

**The Storytelling Revival in England and Wales
and its Contribution to
the Education of Children of Primary Age**

**A thesis submitted
for the award of
Doctor of Philosophy**

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Abstract

This research investigated the contemporary storytelling revival in England and Wales, arising from my involvement in the revival as a teacher-storyteller. It aimed to discover skills and working methods used by tellers of traditional tales, and to offer a context for their craft.

It asked whether this craft has anything to offer to the education of primary age children, and sought to determine ways children work with stories.

The research began by defining the oral tradition with particular reference to storytelling, through a literature review and a chronology of the oral tradition in a theoretical context, with a focus on the educational importance of storytelling.

An empirical study of contemporary practice in the storytelling revival was conducted through a questionnaire survey of professional storytellers. Further empirical research consisted of three case records of storytelling residencies, presenting evidence of children's work with stories, in which the stance of participant observer was adopted.

An interplay between the storytelling revival and the oral tradition was identified, showing that contemporary storytellers are grounded in a living tradition resulting from the experiential rediscovery of a body of craft knowledge, comparable to storytellers' working methods in ancient oral cultures. Storytelling was defined as performance art, and revival practice connected to traditional strands of bardic, fireside and educational storytelling, taking a feminist perspective on the role of women storytellers.

The research identified storytellers' techniques for working with stories which could enhance children's learning, particularly mnemonic strategies and graphic and inner imaging. It presented a new conceptualisation of Vygotskian scaffolding, suggesting that metaphoric scaffolding created by previous storytellers exists in the structure and pattern of a traditional story.

The need for a praxis of storytelling was identified, and the following framework was proposed:

- i) knowledge of the oral tradition's history
- ii) understanding of revival storytelling crafts
- iii) a metalanguage for storytelling drawing on narrative, poetry and metaphor.

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Preface: Personal statement

As a storyteller, drama teacher and art maker I came to this research with a background in child-centred learning, which arose from an interest in Froebelian philosophy developed while studying for my first degree, and was furthered both by my M.A. studies (see Collins, 1990, pp. 39 - 41) and by my connections through storytelling with the Waldorf system of education. As a teacher I was committed to a Socratic mode of learning (see Abbs, 1990, no pagination), and used an apprenticeship model of teaching and learning alongside the children, seeing it as important that 'the teacher is able to enter the creative act' (Abbs, 1989, p. 207). I have tried to foster questioning and critical awareness as key learning processes in children and adults alike, and to recognise that childhood learning is 'purposeful and intentional', and that the 'task for schools is to allow that process to continue, not stop it' (Wray, Bloom and Hall, 1989 p. 61). I am interested in the concept of knowledge as largely taken on trust (Polanyi, 1958, p. 208). My experience as a teacher has led me to understand the individual's view of the world to be rooted in previous experience, trust and belief. I also consider that storytelling as a way of ordering, understanding and making sense of the world can be a key factor in both education and all human experience.

I have been working as a storyteller since 1989, and in doing so have often been impressed by the enthusiastic response of even the youngest children to complex traditional stories. At the time this research began, professional storytellers were being increasingly offered work with children in schools, but their focus was usually in the field of performance: evoking a response from the children to the stories they told, or encouraging the children to create their own stories. I often worked with two other storytellers who had backgrounds in education like myself, and began to think of myself as a teacher-storyteller, combining elements of professional practice from both areas. Tony Aylwin, June Peters and I, working together as Storytellers on Supply, developed a workshop approach to storytelling in schools which promoted active involvement from the children as participants. Using a mixture of demonstration performance, discussion, small group work, co-operative games and peer support, these workshops set out to give primary age children an opportunity to experience the process of storytelling as well as the content of the stories of the oral tradition at first hand, as they listened to traditional tales and then retold them in small groups, sometimes to each other, usually to an audience of younger children. Because of the success of this approach in developing children's oral skills and building their enthusiasm for and confidence in hearing and retelling traditional tales, I began to consider its broader educational value. I began to ask myself whether storytelling could be significant in the education of primary age children, and consequently I decided to investigate the educational value of storytelling further, in research at doctorate level.

1.0 Introduction

The focus of this research is a contemporary yet long-established phenomenon which I want to argue has educational significance. This phenomenon is traditional oral storytelling. For the purposes of this research, I define it as the partly improvised, partly set retelling of traditional stories from different cultures and distant times. This activity has taken on a new lease of popularity in England and Wales since the early 1980s, and is known as the storytelling revival (see Medlicott, 1990, Haggarty, 1995). Revival storytelling occurs in both formal and informal settings, for audiences of adults, children or family groups, and is presented by professional, semi-professional and amateur revival storytellers: that is, people who were not born into an oral tradition, but have come to storytelling from other fields, often in the areas of education or the arts, and who draw their repertoires of stories from both oral and written sources.

The revival of oral storytelling in England and Wales began, as stated, in the early 1980s. By the time this research was registered, in January 1994, the storytelling revival had crystallised to the point where nearly one hundred and fifty people describing themselves as professional storytellers were listed in a Directory brought out in 1995 by the newly formed Society for Storytelling. At that time, there was no extant academic research into the revival, but now several postgraduate research projects are taking place, and two researchers have, at the time of writing, been awarded PhDs for work on storytelling (Naidu, 1994 and Wilson, 1996). They are the first 'Doctors of Storytelling' in the country, and have attracted media attention as a result.

This research therefore appears to be part of a groundswell of interest in traditional oral storytelling which is manifest in the worlds of both the arts and academia. However, there is a problem of confusion: the field is indeterminate, because there is a lack of research into the storytelling revival. There was therefore a need to clarify the field by undertaking research into the storytelling revival and its possible contribution to the education of primary age children. This research aims to increase the knowledge base concerning the phenomenon of the storytelling revival and to investigate whether it is of real significance to education. This introduction to the thesis reporting on the research aims to:

Outline and delimit the research problem, by defining key operational terms and summarising the present state of knowledge in the field.

Set out the research principles which underpinned the research, and the questions which motivated it.

One problem which had to be addressed immediately the research began was the need to identify operational definitions for the topic of study. As storytelling is an area into which relatively little research has so far been undertaken, there was a case for seeking to eliminate inconsistency and lack of clarity about the field through this research. However, before this could be done, there was a need also to define key terms and to

make explicit ways in which they would be used throughout the research. The next part of this introduction therefore sets out key operational definitions.

1.1 Key concepts in storytelling and education

1.1.1 Storyteller

For the purposes of this research, the storytellers under discussion are those who work professionally or semi-professionally as performers of unscripted, semi-improvised retellings of traditional tales from many cultures. They may have preferred age groups for their audiences but most work with all ages from small children to adults, and frequently, at least outside schools, with family audiences. They may use music, song or poetry to enhance their storytelling but the heart of their work is the spoken word: the traditional tale simply told. All the storytellers who participated in the empirical part of this research are revival storytellers (see below for the definition of this term). For a fuller discussion of storytellers working in the contemporary storytelling revival, and the full range of stories which are told, of which traditional tales are only a part, see Grainger (1997, Ch. 1).

1.1.2 Traditional oral storytelling

Oral stories have existed for thousands of years. They were among the first cultural forms to evolve, and are among the most durable: they are still vibrantly alive today in jokes, gossip, pub stories and so on. Folk tales have been claimed as the 'perennially refreshed entertainment of the poor' (Carter, 1990, p. ix), the oral narratives of ordinary people, which express their views of nature and the social order. There have consistently been storytellers who told or sang tales to audiences who played an active part in the tellings by asking questions or making changes, adapting stories for circulation by firesides or, as sometimes now, in the ale-house. Like folk dance or song, storytelling was a collective and constantly changing experience¹. It still exists in this form in some non-European cultures, though in most parts of Europe it had more or less died out during the nineteenth century, until the storytelling revival began to flourish in the early 1980s. In each historical age or community, people amended the stories that were told according to their own needs and desires. So folktales evolved down the centuries and in different cultures with age old popular themes retold in versions adapted to reflect the conditions of the time. They were not intended for children alone, but for the whole community. Literacy arrived comparatively late on the scene: 'for most of human history, 'literature' has been ... heard, not read' (Carter, 1990, p. ix). Padraic Colum has suggested that it was the introduction of artificial light that did away with tale-telling (1944, p. vii). Folk tales filtered to all strata of society, as for instance in the case of peasant women working as wet nurses and nannies to the nobility, who retold stories to the upper class children in their care. Both Pushkin and Rimsky-Korsakov are examples of aristocratic artists who acknowledged the influence of folktales told by their peasant wet nurses.

¹ this summary draws on notes from James Riordan (October 1993) personal communication

Where and when traditional oral storytelling first began is impossible to determine. It seems likely that as long as humans have had speech, they have also had storytelling. For this reason, it is a fundamental human activity, of significance because of its role in understanding the world and the individual's place in it, which has been described by Barbara Hardy as 'a primary act of mind' (in Meek, Warlow, Barton, 1978, p. 12).

1.1.3 Characteristics of oral and literate cultures

The oral tradition is a complex notion because it exists in different forms in different cultures. In Britain, for historical reasons which will be discussed in Chapter Three, it has been bound up with literate culture for so long that the two forms intermingle and influence each other on many individual and social levels, making it difficult to conceive of one without the other. As Walter Ong commented:

Though words are grounded in oral speech, writing tyrannically locks them into a visual field forever. A literate person, asked to think of the word 'nevertheless', will normally (...) have some image, at least vague, of the spelled-out word and be quite unable ever to think of the word 'nevertheless' for, let us say, 60 seconds without adverting to any lettering but only to the sound. This is to say, a literate person cannot fully recover a sense of what the word is to purely oral people. (1982, p. 12)

Ong used his own coinage 'primary orality' to designate cultures which function in a purely oral medium; cultures which vastly outnumber, according to Ong, those which have gone on to develop writing (1982, p. 7). The implications for knowledge and memory of belonging to a culture which does not use writing are difficult to conceive when one has been born and brought up in a literate culture: Plato's criticism in the Phaedrus of literacy's deleterious effect on the powers of the mind and memory seems incredible when the contribution of literacy to the development of knowledge is considered (Penguin Classics, 1973, p. 96). Yet the mind works in a different way in an oral culture, and mnemonic strategies and language forms are developed to a high degree. Milman Parry's seminal work of 1971 on the oral language forms of Homer drew the attention of linguists to the special forms of language in oral culture. His work is considered in more detail in Chapter One.

1.1.4 The oral tradition in Europe

The oral tradition manifests itself in different ways in different cultures. In Europe it has drawn on sacred, courtly and folk traditions in its development. The European tradition has not had, at least in the last two thousand years, the shamanistic elements which still characterise many traditions in other parts of the world. As indicated above, interconnections with literacy have been influential for a long time, especially in England and France. A detailed history of the European oral tradition is outlined in Chapter Three, as it contextualises the fieldwork on the storytelling revival. A key text is Pellowski (1990 edition), which draws together information from around the world

on storytelling traditions.

1.1.5 The main storytelling traditions in England and Wales

The research reported in this thesis focuses on some of the many different traditions or 'schools' of storytelling which are drawn upon by revival storytellers in England and Wales at the present time. These traditions are concerned with repertoire, language, delivery, role of the audience, locations for storytelling and mnemonic and performance techniques. The main storytelling traditions are:

- i) the bardic tradition
- ii) the fireside tradition
- iii) the traditional role of women in storytelling, particularly in the broad educational context.

These traditions are examined in detail in Chapters One and Three.

1.1.6 The storytelling revival in England and Wales

The term 'storytelling revival' is the one which best describes the present context for storytelling in this country, and is used throughout this thesis. Although storytellers who were born into an unbroken oral storytelling tradition, particularly in Gaelic-speaking parts of Ireland and Scotland, are still known and heard, on the whole the storytelling tradition in Britain had died out by the beginning of this century. An exploration of some of the circumstances and possible reasons for this decline can be found in Chapter Three of the thesis.

The so-called storytelling revival dates from the early 1980s. As such it is barely eighteen years old, and has only become comparatively widely known in the last seven to ten years, as festivals, regular storytelling venues and publications by and for storytellers have begun to proliferate. Where did it come from?

The world of education and schooling has contributed a substantial amount to the reemergence of storytelling. An emphasis on oral work was encouraged first by the influential and far-reaching National Oracy Project, established in 1987, and second through the inclusion of Speaking and Listening as key areas of the 1989 English National Curriculum, which required teachers to make provision for oral work and its assessment. Status for oracy within the curriculum was achieved for the first time. Many storytellers now working in the revival, some of whom are included in the survey reported on in this research, have begun by using storytelling in their teaching and then have gone on to develop their storytelling skills either still within the educational context, or else as freelancers. However, for most storytellers, interest in storytelling in school has been focused on finding storytelling job opportunities rather than contributing to the creation of a fertile ground for the growth of storytelling skills. This research was intended to be instrumental in developing a greater exchange of information between storytellers and educationalists than has so far existed.

Perhaps a more significant element in the public storytelling revival has been the growth of community theatre and the development of new and experimental theatrical forms, for some of the best known members of the storytelling revival have backgrounds in community theatre of some kind. For many of the storytellers who participated in the empirical part of this research, their move into storytelling was a development from working with scripts or improvisations based on traditional tales, or narrated by a storyteller character. For myself, I chose to become a storyteller, rather than an actor, because I wanted to take the element of characterisation out of presentation, for a storyteller is able to tell the tale as him or herself, becoming a mouthpiece for the story rather than its interpreter: as the Caribbean traditional storytelling opening has it: 'Mouth open, story jump out!' Furthermore, I postulate a fundamental difference in the creation of images in the two related but separate forms of story and theatre. This first is orally shaped, and visualised by the inner eye in a unique form for each individual listener in storytelling. The second is visually shaped in theatre by actors, set and props, to be presented to the physical eye of the audience member in the fully realised form chosen by the director. Many theatre practitioners do not draw such a sharp distinction between the two, seeing theatre as a form of storytelling. However, in informal discussions in the storytelling world, the two forms tend to be viewed as more separate.

A third starting point for storytellers has been the folk music revival. The *ceilidh*, in which songs, stories and jokes are shared, was a strong influence on the form of the folk clubs which sprang up in the 1970s, and has also proved to be a model for many of the storytelling clubs which opened during the 1990s. Some storytellers have moved from beginnings in folk music into straight storytelling, while others combine the skills of spoken and sung word in their performance style. This folk music model has produced its own style of storytelling, as indeed have the other main sources of present-day storytellers. These three categories of revival practice perhaps connect with three main aspects of the history of the oral tradition in a way which has not been fully appreciated in the storytelling world. This idea is summarised below, and explored more fully in Chapters Two, Three and Four.

Storytellers from the folk music world tend to be exponents of the fireside tradition of storytelling, characterised by a low-key, conversational, interactive style of telling, and with a repertoire mostly drawn from folk tales, tall tales, jokes, and local and urban legends. They typify the accessible face of public storytelling, which is only a few steps away from conversational storytelling, something which figures in everyone's language repertoire. Historically, they draw from the travelling artisans, wandering pedlars, and local yarners who appear everywhere in the histories, such as we have them, of working class and peasant folk.

Storytellers from a background in theatre have a more formal performance style, and

alongside it a more demanding repertoire of myths, legends and wonder tales; longer and more complex, resonant material than the fireside tradition tends to offer. Their antecedents are the court storytellers and historians, and also in the bardic tradition of Irish *filidh* and other figures whose links with religion and ritual contribute to a typically heightened and formal language and delivery.

Thirdly there is storytelling as an educational medium, which also has far-reaching historical roots. The traditional role of stories in passing on admonitions and warnings, or cultural and historical knowledge, predates the invention of literacy, which has come to take over these functions from the oral tradition in most contemporary societies. The material for this type of storytelling draws from fables, moral anecdotes, teaching stories, and also from myths and legends which carry the spoken history of a people, for passing on from one generation to the next. The style is one of simple language, clear messages, often a participatory element to ensure that the listener is drawn in and engaged. The antecedents for today's educational storytellers are teachers and, of course, parents telling stories to their children, roles which still exist with few fundamental changes today. Out of all the traditions discussed, this may be the longest unbroken one, for the rituals, customs and interactions of parent and child have never diversified as broadly as other storytelling situations; the relationship being one which has undergone comparatively little change over time and place.

Although this brief summary runs the risk of stereotyping, nonetheless there is sufficient evidence of these three main traditions of storytelling, both historically and in the present day, to justify this contextualising statement. This evidence is presented in the thesis. It is frequently not possible to pigeon-hole revival storytellers into one category or another: most draw on a wide range of material coming from more than one tradition; many have backgrounds in more than one of the categories described; while still others come from roots which do not connect with any of the areas which have been described. However, the categories are in frequent use within the storytelling revival itself, which suggests some measure of consensus exists about their value and meanings. Nonetheless, a global perspective on the storytelling revival is unusual. Geographical isolation and competition for work opportunities mean that it is rare for storytellers to exchange ideas and techniques, and rarer still to theorise about them. Developing a common language and a shared understanding about the storytelling revival would enable a sharing of good practice, and the identification of historical links. Understanding such links would be of particular value to this phenomenon, in which it is often not easy to see the original roots and antecedents. The present lack of a global perspective is one of the problems this research seeks to address.

1.1.7 The storyteller's craft

The knowledge base of storytelling falls into several different categories. First, there is repertoire; the store of stories which a storyteller holds in readiness to tell. A

storyteller's repertoire often reflects his or her interests and cultural background. There is a difference between the stories a teller knows and the stories s/he can tell. The way in which a story becomes part of the tellable repertoire, rather than one which is 'just known' is an intriguing process, which is explored in Chapter Four.

The next form of knowledge necessary to a storyteller is in the area of memory. Mnemonic techniques and skills are repeatedly discussed by storytellers in the questionnaires and interviews considered in this research. Frances Yates (1966) explored the art of memory in a book which, though not directly about storytelling, had a great deal of relevance to the field, because the memory techniques from the traditions of rhetoric and alchemy which she explored have characteristics in common with those used by storytellers.

Another significant aspect is knowledge of the oral tradition itself: an aspect particularly important to revival storytellers, who must learn about the tradition to compensate for a lack of the intuitive understanding which would come from being brought up in, and so inducted into, a living tradition of storytelling.

The skills of storytelling are the techniques and strategies which enable story tellers to put their knowledge of the craft into practice. From reflection on my own practice, and discussion with other storytellers, I consider the following to be the key storytelling skills:

- i) Performance skills of movement and stillness, gesture, expression and stage presence
- ii) Vocal skills of inflection, pitch, tone, power, range and expressiveness
- iii) Interpersonal skills of rapport with an audience
- iv) Timing, pace and selection of material
- v) The indefinable but nonetheless crucial skill of creating an atmosphere.

These skills are explored more fully in Chapter Four.

It is generally accepted among contemporary storytellers that the storyteller requires:

- i) An attitude of respect towards tradition
- ii) Confidence in his/her own interpretation of a story
- iii) Trust in the story's capacity to touch and enthrall its listeners.

To some in the storytelling world, both tellers and listeners, the power of the story is the all-important thing, with the storyteller merely as the 'mouthpiece' of the story. Others consider the interpretation of the story as the storyteller's key contribution to the storytelling tradition, and that the way an individual tells a story is one of the most important aspects of the skills which are exercised.

1.1.8 The educational value of storytelling

The definition of 'educational value' arrived at before the research began was that if storytelling is to be considered of educational value, then it must contribute to the development of knowledge and understanding in those who undertake it. Instrumental indicators, such as developing skills which increase the individual's potential for future employment, are not relevant to this definition. In a discussion of the classical Greek notion of education, Hirst defined it as 'a deliberate, purposeful activity directed to the development of individuals, (which) necessarily involves considerations of value'. His concept of education opposed the idea that educational goals should follow 'the demands of society or the whims of politicians', and argued that there are fundamental values to which it should aspire (Dearden, Hirst and Peters, eds., 1972, p. 3). Although the Greek concept is problematic in a pragmatic age like the present time, in which culture has become a commodity, a commitment to this kind of educational value remains of long-term importance, even though a consensus about its nature is hard to find. In this research, therefore, the educational value of storytelling is investigated in terms which enquire whether it enhances the growing knowledge and understanding of the learner, and contributes to a better understanding of the world and of self.

1.1.9 A praxis of storytelling

Praxis is an Aristotelian term which is the antithesis of *techne*, 'the expert mastery of ... tasks' (Habermas, 1974, p. 42.) It refers to the philosophy of practice, and represents the underlying principles and theories on which an activity is based. According to Kemmis, 'the study of praxis (informed action) is always through praxis (action with and for understanding)' (in Keeves, 1988, p. 45, author's parentheses). At present there is no formalised or agreed praxis of storytelling, although of course individuals do develop and refine their own practice. An important aim of the research reported in this thesis is to clarify and compare these individual philosophies and to work towards the elaboration of a praxis which will enable storytellers to share common ground and reflect upon the philosophy embodied in their work.

1.2 Methodological concerns in the research

There is a need to justify the focus of the research, and establish the importance of the field and the reasons for researching it. The research included a study of the history of storytelling, reported in Chapter Three, which was carried out for the purpose of clarifying the place of revival storytelling in England and Wales in the context of the European oral tradition at the present time, and investigating whether or not it can legitimately claim to be part of that tradition. It also included, in Chapter Four, a study of ways in which practitioners acknowledged as experts by members of the storytelling revival currently learn and practise their craft, to discover if there are common features between storytellers past and present that could point to the development of a shared body of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Making connections with the storytelling traditions of the past was perceived as important in order to formalise and legitimise

intuitive knowledge, and develop a praxis of storytelling. One of the underlying aims of this research was to contribute to the development of such a praxis, through encouraging present-day storytellers to become reflective practitioners (Schon, 1983).

At the time the research began there was also a need to establish the educational value of storytelling, and to make its educational implications more explicit. The craft of storytelling lacked educational status in comparison to the written word, as is evidenced, for example, in a comparison of the high profile given to Speaking and Listening as a separate attainment target in the 1989 National Curriculum for English with the emphasis on literacy in the 1998 Literacy Hour Framework. This research set out to establish the educational benefits of oral storytelling and the consequent implications for formal education.

In my experience of telling stories professionally for more than nine years, teachers frequently invited storytellers to perform in schools, yet did not seem to take the status of storytelling as an art form seriously. The event was often perceived by staff and pupils alike as an 'entertainment' or a treat, rather than something educational that could be incorporated into the heart of the curriculum. From my point of view, it should be understood as a form of 'work' that contributes to children's education on many levels. Storytelling needs on the one hand to be recognised as an art form, demonstrating its pedigree in terms both of accomplished practitioners showing the best of current achievement and of a recognition of its traditions and longevity. On the other hand there is a need to make a better case for studying and practising this form in schools, and to emphasise its educational and academic worth to teachers. A second underlying aim of this research was to develop a rationale for the educational value of hearing and retelling traditional tales in school.

The research set out to investigate a relatively new aspect of an ancient craft. The implications of this for method were two-fold: as regards the history of the oral tradition, a large amount of both knowledge and speculation existed before the research, but was widely scattered and had not been synthesised into a holistic detailed account. Some summaries existed (for example, Pellowski, 1990 edition). Although interest in the storytelling revival was growing (see, for example, Heywood, 1998), there was as yet no major descriptive historical account of its present state in England and Wales. There was a need to research the history of the oral tradition.

The first research approach adopted was therefore an historical approach, aiming to set the storytelling revival in the context of the history of the oral tradition, and ground it in the chronological development of the craft. This is reported in Chapter Three.

There was also a need to study ways in which storytelling could be used with children in primary schools, in order to describe its educational potential. Therefore, the second

research approach was that of a practitioner researcher working in schools, acknowledging an involvement in the phenomenon being researched, and recognising the positive implications of this stance. Stenhouse argued for 'placing teachers at the heart of the educational research process' (1981, p. 15). I have adapted his term 'teacher-researcher' to 'practitioner-researcher', to indicate to storytellers, teachers and teacher-storytellers that the empirical research is relevant to them. I have also extended the concept of the 'participant observer', (see Ball, in Keeves, 1988, p. 508) to ensure that expertise about the subject as well as about the research process itself is brought to bear in an informed and reflective way. I adopted the position described by Denzin and Lincoln as 'the researcher as bricoleur' in which the researcher 'us(es) the tools of his or her methodological trade' (1994, p. 2) in the understanding that research is an interactive process shaped both by the researcher's own 'personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity' and by those of the 'people in the setting' (ibid p. 3). My own involvement with the subject in hand did not, to my mind, prevent the exercise of objectivity, or the consideration of statements made by respondents in the empirical research, who were also friends and colleagues, from a detached, and if necessary, critical standpoint. As Lincoln and Guba observed: 'One cannot study people without taking ... relationships into account' (1985, p. 105). My relationships with the respondents to the questionnaire enabled better processing of the information, because of my contextual knowledge. This work is reported in Chapter Four.

There are problems, of course, in adopting a personal stance, because of researcher bias. The fact that I was aware of this problem in advance is worth noting. The problem concerns the implications of subjectivity, and the possibility that the study might be too small to be relevant elsewhere. In taking a personal standpoint there is support from researchers in other areas. For example, Joe Kincheloe wrote, 'I would argue that an awareness of self and the forces which shape the self is a prerequisite for the formulation of more effective methods of research'. He emphasised the importance in research of the human ability to 'perceive holistically', because 'human inquirers can extend knowing to a higher level through their capacity to grasp the realm of the felt, the emotional, the unconscious' (1991, p. 29).

The third aspect of research which was needed was the clarification of the form and content of the storytelling revival. The research approach to this problem was empirical, ensuring that a survey of current storytelling practice in England and Wales was carried out, and that records of practical work using stories in schools were also made. The selection of the over-all approach and working methods of the fieldwork was carefully considered. The purpose was to gain access to people whose opinions matter in the storytelling world, and about whose working methods other storytellers, and educationalists, want to know more. This was the fundamental reason for reporting on the questionnaires and interviews by name, rather than anonymously. This decision was made in the first instance at the request of several of the respondents

themselves, who wanted to be present by name in the work. It then became clear that storytellers and others interested in the storytelling revival were going to want to know *who* had said *what*, and that this would in fact be an important factor in the significance of the work. This is therefore a qualitative, rather than a quantitative, study, which investigates the work of individuals, rather seeking generalisations. The empirical research with storytellers is reported in Chapter Four, and case study records from empirical research in primary classrooms is reported in Chapter Five.

These three basic approaches shaped the research, selection and development of the field work methodology, and the perspective from which the various types of data were analysed and the conclusions were drawn.

1.3 Problem statement and research questions

To sum up, this research aimed to bring together and synthesise information that would illuminate the work of revival storytellers in England and Wales today. This revival is fragmented in nature. Revival storytellers may be unaware of connections which exist between the ways in which different practitioners develop their craft. Similarly, historical connections may be ignored, because no coherent account of the history of the oral tradition is available. The need to develop a context for storytellers' work is a fundamental aspect of the research. The research therefore aimed to contribute to the development of a praxis of storytelling.

A second problem the research tackled was that of finding ways in which the educational significance of traditional oral storytelling could be made more explicit. It sought to identify ways in which storytellers practise their craft and aspects which are relevant to and could be used by teachers and pupils at work in the primary classroom. The research set out to improve dialogue between storytellers and educationalists, and to develop an educational rationale for the value of hearing and retelling traditional tales.

The research questions which were developed, and formed the basis for the chapters which follow are:

- What is revival storytelling as distinct from other kinds of storytelling?
- How did revival storytelling evolve historically in England and Wales, and what is its relationship with the European oral tradition?
- How do revival storytellers select, prepare and present the stories they choose to tell, in formal and informal educational contexts?
- What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?
- What would constitute a praxis of storytelling?

The thesis which addresses these questions takes the following structure. The first two chapters review the literature about storytelling. Chapter One critiques theories about

storytelling from six different major perspectives, and Chapter Two focuses on literature on storytelling in education, following five themes through the literature. Chapter Three reports on research undertaken from an historical perspective and sets out a chronology for the oral tradition in England and Wales which contextualises the present storytelling revival. Chapter Four reports on empirical research and analyses the responses of storytellers in the storytelling revival in England and Wales to a questionnaire survey. Chapter Five is also empirical in approach and reports from three primary schools on practical work using traditional stories which I undertook as a practitioner-researcher while storyteller in residence. Chapter Six sets out the findings and implications of the research and revisits the research questions and the summaries of key findings reported at the end of each chapter.

2.0 Chapter One: Theories about storytelling

2.1 Introduction

This chapter, which represents the first part of the literature review, aims to synthesise existing knowledge about revival storytelling and the oral tradition. It summarises a body of knowledge about the research topic which existed before this research began, and in doing so, tests out my belief that storytelling is a well-established craft with educational significance. The chapter begins to address the first research questions, which asked: What is revival storytelling as distinct from other kinds of storytelling? How did revival storytelling evolve historically in England and Wales, and what is its relationship with the European oral tradition?

A number of theoretical constructs have accrued around storytelling, particularly in the last two centuries, associated with psychology, anthropology, Marxism and feminism. But the starting point for many of the theoretical constructs discussed in this chapter is 1846, when the term 'folklore' was first coined by William John Thoms in a letter to the editor of 'The Athenaeum', on 12th August 1846. As the Folklore Society have regularly defined the term in their Manifesto since the first issue of their journal, Folklore, it 'refer(s) to the ballads, folktales and customs of the rural poor'. The oral tradition formed a large part of the body of knowledge of this new science of folklore. As well as examining folklore studies and their contribution to an understanding of the oral tradition, this review has covered a wide range of literature, in its efforts to explore theories about storytelling and to ground storytelling practice in theory.

I undertook the literature review by starting with a list of fifty books which I considered to be seminal, a list which was appended to my original research proposal and is included in the bibliography to the thesis. I spent three months reading widely, following up references from my initial reading; undertaking library searches at Roehampton Institute, the University of Surrey and the Folklore Society Library; and gathering recommendations for further reading from other storytellers, teachers and academics. At the end of this time I began to analyse the notes I had made from my reading and to look for connections and patterns which were relevant to my research questions. I categorised my reading into seven themes, with which I worked for some time. Eventually I discarded the theme of discourse analysis, as I had not developed enough expertise in the field to relate the importance of what I had read to my research questions. I therefore settled on six themes, and arranged them based on two sets of criteria. One set of criteria arranged the themes chronologically, in the order in which the systems on which they report were developed. Thus I began with the literature on myth, and related philosophical issues. The progression from myth to the study of folklore parallels the historical development both of storytelling knowledge, and of material in the oral tradition itself, in which myth predates the folk and fairy tales which form the main focus of folklore studies, according to Campbell (1949) and Graves

(1961 edition). After folklore, the review of literature moved to the more recent science of anthropology. The next section examined Marxist and feminist perspectives on the oral tradition, in a logical sequitur into 19th century philosophies. The final theme surveyed the 20th century system of psychoanalysis, considering its perspectives on storytelling. My second set of criteria moved from the universal theme of mythology to the intensely personal realm of psychoanalysis, via an enquiry which included the social and the political.

The way I have set out the review reflects the development of my own thinking about the subject, as well as identifying connections between ideas from different disciplines, all of which are pertinent to storytelling and the development of an understanding of the theories which underpin its practice.

Throughout the analysis of literature, I constantly had to make choices in selecting material. A guiding principle was to explore themes of relevance to my proposed empirical research into current developments and practices in revival storytelling; another was to explore the importance of oral storytelling as a traditional art form. I wanted it to be clear that I use the term 'storytelling' to refer to an oral art form, in contrast to common usage, which extends the term to refer to written, graphic and filmed narratives. Keeping a tight focus on stories from the oral tradition proved difficult, however, especially with psychoanalytical and Marxist texts, where it was obviously easier to study fixed, printed texts of traditional tales than oral renderings. Arguably, however, this misses something fundamental to the oral tradition, which is the possibility of making immediate links between traditional forms and contemporary concerns, in the moment of telling. Nonetheless, I was frequently obliged to work with the exclusive concept of story as a written form, in order to include relevant and important material. Similarly, I also had occasion to widen the scope of my definition of storytelling, especially in the areas of folklore and feminism, where definitions are often broad. The rationale for this approach has been to offer a fuller account of the importance of oral storytelling in the literature than would otherwise have been possible.

2.2 Mythology and storytelling

Before I can write about the relationship of storytelling and myth, a working definition of myth is needed. This part of the review examined the ideas of some of the best-known thinkers in the field, and a two-pronged description, taken from the work of Michael Senior, was helpful because it outlined 'two contributory streams of myth - the streams from early history and from old religion' (1993, p. 7). He has written that there are both religious and historical aspects of myth, and that 'myth is in fact partly what religion becomes when it is superseded. It comes also from what one might term proto-history: the hazy memory of real but (in terms of the social development of a people) very early events' (ibid). I looked at both these strands, and also at the related

concept of 'sacred landscape'.

2.2.1 Myth and landscape

The notion of the vibrant mythical associations of particular features of the landscape was explored in the literature by Joseph Campbell (1949, p. 43), Robert Graves (1948) and P. L. Travers (1989). It was also the subject of a storytellers' course on 'Story and the Mythological Landscape' I attended in October 1995. At this course, participants retold to each other extracts from the Celtic myth The mabinogion on various Iron Age and Roman sites which Senior (1993) has claimed to have identified as settings for the stories. Having told stories myself at Stonehenge, I can personally testify to the powerful connections between myth and landscape which may be felt when telling stories which have accrued around a specific place.

2.2.2 Religious aspects of myth

Joseph Campbell focused on the religious aspects of myth. He considered it to be a source of cosmic inspiration for human culture, describing it as 'the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation' (1949, p. 3). He viewed myth as something greater than the puny humans whose stories it tells, and especially as a channel for the transmission of traditional wisdom. He described its function as being 'to serve as a powerful picture language for the communication of traditional wisdom' (ibid, p. 256). This view of a system of symbolisation which could be read in many different ways, and was open to diverse interpretation, underpinned a great deal of what he said about myth; for example, 'There is no final system for the interpretation of myths, and there will never be any such thing' (ibid, p. 381). Campbell nonetheless has devoted a considerable amount of his writing to what he claimed is impossible, namely an interpretation of myth. He was influenced by the science of psychoanalysis, and saw myth as closely connected with dreams, because both spring from the unconscious, though in the case of myth he saw it as a function of the collective unconscious, describing 'dream (as) the personalized myth, myth the depersonalized dream' (ibid, p. 19).

2.2.3 Universal themes of myth

Regarding universal themes, Campbell argued that myths are bearers of universal themes, which were spread from culture to culture by travelling storytellers and through cultural exchange:

It is still uncertain by what means and in what eras the mythological and cultural patterns of the various archaic civilizations may have been disseminated to the farthest corners of the earth, yet it can be stated categorically that few (if any) of the so-called 'primitive cultures' studied by our anthropologists represent autochthonous growths. (1949, p. 142)

This position, a belief in monogenesis, can be borne out by studying story motifs¹ and their recurrences in many cultures and geographical areas.

James Frazer believed that the recurring patterns in myths from all around the world reflected human commonalities in responses to the events of life, which resulted in the development of broadly similar stories in independent contexts (1922, p. 386). This phenomenon, polygenesis, is the subject of a detailed account in Brunvand (1976).

P.L. Travers also subscribed to the theory of polygenesis as an explanation of the universality of mythic theme, for she wrote, 'the self-same themes seem to emerge, as though something in the psyche of a race had ripened and produced a fruit that corresponded, not in its form but in its substance, with the fruit of all other races' (1989, p. 13). She has also emphasised the fundamental importance of myth in the life of the individual as well as of a culture (ibid, p. 302). Her analysis of myth arises from her own area of expertise, the fairy tale. She has written about the relationship between the two forms, and understands fairytales as the 'descendants' of myth, which shaped difficult material originally available only to shamans and priests into a form which could be more easily assimilated by 'ordinary people':

All this pondering has led me to believe that the true fairy tales ... come straight out of myth: they are, as it were, minuscule reaffirmations of myth, or perhaps the myth made accessible to the local folkly mind. (ibid, p. 294)

2.2.4 Historical aspects of myth

The poet Robert Graves analysed myth in a somewhat idiosyncratic way, most famously in his book The white goddess (1961 edition), subtitled an 'historical grammar of poetic myth'. In this book he explained their transglobal connections by claiming that they all elaborated the same 'Theme', which has been explored by poets, bards and storytellers the world over. He quoted from the late fourteenth century collection The red book of Hergest, to explain his interest, as a poet, in the power of myth: 'Three things that enrich the poet: Myths, poetic power, a store of ancient verse' (1961, p. 20). Although he admitted they are sometimes difficult to disentangle, owing to meddling which has taken place over time, Graves viewed myths as practical guides to the interpretation of the past:

The elements of the single infinitely variable Theme are to be found in certain ancient poetic myths which though manipulated to conform with each epoch of religious change - I use the word 'myth' in its strict sense of 'verbal iconograph' without the derogatory sense of 'absurd fiction' that it has acquired - yet remain constant in general outline. (ibid, p. 21)

¹ for example, the Cinderella motif, which is found in Chinese, Native American and African traditions as well as the European versions of Perrault, Asbornsen and Grimm.

In the introduction to his encyclopaedic collection of Greek myths, he spelled out this view of myths as practical, accessible records of the past: 'Myths, though difficult to reconcile with chronology, are always practical: they insist on some point of tradition, however distorted the meaning may have become in the telling' (1955, p. 20).

The continuing relevance of myths, according to Graves, could be partly explained by their potential as models for 'right living' drawn from ancient patterns. This view was also espoused by Mircea Eliade who described the function of myth as being 'to reveal models, and in so doing, to give a meaning to the World and to human life. This is why its role in the constitution of man is immense' (1964, p. 145). Eliade's exploration of myths touched on their important role as vehicles of secret knowledge and magic, aligning with Graves' views that there is esoteric wisdom buried in the stories:

... the 'story' narrated by the myth constitutes a 'knowledge' which is esoteric, not only because it is secret and is handed on during the course of an initiation but also because the 'knowledge' is accompanied by a magico-religious power. For knowing the origin of an object, an animal, a plant and so on is equivalent to acquiring a magic power over them ... (ibid, pp. 14-15)

Late twentieth century writers of fiction who connected their own work with myth were concerned to draw attention to the weaknesses of their society, which they claimed has lost touch with the myths of the past. Alan Garner's award-winning novels for children used myth 'to sharpen our perception of ... potentials which are either crushed or ignored in a materialistic, vicarious society' (Philip, 1981, p. 51). For the Booker Prize winner, writer A. S. Byatt, the links of myth, dream and memory were important also. She wrote:

... it was possible that the human need to tell tales about things that were unreal originated in dreams, and that memory had certain things also in common with dreams; it rearranged, it made clear, simple narratives, certainly it invented as well as recalling. (1994, pp. 206-7)

The poet Ted Hughes has developed the argument for the significance of myth beyond the personal and into the social sphere. He agreed with Plato's proposal that myths and legends are ideal educational material, because they function as 'large scale accounts' of interaction between the inner world of the imagination and the real world in which ordinary people live (1988, p. 93). In Hughes' view, myths offer a blueprint for understanding and reconciling the inner and the outer worlds; they are 'an archive of draft plans' for the imagination (ibid).

2.2.5 Key points regarding mythology

Three aspects of the literature on myth shed light on the educational potential of stories, and so forwarded this research:

- i) The power of myth as a teacher of traditions, customs and memories of the past.
- ii) The connections it fosters between humans and their environment, in the way it invests sacred sites with powerful associations and encourages awe in the face of nature.
- iii) The idea that it enables the individual to tap into something greater than him or herself, whether this is some kind of cosmic power or more simply an accumulation of human energy and collected wisdom.

The next section of this chapter will pursue this concept of an accumulation of human wisdom, in order to make it more explicit, and examine folklore theory about storytelling.

2.3 Folklore studies and storytelling

As described above (p. 24), the term 'folklore' was coined to indicate the study of the art forms and customs of the 'rural poor'. However, almost before the Folklore Society was founded, in 1878, this definition was already changing, and it continued to change as folklore studies developed and flourished around the world. For the purposes of this research, these historical changes and developments are less important than the scope and focus of folklore studies now, only a relatively small part of which is devoted to the storytelling branches of the oral tradition. My review, therefore, focused on late twentieth century work in the field, and its relevance to my research.

2.3.1 Systems of classifying folk tales

The review showed that important work has been done by folklore scholars in developing structures for classifying and sorting folktales. Three figures stood out particularly: Antti Aarne, the Finnish folklorist, Stith Thompson, the American folklorist, and Vladimir Propp, the Soviet formalist. Each created classification systems that have been continuously adapted and developed and used since their inception. Aarne's work, in the first decade of this century, produced a tale-type index which is still considered by many as 'the standard system' (Finnegan, 1992, p.163). He took plot or story line as the defining characteristic for his classification system, and divided the material into categories such as animal tales, 'ordinary tales' and jokes. The geographical range, which was restricted to Europe and Western Asia, was one of the most obvious limitations of this classification. Nonetheless, this system is still widely used by editors of folktale collections and folklorists to classify newly-collected stories.

Aarne's work was revised and amplified by Stith Thompson in 1928 and again in 1961, in order to produce an all-encompassing international survey of what Thompson

called 'folk-literature'. Thompson defined his aims as being 'to arrange in a single logical classification the elements which make up traditional narrative literature' (1955, p. 11). His classification system was intended to categorise the motifs of a story, by which he meant the narrative elements, including incidents, items and characters. His term 'folk-literature' raised a recurring theme and problem of this study: the lack of previous research which focused specifically on oral storytelling, and the difficulty of finding a language to speak about oral 'works of art'.

The Soviet scholar Vladimir Propp's 1968 book on folk tale morphology was ostensibly more limited in scope and function, though it is better known than the other two outside folklore studies. This is because of the more politicised approach which he brought to his work, which gave it greater relevance outside the specialist field of folklore studies; for example, in theories of nationalism. Propp addressed only one genre of folk tale, the Russian wonder tale, and his identification of the key functions which occurred in a wonder tale led him to develop the notion of a story grammar which underpinned this basic core narrative, linking tales which otherwise seem only superficially similar. Propp's work inspired many related studies, but he looked at such a specific group of stories that it is unwise to try to draw out too many general principles from it. D. J. Cosentino, for instance, criticised Propp's system on the following grounds:

Without being grounded in a representative body of oral narratives, and in knowledge of the performing art these pale transcriptions represent, and without being grounded in the particular culture whose forms these narratives embody, an armchair critic can construct and justify nearly any ... model his ingenuity might devise. (1982, p. 28)

However, the importance of Propp's work in folklore studies was immense and his interest in children's learning from and about fairy tales was of relevance to my research, for he asked:

How precisely is fairytale structure learned? Does the child unconsciously extrapolate fairytale structure from hearing many individual fairy tales? Do children become familiar enough with the general nature of fairy-tale morphology to object to or question a deviation from it by a storyteller? ... While there have been many studies of language learning, there have been very few dealing with the acquisition of folklore. (1968, p. xv)

His questions regarding children's understanding of the folk tale form are addressed in this research through building the report of case records in Chapter Five. Here, I want to return to Cosentino's argument for the importance of oral texts and performance art as unique aspects of storytelling.

