this behaviour of her pupil, directing Jonathan in a firm voice to sit up straight, put his hand up and cross his legs.

According to Duncan and Tarulli (2003), through dramatic play children can challenge or poke fun at adult forms of discourse and behaviour. Play affords children distance from adult discourses and they can use playful dialogue to expose weaknesses and limitations of these. Imitative elements, as in the above vignette, can be seen as satire, caricature or parody of adult roles and behaviours, problematising the existing authority structure of society (Duncan & Tarulli, 2003, p. 284).

The scenario is a familiar one in the majority of early childhood settings in New Zealand. Children in many childcare settings are gathered for group or mat time, where they are asked what day of the week it is and what the date is. Jonathan's responses and Maddy's confirmation that it is Sunday the 32nd show that, although the children have appropriated the genre of the monologic teacher, the meaning of days of the week and dates is beyond their current comprehension. Again, it illustrates an authoritarian and monologic genre of teaching in this particular daily ritual. It can be argued that Maddy and Jonathan, in their re-enactment of the teacher at group time, show their understanding of what teachers do and what children need to know.

Maddy's mimicking in itself is not disrespectful; one of the participating teachers points out that it is a very good imitation of what teachers say and do (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2012). However, it could further be argued that Jonathan, while seemingly playing the role of the child at group time, at the same time pokes fun at the activity. He walks backwards to the whiteboard; another time he walks in big steps with his knees high up; he responds in a funny voice. He does not sit close to the easel, as children are required to do at group time, but shuffles on his bottom all the way to the back wall. When Maddy, as teachers do, asks Jonathan on this sunny day what the weather is like, he responds, "It is snowing" in a high-pitched voice, turning around with his arms outstretched. Jonathan's actions, verbal response and intonation can be interpreted as carnivalesque behaviour; his mockery resembles folk carnival in medieval times. Bakhtin (1984b) argues that the folk humour in carnival can destroy the limited seriousness of the formal world, thereby opening up possibilities of a new world (p. 49). As one of the teachers comments, Jonathan is "trying to be one of the worst children ever" (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2012). Jonathan's carnivalesque behaviour, referred to by the teacher as "mocking" (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2012), can be

seen as a dialogic response to the monologic approach of group time routines. Whether Maddy's re-enactment is helping her to make sense of her world or whether she is also mocking teachers may not be clear; it is obvious, however, that she enjoys Jonathan's carnivalesque actions. She laughs heartily when Jonathan walks backwards to the whiteboard and when he says it is snowing.

Although we all have appropriated a range of unique speech genres, Bakhtin (1986b) explains, we may not always be able to theorise these (p. 78). In the meeting with the teachers, we agreed that Maddy has made a deliberate choice of speech genre as the teacher and that in her play she rises above what she would be able to articulate in a conversation. As Alcock (2010) notes, children can show complex communication systems as a continuously emergent dynamic process of becoming in their imaginative play (p. 225). Maddy was observed appropriating not only the speech genre of the monologic teacher, but also that of a friend, when Jonathan makes her laugh. When asked by a teacher, who was cleaning up in the background, what number of the month it was, Maddy instantaneously turned into a young child, sucking on a toy, sitting huddled and not making any verbal comments, but instead pointing to a number on the chart. Seconds later, when the teacher left, Maddy immediately returned to her role as the teacher. Maddy not only understands which genre to choose and when, but also how speech genres impose order and form in everyday speech and that structures of power and hierarchy determine which genre to apply in a dialogue (Morris, 1994). It is argued that in unscripted pretend play the actors are by definition unfinalised and they are "becoming" in a way that does not seem possible in a conversation under adult terms. Perhaps adults need to enter the child's domain of pretend play, rather than expecting children to conform to our agenda?

The speech genre of the teacher at group or mat time has been appropriated as one of those that teachers use, as part of their social position of being a teacher, to help especially

older preschool children (and perhaps early childhood teachers themselves?) understand the order of what it means to be a child who will need to obey and sit up nicely when moving on to school. Emilson and Johansson (2009) explain that social order in early childhood settings is fostered through routines that regulate and direct behaviour. It is Stephenson's (2009) argument that group or mat time is the most controlled regular event in early childhood settings and that it defines the demarcation between adult and child, giving children little influence on what happens (p. 220). The rules and roles of mat time routines can be seen as an implicit form of cultural reproduction, as opposed to adults visibly exercising explicit power (Emilson & Johansson, 2009). Teachers at group time display teacher authority, which Bakhtin describes as the authoritative monologic voice of teachers (Bakhtin, 1986c). The child is effectively formed or shaped in a given direction in an activity, in a way that reflects how order is maintained in the name of society (Emilson & Johansson, 2009, p. 74). The children's role play of group time above, in addition to offering an insight into their understanding of this routine, provides us with an example of children's struggle with the authoritative voice of the teacher and their developing ideological becoming.

I live in a world of others' words and my entire life is an orientation in this world, a reaction to others' words. (Bakhtin, 1986d, p. 143)

The selection of the video clip of the children's role play as the topic of discussion for my meeting with the teachers and our collaborative analysis of it can be seen as an ethical response to the children's utterance. The children's utterance of what it means to be a teacher and what it means to be a child affected us, teachers and researcher, and changed us. It can be argued that the children's role play facilitated a pedagogical shift in Gemma's practice, as can be seen in the next transcript:

Gemma: I just put down, what I found so incredible about this experience how children think, how they change what they are doing depending on people's reactions to them and their

personalities, That clip still sits with me, how Maddy, that still sits with me, how it can be interrupted and how different, quickly changing character, and we've talked about that.

Watching the video back I wasn't aware how children responded sometimes and how easy it is to forget when you've got routines, there are other things to look after and manage, it made me realise how important [unintelligible] as individuals and how we need to support them.

(Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March 2013)

As a result of our reflection on the children's role play, the teachers made changes around group-time activities. For example, the centre no longer has group time in order to divide the children into separate groups for lunch. Lastly, making the children's re-enactment of group time public in this study can also be seen as an ethical responsibility.

Tracy Challenges Gemma: Does a story need a nice ending?

Dialogic pedagogy is not only concerned with what children want as teachers still have a role in monologic transmission of existing knowledge; part of dialogic teaching is giving listeners the information they need to take part in dialogue. There is a fine balance between monologic and dialogic teaching. Several discussions at the teacher meetings illustrate the ethical dilemmas teachers face. The next transcript is an excerpt of the second half of a teacher–children dialogue from a collaborative story-writing session. Gemma scaffolds children's collaborative story writing; she starts with the topic (space) and eventually changes the ending of a story made by the children Walter, Maya, Brendan and Peter. In this transcript, Gemma writes down on a large sheet of newsprint, which is attached to an easel, what the children say should go in the story:

Gemma: Let's go back to our story, what happened when the alien took W and M to the cave that had oxygen?

Walter: Uhm, there was a bear in it.

Gemma: A what sorry? (leans over to hear)

Walter: A bear

Brendan: A moon bear called Brendan

Gemma: A moon bear called Brendan

Gemma: And did what?

Brendan: Saved the girl.

Walter: And Walter.

Gemma: A moon bear took Maya and Walter and took them where?

Maya: To earth.

Gemma: And took them back into the space rocket which went back to earth.

Peter: Someone called Peter then divebombed on the bad guys.

Gemma: And then someone called Peter?

Peter: Divebombed.

Gemma: Divebombed, okay. (surprised)

Gemma: Perfect, divebombed on the bad guys. Is that the end?

Peter and Walter: No.

Gemma: What else? It's your story, how do you want it to end?

Peter: Somebody...[unintelligible]

Gemma: Nice? can we have a nice story?

Walter: And a naughty person kicked the bomb in Walter's face.

Gemma: I don't know that I like that. I don't want to hurt anyone in our story. I want a nice ending.

Gemma: So far we got: a moon bear called Brendan saved Maya and Walter and took them back into the space rocket which went back to earth. Then someone called Peter divebombed on the bad guys. The end?

Peter: No.

Walter: Yeah it is eh?

Gemma: The end?

(Gemma writes The end.)

Walter: the End.

Gemma: Well done, thank you very much for the story. I'll type it up and you can then do the pictures. Okay? Is that a good idea?

(Gemma, teacher, and Walter, Maya, Brendan and Peter, all aged 4 years, video-recorded observation at WSC, 28 November 2012)

The video clip was selected for discussion in the teacher meeting by Gemma, because it also included Gemma reading a self-made book about herself as a teacher. Tracy commented on the above part of the video recording, which was not related to Gemma's book about herself as a teacher but was instead about a collaborative story-writing session and Gemma's insistence that the story needed a nice ending. As Grieshaber and McArdle (2010) note, children are fascinated by horror and gore. Interestingly, Gemma does not object to "divebombing the baddies". She obviously adheres to a world where it is okay to use violence provided you are on the right side. Her choice of words also changes subtly: at first Gemma invites the children to give her the next line in the story, saying that it is *their* story, but then when one of the children comes up with a violent line, Gemma refers to it as *our* story. The transcript below shows a philosophical dialogue at the teacher meeting, where Tracy questions if teachers could or should change a child's story to a more sanitised version:

Tracy: Your words in it were let's have a nice ending and so I wrote does every story need a happy ending?

Gemma: Funny that you mention that, because when I did actually write that, I remember this clearly, because I was aware that Lia was also videoing me.

(Tracy and Lia laugh.)

Gemma: I am thinking, do I, you know, end up with a nice ending or do I put in what they want. Why am I making up a nice ending, when it is their story, you know?

Tracy: I know because I wrote: is it a realistic view about things that shape the view of others?

Gemma: Mm.

Tracy: Often they watch the news and there is a bombing.

Lia: Yes but you are saying?

Tracy: Like being exposed to the bombing at the 6 o'clock news.

Tracy: Because I keep thinking about this too, we're reading the three little pigs and the wolf gets burnt and it is part of the story and it never gets altered and it is a pretty violent ending.

Gemma: Yeah.

Tracy: And we're going along with that.

Gemma: It's about going along the PC [politically correct] path though, are we being open and honest with these children about things or do we, some EC [early childhood] centres are pushing forward let's not, keep them in a closed box, that debatable...and again it is knowing who your families are and who your children are.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

Bakhtin and the Subject/Self in Dialogue

For Bakhtin, the self is always dialogic, in the relationship between I and the other. The self always needs the other; without other, there is no self. "Being is, as it were, once and for all irrevocably between myself as the unique one and everyone else as others for me" (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 129). As stated above, for Bakhtin (1986d) dialogue is ongoing and there is no final meaning of self.

Life is by its very nature dialogic. To live means to participate in dialogue, to ask questions, to heed, to respond, to agree, and so forth. In this dialogue a person participates wholly and throughout his whole life. (Bakhtin, 1984a, p. 293)

All involved in the project—the children, the teachers and myself—are unfinalised and becoming in our open-ended identities. As discussed in Chapter 2, for Bakhtin the self is not *in* the subject but *between* subjects. Both *I* and *the other* come to consciousness through

dialogue. Dialogue can be seen as a way of being, through which an individual learns about himself or herself; our own presence depends on the presence of others. Bakhtin (1993) has no faith in rules, norms, theories and systems as he believes they blind us to the particular person and a particular situation. How then does the dialogical self apply to children and teachers in early childhood settings? Bakhtin uses the term *ideological becoming* to represent the development of our system of ideas and how we view the world. Ideological becoming is not about the individual in isolation; Bakhtin always considers the individual and his or her ideas holistically and within a social context. He makes the distinction between two categories: the authoritative discourse of the father and teacher, the rules and the norms (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 342); and the internally persuasive discourse, which is the everyday discourse. The struggle between these two discourses, where the authoritative word demands authority, he calls the *contact zone* (p. 342). In this contact zone we develop our own ideologies. The following two separate reflections from the teachers about group time shows how the video-recorded vignettes of the children's play and the dialogues between the teachers and me led the teachers to question group-time routines:

Tracy: I think in some ways, as much as we think we give them a choice, I think it [group time] is still quite directed. (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

.....