2.3.2 Differences between oral and written versions of folk tales

Ruth Finnegan drew on her anthropological work among the Limba people of Sierra Leone for her views about the holistic nature of oral art (1993, p. 19). She wrote that the art and meaning of the stories were realised not only in the words, but also in the teller's delivery or performance skills, and the audience's response. She warned that 'merely looking at words and assuming, in keeping with the textual model, that they constitute the essence can miss the reality'. The same point was made by Jan Brunvand, another respected folklorist, when he wrote: 'Folktales as oral literature cannot be appreciated fully in mere printed representation ... even the aural medium cannot present the full dimensions of gesture, expression, and audience reaction' (1976, p. 67). A different, historical perspective on the importance of the oral aspects of storytelling, came from Mara Freeman, who argued that the importance of the spoken word to the Bards of early Ireland was magical:

... the spoken word held the power of breath, was literally *inspiration*, which was considered a gift from the great goddess Brigit, patron of poetry and divination. As such, the spoken word could make magic, invoke the divine. A very fine line existed between story, poetry and incantation in early Celtic culture. The title *fili*, generally meaning 'poet' or 'storyteller' interchangeably, has also been translated as 'weaver of spells'. (1995, p. 64)

The claim that oral performance is unique, and cannot be reduced to a written record without loss of many of the aspects which carry its meaning, related to my interest in the skills and methods of storyteller practitioners of the oral tradition. I began to wonder if it would uphold my contention that traditional oral language forms support children's language learning in many different ways.

2.3.3 Relevance of folklore studies to storytelling

Writers and speakers on themes as diverse as Black arts in Britain, werewolf trials in mediaeval France, and musicians in Milton Keynes have all drawn on folklore studies to enable interpretations of cultural events, and have all used them to make connections which resonated outside their immediate areas of study. For example, in 1986, Kwesi Owusu, a Black arts activist, claimed that 'the high points in the development of orature have ... coincided with the most vibrant periods of national, anti-imperialist struggles' (p. 148). Jack Zipes expressed a similar view, with a more specific focus on storytelling, in his study of the role of the Grimm brothers in the struggle for German independence (1988).

In 1993 Caroline Oates devoted a PhD study to werewolf trials in the Franche-Comte area of France during the period of the Inquisition. In it she reached the following conclusions about the continuing vigour of the oral tradition, and its power as a medium for spreading knowledge or supposition:

Rumours and legends borne out of personal experience may also migrate to other areas - although they do not necessarily enter other belief systems unless supported by personal experience. But a good story is a good story, and a sceptic can be as capable a transmitter as a believer. (1993, p. 165)

Finally, giving the twelfth Katherine Briggs Memorial Lecture to the Folklore Society in November 1993, Ruth Finnegan linked the practice of folk arts in Sierra Leone to that in her home town Milton Keynes. In the magazine Folklore, she observed that folk arts such as storytelling are often undervalued, but can be of equal artistic merit to more 'highly esteemed' art forms:

Too often, we fail to notice this interlacing of the everyday and the poetic when it is close to us - preferring perhaps to look for it either in the far away and long ago or in the high textual arts of the elite culture. Yet, as folklorists and anthropologists remind us, we can look for the same qualities in the disregarded and popular arts around us. (1994, vol. 105, p. 9)

The next section of this chapter reports on the views of anthropologists on the folk arts. First I want to consider the role of folklore studies as a force for social change.

2.3.4 Folklore studies as a force for change

I have already referred to Owusu's views on the relevance of orature (his term for the oral arts) to Black struggles for freedom and against imperialism. He expanded this further by arguing that the oral arts could play a key role in forming a new sort of society in Britain, one that is more egalitarian and socialist. He wrote:

Every popular grouping has its songs, and demonstration is literally orature on the streets, with new and old songs competing for attention. ... We can go further still to articulate an orature which informs alternative institutions and whose values form the basis for a new society. (1986, p. 138)

This radical view, far removed from the paternalistic attitudes of Victorian folklorists², indicates the potential of folk arts, such as storytelling, to capture and express popular feeling.

A second example of the possible role of folklore studies as a force for social change was found in a 1995 issue of Folklore, in an article entitled 'Preaching tolerance?', in which Veronique Campion-Vincent explored some of the ways in which 'hostile feelings ... often express themselves covertly through folklore - especially through jokes and contemporary legends, which often articulate .. prejudice' (vol. 106, p. 21). In recognising the role played by folkloric material in the expression of ideas about racism, sexism and stereotyping in society, and the concomitant responsibility of

² see, for example, Joseph Jacobs (1892, p. ix) in his Preface to Celtic Fairy Tales: 'The folktale in England is in the last stages of exhaustion.'

folklore scholars to investigate and comment on this uncongenial aspect of the oral tradition, Campion-Vincent identified a crucial role for folklore in the modern world which complements the crusading and formative role proposed by Owusu.

2.3.5 Key points regarding folklore

Four important findings for my research from the review of literature on folklore studies were:

- i) That a metalanguage for organising the structures of stories has been created by scholars to talk about stories and storytelling, a process which might be described as helping to create a story grammar.
- ii) That written texts tend to constrict the available evidence through which to analyse an oral medium, because so little of the performance of the storytelling can be represented by them. This is a point which will be developed in Chapter Four from the thinking of revival storytellers on the issue.
- iii) That recent scholars in folklore studies are developing an understanding of the need for a different approach which acknowledges the full spectrum of the oral tradition.
- iv) That folklore can be a force for social change.

In the next section some of these themes will be examined further, from an anthropological perspective.

2.4 Anthropological studies and storytelling

In the field of anthropology, insofar as it relates to the oral tradition, the work of Claude Levi-Strauss provides an important starting point for the discussion of the function of storytelling.

2.4.1 Claude Levi-Strauss' theories about history and myth

In a series of books, beginning with The raw and the cooked (1986), Levi-Strauss set out his ideas for a science of mythology, and drew on myths from widely separated cultures to produce a complicated overview of intercultural connections which he made. He defined his scientific method of structuralism in the following terms:

The problem ... is, to try to reach the invariant property of a very complex set of codes. ... the problem is to find what is common to all of them. It's a problem ... of translating what is expressed in one language - or one code, if you prefer, but language is sufficient - into expression in a different language. (1978, p. 9)

He indicated that this theoretical approach was problematic:

There is no real end to mythological analysis, no hidden unity to be grasped once the breaking-down process has been completed. Themes can be split up *ad infinitum*. Just when

you think you have disentangled and separated them, you realize that they are knitting together again in response to the operation of unexpected affinities. Consequently the unity of the myth is never more than tendential and projective ... (1986 edition, p. 5)

For Levi-Strauss the myths of a given society are as crucial to its formation and functioning as speech, because they form a constant and never-ending record of the thoughts and beliefs of a people (1986, p. 7). He was particularly interested in links between myth and music, and in an effort to delineate thought forms which are not rigid and circumscribed, he structured some of his books according to musical, rather than literary, forms. He also described the writing process as something that happened to him, rather than something which was initiated by him, writing: 'I don't have the feeling that I write my books. I have the feeling that my books get written through me', which mirrored his views on mythology, 'that myths get thought in man unbeknownst to him' (1978, p. 3).

Whatever one is to make of this, his writing has been enormously influential in the field of anthropology. His analyses of the interrelationships of myths often used geometric diagrams to illustrate key points, and he endeavoured to draw out logical relationships within myths, using a binary system of opposites to categorise the themes he identified. He was particularly interested in the relationships between science, history and myth, about which he wrote:

... science, which had a purely quantitative outlook in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, is beginning to integrate the qualitative aspects of reality ... This undoubtedly will enable us to understand a great many things present in mythological thinking which we were in the past prone to dismiss as meaningless and absurd. (1978, p. 24)

His question, '(W)here does mythology end and where does history start?' (ibid, p. 38), is one which I often pose in my storytelling work, especially at historic sites such as castles and ancient monuments. In telling stories to children in such story-rich environments, I try to stress that there is a difference between story and history. There is a world of difference between telling a story set in a castle and telling the scholarly history of the castle itself, insofar as it is known, and I take pains to discriminate between the two, by responding to the question which I am most frequently asked by child listeners, at every storytelling occasion: 'Is that a true story?' Levi-Strauss, however, was of the opinion, based on his collection and study of a variety of Native American myths, that 'the simple opposition between mythology and history which we are accustomed to make - is not at all a clear-cut one, and that there is an intermediary level' (ibid, p. 40). He argued that even though, 'in our own societies, history has replaced mythology' they fulfil the same function (ibid, pp. 42-3). This is an interesting point which often engages storytellers, and which is discussed in some of the responses to the questionnaire reported in Chapter Four.

2.4.2 Roland Barthes' and Hayden White's theories of history and story

Other writers have also addressed the notion of how we make sense of past experience, whether personal or collective, and have examined the role of narrative in these processes. Roland Barthes described narrative as 'simply there, like life itself ... international, transhistorical, transcultural' (1977, p. 79). This suggests that narrative can operate across cultures, as a metalanguage, solving the problem of communication which Hayden White called that of 'how to translate knowing into telling' (1980, p. 5); the problem of finding a means to communicate experience in a way which crosses cultural boundaries and is meaningful to others. However, although White acknowledged that 'narrativity' is an indication of the powerful need to make sense of the world that is part of the human experience (ibid p. 27), he pointed out the difficulties which arise from the fact that 'real events do not offer themselves as stories' (ibid p. 8). White also explored the 'distinction between discourse and narrative' (ibid p. 7), though he did not make the connection that the great number of mythic narratives which exist throughout the world may be the result of the conjunction of two factors: the universal urge towards narrative, and the difficulty of making a coherent narrative out of real life events.

2.4.3 Dell Hymes' theories about education and story

Dell Hymes examined narrative and its functions, especially amongst the Native American Zuni and Chinook people, where the educational role of story is important, not didactically to transmit the customs and history of the tribe, but to model patterned and organised language. Hymes described their view of children as one which links them to the land of the spirits from which they have come. Their babbling was interpreted by shamans as a special language which they shared with the spirits. Telling stories to children was both an important way of explaining this world and encouraging them to remain, and a way of inducting them into their new, human language (1982 p. 137). Hymes' thesis, that the patterned form of storytelling language was in itself, regardless of the content, part of the educational value of the story, is important for this research because it supports my contention that patterning of language is an important educational aspect of storytelling. This view was also shared by some of the English revival storytellers whom I interviewed later on in the research (see Chapter Four).

Hymes has explored the relevance of this finding to modern educational goals. He also investigated connections with storytelling language in other cultural forms of narrative discourse, by considering the importance of patterning as a factor which 'may very well bear some of the life of a literary aesthetic impulse in the shaping of experience in narrative, even in today's English and in children's experience of narrative discourse' (ibid, pp. 138 & 140). He questioned whether the importance of patterned language was peculiar to the Native American culture in which he observed it. In this respect his

work connects with studies done by Shirley Brice Heath in contemporary working class American communities, to which the next chapter refers further. Here, I want to emphasise a common interest in oral, as opposed to written, language patterns which Brice Heath shared with Hymes, through a brief extract from her work:

The patterns of interactions between oral and written uses of language are varied and complex, and the traditional oral-literate dichotomy does not capture the ways other cultural patterns in each community affect the uses of oral and written language. (1983, p. 344)

When Hymes addressed the implications of his views for the teaching of language, he indicated a need for teachers to acknowledge that 'the richness of syntax which linguistics finds in every normal child may be accompanied by a richness of narrative organisation' (1982, p. 140). Although Hymes' use of the word 'may' precludes a reading which equates the two aspects of language acquisition which he discussed, the connection which he made between rich syntax and narrative ability shows that he considered narrative to be a fundamental part of the child's language skills. My own experience of storytelling with young children similarly suggests that they are capable of creating oral narratives of great complexity and sophisticated structure, especially when they use traditional tales as models or bases for their own stories. Some examples of this are included in later chapters. In Hymes' view, this facility with oral language was not peculiar to the Native American tradition: he saw it as 'potential' in every language, something 'democratically available for everyone' (1982, pp. 140-1). His view of the language skills used in traditional stories as 'ubiquitous tools' has implications for the importance of storytelling in education because it suggests 'modern' society has a lot to learn from the older, simpler ways of transmitting knowledge which characterise the oral tradition.

2.4.4 Key points regarding anthropological studies

The focus of this part of the review was on anthropological type literature which considered language issues and their importance in understanding how a community functions. The key findings from this section for this research are:

- i) There is a long-standing relationship between history and myth as ways of recording and interpreting past events.
- ii) Narrative has the potential to transcend culture, making it a powerful avenue for the communication of meaning.
- iii) Children bring skills to the use of narrative, making it a possible channel of communication for them.
- iv) Patterned language carries importance in narrative, as identified by Hymes.
- v) 'Older ways' of education, including storytelling and other oral forms, are valuable.

The focus of this section reflected current trends in social anthropology, for as

Finnegan observed, the 'Cinderella subject' of the verbal arts and oral traditions is now beginning to be addressed within mainstream anthropology, rather than remaining the domain of folklorists and oral historians (1992, p.1). The next section considers Marxist theories about storytelling.

2.5 Marxist theory and the oral tradition

Work on the oral tradition is only a fragment of the material which exists in Marxist theory. Since it was neither possible nor appropriate to attempt to survey the whole arena of Marxist thought, I restricted my attention to theories about the oral tradition, and folk and fairy tales. The two major scholars on whom I elected to focus were Mikhail Bakhtin and Jack Zipes. Since Bakhtin's primary interest was in folk customs, rather than stories, and Zipes' major contribution concerns the growth and development of the literary fairy tale, not the oral folk tale, it will be necessary, here as elsewhere, to draw some analogies and connections which may go beyond the writers' original intentions, in order to draw out the relevance of the selected literature to the oral tradition.

2.5.1 Historical perspectives on folk and fairy tales in the work of Walter Benjamin and Jack Zipes

Walter Benjamin's influential essay The storyteller (1992 edition) discussed the development and decline of the traditional figure of the storyteller as a craftsperson, working with an artisan form of communication and rooted in the traditions of the people. Benjamin's essay³ is somewhat misleadingly titled, since it refers not to a teller of tales but to a writer, the author Nikolai Leskov. Benjamin wrote of Leskov as the heir to an older, oral tradition, and lamented the passing of this traditional form: 'The storyteller in his living immediacy is by no means a present force. He has already become something remote from us and something that is getting even more distant' (p. 83). He analysed some of the reasons for this loss, concluding that the crucial factor was that 'experience has fallen in value' (p. 82). He related this explicitly to the aftermath of the First World War, and implicitly to the equally traumatic rise of Nazism, which in 1940 cost him his life.

Benjamin referred to the storyteller as 'always rooted in the people, primarily in a milieu of craftsmen', and based this on Gorky's observation that Leskov was 'the writer most deeply rooted in the people and (was) completely untouched by any foreign influence' (p. 100). According to Benjamin, two social groups in feudal societies created the ideal contexts for storytelling to flourish: trading seamen, whose voyages supplied the material for their tales, and tillers of the soil, who knew 'the local tales and traditions' (pp. 84-5). In his view, the development of the oral tradition would have been 'inconceivable without the most intimate interpenetration of these two archaic

³ quoted extensively by revival storytellers since Jack Zipes gave a paper on it at the Society for Storytelling Gathering at the University of Leicester School of Education, 19th March 1994

types'. This 'interpenetration' was achieved in the Middle Ages through the trade structure. The resident master craftsman and the travelling journeyman worked together in the same rooms; and every master had been a travelling journeyman before he settled down in his home town or somewhere else. As Benjamin wrote, 'if peasants and seamen were past masters of storytelling, the artisan class was its university' (p. 85).

Jack Zipes, in applying Benjamin's ideas to the role of storytelling today, noted how the commercialisation of storytelling by the capitalist media has turned tales into commodities, 'stolen and frozen cultural goods': the 'Disneyversions', 'true life stories' and 'docudramas' of the television and cinema screens (1994, p. 7). Speaking at the Society for Storytelling Annual Gathering on 19th March 1994, Zipes called on storytellers to be 'subversive, converting the media into channels for sharing experiences.' His call for democratisation of the means of communication was based on his reading of Benjamin that 'the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out' (Benjamin, 1992, p. 86); and he commented in the speech on 19th March 1994 that 'the communicability of experience has decreased: we do not know how to give counsel to ourselves'.

In Zipes' writings on the historical development of the literary fairy tale (1994, p.1), he summarised the history of the oral tradition, and proposed a framework considering a social history of the literary fairy tale: 'My foremost concern is how fairy tales operate ideologically to indoctrinate children so that they will conform to dominant social standards' (1983b, p. 18). He explored both the history of particular stories (1983a, 1995) and the historical development of folk and fairy tale genres in general (1983b). His anti-sexist perspective on women's role both in production and in storytelling complemented Benjamin's gender-specific account (1994). Zipes established that women's storytelling played an important role historically in passing on the customs and lore of cultural groups to younger generations.

Zipes and Benjamin located stories within a Marxist socialist perspective which contextualised their expositions of women's and working class contributions to the history of the oral tradition. Their analysis of this history, and in particular the role played by ordinary working people, is of importance to this research because it has borne out the accessibility of the content and form of the oral tradition.

2.5.3 Mikhail Bakhtin's theories on individualism and collectivism

Mikhail Bakhtin paid little attention to the oral tradition in his otherwise wide-ranging survey of folk culture in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. However, in his book Rabelais and his world, (1984, p. 151) he did refer to the 'anonymous oral tradition' in his account of the ways in which 'Rabelais inherited and brought to fulfilment thousands of years of folk humor' (p. 473). Elsewhere, he described written language

as an integral part of culture, though it was an observation which was equally applicable to oral language:

Literature is an inseparable part of culture and it cannot be understood outside the total context of the entire culture of a given epoch. It must not be severed from the rest of culture, nor, as is frequently done, can it be correlated with socioeconomic factors, as it were, behind culture's back. (1986, p. 2)

In the same essay he described the process of writing as essentially a search for something more than mere style: a standpoint from which to observe the world, commenting, 'the author's quests for his (sic) own word are basically quests for genre and style, quests for an authorial position' (p. 149).

This discussion of the solitary position of the author in regard to his/her work contrasts with the situation which obtains in the oral tradition, in which collective creativity and dissemination is more common. As Zipes commented, one result of the development of the literary fairy tale, with its fixed text and acknowledged author, was the introduction of 'notions of elitism and separation through a select canon of tales' (1994, p. 74).

In part, this resulted in a loss of the collective creative power celebrated by Bakhtin. Furthermore, in terms of the fragile *status quo* of the European ruling class, which used stories among its socialising tools, the oral tradition's volatile and changeable nature continued to be a destabilising influence, as Zipes noted (*ibid*, p. 75). The power of oral stories to 'question, dislodge and deconstruct the written tales' made them a threat to the literary tradition. Zipes also noted the potent effects of the movement towards the individualisation of the author (*ibid*, p. 78). This foregrounded the solitary experience of writing and reading, at the expense of the social activity of telling and listening to stories, and contributed, in his view, to the loss of a sense of community which characterises late twentieth century society in European and American cultures.

According to Zipes, the 'divide and rule' strategy of the ruling classes was, as noted above, powerful in the fragmentation of the oral tradition (1994). The move from listening to reading, however, was not characterised by Zipes as one of unmitigated bleakness. Zipes mentioned that 'the fairy tale was (not) totally absorbed and manipulated by the growing capitalist culture industry. In the first place, the folk tale was still the dominant art form among the common people in the nineteenth century' (1979, p. 15).

These writers, however, have not only chronicled working class culture, but also recorded its historical and contemporary significance, which will be addressed in the next section of the review.

2.5.3 Cultural value of folk and fairy tales from a Marxist perspective

In Zipes' view no 'adequate history of the transitional period between folk and fairy tales' exists, a gap he has tried to fill (1979, p. 20). In an early publication quoted above, he argued that adopting a political perspective on folk tales is important:

Needless to say, understanding the politics is not the only approach one can take to folk and fairy tales. Yet, such a perspective is vital ...: it allows us to gain greater insight into the historical forces which influenced the formation of these genres, and it provides us with a basis to review theories of the folk and fairy tales which have not considered their own premises in terms of politics. (pp. 20-1)

In particular, he disagreed with Bettelheim's approach to the study of folk tales through psychoanalysis (see, for instance, 1979, p. 176). For Zipes, folk and fairy tales are 'an essential force in our cultural heritage, but they are not static literary models to be internalized for therapeutic consumption'.

Their value depends on how we actively produce and receive them in forms of social interaction which lead toward the creation of greater individual autonomy. Only by grasping and changing the forms of social interaction and work shall we be able to make full use of the utopian and fantastic projections of folk and fairy tales. (1979, p. 177)

This passage contains some ideological assumptions, mainly centred around Zipes' notion of 'our' culture, assuming a heterogeneity which is inappropriate for the multi-cultural society which exists in Britain now, and was the case even in 1979, when he wrote this paper. However, its merit is that it does propose an active and dynamic role for the storyteller interested in storytelling as a force for social change.

Bakhtin also offered an indication of how to go about this practically, putting the words and deeds of ordinary people at the centre of his agenda (1986, p. 113). This suggests a role for the storyteller working in contemporary culture which is both proactive and effective, and strengthens the view that the oral tradition is a suitable and relevant medium to help give voice to current struggles for equal rights and freedom of speech which are going on around the world. Such theoretical scaffolding has helped articulate my own philosophy and practice as a teacher-storyteller.

2.5.4 Key points regarding Marxist theory

This aspect of the review has established the following:

- i) Some practical and realistic theories on folk and fairy tales past and present were investigated.
- ii) Issues concerning the identity of the author were considered, in the context of collective and social art making, of which the oral tradition offers a paradigm. The contrast between the solitary work of the author and the

collective work on stories by storytellers in the oral tradition was brought out.

iii) Attempts were made to define present and future possibilities for the oral tradition as a force for social change.

This focus continues in the next section of the review, which considers the oral tradition from a feminist viewpoint.

2.6 Feminist theories about folklore and stories

Four related themes will be explored in this section, and the relevant points for this research identified. I consider these themes important for this research because the specific contribution of women storytellers to the storytelling revival has not been acknowledged, either by storytellers themselves, or in the literature. I wished to investigate whether women have a particular contribution to make to storytelling, and aimed to include equal numbers of women and men in the empirical research, which is reported in Chapter Four. I also set out to discover whether there was a feminist perspective in the literature, especially in the field of folklore. The four themes which I selected in this section are: images of women in folk tales, women's ways of working with stories, feminist folklore, and the feminist perspective on psychoanalysis.

2.6.1 Images of women in folk tales

Kay Stone (1986a) has chronicled the development of feminist thought about traditional tales, although in this research context it is necessary to remember that the tale versions she discussed were exclusively literary. She noted that, for a long time, particularly during the 1960s, images of women in traditional folk and fairy tales were the target of criticism by feminist writers, who considered that they contributed to the negative socialising forces which 'discouraged females from realizing their full human potential' (ibid p. 229). Critics tended to focus on a group of very well known texts, including Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White, all of which presented stereotypes of passive heroines. Later, they searched out traditional tales which presented women in less stereotyped roles (Lurie, 1980, Riordan, 1984), and reworked some of the stories (Zipes, 1993). New and more sympathetic readings of stories appeared, such as Leva Kavablum's exploration of Cinderella (1973), and a range of feminist psychoanalytical interpretations examined 'myths and Marchen⁴ as paradigms for inner growth.' (Stone, 1986a, p. 232)

As the storytelling revival has grown, women tellers have increasingly become a significant force working with traditional tales. They have rediscovered tales offering positive images of women and have brought them into repertoire.

⁴ This German term is usually translated simply as 'stories', though it is sometimes used in the original, as here, to denote a particular type of European wonder or fairy tale.

Only a few *Marchen* researchers have had the initiative to look beyond the Grimms and Perrault ... but these more enterprising scholars have discovered that a broader investigation of the European tale tradition reveals numerous stories in which women and girls are at least as capable as male heroes.

Hooker (in *Folklore*, 1990, vol. 101, ii, p. 78)

Although this quotation specifically concerns Eastern European wonder tales, it is important to note that feminist storytellers gather stories from non-European cultures too. For instance, I have found Inuit tales to be particularly rich in positive and extraordinary images of women, as are many African tales (Carter, 1990 and 1992).

Here is a final example of images of women in stories from a feminist academic who is also a storyteller. Speaking at one of the last meetings of the London Narrative Group, on 5th May 1994, Susanna Steele talked about her search for stories she can and wants to tell. She referred to a need to know where the stories come from, 'their passage of time, their changes', and whether these are changes which have been agreed or enforced. She discussed what can be done to soften, reframe, or turn around a tale in the telling, with oral additions, or by including historical or political contextualisation of the material in the telling. She suggested that revival storytellers are creating their own community, in which feminist thought can be a key ingredient in the selection of materials. She said that it was important to her to be 'clear and true with the narrative and to honour tradition, and also to be true to myself and my view of the world'.

Steele argued that decisions about the beginnings of stories are particularly important, and suggested that women storytellers ask themselves the questions 'Where do you start? Whose story are you telling?' She also demonstrated how a telling can be radically changed by shifting the main focus. A good example of this is a comparison of two tellings of the Russian wonder tale Elena the wise, both based on a version in Afanasiev (1945). Susanna Steele tells this story from the point of view of Elena, and leaves a question mark hanging over the ending, 'so that her choices (of whether or not to marry the soldier) will still be open to her'. Tony Aylwin tells the same story from the perspective of the soldier who falls in love with Elena, and offers a different closure, a 'happy ever after' ending in which the protagonists fall in love and marry, which is closer to the Afanasiev version. Each storyteller has found a personal connection in the story which is meaningful to them: Susanna Steele identifying with Elena, and setting out the feminist position epitomised by the slogan 'a woman's right to choose', Tony Aylwin identifying with the soldier and his search for a joyful and meaningful life. I would argue that neither is the 'right' ending, they are just different. This is an exemplar of the oral tradition's approach to storytelling, in which storytellers find their own way of framing the stories they choose to tell. It is also a good analogy of the present eclectic position adopted by feminists on images of women in fairy tales, as exemplified in the selection from the literature analysed above.

2.6.2 Women's ways of working with stories

Charles Perrault's collection of fairy tales 'Histoires ou contes du temps passe' was first published in 1697. The frontispiece showed an old woman telling stories to children, with a plaque behind her, which read, 'Contes de ma mere l'oye' (Tales of my mother goose). This archetypal image was based on a real-life model who characterised peasant and lower class urban life: the woman who told stories to children as part of childcare work, or to her peers, to pass the time devoted to monotonous repetitive labour such as spinning, weaving or waulking cloth. This archetype was influential on expectations of traditional storytelling in many different ways, including the expectations of folklore collectors that 'every old woman of whatever rank'⁵ would prove to be a source of material.

The literature discussed below suggested that historically, women's ways of working with stories were often closely connected to women's work. Spinning and weaving as an analogy for tale telling is referred to over and over again in the actual content of traditional Western oral stories, beginning with the Greek figures of Philomela and Penelope, and The Fates, who shared the three tasks of spinning, drawing out and cutting the thread of each human life. This connection was made by Marina Warner (1994), and analysed in detail by Karen Rowe, who took the story of Philomela and Procne as an archetype of stories of women's work: 'Ovid forces upon us the analogy between weaving or spinning and tale-telling' (1986, p. 55). Her paper investigated women storytellers as characters in stories, from Philomela to Scheherazade, and also actual storytellers such as Madame d'Aulnoy, Perrault's contemporary. Rowe concluded that both storytelling and weaving, which is so often used as a metaphor for storytelling, are women's arts which will never be fully understood by men :

The Grimm Brothers, like ... Perrault, and others reshaped what they could not precisely comprehend, because only for women does the thread, which spins out the lore of life itself, create a tapestry to be fully read and understood. Strand by strand weaving, like the craft practised on Philomela's loom or in the hand-spinning of Mother Goose, is the true art of the fairy tale - and it is, I would submit, semiotically a female art. (pp. 68 & 71)

Other writers who have examined women's ways of working with stories have studied particular traditions in depth. For example, Kay Stone studied revival storytelling in North America in the mid 1980s (1986b). A study by Clodagh Brennan Harvey provided similar insight into the work of women storytellers in Ireland in this century (April 1989). She offered an intriguing argument for the value of folklorists' contribution to keeping storytelling alive, because they take the place of traditional listeners who have died or moved away.

⁵ extract from a letter from George Webb Dasent to John Francis Campbell, both noted Victorian folklorists, quoted by Francis Thompson, 1990, p. 92, in Folklore

Chapter Four of this thesis attempts to complement and add to the studies referred to above, by similarly examining some questionnaire responses from and interviews with women storytellers working in the storytelling revival in England and Wales in the 1990s.

2.6.3 Feminist folklore

Although there has been a feminist perspective on folklore since the 1960s, storytelling has not been its major focus. Feminist folklorists have tended to concentrate on other aspects of women's work, such as quilting and piecing, cooking and organising family gatherings (see, for example, Jordan & Kalcik, 1985). However, the review found a strand of folklore research which examines contemporary women's oral narratives, in what Margaret Yocom called 'the private sphere of women's storytelling' (1985). A considerable number of studies have compared women's storytelling and men's storytelling, in the home, at family gatherings. Similar conclusions were drawn, whether the subjects were Hungarian emigres in small town America (Jordan & Kalcik, 1985), elderly British women in old peoples' homes (Bennett, 1989), or Muslims in Afghanistan (Mills, 1985): 'Men tend to have the floor, but women have the lore' (Stone, 1986b, p. 29, note 19).

Some folklorists have suggested that historically women typically preferred to tell stories in private, to kin, in small groups. They have regularly denigrated their own skills, in contrast to men, who have performed publicly and with confidence (e.g. Baldwin, 1985, p. 15). This mirrors an historical division drawn between fireside storytelling by women and performance storytelling by men. As Chapter Three will argue, women have traditionally passed on the stories, jokes and memorates of the oral tradition to children and kin in transmissions that are both horizontal, to peers, and vertical, to the younger generation. Men have more typically performed, often for payment, and usually for prestige, and their transmissions have tended to be horizontal, to admiring or envious audiences of their peers. This division of audience has affected the content of stories chosen by or allocated to members of the respective sexes. It may mirror the social division of labour which has tended to keep women in or around the home, often busy with child care, while men have often roamed further afield, hunting and gathering, or undertaking the modern equivalent: commuting to work and bringing home the pay cheque! Karen Baldwin, who examined storytelling in the Solley family in lower middle class America, observed and noted differences of style and manner between the male and female storytellers in the family.

... men are less concerned with accuracy of details of texture, aroma, social relationship, color and chronology ... Such stories have a stated beginning and end, and the listener is obliged to hear them through, see the action, laugh at the humor, and get the point. ... The teller must be allowed to 'speak his piece' entirely or he will invariably lose his point and have to begin again in order to find it. Women's narratives do not have the same aesthetic strictures. There

is usually no 'point' in women's storytelling. Their storytelling roles are played out differently. In the process of knitting and piecing the Solley family's narratives, then, the men's and women's performance models are equally important. (1985, p. 155)

Her findings perhaps offer a paradigm of the differing attitudes and expectations of men and women where storytelling is concerned. What the literature identifies is 'a niche', a special role and function for women's storytelling which complements men's storytelling. This is all well and good. But what happens when women do want to tell in public, to bid for what has traditionally been regarded as men's space? In aspects of the present storytelling revival in England and Wales this appears to be what is happening now, as storytelling in general moves beyond the area of informal fireside telling and out into the performance arena: at festivals, on historic sites, in museums, concert halls and theatres, and in the steadily increasing number of storytelling clubs in England and Wales. As opportunities for storytelling grow, so does the number of storytellers, and an increasing proportion of them are women. These storytellers and their audiences are redefining the territory of the oral tradition.

2.6.4 Feminist psychoanalytical perspectives

In this section of the chapter I report on the feminist perspective on three key practitioners of psychoanalysis: Freud, Jung and Bettelheim, all of whom addressed male and female roles in stories. Extracts from their writings and from commentaries on their work are used to present rather than critique some seminal aspects of their theories.

As is well known, Freud's writings drew heavily on myth, and the Oedipus myth was the main pivot for his theories. Feminist writer Mary Jacobus has pointed out that by 'selecting the Oedipus myth as his vantage point for undoing the empiricism of psychiatric medicine, Freud simultaneously writes into his theory the sexual politics that consigns the pre-oedipal to forgetfulness' (1987, p. 131). She has attempted to identify a 'pre-oedipal myth', to find an aspect of psychoanalytical theory that would be relevant to women as subjects rather than as objects, in order to give a feminist perspective. In doing this she was searching for the 'unexplored myth of psychoanalysis to which feminists have appealed in their quest for lost mother-daughter relations' (ibid, p 130).

Jacobus chose the story of Proserpina and Demeter to pursue her theory. This myth told the story of Proserpina's abduction by Hades, and of Demeter's search for and eventual rescue of her daughter, a search which involved the wasting of the earth because of Demeter's grief. It explained the seasonal changes, so important to the agricultural society from which it sprang, as the consequence of Proserpina's fate to spend half the year in the underworld and the other half with her mother. This myth touches on themes that Jacobus has expounded in the paper; namely the mother-

daughter bond, separation from the parent, making relationships with men. It also has parallels with the account in Freud's work of 1899 of 'the dandelion phantasy', in Jacobus' paper (pp. 126-7). Jacobus used 'the dandelion phantasy' as an exemplar of the Freudian preoccupation with 'masculinist and patriarchal self-interest' to which her paper offers an alternative (p 131).

In her paper, Jacobus offered a cogent argument that undermines Freud's portrayal of the Oedipal conflict as an explanation of the key myth for this time. She proposed an alternative paradigm for women based on the myth of Proserpina, just as bleak as the story of Oedipus in its exposition, yet with more hope for compromise and solution in its conclusion. She developed some important ideas about the role of memory in the individual's quest to create an autobiographical story, a personal myth. For Jacobus, the link between memory and myth is a two-way process: 'While myths may be a means of access to what childhood memories screen, they may also be said to produce and structure memory itself' (p. 117).

Jacobus' position, which has important implications for developing an argument for the educational value of storytelling, is that not only do myths offer access to childhood memories which have been lost, as postulated in psychoanalytical practice, but that they also offer frameworks and structure which can be used by the individual to shape, learn from and make sense of memories.

It is Jung who is most closely associated with the interpretation of myths, dreams and stories in the perception of the majority of practitioners working with traditional tales⁶. The next section of this chapter therefore analyses some key texts that examine stories from a Jungian perspective. In particular, I intend to focus on a collection of papers by Ursula Le Guin (1989). Le Guin's views are relevant to this research, because they come from a paper written about a story by the storyteller and writer, Hans Christian Andersen, who played an important role in the history of the oral tradition.

Le Guin adopted a Jungian perspective on the Andersen story about the man whose shadow breaks away from him and leads a life of its own. She drew out general observations from the particular case about the important role stories can play for individuals in developing an understanding of their inner world of dreams and feelings. She wrote:

The great fantasies, myths and tales are indeed like dreams: they speak *from* the unconscious *to* the unconscious, in the *language* of the unconscious - symbol and archetype. Though they use words, they work the way music does: they short-circuit verbal reasoning, and go straight to the thoughts that lie too deep to utter.... They are profoundly meaningful, and usable -

⁶ 'the psychologist whose ideas on art are the most meaningful to most artists', in Ursula K. Le Guin, 1989 (revised edition), p. 52

Her abiding interest in the concept of the shadow, which underpinned her novels for adults (1968, 1971) and children (1968, 1990), fuelled her belief that stories can speak to 'the great unexplored regions of the Soul' (1974, p. 53). She regarded fantasy as the language both of and for the inner self, a medium through which the adult can once again make contact with the 'inner child', and through which the child can comprehend 'as fully and surely as adults do - often more fully, because they haven't got minds stuffed full of the one-sided, shadowless half-truths and conventional moralities of the collective consciousness' (ibid, p. 56).

Not only did she state that stories can 'go deep', reaching and touching the listener, or in her case, the reader, in the 'creative depths of the unconscious' (ibid, p. 55), but also that they are didactic and moral, offering guidance not only in everyday life, but at the level of 'a psychic journey' (ibid. p. 57). Le Guin has a strong case for the educational value of fairy tales for children, whom she described as needing both 'protection and shelter' and 'the truth' (ibid, p. 59). She believed that the most honest and factual way of discussing 'good and evil' with children was to talk about 'the inner, the deepest self'. To Le Guin, therefore, 'fantasy is the language of the inner self'.

Some of these issues will be developed in more detail in the review of literature on storytelling and education in the next chapter. Here, however, my aim was to analyse Le Guin's analysis of the Jungian concept of the shadow. I wanted to explicate her view of the potential in stories for developing an understanding of the self, which I believe is pertinent to my research interest in the educational aspects of storytelling. In particular there is relevance in her view of the role of stories in connecting the dark world of the 'inner self' of the child with educational development.

Finally, this section comments briefly on a feminist critique of Bruno Bettelheim's ideas. Bettelheim's The uses of enchantment, first published in 1975, is one of the first widely known psychoanalytical interpretations of fairy stories, and has been influential on storytelling practitioners. Unusually for the discipline, it is a Freudian, not a Jungian analysis. I will postpone a detailed study of Bettelheim's book until the next section of this review, where it will be considered in the context of a more general review of relevant literature on psychoanalytical theories about storytelling. In this section the focus is on gender issues.

Kay F. Stone has summarised different arguments about the significance of sexist stereotyping in fairy tales as follows:

There are those who feel that fairy tales are unsuitable because they reinforce sexist stereotyping for both boys and girls, others who feel that fairy tales challenge such stereotyping, and still others who insist that these stories have neither a negative nor a positive impact in terms of gender. (1985, p. 125)

Stone was critical of Bettelheim's position, which falls into the last of these camps, and has emphasised that 'a major premise of folklorists studying women's folklore has been that gender is indeed significant in terms of interaction between people and material' (p. 125).

Interestingly, she found that hardly any of the male informants she interviewed about their memories of fairy tales could remember anything at all about what they had heard or read, whereas female respondents, of all ages, not only had clear memories of the fairy tales to which they had been exposed in childhood, but also definite likes and dislikes (p. 130). Stone concluded that 'for males, fairy tales apparently cease to function at an early age, but for many females these stories continue to function on some level well past childhood' (p. 141).

These findings, as well as a sense of dissatisfaction with Bettelheim's position, led to Stone criticising his view that:

... the male and the female heroes are again projections onto two different figures of two (artificially) separated aspects of one and the same process which *everybody* has to undergo in growing up. While some literal-minded parents do not realize it, children know that, whatever the sex of the hero, the story pertains to their problems. (1985, p. 129)

She accepted the possibility of a psychoanalytic interpretation in which the reader's initial response is not determined by gender issues. However, her feminist perspective led her to acknowledge that cultural determinism is imposed from an early age on both sexes, possibly by society's views of female and male, and she perceived that this influences the way in which the individual 'understands the message' of the story.

2.6.5 Key points regarding feminist theory

Before considering the more general findings of the review about psychoanalytical theories on storytelling, it is important to reflect upon the way in which I chose to structure this section of the chapter. Under my four chosen headings I concentrated on a few key texts as exemplars of key points that are relevant to this research. The points emphasised concern both telling and listening to stories.

- i) The important role of women storytellers historically has been considered. A case was made for accepting as evidence of this importance the frequent use of women's work as a metaphor for storytelling. Examples were given from stories by Ovid and Homer of the depiction of spinning and weaving for this

purpose.

ii) Gender-specific storytelling styles have been considered.

iii) In the sphere of women as listeners, Stone's evidence (1985) implies that girls and young women often find fairy stories to be particularly important.

iv) According to Le Guin (1989), stories offer a special way of developing understanding.

The aspects of the educational role of storytelling which Le Guin discussed are investigated in more depth in Chapter Two. However, the review of literature on psychoanalytical theories about storytelling will be fleshed out first, in order to complete this chapter of the literature review.

2.7 Psychoanalytical theories of storytelling

Psychoanalysis has found the world of traditional tales to be a rich source of images, metaphors and ideas. The close links between myth and dream made by many theorists have fuelled psychoanalytical interpretative work throughout this century. For most of the theorists discussed in this chapter the differences between written and oral versions of the same story are not an issue. In the review I was once again constrained to report on work which deals with fixed, printed texts. The conclusion reached was that there are criticisms which must be voiced where psychoanalysts applied ideas dogmatically to one particular version of a story, also that there are significant gaps in the literature which do not illuminate the oral tradition. However, there is some theory, for example, the work of Alida Gersie, which uses the retelling of stories, and this will be considered in Chapter Two. This section, however, begins by considering certain Freudian and Jungian interpretations of the importance of stories. I begin by revisiting the Freudian Bruno Bettelheim. My own responses as a storyteller to his book The uses of enchantment, changing over time, are described. I then consider relevant aspects of the work of Jung, and some important Jungians.

2.7.1 Bruno Bettelheim's theories about the educational value of stories

Bettelheim's The uses of enchantment, first published in 1975, emphasised the didactic function of fairy tales as guides for the task of growing up. He believed that fairy tales had a particular role to play in helping the child to understand and find meaning in life: 'Fairy tales are unique, not only as a form of literature, but as works of art which are fully comprehensible to the child, as no other form of art is' (1976, p. 12). Bettelheim's confidence in the singular educational power of fairy tales arose from his belief that they had a close connection with the child's own ways of understanding the world.

Bettelheim constructed The uses of enchantment around detailed Freudian analyses of several well-known fairy tales and groups of tales, and offered interpretations which linked each story to a specific phase of a child's development, or a particular problem

that all children have to face. As noted above, one of Bettelheim's most controversial claims, and a weakness of his theory, was that the stories speak in the same way to children of either sex. He also failed to recognise the importance of race or class, writing about an 'archetypal child' who could only be middle-European, middle class, male and white. An important aspect of his theory, however, is that Bettelheim felt that the child's individual circumstances and stage of development determine the response to the story, and may change over time.

I first encountered his book during an MA course at Sussex University in 1988. I was just developing an academic and professional interest in storytelling at the time, and the studies of folk and fairy stories to which I was directed by my tutor were a tremendous boost to my interest. I was impressed, not only by the premise of The uses of enchantment, but also by Bettelheim's interpretations, expressing classically Freudian views of events such as the test of the glass slipper in Perrault's version of Cinderella, about which he argued that the symbolism and significance are sexual:

In the slipper ceremony ... he selects her because in symbolic fashion she is the uncastrated woman who relieves him of his castration anxiety, which would interfere with a happy marital relationship. She selects him because he appreciates her in her 'dirty' sexual aspects, lovingly accepts her vagina in the form of the slipper, and approves of her desire for a penis, symbolized by her tiny foot fitting within the slipper-vagina. (1976, p. 271)

In 1999, having worked with stories for a further ten years, and reviewed many other possible interpretative paradigms, I have become more sceptical of Bettelheim's versions. Other theorists, for example Jack Zipes, have expressed misgivings about Bettelheim's work in general. Zipes discussed his theories on Cinderella in particular. He wrote:

... the ideological and psychological pattern and message of *Cinderella* do nothing more than reinforce sexist values and a Puritan ethos that serves a society which fosters competition and achievement for survival. Admittedly this is a harsh indictment of *Cinderella* as a tale. Certainly I do not want to make it responsible for the upkeep of the entire capitalist system. However, the critique of *Cinderella* is meant to show how suspect Bettelheim's theory and methodology are. (1979, p. 173)

I am critical now of Bettelheim's tendency to draw generalisations about the meaning of events in fairy tales when only one version has been considered. He stated that 'the true meaning and impact of a fairy tale can be appreciated, its enchantment can be experienced, only from the story in its original form' (p. 19). If tales do carry universal meanings, how can they be extrapolated from just one telling, and how are the 'truth' of the tale, or its 'original form' to be defined? Bettelheim does attempt to answer these questions (p. 216), but I now find his explanations unconvincing.

Another concern is the confidence with which Bettelheim offered personal explanations for the way tales are interpreted by children of different ages. His stated aim in writing the book was that of 'suggesting why fairy tales are so meaningful to children in helping them cope with the psychological problems of growing up and integrating their personalities' (p. 14). His style is didactic, and verges on the dogmatic. Nonetheless, the book has been enormously influential on psychologists, storytellers and others working with stories, because it was one of the first to reach a wider audience than a purely psychoanalytical one. It remains well known among revival storytellers.

2.7.2 Jungian perspectives on the value of stories

The work of Carl Gustav Jung is more closely associated with myth and fairy tale than that of his contemporary and sometime colleague, Freud. Jung's concept of the 'collective unconscious' drew on the notion of myth as a store of the archetypes created over time by race memory, and available to individuals via the unconscious channels of dream; or, more consciously, as a source for art making, if they know how to tap into it. Jung aimed to help his patients to find their own myths to live by. In his view the loss of past spiritual and religious traditions had left 'the modern age' without guidelines (Staude, 1981, p. 99). Jung believed that mythic stories and images could provide a 'larger framework' within which individuals could 'observe and interpret' their own human development.

Jung's efforts to describe and interpret the functioning of the psyche showed that the concepts drawn from myth and dream were fundamental to his theories. His approach was original and innovative, for little work already existed for him to build on, as described in the introduction to his work on the archetypes and the collective unconscious:

The customary treatment of mythological motifs so far in separate departments of science, such as philology, ethnology, the history of civilisation, and comparative religion, was not exactly a help to us in recognizing their universality ... although the psychological knowledge of that time (the 1860s) included myth-formation in its province ... it was not in a position to demonstrate the same process as a living function actually present in the psyche of civilized man, any more than it could understand mythological motifs as structural elements of the psyche. (1959 edition, p. 151, my parentheses)

Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, which he explained as a propensity to find similar meanings in phenomena and symbols held in common by human beings everywhere and throughout recorded history, was a corner stone of his ideas (ibid, p. 384). He believed that this propensity was not a conscious aspect of the individual psyche, hence the name 'collective unconscious', and that its symbolic system was based on the use of 'primordial images, the archetypes'. In the same text, he defined the archetype as a common driving force behind all fantasy activity, whether the dreams

and imagination of an individual, or the myths and legends of communities, as follows:

In so far as the child is born with a differentiated brain ... it meets sensory stimuli coming from outside not with *any* aptitudes, but with *specific* ones ... These aptitudes can be shown to be inherited instincts and preformed patterns ... Their presence gives the world of the child and the dreamer its anthropomorphic stamp. They are the archetypes, which direct all fantasy activity into its appointed paths and in this way produce ... astonishing mythological parallels. (p. 66)

Verena Kast, a Jungian from the C. G. Jung Institute in Zurich, discussed the aim and form of fairy tale analysis. She wrote:

We interpret with the intention of pointing out parallels to psychic processes that are typical. These processes can occur again and again with different people; it is for this reason that they have also taken form and been preserved in fairy tales. What is important for us in making our interpretations is to translate their language into a form that allows us to recognize their message. Reading or listening to a fairy tale has an immediate emotional effect on us. Understanding a fairy tale by working with it in more depth adds new perspectives. (1992, p.41)

Marie-Louise von Franz has also written about various aspects of fairy tales from the Jungian perspective (1972, 1977). Her stated aim in doing so has been to bring out a 'new approach or understanding of age-old words which have always been told and understood in some form in their essential wisdom, but not understood in the psychological form in which we understand and interpret them now' (1977, p. 141). She argued that 'this clue of Jungian psychology' makes it possible to find once more the 'living meaning which people had always formerly felt in it'. This is achieved by linking it 'again with its archetypal substratum', the universal archetype which, according to the Jungians, underpins the specific story.

Von Franz' books follow a 'typical' format for psychological texts on stories, in that individual fairy tales are summarised, and then interpreted in detail, interspersed with relevant details of actual case studies of analysands with whom the author has worked. The group of tales which appear in such books is relatively small, and the same texts attract the attention of analyst after analyst.

In examining the work of more controversial 'new age' writers in the field of psychoanalysis, such as Robert Bly (1990), it became apparent that the same group of fairy tales, nearly all of which are European, are still the main focus of attention. Perhaps psychoanalysis, being a European invention, cannot cope with non-European forms. Of course, the analysands and self-analysts who encounter the psychoanalytical interpretations of fairy tales are also European, in the majority of cases, so that their

encounters with the collective unconscious have been formed by the myths and stories of their own cultures. Estes is unusual in being a non-European psychoanalyst who interprets traditional tales from a range of cultures. Erich Fromm has argued for the universality of this kind of symbolic language, and I am in accord with his view:

The dreams of ancient and modern man (and, presumably, modern woman) are written in the same language as the myths whose authors lived in the dawn of history. Symbolic language is a language in which inner experiences, feelings and thoughts are expressed as if they were sensory experiences, events in the outer world. ... It is the one universal language the human race has ever developed, the same for all cultures and throughout history ... a language one must understand if one is to understand the meaning of myths, fairy tales and dreams.

(1952, p. 16, my parentheses)

2.7.3 'New age' perspectives on the value of stories

I have chosen two texts well known in the storytelling revival, Iron John (1990) and Women who run with the wolves (1992), to represent 'new age' psychoanalytical theories, though there are many more. The 'new age' writers theorise from a different perspective to writers from the classical schools of psychoanalytic thought. Although their scholarship is sometimes questionable, they may offer insights into areas which have not been investigated, particularly regarding issues of sexuality and gender. Both these texts have acquired the status of 'cult' books with their 'new age' readership. Both focus, once again, on written rather than oral stories.

2.7.3.1 Iron John

Iron John: a book about men, by Robert Bly (1990), arose out of his work with American men's groups. These were extended workshops (often over two or three days) using traditional tales, ceremonies and rituals. They had developed not in reaction to, but perhaps as an answer to, the women's movement. Bly's workshop techniques aimed to break through to the inner 'Wild Man' which he felt had been lost, firstly in the move away from physical labour, and secondly through the assertive influence of feminists, causing the 'new man' phenomenon. He explained his concern in the following general description:

In the seventies I began to see all over the country a phenomenon that we might call the 'soft male' ... They're lovely, valuable people - I like them - they're not interested in harming the earth or starting wars. There's a gentle attitude toward life in their whole being and style of living. But many of these men are not happy. You quickly notice the lack of energy in them. They are life-preserving but not exactly life-giving. Ironically, you often see these men with strong women who positively radiate energy. (1990, pp. 2-3)

Bly has co-ordinated these men's groups since the early 1980s, operating in the immediate sphere of the oral, with discussion, ritual and performance, albeit

impromptu, forming a large part of their learning experience. It is not surprising, then, that he was drawn to the oral tradition in search of metaphors to live by. The book itself is a synthesis of his practical work, and offers a detailed analysis, section by section, chapter by chapter, of the Grimms' story of Iron John. It has become something of a cult among men seeking a feminist perspective on sexual politics and with an interest in self-development, and has reached a wider audience than many more orthodox texts on psychoanalysis and fairy stories.

2.3.7.2 Women who run with the wolves

Women who run with the wolves has become even better known among 'new age' readers than Bly's book. Since its publication in 1992, this book, by the Jungian analyst and storyteller Clarissa Pinkola Estes, became important to new age feminists, in both America and the U.K. It consists of a collection of stories, for once *not* a purely Eurocentric collection, each followed by Estes' analysis of its underlying meanings. As a collection, it introduced some exciting and powerful material for telling, and the analyses which followed the stories furnished food for thought. However, I am concerned about the way in which the book, and the concept, is used with only half an understanding of the significance of the stories, which have been told for longer and in more different ways than Estes suggests. There is also an assumption amongst readers of the book that simply reading a story and uncritically absorbing the commentary is some kind of storytelling work. In fact, as the storytellers who responded to my questionnaire in this research repeatedly indicated, 'working with a story' requires more involvement and thought.

Although her readers may sometimes fail to pick this up, Estes herself is clear about the need for commitment and thoughtful consideration which a deep understanding of a tale requires, because she writes:

Storytelling is ... not an idle practice. Although some use stories as entertainment alone, tales are, in their oldest sense, a healing art. ... In dealing with stories, we are handling archetypal energy, which is a lot like electricity ... Archetype changes us; if there is no change, there has been no real contact with the archetype. The handing down of stories is a very big responsibility ... (1992, p. 463)

Like Bly, Estes emphasised the healing power of stories. The writing and therapeutic practises of Alida Gersie, whose work spans both therapy and education, and which take this concept further will be considered in the next chapter, about storytelling in education. It should also be noted that there are various storytellers in this country now doing similar work to that of Bly and Estes in the United States. For example, Kelvin Hall, who was one of the questionnaire respondents in the research reported in Chapter Four, works with stories both as a performer and a practising psychotherapist, and his observations on these issues in Chapter Four reinforce and amplify some of the points

made by Estes about the potential for change which stories hold.

2.7.4 Key points regarding psychoanalytical theory

In this and the preceding section of this chapter I have explored some of the links between storytelling and psychoanalysis.

- i) I have reviewed seminal ideas of theorists, such as Freud, Jung, Bettelheim about the importance of stories, along with some influential 'new age' theorists.
- ii) The psychoanalysts understand the world of the oral tradition as providing access to the symbolic forms of the collective unconscious, especially useful in the practice of interpreting the words and thoughts of analysands.
- iii) Similarly storytellers seeking to define and validate their craft can draw from the findings of psychoanalysis, even where there is no explicit therapeutic purpose to their work, because it focuses attention on inner processes which characterise the interaction of teller, listener and the story .

2.8 Summary of findings from this chapter

The chapter set out to define the state of knowledge concerning storytelling. It considered the history and nature of the storytelling revival using a thematic approach, and addressed the first research questions from a theoretical standpoint:

What is revival storytelling as distinct from other kinds of storytelling?

How did revival storytelling evolve historically in England and Wales, and what is its relationship with the European oral tradition?

The notion of 'other kinds of storytelling' proved complicated to explore, and the analogies drawn in the chapter between written and oral texts may not be considered tenable. However, this apparent confusion does reflect the eclectic nature of storytelling, both in the revival and more generally throughout the oral tradition. In research terms it is inconvenient to be unable to offer an immutable definition of such a key concept as 'storytelling'. Nonetheless, this blurring of boundaries does itself epitomise a fundamental aspect of the oral tradition, its multifaceted nature. While this research works towards clear statements of definition and intent, it also recognises the characteristics of the phenomenon it investigates. The answers to the research questions are so far only partial, and later chapters, especially Chapter Three, will address the historical evolution of revival storytelling in more depth. The focus of this chapter has been more concerned with establishing key points from the available literature, and with identifying gaps in the present state of knowledge about storytelling.

The important role of traditional stories in maintaining the history and customs of a culture was signalled by literature from the themes of mythology, anthropology and psychoanalysis. Furthermore, a connection not only with the past, but also with place, was found in the role which mythology can play in the culture of a people. Both

folklorists and Marxists also stated that stories could be a force for social change, and feminist literature was reviewed which explored ways of making such changes at a personal level. Psychoanalytical and anthropological texts brought out further aspects which contributed to the self-development of individuals. The literature identified a range of contributions which storytelling could make to human experience. The following specific key aspects emerged which were found to be important for this research:

- i) Storytelling can be a powerful teacher of traditions, customs and memories of the past, because it represents an accumulation of human energy and collected wisdom. According to Le Guin (1989), stories offer a special way of developing understanding. Psychoanalysts understand the world of the oral tradition as providing access to the symbolic forms of the collective unconscious.
- ii) A metalanguage for organising the structures of stories has been created by scholars to talk about stories and storytelling, a process which might be described as helping to create a story grammar.
- iii) Written texts constrict the available evidence through which to analyse an oral medium, because so little of the performance of the storytelling can be represented.
- iv) Narrative is an accessible channel for children, with the potential to transcend culture, making it a powerful avenue for the communication of meaning. Patterned language carries importance in narrative, as identified by Hymes (1982).
- v) The important historical role of women storytellers is evidenced by the frequent use of women's work, especially spinning and weaving, as a metaphor for storytelling in traditional stories.

The importance of storytelling in education has not yet been addressed, because a contextualising picture needed to be drawn before the focus could be sharpened on the main area of interest in this research, which is its educational value. The findings of a literature review on storytelling in education are the focus of the next chapter.

3.0 Chapter Two: Theories about storytelling in education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter, which focuses on the potential contribution of storytelling to education, completes the literature review. It examines theoretical frameworks used to contextualise storytelling in formal education. The aim of the review was to identify a range of answers relating to my research question: What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?

Five major kinds of contributions, identified in the review of relevant literature, are discussed in this chapter. They reflect the present state of knowledge about storytelling in education and the aspects which major theorists consider to be important. I have tried to explicate the links between the themes, and to discuss interrelated aspects of the use of storytelling in schools by educationists and storytellers.

The first section begins by analysing the relationship of storytelling to other language and expressive arts: writing, talking, reading and drawing. The second section considers thinking and feeling, and the contribution of storytelling to the inner world of affect. The focus moves in the third section to autobiography, and in the fourth to narrative, two areas of human experience in which the human need to *story* as a way of making sense of that experience is a crucial factor. After exploring the implications of these essentially subjective personal aspects of storytelling for education, the fifth and final section considers some aspects of culture which are affected by the processes of storytelling in education.

As in the preceding chapter, it is necessary to acknowledge that not all the literature reviewed referred to the retelling of traditional tales. Indeed, the theme of autobiography focuses purely on personal stories, memories from people's lives. However, there are significant points in the literature which merit inclusion, because they are transferable to the retelling of traditional tales, and because the study of other story forms can throw light upon the educational potential of the retelling of traditional tales. They were included in the review, in order to give a full picture of the present state of knowledge about storytelling in education. Two writers quoted extensively in this chapter, Carol Fox and Harold Rosen, whose work is significant to the research, have only written about other forms of story. This is indicative of the gaps that presently exist in the research literature on traditional storytelling.

One thing which this review did not cover was the large number of 'how to do it' books written specifically for teachers interested in using storytelling in their work, such as those by Betty Rosen (1990), Howe and Johnson (1992) and Barton (1986). The review aimed to examine issues which explain *why* storytelling in education is worthwhile rather than how to teach it.

3.2 Storytelling and other language and expressive arts

The chapter begins with discussion of some other language forms in which children express themselves, in order to develop a rationale for the use of traditional storytelling in the broader educational context of language use as a whole. Beginning with connections between oral and literate skills allows examination of the relevance of storytelling in education to the learning of learning literacy skills.

3.2.1 Characteristics of language and thought in oral culture

Kieran Egan (1988a) used Levi-Strauss' term, '*bonnes a penser*', to denote the strategies and structures developed by the mind to cope with the differing demands of oral or literate cultures. He explored in depth what was known from earlier scholars' work about the '*bonnes a penser*' of oral cultures, and drew interesting and illuminating parallels with the findings of researchers who specialise in research into children's cultures. He observed, for example, that children's typical ways of remembering rhymes, skipping chants and other examples of their oral culture are similar to the methods employed in oral cultures by poets and storytellers:

The poetics of memorization observed in oral cultures are also evident in the oral culture of children - the uses of rhyme and rhythm, of hypnotic repetitions, of chanting while dancing in circles or skipping, of clapping, of getting the words exactly right, and so on.

(p. 116)

This comparison between oral cultures in general and the culture of children is apposite for my work, and is discussed further in Chapter Six. Although Walter Ong carried out a detailed study of the differences and similarities between oral and literate cultures (1982), he did not draw Egan's helpful analogy with children's own culture. Carol Fox made a small scale but rich study of stories told on tape by a group of five preschool and reception age children, which revealed that the models of stories which they had acquired from having stories read to them were key factors in their developing competence as storytellers. Fox concluded that 'hearing stories read aloud is a vital link in the move from one kind of story organisation (oral) to another (literate)' (1993, p. 73, my parentheses).

Gordon Wells also considered the educational significance of hearing stories read or told at an early age as part of his influential large-scale study of children growing up in Bristol. He drew a parallel between the contribution of talk to children's 'inner storying' and hearing stories as preparation for learning to read and write. He noted that listening to stories read aloud extended children's ability to understand experience and enabled them to assimilate 'the more powerful and more abstract mode of representing experience that is made available by written language' (1987, p. 200).

According to M.A.K.Halliday, all aspects of language use are acquired through

children's attempts at 'learning how to mean' (1973, p. 24). Nigel Hall summed up Halliday's emphasis on the fundamental importance of the social situation in which language is used in the following terms: 'Children are concerned with making sense because it is making sense that enables life to be lived' (1987, pp. 12-13). As Hall explained, the function of language, not only for children but for all people, is to enable the activities in which they engage to take place: language is not an end in itself, and is rarely the explicit focus of experience. In Hall's words: 'People use language and literacy in the pursuit of their everyday lives' (ibid, p. 9).

Although on a general level the literature makes it clear that the language forms used by humans must influence and shape each other, it is necessary to explore ways in which this happens in more depth, to clarify the educational contribution of storytelling and other oral work. In particular, the nature of the changes brought about in each individual by the transition from oral to literate culture is one which has only in recent years become the subject of research. In her account of young girls writing together, Carolyn Steedman noted: 'whilst we know a good deal about the impact of literacy on primitive societies and about the psychological changes wrought in adults by the acquisition of writing skills, there is very little known about the profound changes that the discovery and acquisition of a writing system bring about in the life of a child' (1987, p. 28). Even though Nigel Hall valued the knowledge which children bring to school, this was in the context of the development of literacy rather than of language skills. He made 'a strong claim that we should be more concerned with valuing the knowledge children have than with replacing it by highly dubious and narrow models of what literacy is and how it functions' (1987, p. viii). Nonetheless, maintaining and developing oracy skills remains a lower priority in the early years than the development of literacy, at least for teachers. Indeed, a finding of this review of literature on storytelling in education was that the individual's move from a personal oral culture to a literate one is an area from which a consideration of the contribution of oral storytelling is largely missing.

3.2.2 The relationship of oral and literate cultures

In 1984, when Sue May reflected on changes in educational practice in the UK over the previous seventeen years, since the 1967 Plowden Report, she observed that the experience of literature was no longer as central to the process of learning to write as it had been then; and that this meant that: 'for many teachers now in service story was more central to their own experience than it is to the children they teach' (p. 29).

May's concern was that teachers and parents in the 1980s undervalued the educational significance of retelling stories. I would argue that this is even more urgent in the 1990s, because of the new emphasis on literacy in the Literacy Hour, introduced into schools in September 1998. May's view, which I shall similarly argue, was that the skills of retelling a story are important building blocks for literacy: 'Understanding

what a story is to the extent that one can retell it with its structure and propositions intact is ... as good an apprenticeship as one could devise for all other forms of discourse' (p. 31).

Anne Haas Dyson, an educationist with an interest in the young child as writer, linked the development of oral and written language by invoking a Vygotskian notion of gestural symbolisation. She noted that children's first visual signs are gestures:

Vygotsky located the seeds of children's writing in their first visual signs, gestural depictions. He argued that other visual symbols ... derive their meaning first from gesture ... As children develop as visual symbolizers, talk is an accompaniment to and then an organiser of their symbolic action. (1989, p. 6)

She also researched the role of symbolisation in some detail, and focused on the notion of 'mapping', which she defined as 'the ability to use culturally agreed-upon convention ... for representing objects, attributes, and experienced structures or patterns' (p. 69). Her understanding of graphic mapping as an early form of representation, one which is often accompanied and explained by talk (p. 25), is similar to the work of Myra Barrs, to which I refer below. Before discussing this, however, I want to consider other aspects of children's whole language development, focusing first on talk.

3.2.3 Oral language in children's learning

Jerome Bruner's work on language was influential in shaping ideas about its educational role not just in developing the ability to describe the world, but also in understanding and reflecting on it. He claimed that language not only transmits reality, but also helps to create it, and described the role of language in enabling reflection as 'a metacognitive step of huge import' (1986, p. 132).

Bruner spelled out the implications of this for the child as a developing language user in more detail when he wrote that language works on two levels, being both a way of representing one's ideas about the world and a way of communicating them to others. '*How one talks comes eventually to be how one represents what one talks about*' (p.131). This statement has far-reaching implications for this research, because it suggests that storytelling and listening to stories are important aspects of becoming an accomplished user of oral language. It connects with a conversation I had with Carol Fox after a seminar on 14th April 1994. I asked her what the children from her study are doing now, as young adults. With the benefit of hindsight, she argued that it was possible to see the antecedents of their present and abiding interests in the stories which they told as small children. Sundari, who at four years old frequently told melancholy tales and preferred 'sad little girl' heroines, and, at the time of our discussion, was taking A level English, had a special interest in Jane Eyre. Josh, whose stories as a

five year old often featured God, Dracula and St Peter as protagonists, was interested in philosophy, which he was studying for A level.

As Nigel Hall pointed out, 'competence with oral language is achieved very early in life' (Wray, Bloom and Hall, 1989, p. 39). Martin Coles noted that in conversation with adults, children usually make fewer oral contributions than their more experienced talk partners, a situation which he described as 'discourse asymmetry' (in Hall and Martello, 1996, p. 4). In many classrooms, as Coles admits, and 'despite the fact that there will be few teachers who would deny the importance of talk in helping pupils of all ages to learn ... it does not happen very often' (ibid, p. 7). When the child tells a story, however, he or she takes longer talk turns than the adult who is the receiver, as will be shown by transcripts discussed in Chapter Five. Vivian Gussin Paley's professional practice at nursery school level, which places storytelling at the centre of the curriculum, has been a source of inspiration and encouragement to me as a teacher-storyteller. In The boy who would be a helicopter, she described storytelling as the way the children ordered their thoughts. She wrote: 'They do not pretend to be storytellers; they *are* storytellers. It is their intuitive approach to all occasions. It is the way they think' (1991, p. 17). She also referred to storytelling as 'a primary cultural institution, *the social art of language*.' (p. 23). Unfortunately its potential has been ignored in recent government initiatives on education in England and Wales, such as the National Literacy Strategy of 1998. Paley's teaching method centres on enabling children to create and act out their stories together. She places great importance on the social aspects of these activities, especially group reenactments. She states that 'any approach to language and thought that eliminates dramatic play, and its underlying themes of friendship and safety lost and found, ignores the greatest incentive to the creative process' (p.6). I welcomed her emphasis on creativity at a time when English school curricula were constrained by the recently-introduced National Curriculum.

Dorothy White (1954) has researched children's storytelling in the context of the home, and with an emphasis on books heard and retold. In Books before five, she identified a phenomenon which has not been recognised as important by classroom teachers. This is the child's use of a special 'storytelling voice' as a way of separating the storytelling or retelling activity from other kinds of discourse. She wrote: 'Over the last month or so Carol has begun to tell me stories. These are always told with a change of tone from her natural way of speaking, for like some clergymen and radio speakers she uses a ritual voice' (1954, p. 40). White has shown that even young children can recognise and use the performative aspects of oral storytelling, and understand the use of the voice as an expressive tool. This view is supported by Carol Fox' belief that the prevalence of 'literary language' used by the children in her research is a consequence of the fact that 'getting the 'tune' of the narrative discourse to sound right' was a priority for the children (1992, p. 9).

Both these researchers have emphasised the educational role of children's literature in shaping their own stories. But their exploration of the vocal use and performance style of children while storytelling has implications for this research, because it suggests that child storytellers are aware of the performance aspects of storytelling. Whereas I have found in my practice that they use the voice as an expressive tool, rather than simply as a medium of communication, the literature on the contribution of hearing and retelling traditional tales to children's learning in general is almost non-existent.

3.2.4 Rhyme and rhythm in oral language

Traditional tales often begin with patterned and rhythmic openings, such as: 'Times and times and very good times, and it wasn't in my time, and it wasn't in your time, but it must have been in someone's time, otherwise how could I begin with 'Once upon a time'?' A love of language play, and delight in the sound and texture of robust spoken language, is especially fostered by the stories and rhymes of the oral tradition. Marion Whitehead, writing about the carnivalesque and subversive elements in nursery rhymes, has established connections between children's early knowledge of nursery rhymes and their later success in learning to read, and noted that 'experiences with amusing, alliterative and rhyming verses' can give young children powerful insights into the structures of language (1993, p. 50).

There is something more substantial offered by the experience of early nursery rhymes and songs than a simple 'helping hand' along the road to becoming a reader, as evidenced by the work of the poet Kornei Chukovsky (1963) on 'topsy-turvy's' and other early language play. Mayakovsky is also on record as describing the importance of 'patterned' or rhythmic language, this time to his own creative process as a poet, rather than with Chukovsky's focus on children's creativity. Roman Jakobson used Mayakovsky's autobiographical writings about the way in which he combined physical movement and internal body rhythms with the development of his own poetry, to make the point that, for the poet, bodily rhythm contributed to the development of oral rhythm:

I walk along gesticulating and muttering - there are almost no words yet - I slow my pace in order not to impede this muttering, or else I mutter more quickly, in the rhythm of my steps. In this way the rhythm is planed down and takes shape. It is the basis of any poetry and passes through it like a din. Gradually one is able to make out single words in this din. Where this fundamental rhythm-din comes from remains unknown. For me it is every repetition within myself of a sound, a noise, a rocking ... or any repetition of any phenomenon, which I mark with sounds. (1985, p. 22)

Iona and Peter Opie have also written about the importance of rhyme and rhythm to children in their choice of language for social or individual play, and described children as 'tradition's warmest friends' (1959, p. 2). If what they mean by this is that children

love and enjoy traditional rhymes and stories, then most people who have worked as storytellers with small children would agree.

The way children use rhyme and rhythm together in their oral language play was explored by Teresa Grainger in her report of a study of children working with poetry, in which she wrote of 'singing the rhythm off the page'. Connections between poetry and storytelling are strong, since both are infused by special language characteristics of the oral tradition, such as rhythm, repetition, onomatopoeia. Grainger is committed to enabling children to explore language in a lively and physical way, and to 'play with the tunes of their popular culture and oral traditions' (1996, p. 30).

Where children are enabled to explore the traditional forms of oral language, my experience suggests this builds on and strengthens their innate propensity for using living, lively language. Their approach to learning oral language is full of confidence and enjoyment, and this is an essential prerequisite for learning to take place. As Hall wrote, in the context of talk between one adult and one child, children 'treat everything as having meaning potential until the contrary can be shown' (Wray, Bloom and Hall, 1989, p. 41). The close relationship between poetry and storytelling is important to language learning, and will be explored further in Chapters Four and Six.

This review now focuses on closer study of the reading process, and the links it has with storytelling processes and practices.

3.2.5 Contribution of stories to learning to read

Vivian Gussin Paley has stressed that the first books which are read to children have a long-lasting influence. She writes: 'the poetry and prose of the best children's books enter our minds when we are young and sing back to us all our lives' (1991, p. 44). Carol Fox (1993) concluded the same in her detailed research study, in which the small number of children involved and the observation notes provided by their parents made it possible for her to identify, with reasonable certainty, which story books had influenced the children in the study.

The metaphor of song permeates views of learning to read in the 1990s. For example, Myra Barrs (1992, p. 22) has examined the 'heard or unheard melodies' of language, and observed that 'reading aloud ... becomes a bridge between orality and literacy, the way of demonstrating the tunes on the page' (p. 19). The musical metaphor employed here is similar to observations by Mayakovsky and Chukovsky about rhythm in oral language, referred to previously (p. 62, above). The significance she accorded to the heard text as an aid to grappling with reading is relevant to this research, because it confirms the importance of hearing stories read aloud, and implies a similar role for hearing stories told.

Margaret Meek's educational booklet How texts teach what readers learn (1988) was influential on the teaching of reading in the UK, and is used as a key text on many initial teacher training courses. In it she explored the tacit learning which emergent readers bring to texts. She concentrated on 'reader-like' behaviour and knowledge, but argued that the lessons learned about 'how a story goes' come from oral as well as literate encounters in the earliest years. The important educational role played by the adult reading to the child in 'giving the text a 'voice'' has been noted by Meek (p. 86), though she herself does not link this with the role of the storyteller. It is my suggestion that analogies can be drawn between the adult helping a child reader by modelling 'reader-like behaviour', and the storyteller's role in modelling oral language use. Meek is convinced that oral and literate learning go hand in hand in the earliest years, and acknowledges the skills which children already bring with them to school. The Opies (1959) also recognised the important role of nursery rhymes and playground games, as the child's first introductions to the intertext of oral and written literature. Meek has described the process of learning to read as being one of recognition, because '...they are able to recognise in their reading what has been in their memories' (p. 94).

Henrietta Dombey (1988) studied the adult's role in assisting the child's reading process, and in particular the way parents help them to make sense of a text. She analysed Pat Hutchins' Rosie's Walk (1970), a picture book which is considered important by primary teachers, mainly as a result of Dombey's and Meek's articles. Dombey identified the role of the adult as being the key to externalise the internal dialogue between reader and author which characterises 'readerly behaviour'. This provides the child with a model or scaffolding which enables him or her to achieve what would otherwise be too difficult alone (p. 75).

Her description of the reading process, as an internal dialogue between reader and author, establishes clear connections with storytelling, because it refers to the externalised, audible interchange between teller and listener. This interchange is characterised above all by the active engagement of the listener in making sense of a story in partnership with the teller. My own experience as a teacher-storyteller has led me to conjecture that listening to stories and rhymes told in the manner of the oral tradition helps to prepare young listeners for an engagement with the author's silent storytelling voice more fully than most descriptions of reading readiness allow. Although this connection with learning to read is often used to justify the value of oral storytelling in educational literature, it is peripheral, rather than central, to my research. My aim is to seek out intrinsic arguments for using storytelling in education, which necessitates taking a broader view than is found in the literature I reviewed.

One other important aspect of reading must be noted before moving on, that of 'reading the pictures'. The literature on children's picture books suggests that there are connections between the function of illustrations in children's books and 'pictures in

the head' which are evoked by told stories.

3.2.6 Illustrations and mental images and reading and listening to stories

Margaret Meek categorised the skills children need to learn to understand picture books, and noted that when they 'turn pictures into stories' they are learning how to function in a culture which 'takes visual images and narrative for granted' (1991, p. 116). Dorothy White also noted that illustrations play a key role in supporting the child's struggles to make sense of a story. She discussed both the actual illustrations in the text, and pictures in the mind which a good story stimulates. With reference to her own child she noted: 'When I read the favourites she doesn't look at the book; she looks outwards, and you can almost see her watching pictures' (1954, p. 135)

My experience suggests that the pictures in the head to which White refers are even more important when a child is listening to the teller, rather than the reader of a story, and that this aspect needs further research. Here, however, it is relevant to note that many storytellers also say they 'watch pictures in the head' while they are telling, which is perhaps an example of a skill which both teller and listener can develop through storytelling.

Illustrations, particularly in children's books, are a rich source of meaning for a reader, and the polysemic texts created by the juxtaposition of visual and written narrations merit greater attention than is possible in this research. The report of empirical research returns, in Chapter Four, to the issue of the educational role of mental imagery in storytelling.

3.2.7 Exploring stories through drawing: maps of play

I want to move at this point from pictures produced by adults for children, to children's own graphic representations of the world and inner images. My review of literature for this section was underpinned in particular by my understanding of Vygotsky's theories on the relationship of drawing and early writing (1978).

Myra Barrs' analysis of children's story drawings and maps of play suggests that children use drawing to communicate stories because they find an iconic mode of symbolisation more powerful and more easily manipulated than writing. She suggested that children 'assume initially that writing is a form of drawing, since drawing is a symbolising mode that is established so much earlier for them.' She noted also that drawing may continue to be their preferred mode of expression even after they have begun to write independently, because 'they may still feel able to 'say more' through their drawing than through their writing' (1988a, p. 55).

Barrs claimed that children's drawing, especially when accompanied by verbal

commentary, is a kind of 'drawing-cum-dramatizing', and argued that 'the creation of a picture therefore corresponds to an enacted drama' (p. 60). She placed this activity firmly at the centre of children's development of symbolic thinking, as 'creators of imaginary worlds which are sometimes enacted, sometimes pictured and sometimes written into being' (p. 69).

Barrs did not include the activity of *speaking into being* in her analysis, which is another indication of a gap in the literature. However, she provides a wider definition of story creation than teachers typically allow, in her exploration of children's graphic storying. She continued her research in her study of Ben, a five year old boy who used maps in fantasy play. Ben used detailed drawings to guide and direct an adult playmate, Michael, and to define the scope and activities of their joint, but child-directed, play. Barrs interpreted his drawings as 'at one level a way for Ben to make public for Michael the fictions inside his head.' She noted too that in talking about them, his 'explanatory, even didactic tone' showed he was aware of his 'audience's needs' (1988b, p. 114).

This style of storytelling is closely linked to the way in which professional storytellers use mental images to respond to the listeners' needs. Is the use of physical maps of play, such as drawings, a transitional stage towards an internalised map from which the storyteller works, leaving listeners space to create their own mental maps? This question is investigated further in Chapter Four.

Another example of the way children use drawings to support their storytelling comes from a school-based project reported on at a London conference (October 1994) on traditional storytelling in education. The storyteller, Susanna Steele, worked with a group of children aged six and seven on a Technology project. The project was based around her retelling of a Russian tale, Baba Yaga and the black geese, after which the children worked collaboratively to design and build a hut for the witch Baba Yaga. This story included a description of this traditional dwelling place, which stands on chicken's legs. She claimed that 'maps of play' were a valuable conceptual tool for these children. In the recommendations in her project report, Steele referred to the children's drawings not as illustrations, but as a way of telling stories. She also claimed that this activity allows children to make symbolic representations of narrative that help to develop their ability to sequence stories (1994, no pagination).

Steele's view about the educational benefits of children's work in a graphic medium to record their storytelling has implications for classroom practice. She has described the processes involved as follows:

... most children used the whole paper as the whole story. The result was a kind of story map where the events of the story can be seen at once and then told in sequence. Children often

talk about knowing 'the whole story' in their head but may have difficulty in shaping the story line. Working in pairs enabled them to share their individual experiences of the story and to collectively represent the whole story. The individual images of Baba Yaga's house showed clearly the rich and varied imagination with which children respond to story. It is important to remember that children's understanding and interpretation of the world is shaped by their experience - and in the case of Baba Yaga's house the drawings showed that their experience of chicken legs isn't the live scaly kind but fried drumsticks! By entering the world of the story through the initial telling and then the retellings the children rose to the design challenge of making the house from the story. ... The design was defined but not confined by the story. (1994, no pagination)

The next section develops these ideas about other language forms which complement and are complemented by storytelling, reporting on literature that discusses internal responses to storytelling, both intellectual and emotional. Some of the gaps where further research is needed have been identified. Bob Barton commented on the collective and all-encompassing potential of storytelling in school, and believed that 'talking about the images we see, the musical sounds we hear and (having) some idea of what we think the story is telling us should be central to our work with storytelling in the classroom' (1988, p. 9). However, the reality, in my experience of both talking to teachers and training them in storytelling skills, is that relatively few teachers feel confident to undertake storytelling work. My experience speaks of a gap in educational practice which needs to be filled if the potential of educational storytelling is to be realised.

3.3 Thinking and feeling

Myra Barrs described children 'operating with certain (conscious or unconscious) theories in their heads about how stories work' when they write stories (1990, p. 32). Her comment specifically refers to writing stories, but can be extended to telling stories. These theories have been the subject of debate in education, and an overview is needed, before picking out the issues most pertinent for oral storytelling. For example, Elizabeth Laycock wrote of 'the cognitive significance of our story-telling propensity' (1988, p. 46). She categorised children's encounters with storytelling into six types:

- (i) autobiographical storytelling
- (ii) dialogic storytelling - typically between child and parent
- (iii) narrated dramatic play
- (iv) imaginative play
- (v) 'story-poems' and other language play
- (vi) encounters with stories from the worlds of the oral tradition, of literature, of popular culture.

She concluded that 'story, in all its variety, is fundamental to our lives ... It begins in infancy, initiated and 'taught' by adults tacitly aware that it is through storying that

children will be enabled to make sense of the world' (p. 66). In this research it is Laycock's sixth category which is important, and specifically stories from the oral tradition which are the focus. The issues which are discussed in detail in this section on thinking and feeling are structured around five aspects: memory, imaging, the emotions, reflection and language and thought.

3.3.1 The role of the emotions, senses and story in developing memory

James Britton pushed Vygotsky's work on memory into a new area by claiming that the mental organising and theorising which arises from storying is a way of organising the memory. He holds the Vygotskian view of memory as a 'chronicle of events' and has noted that the memory must become selective relatively early if it is to accommodate the huge flow of information which it is required not only to store but also to process. For Britton, 'early memory may take the form of a chronicle of events, but it must very soon become 'logicalized' if it is to carry the density of information we accumulate and need to call upon. Memory must, in fact, become 'the storehouse of what *must have been*' rather than 'the catalogue of what *was*' (1990, p. 6, author's emphasis).

A brief exploration of the current state of knowledge on memory, and some findings about the contribution of storying to developing this capacity, may help to illuminate Britton's point, as well as furthering this discussion of the role of thought and feeling in education. Roman Jakobson also emphasised the importance of memory to learning, particularly in linguistics and the psychology of language (1985, p. 20).

F. C. Bartlett undertook a structured experimental study of memory in 1932. He pursued the notion of organising material to which Britton referred more recently as 'logicalising', and defined the successful operation of memory as dependent upon the establishment of organising schemata:

Remembering is not the re-excitation of innumerable fixed, lifeless and fragmentary traces. It is an imaginative reconstruction, or construction, built out of the relation of our attitude towards a whole active mass of organised past reactions or experience, and to a little outstanding detail which commonly appears in image or in language form. (1932, p. 213)

Discussing Bartlett's ideas about the role of affect in memory, Carol Fox noted that his subjects worked from a 'general impression' towards the reconstruction of detail in their story retelling experiments. She restated two of his observations: the first that this general impression was often 'linked to an affective attitude', the second that memory is hardly ever exact, and 'it is not at all important that it should be so' (1987, p. 215).

Bartlett's study acknowledged the key role of the emotions, though this was not thoroughly investigated. Carolyn Sherwin Bailey discussed the role of the senses in assisting memory and recall, noting that in her research, stories which appealed directly

to the senses were the ones which typically held a reader's interest (1913, p. 25).

A tentative conclusion from the above literature is that the role played by the senses in remembering and recalling facts, events or stories is a key link between thought and feeling, intellect and affect. The implication of this for education is that the senses make a greater contribution to learning in general than tends to be acknowledged. Hearing and telling traditional tales may be appropriate educational tools for engaging the senses in memory and recall.

Sue May stressed the importance of framing past experience to becoming familiar with story form and content, in her study of the development of memory skills in a small group of five year old boys. She referred to a memory 'framework' which was created through their experience of stories, and claimed this helped them 'to interpret new stories they hear and to retell them' (1984, p. 34).

Much of my experience as a teacher-storyteller supports May's assertion that the more stories children hear, the more established their frameworks for remembering and retelling them seem to become. The corollary of this, is that the more a particular story is told, heard and retold, the more memorable and retellable it becomes, shaped by the voices and memories of those who have passed it on. This collective work of shaping a story has benefits for the classroom as a community, because, as Bob Barton wrote, it enables many collective learning activities to take place around storytelling. Among the communal activities Barton listed were enactment, composing, interpretation and wondering (1988, p. 5).

Before going on to explore educational strategies for exploiting links between emotion and thought, as Barton advocates, I will first report on the current state of knowledge about children's thinking, with regard to their use of imaging and imagination.

3.3.2 Visual imagination and responding to stories

The following rationale was proposed by Degenhardt and McKay to support the claim that the nature and formation of mental images is a rational process. They argued that because mental images are formed and can be deliberately changed in ways which are impossible with simple perceptions, 'forming images is an activity of mind that can be as rational and informed as any other' (1988, p. 242). They presented a strong case for both the educational value and the educability of the imagination: 'How else but by imagination can one pass beyond the observable evidence for people's thoughts to get at the thoughts themselves?' (p. 244). Their view of imagination as an empathic tool is congruent with the oral folk tradition of informal education which will be reported on in more detail in Chapter Three. Storytelling has played a large part, in this tradition, in providing opportunities for the development of empathy.

Ben Haggarty made the same point about the importance of the imagination in 1994, when he quoted the psychologist James Hillman's views about the difference between children's and adults' responses to stories.

I think children need less convincing of the importance of story than do adults ... childhood tends to mean wonder, imagination, creative spontaneity while adulthood, the loss of these perspectives. So the first task, as I see it, is restorying the adult - the teacher and the parent and the grandparent - in order to restore the imagination to a primary place in consciousness in each of us, regardless of age. (1994, no pagination)

His point was that children are advantaged in this situation, while adults have lost touch with something fundamental, which is best recaptured through the imagination. Hearing and retelling traditional tales is Haggarty's recommended method of achieving this, although at the moment little literature exists that shows teachers how to put his recommendations into practice.