Gemma: Why do we do it, what is the purpose [of group time]...The purpose is very structured, it is very planned, uhm the children don't have choices, so if it goes against the philosophy why do we do it? (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

Reflecting on the excerpt where Mariah persists that on Father's Day she will not turn off the television in her room, Tracy leaves the dialogue open and unfinalised:

Tracy: It would actually have been quite interesting to go back to her [Mariah] the following week and say what did you actually do on Father's Day.

Lia: Yes, yes.

Gemma: Mmm.

Tracy: Like did she change her mind? This kind of dialogue, did it actually conflict enough with her, make her conform?

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

The teachers' reflections show how their discussion of the vignette helped them to realise the power dynamics of group time. As shown in the transcripts, the ideological process is not hidden in someone's mind; "it is not in the word of the soul but in the world of word, sound, gesture" (Bakhtin/Medvedev, cited in Ball & Freedman, 2004, p. 29). Ball and Freedman (2004) conclude that ideology is observable and accessible for research. While ideology belongs to the individual, the creation and comprehension of it always happen in social interaction. Bakhtin's thinking therefore offers a self-emerging for teachers and the possibility of research to make ideological becoming visible. Teachers became more aware of children's and their own subjectivities; they became more reflective and more deliberate.

Unique selves and open-ended dialogues. Bakhtin (1990) argues that we always have our own unique point of view: what I see cannot be seen by someone else. Furthermore, he implies a responsibility to apply our uniqueness: "I *am* actual and irreplaceable and therefore must actualize my uniqueness" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 41, original emphasis). Although the dialogues about the video clips undoubtedly affected both the teacher participants and myself as the researcher, reflections show how the effect was different for each of us. Bakhtin (1986b) describes how each unique individual is shaped and develops further as a result of continuous and constant interaction, assimilating, reworking and reaccentuating words of others (p. 89). Gemma reflected on her reading techniques: "Excitement and enthusiasm in voice and smaller group, keeping children engaged" (field notes by Gemma, March 2013).

The comment reinforces the importance Gemma gives to her intonation and teaching strategies at that time and that she wanted to reflect on these:

I just wanted to see my strategies, like what strategies am I trying to use, acknowledging negative behaviours but also keep acknowledging positive behaviours. In general; just to see how I was reading a story. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2012)

In contrast, in reflecting on that same book-reading episode, Tracy noticed that children were more empowered:

They really did have ownership of that story even though it was read to them...it would have been so empowering him, you know, like I can do this and I can show you what I know about this (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 1st teacher meeting, 11 October 2012)

Exploring Own and Children's Subjectivities

Especially during the later teacher meetings, Gemma and Tracy became more confident about discussing their perspectives. Discussions of teaching and teacher-child relationships became more complex, uncertain and open-ended. The next transcript illustrates how Gemma's genre has changed from a monologic teaching role, where she wants to know how her voice sounds, as discussed in the transcript of her practice earlier, to a teacher who has shifted her attention to asking what the children think her role is and leaves this open-ended :

Gemma: And he [Piaresh] is so expressional about things and I think who does he see me as?

Lia: Mm.

Gemma: Who does he kind of, uhm, what is my role to him? He does kind of see me as a friend, come and play do the fishing with me, because then he will take you, he will say something, physically show you, like when you make a comment, like today, Ronnie [teacher] was saying I might need to look in the mirror, he grabbed her hand I'll show you where it is, just like what does he think what his role is as well?

Lia: Mmm.

Gemma: To be there, what is his place, does he feel that he needs to please us? Does he feel like we're a friend to him? It's just, it's just interesting what does he think, you know?

Tracy: Mm.

Gemma: Because he loves the adult interaction too.

Lia: Mm I think they see adults as different from themselves, not the same.

Gemma: Yeah, definitely.

Tracy: Mm.

(Pause.)

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

Earlier discussions were brought up again, such as the one about the book writing where Gemma changed the ending of the story when the child originally had dictated a violent ending to her:

Lia: Okay that one, we kind of agree on that, that children find out for themselves, then we come back to that really interesting point and maybe we already said enough about it for today, with that bad stuff happening, what is then our role, is our role to kind of divert to something else, or can we let that happen and how far and I don't have the right answer.

Gemma: No, no (firm), my personal opinion would be as long as it was explained and appropriate that children weren't going to be uhm, obviously copying behaviour and doing something that they shouldn't, but also like really explained why and the aspect of that around it, because like I said before, I feel they need to know what's going on.

Tracy: Mm.

Lia: So you would be happy for them to have a story like that and have an [violent] ending like that but you would still express your view on it somewhere in that?

Gemma: Yeah.

(Pause.)

Gemma: I think I would. I would not necessarily put it in the story.

Lia: But you find somewhere a place to say what you think about it.

Gemma: Yeah.

Lia: Would that then be with the purpose of making the child change his mind though?

Gemma: (laughs) That is a good point.

Lia: Look, I am not saying I would do anything different, don't get me wrong, just brainstorming?

Gemma: I can't think of an example. I know I have done this before, I guess maybe not, yah, that is a hard one.

Lia: Like with, I am aware, with the child, who didn't want to do something nice for her dad, while I was observing, I felt the teacher's frustration and I was not hugely frustrated, but there was this little niggle, why can't she just do this for her dad?

Gemma: Mmmm.

Lia: I am against watching a lot of television, that probably doesn't help, but then later I thought why should she conform? Again, you wouldn't put it to the child that he has to change, but you still make it clear that it is wrong and that you would like the child to think like you think, not with the intention that you can think this and he can think that, but you are giving him that, because you want him to change his mind about it, right? Or not?

Gemma: Mmmm (unsure?) not changing his mind, but is he aware of what he is actually putting in that story, does he understand what a bad guy is. I must have asked him. Did I ask him what a bad guy is?

Tracy: Mmm, right at the end.

Gemma: What do they define as a bad guy. That is what I would quite like to know. A bit more in-depth.

Lia: That might be a good question, they would be interested in talking about that even when the bad guy comes up.

Gemma: What he might think is, seen from a cartoon and not even as bad as what I've got pictures in my head, you know, sword fighting in those cartoon, Bin Teng or whatever, or is a bad guy like the aliens on TV, like does he have an understanding of what he is actually saying?

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

The dialogue shows the uncertainty the teachers and I felt in having to choose between influencing children to “a right way” of thinking and giving the children freedom to author their story. An open-endedness enters into the dialogue, when Gemma and Tracy start wondering what children think a bad guy is. In the last two meetings especially, more open-ended and uncertain dialogues started to happen, either consciously or subconsciously. Tracy, for example, considers the open-endedness of the transcripts:

What makes me think, how do the transcripts look to someone who doesn't know the children or the context? I feel that it was easier for me as I am familiar with all of the participants. But would an outsider reach the same conclusion? Could they find something that I overlooked?

(Tracy, teacher, field notes by Tracy, November 2012)

Again, this reflection marks a shift towards teachers becoming more accepting that there is no one right answer and illustrates how the dialogues led to more open-endedness and uncertainty. In Chapter 5, Gemma expresses her disappointment that when children are asked what teachers do, the children respond minimally. Tracy also wonders how children actually see the relationship with their teachers. She writes that her common thread throughout the project was: “To find out how children actually perceive us?” (Tracy, teacher, field notes by Tracy, December 2012). The following transcript shows that both Gemma and Tracy ask themselves how they can make children understand that they have chosen to be teachers and that they want to be with the children at the early childhood centre. After viewing a video recording in which Gemma shares with the children a book that she made about her lifelong

wish to be a teacher and her journey to get there, Gemma and Tracy reflect on what children think about them:

Gemma: What do children actually think, what is your [teacher's] purpose and how do you come to me in my life, like what is your purpose here in my life?

.....

Tracy: But for me it was like children get dropped off at this place and they know what mum and dad's role is and they know what we do, that we care for them, because that was quite interesting because your responses were that a teacher reads to them, looks after them, goes outside.

Gemma: Mm.

Tracy: Plays and helps them, but really it makes them think what is your purpose in my life and how did you get there, because you explained how you really enjoyed children and you decided to do something like that (to Gemma).

Tracy: And so for them that was probably quite empowering because they probably [think that] like mum and dad you just happen to be there, but probably for a child they understand that you have actually made a choice to be here.

Gemma: Yeah.

Tracy: It could possibly be quite empowering for them because you are not just being there for the sake of being there, you've actually made that decision to be there and to be with them.

Gemma: Hmm. (confirming)

Tracy: And for them to actually [unintelligible] like you've made this choice and how lucky to have you here.

Gemma: Yeah, you're right.

Lia: But we don't say that?

Gemma: How would they understand that?

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

The transcript shows the teachers' commitment to the children in their care and their desire to be with the children. Gemma and Tracy ask themselves who they are in children's lives and what children actually think about their teachers and again they leave the question open and the children unfinished.

Co-authoring: Where Do Teachers Fit in Children's Role Play?

In previous chapters I have discussed how it is difficult for children to express their opinions in adult-oriented interviews whereas in play, which is seen as the child's world, children seem to be more competent at showing us their perspectives (Duncan & Tarulli, 2003). What role then do teachers have in children's play?

In the following discussion, children's play is compared with improvisation theatre. Through a collaborative dialogic analysis, the teachers and I arrive at a point of understanding children as experts in play situations and understanding dialogic situations as happening in unstructured, spontaneous interactions:

Lia: In their [children's] interactions, even in that play, that rest time one, if you see them interacting that is perfectly natural and quite complex, their interactions with one another.

Tracy: Mm.

Lia: And nothing needs explaining and they pick up straight away, it's very smooth, it doesn't break down, because the other one does not get it, do you know what I mean? Always get from each other what they mean?

Gemma: Right.

Lia: And it is almost a much better version of what we do in Scared Scriptless.

Gemma: Yeah. (surprised)

Tracy: Improv.

Lia: Yeah.

Lia: Yeah and in that sense, we don't fit with that?

Gemma: No.

Lia: We're almost a bit—

Gemma: of an imposter.

Lia: Yeah.

Gemma: Well it is, even, you do see them quite happily playing and you're trying to interact, it is awkward.

Tracy: It is, it is quite scripted, you think about what we do and say, it is quite scripted.

Lia: Yeah but they are equally capable of doing their script. It's not like you've got to respond

Trace, now I've said this.

(Tracy laughs heartily.)

Lia: This happens kind of, dialogic right.

Gemma and Tracy: Yes.

Lia: But they have that too, with each other, but then asking what do you think, we with all the strategies.

Tracy: Ah, I see what you mean.

Lia: And all the skills that you tried and I was blown away by those strategies and the book that you made, everything, it wasn't kind of like matching, making a good match was it?

Gemma: No.

Lia: Their response, there came responses and there was more than what we got before, because before they were just whispering, if they said anything. This time they were much more confident in responding but still a kind of like: you ask, they said something, you asked, they said something.

Gemma: Yeah, they didn't kind of initiate themselves, oh Gemma, oh oh. [in an excited voice]

Lia: No.

Gemma: It was Emma, she said something, she interrupted, it was still from my question, a wee bit delayed, it wasn't like, oh Gemma I notice what you do as a teacher today. It's not that they come saying to you I know what you do as a teacher.

Tracy: Mmm.

Gemma: What your job is, yeah it was very much: answer what I have said.

Lia: Yes it was, eh.

Lia: I just don't know any more. I don't know uhm. I think that it has to be in those spontaneous moments and you ask Maddy and it is kind of by accident, not thinking much about it, but still as you said that question about fairness, I might not have asked otherwise.