Haggarty, who is an experienced storyteller, published notes for teachers in 1994 on preparing a story for retelling which stress the importance of attending to the visual imagination, a position that was also emphasised by other storytellers who completed the storytellers' questionnaire, reported in Chapter Four. Written accounts by storytellers of the process of preparing a story are rare, but there is another in Ruth Sawyer's book on storytelling (1944, pp. 99 - 100). Although the following is a lengthy extract, Haggarty's statement in 1994 merits quoting in full, because he outlines the process of building a visual image of the story:

There is probably one image, amidst many, that really stands out for you in this story. Identify it. (It may be obscure but don't try to analyse why it attracts you!). This is important because this image is your doorway into the visual world of the story. In your mind's eye, explore this picture. You are directing your own private film, zoom in on close up details, pan across the scene, take in the colour, the light source, the costumes ... What is in the background? Visualisation is the key to telling stories. When you tell, it is as if a film is unwinding in your imagination and you are describing what you see to others. The more clearly you see your story, the more clearly your listeners will see it, (however it's not necessary to describe every detail you are seeing to them, just know that you could if you were asked ...) (1994, no pagination)

More information like this would be useful to teachers who want to become teacher-storytellers, but do not know how to go about it.

Tony Aylwin, who is a practising teacher-storyteller, also reported on the value of what he calls 'visualisation work' which he undertook as part of his training in storytelling with the experienced storyteller, Pomme Clayton:

Some of Pomme's exercises uncovered unsuspected weaknesses. In one case, we had to give aerial-view descriptions of our stories to our partners. I found that I couldn't visualise a cotton field, although I had learned the story, The people could fly, without being aware of that. I was able to remedy the weakness by some simple research, and as a result of this my later retellings have been significantly different in a way that I hope has helped the listeners' appreciation. (1988, p. 21)

June Peters' M.A. dissertation reported research which focused on children as storytellers. Her findings echoed the educational principles described above, in that she wrote: 'I think that discussion of visualisation is an important tool for validating and reflecting on each child's individual response to particular stories' (1992, p. 54). Later in the same dissertation, she commented on an individual child's responses to her own storytelling, saying that 'Visualising has become for Michelle a conceptual system and she can use the language to examine her own responses' (p. 117). Her notion of a 'conceptual system' is consistent with Myra Barrs' comments on 'frameworks' which I discussed above (p. 67).

Popular culture, especially television, is a significant influence on many children's visual imagination. By enabling them to develop and refine this skill, it may be that teacher-storytellers can enable cognitive growth.

3.3.3 Contribution of storytelling to the development of thinking and feeling

I intend to consider the relationship between thought and emotion, linking this to the question 'Can the emotions be educated?' There are different schools of thought about the answer to this question. My common-sense response is, and always has been, 'yes', supported by theory, reported below, which confirms that the emotions are rational, and therefore educable aspects of the mind. My focus is on the child's expression and developing understanding of personal feelings in response to art forms, specifically, in this case, traditional tales. Barrie Wade's stated position concerning the matter supports my position, though he does not use the word 'story' to signify oral stories. Nonetheless, his point that there is 'universal delight in story' is transferable. He suggested the educational process involved is an indirect one, and that through stories the pupil 'can enter into situations that might elsewhere than in story be too complex and too subtle for young understanding' (1983, p. 28). The opportunity cited by Wade for the child to empathise with characters in a story, and to experience, through story, events which are outside his or her range of experiences, suggests which aspects of the experience are significant for the child's learning. It is important to point out, moreover, that the notion that stories are educationally valuable simply because they are enjoyable is not sufficient to explain why they provide such a powerful medium for the development of emotional understanding.

Carol Fox provided one clue as to why this might be the case by positing imaginative fiction as a half way house between talk and literacy. This argument is based on the presence of oral language forms in fiction, about which Fox wrote: 'Written imaginative fiction comes closer than essayist prose to oral traditions of narration and speech play ... and therefore can be seen as a bridge between speech and writing' (1987, p. 204). I wish to extend her argument to imaginative oral fiction. No research literature exists to prove this yet, but I suspect that storytelling is the most appropriate vehicle for bridging the distance between speech and writing in the education of primary age children.

Nelson Goodman elucidated the importance of the emotions in learning by linking them with other forms of knowledge. He wrote that 'in art - and I think in science too - emotion and cognition are interdependent: feeling without understanding is blind, and understanding without feeling is empty' (1984, p. 8). This interplay of the cognitive and the affective is a key aspect of educating the emotions: it is an area in which the content of traditional stories can effectively engage the child.

Vivian Gussin Paley found that many adults have difficulties in exploring their emotions, whereas children, who 'have not yet learned to be still and hide their stories', may more easily use story and storytelling in a cathartic way (1995, p. 4). Although my experience of teaching in inner city schools in London suggests that there are, sadly, all too many young children who have learned to hide their stories, because of real or imagined fears, the warm and supporting teacher like Paley can perhaps provide some compensation.

Richard Baumann researched the emotional investment of adults in their shared conversational storytelling together. From his study, he concluded that the social practice of telling stories, from the teller's own, often recent, life experiences, was frequently 'a means of giving cognitive and emotional coherence to experience, constructing and negotiating social identity' (1986, p. 11). This social dimension of sharing stories is another important facet in educating the emotions, both for the teller and for the listener, who becomes engaged through empathy at two levels: with the plot and characters of the story (including the 'I' representing the person who is narrating, when a personal story is being told) and also with the narrator as the present 'I'.

All these arguments touch on the need to educate the emotions, but do not reach the centre of this issue, or the potential contribution of storying to the development of thinking and feeling. Further investigation is needed into ways in which storytelling is used by professional storytellers, together with a consideration of the extent to which their techniques could be used in formal educational contexts to contribute to the affective education of children. Although the literature researched so far contains valuable material, it does not answer my original research question: What does

storytelling have to offer to the formal education of primary age children?

3.3.4 Contribution of storytelling to reflecting on the world

Arthur Applebee explored in great depth the 'spectator role' of the respondent to a story. In doing this, he extended D. W. Harding's concept (1963, p. 300 et seq) of 'detached evaluation' to consider the possibility for the reader or listener of 'a second chance of construing the experience to be considered'. He seems to be referring here to the possibility of distancing oneself as a reader or listener from the content of a story, so that it can be considered objectively. He said that the form of a story is one thing which enables this detached stance to be reached, and that stories are one of the most familiar ways of structuring experience known to human beings. His work mostly refers to written works, but his conclusions may be transferable to oral storytelling (1973, p. 342).

Perhaps it is the dual opportunity storytelling provides, for detached reflection on form, and involved identification with character and content, that enables it to make what Carol Fox calls 'cognitive demands which push children towards new relationships and decentred viewpoints' (1989, p. 33). The notion of 'scaffolding' (Vygotsky, 1978) was invoked by Fox, who claims that stories offer opportunities for understanding which take children 'above their daily behaviour'. She affirms the importance of the emotions in the storytelling themes chosen by the five subjects she studied in her research, noting: 'In their storytelling the children's most complex utterances arise from an affective base; the themes of their stories are powerful ones - fear and ambition, love and hate, birth and death' (1989, p. 32). Vivian Gussin Paley attempted to define what the most fundamental of these story themes might be. She claimed that 'the fairy tales, in one way or another, hit squarely at the most important issue for any child: will I be abandoned? Will it happen to me as it does to the pigs?' (1991, p. 157).

Discussing the relationship between pleasurable activity and intellectual development, Fox noted the lack of 'a detailed account of the ways in which *verbal* imaginative play, particularly, supports and nourishes, within an affective frame, children's interest in the laws of the physical world and the expression of that interest in reasoned and logical thought' (1989, p. 28). Nigel Hall and Anne Robinson have considered the relationship of symbolic play and literacy development (1998, p. 8), but further research is still needed to establish more definitely the contribution of the verbal imaginative play of storytelling to children's developing understanding of the world.

3.3.5 Storytelling as Vygotskian scaffolding to the development of language and thought

The extracts from the stories of the children in Fox' study are proof that the kind of rich verbal play described above does exist. They enabled her to conclude that the affective and intellectual development of young children were 'inextricably linked, just as Piaget

and Vygotsky claimed them to be'. She also concluded that language and thought are closely connected, and are 'generated by the pleasure and power the children have in mastering the art of story' (p. 29).

It is appropriate now to consider in more detail Lev Vygotsky's theories on children's developing language and thought, because they are the source of an important line of my developing argument for the educational value of traditional tales. My argument is that a traditional tale contains in its structure a metaphorical equivalent of the scaffolding which an adult reading with a child provides, enabling the child to achieve more with help than s/he could manage alone. I suggest that the shaping given to the story by the many anonymous tellers who have told it, gives the same support to the child retelling the story that the adult helper gives to the child reading.

Vygotsky argued that the resolution of tension caused by the impossibility of immediate gratification of desire was a motivating force in the child's imaginative play. He described play as 'an imaginary, illusory world in which the unrealisable desires can be realised', and believed that imagination, which he claimed is not present in the consciousness of the young child, is 'a specifically human form of conscious activity', which originally arises from action (1978, p. 93). He also suggested that 'the acquisition of language can provide a paradigm for the entire problem of the relation between learning and development' (p. 89).

The specific language play of storytelling can be linked to Vygotsky's theory of play and the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which he defined as:

... the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

The source of the paradigm which Vygotsky put forward is the social nature of language, where there is invariably interaction with another, awakening 'a variety of internal developmental processes' (p. 90). One such process is the interweaving of internal and external speech, thought and word. Vygotsky emphasised the need to 'distinguish between the vocal and semantic aspects of speech' (1962, p. 126), when he referred to the relationship between language and thought as reciprocal:

The relation of thought to word is not a thing but a process, a continual movement back and forth from thought to word and from word to thought ... thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. (p. 125)

The ZPD is crucial to learning, which Vygotsky distinguished from development (1978, p. 90), and the support of a more able practitioner is needed to move the learner

into the ZPD. As thought is created as well as expressed through language, an introduction to the language of the oral tradition can offer support to the developing thinker. Traditional oral language is shaped by many speakers, and provides access to the language expertise of all the tellers who have told the tale in which it features. Children and professional storytellers alike draw on this expertise 'built-in' to a story, as my own experience can demonstrate. The story The man who had no story to tell was the first story that I ever told to adults, in August 1990, and indeed was the first story told in a formal storytelling setting which I ever heard, at the third International Festival of Storytelling at the South Bank Centre, London, in November 1989. I have never seen a written version of the form that I tell, though I have read other versions of the motif. In my telling I regularly used, and still use, the onomatopoeic sound 'sploosh, sploosh' to represent the sound of water being baled from a little boat, an important point in the story at which the protagonist, Jimmy, passes from the 'real' world to a magic world. I genuinely believed that I had created this oral marker of the transition in the story for several years, until I offered it as an example from my practice in a workshop on the storyteller's use of sound and language led by Ben Haggarty in January 1993. He then told me that I had adopted and internalised it from his telling, heard in November 1989. Now I have passed on that scaffolding device to others who tell the story. An example of a child's use of this scaffolding can be found in Chapter Five, in the analysis of the story The unicorn.

The key authors for this research in the field of thinking and feeling were Vygotsky, Bruner, Fox, Wade, Goodman, Applebee, Baumann and Paley. My reading of their work suggests that the links between affect and intellect, feeling and thought, and thought and language are important factors in the child's learning and development. They are also reciprocal, feeding and supporting each other. Storytelling, specifically the language of traditional storytelling and the themes such as loss, quest and discovery which traditional tales address, can nourish these links and promote learning in the area of affect, and the education of the emotions. The review has made a case for my belief that the adult storyteller can 'scaffold' the child's learning in a unique way, but this needs further research.

3.4 Autobiography

This section of the review moves away from traditional tales, and considers personal stories from an educational perspective. This step is justified, both because of the importance which many significant figures in the educational literature attach to autobiography, and also because I have found, in my work as a teacher-storyteller, that children and adults frequently use storytelling as part of their effort to make sense of the world.

James Olney studied autobiographical writings, and has concluded that autobiography is vital to understanding the world, because 'all philosophy, indeed, and all knowledge

is real only in autobiography' (1972, pp. 50-1). My experience as a teacher-storyteller indicates that what Olney referred to as the 'poetic-autobiographic metaphor' is a powerful way also for young children to consider personal experiences, but there is no extant literature which makes this connection. In this section of the literature review I will evaluate some aspects of autobiographical storytelling which appear relevant to my research.

Harold Rosen has long been committed to the study of autobiographical storytelling, and his work is important for this research because it describes what he calls 'the storytelling instinct'. He described human beings as 'incorrigible autobiographers', noting that from the first onset of speech, stories of personal experience form a large part of the content of most conversational speech. In fact he asserts that 'to speak is, amongst other things, an effort and an offer to share each other's lives' (1994, no pagination). Rosen explored the fusion in 'conversational storytelling (of) memory and autobiography' and asserted that 'conversation without stories is impossible to imagine: it would be the banishment of life itself' (1988, p. 197). He argued that shaping experience into story makes it possible to share it with another, and to come to an understanding of it for oneself. The novelist Chinua Achebe, who draws strongly on the African oral tradition for his books, discussed storytelling in similar terms. In an interview with John Windsor for The Independent on 20th August 1994, he described storytelling as 'the basis of our existence - who we are, what we think we are, what people say we are, what other people think we are'.

Aidan Chambers' report of his study of a young child's written story linked the creation of fictional stories to the 'true life' context within which they have been conceptualised and developed. He stated that the principal drive towards reading and writing is the desire to obtain some distance from knowledge in order to be able to reflect on it (1992, p. 160). This is equally the case with the told tale. The implication of this is that the desire for personal knowledge is a driving force behind the urge towards storytelling.

If autobiography is, at root, the pursuit of self-knowledge, then an important aspect of autobiographical writing is the development of the skill of organising experience into a meaningful and shapely whole. Rosen, who claims that 'stories make organised sense of very chaotic experiences' (1993, p. 148), has described storytelling as involving a mental process which is partly creative, partly memory-based, and which 'enables us to excise from our experience a meaningful sequence, to place it within boundaries, to set around it the frontiers of the story, to make it resonate in the contrived silences with which we may precede it and end it' (pp. 13-14). Rosen asserted that the process of shaping and sharing one's own personal experiences is available to everyone, even the young: 'Everyone has a similar repertoire, an invisible autobiography. We are at it all the time. So are our pupils, even when their pasts amount to a very few years' (p.

Oliver Sacks, the neurologist, concurs with this view. He wrote about the centrality of personal stories to our developing sense of self in a book about people who have lost touch with who they really are. He asserted that every human being 'needs such a narrative, a continuous inner narrative, to maintain his (sic) identity, his self' (1986, pp. 105-6).

3.4.1 Telling one's own story

In a study of the process of research from a feminist perspective, Susan Drake, Anne Elliott and Joyce Castle (1993) used autobiographical storytelling and, above all, *sharing* to make sense of their lives and work. They met regularly and told their life stories to each other, following the model of the early consciousness-raising groups of the Women's Movement. They gave written and oral feedback to each other on these autobiographies, then each woman reinterpreted her life story in the light of her colleagues' comments. Their agreed aim was to negotiate 'a search for meaning' in their lives 'through shared interpretation' (p. 294). The women realised that their stories shared common themes, and wrote: 'Interpreting the components of our own and each others' stories, we discovered that we each tended to repeat the same story ... Only after making this common story explicit were we also able to acknowledge that the story was not unique to us' (pp. 294 & 296). Andrew Wilkinson also acknowledged the ways in which autobiographical stories can define, not only an individual, but a whole family: 'A family lives by its stories. Without them it is without past and without future, without imagination, without vision, without aspiration. It is here, and it is now - but no more' (1990, p. 11). Harold Rosen described personal and interpersonal knowledge as shaped and shared through the telling of personal stories: 'To engage intimately with others is to invite their stories, for it is via our stories that we present ourselves to each other' (1990, p. 17).

These authors attribute value to the telling and hearing of personal stories, and agree that the human impulse to make sense of experience uses story as a form to shape events. Their emphasis on the importance of both creating and sharing personal stories gives a focus to the oral transmission of stories which has been missing from the literature already discussed. However, connections still need to be made between personal stories and traditional storytelling, and a stronger case for the educational value of the two forms must be developed.

3.4.2 Teaching through story

Vivian Gussin Paley used story, and most importantly, personal stories, as a fundamental part of her nursery teaching. In her book *You can't say you can't play*, (1992) she reported on her struggle to teach fair play in the nursery class and how she achieved this through a story composed for the class. Although the story was fantasy,

it reflected back to the children real life conflicts and desires in the acceptable mirror of fiction, making it possible for them to discuss calmly issues which elicited such strong feelings that they were best contemplated through the lens of the story.

Just as skilled teachers like Paley can use story to help children's understanding of real life, so children may be able to use the stories they have heard to build their own repertoire of stories to tell. They can create a personal morphology and gain familiarity with the medium as they hear more and more stories, retell them and make them their own. As Sue May observed: 'From the earliest stages children use the stories they hear as the raw materials with which to construct stories of their own' (1984, p. 36).

June Peters, another teacher-storyteller, described this happening when she wrote: 'My personal experience tells me that I am better at telling the personal stories of my life since I have started telling traditional ones regularly' (1992, p. 52). About the storytelling skills of a nine year old girl in her class, she commented: 'she cannot use her story to examine her life and its relation to other lives and other stories, unless she begins to develop a language to talk about it' (p. 119). Peters argued that children can use their personal experiences as material through which to develop their storytelling skills, but they need help to develop a metalanguage in which to express their growing understanding.

This suggests a further educational function for the teacher-storyteller in facilitating children to articulate their understandings of stories, by helping them to acquire a metalanguage, which would enable them to understand something of themselves and their places in the world as well. Although the specialist literature by teacher-storytellers describes in broad terms how this is significant, research which outlines how to achieve it is lacking. Betty Rosen reminded the reader that storytelling is an activity which anyone can undertake, when she commented 'Our memories make storytellers of us all' (1991, p. 53). However, for storytelling to be adopted as an educational strategy which is central to the formal curriculum, more guidance for teacher-storytellers, and a greater understanding of how children can be helped to articulate their understandings about stories, are both essential.

3.5 Narrative

Narrative has been defined as 'a fundamental means of organizing our experience along the dimension of time' (Fox, 1993 p. 68). It has been the focus of a large amount of theoretical work, giving a cross-disciplinary focus on this issue which is complex to analyse. This part of the review of literature focuses on my research question about storytelling's contribution to the formal education of primary age children. For this reason only a relatively small part of the literature on narrative has been reviewed.

Harold Rosen has researched narrative in the fields of anthropology, literary studies,

discourse analysis, history, theology, linguistics, psychology, therapy, folklore, ethnography, verbal art, revival storytelling, and, by implication, rather than explicitly, teaching (1988, pp. 165-6). He has noted that 'as yet no major work has appeared which presents a coherent educational theory of narrative' (p. 164).

In view of the enormity of the field, I therefore focused on what has been written about the specific use of narrative in education, and considered in particular children's understanding of narrative, and the kinds of narratives they can construct with the help of adults.

3.5.1 Theories about narrative and learning

I found two main theoretical constructs on narrative that provided insights into the research question on which this chapter is focused. The first was Barbara Hardy's idea of narrative as 'a primary act of mind'. For Hardy, the significant point is that 'we dream in narrative, daydream in narrative, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticise, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love by narrative' (1978, pp. 12 & 13). In this sense she considers the impulse towards narrating experience a fundamental way in which humans conceptualise the world. According to James Moffett, who was concerned more specifically with children's understanding of narrative, it is the sole means which children have of understanding and making sense of the world. He believed that the range of discourse and thought to which adults have access is not yet available to young children, who use story form to shape their understanding of the world.

'Whereas adults differentiate their thought into specialised kinds of discourse ... children must for a long time make narrative do for all. They utter themselves almost entirely through stories - real or invented - and they apprehend what others say through story' (1968, p. 49).

These two ideas, then, define the parameters for this section of the review. More background on the different schools of thought in narrative studies is needed, however, in order to contextualise my intended focus on narrative in education.

Carol Fox (1993) has noted that some studies (e.g. Stein & Glenn, 1979, Whaley, 1981) which argued the case for developing a 'story grammar', were attempts to define narrative through an analysis of form. She cited Labov's 1972 research on the stories of young Black men as an important milestone in narrative studies because it emphasises the performance aspect of telling stories, and 'stresses that the point of a story is *the way it is told*, and that therefore whatever gives a story its colour, its life, its particular stance or point of view, is the most vital element of the story's structure' (1988, p. 54, author's parentheses).

The psychotherapeutic approach to analysing narrative (e.g. Pitcher and Prelinger,

1963, Ames, 1966) addresses the 'deep structure' of the stories and searches for subconscious meanings in them that children relate to their own lives and conflicts. Fox complained about the fact that 'the narratologists tend to see stories entirely as form with little meaning, while the psychoanalysts see them as all meaning but with little significant form' (1988, p. 55). I agree with her that there is a case for a theoretical framework for storytelling in education in which the importance of both content and form is discussed.

Fox also identified a need for inquiry into children's acquisition of skills and abilities in narrative, and called for 'much more inclusive studies of language learning'. She suggested that 'whatever lies at the heart of story-telling lies at the heart of language itself', and argued that narrative should not be studied from the perspective of specialised theoretical constructs, but within 'mainstream studies of language development' (ibid).

Harold Rosen shares this view and stressed the importance of conversational storytelling, because he believed that teacher-storytellers should examine storytelling's 'most modest and ephemeral moments' in order to build a 'deeper understanding of the narrative impulse' (1988, p. 197). He has emphasised the importance of narrative to all forms of speech. Gordon Wells has quoted him as saying: 'We are in error if we believe narrative ... stands in complete contrast to other kinds of discourse. In fact it is an explicit resource in *all* intellectual activity' (1986, p. 213).

Rosen criticised narratology for defining narrative too narrowly, and limiting it to 'the world of literature, of great fiction' (1985, p. 11). Carol Fox, on the other hand, used semiotic structures devised by Genette (1980) for studying Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu, and by Barthes (1974) for Balzac's Sarrasine, to interrogate stories collected from children (1993, chs. 8-10). She found that they could be applied to this kind of material, and that methods and codes, developed for the scrutiny of literary works, also illuminated previously unnoticed complexities in the children's narratives. For Fox, systems transferred from the world of literary theory have proved to be 'the most useful educational tools' for studying children's narratives. However, her work on children's stories has tended to focus on the influence of literary stories on them. In connecting literacy and early oracy her research appears to differ from mine. Rather than aiming to show, as Fox did, how soon literature begins to influence children in this culture, my research interest focuses on the contribution of oral storytelling to the formal education of primary age children.

According to Jane Miller, narrative begins to have an influence early in each child's life on 'fram(ing) their understandings and perception' (1984, p. 11). This leads into the second focus of the review of literature on narrative, which is children's understanding of narrative.

3.5.2 Theories about children's understanding of narrative

Henrietta Dombey studied the way a three year old named Anna and her mother read Pat Hutchin's picture book, Rosie's walk, together. Dombey mentioned that when Anna worked with the text, she directed her attention 'not at the spoken words or at their printed counterparts on the pages in front of her, but at the narrative constructed through these words', and at the world out of which that narrative came. She concluded that the conversations between mother and child at the time were important because they were 'concerned partly to establish connections between the narrated events and Anna's own first-hand experience and partly to construe the pictures' (1988, p. 72).

Nigel Hall analysed the skills young children bring to the task of being a narrator, drawing for evidence on Carol Fox' study of the five year old storyteller Sundari. His comment that 'by the time children are five the complexity of their own narratives is considerable' was made in the context of a description of the emergent reader, but it also has direct relevance to the argument being made here. (1987, p. 35).

Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan analysed the conversations of readers, or tellers and listeners, making sense of a text together, and concluded they were rich, because any narrative does not include 'the whole story'; rather the audience, whether reader or listener, must complete the picture for him or herself. She explained that 'holes or gaps are so central in narrative fiction because the materials the text provides for the reconstruction of a world (or a story) are insufficient for saturation. No matter how detailed the presentations, further questions can always be asked; story gaps always remain open' (1993, p. 127).

Importantly for this research, a great many influential texts on early reading attach importance to the role of the adult in 'scaffolding' the child's readerly behaviour, while Carol Fox' equally important text on storytelling (1993) suggests that child storytellers need the minimum of adult assistance. Although I understand why her study emphasised this, I wonder if there are not conclusions to be drawn about the relative ease with which the child engages with the literate and oral modes, which could lead to oral work in schools being afforded greater status. The search for these links influenced the design of the empirical studies in this research.

Myra Barrs (1990) has categorised some of the narrative competences which children display in their stories, when writing and reading texts. Her ideas about children's narrative are relevant to storytelling, because she claims that listening to stories plays a key role in shaping 'children's personal theories of narrative' (p. 38). She also stressed the importance for teacher-storytellers of recognising the child's developing understanding of narrative as more than 'a simplistic theory of modelling' (p. 32).

I will draw on the ideas of the literary theorist Tzvetan Todorov to exemplify this point. He observed that 'point of view' in stories, by which he meant 'literary narratives', is a complex and dialectical phenomenon, in that 'the one who says *I* in the novel is not the *I* of discourse, that is, the subject of the speech-act. He is only a character ... But there exists another *I*, an *I* generally invisible, which refers to the narrator, that 'poetic personality' we apprehend through the discourse' (1977, p. 27). This is a complex notion, but one which Carol Fox' young storyteller Sundari seemed able to understand. In the children's stories Fox collected and wrote about, Sundari, aged five, demonstrated an ability to distinguish between different first-person aspects, and did this, moreover, while narrating. She seems to have been holding in her head not only the content and form of the story, but also these various roles, which she distinguished by different voices. Carol Fox wrote that: 'By inventing a narrator and allowing the narrator a superior view of the story and story characters, Sundari can ... mov(e) in and out of the story at will', and noted that the cognitive implications of this feat were 'enormous' (1993, p. 152). Sundari was able to construct and sustain 'the point of view of an entirely invented alter ego (her narrator) as well as the points of view of her characters.' Bruner (1986, p. 39) and Todorov agree that the apparent 'inseparability of character, setting and action must be deeply rooted in the nature of narrative thought.' Sundari's storytelling is strong evidence that this aspect of narrative can be manipulated at an early age. In another paper Carol Fox made a key observation about Sundari's developing understanding of her own mental processes, noting 'Sundari is becoming explicitly aware of her own mental activity and is able to represent that awareness in language' (in Hall and Martello, eds., 1996, p. 61). That such metacognition can be developed by a child as young as five through working with storytelling is a very crucial finding from the literature.

3.6 Culture

For the purposes of this research I define culture as 'the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values, and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action' (Collins, 1998, p. 267). Claire Woods has argued that the importance of culture in shaping narrative has been underestimated. She wrote: 'a personal narrative is a cultural narrative, spun as it is within the understandings, traditions, ways of knowing, ways of speaking into which each of us is born and in which we each live and grow' (1988, p. 139). Writing about Maxine Hong Kingston's novel, The woman warrior, Tony Burgess observed: 'perhaps it is only through story that language, culture and difference can be seen concretely and not abstractly, fully grasped as shaping and shaped by experience' (1988, p. 162). The influence of culture on the individual's ability to express the self through narrative was implied in the above extracts from Todorov and Fox, but it needs to be made more explicit, in relation to the research question which this chapter addresses.

3.6.1 Stories and transmission of culture

Jerome Bruner noted that the self is intimately related to 'one's cultural-historical existence', and defined another educational function of story, which is that it makes a particular contribution to initiation into one's own culture. Because stories define a possible range of characters, settings and actions, he suggests they offer 'a map of possible roles and of possible worlds in which action, thought and self-definition are permissible (or desirable)'. According to Bruner, the young person's entry into the home culture is shaped by 'the characteristic cultural dramas in which he (sic) plays a part - at first family dramas, but later the ones that shape the expanding circle of his activities outside the family' (1986, pp. 66-7). These 'cultural dramas' which initiate the young person into his/her culture were investigated more fully by Shirley Brice Heath (1993) in Ways with words. She studied three contrasting cultural milieux in the Southern United States, which were two small urban communities, one Black and one white, and also the 'townspeople' who worked with both communities. The evidence she collected in her study about child-rearing practices in the three communities supports Bruner's claims about the cultural influence of the family and provided a picture of different cultural expectations of 'story'.

Heath's study is important for this research because it defined the storytelling conventions observed in, practised by and used to socialise the children of the communities of 'Roadville' and 'Trackton'. Cultural transmission is a common function of storytelling by communities, as John Sturrock has also observed. He wrote: 'As we grow up and are socialised we become steeped in narrative. It is through narrative that cultural norms are inculcated in the young and preserved through time' (1993, p. 291). Wray, Bloom and Hall stated that 'children are born into a social world' and that 'children born into cultural groups are inducted into the values, attitudes, and beliefs of that group' (1989, p. 37). Heath drew out similar implications for teachers and schools from her ethnographic data. She wrote: 'For Roadville and Trackton children, the what, how, and why of patterns of choice they can exercise in their uses of language prepare them in very different ways for what lies ahead in school and in work or other institutional settings' (1983, p. 347). One of the most frequently used tools for socialising children into their culture is storytelling, by adults and other children, which frames moral and educative messages in a form which children can understand.

3.6.2 Promoting intercultural understanding

Differences of attitude between generations are an aspect of intercultural understanding which can cause problems both within a culture, and between cultures. In a paper on the role of imagination and education in intercultural understanding, Degenhardt and McKay emphasised the key role played by the imagination in developing intercultural understanding. They commented that 'we really understand neither people nor their culture unless we know their ideas and intentions as well as their observable

movements and artifacts' (1988, p. 243). Although they do not refer specifically to storytelling, the literature reported in this chapter has argued that storytelling is an effective way of communicating such ideas.

Jack Zipes, writing for the Times Educational Supplement on 31st March 1995, analysed the role of stories in intercultural understanding, and commented on the way the status of stories changes as they pass between generations. He examined aspects of modern European culture which did not appear to value the oral tradition, and wrote:

In protest against the fragmenting impact of post-modern technology, many people appear to be searching for a new sense of community, and storytelling may be one way to restore a shared tradition and social values. In particular, the innovative storytelling with children that has recently flowered in the West can lead to strengthening children's creativity, co-operation, and social awareness. (p. 14)

His analysis of the possible causes of the storytelling revival in the UK goes some way towards answering my research question about the evolution of the storytelling revival in England and Wales.

3.6.3 Children's culture

Tony Burgess researched the rich variety of cultures, dialects and stories present in one London secondary classroom, through an analysis of written stories. He concluded that storytelling in multi-cultural settings contributes to an appreciation of cultural diversity, writing that 'when stories are told, there will be diverse melodies' (1984, p. 6). He suggested that these diverse melodies merit recognition from teachers, and noted that many teachers do attempt this, understanding that raising children's awareness of and respect for each other's cultures is part of their educational role. With reference to teachers with a commitment to multi-cultural education per se, Sue Ellis wrote of using traditional tales in the classroom as 'a positive way of expanding children's experience of different cultures, and a means by which they become aware of the parallels with their own' (1988, p. 23). Children themselves bring their own stories and their own culture into the classroom, as Alistair Summers pointed out in his study of 'the unofficial narratives of the classroom', or the stories pupils tell each other 'when they should be doing something else' (1991, p. 25).

3.6.4 Connecting home and school culture

Shirley Brice Heath (1993) showed that home and school culture are the two most important influences in the young child's life, and that, where the two are in opposition, difficulties result for children. When these two cultures share values, even though they operate in different ways, the personal, family culture is complemented rather than challenged by the school's ethos, and the effect is positive for the child. As June Peters wrote, addressing teachers, 'if you have no shared canon of stories (with

the children), then your separate expectations of stories will be different, and you lack the cultural context which supports the stories and vice versa' (1992, p. 23, my parentheses).

Sue May stressed the role of the teacher's remembered childhood culture in determining the culture of the classroom. She pointed out that teachers' own experiences of learning to read and write are powerful influences on their own practice as educators (1984, p. 28). For June Peters this can be a strength as long as the power differential between child and teacher is not abused. She has written of the need for teachers to value stories from all kinds of home cultures, and to help children to understand that school and home are not separate worlds (1992, pp. 81 & 89). Peters' 1992 study followed one child as she moved from being a silent participant in regular classroom storytelling sessions to sharing, at last, a story from her own culture and imagination. Peters noted: 'She cannot use her story to examine her life and its relation to other lives and other stories, unless she begins to develop a language to talk about it' (p. 119). For Peters, a teacher-storyteller's educational role is two-fold, and involves respecting and allowing time for the telling of 'home stories', as well as supporting children in developing a language to talk about their particular stories which helps them understand the form and function of the storytelling process as a whole.

3.7 Summary of findings from this chapter

In this chapter I have reviewed the literature of storytelling in education thematically. This has involved a lot of cross-referencing between disciplines. I have also related the literature to my own experience of educational storytelling and the practice of others. Much ground has been covered, but the most significant findings which relate to my inquiry into 'What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?' will now be summarised below.

My first key finding pertains to the conceptual framework for thinking which story can provide; throughout life, but particularly in childhood, when it is used extensively to shape experience into a comprehensible whole. This educational function is partly achieved through the development of the mental imaging of visualisation: mental mapping and 'pictures in the head'. The predictable and familiar structure of the traditional tale is another educational function of storytelling for children, because it offers them an achievable model of language and thought. An important component of this model is the correspondence between the rhymes and rhythmic language which are typical of children's play, and the patterned language of the stories and poetry of the oral tradition. Children can be aware of and capable users of the performative aspects of storytelling, as demonstrated by Fox' subject Sundari (above, p. 82) and White's daughter Carol (above, p. 61) in their use of a 'storytelling voice'. When children operate with stories from the oral tradition they are confident with the material because it is familiar, and resembles their own natural language forms. I would argue that

traditional tales, in particular, provide the kind of Vygotskian scaffolding for the learner which is usually perceived as coming from a more experienced partner. Margaret Meek's work has established that the role of a teacher-partner in supporting children as readers is essential. On the other hand, Carol Fox has shown that children who work alone and unaided telling stories can achieve measurable competences far beyond what might have been expected for their age. I suggest, therefore, that the traditional tale itself can act as scaffolding taking the child into Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. On a metaphoric level oral stories can bring with them the scaffolding of generations of previous tellers, because oral stories have been 'shaped by tongues'. These invisible storytellers who, in the words of storyteller Hugh Lupton 'stand behind us as we speak'¹, are the helpmates of the child retelling a story, just as the parent, helper or teacher who 'hears readers' is the helpmate of the child reading a literary story. In the case of the told story, however, this scaffolding is internalised, and this enables the child to develop independently as a confident user of storytelling language. When retelling a traditional tale, even when telling alone (in some cases literally, into a tape recorder) a child is engaged in a cross-generational collaborative task with past storytellers. I suggest that this reading of the Vygotskian notion of scaffolding could have implications for the status of storytelling in education, even though it operates in a metaphorical dimension.

Another finding of this chapter is that the contribution of metaphor to storytelling language has important implications for children's learning. It appears that the natural propensity towards mental imagery in their thinking is not paralleled by a facility with verbal imagery, which takes time to develop. Yet children are able to engage, both as tellers and listeners, with traditional stories which deal with sophisticated or abstract ideas embodied in narrative form. Told stories provide appropriate material for children to develop this facility.

A third point concerns the interplay between cognition and the emotions: because stories elicit an emotional response, the experience of storytelling can contribute to holistic learning. If, as Olney (1972) maintains, autobiography is the basis of all knowledge, then shaping experience into story form both communicates it to another and enables the teller to come to a fuller understanding of it. Using story to promote understanding in the way that Paley advocates (above, p. 61) can enable children to come to grips with the experiences in their lives, and come to terms with them through articulating, and thus becoming aware of, their feelings. It also makes connections with the experiences of others, developing understanding and empathy, not only with the teller of the tale, but also with the 'I' who is presented as a character in a first person narrative. This learning in the area of the emotions can contribute to the goal of an holistic education. In the area of cognitive learning, narrative is the principal tool

¹ these words form part of his introduction to the Company of Storytellers' performance of The three snake leaves, heard most recently at BAC, London, on 20th March 1999

available to children to order and organise their thoughts. Children can be capable of developing a metacognitive understanding of narrative, as Sundari demonstrated by her creation of a 'narrating stance' (see Fox, 1993, pp. 141-168). Because telling or listening to a story makes cognitive as well as emotional demands, it encourages reflection on form as well as content. This review shows that there is a lack in the literature of a theoretical framework for storytelling in education which recognises the importance of both of these aspects.

A fourth important point arising from the review of literature in this chapter is that stories play a significant role in creating, affirming or rejecting cultural identity. A need has been identified to establish common ground between different definitions of storytelling's role in cultural identity for educational purposes. Whether stories are used firstly by societies, or groups within societies, to promote cultural homogeneity and instil cultural norms, or secondly by individuals to bolster their personal culture against such pressure, or finally as channels for transmitting cultural heritage, their educational importance has been acknowledged in the texts I have reviewed. However, a clearer understanding of the role and educational function of storytelling as a tool of cultural identity is needed.

Finally, the review of literature reported in this chapter has established that there is a linguistic and conceptual relationship between poetry and storytelling. This connection was historically stronger in past oral cultures in Europe than it is today. But it is a relationship which needs to be investigated through empirical research into storytelling in schools. If, as I maintain, analogies can be drawn between oral cultures of the past and individual children's cultures in the present, then there is a case for establishing closer connections between story and poetry in the kinds of language opportunities presented to children in schools. There is also a need to find out if teachers bring a more perceptive response to children's own expressive language when they recognise the manifestations of these oral cultural links of language form.

The questions raised in this summary of key findings are developed further in the following chapters, through document analysis and empirical research.

4.0 Chapter Three: Chronology of the oral tradition

4.1 Introduction and rationale

This research into the history of the oral tradition, reaching back to the earliest recorded evidence, and ending with a description of my perspective on contemporary storytelling practice, sets the revival of the oral tradition and its development in England and Wales in the late 1990s in an historical context. My intention in the research reported in this chapter was to connect contemporary storytelling practice with what is known of the past, and to answer the research question: How did revival storytelling evolve historically in England and Wales, and what is its relationship with the European oral tradition? This introduction to the chapter describes how I went about this task.

Michael Polanyi's notion of 'personal knowledge' is important in the way I approached research into the oral tradition (1962 edition, p. 20). The subjective nature of information transmitted orally is fundamental, for spoken language is not verifiable: it exists neither in space nor in time, but in sound waves: in the mind of the speaker for a brief moment, and in the understanding and memory of the listener for only as long as that individual is able to retain it. Evidence of the history of the oral tradition is interpretive, because it has all been translated into another medium: oral speech recorded as written or printed text, in graphic or plastic art, or, more recently, captured by one of the technological products of what Walter Ong called 'secondary orality': film, video or audio recording (1982, p. 3). Because it is impossible to record directly the form of the spoken word, a great deal of what is written about the history of the oral tradition can only be conjectural, and interpretations of even recent and recorded events must be speculative, not fixed or final.

I am conscious of the inherent contradiction in choosing to write about the oral tradition, and aware that a considerable amount of the evidence used to research it in this chapter comes from written sources. However, the intermingling of the oral and literate traditions goes back a long way, as will be demonstrated, and they have fed each other. It must be recognised, finally, that the point of view taken is Eurocentric, particularly when storytelling in recent times is explored, when information about the oral tradition in Britain and Europe is already so extensive that it would be difficult to research the world picture. This is a shortcoming which must be borne in mind.

4.1.1 Structure of the chapter

The aim of the chapter is to synthesise information from a range of sources to create a chronological account of the development and decline of the oral tradition in England and Wales, without which the concept of a 'storytelling revival' is meaningless. I have drawn evidence from:

- i) Historical accounts which discuss storytelling or factors which relate to it. For example Trevor-Roper's account of the persecution of witches in the

sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe (1967).

ii) Histories of literature which include accounts of oral as well as literary texts. For example, H.M. & N.K. Chadwick (1932).

iii) Anthropological and ethnographic texts which discuss storytelling (for example, Parry, ed. (1971) and Lord (1971 edition)) or story content (for example Kramer (1981 edition)).

iv) Pictorial evidence and artefacts from certain historical periods, for example carvings and cylinder seals from Sumer held in the British Museum.

However, the interpretation of images and objects can only be speculative, given that no contemporary written commentary exists.

v) Evidence of storytelling content and practices gathered by folklorists, such as J.F. Campbell (1890), who collected stories 'in the field' from representatives of living oral traditions.

vi) Literary texts which describe what could reasonably be construed as evidence of storytelling. For example, scrolls from Ancient Egypt and playscripts from Ancient Greece.

vii) Written records of oral stories themselves, when storytelling is referred to and described within the story itself, For example the frame tales (defined below) which structure The Canterbury tales and The Arabian nights.

I have divided the discussion of this chronology of storytelling into four main sections:

i) Ancient times (the era, usually referred to as 'B.C', from earliest recorded times up to the birth of Christ).

ii) The first millennium (from 1 A.D. to 999 A.D.).

iii) The second millennium (from 1000 A.D. to the late 1980s).

iv) The present day (the storytelling revival in the 1990s in England and Wales).

I decided to use these divisions, which are generally accepted in this society, though culturally-specific, as a way of segmenting the long period of time covered. Within these four main sections, sub-headings are used to divide the chronology according to specific foci. Some of these sub-headings refer to shorter time periods within the broad headings. Others name specific cultures. Hopefully these sub-headings are self-explanatory, since they are non-specialist terms in common use as ways of sectioning and designating the past. Their function is to maintain an account of the chronology of the oral tradition as a coherent whole, while acknowledging a particular focus from time to time. It was not possible, of course, to discover and include everything known about the history of storytelling, and I am not a specialist in the field of historical analysis. There are some historical periods about which more is known than others, either because they were particularly rich in storytellers and opportunities for storytelling, or because, for various reasons, more evidence remains.

Another structuring device which shapes this chapter was a decision to follow three main lines of thought through this history of the European oral tradition. These are:

- i) The use of storytelling as an educational activity. This is a function which can be traced back as far as records exist, and which is important to my research focus into the educational value of revival storytelling in the present day. Searching for historical evidence of this purpose of storytelling in the history of the oral tradition helped me to answer the research question: what does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?
- ii) The role of women in the tradition as tellers and transmitters of stories. This occurred mainly within the sphere of informal family storytelling, which is usually referred to in storytelling circles as the fireside tradition, in which it was typically used as an informal educational or entertaining activity shared by family members. In searching for evidence of the role of women in maintaining the tradition I brought a feminist perspective to bear on the history, to counterbalance the emphasis on men's contributions which I have found to exist both in the historical literature and the storytelling revival in England and Wales. I wanted to include the role of women in answering the research question: how did revival storytelling evolve historically in England and Wales, and what is its relationship to the European oral tradition?
- iii) The use of storytelling for ritual or ceremonial purposes. This occurred both as an oracular and predictive activity or, more frequently, as a celebration and record of great deeds and magical occurrences believed to be part of the history of the storyteller's community. This function is particularly strong in many non-European cultures, for example in the Dreamtime creation stories of the Native Australian storytellers, the shamanic stories of the spirit world widely told amongst the Inuit peoples of Siberia and northern Canada, or the ceremonial performances of the great Hindu epic The mahabharata given by Pandvani singer-storytellers in the northern areas of India. However it is also a characteristic of the European tradition, where it is usually described by revival storytellers as the bardic tradition, and is contrasted with the style of the fireside tradition, described above. Investigating this use of storytelling enabled me to give as full as possible an answer to the research question: how did revival storytelling evolve historically, and what is its relationship with the European oral tradition?