Tracy: Yeah, I might not have asked otherwise, I wouldn't have like, if I hadn't thought about getting them to really think about something. I wouldn't have asked that question: do you think it's fair that they put an empty box beneath the Christmas tree.

Lia: Mm but it kind of happened in a moment, it wasn't kind of planned for.

Tracy: No.

Gemma: It was on her [Maddy's] own agenda, whereas with me [asking about the teachers' role] it was my idea.

Lia: It was initiated by her.

Tracy: Yes, because I walked in the room and all the garlands were up on the ceiling and they go: oh look, look, look and I go, what's that and they: Oh it is Christmas.

Lia: So she [the child] wanted to have a conversation about Christmas whereas [in the interviews] we wanted a conversation about teachers.

Gemma: *We* wanted it.

Lia: *We* wanted it.

Tracy: Mm.

(Pause.)

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

The above transcript illustrates how Gemma and Tracy view their engagement with children in either play or dialogue and, by juxtaposing different scenarios, they reflect on whether there can be an equal power relationship between teachers and children. In planning an

activity from which she wanted to find out how children saw her, Gemma made a book of her life and her aspirations as a teacher. However, children's responses to Gemma's story about wanting to be a teacher are brief; the children comply by giving (minimal) answers, but they do not offer any spontaneous comments or ask Gemma any questions. On the other hand, Tracy reflects on her conversation with Maddy about the presents under the Christmas tree and concludes that, when the conversation follows the child's interest, or when it is initiated by the child, the conversation seems to be more natural and more equal.

In his book about his experiences of playing with his son, Edmiston (2008) describes playing together as co-authoring possible selves together (p. 32). Inspired by Bakhtin, he rejects ethics that conform to universal rules and instead accepts ethics as being answerable to the person who addresses them (p. 17). Edmiston accepts a view of play that just *is*, not as something that leads to a particular outcome. He argues that Bakhtin's dialogical theory of ethical action guides the role of adults as co-authors in play. Edmiston's argument to accept play as being in the moment, rather than having a particular outcome in mind, can also be applied to dialogues with children. Gemma's plan to read a narrative on why she wants to be a teacher to the children did not lead to meaningful responses from the children, whereas Tracy's conversation, which was based on the child's interest and initiated by the child, was more equal.

A little further in the same discussion, Tracy and Gemma take responsibility for their lack of involvement in play. Gemma thinks that teachers can be involved in play as long as they place themselves as equal to children:

Tracy: It makes me wonder sometimes are we too scared to play with them.

Gemma: Sometimes, I think.

Tracy: We were frightened to play with the children.

Gemma: We were too worried what others might think.

Lia: Mmm.

Gemma: And that's what holds it down.

Lia: What should we, and that's fine too, we don't have to be children.

Gemma: Yeah.

Lia: Should we be in that situation, should we be doing it, should we be like children or, you know?

Gemma: I...like that.

Lia: Yeah, but is that the role of the teacher, is that the role of every teacher or is that what you do because you enjoy it and if there is time, you do it?

(Pause.)

Lia: Well how do you see teaching and how do you see children, or teachers and children how do you see those?

(Pause.)

Gemma: Uhhh interesting to put that into words. For me in particular I think there is that balance, I do think that in play there's equals, but [if] we are still role-playing in that play there's an equal. For the child, obviously not having that teaching, that leadership role,.....I think it can be put into an equal uhm scenario, that we are not there to just be up there, we're down there.

Lia: But can it be like that?

Gemma: I think it can.

(Pause.)

Gemma: (laughs) I do think it can. I think there is that balance and people need to understand that balance.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

When I asked Tracy about teacher–child relationships and whether teachers and children could be equal, she responded:

I like to think it is reciprocal but I don't think it is. I think there is still a lot of the time I am the teacher and as hard as we try to sometimes break that balance there is often something that offsets it? (Tracy, teacher, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

Although both Tracy and Gemma think that it is possible for teachers to co-author with children in children's pretend play, they realise that it is difficult as a result of the power imbalance between teachers and children in early childhood settings. It is argued that teachers are more powerful than children not only because of the mostly adult-imposed rules to keep children safe, but also as a result of the institutionalisation of both children and teachers, as will be discussed next.

Teachers' Institutionalisation

It can be argued that it is not only the children who are institutionalised. Gemma and Tracy, when engaging with children, are often aware of being outside the world and being watched. This awareness was seen as a limitation operating against being engaged in children's role play. Tracy questioned the highly structured sessions at Jacarinda Street centre and, although Wisteria Street centre had more time in the programme for child-initiated play and ready access to props, Gemma also commented on surveillance and the institutionalisation of early childhood centres as barriers against being involved in play.

Tracy: Well it's also...people can just literally walk past that fence, quite open. People driving past can see exactly what's going on. Because it's kind of like, it's almost being intrusive.

Gemma: Yeah.

Tracy: The outside world looking in.

Gemma: And then I also think this where we have the children and our programme and our routines. It is very dominated by scheduled times.

.....

Tracy: But I always disagreed with the structure too because I used to have conversations with staff about: they are children, where is the time for them to play and just *be* the child.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 11 November 2012)

“Right start again, start from scratch what we think is important”. I return to a transcript that was discussed in Chapter 6 to illustrate children's pleasure; this time, the purpose is to focus on the dialogue between the two teachers and the change in Gemma's genre as an example how adult subjectivities are never stable or finalised, nor are they affected only by past experiences; they are also shaped in the moment *through* dialogue. The transcript starts after Tracy has just described how she talks with the children of bogeys and what they are made of:

Gemma: Gross!

Tracy: (laughs) But do you know what, there's three boys and they are all four and there's one girl and they thought it was hilarious I don't think that anyone'd ever had a conversation with them about bogeys.

Gemma: I do it every day (laughs).

(All laugh.)

Lia: You don't talk what bogeys are made of?

Gemma: Nooo.

Tracy: They know bogeys are made out of snot, water, dust.

(All laugh.)

Tracy: One of them likes to eat them too, we stopped him now. They found that quite refreshing that an adult had a conversation with them about bogeys.

Lia: In a way children, for children it is their world, isn't it, in Jacarinda Street it was.

Tracy: Mmm [confirming], because it is taking an adult out of their comfort zone.

Gemma: Mmm. [pensive]

Tracy: Because children have already talked about poos and wees and bogeys and it is a very significant thing if you have been sick the night before. It's the kind of conversations that we keep hidden, but that kind of conversation is like whispers: X in the bathroom did...

Gemma: As teachers though, that stuff has been opened up a bit more. I think, constantly in the nursery they are talking about it and I find (laughs) myself going home and talking about it quite openly. I've never been able to talk about like using those common words, like wees and stuff, but because you work in that age group, you constantly talk about it, you become more open about it.

(Tracy and Gemma, teachers, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March 2012)

An interesting dialogue ensued with Gemma, who initially opposes the carnivalesque talk, in which she parodies Tracy's comment on discussing bogeys with the children by saying, "I do it every day". Influenced by Tracy's response, Gemma changes her initial reaction of talking about bogeys as "gross" to a genre of a teacher who openly discusses bodily functions with children and uses words such as *poos* and *wees*. The transcript shows how the dialogue between the teachers has led to a change for Gemma so that she finishes the conversation in a way that indicates it is now normal to discuss bodily functions.

In addition to changes in the way the participant teachers in the research talked with children, there were changes in routines and the structure of the day. In the following utterance, Gemma reflects critically on her actions as a teacher:

Gemma: Now even in the last couple of weeks, I am asking questions and I am thinking mmm. I shouldn't have asked that....I'll do it in the future, because you can't go back on these things, but I wish I had thought about it a little bit more about these questions, but it is very clear to me, how I can do it. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

As well as reflecting on her dialogue with children, Gemma explains how the routines in the centre have been changed as a result of her involvement in the project:

I've even in the last, last couple of weeks, even in the last week, I've stepped away from that thinking, yes it is 9.45, group time has not commended just yet, but that's okay, because we don't want to be rushing those children. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

Gemma: Yes, but we've always have had story, activity and resources, we've always had this permanent lunch set at this time, it was structured, it was not significantly changed, whereas now we threw it out at Tuesday night [staff] meeting: right start again, start from scratch, from what we think is important and have some evidence to back it up and why we are doing things, why we are doing this now? (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 3rd teacher meeting, 3 December 2012)

Gemma: I think it's also about time management for teachers and thinking about what is important and how can we make things simpler, yes there is planning, yes there is self-review, there is all those things, but how can we make it simpler on ourselves and I think as teachers it's one thing I learnt from this particularly is those things are second, they are not first, as much as other people tell you, management and such sort of things, sometimes it is very important to get it done but it is about balancing, how can I do both and make sure the key things are there for the children. (Gemma, teacher, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March 2013)

Gemma's reflections show how her subjectivity of her role of the teacher has changed to a less conforming teacher who has decided for herself that the children come first. When asked what has changed for her since we started the project, Tracy expresses the open-endedness of her role as a teacher:

Where do I fit, like, am I you know, am I doing too much, you know, am I really there? I think am I really there for those children, am I taking those opportunities? (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 12 November 2012)

Tracy's subjectivity also changes. Towards the end of the project, she critically reflects on her role as a teacher and how teachers are institutionalised, both through their experiences and training, and that they are thus prohibited from supporting children in an open-ended education where the children can make their own discoveries:

Our experiences shape the way in which we perceive children, their learning and how it should be done. Without a doubt this influences the way in which we choose to interact and transmit information. I do believe however in some cases our need to conform with society and the information that we have been given prohibits us from truly allowing children to make realistic discoveries about their world. (Tracy, teacher, field notes by Tracy, December 2012)

Gemma does not address power relationships directly, but she often reflects on the importance of listening respectfully to the children and how she has changed in her relationship with children:

Children need to be given more choices and it's made me think about our programme and what we are offering to children. Are they given opportunities and choices, do they have a say in the things we do? (Gemma, teacher, field notes by Gemma, December 2012)

It [the project] has made me realise how important every word a child says and how their conversations represent them. (Gemma, teacher, field notes by Gemma, March 2013)

In their play children interpret personalities, mannerisms and even voice tone and share this in their play. (Gemma, teacher, field notes by Gemma, March 2013)

My Positionality

My position as the researcher who has been thinking and reading about teacher-child dialogues for a long time puts me in a different position from the teachers. I have decided on the topic and what the structure of the research is; I observe the teachers in their practice and

facilitate the meetings. While both Gemma and Tracy seemed comfortable during the meetings, it was not until one of the last meetings that Gemma said that she had been very nervous about being filmed. When transcribing the meetings, it was also noticeable that Gemma and Tracy spoke more freely at the last two meetings. Having been enculturated in a monologic education system for most of their lives, the teachers were at times uncertain about voicing their own opinion:

I must admit, I looked through the previous emails to see exactly not what was expected, but kind of what you are looking for. (Tracy, teacher, audio recording of 2nd teacher meeting, 11 November 2012)

It was only in her later field notes and at our last meeting that Gemma expressed how she had felt when her interactions with the children were being filmed:

The things that challenged me the most was being aware a video camera was there, knowing I was to be careful how I would say things and it made me nervous. This got easier as time went on. From watching the clips made me realise the importance of ensuring everyone is included and being aware of the soundings. (Gemma, teacher, field notes by Gemma, March 2013)

Gemma: But that [video recording her practice] has really helped because now when people come into the room, I haven't felt like that, I felt I've come into my new position quite confidently, in my interaction. Because I have been observed and I know I am doing okay and when other people come into the room, like relievers, students and things, who are constantly seeing what you are doing because they want to learn, I feel like more open, to share with them because I know I am doing an okay job.

Lia: Mm. That's interesting, eh.

Gemma: I feel it has actually helped. I think the video-taping has helped because I have become more confident.

Lia: And also that it's kind of okay if something isn't perfect?

Gemma: Yeah because we're not perfect, and nothing is ever perfect. (Gemma, teacher, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March 2013)

On reflection, I also notice a change in myself. During the earlier meetings, I felt protective of the teachers and filled in gaps in conversation to avoid any uncomfortable silences, but the roles are reversed at the last meeting when we discuss the video clip with Effie, where initially I am not engaged in the conversation with the child because I am trying to film what Gemma is doing:

Lia: And wasn't impressed with myself for quite a bit of it, you know.

Gemma: That's good for you to be reflective.

Lia: Yeah, of course, of course and I am thinking, do I want Tracy and Gemma to really see this or and I thought, yeah I don't mind, I do know the relationship we have; that you know I don't have to be perfect.

Gemma: No.

Lia: What was more important, the surprise that I had that Effie truly thought that she was eight and that put me, my whole thinking, like what you are saying way different, but along the same wavelength, we don't think about that but we have to kind of be careful when we do these things.

Gemma: Yeah but also, for you, you are not in an everyday teaching job are you? So for you, you don't expect you to come out with everything so perfect either.

Lia: No, and I didn't want to be a teacher either.

Gemma: No, no and you made that clear you wanted to show that you were doing your research.

(Gemma, teacher, and Lia, researcher, audio recording of 4th teacher meeting, 7 March 2013)

Conclusion and Implications

This last analysis chapter contains many transcripts and quotations that capture some of the complexities of teacher-child dialogues. Certainly children's subjectivities are affected in

teacher–child dialogue but this chapter illustrates also how teachers' subjectivities are in constant flux; each encounter between teachers and children may affect teachers' subjectivities. The transcripts of my meetings with the teachers further show how our dialogues influenced teacher subjectivities; as a result, teachers made many changes to their practice and routines. At the last meetings, the teachers expressed more uncertainty and a realisation that there is no one right pathway. Through a Bakhtinian dialogic collaborative process, the teachers developed a view of self that is critically reflective of their unique situation.

It is evident that the teachers who participated in the study are strongly committed to the children in their care. Their commitment is shown in their willingness to participate, to be observed and to attend the teacher meetings, as well as in their practice and their comments in the transcripts. The transcripts of the teachers' interactions with the children and their comments in their meetings with me provide further evidence of their strong reciprocal relationships with the children—relationships that are at the heart of dialogic pedagogy.

The teachers' dialogues provide exemplars of open-ended dialogue and uncertainty, showing a growing sense of children as agentic and of education as open-ended. It is argued that the meetings supported the teachers and me in being morally answerable to the children. It is therefore suggested that teachers engage in dialogic reflections on teacher–child dialogues with colleagues and others to gain a deeper understanding of how children can be supported to be active participants in dialogue.

“That which can be done by me can never be done by anyone else” (Bakhtin, 1993, p.40). It is argued that Bakhtin's moral answerability (1993) is more than a critical analysis; it not only allows, but it demands an active response from teachers to children's utterances. Teachers cannot hide behind a universal theory; they need to take responsibility as a unique individual in a once occurring event (Holquist 1993; Noddings 2003). Bakhtin also states

how an utterance goes beyond the immediate encounter between speaker and addressee, addressing a higher 'super-addressee' (Bakhtin, 1986, p.126), which can be viewed as a socially just response. An example of this could be seeing oneself answerable to God or considering how over time, one might be judged by others, or one's own conscience.

Reflecting on his interactions with his son, Edmiston (2008) explains how Bakhtin's moral answerability goes beyond responsibility; it implies not only an ethical responsibility based on values or cultural norms, but an openness to another's ideas or utterances in order to make meaning and then to act on these. This does not mean that this always happens or that teachers have no choice in how they answer. Bakhtin leaves it to teachers to take individual responsibility; while there is always a response, the responses are open-ended and one of these could be to not take responsibility (Sidorkin, 2004). Answerability is also more than an immediate response; it is a way of living. Bakhtin's moral answerability provides guidance to teachers (and, it can be argued, researchers in educational settings) to engage in a critical analysis in order to increase understandings of the power relations and the complexities of teacher-child dialogue in their own contexts.

Although it is difficult in a Bakhtinian sense to finish with a conclusion, in the "genre" of thesis writing, I write a summary of findings and implications in the final chapter that follows, recognising that there never can be a final word.

Chapter 8:

(Un)final Words

This last chapter of the thesis briefly summarises how past research and current policy provide a rationale for this study of teacher–child dialogue in early years education. It explains how Bakhtin’s ideas have provided a means to see teacher–child dialogue with fresh eyes. I also discuss my own subjectivity as a researcher and how this changed during the project. Findings of the study and implications of these are also discussed and some attention is given to the ongoing tension between dominant neoliberal discourses and the implications of this study. Lastly, suggestions are made for future research.

In this thesis, I have used a Bakhtinian framework to reconceptualise teacher–child dialogue in early years education. Rather than rejecting current practice, my aim has been to engage in a philosophically based inquiry in order to open up more complex views of teacher–child dialogue in an open-ended curriculum. The initial discussions of dialogue, childhood and the purpose of education illustrated the importance of teacher–child dialogue as a teaching tool and thus provide a rationale for research of teacher–child dialogue in early years education. The subsequent review of research related to teacher–child dialogue in early childhood settings presented a historical context for the present study. The discussion of dominant neoliberal discourses explained how these influence current New Zealand policy and are framing teaching and learning with increasingly technicist practices that have narrowly defined economic outcomes. It is argued that the above discourses underestimate the complexity of teaching and learning and that a Bakhtinian approach may hold some potential in providing alternative practices.

As explained in Chapter 3, the teacher–child dialogue issues of IRE questioning and unchallenging dialogue that concerned Cazden (1988) in her study in the 1980s are still

identified in many current research projects. Teachers often ask questions that they already know the answer to and power imbalances are left unquestioned in many cases. Moreover, current dominant neoliberal discourses, which assume education as preparation for future workers with narrowly defined outcomes, greatly affect early childhood education policy and, increasingly, practices. There is a tension between neoliberal, technicist approaches to teaching and learning and the tenets of TW, the early childhood curriculum, which has a view of children who are empowered as active participants in a holistic programme where they can follow their own interests. Only a handful of research studies have explored teacher–child dialogue and practice applications from a range of philosophical perspectives that are more respectful of teachers and children. I was therefore interested in exploring and analysing observed teaching practice in teacher–child dialogic situations, grounded in Bakhtin’s philosophical ideas, with practising teachers.

Affordances of a Bakhtinian Theoretical Framework

Due to Bakhtin’s open-ended and unfinalised dialogue and his preference for dialogism over monologic, authoritarian discourses, coupled with his philosophy of dialogue as the meaning of all life, he is the philosopher par excellence for this thesis on teacher–child dialogue, which aligns with a view of education as open-ended and students as active participants. It has been explained how Bakhtin’s concepts such as polyphony and carnivalesque offer a different lens, enabling us to view children’s utterances as dialogic expressions that resist authoritative discourses. After more in-depth analysis of his work during the writing of this thesis, I realised the importance of Bakhtin’s Utopian views of moral answerability and how this concept may provide ethical guidance for teachers. During this project, I also gained a wider understanding of children’s and adults’ subjectivities as fluid consciousnesses and how these subjectivities simultaneously affect dialogue and, in turn, are affected by it. Despite

limitations (as described in Chapter 2) of applying his ideas to teacher–child dialogue, Bakhtin’s concepts greatly expanded my understanding in relation to this research project of teacher–child dialogue in early years education.

The study extends previous research projects related to teacher–child dialogue that have used a Bakhtinian lens. First, it combines Bakhtinian concepts such as carnivalesque, moral answerability, polyphony and both adult and child subjectivities in the analysis of data from early years education contexts. Second, a dialogic research process not only provides multiple perspectives of the interactions between teachers and children; the collaborative reflections of the teachers and myself are also viewed as a moral answerable response to the first layer of data of the teacher–child interactions. This second layer of data of my meetings with the teachers and the acts or changes in practice that followed from these can be viewed as praxis or an enactment of Bakhtin’s theories.

While many scholars have theorised on how Bakhtinian dialogic concepts can be applied to rethink pedagogy, only a handful of studies (see, for example, Matusov & Brobst, 2013; Ødegaard, 2007; Rosen, 2014; White, 2009a) apply Bakhtin’s ideas to enacted educational practices. As Apple (2011) argues, critical democratic policies and practices can only proceed if more critical work in education is linked to the realities of everyday experiences of teachers and children. This thesis has aimed to make a contribution to critical thinking in education that is related to everyday experiences; illustrating teachers’ moral answerability in response to the polyphony in teacher–child dialogue and children’s carnivalesque utterances in everyday lived experiences in early years settings.

I am aware of criticism of attempts to apply Bakhtinian theory to classroom settings. Emerson (2000) argues that Bakhtin’s own teaching style with his student teachers was highly authoritative and that he preferred primary texts over interpretations. As discussed in Chapter 2, Bakhtin’s context, which is so different from my own politically, culturally and temporally,

makes it difficult to understand his work if we assume understanding to mean a full grasping of Bakhtin's intentions. However, Bakhtin does not expect a full understanding, which for him would only be a duplication of the world. As he explains, "If all I do is merge with the other's life...I only duplicate his life numerically" (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 87). Bakhtin (1984b) illustrates this in his own interpretations of Rabelais, where he proposes to use literature as a philosophy for our everyday life, noting that living in a different time and cultural context may assist us in seeing the meaning of the literature in a new way. Bulavka and Buzgalin (2004) explain that when Bakhtin's work was published in Russia, Russian scholars entered into a dialogue with his work, argued with him and developed his ideas further. However, in the West, Bulavka and Buzgalin maintain, Bakhtin has mostly been seen as a study object, in the way animals are studied, with an intention of grasping Bakhtin's meaning without extending his work. It could be argued that Bakhtin's own interactions with his students reflect his context and the educational context of that era. As Bakhtin (1986b) states, we can find new things in Shakespeare's work that neither Shakespeare nor his contemporaries could consciously perceive in their era and cultural context. The same could be said of current interpretations of Bakhtin's work. The application of his ideas in early years education in this thesis is my moral answerable deed in my context, in response to Bakhtin's utterances in his texts. It is acknowledged that this thesis provides one interpretation of Bakhtin's ideas and that others may be possible. Furthermore, different philosophical frameworks may offer many more possible interpretations of teacher-child dialogue.

A further concern I am left to ponder, as discussed elsewhere, is how this thesis, which is written by me in fulfilling part of the requirements for a doctoral study, fits a model of an open-ended, unfinalised dialogue. The participating teachers have been given a copy of the draft thesis to comment on but, while grateful for receiving a draft copy, they have not given any feedback on it. It can be argued that the participating teachers are at a

disadvantage; I have spent much of the last five years reading and writing about Bakhtin and teacher–child dialogue. However, how can I ensure the teachers remain unfinalised? Perhaps the discussion in this thesis can be presented as my utterance, as a third layer in this study, in response to both Bakhtin’s utterances through his texts and all utterances by the children and the teachers. Through the inclusion of many transcripts of both children and teachers within the text, I have attempted to present a Dostoevskian polyphony of utterances that show how subjectivities are in constant flux during the study; they imply that changes in genres are ongoing, beyond the study.

There is no universal truth; only my moral answerability in this unique event of my life. Nor is this thesis a full account. Bakhtin (1984b) asks us to know the other as a co-participant; there is no need to wholly know the other, we only need to understand in relation to his or her utterance. One can never fully describe the richness of life; lived life is always presented as someone’s partial interpretation. This thesis can therefore be viewed as my *postupok* or answerable deed.