The above description sets out the framework within which I structured the investigation into the history of the European oral tradition. Certain key terms have been explained above. Three more which require more explanation are listed below, before the historical account which makes up the main body of this chapter.

4.1.2 Story types

4.1.2.1 Folk tale

Folk tale is a generic term for many different kinds of narrative typical of the oral tradition. It is a short story which can be told in one session, rather than an epic which lasts an evening or more. The folk tale has an emphasis on narrative rather than emotion, and may tell a story of humans, animals or magical creatures of all kinds, but never features gods or similar celestial beings. It may be didactic or entertaining, and its purpose is to illustrate the whole range of non-religious human experience. (See Crossley-Holland, 1998, p. 4, for a more detailed definition).

4.1.2.2 Fairy tale

The fairy tale is a particular kind of folk tale; Crossley-Holland noted: 'It is incorrect to speak of 'folk and fairy tales' as two genres, for the latter is simply one species of the former' (1998, p. 4). Although a fairy tale normally includes some supernatural events or creatures, there may not be any fairies in it. In the Russian and Eastern European tradition such tales are usually called 'wonder tales', which is perhaps a clearer definition. In German these stories are called *Marchen*. The term 'fairy tale' itself was probably invented by Baronne d'Aulnoy, Charles Perrault's contemporary, in the late seventeenth century, for the title of her collection of literary fairy tales Les contes des fees (Fairy tales).

4.1.2.3 Frame tale

The frame tale is a device for including stories within other stories, connecting diverse material into a coherent whole. In The Canterbury tales, the frame tale is that of a group of pilgrims who agreed to take turns to tell stories to while away the journey, at the suggestion of the host of the Tabard inn. In this case, Chaucer used it as a way of putting together a variety of stories, from the romantic and chivalrous, like The knight's tale, to the bawdy, for example The miller's tale. The frame tale allows a variety of stories to be connected together, often with the goal of creating a whole evening's entertainment. It is also self-referential, enabling the storyteller to refer to and make explicit the storytelling process itself within the story. It is used in this way in The Arabian nights, in which the frame tale tells the story of two royal brothers, Shahriyar and Shahzaman, who became convinced of the faithless nature of their wives and had them both put to death. Shahriyar then adopted the custom of marrying a new wife each day, and having her put to death after the wedding night. Only Scheherazade, the heroine of the frame tale, was able to break this cycle, which she did by telling Shahriyar a story every night, but breaking it off at some exciting point in the morning, so that Shahriyar postponed the execution, in order to hear the end of the story. By the time the one thousand and one nights of the story's Arabic title had passed, Scheherazade had reformed him through the didactic power of her stories. This incorporation of the storyteller as a character in the story itself gives evidence of ways in which storytelling was used historically, though caution must be exercised in

interpreting this as hard evidence, for a story cannot be taken literally.

4.2 Account of chronology

4.2.1 Ancient times

Records of storytelling exist which came from the earliest civilisations in the world to invent the means with which to make long-lasting records: literacy. So, from both Ancient Sumer, from as early as the second half of the third millennium B.C., according to Kramer (1981, p. xxi), and from Ancient Egypt, from the period 2000 to 1300 B.C. (Pellowski, 1990, p. 4) there were records of great myths, as well as simpler stories of ordinary people. It is generally accepted by scholars such as Kramer that stories were being told long before they were written down (Kramer, 1981, p. xxi). It is, however, only possible to speculate about how, when and where tales were told, and for how long they existed before scribes first wrote them down.

4.2.1.1 Storytelling in Ancient Sumer: c. 3000 - 1200 B.C.

Samuel Noah Kramer is one of the foremost scholars of Sumerian culture, and it is largely because of his work in uncovering, translating and matching thousands of fragments of sun-baked clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform writing by long-dead scribes, fragments scattered around the museums of the world, that a good deal is now known about this civilisation. Sumer flourished at least four thousand years ago, but all recollection of its achievements had been lost (Sandars, 1971, p. 117) until the Victorian passion for exploration and cultural imperialism in Europe resulted in excavations uncovering treasures of both intellectual and financial wealth in sites such as Ur, Warka and Babylon all over the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, the land which is now modern Iraq. Kramer's estimate of dating for these earliest records of fables, poetry and heroic narrative tales acknowledged that it was impossible to know how long the material had been circulating in oral form before it was scribed:

In Sumer ... some of the early heroic lays were first inscribed on clay five to six hundred years following the close of the Heroic Age, and then only after they had undergone considerable transformation at the hands of priests and scribes ... the Sumerian epic texts which we have at present date ... from the first half of the second millennium B.C. (1981 edition, p. 226)

Because of the work of collection and translation undertaken by Kramer and other Sumerologists, some of the great Sumerians myths have been restored during the last forty years to the storytelling canon. Diane Wolkstein, who collaborated with Kramer on oral renderings of the material, Ben Haggarty and I are among the storytellers in the U.S.A. and England now telling these stories, which were lost for over three thousand years. However, we found no sure information about how the stories were told: whether spoken, chanted or sung, accompanied or unaccompanied, as part of religious ritual or as court entertainment. Kramer, described by his collaborator Wolkstein as

'Inanna's scribe' (1983, p. xix), eschewed discussion of orality in his work, and his focus was textual. N. K. Sandars, in the introduction to her translation of the Sumerian epic Gilgamesh, identified some characteristics of oral poetry in the epic of Gilgamesh, specifically, 'the word for word repetition of fairly long passages of narrative or conversation, and of elaborate greeting formulae' (1960, p. 48).

Artifacts of the time depicted activity which might be construed as storytelling, but such an interpretation could only be speculative. Leonard Woolley's book about his excavations and discoveries in Ur described figures on the obverse of the Royal Standard of Ur (now on display in the British Museum) as 'a player on a lyre and a woman singer (who) supplies music' (1946, p. 31). An interpretation of them as storytellers is equally plausible, but the activity depicted cannot be definitively interpreted. Anne Pellowski uncritically reported Frankfort's definition of the inlay on the bull's head lyre from Ur (now in the University Museum, Philadelphia) as illustrations for the recitation of myths or fables, but this reading was speculative (1990, p. 3). Although these questions of interpretation, separated by thousands of years from their answers, are insoluble at present, the evidence uncovered by Kramer and other Sumerologists verifies that oral stories existed in this early period.

4.2.1.2 Storytelling in Ancient Egypt: 2000 - 1300 B.C.

The first written descriptions of an activity which can be defined with reasonable certainty as storytelling came from the Westcar Papyrus and the Golenischeff Papyrus, recorded sometime between the twelfth and eighteenth dynasties of the Egyptian Pharaohs (2000 - 1300 B.C.) The first papyrus included the motif of the king, in this case Khufu, or Cheops, asking for stories: 'Know ye a man who can tell me tales of the deeds of magicians?' The stories told in turn by his three sons Khafra, Baiufra and Herutatef were then recorded. In the second papyrus the storyteller was the archetypal figure of the returned voyager, who recounted his adventures to a nobleman (Pellowski, 1990, p. 4).

4.2.1.3 Storytelling in religious texts in ancient times

References to the didactic use of storytelling appeared in both the Old testament, for example Judges 9:7, Deuteronomy 11:29, and Joshua 8:33, and in the New testament, such as the parables of Jesus retold in the four gospels. Indeed there is evidence for the telling of tales with an educational or moralistic function in religious scriptures world-wide. Sanskrit, Buddhist, Taoist and Zen teachers used and still use story as a teaching method and there are references to storytelling and to stories for telling scattered through the Tripitaka of Buddhism, which contained the Jatakas, source of many folk tales now spread around the world, and The upanishads of Hinduism.

4.2.1.4 Storytelling in Ancient Greece

Early Greek theatre included several references to storytelling. Although only the

scripts remain, and there is no evidence of how such activity might have been depicted on stage to reflect the reality of social storytelling scenes, the plays offered substantial evidence that storytelling was seen as something which was commonly provided for children by their female carers, or exchanged between friends.

Euripides wrote these words for his character Amphitryon, speaking to his daughter-in-law Megara:

Dry the living springs of tears that fill
your children's eyes. Console them with stories,
those sweet thieves of wretched make-believe.
(no date, Murray's translation, vol. 5, p. 132)

Aristophanes wrote this exchange between Anticleon and Procleon:

Anticleon: No, not that mythical stuff: something from real life - the kind of thing people usually talk about. Give it a domestic touch.
Procleon: Domestic, eh? Well, how about this? Once upon a time there was a cat and it met a mouse ...
(1964, Barrett's translation, p.82):

He also included a reference to fairy tales in the following speech for the chorus:

I'll tell a little fairy tale/ I heard when I was young
(1973, Sommerstein's translation, p. 82)

This evidence should not be taken as proof of a polarity between storytelling for instructional purposes in Hebrew and Sanskrit literature and storytelling for solace or amusement in Ancient Greece. Where one was present it is probable that the other also existed. What remains for analysis after such a long passage of time cannot be regarded as definitive, but only as a fragment of a bigger picture. Critics of storytelling as a frivolous and time-wasting activity already existed in this period. Plato had a particular aversion to what he contemptuously described in the Gorgias (c. 400 B.C.) as *mythos graos*, 'the old wives' tale' (cited by Warner, 1994, p. 14) and he complained that

... It seems that our first business is to supervise the production of stories, and choose only those we think suitable, and reject the rest ... The greater part of the stories current today we shall have to reject.
(1974 edition, book 2, p. 1331)

Eighty years or so later Aristotle also expressed concern about the potentially harmful

effect of listening to stories at an impressionable age:

The officials known as Trainers of Children ought to pay attention to deciding what kinds of stories and legends children of this age are to hear
(1951 edition, Sinclair's translation, book 7, part 1336, p. 445)

However, the historian Strabo, writing around the year 1 A.D, had a more positive view of the role of storytelling in education:

It is fondness for tales, then, that induces children to give their attention to narratives and more and more to take part in them. The reason for this is that myth is a new language to them - a language that tells them, not of things as they are, but of a different set of things. And what is new is pleasing, and so is what one did not know before, and it is just this that makes men (sic) eager to learn. But if you add to this the marvellous and portentous, you thereby increase the pleasure, and pleasure acts as a charm to incite to learning.
(1917 edition, Jones' translation, no. 49, pp. 67-9)

Alongside this evidence of storytelling as an educational or recreational activity intended for children, there is also evidence of the practice of storytelling as a performance art. There are many references to the work of professional storytellers, bards or rhapsodes, in early Greek literature. Plato, who, as indicated above, was not a great lover of the oral tradition, lampooned the pretensions of the rhapsode:

I must say, Ion, I am often envious of you rhapsodes in your profession. Your art requires of you always to go in fine array, and look as beautiful as you can, and meanwhile you must be conversation with many excellent poets.
(Hamilton & Cairns, 1973, p.216)

The odyssey itself, one of the great oral masterpieces to have survived to the present day, because it was recorded in a literary form in the seventh or sixth century B.C., contained references to bards, a self-referential touch by the storyteller-poets who recited it. Penelope said to Phemius at a feast for her numerous suitors:

Phemius, ... with your knowledge of the ballads that poets have made about the deeds of men or gods you could enchant us with many other tales
(Homer, 1991 edition, Rieu's translation, p.13)

The rhapsodes composed, remembered and retold epic poem-stories of great length. The odyssey is considered by storytellers and scholars to be the greatest extant example of their work, and it must have been regularly performed for many years, perhaps centuries, before it was written down. How did the poets who recited it succeed in maintaining the tight structure of the eleven-syllable line of the verse form; how did

they bring the episodes they wished to perform to the forefront of their minds? Research by Havelock (1963) and Parry (1971) suggested that it was the playing of the lyre which enabled this prodigious feat of memory, not through the music, but because of the rhythmic body movement engendered by playing, as the hands swept regularly across the strings, supporting the poet, who began with a familiar and formulaic opening, and then 'unrolled' the rest of the story from the memory in a rhythmic and patterned way. The poet drew on an inner rhythmic structure which is also harnessed by many present-day storytellers, which was touched on in Chapter Two, and becomes clear in Chapter Four of this thesis. Strabo's observation about the language in which storytelling was described supports these findings:

... the fact that the ancients used the verb 'sing' instead of the verb 'tell' bears witness to this very thing, namely, that poetry was the source and origin of style ... For when poetry was recited, it employed the assistance of song ... Therefore since 'tell' was first used in reference to poetic 'style' and since among the ancients the poetic style was accompanied by song, the term 'sing' was equivalent to the term 'tell'.

(1917 edition, Jones' translation, pp. 67-69)

There is also a surviving description of the bard's position among the Gauls, recorded by Diodorus of Sicily somewhat earlier than Strabo's work:

Among them are also to be found lyric poets whom they call Bards. These men sing to the accompaniment of instruments which are like lyres, and their songs may be either of praise or of obloquy.

(1939, Oldfather's translation, Vol. 5, no. 1939, pp. 177-9)

This connection between music, poetry and storytelling is one which figures frequently in the evidence found in this exploration of different eras of the oral tradition.

Having considered both educational and bardic storytelling in Ancient Greece, I also found evidence of a specific role for women storytellers in the oral tradition, in Ovid's description of storytelling from within a story. In the *Metamorphoses*, he depicted a type of storytelling which has recurred throughout history and in many different cultures. This is a real-life model characteristic of ancient rural and urban life everywhere, in that the women told stories to each other to while away large amounts of time devoted to monotonous repetitive work. Ovid wrote the following words as if spoken by one of the daughters of Minyas as they sewed, mended and span:

'While our hands are usefully engaged in the service of Pallas ... let us take turns in telling stories and each contribute something to while away the time. The rest will listen.'
Her sisters were pleased with the idea, and said that she should begin. She knew a great many stories, so she considered which of them she ought to tell.

(1955 edition, Miller's translation, p.95)

Marina Warner (1994), has researched women storytellers and women in stories, taking the oracular Sibyl of Cumae as a key figure in her study of women in the oral tradition. Her book The beast and the blonde is worth consulting to investigate this aspect further.

4.2.1.5 Storytelling in Early Europe

It is necessary at this point to comment on the lost histories of storytelling, the purely oral recollections which, without the mnemonic aid of writing, did not stay in the collective memory for more than a few generations. Written histories were typically conquerors' histories, and those who lost in successive waves of invasion tended to be pushed in both outer and inner worlds farther and farther towards the hinterland; the so-called 'Celtic fringe' of Britain being a result of the movement described. I have considered briefly, above, the role of storytelling in the civilisations of Sumer, Egypt, Greece. But what role did it play in the early 'primitive' societies of Europe? I refer to those societies which did not use writing or decipherable means of recording their customs, but which instead left enigmas like the Gundestrup Cauldron, the cave paintings of Lascaux and Altamira, the Giant's Ring of Stonehenge: patently human artifacts of developed culture, but ones which cannot be 'read' with any of the faculties presently at our disposal. Did storytelling have a place among the rituals and customs which surrounded these symbolic forms? It is impossible to know, though John Matthews' book on the shamanic mysteries of the Celts suggests that it did (1991, pp. 120-126). He draws on varied sources, including Caesar's De bello Gallico, the Irish epic The tain, and the writings of early Christian monks such as Giraldus Cambrensis, for evidence about the Celtic Bardic schools, and maintains that learning and reciting stories was both a necessary skill and a source of shamanic power. Joseph Nagy has also emphasised the close links of storytelling and magic in the pre-Christian Celtic culture of Ireland:

... the Irish poet's function as the proclaimer of truth who reveals the hidden has a definitely 'shamanic' quality to it: that is, the fili knows, 'sees', and can communicate because he is regularly transported in the other world.

(1985, p. 25)

Robert Graves, in his study The white goddess, also set out to show that:

... the language of poetic myth anciently current in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe was a magical language bound up with popular religious ceremonies in honour of the Moon goddess, or Muse, some of them dating from the Old Stone Age

(1961 edition, pp. 9-10)

However, no definitive theories can be proved on the basis of the information currently available, and as the gap widens between the present and the times when these customs were celebrated and understood, it will only become harder to interpret the evidence. What is necessary, however, is to remember that no study of the oral tradition will ever be able to classify and explain everything.

4.2.1.6 Storytelling in the Roman Empire

There is some clear evidence of the practice of the oral tradition in early Europe, which is found, as indicated above, in the annals of the Roman Empire, a culture with both powerful armies and industrious scribes. It seems reasonably certain that storytelling flourished in Rome in all the various forms outlined above: as an important aspect of child-rearing, as a palliative to monotonous work, as entertainment, as an element of religious experience or ritual. Horace provided a lively picture of a 'fireside' social storytelling scene which included an early reference to a story which is still popular:

Ah, those evenings and dinners. What heaven!

My friends and I have our meal at my own fireside ... And so the conversation begins, not about other people's town and country houses, nor the quality of Mr. Grace's dancing; We discuss things which affect us more nearly and which we ought to know about ... from time to time our neighbour Cervius comes out with a story which is old but apt. (1973 edition, Rudd's translation, book II, satire 6, lines 71-8)

One of Cervius' 'old but apt' stories was The town mouse and the country mouse.

Rhetoric, or public speaking, flourished in Rome, though whether it was more or less popular than storytelling is difficult to judge. It accrued a greater body of literature than the art of storytelling did, although treatises on the *ars rhetorica* by such notable orators as Cicero and Quintilian shed interesting insight into the cross-fertilisation of ideas between the two arts. They described the development of mnemonic techniques which were traditionally believed to have been invented by a storyteller, Simonides of Ceos, whose story is summarised below, in Chapter Four. The system, known as the art of memory, *ars memoria*, was applied by these orators to the memory work of rhetoric. The method involved committing to memory the layout of a familiar building and then 'placing' in it in specific locations symbols or images to represent the main points of the speech. Suggested images included a spear, or an anchor. Then in making the speech the rhetor simply 'walked' in his imagination through the memorised building, 'picking up' the images in turn as he came to them and so following a beaten track not only through the memory location but also through the speech. This method was adapted and developed for hundreds of years, and the use of the art of memory up to the time of the Renaissance was recorded in detail by Yates (1966).

Storytelling with the aim of educating and socialising the child also featured in

Quintillian's writings:

They should learn then to recite, in pure and unaffected diction, fables such as those of Aesop, which come immediately after the stories of their nurses, and then to achieve the same gracefulness in writing them.

(1938, Small's translation, book I, ch. 9, p. 45)

This extract contained both the notion of a developmental hierarchy of stories suitable for different ages, which is a notion strongly espoused in modern Waldorf education, and the still widely-held view of oral stories as fodder for writing tasks. Some things have not changed in two thousand years.

4.2.1.7 Some final observations about storytelling in ancient times

In some ways the history of the oral tradition is easier to trace in the Ancient World than in the centuries which followed. Culture became more fragmented, less dominated by the autocracy of Rome; national identities and idiosyncrasies were able to emerge; records are not so readily available. I am conscious that my representation of storytelling in the Ancient World has omitted a great deal, and that it remains the story of the aristocracy, rather than a true social history. What ordinary people did then with stories, however, may not have been all that different from what they do with them now. This is described in the opening of A story, a story, a present-day West African folk tale:

Stories for parents to tell to their children at bedtime; stories for teachers to tell to the children at home time; stories for children to tell their parents about school, and to tell to their teachers about home; stories for friends to tell of their own exploits, and for enemies to tell of the exploits of others; stories for gossip, for pleasure, for news and for views, for daring, sharing, leering and jeering!

4.2.2 The first millennium

A valuable secondary source for the discussion in this part of the chronology was the three volume history The growth of literature written in 1932 by H.M. & N.K. Chadwick. They apologised for their use of the term 'literature' in the title of a volume which referred to a time when most great works were composed and transmitted orally:

... purists may perhaps object to the use of this word on the grounds that etymologically it implies writing. But there is no other term available, apart from cumbersome circumlocutions ... the reader will doubtless understand what we mean, and that is enough (1932, p. 5)

I have struggled with exactly the same problem of definitions in this research, and am less optimistic than the Chadwicks about the viability of using the term 'literature' to describe works of spoken art, but I do not see a suitable alternative, given both the lack

of an equivalent term in the oral tradition for 'literature', and the fact that most of what is known about it comes, as explained above, from written or other fixed media.

4.2.2.1 Problems of method in researching storytelling in the first millennium

Rudolf Schenda has discussed the difficulties of theorising about the practices, rather than the content, of the oral tradition, and provided such a clear summary of what it is reasonable to conclude about the oral tradition in the first millennium that an extended quotation from his paper is included:

Unfortunately we have no history of narration or of narrative acts for European history in the first thousand years, although there is much evidence that gatherings of all kinds were accompanied by storytelling, which included not only factual reports but also unusual, fantastic, and comic occurrences ... The usual locus for storytelling could be transformed by the arrival of a stranger coming from afar who recounted his experiences or told tales he had heard from others ... We are dealing with a narrative milieu composed of country people, the greater number of whom were illiterate and who were at home with direct forms of communication such as speaking, gesticulating, demonstrating and imitating the model. Oral communication played a much greater role in this milieu than city dwellers can imagine today. For the sort of amusement that was distinguished culturally from the quotidian, they certainly had no salons as did the nobility or the haute bourgeoisie, though they had at their disposal large community rooms with a hearth and a source of light. The absence of news printed daily made the exchange of information especially necessary; the long winter evenings left much time to share events and experiences, partly true and partly embellished, some up-to-date and some recalled from memory. (1986, pp. 76-81 passim)

A few works originally made for telling still exist, making it possible to investigate the bardic tradition of the court and great hall, and providing some evidence of the kinds of public storytelling that were going on.

4.2.2.2 Storytelling in the Anglo-Saxon bardic tradition

In the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf (c. 700 A.D.), a storyteller was described in the following terms:

... a fellow of the king's,
whose head was a storehouse of the storied verse,
whose tongue gave gold to the language
of the treasured repertory, wrought a new lay
made in the measure. The man struck up,
found the phrase, framed rightly
the deed of Beowulf, drove the tale,
rang word-changes. (1973, Alexander's translation, p.78)

This extract suggests that alongside functioning as a memory store of tales of the past, the *scop* or *gleoman* was also expected to improvise heroic narrative poems recounting incidents which had only just taken place, for the entertainment of those who had taken part in them¹. It also indicated the skills which were valued in the storyteller of the court, such as a facility with expressive and descriptive language, acquaintance with oral material current at the time, and the ability to improvise both pleasing verse and powerful narrative.

Two other, slightly later narrative poems of the Anglo-Saxon period also professed to be the work of court minstrels, *gleomen*, of the Heroic Age. The poem *Deor* (c. 1000 A.D.) described an Old Teutonic minstrel, and the poet Widsith, writing in the first person, described himself as 'a word shaper, hoarder of tales .. (whose) songs were called in the mead hall'. This poem, *Widsith's pledge*, also written about 1000 A.D., was reproduced on the back cover of various edition of the storytellers' magazine *Facts and Fiction* between 1993 and 1995.

4.2.2.3 Storytelling in Christian chronicles of the first millennium

As well as the storytelling of ordinary folk, and the entertainment of the court, a third kind of storytelling was influential during this period. The Chadwicks described it as 'concerned with didactic and speculative work in theology, moral and natural philosophy, and antiquarian lore, which was often combined with prophecy' (1932, p. 122).

Christian chroniclers such as Aldhelm, Bishop of Sherbourne, who died in 709 A.D., and Bede (writing in 700 A.D.) showed something of the process of storytelling in their time. The Chadwicks recounted a story telling how Aldhelm used to stand on a bridge and sing to the people 'like a professional minstrel' in order to entice them to church (1932, p. 573). Bede, telling the story of Caedmon, described how:

he was well advanced in years and had never learned any songs. Hence sometimes at a feast, when for the sake of providing entertainment, it had been decided that they should all sing in turn, when he saw the harp approaching him, he would rise up in the middle of feasting, go out, and return home.

(1994 edition, p. 215)

Bede and his contemporaries in the early Christian church of Britain also made a substantial contribution to the preservation of oral material by their work as scribes and collectors. Rudolf Schenda wrote that 'countless tale types and motifs were drawn from the treasure trove of mediaeval epics and lives of the saints' (1986, p. 79).

¹ Milman Parry & Albert Lord found the same expectation in twentieth century Serbia: indeed the appendices of Lord's *Singer of Tales* (1971 edition) included an account of the exploits of Milman Parry himself, spontaneously composed at the collectors' request

4.2.2.4 Storytelling in the Celtic bardic traditions

It was not only the Christian clergy who collected and created the corpus of the oral tradition during this period of Britain's history. The older religions were still active, and bards, druids, *filidh* and *pencerddiadd* in the Celtic fringe were working with myth and poetry in a sacred way. According to the Chadwicks:

The 'Book of Leinster' contains a list of sagas which were required to be known, and it adds at the end: "He is no poet (fili) who does not synchronise and harmonise all the stories" ... it is clear from many other passages that the *filidh* were concerned with antiquarian lore, including genealogies and, probably, lists of kings.

(1932, p. 169)

John Matthews quoted from, and commented on, his own translation of Taliesin's bardic lore. This came from the fourteenth century collection The book of Taliesin, which is regarded by some as being of doubtful authenticity in the evidence it provides about the historical figure of the Celtic bard Taliesin. Matthews, however, drew on it for his study of the bards and *filidh* of the sixth century:

'Whoever shall hear my bardic books/ shall obtain sanctuary in the Otherworld'.

We note that it is those who 'hear' the lore who will prosper, not those who read it. This dates still from the time when the wisdom was spoken aloud, chanted in the halls of kings and princes, or in the bardic schools. (1991, p. 128)

Caitlin Matthews gave a clear exposition of the hierarchy of poet, storyteller, druid of those times: the *clerwr* or wandering minstrel at the bottom of the hierarchy, then the *teuluwr* or household poet, next the *pencerdd* or court poet, and finally, held in the highest esteem, the *cyfarwydd* or storyteller (1987, p. 3).

4.2.2.5 Some final observations about storytelling in the first millennium

The Chadwicks noted that 'from the seventh century onwards Irish scholars were active in constructing a history of Ireland and the Irish people from the earliest times' (1932, p. 312). They also identified similar purposes in Norse heroic poetry, for example in the work of Iceland's most famous poet, Egill, c. 901-82 A.D. (p. 349). They hypothesised about the class and financial status of the poets of the North, whom they considered 'were usually persons of independent means, or at least able to make their living in a way which did not involve the sacrifice of their independence' (p. 375).

The assumption that poetry must therefore have been a profession for men is probably incorrect, for the Chadwicks identified women poets both in the Norse tradition, including Jorunn the Poetess, and in Greece at the same period, citing Sappho (pp. 599 & 594). They also suggested, as evidence for the involvement of women in the oral

tradition, the fact that 'prophecy and witchcraft are usually associated with women from Roman times down to the end of the saga period' (p. 620).

Though the focus on this evidence of bardic storytelling may have led to an over-emphasis in this part of the chronology on courtly and arcane uses of storytelling, it seems likely that storytelling among friends and family, for entertainment and education, continued, as described previously. It is difficult not to be drawn into a one-sided view of the tradition when the records are, as expounded above, so firmly oriented towards the upper classes. This problem is perhaps even more acute in the next chronological period, when records of storytelling, song and literature of the time strongly emphasise courtesie and courtly love.

4.2.3 The second millennium

In many ways the oral tradition in England and Wales is more tenuous than its counterparts in Northern, Southern and Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe particularly, as Albert Lord has demonstrated (1971), an unbroken oral tradition has been preserved almost up to the present day. A particular complication for this study of the oral tradition in England and Wales is the comparatively early diffusion of literacy in the British Isles, making it difficult to trace the oral and literate traditions separately. As the Chadwicks wrote, with reference to the 6th and 7th centuries A.D and later:

Both in Greece and in the North the best intellects of the age were devoted to the cultivation of oral poetry and saga ... On the other hand, the best intellects of the British Isles were now diverted into a different channel, the cultivation of written (primarily ecclesiastical) literature.
(p. 370)

The consequence for this history of the oral tradition is that more and more reference had to be made to written texts, in which it was sometimes easy, sometimes hard, to discern the oral roots of a story. As the Chadwicks indicated, the evidence was frequently to be found in books commissioned or collected by the church (p. 573). Closer to the present day, however, it is also clear, for example in Spufford (1994, p. 13), that cheap and easily obtainable literature was available to people of all classes from pedlars and other itinerant traders from at least as early as 1550, and that written and spoken language were closely interconnected.

4.2.3.1 Storytelling in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries

The ecclesiastical writers of the Middle Ages produced extremely rich sources of British myth and legend. Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*, published in 1136, is an example which was closer to modern storytelling than to any present definition of history. It contained, for example, an account of Merlin's magical transportation of the stones of the Giants' Ring from their original position on Mount Killaraus in Ireland to their still-familiar site on Salisbury Plain (1966 edition, pp. 195-

198). This was evidently a book written to be read, not declaimed aloud, because Geoffrey specifically referred to readers in his dedication: 'If I had adorned my page with high-flown figures of speech, I should have bored my readers' (p. 51).

This book stimulated other similar histories, for example Giraldus Cambrensis' Itinerarium Kambriae of 1188. This was also the period of the courtly romance and the Arthurian verse romance. Between 1167 and 1184 Marie de France wrote the Lais, which were Arthurian in setting and character, for example Sir Lanval, of which a prose rendering exists in Picard (1955). During almost the same period, from 1175 until his death in 1183, Chrestien de Troyes composed a long series of Arthurian verse romances, Li contes del graal. In Germany, these were followed by Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival, written between 1200 and 1210. The next important British text of Arthurian work was Sir Gawaine and the green knight, written between 1350 and 1400 in the grammar, style and vocabulary of the West Midlands, a dialect which in the view of its translator, J.R.R. Tolkien (1975, p. 1) would have been considered 'dark' and 'hard' by the readers of the day, accustomed to the received pronunciation (or its ancestor) of Chaucer's work. It is of interest here, however, as evidence of the rich vocal range then employed in both oral and written story. Thomas Malory's Morte d'Arthur was published in 1469. Caitlin Matthews has investigated the Arthurian literature in connection with the eventual scribing of the oral Welsh cycle The mabinogion, sometime between 1100 and 1250. She found connections of source material in the various storytelling traditions of both European and Celtic countries, but noted that the troubadour tradition of France and Germany lacked the bardic and educational elements of the Celtic traditions. She wrote:

Welsh storytellers were still practising their skills when the Breton *conteurs* were influencing the course of European culture; the *Lais* of Marie de France, the *minnesinger*-cycles of Germany, the romances of Chrestien de Troyes together with the *Mabinogion* are part of the European troubadour tradition, although we must not forget that the *cyfarwydd* drew on ancient bardic skills whose function was educative not merely entertaining. (1987, p. 5)

Texts of The mabinogion, which contained, among others, four stories of Arthurian quests and romances, survived in The white book of Fydderch (c. 1300) and The red book of Hergest (c. 1400), but it is important to recognise that, like Gilgamesh and The odyssey before it, it had existed in oral form from an earlier date.

4.2.3.2 Storytelling from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century

Further important evidence of the oral tradition in Europe in the Middle Ages exists in books of the time which depicted storytelling in progress. Boccaccio's Decameron, published between 1348 and 1353, used the frame tale of stories being told by a group of aristocrats in order to while away the time while in voluntary exile from plague-stricken Florence, ostensibly overheard by the actual author. A fifteenth century

frontispiece to this work, reproduced in Warner (1994), showed the writer eavesdropping while concealed behind a wall, pen and parchment in hand to take down the stories. This was followed by Chaucer's frame tale The Canterbury tales, published by Caxton around 1487, but written in the second half of the fourteenth century, since Chaucer himself died on 25th October 1400. Here the frame tale was one of pilgrims telling each other tales to while away the time on their journey from London to Canterbury, and although the range of tales provides a useful insight into the variety of mediaeval story, which included romances of courtly love, pious legends, fairy stories, racy fabliaux, it is the evidence of a lively oral tradition which is offered by the book's frame tale which is relevant here. The genre continued to flourish into the sixteenth century with Straparola's Le piacevoli notte, published in 1550, Marguerite de Navarre's Heptameron, published by her valet de chambre in about 1559, and Basile's Lo cunto de li cunti, which was published posthumously, in an obscure Neapolitan dialect which rendered it inaccessible for some considerable further period of time outside the dialect speaking area of Naples. The best known example of frame stories, The Arabian nights, was unknown in Europe until the first decades of the eighteenth century, when it was first published in a European language in Antoine Galland's 12 volume translation into French, (1704 -1717) Les mille et une nuits: contes Arabes, traduits en Francais par M. Galland.

Alongside the development of the genre of the courtly romance the vernacular oral tradition was continuing. James Riordan identified folk tales as the repository of the 'intrinsic beauty and wealth' of the various dialects and languages of the British Isles, describing the language of folk tales as 'a genuine oral poetry of the common people, dating from a time when poet and peasant were one'. In his view, the spread of folk tales 'by word of mouth' preserved a linguistic and folk history of the rural and urban working classes of Britain which is not found in any other medium (personal communication, October 1993).

4.2.3.4 Storytelling from the seventeenth to the twentieth century

In the seventeenth and eighteenth century the oral tradition continued to be adapted into literary form, principally through the development of the literary fairy tale by Charles Perrault and his contemporaries, but also among the folk, through the distribution of chapbooks by pedlars. Margaret Spufford has shown how, from as early as 1606, the printed texts of ballads began to infiltrate folk plays, with 'stultifying results' (1981, p. 11). She quoted from David Buchan:

The end result of the spread of printed songs in a newly literate society is that people, with an awed respect for the authority of the printed word, come to believe that the printed text is *the* text; they lose their acceptance of the textual multiformity of the oral ballad story. (1981, p. 13)

Whereas this is a pessimistic picture of the effect of literacy on oracy, it should not be taken as a death knell for the many and varied folk forms which continued to thrive. From a contemporary perspective, it is interesting that England had a smaller corpus of folk tales than many other European nations, as evidenced by the words of one of the best-known collectors of the Folklore Society, Andrew Lang. In the introduction to his Blue fairy book of 1889, Lang lamented that 'the English tales are so scanty, and have been so flattened and stupefied, and crammed with gross rural jests, in the chap-books' (1975 edition, p. 357). The Victorian folklorists were more successful in discovering ballads, music, dance and folk customs than in identifying uniquely English stories, though of course these do exist (see, for example, Philip, 1992). Spufford's more recent work has again addressed the relationship of print and the oral tradition, and she set out a history of the interrelationship of the oral and written traditions, particularly in relation to chapbooks (Nov. 1991, pp. 21-2). Spufford described England before 1550 as a peasant society in which 'reading and writing were still special skills exercised by experts on behalf of the community'. Over the next two hundred years, the skills of literacy, especially reading, became 'widely used in many areas of human activity, including pleasure and self-education, by more members of the population, including some of the labouring poor'. From the 1620s onwards, when Spufford recorded a sharp expansion in the cheap print trade, she noted that 'we have to be aware of the content of printed cheap popular literature feeding into the oral tradition in bulk'. The decade of the 1620s saw the beginning of mass marketing of the different forms of chap book: the 'small godly' book, the 'small merry' book and the 'news book'. However, she observed that 'there is evidence that printed and literary work fed into oral culture' long before that date (1991, p. 22).

Perhaps the major innovation of the 18th and 19th centuries was the development and swift rise in popularity of the literary fairy tale. The folk tale was the foundation of the literary fairy tale for children, which began to flourish just as church and education began suppressing folktales in Europe, as indeed missionaries continued to do in African and Asian countries until more recently. In 1860, J.F. Campbell, while collecting folktales in Scotland, recorded from Hector Urquart, one of his contributors, how informal storytelling gatherings had been suppressed: 'The minister came to our village in 1830, and the schoolmaster soon followed, who put a stop in our village to such gathering' (1890, p. cxii).

To become considered suitable for publication many tales needed to be 'cleaned up': the language had to be refined, Christian patriarchal morals and ethics added. The availability of cheap and efficient printing processes made it possible to disseminate the material widely. As Tatar (1992) observed, children were being considered as a social group for the first time. A host of books and chapbooks appeared in the seventeenth century on table manners, correct speech, and bedroom etiquette, with the aim of 'character training' through literature, which became part of the schooling of all upper

class children. These moral standards were incorporated into the fairy tales of that time and were handed down, with the stories, to today's children.

The origin of the literary fairy tale in Europe needs to be seen against this background of a didactic or moral function, providing children with patterns and models of conduct aimed at reinforcing the status quo and bourgeois-aristocratic values at the time of feudalism's evolution into capitalism.

Perrault's collection of fairy tales Histoires ou contes du temps passe ('Stories or tales from past times') was published in 1697 with the subtitle 'Contes de ma mere l'oye' (Tales from my mother goose') and drew for its themes on oral folk material. He amalgamated folk and literary motifs, shifted the narrative focus from peasantry to aristocracy, and presented his own bourgeois perspective. In his preface he wrote of the eight stories in the collection: 'They all contain a very sensible moral which can be discerned more or less according to the degree of perception of the reader.'

His collection included such staples of modern times as Cinderella, Bluebeard, Puss in Boots, Sleeping Beauty and Red Riding Hood. He chose from thousands of available folk tales the stories which suited his didactic purpose best. These were moral tales, full of stereotyped class and gender behaviour. The change of name from folk to fairy tales was in itself significant. Fairies were viewed as supernatural, so the stories could be derived from the irrational, fantastic, and magical, and not, as folk tales often were, from real circumstances, homely wisdom and common sense. Like all collectors, he put an individual stamp on the stories, through his choice of material, the versions and settings he chose, and the language of the stories. Each time stories are translated, whether from spoken to written, or from one language to another, they are changed. Other French writers of the time were mainly ladies of the court, such as Madame de Villeneuve, Madame Le Prince de Beaumont, and Madame d'Aulnoy, who included Goldilocks in her collection, and coined the term fairy tale for the title of her collection, Les contes des fees, ou fees a la mode ('Fairy tales, or fairies in fashion', no date). These collections were intended to divert and entertain the court of Louis XIV, hence the transposition of so many of the original tales to royal and courtly settings.

In the early nineteenth century, the German brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm made folklore a serious and legitimate subject for study, and scores of imitators followed them. The first volume of their Kinder- und Hausmarchen ('Fairy tales for children and the home') was published in 1812. It contained such classic tales as Hansel and Gretel, Rapunzel, Cinderella (in a quite different version from the one published by Perrault), and Little Red-cap, a version of Perrault's 'Petit chaperon rouge' which introduced the swashbuckling woodcutter, and has become by far the more popular

variant today². The impulse to collect folklore in Germany was part of the struggle during the nineteenth century for the cultural unity of the nation. When the Brothers Grimm began collecting their folk tales, Germany was under the rule of Napoleon, and they saw their work as a contribution to the nationalist movement and then the struggle for unification, which was eventually achieved in 1871. This political context has been analysed by Zipes (1988, p. 45), who also considered the unconscious motives of the brothers in the context of their childhood and upbringing (1988, ch. 2). The Kinder- und Hausmarchen was for over a century the second most popular book in Germany, eclipsed only by The bible. The brothers rendered the stories into more literary form and language over successive editions, and censored them when they thought it necessary. They wanted the rich cultural tradition of the common people to be used and accepted by the rising middle classes, and felt that this could only be achieved through editorial censorship.

This began a period of active folklore collection in Europe, paralleling the work of excavation and appropriation by archaeologists of the same period and with similar motives. Asbjornsen and Moe were collecting stories in Norway, and their collection, published in 1841, included East of the sun, West of the moon. Their purpose, mirroring the nationalistic aspirations of the Brothers Grimm, according to John Gade was to 'help free the Norwegian language from its Danish bondage' (in Carter, 1990, p. xvi). Meanwhile the aim of their contemporary J. F. Campbell (1890) in the Scottish Highlands was to collect folk material in Scots Gaelic before that language was ousted by English.

A different ethos influenced Hans Christian Andersen's work in Denmark. His first collection, including The tinderbox and The princess and the pea, was published in 1835. He wrote more than 150 fairy stories. He was a writer from the oral tradition of the lower classes, whose father was a cobbler, and whose mother was a washerwoman, growing up in different circumstances from those of the professional, middle class Grimms and other collectors. Andersen was an inventor, rather than a collector, of fairy tales, using traditional themes but making his own stories. Some of them did find their way into the oral tradition. On one occasion the Grimms found themselves taking down a folktale that turned out to be a retelling of one of Andersen's stories.³

Angela Carter has linked the cause of Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century to a 'surge of passionate enthusiasm for native Irish poetry, music and story, leading eventually to the official adoption of Irish as the national language' (1990, p. xvi). England, however, as I indicated above, does not have a huge collection of traditional

² see Jack Zipes (1983a) The trials and tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood: versions of the tale in socio-cultural context for a detailed exploration of these and some thirty further variants of the tale

³ I am unable to supply a reference for this piece of folkloric gossip, which I heard from the storyteller Susanna Steele

tales compared with other European countries, and its strength in folklore tends to be in ballads and dance. English stories mainly fall into two categories - local legends and jokes. Nonetheless, in the Victorian era Andrew Lang, a folklorist and eminent member of the Folklore Society, was able to include English tales, such as Dick Whittington and Jack the giant-killer, in his Colour fairy book collection, which began with The blue fairy book in 1889 and continued till 1910. He produced a highly popular series which is still in print, and became the first internationally known collector to be published in English.

In the later nineteenth century in both Europe and the United States there was a flood of writers like Andersen who used fairy tale form and motifs in their original stories. These included the Americans L. Frank Baum, who wrote the Oz books, and Nathaniel Hawthorne who wrote Tanglewood tales; the Scottish writer George MacDonald, author of The princess and Curdie; and English writers including Lewis Carroll who wrote Alice in Wonderland and Alice through the looking glass, Charles Kingsley who wrote The water babies, E. Nesbit who wrote Five children and It and other books, and the Irish writer Oscar Wilde, who wrote The selfish giant.

In the twentieth century, many novelists have been influenced by fairy tales: Susan Cooper, Alan Garner, Kenneth Grahame, Ursula Le Guin, C.S. Lewis, Philip Pullman, J.R.R. Tolkien (writing for children); Chinua Achebe, A.S. Byatt, Angela Carter, Salman Rushdie (writing for adults). Collections of fairy tales have continued to be published throughout this century, and there are also many publications of single stories, often beautifully illustrated, such as Errol Le Cain's version of The sleeping beauty.