My Subjectivity as a Researcher

My role as a researcher changed during the project. After the initial pilot (phase one), I felt uncomfortable analysing data without teachers having an opportunity to see the video-recorded sessions again and to respond to these. As discussed in Chapter 4, I felt it was somewhat disrespectful towards teachers, who had strong relationships with children and who had allowed me to observe their practice, to finalise them in my analysis of these observations. The design of the research was therefore changed to a dialogic research approach for the second and main phase of the project, in which the teachers and I discussed video recordings of teacher–child dialogue, including those of the pilot phase, over a period

of four months. As a result, the teachers contributed greatly to interpretations of the data from the video recordings and, moreover, made changes to many of their practices and routines.

My own subjectivity has been affected during this project, as a result of both the data from the field and the theory. I now understand teacher–child dialogue in a wider sense, whereby a response does not have to be immediate and I also accept a more embodied view of teacher–child dialogue. Lastly I accept a Bakhtinian view of dialogism as a way of being and doing; I have a greater understanding how teacher–child dialogue is inevitably connected with subjectivities, for children, teachers and myself as the researcher. I will explain each of these changes in my thinking in more detail.

After phase one and having deepened my understanding of Bakhtinian dialogue as dialogism or a way of being, I realised that teacher–dialogue is not only something that happens immediately within an encounter, but that an utterance from a child, for example, can be a pretend play session in its totality to which teachers listen and then respond. This response is not necessarily a verbal response; it can also be an action that teachers take.

As a result of my interactions with the children, watching the video recordings and the discussions with the teachers at the teacher meetings, I became aware of children’s dialogue as embodied. Until that time I had accepted body language as part of dialogue, but I still saw this as mostly an addition to and a support for spoken language. It was not until I noticed the need for children to communicate through their bodies that I realised the importance of seeing dialogue in a holistic sense. My awareness also grew in relation to children’s pleasure in and through their bodies and their right to this pleasure.

Again as a result of our discussions of the video recordings of teacher–child dialogue, at times the teachers and I each had different responses due to our different histories and contexts, which had shaped our subjectivities in unique ways. I further noticed how we started to see things differently from observing and discussing children’s utterances in the

video clips, with the result that our subjectivities changed. We gained different understandings about children, we talked differently about them, with more uncertainty and we started to do things differently, with a greater awareness of power imbalances and a more respectful attitude towards children.

After an evaluation of the children's minimal answers at the interviews and as a result of the children's interactions, I realised that ethical research does more than follow the researcher's agenda: researchers need to tune in to children's agendas and make room for these. During the week in phase one, I had engaged with children but had merely focused on observations of teachers interacting with children, while avoiding any meaningful interactions with children myself. I realised that, in a study advocating an open-ended curriculum and where children are seen as active participants, I had not "walked the talk". Therefore, in phase two, I increased my time for observing in the early childhood setting so I could engage with the children. I negotiated with the children that each morning they could use the video camera with the tripod under my supervision for one hour, before I started my observations. During the day, I engaged with children when they initiated a conversation with me. As well as being enjoyable, these interactions provided me with another authentic layer of data. My lived experiences with the children affected my own subjectivity; as a result of the children's utterances, both in their play and those that were directly addressed to me, I responded in a new genre as a researcher who was more open to follow children's leads and be affected by these and I came to a much more holistic understanding of embodied and open-ended dialogue.

Findings and Implications for Early Childhood Practice

Findings in this thesis show that teaching in early childhood settings involves a complex mix of both monologic and dialogic acts. Teachers' and children's utterances indicate that both have access to a diverse range of genres. A Bakhtinian analysis of video-recorded

interactions provides insights that children can be agentic, but that this usually is achieved without teachers supporting their agency. At times, it can even be achieved despite the teachers' actions. The children's utterances illustrate that children can support each other to become more agentic. The analyses of their utterances show that these depend on children's subjectivities, based on their unique chronotope, but that these subjectivities are further shaped by the dialogues. Transcripts of conversations initiated by children reveal that these tend to be more complex and more enjoyable, for both children and teachers; they present an image of children as competent co-authors and active participants.

The teachers in this study, once they "listened" to children's perspectives through the video recordings, realised that child-initiated dialogues were more complex and more enjoyable. They became less rigid about the time slots for activities and they experimented with different routines in order to create more opportunities for open-ended conversations. In many early childhood settings, the day is dictated by punctuated periods of time for mostly teacher-initiated, planned activities. It is suggested that teachers reflect on the routines and flexibility of the programme to allow time for children's uninterrupted, open-ended dialogues.

Viewing children's nonsensical utterances through a carnivalesque lens gave a fresh insight into what is pleasurable for children. It also became obvious how physical bodies matter, for both children and adults. A Bakhtinian carnivalesque analysis of children's utterances validated their interactions as a necessary force, opposing the traditional, institutionalised world of the early childhood setting, enabling us to see the educational practices and routines with fresh eyes and opening up possibilities for more equalising and open-ended education. That is not to say that education is all about disrupting societal order. Teaching is suggested here to involve finding a balance between monologic teaching, where children are exposed to cultural and traditional knowledge, and dialogic interactions. In an

open-ended education, teaching should include listening to what is pleasurable for children, in their language, about their bodies, through their bodies and of their bodies. Teaching in an open-ended curriculum can and should be an inquiry into what and how pleasures are part of the curriculum, not only for children but also for teachers.

It is important that children's perspectives are taken into account in their everyday life in the early childhood setting and in research projects, as they are the people who inhabit early childhood institutions. Although most research in early childhood education includes children's voices, often these voices are referred to in a metaphorical sense as a right to express themselves and to be heard. Children's real and at times loud or nonsensical voices in the data tend to be ignored. As discussed in Chapter 6, children's real voices through their chanting should not be dismissed immediately as children who are simply being loud. Through their chanting children express an opinion. Lastly, an analysis of children's non-verbal, embodied communication, which is described in detail in Chapter 6, provides insights into the importance of embodiment and what is pleasurable for the children in this study. Children have a right to have pleasure. It is suggested that adults try to find ways to listen to children, in situations where children can express themselves, and that they listen carefully and respectfully. As discussed in this thesis, pretend play is one of the domains of children in which they not only make meaning but also convey strong messages to adults about how they experience their everyday life.

The discussion of the meetings between the participating teachers and me reveal how our subjectivities changed. We became more aware of power imbalances and our talk about the children became more respectful; a Bakhtinian lens made us see children as more competent; and our views about children and education became less certain and more open-ended. One of the subquestions of this thesis is how open teachers are to children's internally persuasive voices. We all gained a deeper, more complex understanding of dialogic

interactions and power imbalances, but this only happened as a result of viewing video recordings of teacher–child interactions and the collaborative discussions of these in the teacher meetings. It is argued here that the dialogic research process, whereby the teachers and I selected video-recorded dialogues between teachers and children and then discussed these, allowed a moral response, particularly when integrating related literature, using a Bakhtinian lens to make sense of puzzling or interesting dialogues. As a result of the discussion of these video clips at our meetings, teachers made many changes to routines; for example, they stopped having structured group time.

Based on the findings in this study, the following suggestions are made in regard to early childhood teaching. First, early childhood teachers can create opportunities to collaboratively reflect not only on teacher–child dialogue, but also on other aspects of their practice with children. Second, teachers have a moral answerability to act in response to children’s utterances; teachers’ collaborative dialogue may support teachers to further explore how children can be given opportunities for carnivalesque responses as active participants in their education.

Teachers’ subjectivities are in constant flux as a result of their encounters with children and each other. On many occasions the teachers express uncertainty; there is not one right pathway. Through a Bakhtinian dialogic research process, teachers develop a view of self that is critically reflective of their unique situation. The teachers’ dialogues provide exemplars of open-ended dialogue, showing a growing sense of children as agentic and of education as open-ended. The teachers’ comments and some of the later video recordings show the changes that they made to their practice and routines in the centre.

However, I am aware that not all teachers in early childhood can engage in collaborative discussions with colleagues. As a result of the long hours that young children spend in childcare settings and the requirement for privately owned childcare centres to be

profitable, teachers in childcare settings, in contrast to their colleagues in state-funded kindergartens or schools, have little or no paid time to reflect collaboratively with their peers. If children's active participation is valued, research such as this study may be used to advocate for providing teachers with opportunities for collaborative dialogues during their work hours.

While much can be gained from teachers reflecting collaboratively on video recordings of their practice, it is further suggested that they make use of existing theories and philosophical frameworks to reflect critically and to open up new possibilities. As shown in this thesis, Bakhtin's concepts made it possible to notice children's chants and accept these as meaningful expressions rather than seeing them as a behaviour guidance issue. Cultural, existing knowledge and lived experiences must be juxtaposed and united in the lived unique event to form a moral answer. For researchers, a dialogic research approach offers a more respectful attitude to participants and gains more diverse interpretations of everyday experiences and practices in education. It is therefore suggested that researchers combine forces with teachers in collaborative dialogic relationships.

Lastly, as a teacher educator I need to consider what will be *my* moral response to these findings. As Nuthall (2007) reminds us in Chapter 1, if student teachers are asked to attend lectures, they only learn that knowledge is something that is given to you. It is suggested that teacher educators create opportunities for student teachers to actively participate in their own education, so they can experience this themselves, if we want them to support young children to be actively engaged. While it is now common for student teachers to have opportunities to participate in online discussions about their academic readings, teacher educators may need to explore how the teaching programme itself can be more open-ended in a regulated university environment with prescribed learning outcomes that need to be assessed.

In summary, I claim, first, that a Bakhtinian framework goes beyond teacher–child dialogue based on open-ended questioning and more linguistic complexity; it enables us to view teacher–child dialogue that is embodied and that takes children’s perspectives into account. Second, I claim that, contrary to technicist intervention approaches, which tend to reduce teaching to the transmission of universal strategies and as a monologic act, a Bakhtinian critically reflective dialogic approach enables teachers to respond morally, in their unique situation with their unique “ought”.

Continued Tensions between Neoliberal and Dialogic Discourses

This study illustrates how philosophically grounded research holds potential, both pedagogically and methodologically, to counterbalance technicist intervention strategies. However, the transcripts of the teachers illustrate that such research in itself will be insufficient to erase the tensions that exist between educational policy based largely on neoliberal discourses and educational ideals of students as active participants in an open-ended education.

The teachers mentioned several times that they felt constrained by policy. As discussed above, research such as this study may be used to support changes in policy. For the present, the discussion of the changes that the teachers made to their practices and routines as a result of the critically reflective collaborative dialogues shows that, regardless of policy requirements, teachers still have opportunities for change in the unique moment of their encounters with children. Bakhtin (1990) reminds us that the changes happen in our dialogues and our actions; teachers determine their *postupok*, or next step in their moral answerability to children.

Future Research

Although it can be argued that this study gave attention to children's voices (see above in this chapter), it can be seen as a limitation of this study that children were not given *more* opportunities to revisit the video-recorded experiences. Although the teachers changed some of their practices and routines, children were not consulted about those changes. Children's active participation should not be limited to a project in which adults gain children's perspectives; this participation should be ongoing. During phase one, the teacher showed a small group of children a video recording of their re-enactment and retelling of the story *Where the wild things are* (Sendak, 1963). While the children enjoyed viewing the video of themselves, pointing things out to each other, they did not comment any further and, although re-viewing of the video recordings with children was planned in the second phase at WSC, it was not carried out. At WSC, children occasionally asked me to show them a video recording. Similar to JSC, they enjoyed seeing themselves on the video but again offered no further comments. One time, at WSC, Gemma set up a slideshow of the photos that the children took on the computer that children have access to but the children who were present did not show an interest in the photographs. Over time, the children might present their perspective through their role play, just as Maddy and Jonathan did in their re-enactment of group time.

In hindsight, children could perhaps have been given more opportunities to revisit the video-recorded interactions. After phase one, the research design was changed to a more dialogic research approach with the teachers, presenting teachers and me as unfinalised; opportunities for children to retell experiences could have provided further insights. As Ødegaard (2011) argues, narratives of past experiences are always from the perspective of the narrator and therefore show the narrator's meaning making of the experience. Perhaps in a future research project, teachers and researchers could scaffold children's retelling of

previously recorded events to obtain children's voices, in addition to using some of the methods that were employed in this project.

In his reconceptualisation of current early childhood pedagogy, Moss (2008b) suggests rethinking education as a forum or a public space. I understand this public space to be different from current early childhood institutions, where children and teachers are in a sense outside the real world, separated from it by fences and locked gates. Apart from discussing consent procedures with parents, listening to their comments about the research and informally sharing with them information about their children that I thought they might be interested in (see Chapter 4), there was no further engagement with parents. From my previous role in professional development for early childhood teachers, supporting teachers to implement principles of the early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) and currently as a teacher educator, I am aware of the importance of early childhood teachers working in partnership with parents. Good-quality early childhood education is built on strong relationships; this includes teachers who have reciprocal relationships with parents and whānau (Māori concept of extended family). White's (2009a) doctoral thesis on two toddlers' utterances illustrates how, particularly in research related to very young children with little verbal skills, parents add valuable perspectives based on their close relationship with their child. From my observations in the centres, when parents came in to drop off their children or to pick them up, teachers and parents had many informal conversations. They frequently shared information about home or centre situations. Teachers in both participating childcare centres discussed children's learning in the learning stories in the child's portfolio and invited the parents to write their contributions. However, to my knowledge, not many of the transcripts that were discussed in the teacher meetings were used in writing the learning stories. Similar to White's (2009a) findings, the teachers involved in this study saw the writing of the learning stories as an administrative chore that did not have much meaning for them. Although this

study foregrounds the dialogue between teachers and children and teachers' collaborative meaning making of this, collaboration with parents could have added valuable contextual information to assist in the meaning making of children's utterances. How parents can or should be included more in an open-ended curriculum and in teachers' conversations with children more specifically was beyond the scope of this study; it is suggested as a further area for research.

As long as a person is alive, he lives by the fact that he is not yet finalized and that he has not yet uttered his last word. (Bakhtin, 1984b, p. 59)

A person's various speech genres can reveal several layers and facts of the individual personality (Bakhtin, 1986b). It needs to be noted that, for example, the re-enactment of teachers at group time is one interpretation of the event; it represents only one genre from a variety of styles and genres that teachers apply in their dialogues with children. There is no final word: a dialogic research approach accepts an open-endedness, even now the project has finished; the children, the teachers and I will continue to change as a result of ongoing dialogues; aware of a moral answerability that "that which can be done by me, can never be done by anyone else" (Bakhtin, 1993, p.40) and that each of us has to take responsibility as a unique individual in a once-occurring event.

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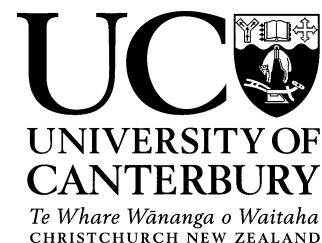
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Owner Information Letter—Jacarinda Street Centre



Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht-van Alphen

Tel work: 366 3459

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

16 July 2010

Dear

Study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings.

Information sheet for manager/owners

What is the study about?

I am a doctorate student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I am conducting a study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Many research projects around classroom dialogue point out the importance of oral language and they suggest that further in-depth study is required to deepen our understandings on this complex topic.

I would like to run a pilot study at your centre in order to find out what kind of observations in an early childhood education setting are most likely to give me the information required for my study. I would also like to interview teachers before the observations to find out their beliefs around teacher-child dialogue. Lastly, I would like to interview teachers after the interviews to listen to their reflections on what happened during the observations and to hear their feedback about the method for this pilot.

Invitation to participate:

I intend to observe and use either digital video or audio recording when teachers are interacting with children aged 3 and 4 at your centre for a whole week, times and dates to be negotiated with the teachers. I will only observe and record interactions of teachers who are consenting to take part and of children who have consented themselves and whose parents have consented. Teachers, parent and children will also be given information about the study.

I also propose to undertake two informal interviews with teachers' consent who work with children aged 3 and 4, one before and one after the observations. Interviews are expected to take no longer than one hour and they will be at a time to suit the teachers. Lastly, I would like to do an unstructured small group interview with children aged 3 and 4 at your centre, at a time that suits teachers and children.

I would be grateful if you would agree to give me access to the teachers and the children at your centre for this project.

What to do if you have any further questions:

I am available to answer any questions you may have and I can be contacted lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz. My telephone number is (03) 384-9139. My supervisor, Associate Professor Dr Judith Duncan, is also available to answer any questions. Dr Duncan can be contacted by email: Judith.duncan@canterbury.ac.nz or by phone 364-3466.

How will my privacy and that of the centre and the other teachers and the children be protected?

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study.

Pseudonyms will be used in my PhD report and any possible presentations and publications. While every effort will be made to preserve anonymity, I cannot guarantee anonymity.

Please also note that participation in the study is voluntary. Anyone participating in the study has the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury College of Education.

How will the information from the study be used and how do I find out about the results

Themes emerging from the data will be sent to each participating teacher to check for accuracy and for any additional comments.

Information will be used for my doctorate study. Parts of my study may be published or presented at conferences.

Your centre will receive a report of this pilot study. All teachers will receive a 2-3 page summary report. You may also request a personal copy.

I appreciate your support for my study. I am an experienced facilitator of professional development and would like to offer 10 hours of professional development for your centre on a topic of your choice after the data for my study has been collected.

I would appreciate it if you would **return the signed consent form** to me in the envelope provided **by Day/Date/Month**.

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Lecturer in Early Childhood Education

School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education

University of Canterbury

Appendix 2: Owner Consent Letter—Jacarinda Street Centre

Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Declaration of Consent for Centre participation by Owner(s)/ Managers

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

I know that the teachers are free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I know that this project involves informal discussion and questioning where the precise nature of the questions (or what is discussed) is not known in advance but will depend on the nature of the children's activities and interactions, and the teachers' discussions. I know that if the teachers feel hesitant or uncomfortable they can decline to answer any questions and may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage.

I understand that I have access to Lia should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project.

I understand that any published data will not identify the centre, the teachers or the children.

I understand that all video and/or audiotapes and transcripts from observations and interviews from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. All personal information and consent forms will also be destroyed at that time.

I understand that only Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen, her supervisor, Dr Judith Duncan and the person who typed the transcripts will have had access to the data. I am aware that only Lia and Judith will have further access to the data gathered for this project once the transcripts have been transcribed.

I understand that the centre will receive a report on the findings of this study and I have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I consent to [name of centre] participating in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Email address for report on
study:

Please return this completed consent form in the envelope provided

by Day/Date/Month

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Cornelia de Vocht-van Alphen

Tel: +64 3 849139,

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 3: Teacher Information Letter—Jacarinda Street Centre



Date/Month/Year

Dear (name of teacher)

Information sheet for teachers

Study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings.

What is the study about?

I am a doctorate student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I am conducting a study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Many research projects around classroom dialogue point out the importance of oral language and they suggest further in-depth study is required to deepen our understandings on this complex topic.

I propose to run a pilot study at your centre in order to find out what kind of observations in an early childhood education setting are most likely to give me the information required for my study. I would also like to interview you before the observations to find out your beliefs around teacher-child dialogue. Lastly, I would like to interview you after the observations to listen to your reflections on what happened and to listen to your feedback about this pilot study.

The manager/ owners of your centre have given consent for me to approach you.

Inviting teachers to participate:

I intend to observe and using either digital video or audio, record consenting teachers interacting with children aged 3 and 4 at your centre over a period of a week. I also want to undertake two informal interviews with all the teachers who are involved with children aged

3 and 4, one before and one after the observations. Interviews are expected to take no longer than one hour and they will be at a time to suit you. Lastly, I propose an unstructured small group interview with children aged 3 and 4 at your centre, at a time that suits teachers and children, and with the consent of the parents and children.

I would be grateful if you would participate in an unstructured interview before and after my observations at your centre. I will also ask you to agree to a video or audio recording of teacher-child dialogues at your centre for a period of one week.

What to do if you have any further questions:

I am available to answer any questions you may have and I can be contacted at lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz. My telephone number is (03) 384-9139. My supervisor, Associate Professor Dr Judith Duncan, is also available to answer any questions. Dr Duncan can be contacted by email: Judith.duncan@canterbury.ac.nz or by phone 364-3466.

How will my privacy and that of the centre and the other teachers and the children be protected?

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. Pseudonyms will be used in my PhD report and possible presentations and publications. While every effort will be made to preserve anonymity, I cannot guarantee anonymity.

Please also note that participation in the study is voluntary. If you do participate, you have the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. This project will involve informal discussion and questioning where the precise nature of the questions (or what is discussed) is not known in advance but will depend on the nature of the children's activities and interactions, and the teachers' discussions. If teachers feel hesitant or

uncomfortable they can decline to answer any questions and may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage.

The project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury.

How will the information from the study be used and how do I find out about the results

Themes emerging from the data will be sent to each participating teacher to check for accuracy and for any additional comments.

Information will be used for my doctorate study. Parts of my study may be published or presented at conferences. At all times the anonymity of teachers, centre and children will be preserved.

Your centre will receive a report of this pilot study. All teachers will receive a 2-3 page summary report. You may also request a personal copy.

I appreciate your support for my study.

I am an experienced facilitator of professional development and would like to offer 10 hours of professional development for your centre on a topic of the teachers' choice after the data for my study has been collected.

I would appreciate it if you would **return the signed consent form** to me in the envelope provided **by Day/Date/Month**.

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Lecturer in Early Childhood Education

School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education

University of Canterbury

Appendix 4: Teacher Consent Letter—Jacarinda Street Centre

Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Declaration of Consent to participate for teachers

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

I know that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I understand that any published data will not identify me, the centre or the children.

I understand that all video or audiotapes and transcripts from observations and interviews from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. All personal information and consent forms will also be destroyed at that time.

I understand that only Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen, her supervisor, Dr Judith Duncan and the person who typed the transcripts will have had access to the data. I am aware that only Lia and Judith will have further access to the data gathered for this project once the transcripts have been transcribed.

I understand that the results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved.

I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.

I understand that I have access to Lia should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Appendices

Name teacher:

Date:

Signature:

Please return this completed consent form to the centre in the envelope provided

by Day/Date/Month

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix 5: Parent Information Letter—Jacarinda Street Centre



Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht-van Alphen

Tel: +64 3 849139,

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Date/Month/Year

Dear parent(s)/ caregiver

Study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings.

What is the study about?

I am a doctorate student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I am conducting a study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Many research projects around teacher-child dialogue point out the importance of oral language and they suggest further in-depth study is required to deepen our understandings on this complex topic.

I would like to observe your child when interacting with one of the teachers and record these conversations on video and/ or audiotape. I would also like to ask your child to participate in a small group unstructured interview, where I will ask the children questions about their conversations with teachers.

Inviting your child to participate:

I intend to observe and video or audiotape teachers' interactions with children aged 3 and over at your centre for a whole week. I also would like to do an unstructured small group

interview with children aged three and over at the centre, at a time that suits teachers and children.

I would be grateful if you would consent for your child to participate in a small group unstructured interview at the centre. I would also like to ask you to consent to my observation and video or audiorecording of your child for a period of one week when he/she is interacting with one of the teachers.