4.2.4 The role of women in the oral tradition

The collection of oral folktales for publication during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was usually made by men, though of course there were some notable exceptions, particularly Katharine Briggs and Ruth Tongue (1965 edition) in England and Hannah Aitken (1973 edition) in Scotland. Many of the male collectors chose to publish using a woman as a mouthpiece for the stories, perhaps because they felt that this would give a greater authenticity to their work. This is even true of the brothers Grimm, who, according to Warner, immortalised one of their regular informants, Dorothea Viehmann, a tailor's wife, in an engraving made in 1811 by another brother, Ludwig Emil Grimm, as 'Gammer Grethel', an idealised peasant woman (1994, pp. 189-193). One of the most famous of all literary collections of stories, The tales of the 1001 nights, is framed by the device of a woman, Scheherazade, literally telling stories to save her life. Karen E. Rowe has noted how 'Scheherazade paradigmatically reinforces our concept of female storytellers as transmitters of ancient tales, told and remolded in such a way as to meet the special needs of the listener' (1986, p. 60). For Scheherazade 'cured' Shahriyar of his mistrust of women, which had led him to marry

and behead bride after bride, before they could be unfaithful to him, just as women tellers have traditionally used stories to pass on lessons, advice and information to new generations of listeners. Marina Warner has listed a whole host of Mother Goose's fictional relatives: Mother Bunch, Old Dame Trot, Dame Fidget, Dame Wiggins of Lee, and linked them to similar figures with higher status, such as the mythical Sibyl of Cumae and the biblical St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin Mary (1994, chs. 4 & 5).

From the sixteenth century onwards, according to Warner, French peasant women would congregate in long winter evenings around the hearth for mending, spinning and tale-telling, in gatherings called *veillées*. She also described the upper class equivalent, the *ruelles* of Madame d'Aulnoy and her contemporaries in the French aristocracy in the late seventeenth century (1994, p. 168). In Germany similar gatherings called *Spinnstubenabende* were held, and also banned, when perceived as too subversive by the ruling classes, according to Rainer Wehse (1986, p. 247). The Dogon women of Sudan, as recently as the 1960s, had a similar custom, in which they whispered stories known as *parole cachee* (concealed speech) while spinning cotton (Rowe, 1986, p. 72). These stories contained secret knowledge about, for example, sex, and so were passed on discreetly. Not all persecuted storytellers have been women, but historically, hostility to storytelling gatherings has tended to be directed at them, with the aim of cheapening the value of the oral tradition because of its close links with women. Angela Carter summed this up most succinctly when she explored the connotations of the phrase 'old wives' tales', and described it as 'a derisive label that allots the art of storytelling to women at the exact same time as it takes all value from it' (1990, p. xi).

The European witch-craze of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a far greater threat to the oral tradition and its exponents, especially women storytellers, than the growth of popular literacy described above. Hugh Trevor-Roper's analysis of the phenomenon identified religious colonialism as the real source of the persecution of 'witches':

The witch-craze was created out of a social situation. In its expansive period, in the thirteenth century, the 'feudal' society of Christian Europe came into conflict with social groups which it could not assimilate, and whose defence of their own identity was seen, at first, as heresy. (1967, p. 112)

The source of greatest difficulty for the persecuted, who were poor, ordinary, often old, frequently female, was the witch burner's encyclopaedia, The malleus maleficarum, published in 1486. Shahrugh Husain, in her introduction to The Virago book of witches, noted many attacks during this time on both the old religion and the traditional lore of women (1993, pp.xii-xxi). In doing so she gave an insight into the depictions of witches which began to feature in many European folk and fairy tales around this time. She also indicated the typical pursuits of a victim, when she wrote:

'A number of women spinners, midwives and herbalists were also convicted of witchcraft' (p. xvii). All these activities had been associated in earlier times with storytelling, as outlined above. This made storytelling, by association, into a perilous activity, and as a consequence a great deal of the womanly storytelling style and lore which had developed over time was suppressed.

Although the spinning and nursing, and the storytelling, were able to flourish once more in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the disruption caused by the witch-craze meant that oral material, and also, perhaps more crucially, understanding of the meaning, imagery and symbolic content of some tales was irretrievably lost. Certainly the archetype of the old wise woman acquired connotations which have been hard to lose, as Warner described (1994, Part 1, *passim*). She discussed the connotations of the figure of 'Mother Goose' in her Katherine Briggs Memorial Lecture to the Folklore Society in October 1989, noting that 'a certain symmetry is implied between the low humour of the animal, the lowness of the genre, and the lowness of the presumed audience' (1990, p. 4).

Adam Fox's work explored a clear sexual division of oral storytelling which obtained at the end of the eighteenth century, 'when the six year old Samuel Bamford found in a Manchester workhouse that 'the old women would tell me stories of ghosts and hobgoblins; the old men narrated shipwrecks and battles' (1993, p. 27). Fox also quoted from Daniel Defoe on women's typical lore: 'We have abundance of merry Tales scatter'd abroad in the Oral Tradition of antient times, and among those antient things called Old Women, concerning Wizards' (p. 27).

On balance the European oral tradition does seem to have been maintained more by women than by men, particularly since the invention of the printing press. So how has it come about that the oral tradition, which is so closely linked with women and their words, merits such low status in comparison with the literary collection and rendition into the printed word of virtually the same material? There is an obvious, though lengthy, answer to this question, which is linked to the issue of women's oppression in the broadest terms. But there is a more specific answer too, which relates to the comparative status of men's and women's stories in the oral tradition, and the perceptions which the two sexes have of their own and each other's storytelling, both historically and in the storytelling revival.

4.2.5 Personal account of storytelling in England and Wales at the present day

The storytelling revival dates from the early 1980s. As such it is barely eighteen years old, and has only become comparatively widely known in the last seven to ten years. The storytelling tradition in Britain had mainly died out by the beginning of this century. Here I complete this chronology of the oral tradition by presenting a

contemporary picture of revival storytelling in England and Wales. This discussion, however, is based on personal experience of and direct involvement in the phenomenon under scrutiny, rather than on scholarship. One study of the 'new' storytelling exists (Heywood, 1998), but for the purposes of this research I have chosen to write in a personal voice and to offer a subjective account of the storytelling revival, in order to acknowledge my role in it as a participant storyteller and a founder member of the Society for Storytelling, established in 1993. This section further elaborates points made in the introduction to this thesis (see pp. 15-17).

The world of education and schooling is one source of the reemergence of storytelling. Traditional stories from many lands became familiar to English children during the 1980s and 1990s as teachers in inner-city schools used them as tools for understanding and learning about other cultures, in order to recognise and value all the cultures of children in school in a multi-cultural society. The popular *Anansi* stories of West Africa and the Caribbean are examples of multi-cultural stories which are commonly used in schools for these reasons by both teachers and storytellers, in my experience as a teacher-storyteller. An emphasis on oral work was also encouraged by central government, first by the National Oracy Project (1987), and second through the inclusion of Speaking and Listening as key areas of the English National Curriculum (1989), requiring teachers to make provision for oral work and its assessment. Many storytellers now working in the revival began by using storytelling in their teaching and then went on to develop their storytelling skills either still within the educational context (for example, Susanna Steele) or else as freelancers (for example, Amoafi Kwapong). A second significant element in the public storytelling revival has been community theatre, with its development of new and experimental forms. Some of the best known and most respected members of the storytelling revival (for example, Ben Haggarty or Vayu Naidu) have backgrounds in community theatre of some kind. A third source of influence on storytelling has been the folk music revival. The *ceilidh*, in which songs, stories and jokes are shared, strongly influenced the folk clubs of the 1970s, and has also proved to be a model for many of the storytelling clubs which began to spring up during the 1990s. Some storytellers (for example, Richard Walker) moved from folk music into storytelling, while others, such as Rob Parkinson, combined the skills of spoken and sung word in their performance style. This folk music model has produced a distinctive style of storytelling, and so have the other main starting points for revival storytellers. These different styles have connections with the main historical strands which were identified at the beginning of this chapter, as I now explain.

'Fireside storytelling' is typically practised by storytellers from the folk music world, using a conversational, interactive style of telling. Their repertoires are mostly drawn from folk tales, tall tales, jokes, and local and urban legends. This kind of storytelling is only a few steps away from the conversational storytelling which figures in everyone's language repertoire. Historically, fireside tellers are most closely related to

travelling artisans and wandering pedlars.

Storytellers with a background in theatre have a more elevated and formal performance style, and a more demanding repertoire of myths, legends and wonder tales, which are longer and more complex material than the typical repertoire of the fireside traditional tellers. Their antecedents are the court storytellers and historians, and perhaps also the bards, Irish *filidh* and other figures whose links with religion and ritual contribute to a typically heightened and formal language and delivery.

Thirdly there is storytelling as an educational medium, with a didactic or moral role in communicating admonitions and warnings, or cultural and historical knowledge. This style of storytelling draws from fables and folk tales, moral anecdotes and teaching stories, and also from myths and legends which carry the spoken history of a people from one generation to the next. The stories frequently carry messages or morals, and often include a participatory element to ensure that the listener is drawn in and engaged.

Although this survey of the chronology of the oral tradition has been brief, it has identified sufficient evidence of the three main aspects of storytelling, both historically and in the present day, to justify use of the categories for revival storytellers which I proposed at the beginning of the chapter : bardic, fireside and educational storytelling. These categories are familiar within the storytelling revival itself, which means that a measure of informal consensus exists already about their value and meanings. They make possible the use of a common language and shared understandings about the way storytelling is developing in the revival, and identification with historical links. This is of particular value to a movement which is not clear about its origins.

Historical continuity is of importance at a time when many revival storytellers are searching for authentic roots. At a conference in May 1995, Ben Haggarty, who is probably the best-known and most influential of the revival storytellers, gave a paper entitled Serving the story well which sparked a lively controversy. He reminded the many storytellers present of the fact that, in the words of the French storyteller Muriel Bloch, they were all 'orphans to tradition', working in an artificial way to recreate a repertoire of tales which would have been effortlessly acquired from parents, grandparents and the community in an earlier, oral society. According to another European storyteller, Abbi Patrix, the 'revival storyteller is about twenty five years behind a storyteller born into a tradition' in terms of repertoire and understanding. Ben Haggarty differentiated between the fireside tradition of stories shared between family and friends, and the professional or bardic tradition to which most revival storytellers aspired, saying that once a teller became professional then the 'rules of the game' were changed, but that all too often contemporary tellers had only fireside skills to bring to the professional setting. He reminded listeners that neither contemporary audiences nor revival storytellers had the expertise born of familiarity with tradition to enable them to

evaluate storytelling with 'true judgment'. He called for informed critical debate and probing thought to ensure that a knowledgeable audience develops, and that storytelling is not brought into disrepute by practitioners who do not have the skills to do justice to the material they present. The debate sparked by this influential paper is continuing, which makes the timing of this research as a whole particularly apposite.

There is one more aspect of the storytelling revival which must be discussed in this section of the chapter; all the more, perhaps, because it has not been so widely identified and argued over as the debate between the different traditions which has just been outlined. This is the relationship of men's and women's storytelling, which has implications for the different aspects of the present storytelling movement, and which can be connected to the historical differences which fuelled the fireside/performance debate, in order to illuminate it. It is an area which has received scant attention as yet in the storytelling revival movement, though the work of women solo and group performers, and the writings of Angela Carter (especially the two collections of traditional tales which she edited for Virago in 1990 and 1992), are beginning to change this. It is, however, one of the areas in which contemporary research in folklore can further understanding, even though revival storytelling is not really considered to be a branch of folklore by purists. This means that comparatively little folklore research focuses on contemporary storytelling, in contrast with other forms of folklore, such as music or crafts, except in the area of feminist folklore, where studies comparing women's and men's storytelling provided some of the information explored in Chapter One (p. 44).

As the opportunities for storytelling grow, so does the number of professional and semi-professional storytellers. And an increasing proportion of this number are women. These women's voices come through strongly in this chronology of storytelling, and the relationship of men's and women's storytelling is a continued focus in the next chapter, which reports on information gathered from revival storytellers themselves about the practice of their craft.

4.3 Summary of findings: three key issues in storytelling

This chapter set out to answer the research question 'How did revival storytelling evolve historically in England and Wales, and what is its relationship with the European oral tradition?' It drew together evidence from a wide range of sources to create a chronology for the oral tradition in England and Wales. It included a brief description of the present storytelling revival, based in the main on my own first-hand experience of it as a practising professional storyteller, a member since its foundation of the Society for Storytelling, and a colleague and friend of most of the professional storytellers mentioned by name in the text.

Three aspects provided structuring devices for the chronology. First, storytelling was

viewed as an educational activity, and traced from the earliest available records to the contemporary revival. This issue is developed in more detail in the two following chapters, which report on empirical studies of storytelling in education.

The second aspect addressed the role of women in the oral tradition, both as storytellers and, to a lesser extent, as characters in traditional tales. This has been discussed at length, because it is an aspect frequently ignored by contemporary storytellers. I have therefore set out to redress a balance by considering it in more detail. Further information on the status of women as storytellers in the contemporary revival will become available from the responses of women storytellers to the questionnaire survey reported in the next chapter, although it is an aspect which needs further research.

The third aspect was the function of storytelling in ritual or ceremony. This is also known in England and Wales as bardic storytelling, and it is the antecedent of performance storytelling in the revival. This storytelling style was contrasted with the fireside tradition, and the development of these two aspects of storytelling practice was traced through the chronology.

The next chapter continues the focus on the contemporary storytelling revival established in the last section of this chapter, and addresses the research question: How do revival storytellers select, prepare and present the stories they choose to tell, in formal and informal educational contexts?

5.0 Chapter Four: Questionnaire survey

5.1 Survey aims and rationale

The aim of this chapter is to answer the question: how do revival storytellers select, prepare and present the stories they choose to tell in formal and informal educational contexts? It examines ways in which storytellers are constructing and reconstructing a modern oral culture. It draws on evidence from data which is potentially of value to those interested in revival storytelling, providing a recorded pool of knowledge about contemporary practice which has not been previously available. It develops ideas introduced through the literature reviews, especially about ways in which storytellers and children use traditional oral skills, and about values and attitudes which are promoted by an understanding of the oral tradition. In this way it contributes to the development of a praxis of storytelling. Furthermore, the data could be used by educationalists to inform themselves about the views of storytellers on children's ways of working with stories, and decide whether or not storytelling techniques and artistry would be useful in their personal repertoires of classroom skills. The chapter, therefore, also begins to answer, from the point of view of professional storytellers, the question: What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?

After registering my research proposal in January 1994, I began reading widely on the history and applications of storytelling for my literature review. In May 1994 I planned to gather data from primary sources about the contemporary picture of revival storytelling in England and Wales. I believed that this would assist me to develop an understanding of the way that storytellers in the revival perceive and practise their craft, and consider it alongside the findings from the literature review. I wanted to build a picture of ways in which storytelling is being used in the present revival, with a particular focus on the use of traditional tales, in accordance with my research interest and the focus of the literature review. I also aimed to pursue my central interest in the educational potential of storytelling. I anticipated that the findings would be of interest to both teachers and storytellers.

I decided to design a small scale questionnaire survey and to distribute it to a group of fifty storytellers as a kind of 'formalised interview' (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993, p. 110) My intention was to use the information gathered in response to this questionnaire as the basis for more in-depth interviews later, to gain access to the respondents' 'perceptions, including crucially the thoughts, attitudes and opinions that lie behind their behaviour' (ibid, p. 101), after the survey had enabled me to identify which themes I needed to investigate further. Following the recommendations of Cohen and Manion (1987, p. 110), I designed a questionnaire, and sent out fifty copies by post at the beginning of June 1994, with a request that they be returned during August. The closing date was extended once, to the end of August, after which time no further returns were solicited or received. I opted for a relatively small sample, because

I wanted to focus on a group of storytellers whose responses would be of interest to those concerned with the storytelling revival. The data returned from the questionnaire survey group was so detailed and informative that I decided not to proceed to step two but to concentrate on analysis of this data. This chapter reports upon the design, content, preparation and distribution of the questionnaire, and on the related interviews which took place in August 1994, and on analysis of the data and findings.

5.2 Methodological issues concerning the use of questionnaires

In deciding to use a questionnaire survey, and particularly when I revised my original plans for the empirical research and decided to concentrate on analysing the questionnaire responses without collecting further data, I was aware that there are methodological concerns around the use of the questionnaire survey as a research tool. In this section my aim is to consider critically the advantages and disadvantages of this strategy, and its value as a research method.

5.2.1 Definition of a questionnaire survey

K. M. Evans (1978 edition, p. 43) defined a questionnaire as 'a series of questions dealing with some psychological, social, educational, etc., topic or topics, sent or given to a group of individuals, with the object of obtaining data with regard to some problem'. This description, taken from the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, offers the working definition used in this thesis of this research tool, considered by Cohen and Manion (1989 edition, p. 97) to be 'the most commonly used descriptive method in educational research'. However, many writers (de Vaus, 1986, Hakim, 1987, Robson, 1993) discuss the errors that can result from simplistic use of this apparently straight-forward research method. Colin Robson, in a text which introduces the field to the beginning researcher, set out some guidelines for selecting a questionnaire survey as the most appropriate strategy for a piece of empirical research:

If you are focusing on a topic where people are likely to be able and willing to respond accurately to your questions; if you can obtain a sample representative of the population in which you are interested; and if your main concern is to describe the situation in the population relating to your topic - then a survey is indicated. (Robson, 1993, p. 168)

The same text also discussed the possibilities of moving beyond the descriptive in terms of the information gathered by a survey into the interpretive mode, to 'provide explanations of what is described'. Although Robson considered this path to be neither 'easy nor straightforward' (1993, p. 127) I decided that my experience as a practitioner-researcher would enable me to gather meaningful data from revival storytellers, because of our shared understanding of the key issues. I concluded that I should investigate the possibility of using a questionnaire survey as a research instrument to collect information from storytellers about their practice and philosophy.

5.2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the postal questionnaire

In deciding to use a postal questionnaire I was particularly aware of the difficulties this presents regarding the possibility of returning to respondents to discover additional information. I therefore gave a lot of thought to developing clearly-expressed and focused questions, which would elicit the information which I wanted to gather. As de Vaus commented: 'The way data are to be analysed affects what information is needed: it is pointless collecting information which cannot be analysed' (1986, p. 71-2).

A. N. Oppenheim (1992 edition, p. 102) compared postal questionnaires and standardized interviews, and listed several disadvantages of the former, noting particularly their unsuitability for many types of respondent, especially those with poor literacy skills; their generally low return rate; and the researcher's inability to clarify or probe to elicit further information, or to control such factors as the order in which questions are tackled. Because my proposed sample population were revival storytellers who were known to me, I knew that there would be no literacy difficulties, and I felt that misreadings of questions would be minimised because the respondents and I shared common background and experience. I also anticipated that the response rate would be good because of my personal connections with the proposed respondents.

Robson (1993, pp. 236-7) discussed further disadvantages of the postal questionnaire in comparison with structured interviews, noting that certain factors cannot be weighed up when the researcher is not present. For example, the respondent's attitude to answering the questions, such as whether responses are thoughtful or impromptu, cannot be ascertained. However, the possibility of contacting a large number of storytellers which was afforded by the use of the postal questionnaire was the deciding factor in my choice of research instrument.

5.2.3 Planning and designing a questionnaire survey

Oppenheim (1992 edition, pp. 7-8) set out a cycle of stages which characterise drawing up the design of a research instrument such as a survey, noting that this 'takes place at the very beginning of the research process, though the plan may have to be changed later'. Cohen and Manion (1989 edition, p. 99) recorded 'three prerequisites to the design of any survey': the need to specify the exact purpose of the enquiry; the population on which it is to focus; and the resources that are available. In this research, the purpose of the enquiry was to answer the third research question: how do revival storytellers select, prepare and present the stories they choose to tell, in formal and informal educational contexts? The population was the group of professional revival storytellers working in England and Wales. Section 5.3 of this chapter describes how the sample from the target population was selected.

The need for a balance between inspiration and rigour which good research requires was emphasised in Hakim's suggestion that 'imagination can range more freely, and

creativity is most fruitful, when the most essential aspects of research design have been tackled and got under control' (1987, p. 13). This convinced me that the questions needed to be carefully organised and sequenced. Cohen and Manion equated the properties of a questionnaire with those of a law: 'It (should be) clear, unambiguous and uniformly workable' (1989 edition, p. 106). I made the achievement of these qualities my aim for the questionnaire design.

According to Oppenheim (1992, p. 144), validity and reliability are required of a survey for its data to be meaningful. These concepts are derived from measurement theory and psychometrics. There are two aspects of validity to which a researcher must attend. A survey must have internal validity, which depends on clarity and proficiency in designing the survey, for incomprehensible or ambiguous questions will not obtain valid information. External validity depends on the accuracy of the sampling procedure in order to allow the results of the survey to be generalised. The sampling procedure used in this research is discussed below. Reliability refers to the consistency with which the survey as an instrument measures; in other words, whether it is efficient and replicable. Asking the same set of questions of each respondent should ensure reliability. In this survey, a few respondents completed the questionnaire in interview mode. However, they all answered the same questions in the same order, although in the interviews other information was included informally.

An important factor in ensuring that a questionnaire is appropriate to the intended task is the use of a pilot study to detect weaknesses by testing procedures, instructions, wording of questions, and arrangements for recording answers. Furthermore, as Evans observed, 'the pilot experiment will ... give some indication of the result to be expected from the main investigation' (1984, p. 39). In my research, as reported above, there was no pilot study. I had originally understood the questionnaire survey as preliminary or background research that would establish the focus for in-depth interviews, but in the event this was not to be. The responses to the questionnaire furnished so much data of relevance to the research question that I decided to concentrate analysis on these responses alone, and not proceed with interviews. There was therefore no opportunity to refine the questionnaire.

Consequently, I referred to a check list of fourteen points developed by de Vaus (1986, pp. 71-74) to refine and improve my first attempts at wording questions, and asked June Peters, a teacher-storyteller, to scrutinise them so that I could eliminate, as far as possible, any ambiguity in the wording. Although I believed the questions to be unambiguous, they were not, even in final form. For example, the first question, 'How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?' was double-barrelled (see de Vaus, 1986, p. 72), although it was not perceived as confusing by respondents. Some respondents criticised the wording in questions F and H. They found the term 'oral methods' in question F unclear, even though this was clarified by examples

included in brackets, and criticised the lack of a definition for 'children's work with stories' in question H¹.

Much of the literature about questionnaire design focuses on the framing of structures for responses and the relative merits of specific, general, open and closed questions (see, for instance, Robson, 1993, pp. 247-250, or de Vaus, 1986, pp. 71-4). Some authors (for instance, Oppenheim, 1992, p. 109) argue that an important aspect of the design of a questionnaire is the need for a balance of question types, which is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

5.2.4 Framing questions

Oppenheim (1992 edition, pp. 112-117) made a detailed study of question types, on which this discussion draws. He advised the use of closed questions and response formats for replies in order to acquire information in a form which expedites the categorisation and analysis of data. However, I decided upon an open format for the questions, in order to permit respondents to respond fully and at length. This decision was made because I knew from personal experience that most storytellers would prefer to discuss their views freely in an open format rather than be restricted by forced choice response formats such as Likert scales, checklists or ranking formats (de Vaus, 1986, pp. 75-6). In fact, even the open questions which I eventually used were seen as too restrictive by some respondents².

In terms of types of questions, the literature commonly distinguishes between questions concerned to ascertain facts (what people know), behaviour (what they do), and beliefs or attitudes (what they feel) (see Robson, 1993, p. 228). The questionnaire survey in this research was designed to elicit information from storytellers in all three areas, in order to build up a detailed picture of something which had not previously been available in the public domain, namely the practice and philosophy of storytellers in the revival in England and Wales.

5.2.5 Sampling

Robson (1993, pp. 135-144), who has made a thorough study of different systems of sampling, grouped sampling techniques into two broad categories: probability and non-probability samples. 'Probability' refers to the likelihood that the selection of the respondents will be known. In random sampling every *n*th person in a list of the population is chosen. This gives each person an equal chance of being included in the sample. Other techniques for obtaining a probability sample include systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling and multi-stage sampling. The second category is non-probability sampling, in which it is not possible to make

¹ the questionnaire is reproduced in full, below, p. 122, and its design is discussed in section 5.4.

² see below, p. 128, the responses of Pomme Clayton and Grace Hallworth to receiving the questionnaire.

statistical inferences about the whole population from the sample, because the probability of selection of the sample members is not known. Techniques for this type of procedure include: quota sampling, dimensional sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and purposive sampling, the technique chosen for this research.

The reasons for the choice of the sampling procedure for this survey are discussed in more detail in section 5.3 below. A purposive sampling method was chosen because I knew that the responses of certain members of the target population would be of particular interest to other members in the storytelling revival, because they were well-known and influential.

5.2.6 Administration of the distribution and return of a questionnaire

Various researchers have considered aspects of design and layout which are important in securing high levels of response to postal questionnaires (see, for instance, Cohen and Manion, 1989 edition, pp. 111-116, or Oppenheim, 1992 edition, pp. 102-107). On reflection, it is my view that the two principal factors in securing a high response rate (38 returns out of 50) were the commitment of the respondents to the aim of increasing knowledge about the storytelling revival; and their personal contact with me established through storytelling, which gave them confidence that I would report fairly and accurately.

5.2.7 Interpretation of data

Cohen and Manion considered the primary task of data reduction to be coding (1989 edition, p. 117), which Evans noted is 'the hardest section (of the research) ... to write' (1978, p. 61). Robson's book on research methods includes a section on interpreting data derived from open questions (1993, p. 253). He noted that, in the interpretive paradigm, 'theories and concepts tend to arise from the enquiry'. He called this type of research 'hypothesis generating' (as against 'hypothesis testing')' (1993, p. 19). Robson's views on interpreting data, together with the work of Altrichter, Posch and Somekh (1993, especially pp. 121-125), supported the approach I adopted to select and analyse the data which I had collected. The method of analysis used in this research is described below, in section 5.6.

5.2.8 The use of a questionnaire survey in this research

Transparency was one of the key factors in my decision to use a questionnaire survey as the main data gathering instrument in the empirical research. Hakim has connected transparency and accountability, noting that the 'methods and procedures used can be made visible and accessible to other parties ... so that the implementation (and) research design can be assessed'. She compared sample surveys with other research methods, such as depth interviews or case study databases, in which the methods 'remain hidden' (1987, p. 48). One of the most significant aspects of the empirical part of my research is the detailed evidence about the practice of significant individuals in the

storytelling revival contained in the responses, reproduced in appendices 2 and 3.

Having outlined and critiqued some of the methodological issues behind the use of the questionnaire survey in this empirical research, this section concludes with the content, though not the layout, of the questionnaire which was sent to fifty storytellers in August 1994. This is followed by a detailed description of the design and implementation of the questionnaire survey and an analysis of the data collected from it.

5.2.9 Content of the questionnaire

- A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?
- B) What influences your choice of material?
- C) How do you make a story your own?
- D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?
- E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources?
If so, please describe the different ways you work.
- F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?
- G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?
- H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?
- I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own?
(e.g. through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)
- J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

5.3 Selection of target population

I selected fifty storytellers to receive the questionnaire with the following aims:

- i) To contact a representative sample of the professional storytellers working in England and Wales
- ii) To question the best-known figures in the storytelling revival, who are considered by other storytellers to be leaders in the field
- iii) To ensure that a number of teacher-storytellers were included, because of the research focus on storytelling in education.

Identifying the total number of storytellers in the country was problematic, as there is no professional association akin to the actors' union Equity that keeps a record. The Society for storytelling, founded in 1993, is open to all interested in the area of storytelling, whether as performers, arts administrators, professionals in other fields who are interested in storytelling, or simply listeners and enthusiasts. The membership list of the Society does not, therefore, give an indication of the number of storytellers. The Society does publish a Directory of storytellers, although this is not an exhaustive listing, since storytellers must pay to be included and some opt not to do so. It does, however, provide statistics which were used in another academic study of the

storytelling revival by Heywood (1998, p. 37). In 1995, this Directory listed 135 professional storytellers. Taking this source of statistics as a bench mark, the survey set out to collect data from just over one third of the professional storytellers in England and Wales.

Having decided on the sample size, the choice of individuals to be included was necessary. Most storytellers would agree that the revival of professional storytelling in this country was initiated by two groups: Common lore, founded in 1981, and the West London Storytelling Unit or WLSU (also founded in 1981), which developed in 1985 into the influential Company of storytellers (COST).

From these groups the following selection was made:

Helen East, Kevin Graal, Rick Wilson (founder members of Common lore)
Jan Blake, Amoafi Kwamong (two later members of the same collective)
Pomme Clayton, Ben Haggarty, Hugh Lupton (founders of COST)
Daisy Keable, Godfrey Duncan (co-founders, with Ben Haggarty, of the WLSU)

Two pioneer figures of library storytelling in the 1930s and 1950s were included, because of their known influence on later members of the revival. Grace Hallworth continues to practise as a storyteller. However, Eileen Colwell, now in her 80s, only rarely tells stories in public, though when interviewed in August 1994 she had just been awarded the Eleanor Farjeon medal for services to children's literature:

Eileen Colwell
Grace Hallworth

The following long established storytellers were selected:

Roberto Lagnado (Inner London Education Authority's storyteller during the 1980s)
Mary Medlicott and Karen Tovell (leaders of a series of storytelling workshops which were an influential training ground for storytellers during 1988-1991)
Duncan Williamson and Linda Williamson (the Scottish Traveller storyteller and his then wife, a scholar of folklore)
Betty and Harold Rosen (founders of the London Narrative Group, and key figures of the group I have called teacher-storytellers, because of their joint and individual publications on the subject)

Other long-established storytellers in the world of education included were:

Tony Aylwin, formerly of the University of Greenwich
Susanna Steele, at the same institution
James Riordan at the University of Surrey
Vayu Naidu, then reading for her PhD in storytelling at the University of Leeds

Ginny Lapage, reading for her PhD in storytelling at the University of Reading. These storytellers, all of whom were personally known to me, made up half the sample.

A further twenty six more recently-established professional storytellers were then selected, including members of The mouth collective of storytellers from the South West, and teacher-storytellers whose background was working in classrooms rather than in universities. These storytellers were also personally known to me. In this way fifty storytellers were selected who met the criteria to receive the questionnaire. A full list of respondents, together with brief biographical notes on each storyteller, can be found in the appendix.

This method of selecting respondents is known in the research literature as 'purposive sampling' (Cohen and Manion, 1987, p. 100). In other words, the group of participants was not randomly selected, but chosen according to preselected criteria. Because of personal involvement with the revival storytelling movement, I was able to select respondents whose work I knew, who appeared generally well known and well-respected, and were working professionally as storytellers. Many of them were friends, or people with whom I had professional links. This personal contact was one of the factors that secured a high response rate. It meant that people were more motivated to answer the questionnaires, and that I was able to make effective follow-up calls to non-responders in a friendly and reasonably successful way.

It does, however, raise the issue of bias in the selection of the sample. I consulted the literature on research methodology about bias, especially Cohen and Manion (1987, p. 302). I considered this point carefully and decided, that as the aim was to collect responses from people considered to be influential in the world of storytelling, it was important to select them as described above. The fact that most of them were personally known to me was of secondary importance. It is, however, possible that the responses received were influenced by the fact that respondents knew me. I believe that the principal effect of this was to encourage a full and detailed response, but there is now no way for me to validate this opinion, and it is a factor which must be borne in mind when considering the data.

The gender distribution of respondents was divided equally between the sexes. It was important to me that women's views were fully and equally represented in the survey, as it appears to me that they have been under represented both historically and in the present revival. Ideally I would also have liked a representative racial mix in the sample. However, because I limited the survey to people who are well or reasonably well known as professional storytellers (and also perhaps because of my focus on people known personally to me), the racial mix of the survey was not as balanced as I would have liked, though it reflected the racial balance of the storytellers listed in the

Directory of storytellers.

The original intention was to limit the survey geographically to England and Wales. The reason for this was that storytelling is more contained within the revival movement in England and Wales than in Scotland or Ireland, where an unbroken oral tradition is more vigorous. The intention was to ensure that the data would reflect more accurately the approaches typical of the revival than if the survey had included people still partly or fully involved with the oral tradition in its older form. After deliberation, I decided that the criterion of choosing significant individuals in the storytelling revival was more important than the limits I had placed on geography. This was the reason for the inclusion of the Scottish storytellers Duncan and Linda Williamson (though in the event they did not respond to the questionnaire).

5.4 Design of questionnaire

The instrument for data collection in this part of the research was the questionnaire. In five cases the respondents requested interviews, so the questionnaire was implemented in this form to the individuals concerned. In essence, these five respondents completed the questionnaire orally. The questionnaire consisted of ten questions, together with an explanatory covering letter, and was mailed to fifty storytellers by first class post on 1st June 1994. The questionnaire was reproduced above (p. 122).

The questions were constructed in two clusters in order to obtain information on two separate but related areas: the first six questions clustered around the respondent's own storytelling craft, the following four questions inquired into the respondent's experience of storytelling with children of primary school age and their responses to the stories. The final question in this cluster asked for the respondent's views on whether or not professional storytellers could learn anything from the ways in which children work with stories. The questions were phrased in order to be as simple, unambiguous and straightforward as possible, and were expected to elicit brief and straightforward answers. A supplementary question at the end of the questionnaire asked whether each respondent would be prepared to be interviewed on the content of the returned questionnaire. As noted, previously, I expected that the questionnaires would furnish simple data, following which I would then select individuals for more in depth research through interviews.

5.4.1 Design of first section of questionnaire

The first section of the questionnaire, as stated above, inquired into aspects of the storyteller's own practice. The aim was to find out what similarities or differences existed between their working methods, as there is no formal training or apprenticeship, except where individuals have set up something for themselves, to induct them into their craft. Individuals develop their own strategies without formal or informal support. Since no agreed model of training or practice exists, these questions

were structured by first reflecting on my own practice as a storyteller and identifying the steps I took in preparing a story for telling and adding it to my repertoire. This was a useful exercise for me, as it made me more conscious of my own strategies and approach, and gave me something to compare with the data in the returned questionnaires.

The first question inquired into the storyteller's repertoire, asking how and where stories are found. The question was intended to start the respondents reflecting on their practice by beginning with the act of choosing a story, and later questions taking them through the storytelling process sequentially. The question had two aims, as follows:

- i) to determine if stories are being 'revived' (i.e. being brought back into the oral canon from written texts), or passed on orally in a more traditional way.
- ii) to offer respondents an opportunity to identify key factors which influenced them when choosing stories.

The responses were intended to establish the weighting of oral and literary material in use, and common strategies among storytellers for choosing stories.

The second question inquired further into the choice of material by asking respondents to identify influences on this. This question was intended particularly to establish the importance of the emotions in choosing stories, which I believed from my own practice to be an important element, but the question was worded in such a way that responses could include such factors as:

- i) the setting in which the story was to be performed
- ii) considerations involved in creating a programme of stories
- iii) the influence of other people, storytellers and listeners, on choosing a repertoire.

The third question in this cluster addressed the craft of the storyteller in preparing a story for telling, asking about the process of 'taking ownership' of the story which is considered an important aspect of the craft of the oral tradition, and how the respondent went about that process. This question asked for a more detailed description of the storyteller's craft, and was intended to draw out information on the way in which an individual storyteller adapted the traditional content of a story to produce an original rendering.

The fourth question asked how stories are prepared for performance. This question deliberately separated the telling of a story to an audience, however small the number or informal the setting, from the preparation for telling, which was referred to as 'making the story your own'. Because there is no recognised common approach to storytelling practice, it seemed useful to offer an implied analogy with theatre, a craft which is more formally established, helping to provide a tentative framework. However, it was also

important not to make the structure so rigid that it hampered the discussion of the unique aspects of the storytelling craft.

The fifth question revisited the territory of the first one more explicitly, by asking whether the respondent worked differently with stories from oral and written sources, and if so, what those differences were. The nature of storytelling in England and Wales at the present time is that it is a revival, and the sources of material available are different from those available to storytellers in an oral culture, such as those of West Africa, the Caribbean or Australia. I know from my own practice that preparing a story which I have heard from another teller is a different process from working on one from a written source. I wanted to learn the views of other storytellers on this aspect of being part of a revival, and also of the techniques which they employed, to clarify some of the features which make revival storytelling distinct from other kinds of storytelling.

The sixth question, the final one in the first cluster, both elaborated and refined the previous one. It asked respondents whether or not they used any 'oral methods' in committing a story to memory, and suggested some examples for clarification, such as rhyme and inner images. This question set out to identify the extent to which revival storytellers used techniques resembling those used in traditional oral cultures, as far as can be deduced from the available evidence. I realised that this data could not determine how oral methods, if used, had been arrived at: whether from research into oral cultures, through a process of exploration or trial and error, or acquired by some other means. It did, however, offer the opportunity to gain information from contemporary practice about an aspect of storytelling practice in earlier oral cultures, namely the *ars memoria*, the significance of which had become clear from the research into the history of storytelling presented in Chapter Three (p. 98).

This question was the last one focussing on the craft of storytelling, and the second cluster addressed the respondent's experience of working with children. This was done in order to furnish data on the educational use of story, and, specifically, ways in which children work with stories. There were four questions in this cluster.

5.4.2 Design of second section of questionnaire

The first question aimed to establish the settings in which the storyteller worked with children, and to clarify the age range (under 11 years old). It did not ask respondents to estimate what proportion of their time was spent working with children: it was sufficient for the purposes of the survey to establish whether or not they had experience with the stated age range.

Once this had been established, two further questions were posed. The first asked respondents to comment on ways that children work with stories. This was an open question in order to encourage respondents to include a wide range of observations.

The term 'children's work' was used both here and in the final question of the cluster to cover a wide range of activities related to story content and strategies for retelling, whether teacher-directed or children's self-chosen activities. The second question asked specifically about ways in which children 'make stories their own', giving some examples to clarify the question. It reinforced the earlier question (question C) which asked about the storyteller's own practice. This link was intended to enable respondents to reflect on children's work with stories and to differentiate the tasks they set from the children's own preferred ways of working.

The final question asked whether or not the respondents considered that storytellers themselves could learn anything from children's work with stories. This, it was hoped, would enable respondents to record what, if anything, working with young children hearing and telling stories could contribute to the revival of traditional oral storytelling in this country.

There was a supplementary question at the end of the questionnaire which asked whether or not respondents would be prepared to be interviewed later. This second phase was not undertaken because the data gathered by the questionnaire seemed adequate. The next section of this chapter reports on the implementation of the survey.

5.5 Implementation of survey

The questionnaire was designed during May 1994, and the first design was submitted for comments to a senior researcher at Roehampton Institute. On his advice, and bearing in mind the recommendations of Cohen and Manion (1987, pp. 108-110), no changes were made to the wording of the questions but the layout of the questionnaire was improved. The questionnaire was sent out with a covering letter on 1st June 1994, with a stamped addressed envelope enclosed for reply, and a specified return date of 5th August 1994.

By that date eighteen completed questionnaires had been returned, and two letters of refusal had been received. One was from Harold Rosen, citing pressures of time as a reason for not completing the questionnaire. The other was from Pomme Clayton, who expressed misgivings about the inability of a questionnaire survey to explain her commitment to the oral tradition. The librarian-storytellers Grace Hallworth and Eileen Colwell both wrote to suggest a visit to collect their answers on tape. Grace Hallworth wrote, on 7th June 1994, that she was 'psychologically unable to give coherent answers in this form, especially on storytelling'. Eileen Colwell, writing on 14th June 1994, explained that problems with her sight made 'such documents as yours' difficult to tackle. Visits to both respondents to administer the questionnaire orally were arranged, and took place on 16th August 1994 and 18th August 1994. Their tape recorded interviews covered both the questions of the survey and broader issues of storytelling. The edited transcripts appear in the appendices.

Another two weeks were allowed to elapse before a reminder letter was sent out to those who had not yet replied and, during those two weeks, another twelve questionnaires were received. One more was sent back in the form of a tape onto which the respondent, Helen East, had read the questions and then replied to them orally; and two more respondents gave oral interviews at their own request. Jacqueline Paschoud, who described herself as finding writing difficult, gave a taped interview responding to the questions on 8th August 1994. Kevin Cotter, who was happy to reply to the questions but was sure he 'would never get around to completing the questionnaire' responded by phone on 15th August 1994. One letter declining to complete the questionnaire was received on 11th August 1994 from Daisy Jerstad, formerly Keable, who wrote that she considered herself 'a dormant storyteller now, telling to family and just the odd event'.

A reminder letter with a second copy of the questionnaire was sent out on 23rd August 1994 to the twelve people who had not replied, and this brought in three more completed questionnaires. Out of fifty questionnaires, therefore, a final total of thirty eight replies was received, of which thirty three were replies on paper, either completed questionnaire forms or letters replying to the questions, and five were collected orally. Of the oral returns, four were collected on tapes which were then transcribed and checked by me against the original tape recording. Each transcript was then posted to the respondent for approval and amendment. Only Grace Hallworth made any changes to the transcript. One oral response was collected as a written record in the form of hand written notes taken during the telephone interview with Kevin Cotter on 15th August 1994 and read back to him for checking at the end of the call. Letters of thanks were sent to all respondents on 23rd August 1994, outlining the aims of the research and the ways in which findings would be recorded and disseminated, and offering to return the questionnaires if respondents now felt in hindsight that they wished to make amendments. No respondents requested a return for this purpose.

The final total of responses represented a return rate of 76%. Three people, as described above, had written to explain why they did not wish to complete the questionnaire. In another three cases it seemed probable that the questionnaires had not been received as it became known that the storytellers (Beulah Candappa and Duncan and Linda Williamson) were away from home for an extended period. This left only six failures to respond unaccounted for. Of the responses received, there were eighteen responses from females and twenty males. Although respondents were not asked to declare themselves as belonging to a particular racial or ethnic group, I have sufficient knowledge of them to offer the following breakdown of their racial origins: Thirty three respondents were white, and five were people of Black, Asian or mixed racial origin. In September 1994 the process of analysing the data began.

5.6 Method of analysis

The data was analysed in order to gain a 'deeper understanding of the situation' (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993, p. 121), through scrutiny and selection. The data collected was not what had originally been expected, for the proposed pilot project became, in effect, the main body of data, as described above. An inductive method of coding the data was therefore adopted, in which 'categories are chosen during and after scrutinising the data ... the categories are 'derived' from the data' (ibid p. 124). It was not until I began to read and reflect on the questionnaire responses that I was able to discern the patterns which were emerging. I began to discriminate between these patterns using the following method. After reading the responses a number of times I began to code the text by highlighting passages which seemed significant in terms of the research questions. I read through the data again, focusing on the highlighted passages and choosing short titles or categories to represent their contents. I then transferred the information from the highlighted passages onto index cards, using one card for each category, and thus brought together data on the same theme from different respondents. Altrichter, Posch and Somekh have described this process as beginning 'to hold a reflective conversation with the text' (ibid p. 125), because the data informs the choice of categories, and the categories affect the way in which the data is read. In the report of the analysis, below, the data is described as fully as possible, using the categories which were selected during the coding exercise.

5.7 Analysis of data from questionnaire survey

The data is described below question by question. Respondents are identified by initials. The decision to report on the questionnaire data by name, rather than anonymously, was made in the first instance at the request of several of the respondents, who wanted to be named in the research. This was more in keeping with the qualitative nature of the research. This decision was made clear to and checked with all respondents in the letter of acknowledgement which was set out on 23rd August 1994. It was clear from comments made to me by storytellers inquiring about the progress of the research that storytellers and others interested in the storytelling revival wanted to know *who* had said *what*, because of the importance of some of the respondents in the revival, and that this would affect the way the significance of the work was understood. Direct quotation from the questionnaire responses, using the respondents' original syntax, punctuation and expression, has been used in order to give the authentic voice of the actual responses. For the same reason, extracts from the taped answers are reproduced verbatim.

5.7.1 Responses to question A: finding and choosing stories

All the replies to the first question, about choosing stories, gave more than one source of stories, and some listed four or five. There was no provision for respondents to rank answers in order of importance, though some chose to list and number their answers as a way of doing this. Eleven different sources were mentioned. The

responses are reported in decreasing order of importance, according to the number of storytellers who mentioned each type.

The first category was other storytellers, amateur and professional, including both storytellers born into an oral tradition and revival storytellers. These were cited by thirty storytellers as the most frequent sources of material for their repertoire. However, in contrast, two respondents, (RP and JaP) stated that they preferred to avoid gathering stories from other storytellers, in order to keep a measure of originality in their repertoire and style.

The next most popular category was 'books', cited by twenty six respondents. Most were not specific about which books, but CF did list those which were most important to him. His list indicated the wide range of knowledge he brings to his craft:

The short answer is from a lifetime's eccentric reading. I use the classic English, Irish, and Northern European collections of folktales, especially Joseph Jacobs, Asbjornsen and Pourrat, plus modern works in the same field. I borrow from dictionaries of folklore, and from works of social and rural history. My language base for storytelling comes from long familiarity with the speech-rhythms of the Authorized Version and the Coverdale Psalter. I also draw upon the Icelandic Sagas (trans. Magnusson & Palsson), the Kalevala (trans. Bosley) and journals, memoirs and diaries from many periods of history, especially the records of C17 antiquaries such as Gough, Aubrey and Sir Thos. Brown. I read Middle English fluently and Mediaeval Latin adequately, which gives me access to the original phrasing of Chaucer, Sir Gawaine or Giraldus Cambrensis.

BH also commented on his extensive personal collection of source books:

I have built up over the years a very valuable library - several thousand books of traditional narratives. The wondertale and myth/epic parts of my repertoire are almost exclusively found by research as for a long time not that many people were working with that material and it was hard to come by aurally.

He further commented that he obtained stories from literary sources:

I often get folk tales, drolls and jokes from other storytellers - but I still look for them in books as I feel strongly that part of 'earning the right to tell stories' is an obligation to put material back in to oral circulation.

RD listed 'collections such as Ruth Tongue/Katherine Briggs (1970-1), Grimm (1944 edition), Jacobs (1994 edition), Garner (1969)'. There were seven responses which cited folklore collections as sources. This was interpreted as meaning the respondent's own collection of books, rather than from libraries and archives, which are categorised

separately below.

The third most popular category, mentioned by thirteen respondents, was friends, family, and members of the storyteller's community. In some cases a community was geographically defined, such as MD's work, mainly oral, as an oral historian with older people in the Okehampton area of Devon, KH's oral sources from 'conversations with neighbours and friends about life in this (rural) area', and AK's oral and written 'collecting in Ghana and other parts of Africa'. In others, the community was a cultural one, for example PS' collection of 'fragments of story heard by the African/Caribbean community', and VN's sources among the women of her Brahmin community: 'grandmother, mother, aunts and ayahs'.

The fourth category was libraries and archives, mentioned by eleven storytellers. Some named actual collections. WD mentioned Exeter Library's 'pre-1950' stacks, and MD the local studies sections of public libraries. JE, in contrast, named a modern collection, the postal catalogue Letterbox Library, which specialises in multi-cultural, non-sexist books. HE gave some specific examples of sources from her work researching for commissions: 'If I'm asked to do a project on a topic I'll go to various libraries, particularly the Folklore Society library, the British Museum library and the Kensington library and any other specialist libraries relating to that topic'.

In the fifth category, nine storytellers stated that they invented and included their own original material in their repertoire. The sixth category, cited by eight respondents as a source, was storytelling tapes made and sold commercially by other storytellers. One respondent (PR), who referred to transcripts of tapes, meant folkloric and anthropological collections of oral material. In the seventh category five storytellers drew on their childhood and other memories as sources of personal stories for their repertoires.

Two respondents specifically referred to children's books or picture books as a source, though RL wrote: 'I never use children's books or books rewriting the stories. I always try to get as close as possible to the 'original' versions, even if they are fragmented'.

One storyteller referred to 'manuscripts', but it was not clear what he meant by this. Another said he used anthropological texts as sources for stories. A third used Indian dance performances as a source of material, and a fourth mentioned the radio. Nobody referred to theatre, cinema or television.

5.7.2 Responses to question B: choosing a repertoire

Although there were many different factors cited by storytellers as influencing their choices of material, the responses fell into three main categories: the storyteller's

personal taste; the requirements of the booking organisation; the perceived needs of the audience.

The category most frequently mentioned as a factor in choosing stories was the personal taste of the storyteller. Twenty four responses mentioned the importance of liking the content of the story, for example: 'I have to like the story or at least an element within it' (RD), 'I have to like the story' (MO), 'If I like it' (JuP).

BH expressed his views on this point strongly:

If storytelling is a game then it must have rules and rule number one, as far as I can see, is 'you can only tell a story you like'. That is the final deciding factor.

Eleven storytellers said they must feel moved by the story themselves.

Being inspired by a performance. (TA)

Makes my hair stand on end - something in the story I can relate to (JE)

Something in me has to respond to the material - whether it makes me laugh, moves me, disturbs me or teaches me something. (HL)

I tend to choose stories which describe some difficulty I have myself faced. (KH)

Five respondents not only said the content had to appeal to them, but also the form. LA mentioned that 'literary rhythm' in a story was important to him. MD described how he 'look(s) for stories that suit my temperament and way of telling'. JaP said that she 'like(s) to be able to ... tell stories in a way that sounds natural for me.' RP wrote: 'I look for stories that suit the way I tell tales. I probably do that without thinking about it'. RWa described how he chose the stories that he wanted to tell: 'If I think a story might suit I try it out - if I tell it more than two or three times then it's right for me.'

Fifteen respondents mentioned choices made 'to order' as it were, for particular bookings or occasions, describing such circumstances as the exigencies of programmes, projects, themes, topics, contexts, 'time of year, festival' (AR), 'the needs of a particular situation or group of people' (MM). BH, a storyteller who played an important role in the early days of the storytelling revival, made a telling comment about the relative importance of external influences when he said that 'stories found for such events rarely stick in the repertoire'.

Eleven responses referred in some way to the perceived needs of the audience. Three of these stressed an aim for the storytelling event of involving the audience in some way, through active participation:

I like an audience that will subscribe its own memories and observations. (CF)

I often look for tales which can include participation either in the form of choruses, questions

and answers etc. or in the playing of simple musical instruments along with me. (RP)
Involvement of children - through rhymes or songs or jokes. (JR)

Three more wrote of choosing emotive material to stimulate an emotional or intellectual response in listeners:

I like spaces or areas of stimulation to promote dreaming and considering. (LA)
Events and incidents in my childhood which evoke memories of feelings which I think young people will empathise with (MO)
... relevance or resonance to issues and beliefs that form part of contemporary debate - particularly when working with children. Stories dealing with philosophical dilemmas. (RiW)

There were other factors affecting choice mentioned by individuals. TA expressed an interest in finding less well-known stories from 'rare books and tapes', as 'it's nice to have a story few will know'. Two Black storytellers found 'cultural' aspects important: one (AK) sought moral tales, which are typical of the West African tradition from which she comes, while PS looked for a 'strong sense of African traditions passed to Caribbean or Black British life'. Two storytellers (JuP and RP) mentioned that strong imagery drew them to a story. EC, a librarian storyteller, had a particular interest in literary stories, partly because of their 'beauty of language', and partly because, as a librarian, 'my whole purpose was to introduce books'. However, the three categories of response described above summarised the most common responses to this question.

5.7.3 Responses to question C: taking ownership of a story

There was a considerable degree of consensus between storytellers about their preferred techniques for taking ownership of a story. The three main strategies referred to were:

- (i) the use of oral techniques, especially telling the story repeatedly, but also use of rhythm and visualisation
- (ii) assimilating work on the story into the life style
- (iii) written work.

Seventeen storytellers emphasised the importance of the process of telling the story repeatedly as a way of taking ownership of it. In this category LA responded simply: 'Chiefly by telling, and telling and telling again.' Other storytellers wrote of making a story their own by telling it to themselves, to family or friends, even to 'cows and magpies ... while trudging over fields' (CF). EC described the reaction of local people to her working methods:

'I always learnt a story by telling it to myself aloud ... by telling myself stories as I walked along the road. I was known in Hendon because every now and then somebody would come up behind me and I didn't realise they were coming you see to stop in time and they used to

look at me quite kindly - oh that's the children's librarian, she's getting ready for a story.'

Other recognisably oral strategies discussed were: working with song, music or rhythm (six respondents); visualising the events of the story (three respondents) or its setting (two respondents); taping and replaying 'draft' versions of the story (MO); introducing distinctive language 'which will tie me personally to the story' (GL) or rhetorical devices (PR), or dialect (JR and TT) or 'phrases that will work and are memorable' (SS).

Four storytellers answered this question by describing a process which could best be defined as 'assimilating the working process into the everyday occurrences of the storyteller's life'.

I don't try consciously. Some stories move me strongly and I begin to ask myself why (TA)
Living with it ... (SS)

... mainly by living with it, carrying it around with me in my head and heart, exposing it to my own daily experience. (MM)

I eat it, breathe it, sleep it, take it on walks, tell it to my dog, tell it to friends, try it out on my children, write out bits, rewrite bits, speak it as a poem, a song, mow the lawn, do the dishes, take it out in the car, worry about it, put it away for a week, climb inside it again, weep some, laugh some, and LISTEN. (AR)

In the responses in this category there was no apparent division between 'working on' the story and 'not working on' the story, no rehearsal period during which the work was done. In their responses, the storytellers did not separate 'work' from 'living'. Rather a kind of osmosis seemed to take place, with the story gradually becoming immersed in the storyteller's consciousness. This process is further addressed in the responses to the next question.

Three storytellers mentioned the writing process as an important strategy. MD 'rewrite(s) it again and again until I have got it more or less right', though he emphasised that he did not tell the story 'by rote', as it was constantly reworked in performance. CF kept notes on his repertoire in cross-referenced notebooks, both as an aid to building programmes, and because 'the writing of such a synopsis is my first step towards learning a new story'. RP wrote:

Sometimes I summarise in writing, though rarely consult the summary afterwards - I do it simply to clarify the pattern.

5.7.4 Responses to question D: preparing stories for performance

The responses to this question elaborated replies to the previous one, and it seemed that these two aspects of the storyteller's craft are not easy to separate. There were five

main categories of response:

- (i) telling the story
- (ii) use of walking or other rhythmic activity
- (iii) inner imagery
- (iv) language patterning
- (v) none - improvisation was seen by some as of equal importance to careful preparation.

The most frequently recurring response was that which emphasised the impossibility of working on storytelling without an audience. As RiW expressed it:

In the end, there's no substitute for just telling them in public. One performance will tell you more than fifty rehearsals.

Fourteen other storytellers cited the importance of working on the story by telling it to an audience, although their definitions of 'public' varied widely, with six storytellers naming family members or friends as 'willing guinea pigs' (SJ) and another (RWa) using his own storytelling club as an environment for trying out stories. Seven storytellers stated that they use a tape recorder to work on their craft at this stage in the process, and two (JE and JaP) said that they felt 'too embarrassed' to record themselves. Being one's own critical audience was deemed important: six storytellers regularly told stories aloud to themselves, seven ran through the stories silently, while another four used a combination of these two methods. Some specific environments were mentioned: three people worked on their stories in the car; three while lying in bed (though TA commented 'that usually sends me to sleep'); two mentioned the bathroom ('in the bath' (JE), 'sit(ting) on the loo' (WD)); one (SS) ran through the story while cooking; AJ worked 'in front of a full length mirror'; VN, using her own techniques developed from the Indic oral tradition, worked by 'selecting music and walking quietly in a confined space, mapping the journey of the story', while JuP also used music as an aid to her rehearsal work, 'telling (the story) out loud to myself while I play my mbira³'.

In the next category, walking to fix the story in the mind was mentioned, not only in the 'confined' context described above by VN, but also by three respondents who wrote: 'on walks' (RD), 'going for long walks trying out the language and rhythms' (HL), and on 'walks with the dog' (WD). WD summed up the purpose of this for her: 'Movement of walking helps them sink in'.

A third category which included the responses of four storytellers was that of preparing mental imagery. KC observed: 'If the pattern holds up and the imagery is there when I

³ the mbira is a traditional hand-held instrument, also called the thumb-piano, used throughout Africa but especially well-known in Zimbabwe. It is used to play regular and repeating rhythmic tunes

tell it then it's ready'. RD also used 'positive imagery devices - sequencing mental images to keep the links in action'. HL described both 'imaging and imagining', and MM, in connection with preparation immediately before a performance, wrote:

Before any telling I go through a process of recollecting, re-imagining, paying attention to overall patterns of words, thinking about the particular circumstances of the occasion.

In the fourth category, mentioned by five respondents, a major concern was choosing and preparing the language of the storytelling. Indeed, according to CF:

The appropriate language is the key to storytelling. A failure in this respect separates many would-be storytellers from success with their material and with their audience.

He noted, however, 'the detail, the passion and the phrase-making must happen for the first time in performance - to rehearse it beforehand would be tedious and artificial'. The tension between the fluency which only good preparation allows and the storyteller's desire for spontaneous language and flexibility was addressed by several respondents. LA focused on 'creating a vocal and eloquent delivery capable of sharp communication and .. aesthetic appeal'. MD shaped a version which 'pleased him' by repeatedly telling the story aloud until he could 'improvise ... fairly fluently'. He noted, though, 'I do like using particular phrases ... careful use of language being one of my 'betes blanches''. MM mentioned 'paying attention to overall patterns of words'; JuP described how she worked on the story aloud and then 'I write down particular phrases and runs which I'm pleased with and which only seem to arise in this way, which I might forget'. BH, who stated that 'many of my bigger stories .. can take five years or more to prepare', described how 'I work with the material and the audience for a long time until a more or less robust shape establishes itself'.

The fifth category showed that, alongside an emphasis on careful preparation, ran an acknowledgement, often from the same respondents, of the role of spontaneity, improvisation and 'choosing the story for the moment'. LA wrote: 'For most stories, these days, I don't prepare as such. I find I can read a story, say twice, and begin to tell it. Then the work starts'. TB replied to the question 'How do you prepare?' in the following words:

I don't really, I just run through the story (if it's a new one) in my head to make sure I know what happens, and then see what comes out in performance.

KC noted 'There may be very little preparation'. RD added: 'depending on how I feel in performance, sometimes 'take a risk' and do the story from cold.' AR felt that the stories are 'always only half ready to perform. The other half is the audience, the listeners - they are constantly preparing and repairing the story and what comes out in the moment'. RoW wrote: 'I generally work in performance keeping the bits that work

with audience'. BH commented, in contrast with his description, quoted above, of working on wondertales or myths for five years or more: 'Some stories on the other hand, drop into my lap - I read them or hear them and the next day I tell them'. CF was adamant that 'there must be room for the God-given and the unexpected. ... The detail, the passion and the phrase-making must happen for the first time in performance'.

The tension between careful preparation and spontaneous response is part of the nature of the oral transmission of stories, and RP's reply to this question offered a pertinent analogy with music:

In general, I don't memorise in the conventional sense, but I suppose what is in my mind is something akin to a jazz score, with main themes and motifs written in and large areas marked for improvisation.

5.7.5 Responses to question E: ways of working with oral and written sources

Most of the responses given to this question referred to the respondent's working methods, or explained the storyteller's thinking. There was no consensus of opinion, and in some cases, they wrote at length on this issue.

The majority said they worked differently on stories from oral and written sources, however five (MD, CF, KH, PR, RWa) said that they did not, CF adding, in explanation, 'all stories from written sources had their beginning in the spoken word'. EC and RL stated that they only worked with written sources, and EC, who began storytelling as part of her work as a children's librarian in the 1930s, wrote: 'actually I very seldom worked on an oral story because ... at that time there were not the storytellers about to give you oral stories.' TA said he worked differently from oral and written sources, but in essence his technique with a written story, which was to read it aloud into a tape recorder and play it back, replicated his strategy with oral texts, which was 'to tell them afterwards as soon as possible'.

Ten respondents were of the view that it was easier to work with a story from an oral source, though the reasons varied. KC described an oral source as 'much richer - with more freedom to respond to an audience'. JE wrote: 'when it's from a written source - temptation to check if I've got it 'right' is inhibiting'. HL commented: 'It's much easier to tell a story that you've heard - the work on 're-oralising' has been done for you'. In contrast he added: 'it can, though, be harder to 'make it your own', the 'ghost' of the person you heard it from can loom very large'. RP found that by 'really listening' to a story he also visualised it, so that some of the process of preparing the story was already begun:

The essential difference is that with a story I've heard, I'm further on in the process: because if

I've really heard it enough to remember it, then I've also 'seen' it and I don't have to go through those stages of summarising

RD considered stories from written sources harder work than a heard story, because 'they seem to generate a different kind of mental image'. MO also commented on the mental images generated by a told story: 'Certainly, from hearing a story I have clearer mental images than from reading'. JuP found that stories from oral sources required less work, though her view was that this was 'just laziness'. SS described written sources as 'more of a challenge, especially where the story is an account of a story rather than a telling'. By 'account of a story' she meant a story summary, of the type often found in folklore texts (e.g. Rutherford (1987)), as opposed to a fully rounded narrative. HE commented: 'a written story, I find them a little harder to learn', whereas with an oral story, 'generally, the bones of the story, the shape of the story, I can just hear and ... and tell myself'. JaP said:

'I wish I learnt all my stories by being told them because I remember them so much more easily ... if I'm remembering stories from written stuff I might have to read it eight or nine times but if somebody tells me a story then the next day I could go and tell that story and it would probably be quite different but it would be a version'

No one expressed the view that written stories were easier sources from which to work.

The majority of the respondents did not say whether they found oral or written starting points easier to work from. However, many described the differences as they perceived them, and some took the opportunity to say more, as described below, about their working methods and the philosophy behind their approach.

Two storytellers told how they drew on sensory memories of the teller as well as of the story when working from an oral source. Both referred to the Scottish traveller storyteller, Duncan Williamson, in their answers, HE commenting that 'it's his voice that kind of sticks in my mind', while RWa used 'an anchor point of my remembered image (of Duncan) telling me the tale perhaps from their fireside'.

Three people described how they searched for alternative versions of stories when working with written sources. LA stated that he was 'more inclined to read different versions of a story I find in a book', though he did not give reasons for doing so. VN described how she read 'the same story through different sources, if possible, i.e. translations, retellings, later editions, combining, with analysis and different versions, a narrative spine'. RP wrote that his work with a literary text 'may include looking at different versions'.

The issue of introducing changes into the storyteller's own version of a tale was discussed, but only in relation to work drawn from written sources. MM wrote: 'With stories from written sources, I am more conscious of shaping the story, looking at opportunities to introduce rhythm, song, participation'. RWa noted: 'I try to avoid going back to the text too often ... because I don't want to be overinfluenced by it'. However, he observed that the same was also true for oral tellings, saying that for similar reasons he also tried not 'to (hear) the original teller too often'. BR wrote: 'The only real difference is that I can refer more than once to a written story ... I tend to work well away from it, however, once I get started, using my own detail'. SJ noted: 'Going to a written source directly, one has the impression of being less influenced by others' interpretations'.

In contrast, RoW wrote: 'I do not interfere with bardic literature but try to represent it faithfully', and PR observed: 'If I were to learn a literary tale ... then care has to be taken to memorize accurately'. AR's comments emphasised his desire to respect the author's work:

The written version demands a certain respect. Respect for the author, his/her sources. Respect for the form, the way the tale has been crafted. There's a lot to learn there and many limitations, ways that are not my way - the oral story also demands respect of sources but leaves greater freedom for my own language and style.

AJ said she kept closely to the written text, because 'from written sources I memorize parts when the language is really wonderful so as not to lose it'.

RiW and SJ, both musicians as well as storytellers, used analogies from music to clarify their views about oral and written stories. RiW wrote that 'with stories from written sources, although the text is fixed, it acts more like a composition from which one can bounce off into improvisation and back again'. SJ described her approaches to the two different sources as:

Quite different - If I hear a story, even a complex one I can remember it straight off first time. Reading is not an aide memoire and usually I will have to read a complex story two or three times before being able to get through the narrative. This relationship between memory and hearing and seeing (reading) and not remembering is one which emerges in many different practices .. for instance, with fellow traditional musicians - to learn a tune by ear is to remember, to read it by music is to play it at the time and to forget it as soon as it is over.

BH's response was informative about his ways of working, making a point about oral methods of committing a story to memory which was important to him. His approach to new material was best described as 'corporeal', for he described working with his 'body and feelings'. He was adamantly opposed to writing the story down. His

response is included here, as it was given to this question, but should be considered along with the information gathered from other storytellers under Question F.

I never ever write the stories - I'm totally into developing them with my body and feelings with an audience and the inspiration that is available in a well-prepared live situation. The work of the head is to know what happens very clearly, and that is the main preparatory work I do. I mutter the stories as I walk to get them into my body.

5.7.6 Responses to question F: using oral methods as an aid to memory

Many storytellers mentioned a close connection between rhythmic activity and working on a story which matched BH's description of his practice of repeating stories while walking. The other most common methods cited in answer to this question were:

- (i) visualisation
- (ii) language patterning such as rhyme and repetition
- (iii) the importance of the emotions.

Each of these is reported on in turn, but first it should be noted that three storytellers (TB, JaP, JR) answered 'no' to this question. JuP commented that the question was confusing. She wrote: 'I'm not sure what the difference is between working on a story and committing it to memory'.

The first oral method of remembering a story, used by eighteen storytellers, was visualisation. MM raised and answered the question of definition at this point, wondering: 'Is visualisation an oral method? I suppose I would say yes, it is part of the inner speech which, aloud, becomes storytelling'. Both EC and LA described telling the story from mental images, which EC considered a vital skill, for she said: 'if you don't see it it's difficult to describe it as vividly'. They responded:

I think probably I see a series of pictures in my mind, and I would see them in ... in colour, I think, and in sequence of course, and I could pass from picture to picture (EC)

It's sometimes as though patterns and sequences are visually imprinted in my imagination. ... as it were 'in the back of my mind'. They are constant enough for me to find I can speak freely ... they are a sort of steering and reviewing facility. (LA)

MD felt that there was a 'way of seeing' which was particular to traditional stories:

Traditional stories are often based on an older and wiser way of seeing ... they operate in the medium of powerful, archetypal picture-images which tell us some vital truths.

BH described his approach to visualisation in the following terms:

I visualise as intently as I can when I tell. But what I remember is the 'sequence of events' -

the 'what happens'...

MO used her own mental images, but also valued the images which the audience would visualise:

I come back to working on it, always looking at the mental images conjured up, never attempting to describe them in detail, but holding onto those images and remembering that I am aiming to help my audience to see their own mental images. (MO)

RWa and RD both referred to using images of the scenery of 'where it's happening', and CF visualised the events of the story taking place in settings which were familiar to him:

In committing stories to memory I rely upon a strong sense of location; I move each episode into a house, a field or a landscape that I know well. This enables me to visualise the action and the sequence of events with complete confidence. (CF)

In most cases, the inner images evoked by the storytellers were of events in the story, though SJ referred to rich description when she noted 'sometimes I am aware of a story hanging upon lyrical images which I describe for the audience'. Four people (JE, CF, VN, RWa) emphasised the importance to them of the landscape of the story rather than its events in terms of the inner images they created.

The second main mnemonic device, mentioned by twelve respondents, was the use of rhythm and other forms of patterning in language. Patterned language characterises oral stories from around the world, and is an aspect which links them with poetry. Traditional story openings and closings offer some clear examples of patterned language, for instance:

'Times and times and very good times ...' (English opening)

'Once upon a time, and it wasn't in my time, and it wasn't in your time, but it was in somebody's time...' (English opening)

'Davnim-davno...' (lit: 'long and long ago': Russian opening)

'Snip, snap, snout, my story is out!' (Swedish closure)

'A piece of puddin' for telling a good'un, a piece of pie for telling a lie!' (English Gypsy closure)

'Bee bo bendit, my tale is ended, and if you don't like it, go to Wales, get copper nails, and mend it!' (English closure)

KC mentioned set pieces of language (known to storytellers as 'runs') which became fixed in his storytelling, and helped him to recall it: 'Certain phrases or patterns of description will always appear in the story, memory of rhymes will stay the same'.

KH wrote: 'I memorize key phrases. I usually have a fixed first line and closing line. I build repetition into a lot of stories. I also like to use phrases repeated but with significant variations'. AJ noted that she used 'a lot of rhyme'. SJ described 'the 'rhythms' and 'cadences' of the story itself, the 'threes' etc.' as being important to her. GL worked to 'find patterns of events, repetition - openings and closures'. HL wrote that 'refrains and repetitions and formulaic passages, once they are learnt, help the process of memorising the story as a whole'. VN observed that 'refrains can help; they can also distract'. MO believed that patterned language was mainly of value to listeners, in helping them to predict what was coming next: 'I put rhyme, repetition, strong rhythm, two line songs into many stories, but always think of those elements as being for the benefit of listeners rather than for me'. TT referred only to language patterning when he said: 'I use a lot of rhyme, rhythm and repetition, what some of my contemporaries call 'runs''. RiW also used language patterning:

I use anything and everything, particularly repetition! Perhaps stock expressions (hopefully original) - rhythmic phrases - inner images - the voice of the person who told me the story.

HE, in contrast, said: 'I wouldn't tend to use rhyme because - although - rhymes kind of stick in my mind quite easily but it's too much attention to individual words'. BH was the only storyteller who mentioned rhythmic physical activity as an aid to committing a story to memory.

Three storytellers discussed the importance of their intuition about the story in their responses to this question. Whether this is strictly speaking an 'oral method' of working on stories is a debatable point, but the respondents included it. WD wrote: 'I tend to work by emotional recognition of a tale, rather than a total string of visual images'. RL wrote: 'I want the story to float in my mind, and change depending on my mood, or the mood of the audience'. KC said: 'I start from within the feeling - the beginning is important. Objects might key in a story. The discussion of the mermaid's mirror keys in the feeling to start the story'. JE also referred to displaying objects or artifacts as she told the story, though for her they were devices to stimulate memory rather than feelings, for she noted: 'sometimes I mark the events off with objects that I take along'.

This concludes the analysis of the data on the working methods of storytellers from the first half of the questionnaire. The data from the four remaining questions referred to their views about how children work with stories.

5.7.7 Responses to question G: settings for storytellers' work with children

All respondents had experience of working with children under eleven years old, though three (KC, HE, BH) did not specify a setting. The list of situations revealed a

range of settings in which storytellers worked with children, not just in schools. All respondents named more than one setting in their responses, and some listed several. HE simply replied: 'In every possible situation that I am allowed to work with them and also in all sorts of situations where I'm not working at all'.

In total twenty one different settings were listed in the responses to this question.

- schools (31 respondents)
- libraries (18)
- festivals (11)
- museums or art galleries (7)
- nursery classes, nurseries and pre-school groups (6)
- community projects of various kinds (6)
- theatres or arts centres (6)
- playschemes (5)
- playgroups (5)
- public performances (unspecified) (3)
- story walks (3)
- children's parties (3)
- 'children at home' (2) (It was not clear whether the children were family members)
- after-school clubs, youth clubs, camps, fairs, parks, health centres, and settings simply described as 'informal' (2 each)
- Brownies and Cubs (1)

5.7.8 Responses to question H: storytellers' observations about children working with stories

Two respondents (TB and RWA) emphasised children's individual approaches, noting that it was not possible to generalise about children as 'they each have their own way of working - same as adults' (TB). Three others prefaced answers with the comment that it was difficult to generalise. HE observed: 'actually this is a bit of a vague question'. Three more storytellers felt that children's work with traditional stories was not as 'rich' as other responses indicated. Writing about 'experience with a small selection of children', RD had found that they 'are greatly influenced by what they see on video' and that film versions of traditional tales dominated the children's inner images, being 'more authoritative than the versions they create in their own minds from my tellings'. MO wrote: 'The older they become, the less imaginative they are, or perhaps the more reluctant to show their imaginations'. RP wrote: 'It is generally easier to get children to make up stories than to work creatively with traditional tales'. CF blamed the current educational climate for this:

Schools are organised to be continually busy .. Teachers are under pressure to resist the intimate and the slow-moving So stories that deserve a lifetime's meditation are reduced to

sound-bites, sampled as topic-work, and then tossed aside. The tidy and the cheerful are preferred before the wayward and profound.

Nonetheless this question also elicited positive responses which clustered into five categories:

- (i) the potential for success of under-achievers
- (ii) children's interest in the truth of stories
- (iii) their enthusiasm
- (iv) their listening skills
- (v) their facility with oral techniques

Three storytellers said under-achievers were often successful, and that children who were struggling at school or regarded as difficult often did well in storytelling work: WD noted: 'Those less able at formal schoolwork are often brilliantly zany verbally'. RiW wrote: 'storytelling can reveal hidden talent in 'troublesome' or 'under achieving children' ... It can visibly boost confidence'. HE wrote: 'Sometimes the very act of being able to tell a story gives a child confidence in themselves and their ability to hold an audience; sometimes the story itself can inspire a child and help them to find - you know - strength or confidence'.

Five storytellers commented on a concern for truth which they found evident in children's work with stories. WD observed that 'their moral sense is very strong'. JuP wrote: 'In any class someone will always say 'Is it true?' if the story has touched them'. GL also noted: 'They ask 'Is it true?' which I find leads to an interesting discussion'. MO recorded the same question from both infants and juniors. SJ wrote :

One of the things that most interests me about children's responses is the way in which they use story to deepen and question their understanding of reality ... stories have often promoted discussions about scientific reality and other kinds of reality being simultaneously valid

Six storytellers commented on children's enthusiasm for stories. MD wrote: 'Children love stories and work very easily with them', and children's perceived enthusiasm for stories featured in five other responses too. AJ noted that 'children love to tell stories to adults and each other'. PS commented on their 'tremendous' enjoyment of stories and her telling. TT wrote: 'Children love to collect and swap things (ie stickers, badges, marbles and STORIES)'. AR listed children's 'incredible powers of retention, mimicry, invention, enjoyment and the way they link the stories to LIFE'. EC said:

Undoubtedly you can tell when a story is enjoyed and often it is quite oral too - you hear a sigh or a chuckle or something like that, you can always know can't you - whether your story is accepted or not

Five responses found that children's capacity for listening was a strength. TA

commented that, in a storytelling session, 'most 'enter' a story in a way adults can no longer manage'. RP found 'the capacity of young children for listening to stories is frequently underestimated, especially by teachers' and noted that, in his experience, they 'will listen better and more closely than many adults'. AD considered that listening to stories 'improve(s) their listening and concentration skills'. HL described children as 'always thirsty for stories - (they) will allow themselves to 'enter' the world of the story in an almost trance-like way ... and they often remember the stories to the smallest detail'. BH believed that simply hearing stories well-told was of educational value:

I still think, when all's said and done, that the most important thing is for children to be given the chance to hear stories well-told and then the stories will work with them.

The final category of responses concerned children's facility with oral techniques. Four storytellers considered the impact of stories on children's imaginative and inner worlds. AD found that stories promoted reflection:

I find that if children are given an answer in a story that they have to think about then it is taken in more than if they are just told straight out and it goes in one ear and out the other - a story may not be true - but it doesn't mean there isn't a lot of truth in it.

HE said that a story can 'sometimes ... affect their dreams - sometimes it can go sort of deep into their sub-conscious and you're aware that a child is affected by a story in a way that they're not aware of'. CF described stories as 'children's only means of independent travel, free from the confines of their watched-over and restricted lives'. LA wrote that 'children grow with stories according to their own developmental agenda'.

Eight other storytellers noted that children found it easy to work with the characteristic features of traditional oral stories. MM described children's work with stories as 'very natural and unforced; it arises from genuine enjoyment, involvement and an instinctive sense (fed by good storytelling) that stories are for them'. AK, echoing the Opies called children 'tradition's warmest friends' (Opie, I. and P., 1959). KC said that children 'latch onto .. patterns and repetition of events'. TT noted that children 'tend to remember stories as a series of pictures'. WD wrote: 'If you ask them to finish a half-told story they will always tie up all the ends and baddies get their come-uppance'. KH wrote that convincingly presented stories inspired children to 'care about the content', and added 'but they also pick up much vocabulary and variety of language'. EC made an observation about listening and remembering based on her experience of storytelling over fifty years:

Years afterwards I had parents come in and say do you remember that story you used to tell about so-and-so ... and now I'm telling it to my children

All these storytellers were drawing parallels between aspects of children's own ways of working with traditional stories and their own priorities.

5.7.9 Responses to question I: storyteller's observations on children's ways of making stories their own

Two storytellers, RL and JR, replied that they did not know how children developed ownership of stories. MO commented: 'I feel as if their teachers are the people with the most useful comments to make here'. SJ observed: 'this phrase ('make stories their own') needs clarifying and/or discussing'. The fact that she was right is demonstrated by evident confusion in several storytellers' answers between activities chosen by children themselves and activities set by storytellers as tasks in this process of taking ownership of a story. This summary of responses is grouped in four main categories:

- (i) retelling
- (ii) acting out and 'playing with' the story
- (iii) working on characters from the story
- (iv) using other art forms.

Retelling stories told by the storyteller was the most frequently reported activity (fifteen respondents). MO wrote: 'I believe that telling a story is important if they are to remember it'. KH noted:

Certain children remember very well the language of a storytelling, if it is delivered with conviction and ingenuity. They involuntarily make their own versions and alterations, and the important thing is to help them become conscious of this.

RP also described the ways in which children developed their own versions of tales through retelling them: 'they will use their own words, re-set the tale, invent extra bits and so on'. TT observed that children retelling 'sometimes place(ed) themselves in the story'. HE commented in detail on the process of making a story one's own through retelling it and said: 'when they've fully re-shaped (the story) I think it's fully their own and when it's least their own is when they're just totally parroting'.

Acting out the story was the second category, mentioned by nine respondents. TA commented that drama activities 'allow(ed) children to dwell on behaviour in the story'. MM felt that children did this simply because it was familiar:

I would say that children are more used to some ways e.g. acting and writing. They respond very readily when introduced to new ways such as oral retelling, retelling in groups, retelling without words, working on sounds.

She also wrote that she was 'constantly gratified by the discovery that children may have held a story in their minds for months or years after I have told it to them'.

The important role of children's play in making stories their own was recorded by four respondents. LA wrote:

At the end of the day a child makes a story his or her own by playing in some way with it. The more involved the child is with the play it affords, the more it becomes 'owned' by the child.

HL wrote: 'They always want to act the story - and they have lots of fun doing so, though it rarely works as a performance (really they're playing the story)'. BH also noted the importance of play, listing 'repeated retelling and play and dream' as his answer to this question. JaP also described children 'play(ing) out the story with other people - pretend them and now you say this and they'll tell other people what they've got to say'.

Working in some way on the characters in a story was the third category, noted by six storytellers as a way for children to make the story their own. KC, who often used puppets in his storytelling, found that children identified with characters, and the puppets helped this, acting as 'little hooks to tease people out'. WD commented on the process of developing new versions of stories with children: 'This always seems to surprise them - that they can keep a story true, but change the characters completely'. JE described children's spontaneous work: 'Twice I've been shown tiny dolls of a character and been told their life story on a return visit'. SJ felt that children made stories their own, not through art making but 'by being able to relate them to their own experience and other sources of information - retelling/drama/making pictures etc are all tools in this process'.

The fourth category contained observations about responding to a story through other art forms. PS listed: 'poetry, dance, sculpture' as media in which children might choose to respond to a story. RiW, who drew on oral traditional methods in many parts of the world, wrote that he encouraged children to learn 'about playing with language. By the use of working in pairs/trios etc., storyboards, storycloths, songs, refrains, rhythms, objects, pictures'. His teaching strategies were based on peer talking about the story in pairs or small groups, which is a strategy often used also by teachers in promoting Speaking and Listening work. Storyboards are a technique borrowed from media studies, a way of recording a story as a series of pictures, a form which is often familiar to children from cartoon strips. Storycloths are traditionally used in northern India by travelling storytellers who unroll and display the cloth, picturing the events of a story, and then tell from it, indicating with a pointer each episode as it is told. Again, the form is familiar to children from strip cartoons. Songs, refrains and rhymes draw on the patterned language which is characteristic of the oral tradition, as discussed above in responses to Question F, and with which children have an affinity. The use of objects and pictures to make aspects of the story more concrete was also something which storytellers themselves stated that they used.

It was not, therefore, surprising, to find a storyteller using them as a teaching strategy.

AR wrote of using 'acting, modelling painting' and noted 'but it's much more of a whole body thing for them than it is for us'. CF wrote of:

unexpectedly powerful dimensions such as dreams and fears, interior monologues and sustained fantasies. In the classroom, drawing and painting are important media, since they retain some of the slow inwardness of response and interpretation that has been lost in other areas of the curriculum.

SJ's final comment is evidence of how important it was to allow plenty of time to enable children to develop a considered response to a story:

I have developed the work of stories after a two year gap in visiting a school - where the original telling was remembered, treasured and triumphantly flourished at me on my return.

5.7.10 Responses to question J: storytellers' observations on the possibility of learning from the ways children work with stories

The final question was answered in a variety of ways, but the data clustered into four main categories: the first three agreed that storytellers can learn from children, and focused respectively on:

- (i) the need to learn from all audiences
- (ii) the use of children's enthusiasm as a source of inspiration
- (iii) the value of children's feedback as a guide to evaluate success.
- (iv) the final category of responses disagreed with the premise of the question.

The first category contained seven responses, which centred on the need for storytellers to be open to learn from all audiences, not just children. VN wrote that storytellers should engage in 'listening, not just hearing'. KC observed: 'The story and its richness develop through telling, which is dependent on the environment of the telling and on the children's responses ... a storyteller can't exist in isolation'. SJ said: 'Storytellers are listeners and observers more than anything else ... We can all learn from everybody'. Four more respondents each addressed a different benefit which they saw. TT wrote: 'Professional storytellers can learn from the way any listeners work with stories. Children merely have a fresher and less inhibited love of language, the chief tool of the storyteller'. RiW made a similar observation:

Professionals should always be open to learn from anyone - although many aren't! Children can create original and imaginative settings for narratives. They are still flexible and not yet tied to a style. This expands possibilities.

BH wrote: 'I believe professional storytellers should desire to learn from everything -

newness is all - one can only learn from the unknown'. WD gave a more detailed answer:

Tellers should always learn from listeners. They tell you things you've forgotten about the tale or the song in the learning of it. Enthusiasm. Humour. Directness. Concentration, or the consequences of not having it. How powerful stories are, and to be true to them.

In the second category, four responses addressed the need to value, rather than underestimate, what children could teach storytellers about storytelling and stories. PS wrote that observing children had 'broadened (her) outlook on how stories can be retold and shared in so many ways'. HL wrote:

I've learnt almost all my storytelling techniques from telling to children. The importance of rhythm, honouring the repetitions, making the world of the story consistent, finding the balance between narrative and description ... they are the best audience because you know when you've got them!

MM made two separate points which she considered important. The first required that storytellers acknowledged children's commitment to working with stories. The second urged them to imitate children's spontaneity. She wrote: '1) to hold on to the fact that children, too, are serious about stories, 'vocational' in their response. 2) to take risks and always go for the life of the story rather than the polish'. JuP's comment concerned both storytellers and teachers:

I think we, and teachers too, can learn to respect children's work with stories, and observe peer response to children's stories rather than our own, in order to gauge what is a 'satisfactory' piece of work.

Five responses focussed on children's spontaneity and enthusiasm as a source of inspiration for the storyteller. KH wrote: 'Certain children are able to abandon themselves unselfconsciously to the 'feel' of a story, and this would be an asset to many of us'.

TA made two separate but related points: 'Probably from their freshness and enthusiasm - maybe also from what is seen as the rough edges - advising others can make us reflect on our own behaviour'. JE answered:

Yes - there's something about the emotion with which children respond - they accept a story and quickly and often with little inhibition make a story their own in some way.

MD wrote:

A professional storyteller ... should have a childlike quality of mind, anyway. Wonder,

acceptance, delight in 'what happens next', seeing the whole story in pictures, loving each story for what it is, these are all traits we share with children.

Four respondents in this category compared the spontaneous responses of children with what they considered to be the laboured and over-wrought performances of their contemporaries. JaP said: 'I think they could loosen up about getting it right ... if professional storytellers were more like children they would be more individualistic, creative'. HE's reply noted the value of the child's spontaneous and unselfconscious approach as a model for professionals:

Personally I think we could all learn from absolutely natural deliveries rather than awareness of self presence on stage ... this is getting away from the idea of waiting until something is perfect before you deign to deliver it and more about seizing on the feel of the moment to say what you want to say ...

AK wrote that professional storytellers 'ought to do what children do - be themselves and not copy 100%'. RP commented:

I suspect that the most important lesson to learn from children is being unselfconscious and natural in storytelling ... which is not always easy for adults - especially with what is almost becoming the officially sanctioned mode of highly prepared, excellent but for me sometimes too selfconscious-to-be-really-effective theatrical storytelling.

In the third category, four responses focused on the importance of encouraging storytellers to use feedback from children to ensure that what they offered to children was appropriate, stimulating and enjoyable. RWa's answer was: 'I don't feel that as a storyteller I have learned from (children) anything about how to tell stories - I have learned how to see/view/react to my audience'. EC said: 'I think you could certainly learn from the way children receive stories and get to know just what does appeal to their imaginations'. BB wrote: 'I think that in retelling a story we should always leave plenty of space for the children to consider a story's possibilities and to continue to take it in different directions within the context of the world of that story'. GH said: 'not only the sound appeal but the sense of it - the meaning - deeper meanings of it begin to strike a chord in the children listening and I believe that those are the stories that help memory - I really do'.