What to do if you have any further questions:

I am available to answer any questions you may have and I can be contacted at lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz. My telephone number is (03) 384-9139. My supervisor, Associate Professor Dr Judith Duncan, is also available to answer any questions. Dr Duncan can be contacted by email: Judith.duncan@canterbury.ac.nz or by phone 364-3466.

How will my child's privacy be protected?

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. Please also note that participation in the study is voluntary. If you give consent, you have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury.

How will the information from the study be used and how do I find out about the results

Information will be used for my doctorate study. Parts of my study may be published or presented at conferences; anonymity of your child will be preserved.

Your centre will receive a report of this pilot study. All participating families will receive a 2-3 page summary report. You may also request a personal copy.

I would appreciate it if you would **return the signed consent form** to me in the envelope provided **by** Day/Date/Month.

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Lecturer in Early Childhood Education

School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education

University of Canterbury

Appendix 6: Parent Consent Form—Jacarinda Street Centre

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Declaration of Consent for child to Participate for Parents/ Caregivers

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.
- I have also read and understood my child's information and consent forms.
- I have read and discussed the research with my child.
- All my questions have been answered to my child's satisfaction and myself.
- I understand that both my child and I are free to request further information at any stage.
- I understand that my child's participation in the project is entirely voluntary and I know that I am free to withdraw my child from the project at any time without any disadvantage to my child. My child is also free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
- I understand that my child will not be interviewed without his/her consent.
- I understand that I have access to Lia should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project.
- I understand that all video or audiotapes, transcripts of observations and interviews from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. All personal information and consent forms will also be destroyed at that time
- I understand that only Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen, her supervisor, Dr Judith Duncan and the person who typed the transcripts will have had access to the data. I am

aware that only Lia and Judith will have further access to the data gathered for this project once the transcripts have been transcribed.

- I understand that the results of the project may be published but my child's privacy will be preserved.
- I understand that the centre will receive a report on the findings and that I will receive a summary report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I agree that my child participates in this research project.

Name child:	Name parent:
Date:	Signature:

Please return this completed consent form to the centre.

Thank you for your contribution to this study,

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Appendix 7: Child Information Form—Jacarinda Street Centre



Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education setting

Information sheet for children

I am inviting you to be part of a special project that I am doing at the University of Canterbury; that's the school that I go to.

My project is about how teachers and children talk to each other and I would really love to find out what you know about it and watch and listen to how teachers and children talk to each other at your centre.

If you agree to be part of this project:

I will be asking you some questions together with other children at your centre.

Because I am not going to remember everything that will be said I am going to record what everyone says.

I will be asking questions about what kids think about how teachers and children talk to each other.

There are no right or wrong answers and if you don't want to answer a question, it's ok.

Any time you want to stop talking, it's okay, and I will turn the video or audio tape off if you want me to. I will stop when you are tired.

I will be coming in for a week to watch and listen to what teachers and children say to each other and each time I will ask you if I can record what you are saying. If you don't want

me to record when you are talking to the teachers or other children on that day, it's ok, and you won't get into trouble.

I will try to do the things for my project without disrupting your play or the things you want to do.

I will write about some of the things you have talked about but won't use your name.

The tape and a copy of my words on the tape will only be seen by me, my teacher Judith and the person who is doing the typing. The tape and a copy of your words from the tape will be kept private.

Any time when you have any worries about what you said or about this project, you can come and talk with me.

Thank you for listening about my special project.

Lia



Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Appendix 8: Child Consent Form—Jacarinda Street Centre



Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Consent form for children

- I have heard about what Lia is going to do and I am happy to be in her project.
- I know I can say no anytime I don't want to answer questions or tell Lia to stop recording me talking to the teachers.
- I know I can tell my parents or the teachers if I change my mind about being in Lia's project and no-one will mind.

I agree that it is okay for Lia to talk to me today

I agree that it is okay for Lia to video or audio tape.

.....(I agree) Day.....

Appendix 9: Manager Information Letter—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht

19 Martindales Road

Christchurch 8022

Telephone work dd: 364 3459

Mobile: 021 0255 6200

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

26 June 2012

Study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings.

Information sheet for manager/owners

What is the study about?

I am a doctoral student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I am conducting a study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Many research projects around classroom dialogue point out the importance of oral language in facilitating learning for early learners, and they suggest that further in-depth study is required to deepen our understandings on this complex topic.

I would like to record teacher-child dialogues between one of your teachers and the children in her care on four occasions for 2 days each at your centre. I would also like to interview the teacher before the observations to find out her beliefs around teacher-child dialogue and meet with the teacher each time following the observations to analyse the data I have gathered. Lastly, I would like to record an informal conversations and/or a small group interview with the children about their understanding of teacher-child dialogue.

Invitation to participate and details of the study:

I would like to ask your consent for the project to take place at your centre. Once I have received your consent, I would like to do the following:

I would like to spend some days at the centre to build relationships with teachers and children (time and length to be agreed to by you and the teachers); in this period I will make myself available to explain the project and to answer any questions about the project from teachers, parents or children.

How will I gather the data?

I intend to observe four times for a two day period over a period of six months, times and dates to be negotiated with the centre and the teacher. I intend to observe, take notes and record using video or and audio equipment, when the participating teacher is interacting with children aged 3 and 4 at your centre.

The initial interview with the teacher is expected to take no longer than one hour and it will be at a time to suit the teachers. I intend to meet with the participating teacher and one other teacher who was involved in a pilot project with me at her previous centre, after each of the two day observations at the centre to discuss the findings, for up to two hours, again at a time and place to suit the teachers. Lastly, I would like to record an unstructured interview with a small group of consenting children aged 3 and 4 at your centre, at a time that suits the centre, teachers and children.

I would be grateful if you would agree to give me access to the teacher and the children at your centre for this project.

What to do if you have any further questions:

I am available to answer any questions you may have and I can be contacted by email at:

lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz. My home telephone number is (03) 384-9139. My first

supervisor, Dr Kathleen Quinlivan, is also available to answer any questions. Dr Quinlivan can be contacted by email: Kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz.

How will my privacy and that of the centre and the other teachers and the children be protected?

I will only observe and record interactions of the consenting, participating teacher with children who have consented themselves and whose parents have consented. The participating teacher will have full access to the gathered information. You as the management, other teachers, parent and children will also be given a summary report about the study.

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. Pseudonyms will be used in my PhD report and any possible presentations and publications. While every effort will be made to preserve anonymity, I cannot guarantee anonymity. Please also note that participation in the study is voluntary. Anyone participating in the study has the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury College of Education.

How will the information from the study be used and how do I find out about the results

Themes emerging from the data will be sent to the participating teacher to check for accuracy and for any additional comments.

Information will be used for my doctoral study. Parts of my study may be published or presented at conferences.

Your centre will receive a report of this study.

I appreciate your support for my study. I am an experienced facilitator of early childhood education professional development and would like to offer ten hours of professional development for your centre on a topic of your choice after the data for my study has been collected.

I would appreciate it if you would **return the signed consent form** to me before 10 July (email is fine; I can pick up the signed form at my next visit).

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available to meet with you if you would like to discuss the project.

I thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Lecturer in Early Years Education

School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education

University of Canterbury

Appendix 10: Manager Consent Letter—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht

19 Martindales Road

Christchurch 8022

Telephone work dd: 364 3459

Mobile: 021 0255 6200

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

26 June 2012

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Declaration of Consent for Centre participation by Owner(s)/ Managers

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

I know that the teachers are free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I know that this project involves informal discussion and questioning where the precise nature of the questions (or what is discussed) is not known in advance but will depend on the nature of the children's activities and interactions, and the teachers' discussions. I know that if the teachers feel hesitant or uncomfortable they can decline to answer any questions and may withdraw from the project without any disadvantage.

I understand that I have access to Lia should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project.

I understand that any published data will not identify the centre, the teachers or the children.

I understand that all video and/or audiotapes and transcripts from observations and interviews from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. All personal information and consent forms will also be destroyed at that time.

I understand that only Lia de Vocht, her supervisors: Dr Kathleen Quinlivan and Professor Peter Roberts and the person who typed the transcripts will have had access to the data. I am aware that only Lia and Kathleen and Peter will have further access to the data gathered for this project once the transcripts have been transcribed.

I understand that the centre will receive a report on the findings of this study and I have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I consent to [name of centre] participating in this research project.

Name:

Date:

Signature:

Email address for report on study:

Please return this completed consent form in the envelope provided

by 10 July 2012

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix 11: Participating Teacher Information Letter—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht

19 Martindales Road

Christchurch 8022

Telephone work dd: 364 3459

Mobile: 021 0255 6200

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

August 2012

Study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings.

Information sheet for teachers

What is the study about?

I am a doctoral student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I am conducting a study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Many research projects around classroom dialogue point out the importance of oral language and they suggest that further in-depth study is required to deepen our understandings on this complex topic.

I would like to record teacher-child dialogues between one of the teachers at your centre and the children in her care on four occasions for 2 days each at your centre. I would also like to interview the teacher before the observations to find out her beliefs around teacher-child dialogue and meet with the teacher each time following the observations to analyse the data. Lastly, I would like to record an informal conversations and/or a small group interview with the children about their understanding of teacher-child dialogue.

Details of the study:

I understand that this study may also impact on you and I would like to ask your consent for the project to take place at your centre. Once I have received consents, I would like to do the following:

I would like to spend some days at the centre to build relationships with teachers and children (time and length to be agreed to by you and the teachers); in this period I will make myself available to explain the project and to answer any questions about the project from teachers, parents or children. I intend to observe four times for a two day period over a period of six months, times and dates to be negotiated with the centre and the teacher. I intend to observe, take notes and record using video or and audio equipment, when the participating teacher is interacting with children aged 3 and 4 at your centre. I will only observe and record interactions of the consenting, participating teacher with children who have consented themselves and whose parents have consented. The participating teacher will have full access to the gathered information. You as the teachers at the centre, as well as parents and children will also be given a summary report about the study.

I intend to meet with the participating teacher and one other teacher who was involved in a pilot project with me at her previous centre, after each of the two day observations at the centre to discuss the findings, for up to two hours, again at a time and place to suit the teachers. Lastly, I would like to record an unstructured interview with a small group of consenting children aged 3 and 4 at your centre, at a time that suits the centre, teachers and children.

I would be grateful if you would agree to this research project at your centre.

What to do if you have any further questions:

I am available to answer any questions you may have and I can be contacted by email at: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz. My home telephone number is (03) 384-9139. My first supervisor, Dr Kathleen Quinlivan, is also available to answer any questions. Dr Quinlivan can be contacted by email: Kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz.

How will my privacy and that of the centre and the other teachers and the children be protected?

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. Pseudonyms will be used in my PhD report and any possible presentations and publications. While every effort will be made to preserve anonymity, I cannot guarantee anonymity.

Please also note that participation in the study is voluntary. Anyone participating in the study has the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury College of Education.

How will the information from the study be used and how do I find out about the results

Themes emerging from the data will be sent to the participating teacher to check for accuracy and for any additional comments.

Information will be used for my doctoral study. Parts of my study may be published or presented at conferences.

Your centre will receive a report of this study.

I appreciate your support for my study. I am an experienced facilitator of professional development and would like to offer 10 hours of professional development for your centre on a topic of your choice after the data for my study has been collected.

I would appreciate it if you would **return the signed consent form** to me in the envelope provided asap

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available to meet with you if you would like to discuss the project.

I thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Lecturer in Early Years Education

School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education

University of Canterbury

Appendix 12: Participating Teacher Consent Letter—Wisteria Street Centre



Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Declaration of Consent for teachers

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

I know that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I understand that any published data will not identify me, the centre or the children.

I understand that all video or audiotapes and transcripts from observations and interviews from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. All personal information and consent forms will also be destroyed at that time.

I understand that only Lia de Vocht- van Alphen, her supervisor, Dr Kathleen Quinlivan, the participating teachers from the centre and the person who typed the transcripts will have had access to the data. I am aware that only Lia and Kathleen will have further access to the data gathered for this project once the transcripts have been transcribed.

I understand that the results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved.

I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.

Appendices

I understand that I have access to Lia should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name

teacher:

Date:

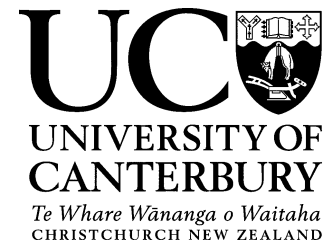
Signature:

Please return this completed consent form to the centre in the envelope provided

by Day/Date/Month

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix 13: Non-participating Teacher Information Letter—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht

19 Martindales Road

Christchurch 8022

Telephone work dd: 364 3459

Mobile: 021 0255 6200

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

August 2012

Study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings.

Information sheet for teachers

What is the study about?

I am a doctoral student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I am conducting a study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Many research projects around classroom dialogue point out the importance of oral language and they suggest that further in-depth study is required to deepen our understandings on this complex topic.

I would like to record teacher-child dialogues between one of the teachers at your centre and the children in her care on four occasions for 2 days each at your centre. I would also like to interview the teacher before the observations to find out her beliefs around teacher-child dialogue and meet with the teacher each time following the observations to analyse the data. Lastly, I would like to record an informal conversations and/or a small group interview with the children about their understanding of teacher-child dialogue.

Details of the study:

I understand that this study may also impact on you and I would like to ask your consent for the project to take place at your centre. Once I have received consents, I would like to do the following:

I would like to spend some days at the centre to build relationships with teachers and children (time and length to be agreed to by you and the teachers); in this period I will make myself available to explain the project and to answer any questions about the project from teachers, parents or children. I intend to observe four times for a two day period over a period of six months, times and dates to be negotiated with the centre and the teacher. I intend to observe, take notes and record using video or and audio equipment, when the participating teacher is interacting with children aged 3 and 4 at your centre. I will only observe and record interactions of the consenting, participating teacher with children who have consented themselves and whose parents have consented. The participating teacher will have full access to the gathered information. You as the teachers at the centre, as well as parents and children will also be given a summary report about the study.

I intend to meet with the participating teacher and one other teacher who was involved in a pilot project with me at her previous centre, after each of the two day observations at the centre to discuss the findings, for up to two hours, again at a time and place to suit the teachers. Lastly, I would like to record an unstructured interview with a small group of consenting children aged 3 and 4 at your centre, at a time that suits the centre, teachers and children.

I would be grateful if you would agree to this research project at your centre.

What to do if you have any further questions:

I am available to answer any questions you may have and I can be contacted by email at: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz. My home telephone number is (03) 384-9139. My first supervisor, Dr Kathleen Quinlivan, is also available to answer any questions. Dr Quinlivan can be contacted by email: Kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz.

How will my privacy and that of the centre and the other teachers and the children be protected?

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study. Pseudonyms will be used in my PhD report and any possible presentations and publications. While every effort will be made to preserve anonymity, I cannot guarantee anonymity.

Please also note that participation in the study is voluntary. Anyone participating in the study has the right to decline to answer any questions and to withdraw from the study at any time. This project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury College of Education.

How will the information from the study be used and how do I find out about the results

Themes emerging from the data will be sent to the participating teacher to check for accuracy and for any additional comments.

Information will be used for my doctoral study. Parts of my study may be published or presented at conferences.

Your centre will receive a report of this study.

I appreciate your support for my study. I am an experienced facilitator of professional development and would like to offer 10 hours of professional development for your centre on a topic of your choice after the data for my study has been collected.

I would appreciate it if you would **return the signed consent form** to me in the envelope provided asap

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available to meet with you if you would like to discuss the project.

I thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Lecturer in Early Years Education

School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education

University of Canterbury

Appendix 14: Non-participating Teacher Consent Letter—Wisteria Street Centre



Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Declaration of Consent for teachers

I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.

I know that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time.

I understand that any published data will not identify me, the centre or the children.

I understand that all video or audiotapes and transcripts from observations and interviews from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study, after which time tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. All personal information and consent forms will also be destroyed at that time.

I understand that only Lia de Vocht- van Alphen, her supervisor, Dr Kathleen Quinlivan, the participating teachers from the centre and the person who typed the transcripts will have had access to the data. I am aware that only Lia and Kathleen will have further access to the data gathered for this project once the transcripts have been transcribed.

I understand that the results of the project may be published but my anonymity will be preserved.

I understand that I can receive a report on the findings of this study and have provided my email details below for this purpose.

Appendices

I understand that I have access to Lia should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project.

By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name teacher:

Date:

Signature:

*Please return this completed consent form to the centre in the envelope provided
by Day/Date/Month*

Thank you for your contribution to this study.

Appendix 15: Parent Information Letter—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht-van Alphen

Tel: +64 3 849139,

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

August 2012

Dear parent(s)/ caregiver

Study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood settings.

What is the study about?

I am a doctoral student at the College of Education, University of Canterbury. I am conducting a study on teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings. Many research projects around teacher-child dialogue point out the importance of oral language and they suggest further in-depth study is required to deepen our understandings on this complex topic.

I would like to observe your child when interacting with one of the teachers and record these conversations on video and/ or audiotape. I would also like to ask your child to participate in a small group unstructured interview, where I will ask the children questions about their conversations with teachers.

Inviting your child to participate:

I intend to observe and video or audiotape teachers' interactions with children aged 3 ½ and over at your centre. I expect to spend several days at the time, on three or four occasions at

the centre. I also would like to do an unstructured small group interview with interested children at the centre, at a time that suits teachers and children.

I would be grateful if you would consent for your child to participate in a small group unstructured interview at the centre. I would also like to ask you to consent to my observation and video or audiorecording of your child on the days that I am at the centre, when he/she is interacting with one of the teachers.

What to do if you have any further questions:

I am available to answer any questions you may have and I can be contacted at lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz. My telephone number is (03) 384-9139. My supervisor, Dr. Kathleen Quinlivan, is also available to answer any questions. Dr Duncan can be contacted by email: kathleen.quinlivan@canterbury.ac.nz

How will my child's privacy be protected?

Please be assured that particular care will be taken to ensure the confidentiality of all data gathered for this study. All data is to be securely stored in password protected facilities and/or locked storage at the University of Canterbury for five years following the study.

Please also note that participation in the study is voluntary. If you give consent, you have the right to withdraw your child from the study at any time. The project has been reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Canterbury.

How will the information from the study be used and how do I find out about the results

Information will be used for my doctoral study. Parts of my study may be published or presented at conferences; anonymity of your child will be preserved.

Your centre will receive a report of this study. All participating families will receive a 2-3 page summary report. You may also request a personal copy.

I would appreciate it if you would **return the signed consent form** to me in the envelope provided **by**

If you have any questions about this research, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you in advance for your contribution.

Yours sincerely

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Lecturer in Early Childhood Education

School of Māori, Social and Cultural Studies in Education

University of Canterbury

Appendix 16: Parent Consent Form—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Declaration of Consent for child to Participate for Parents/Caregivers

- I have read and understood the information provided about this research project.
- I have also read and understood my child's information and consent forms.
- I have read and discussed the research with my child.
- All my questions have been answered to my child's satisfaction and myself.
- I understand that both my child and I are free to request further information at any stage.
- I understand that my child's participation in the project is entirely voluntary and I know that I am free to withdraw my child from the project at any time without any disadvantage to my child. My child is also free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage.
- I understand that my child will not be interviewed without his/her consent.
- I understand that I have access to Lia should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project.
- I understand that all video or audiotapes, transcripts of observations and interviews from this research will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury for five years

following the study, after which time tapes and transcripts will be destroyed. All personal information and consent forms will also be destroyed at that time

- I understand that only Cornelia (Lia) de Vocht- van Alphen, her supervisor, Dr Kathleen Quinlivan, my child's teachers and the person who types the transcripts will have access to the data. I am aware that only Lia and Kathleen will have further access to the data gathered for this project once the transcripts have been transcribed.
- I understand that the results of the project may be published but my child's privacy will be preserved.
- I understand that the centre will receive a report on the findings and that I will receive a summary report on the findings of this study. I have provided my email details below for this purpose.

By signing below, I agree that my child participates in this research project.

Name child:

Name parent:

Date:

Signature:

Please return this completed consent form to the centre.

Thank you for your contribution to this study,

Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Appendix 17: Child Information Form—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education setting

Information sheet for children

I am inviting you to be part of a special project that I am doing at the University of Canterbury; that's the school that I go to.

My project is about how teachers and children talk to each other and I would really love to find out what you know about it and watch and listen to how teachers and children talk to each other at your centre.

If you agree to be part of this project:

I will be coming in some days this year to watch and listen to what teachers and children say to each other. If you don't want me to record when you are talking to the teachers or other children on that day, it's ok, you can just tell me or your teachers and you won't get into trouble.

I may also ask you some questions together with other children at your centre.

Because I am not going to remember everything that will be said I am going to record what everyone says.

I will be asking questions about what kids think about how teachers and children talk to each other.

There are no right or wrong answers and if you don't want to answer a question, it's ok.

Any time you want to stop talking, it's okay, and I will turn the video or audio tape off if you want me to. I will stop when you are tired.

I will try to do the things for my project without disrupting your play or the things you want to do.

I will write about some of the things you have talked about but I won't use your name.

The tape and a copy of my words on the tape will only be seen by me, some of your teachers, my teacher Kathleen and the person who is doing the typing. The tape and a copy of your words from the tape will be kept private.

Any time when you have any worries about what you said or about this project, you can come and talk with me.

Thank you for listening about my special project.

Lia



Appendix 18: Child Consent Form—Wisteria Street Centre



Lia de Vocht- van Alphen

Tel: (03) 3 849139

Email: lia.devocht@canterbury.ac.nz

Study of teacher-child dialogue in early childhood education settings

Consent form for children

- I have heard about what Lia is going to do and I am happy to be in her project.
- I know I can say no anytime I don't want to answer questions or tell Lia to stop recording me talking to the teachers.
- I know I can tell my parents or the teachers if I change my mind about being in Lia's project and no-one will mind.

I agree that it is okay for Lia to talk to me

I agree that it is okay for Lia to video or audio tape.

.....(I agree) Day.....

Appendix 19: Interview Questions for Teachers, Jacarinda Street Centre

1. How do you define teacher-child dialogue?
2. What is your personal philosophy about teacher-child dialogue?
3. In what way are your beliefs about teacher-child dialogue influenced and by what?
4. If not already commented on, what role did NZ policy (*Te Whāriki*) play in the development of your beliefs?
5. Can you recall an example of a meaningful dialogue you or another teacher had with a child/ children?
6. What do you see as your role in a teacher-child dialogue?
7. When do you tend to have more meaningful conversations with children?
8. During which activities, times?
9. What triggers these conversations?
10. How frequently do you have meaningful dialogues, one a day, one a week?
11. Do you have these with all children in your primary care, if not who do you have these with?
12. What kind of strategies do you use in order to engage in meaningful conversations with children?
13. Any barriers?
14. Other comments?

Appendix 20: Suggested Questions for Informal Interviews with Children

1. What do teachers do at JS centre/ WS centre?
2. What do children do at JS centre/ WS centre?
3. What sort of things do teachers and children talk about?
4. What kind of things do teachers ask children/ tell children?
5. What kind of things do children ask teachers/ tell teachers?
6. What kind of talking do you like most?
7. Can you remember a time when you talked with a teacher and you really liked it?
8. What kind of talking or questions don't you like?