In the fourth category there were two responses, which both opposed the premise that storytellers should model themselves on children; TB said this was because 'The best place for professional storytellers to learn from is their own inner child'. CF wrote at length:

Children ought to learn from storytellers, not the other way around. This is the conventional

wisdom of every traditional society. Storytellers must be the elders of the tribe, the grandparents and other permanent, slow-moving figures of which so many modern children have been deprived. Only in an age as frantic as our own, could it be suggested that a storyteller's wisdom could be learned from the young. It is the duty of the old to speak and the young to listen and keep silent.

This open question at the end gave respondents the opportunity to make statements on anything about which they felt strongly. CF, quoted immediately above, summed up aspects of his philosophy which he felt were essential to his work. However, only the points related to the research questions will be analysed below.

5.8 Analysis of findings

This questionnaire survey produced a large amount of descriptive data about the skills and techniques which are part of the craft of storytellers working in the contemporary storytelling revival. It also provided data about issues of teaching and learning in the primary school, and the possible educational contribution of traditional storytelling in this setting. The findings are organised around two main themes, each related to one of the two research questions addressed in this part of the research.

5.8.1 Ways in which revival storytellers select, prepare and present stories in educational contexts

A finding of the survey was that the most commonly cited source of repertoire was stories told by other storytellers, from both professional and traditional backgrounds. This suggests that the revival is both drawing on and helping to reestablish the traditional oral transmission of stories. The frequently made observation by respondents that a story from an oral source was easier to learn showed that contemporary storytellers have direct experience of the advantages of traditional methods. Listening to storytelling tapes is a modern addition to more traditional methods of the oral transmission of stories. However, some storytellers prefer to search for stories in books, in order to create a personal repertoire that is not known by others on the storytelling 'circuit'. In some cases this is because they want to have an unusual repertoire. The view expressed by BH, however, that 'part of 'earning the right to tell stories' is an obligation to put material back in to oral circulation', suggests that some revival storytellers feel they have a debt to pay to the oral tradition.

A second finding established the factors influencing the storyteller's choice of material, including the importance of the emotions in choosing stories. The requirements of programme organisers, bookers and listeners were frequently cited as an influence, and seemed at first sight to be of high priority. However, according to BH, 'stories found for such events rarely stick in the repertoire'. The key factor for almost half the respondents was their own intuition. Put simply, if a storyteller does not have a 'gut feeling' about a story, it is unlikely to become an established part of his/her repertoire.

How the storyteller responds emotionally to the story is important in creating a repertoire, for BH referred to it as 'the final deciding factor'.

A third finding was that the responses were evidence of the frequent use of oral methods of working on a story; in other words, the use of techniques that are characteristic of storytellers in oral cultures, as described in Chapter Three (pp. 96, 98 and 101). These techniques are being discovered and used independently by many storytellers in the revival. The four oral methods cited by respondents were:

- (i) retelling a story as a means of taking ownership of it
- (ii) visualisation
- (iii) oral devices of memorable patterned language
- (iv) use of music and rhythm, both aural and physical.

The importance of spontaneity, improvisation, and flexibility in performance was rated highly by a quarter of respondents. An analogy with jazz music by RP (p. 138, above) was especially helpful in understanding the balance between preparation and improvisation which characterises the way many respondents approached the telling of traditional stories. However, the unexpected finding that several of them worked to memorise written sources by heart, because, in AR's words: 'the written version demands a certain respect' revealed that not all revival storytellers are using traditional oral craft skills.

The significance of these findings is that they make it possible to describe storytelling techniques in common currency now. The data shows that many storytellers are operating with traditional storytelling methods which have evolved in the oral tradition, just as the stories themselves have been handed down from one generation to another. The findings show that storytellers, who have been working in relative isolation to develop their techniques, and independently developing similar ideas, have been rediscovering for themselves ancient examples of the storyteller's craft. This was a positive finding of the survey, showing that revival storytellers are still maintaining, and indeed recreating, such characteristic working methods of the oral tradition as rhythm and pattern, and internal imagery, as described in Chapter Three (p. 98).

A more unexpected outcome, and one which is less easy to categorise, is the discovery of the notion of 'living with' the story as a way of working on it, a strategy (p. 135, above) of 'assimilating the working process into the everyday occurrences of the storyteller's life'. A parallel can be drawn between the storytellers' concept of absorbing the story through ordinary every-day activity and the way in which children absorb themselves in play, their equivalent of the storytellers' craft. This holistic way of working on material, the experience of 'living with' their stories as they work on them, is an important element of these storytellers' practice, which differentiates the storytelling craft from related forms like recitation or theatrical performance. Initially I

had hoped to be able to draw an analogy between storytelling and acting as an aid to defining the craft of the storyteller. However, the finding that storytellers work in an holistic way, which is so different from the structured rehearsal process which characterises acting, challenged this assumption. In its place, a description of the revival storyteller's craft was emerging as something unique, yet grounded in traditional methods from oral cultures.

Data from the literature review about the contribution of rhythmic whole body activity (such as walking) to preparing a story for telling was reinforced by BH's response: 'I mutter the stories as I walk to get them into my body'. Many other respondents affirmed the important role of rhythmic language in the practice of their craft. The findings were that storytellers emphasise such characteristic forms of oral language as patterning, rhythm, repetition, and 'runs' such as formulae for opening and closing the story, or colourful descriptive phrases such as the traditional description of exhaustion quoted by HE: 'they'd worn their feet up to their knees'.

Unexpectedly strong substantiation of the finding that revival storytellers are rediscovering traditional oral methods came from frequent and detailed references to visualisation as a way of committing a story to memory. CF's description of his technique (p.142) was particularly important, because he was using his own version of an age-old system of creating pictures in the mind to hold and retain ideas. For ease of reference his description is reproduced again here:

In committing stories to memory I rely upon a strong sense of location: I move each episode into a house, a field or a landscape that I know well. This enables me to visualise the action and the sequence of events with complete confidence.

The ancient system which this resembles was remembered through a traditional oral story from Ancient Greece, though CF did not know of it until I told it later. It was the story of Simonides of Ceos, a storyteller who recognised and developed his own memory skills of ordered visual recall, with the help of the gods, but mostly through his own ability, honed of course by his storytelling skill. Simonides' discovery was developed into a full memory system, which became well-known in the Ancient World, and he was remembered for his art of memory (*ars memoria*) as well as for his storytelling. Cicero and other thinkers in Roman times used his ideas in the field of rhetoric, developing a system to memorise their speeches, which was described by the unknown author of the Rhetorica ad Herennium, and quoted in full by Frances Yates (1966, pp. 5 -17).

The *ars memoria* was described in Chapter Three (p. 98), but is summarised again here to detail the similarities with CF's method. It involved committing to memory the layout of a familiar building and then 'placing' in it, in specific locations, symbols or

images, such as a spear, or an anchor, to symbolise the main points of the speech. Then, in making the speech, the rhetor simply 'walked' in his imagination through the memorised building, 'picking up' the images in turn as he came to them and so following a beaten track not only through the memory location but also through the speech. Although it was used and developed for hundreds of years (Yates, 1966, chs. 1 and 2), its earliest manifestations as a straight-forward memory system interests me, and I was curious to know if it could be used, or adapted for use, by storytellers and teachers working now. The data suggested that professional and well-respected storytellers are using their own adaptations or inventions of this method as memory tools. CF's description of his method was virtually identical to the one attributed to Cicero, using, as Cicero recommended, locations which were well-known to him and so easier to commit to memory. Other storytellers to whom the idea was introduced, however, found it too restrictive a method for the flexibility they wanted in storytelling. This is where the *ars memoria* betrays its origins as a system primarily used, in Ancient Rome, by rhetors rather than by storytellers, as a way of remembering facts or 'points' rather than narrative. From the data in the survey I conclude that this is why storytellers, while using visual memory systems of their own devising, as shown by CF's evidence, have not adopted the *ars memoria* in its most developed form.

The similarity between the memory systems of ancient and modern storytellers is a good example of the way the oral tradition works, maintaining constant links passed from storyteller to storyteller, and conserving not only traditional lore in stories, riddles and rhymes, but also skills and systems of the mind which are particular to the oral tradition. The storytellers who answered this questionnaire have many artificial aids to memory, such as notebooks in which to list their repertoires, and library books through which to search for new material. But a key finding from the responses also shows that they are still drawn to oral methods of working on stories.

5.8.2 Contribution of storytelling to the formal education of primary age children

Storytellers told stories to children in a surprisingly wide range of settings, for twenty one different settings were listed in total. Although it might be valuable for other researchers to investigate the particular characteristics of these varied settings, it is not relevant to my present research, which focuses on storytelling in primary schools.

Some storytellers' responses about children's work with stories revealed that their experience of working them was limited. As recorded previously, the question asking for views on how children 'work with stories' attracted criticism from some respondents, and should have been more accurately phrased. In particular, the term 'children's work' was confusing. It should be noted, however, that no respondent found difficulty in replying to questions E and F, where the question 'how do you work?' was not perceived as ambiguous. A clearer analogy between storytellers' and

children's 'work' might have clarified question I. However, the majority of responses suggested that respondents consider that children bring intuitive understanding to the oral form of stories, and that traditional storytelling is a craft in which children of primary school age can develop a considerable degree of technical skill.

The findings are that the contribution of hearing and retelling traditional stories to children's listening skills was recognised in several responses. Working with stories was said to enable children who are struggling with school work or considered to be difficult to do well. This accords with my own experience as a teacher-storyteller, which has led me to see this as one of its main contributions to the education of primary age children. It was helpful to have this corroborated by the survey responses. A more unexpected finding was the number of references to the concern for truth which traditional stories stimulate in children, suggesting a possible role for storytelling in formal moral education.

The third question in this cluster aimed to stimulate respondents to consider children's preferences in making stories their own. The enthusiasm with which children approach the retelling of traditional tales in their own way was mentioned in many replies to this question. The frequent comments about the value of drama strategies, character work and acting as ways of taking ownership of stories suggest a need for storytellers and teachers to consider linking the two related forms of storytelling and educational drama. The lack of precision in this question meant the data lacked clarity also. An unexpected benefit, however, was the opportunity to gather more information about the strategies which the storytellers themselves had introduced for children to try. A collection of ideas can be assembled from the responses, which could be valuable to primary teachers, because combinations of craft forms and strategies were suggested which, in my experience, most non-specialist teachers do not know about. These findings about storytellers' strategies could therefore contribute to primary education in schools by disseminating storytellers' ways of working more widely.

The possibility that young children hearing and working with traditional tales can contribute to the revival of the oral tradition of storytelling was corroborated by the well-respected revival storyteller, HL, who wrote: 'I've learnt almost all my storytelling techniques from telling to children'. But this view was diametrically opposed to CF's comment: 'Only in an age as frantic as our own, could it be suggested that a storyteller's wisdom could be learned from the young'.

The aim of the data-gathering exercise was not to establish a majority view, but rather to find out the opinions of significant figures in the storytelling world. It was clear that there is no common approach to storytelling, nor a shared view of its value. The information gathered, however, goes some way towards identifying patterns in the storytelling revival, which could be valuable and encouraging to those storytellers who

understand themselves as being cut off from tradition.

5.8.3 Key findings

There are six key findings in total from the data:

- i) Storytellers in the revival are both contributing to the reestablishment of an oral tradition in England and Wales and drawing on it for craft skills.
- ii) Storytellers rate their own intuition highly as a factor when choosing material for their repertoires.
- iii) A variety of traditional oral methods are in common use for remembering and preparing stories for performance. Four main types of strategy were identified:
 - retelling the story as a way of making it one's own
 - using visualisation and inner imagery
 - using patterned language, including traditional runs and formulae
 - using music and bodily or aural rhythm.
- iv) Preparation of stories is frequently characterised by the 'assimilation' of a story, through 'living with' it: a process which is different from the rehearsal of an actor.
- v) Storytellers consider that children of primary age can develop storytelling skills, that they can work easily and successfully with stories and can contribute to the revival of the oral tradition.
- vi) Storytellers work with children with stories in varied and creative ways. The range of techniques and strategies for use in the classroom which was identified could make a valuable contribution to the formal education of primary school children.

5.9 Conclusions

The most significant outcome of the survey is the finding that traditional storytelling techniques are still in common currency in contemporary England and Wales. The use of these techniques enables storytellers to see themselves as practitioners of craft skills which have evolved in the oral tradition, just as the stories themselves are handed down from one generation to another. The mnemonic techniques developed by many revival storytellers, which resemble those of their predecessors in Greece and Rome, are examples of this oral transmission. To be able to show to other storytellers, working in relative isolation, that many of their peers have independently developed similar ideas, and are rediscovering for themselves ancient examples of the storyteller's craft, is a valuable outcome of this empirical research. This finding relates to the education of storytellers themselves.

In relation to the formal education of children, the survey endorsed the view that children bring energy and focus in their approach to a story. Whereas this enthusiasm, so vital a factor if learning is to take place, can be observed equally in both able children

and those causing concern, many respondents emphasised the social advantages of work with traditional stories for those children who are perceived as under-achievers.

Another quality of the child's ability to 'enter' and become absorbed in the secondary world of the story was identified in the links the storytellers made between acting, play and dramatic play, especially the typical, though not unique, method of 'playing out'. Given the close relationship between performance storytelling and the world of the theatre, both now and in the past, this is an aspect of the findings which could be of interest to a wider audience in education and theatre as well as storytelling. It merits further research.

Finally, a potentially valuable practical outcome for teachers from the data is the rich store of ideas from storytellers for classroom activities related to oral work with traditional tales (detailed above, on pp. 147-9). By describing the typical activities planned to enable children's responses to stories, and suggesting other, more unusual ones, the data could be used to enrich the range of preparatory, engaging and follow-up activities which can be offered in the classroom. These suggestions could be used by teacher-storytellers and primary teachers alike, to increase the skills of their craft.

Although a considerable amount of data has been analysed in this chapter, more detailed information is needed on how children work with stories. Evidence arising from participant observation, rather than recorded at second hand from storytellers, could reduce the gaps in the information this research aimed to gather. The fifth and final chapter describes case records from three residencies in which I worked as a teacher-storyteller with primary age children. It offers more detailed examples of children's work with stories, which will amplify the storyteller's responses in the second cluster of the survey. The fifth chapter addresses the research question: what does storytelling offer to the education of primary school children?

6.0 Chapter Five: Case records of three residencies

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the part of the research that set out to answer the research question: What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary school children? In the previous chapter, storytellers' understandings of this issue were analysed. In the research reported in this chapter, further data about how children work with stories was gathered during three residencies I undertook in London primary schools, across the primary age range. The contents of these residencies, which took place between October 1993 and April 1996, are described and analysed chronologically in the order in which they were undertaken.

6.1.1 Background to the residencies

Cohen and Manion defined a 'case study' as an opportunity to build and extend a knowledge base, with a particular emphasis on the 'interpretive, subjective dimensions of educational phenomena' (1995, pp. 120). They described two principle types of case study method: participant and non-participant observation. The residencies reported in this chapter used participant observation as defined by Silverman, as a method which 'involves sharing in people's lives while attempting to learn their symbolic world' (1993, p. 48). Broadly speaking an ethnographic approach was adopted, seeking to link my research fieldnotes 'into a coherent text representing some aspect or slice of the world covered' (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 1995, p. 170). Each residency was established in consultation with, and in one case at the request of, the head teacher and staff concerned. The agreed educational aims of the residencies are reported below. The purpose of undertaking the residencies for the research was to examine children's responses to and views on traditional oral stories and storytelling across the primary age range.

The residencies took place in three inner-city schools in two London boroughs. The schools were invited to participate because of personal links I had with class and head teachers in all three schools. This meant that background knowledge about each school, its ethos and catchment area was already available to enable me to contextualise the case records. The first case study took place in Y6, the last year of Key Stage 2, with eleven year old children. The second took place in the nursery class of a primary school, with four year old children. The third took place as part of a year long residency in a primary school, during which I worked with every class in the school. This residency took place in Y2, with seven year olds, in order to include data from the end of the first Key Stage of compulsory schooling. By ensuring diversity in the conditions of each residency, I aimed to give a breadth of application to any conclusions which were drawn.

In reporting the residencies only the first names of the children will be given, and these

have been changed. The names of the schools have also been changed. The teachers' names are not given, though in Case Record Two the teacher's initials identify her contributions to the first transcript. These strategies comply with ethical considerations of confidentiality (Altrichter, Posch and Somekh, 1993, p. 78). The case records include the following information:

- (i) the aims of the activities
- (ii) the age of the children
- (iii) the relevance of the activities and their outcomes to the research question.

For the research the aims were:

- (i) to collect evidence to test my working hypothesis about the value of storytelling and related activities in formal education, which is outlined below.
- (ii) to produce a 'proper qualitative analysis true to the spirit of a reflexive ethnography' (Delamont, 1992, p.150).

The form and structure of each residency are described at the beginning of each case record, because they were sufficiently different to require individual descriptions. In two cases, children's written work is included. However, this was of course an outcome which was not oral work, and this has been borne in mind when considering the texts.

6.1.2 Educational benefits of working with traditional oral stories

The views on the potential educational benefits of working with traditional oral stories which I held before beginning the residencies are outlined below. They were tested out in practice during this part of the research. They represent the accumulated experience of fifteen years as a full time primary and advisory teacher, and five years part time and four years full time as a storyteller. Undertaking this research has helped me to make explicit and to justify my implicit ideas on the value of storytelling as an educational activity. Essentially, this chapter is an account of my first-hand experience as a teacher-storyteller, and does not necessarily represent the views or experiences of other storytellers, as reported in Chapter Four. This chapter focuses on a range of aspects of education to which my experience or research lead me to believe storytelling has something to contribute. There is no attempt to rank or order them in terms of importance. However, the case records from the residencies focus on the cognitive and creative aspects of working with children on traditional tales, as these are the areas in which I suggest storytelling has a unique contribution to make, based on my personal experience as a teacher-storyteller, and on the review of literature in Chapters Two and Three.

6.1.2.1 Cognitive benefits

Hearing and retelling traditional tales contributes to the ability to predict and sequence narratives. The first factor which assists this is the patterned shape of traditional tales,

which makes it possible to predict 'what happens next'. A second element is the way in which tellers and listeners become familiar with 'families' of stories (various tale-type indices, which are discussed in Chapter One, have been devised to categorise these), which enables them to relate content in one story to what they know of another of the same type. Thirdly, traditional tales relate events rather than emotions or psychological states. This keeps the narrative line clear.

Children bring a lively interest in the truth value of stories to hearing and retelling traditional tales. The first question I am most commonly asked by child listeners is: 'Is that a true story?' My view on this phenomenon is that stories engage children in considering reality and fantasy, truth and make-believe, and that this is a most important and urgent question for even the youngest primary age children.

Finally, my experience has led me to believe that storytelling using traditional tales exercises and develops the memory. The 'shaping of the story' over many tellings by different people makes stories memorable in two ways: firstly, the narrative becomes shaped and predictable, as discussed above. Secondly, the language becomes patterned, often using formulaic expressions or rhythmic language which are retained in both mind and body, giving a variety of ways to access the story in the memory.

6.1.2.2 Creative benefits

As I have argued previously, in Chapter Two (pp. 73-75), the way in which storytelling combines a remembered frame and newly improvised presentation provides Vygotskian scaffolding for the storyteller's creativity. I wondered if the framework of the story supported the teller into the ZPD, enabling a performance which is more accomplished, detailed and complex than the teller could manage alone, while still leaving him/her the opportunity to create a personal and individual version. There can be equality of opportunity in retelling a traditional tale, for each teller's version is valued, and a child may contribute something to a retelling which becomes valued and perhaps adopted by adult storytellers of the tale, as the transcripts from Queen Anne's Nursery, reported below, will demonstrate.

6.1.2.3 Communicative benefits

Storytelling can be a useful instrument for developing the communicative skills of speaking and listening. Retelling a story provides the teller with rich models of language forms and vocabulary. The storytelling situation offers a real audience, so that language is used for a purpose. By retelling a story, children are handing it on and taking part in the process of the oral tradition. Technical skills of expression, gesture, body language, vocal projection and breathing can be taught to them and developed in the storytelling situation. Listening skills can be made explicit to them and the content of stories encourages them to attend, especially if told in a participative way. In my experience, children learning English as an additional language find traditional stories

helpful material because of the repetitions of words, phrases and ideas and especially where oral language is supported by a range of visual clues to assist comprehension, such as objects, pictures, or facial expression and body language. Furthermore, by choosing stories from a home culture represented in a group, a storyteller can enable children to share expertise with the rest of the group and raise the self esteem of the child whose culture has been celebrated.

6.1.2.4 Emotional benefits

The lively debate about the psychological effects of the content of traditional tales was reported on in Chapters One and Two. At this point in the thesis I want to focus on the educational benefits of the activity of retelling traditional tales. For some children who are seen as disruptive, storytelling channels their desire for attention into a constructive activity. Success and appreciation as a storyteller gives a boost to self-esteem which can spill over into other areas of school and social life. Working with a partner to prepare a story can give valuable experience in negotiation and co-operation. Giving constructive feedback to a storytelling peer after a storytelling event allows children to give and receive praise. Telling a story to a group of younger children in the school enables less-confident tellers to practise in a non-threatening situation, and gives older children an experience of caring for younger ones which can be nurturing for both parties.

6.1.2.5 Social benefits

Through storytelling work children can be assisted to develop social skills, in particular those of listening. Traditional tales provide material to which children, in my experience, want to listen. They can remain absorbed in a story for longer than most teachers, or other persons who know them well, might expect. They can attend to each other when a story is being retold. They will listen to repeated tellings of the same story and note differences between versions, often referring to both content and form in a discriminating and closely observant way. The cooperative nature of the oral tradition seems to act as a paradigm for children's own work on stories, encouraging them to work together and share ideas.

6.2 Case Record One: Andrew Marvell Primary School (September 1993 to March 1994)

6.2.1 Specific aims and rationale of residency

This residency was undertaken as a storytelling project with a Year 6 group of 22 children, aged ten and eleven years old, on one afternoon a week over the Autumn and Spring terms of the academic year 1993-4. The aims of the residency were:

- i) To introduce the class to the telling of traditional stories from around the world
- ii) To enrich the Speaking and Listening area of the curriculum

The aim of this part of the research was to collect children's own stories as inspired by the stimulus stories, told by myself.

A range of folk tales from various cultures were selected which told how the world came to be as it is. Creation stories were chosen because of their typically traditional formal characteristics, and because they present a variety of views about why the world is as it is, which can be compared with children's understanding of and knowledge about the world.

The stories used in these case records were:

- i) How the sun came (Native American Coyote story)
- ii) Bee and Mantis (Bushman legend)
- ii) The swallowing drum (West African folktale)

These stories were chosen for the following reasons:

- i) They are good examples of the characteristic oral form of folk tales because they have patterned, repetitive form and content
- ii) They represent different cultures
- iii) They are stories I had first learned orally, so I knew at first hand that they were appropriate material for oral transmission
- iv) They were long-established parts of my repertoire, so I knew them well

The school was situated in a Victorian Board School building and served an inner city area of London. The class was a Year 6 group of 22 children, of ten and eleven years old, whose teacher was attending a twenty day maths course on Thursday afternoons. I worked as a teacher-storyteller with the class on these afternoons, in the role of a supply teacher. The headteacher had a strong personal interest in storytelling and was supportive to my research interest. The class teacher was a technology specialist and believed that through participating in the storytelling project her class could cover areas of the curriculum in which she felt herself to be lacking expertise. She was supportive in a practical way, giving me relevant information about individuals in the class and liaising over the progress of the work.

6.2.2 Working methods

The aim in this research was to collect children's own stories as inspired by my telling of the stimulus stories, and to interview them about the stories. Children's stories at this school were collected in the following forms:

- i) Written stories resulting from a traditional creation folk tale told by me as a stimulus
- ii) Storyboards: the storyboard is a term borrowed from media studies, a graphic representation of the main points of a narrative in a series of pictures. In my previous experience, it had proved a useful way of clarifying and

remembering the key events of a story, and more effective than a written record in enabling a flexible retelling. For children, a helpful analogy is that of a strip cartoon, which the storyboard closely resembles

iii) Oral versions scribed by me from a child's dictated prose

iv) Storymaps: the storymap is a memory aid invented, to the best of my knowledge, by storytellers in the revival. It provides another way of recording a story pictorially, focusing on locations rather than events, in contrast to the storyboard. Because so many traditional stories feature a journey, whether real or metaphoric, the storymap helps the storyteller to recall the events of the story as well as their locations. Storymaps can be created in a variety of media, individually or collectively. When created in drama they are sometimes called 'storyworlds'. In this residency, the storymaps were graphic and individual.

Although I used a variety of approaches to explore the stories I told, and the children were asked to record their responses in different ways, as noted above, the basic outline for each half day session was as follows:

Introduction: sharing the aims of the session, which were to collect the children's views on and responses to the stories

Storytelling session: telling the stimulus story

Response time: a variety of tasks offered, as described in the section above

Concluding activity: sharing children's work, or inviting final comments and contributions from individuals as a round.

Because there were control difficulties with this class, it was agreed with the class teacher that the tasks I set for the children in this part of the research would be optional.

The written work, storyboards and storymaps were created during three sessions on 30th September 1993, 7th October 1993 and 14th October 1993, near the beginning of the residency. The interviews about the children's stories were undertaken on 3rd February 1994, near the end.

The first task which I set the children, on 30th September 1993, was to listen to my retelling of the traditional Native American story How the sun came and then to write their own story using this as a stimulus. A full written version based on my retelling is included here, for ease of reference. This version comes from Collins (1996).

6.2.3 My retelling of the story How the sun came

Long, long ago, before there were any people in the world, only the animals, it was dark all the time.

Dark in the night time and dark in the day time. Dark in the day time and dark in the night time. And life was hard for the animals. They couldn't see to find their food. They couldn't see to cook their food. They couldn't see where they were going.

They had bumps and cuts and bruises because they were always falling down in the dark. They were thin because they couldn't find any food.

Now Coyote was a clever animal. He was full of tricks. He got tired of falling down. He got tired of being thin. He said to himself, "If I had a friend to help me, life would not be so hard. Who shall I choose to be my friend?"

He looked all around and he chose Eagle - Eagle with the sharp claws, the strong beak, the powerful wings. He went to Eagle and he said, "Let's be friends. We can do everything together and life will be easier for us both."

So Coyote and Eagle became friends and they helped each other to find food, to find somewhere safe to sleep, to find safe places to go. And life was easier for them both.

Then they began to hear stories that far away, in the West, where the Kachinas lived, there was a bright light which belonged to the Kachinas.

"If only we had that light," said Coyote, "We could use it to help us find our way."

So they decided to travel to the West to find the bright light. They travelled and they travelled for a long time, Coyote walking and Eagle flying, across the long flat grass lands of the world. And sometimes they would see a bright light flash in the sky in the West, and then they would look at each other and nod, because they knew that they could see the light they wanted to find.

At last the long flat grass lands came to an end, and the mountains of the West made a high wall in front of Coyote and Eagle. Now they could see the bright light more and more. They knew they were coming to the end of their journey.

They began to climb the foothills of the mountains. They peeped carefully over some rocks. In front of them they saw the camp of the Kachinas, with their lodges in a circle round the fire. The Kachinas were dancing round the fire and the drummers were drumming. Next to the drummers stood a big wooden box. Coyote and Eagle saw one of the dancers come out of the circle, dance to the box and open it. A bright light shone out. Then the lid of the box dropped down again and the light was gone. Coyote and Eagle looked at each other. This was the bright light they had come to find!

They watched the dancers and the drummers for a long time. They saw the dancers stop dancing one by one, and yawn, and go into the lodges to sleep. They saw the drummers stop drumming and put down their drums and go into the lodges to sleep. They saw the bright fire burn down until there were only grey ashes and a thin line of smoke. They waited and watched, watched and waited for a long time. At last, when they were sure that everyone was asleep, they crept over the rocks, they came down the hill, they tiptoed between the lodges and they stepped past the fire. They picked up the box. Coyote took one side in his strong jaws and Eagle took the other side in her strong claws, and then they carried it, one walking, one flying, past the fire, between the lodges, up the hill and down the other side and away across the long flat grass lands of the world.

They went on for a long time, until Coyote's jaws were sore and Eagle's claws

were tired.

Then Coyote said, "I'm so tired. I want to rest."

Eagle looked back and said, "Now I think it is safe to rest. We have walked far enough. The Kachinas will not be able to see us. But we must keep watch in case they wake up and come after us. You can sleep first and I will keep watch. Then when you have had a rest I will sleep and you can keep watch."

So Coyote put his nose on his paws and lay down and went to sleep. And Eagle flew up above him into the sky and circled round and round and round, keeping watch. She flew and she flew until her wings were tired and she could not fly any more. Then she flew back down and woke up Coyote.

"Now it's your turn to watch so that I can sleep," she said to Coyote. Eagle put her head under her wing and went to sleep, and Coyote sat up to watch.

Coyote looked to the East, and he looked to the West, and he looked at the box. Then he looked to the West, and he looked to the East, and he looked at the box.

He looked to the East, and he looked at the box.

He looked to the West, and he looked at the box.

He looked at the box and he looked at the box and he looked at the box!

"I wonder what the bright light is like? I just want to have a little peep," thought Coyote. And he just could not help himself. He had to see! He pushed the lid of the box with his long nose. The lid opened a crack. The bright light came shining out through the crack. But it wasn't just bright, it was hot as well, and it burnt the soft spot at the end of Coyote's nose. He yelped, and jumped back. And when he jumped back his nose bumped on the lid of the box. And when it was bumped the lid of the box opened. And when the lid opened the bright light flew out of the box and up into the sky - up and up and up!

I don't know what woke up the Eagle - maybe it was the noise that Coyote made. Maybe it was the bright light shining down from the sky. But she did wake up. And she looked around. She saw Coyote rubbing his burnt nose, she saw the open lid of the box, she saw the bright light up in the sky. Quickly she flapped her wings and flew up into the sky, up and up and up, chasing the bright light. But the bright light went so fast and so high that she could not catch it, and at last she had to come slowly back down again.

Coyote looked at Eagle. Was she cross because Coyote had opened the box and lost the light? But when Eagle looked at Coyote and saw his worried face, and his burnt nose, he couldn't be cross.

She said, "Never mind, Coyote. We can't keep the bright light for ourselves, but now that it is in the sky we can share it with all the animals."

So the bright light stayed up in the sky and made the day time light. The animals could see now to find their food, to cook their food, and to see where they were going. So they were happy.

And if you look up in the sky, you will see that the bright light is still there,

even today!

And that is the story that the Native American people tell about how the sun came in the sky.

6.2.4 The children's story work

The stories written by the children in response to hearing How the sun came blended elements of what they had heard with original material that reflected their own concerns. I selected three stories which were written during the session on 30th September 1993 for further analysis, and on 3rd February 1994 I asked their authors to respond to questions about their work in an oral interview with me, during which I scribed their responses in longhand. The stories and interviews are reproduced below in full. The story which was closest in form to the folk tale was the one written by Soraya (aged 11.0 years).

6.2.4.1 Soraya's story work

6.2.4.1.1 Story 1: How rain came by Soraya (30th September 1993)

One day in America there was no light. When it was night it was dark when it was morning it was dark. So Coyote slept all day. So when he was hungry it was hard for him to find some food for him to eat.

But one day he said I must find a best friend and that is going to be Immy the Robber. So he started to look for Immy the Robber. Finally Coyote found him because he had eyes like torches. He was easy to find because he had eyes like torches.

So one day they both went to the north. Immy the Robber flyed and Coyote walked. While they were walking and flying right in front of them was a big red box. So Coyote picked it up and Immy said open it up. So Coyote opened it. Just then rain came light came trees grewed plants grow food grow.

Coyote and Immy the robber were so happy they did not see the other animals because it was dark they did not know that there was other animals.

6.2.4.1.2 Interview with Soraya (3rd February 1994)

FC: Can you tell me where you got the ideas for this story?

S: I got it from the story the teacher told.

FC: Why did you decide to have Immy the Robber?

S: No reason. I just chose a name and asked Immy if he wanted to be and he said he doesn't mind.

FC: What kind of story would you say this is?

S: A fiction story.

FC: Before the story there was no light. Do you know why?

S: Because it was just dark before. And in the bible it said god created light.

FC: What do you think the story means?

S: Not really anything. It's just like for little children.

6.2.4.1.3 Analysis of Soraya's story work

Soraya used the same setting and plot as the stimulus story, and simply created a new character to join the hero Coyote by putting a friend from the class into the role filled in the original by Eagle. Her new character had an attribute, the 'eyes like torches', which Soraya herself had invented, but which related closely to the setting of the story. Although the lack of light was irrelevant to her plot and seemed to have been imported wholesale from the stimulus story, it created an environment to which her invented character seems peculiarly suited. The action of her story began with Coyote's search for a best friend, and they travelled to the north without any apparent purpose, although the journey resulted in their discovery of the powerful big red box. The story therefore was formed of a series of apparently unrelated incidents linked by the connectives 'so, so, but, so, finally, so, while, so, so, just then'. There was no expression of motive or incorporation of material, except for the implicit link between Immy the Robber's 'eyes like torches' and the perpetual darkness of the story world. The coda at the end in which Coyote and Immy the Robber joyfully discovered the existence of the other animals, once it was light enough to see them, was expressed in a confused manner, possibly because of the complication of tenses which the sense required. This seemed like an afterthought on Soraya's part, and as a teacher-storyteller I considered it a useful plot device, as it served the purpose of providing direct gratification to the story's characters from the actions which they had performed.

In the interview with Soraya about her story, which took place almost four months after its composition, she was fairly offhand about her motivation and purpose, and dismissed it as 'just for little children', when asked what she thought it meant. The question, 'Before the story there was no light. Do you know why?' was put to each child with the intention of clarifying how they had imagined the 'world' of their story as they started to compose. Soraya replied in terms which contextualised her trivialisation of her own and the stimulus story: 'Because it was just dark before and in the bible it said god created light.' It seemed that for Soraya there was only one story which had enough weight to be taken seriously, which in her view was the truth, rather than a story, which she recognised with the certainty of religious faith. This was a position which she held with great consistency all through the project, for she was definite, almost dogmatic, in her responses when we discussed the 'truth of the story' further:

FC: How did you decide if the story is true or not?

S: I know that it is false because God made the world.

FC: In your opinion, how did the sun really come to be in the sky?

S: By God.

FC: How did you decide if this is the true reason or not?

S: Because I know.

It was not easy to negotiate with Soraya on any of these responses, nor did I consider it appropriate to do so, but I was intrigued by the apparent contradiction between her rejection of the storyworld on one hand, and the ease with which she made use of its conventions and form, as evidenced by the threefold use of the traditional opening 'One day'. I wondered if she saw stories as tools which adults use 'for children', with the implied condescension of the preteenager for anything which seems 'childish'.

In many ways Soraya's story was, as noted above, the closest to the stimulus one. Yet she introduced personal unique material which was appropriate for the traditional form and made her own individual version.

6.2.4.2 Karen's story work

6.2.4.2.1 Story 2: How the seas came by Karen (30th September 1993)

One day long ago a king ruled the world. He had one slave called Coyote, he was kind of a wolf. There was a treasure that Coyote knew and noone in the whole wide world knew about it. It was in the cellar, there was a silver thing; but nowadays they call them taps. The king didn't know about this. He thought what on earth are they? One had a blue spot on it and one had a red spot on it. Anyway he had to tell his friend tiger about this.

Tiger lived in a big piece of land that dipped down the way. There was quite a lot of them in the world. "TIGER TIGER! Do you know what is in my cellar there are two silver things with a blue dot on one and a red dot on the other. Come and see".

Tiger said "Alright". When they got in the cellar the tiger said "Wow. Twist that thing on the top." So he did and all of a sudden loads and loads of water came pouring out. They got out the door and forgot to turn it off again and water went out the front door and into the holes. That's how seas came.

6.2.4.2.2 Interview with Karen (3rd February 1994)

FC: Can you tell me where you got the ideas for this story?

K: I don't know -I just thought of it.

FC: Why did you decide to have the taps in it?

K: Cos I couldn't think of anything else.

FC: What kind of story would you say this is?

K: A watery story.

FC: Before this story there were no seas. Do you know why?

K: There was no such thing as water.

FC: What do you think the story means?

K: Tells you how seas came.

6.2.4.2.3 Analysis of Karen's story work

Karen (aged 10.8 years) wrote a story which took the format of the title of the stimulus story, but moved off quickly into her own ideas. The story began with a formulaic utterance in keeping with traditional story forms, but Karen quickly brought in features of the everyday world when she wrote, 'nowadays they call them taps'. Her humorous account of the origin of the seas mirrored the folktale motif in which the seas become salt because of the salt mill which no one could stop, or the flood of broth and herrings in which a village was engulfed after the hapless silly forgets the word to stop the cauldron. Karen structured her story with a plot firmly in her mind, using the introduction of the key figure, Tiger, to set the scene by describing his environment as 'a big piece of land that dipped down the way. There was quite a lot of them in the world.' This detail seemed to be irrelevant until the end, when she wrote that the water flooded out and 'into the holes'. At this point it became clear to me that every detail was carefully woven into the story and that this coda was actually a piece of reincorporation.

Karen gave distinct characters to her two protagonists: Coyote, modelled on the traditional Trickster figure, was inquisitive, gregarious and gossipy ('He had to tell his friend Tiger about this'). Tiger was the initiator, though not apparently the executor, of the crucial action of the story. Together they formed an archetypal pair of stock characters, recently incarnated as Laurel and Hardy, but with antecedents in Harlequin and Punch. In Karen's story it was not easy to unpick who was doing what, owing to her rather confusing use of the pronoun 'he'. For instance, in the opening paragraph it was not clear whether it was Coyote or the king who wondered 'What on earth are they?' In fact a reading in which it is the king who, with Tiger, discovered and turned on the taps is legitimate based on the story's grammar; though, as Karen knew, story conventions dictated that the appropriate character to accompany Tiger was in fact Coyote. This was a piece which successfully adopted and manipulated the traditional tale framework and worked both for Karen as its composer and as a modern form of a folk tale.

In her interview Karen was unable to articulate what her thought processes had been when devising the tale. She said 'I don't know' to the question about where the ideas for the story came from. It seemed they just came unbidden, and apparently unsought, into her head. Her remark about the genesis of the idea of the taps, 'I couldn't think of anything else', was dismissive of a deft, appropriate and comic touch. This was however quite characteristic of Karen, who manifested a rather poor self-image in other ways, in spite of abundant evidence to the contrary. She was quite clear in interview that the taps were the source, not only of the seas, but of all water, and this was further emphasised by her definition of the story type as 'watery'. She was able to manipulate

the traditional form skilfully and with originality, and to disassociate what happened in the story world from what happens, in her view, in the real world. Her understanding of where things come from was as clear cut as Soraya's, because she said: 'God made everything else so he made the sun as well'.

6.2.4.3 Lilith's story work

6.2.4.3.1 Story 3: How the Earth was saved! by Lilith (30th September 1993)

One day the world had flooded and the animals had to be saved. At that minute came a man made of gold on an ark.

"Come on, quick, before you drown!"

So on went the deer, eagle, beaver, otter, bear and water rat.

The man knew how to make the world back again!

All he needed was a bit of soil so he asked the water rat "Please Brother Water Rat, dive down into the water and go and get me a grain of earth!"

So the water rat dived in and swam for hours and just put his paw on a bit of earth when he ran out of breath and floated to the top and beaver saw him and took him on board and took the grain of earth from his paw and the gold man put his finger on his eyes and the water rat was alive. The gold man wasted no time - he threw the bit of earth and blew as hard as he could and they were no longer floating any more! The animals turned to thank him but the gold man had gone!

And that's how the earth was saved.

6.2.4.3.2 Interview with Lilith (3rd February 1994)

FC: Can you tell me where you got the ideas for this story?

L: From my head.

FC: Why did you decide to have a golden man?

L: To show that he was a spirit and that god is always there.

FC: What kind of story would you say this is?

L: A don't worry about anything story, because everything will be alright in the end.

FC: What do you think the story means?

L: To show that animals could be a help so don't kill them. And god tells us not to kill.

FC: Before the story begins the world had flooded. Do you know what had happened to make this happen?

L: Yes, I had thought about it before I write it down. I had to make it have sense so you know what the story's about and that's it.

6.2.4.3.3 Analysis of Lilith's story work

Lilith (11.1 years) created a story as a result of listening to 'How the sun came' which used traditional themes which appear in civilisations as far apart, both temporally and spatially, as the Sumerian legends of the Middle East, the Inca stories of South America, and the Maori tales of New Zealand. The key elements of Lilith's story, which were the ark, the flood, the golden man, creation of the land from a grain of earth, resurrection through the laying on of hands, are archetypal images. Lilith created a high quality piece of storytelling work in her combination of traditional motifs into a story that she made uniquely her own. She created her own storyworld: it was as though How the sun came opened the door into her storehouse of deeds and images, but she made her own path through what she found there, rather than following closely the track of the stimulus story, as the others did. She wrote with economy and vigour, from her formulaic opening to the coda formed of the repetition of the title, which is a traditional form of closure which was adopted by many storymakers. The story moved with a lively pace through its momentous events, the pace characterised in the writing both by frequent references to time passing, such as: 'one day, at that minute, for hours, the gold man wasted no time' and by the long and breathless sentence of nine clauses linked by connectives into which the key actions of the story were packed. The animals she listed were all totem animals of the Native American peoples, so she maintained links with the stimulus story, though the plot was more closely connected to her own cultural background in the Mediterranean area, for her parents came from Libya. The mysterious figure of the man made of gold, who appeared from nowhere, performed three major restorative acts:

- (i) the saving of the animals
- (ii) the recreation of the land
- (iii) the resurrection of water rat.

He then disappeared before the animals had a chance to thank him. I was intrigued by him, and wondered on which sources Lilith had drawn to create this character.

The interview data revealed that Lilith's ideas for the story had come 'from my head' and that the golden man took this form to 'show that he was a spirit and that god is always there.' She defined the story type as 'a don't worry about anything story, because everything will be alright in the end', and made two mentions of god in her answers. It seemed clear from the way that she phrased her answer, however, that the golden man was not god, but a spirit, and that the existence of one did not preclude the existence of the other, in Lilith's view. This view contrasted with those of most of the other children in the class, who could not entertain the notion of creatures similar to god rivalling his position. Lilith was the first of the child storymakers in this residency to use her story to communicate a moral goal ('And god tells us not to kill') as well as to convey something of her positive philosophy of life. When asked about the source of her ideas, she responded indirectly. She explained her thought processes about the storyworld she had created before the narrative could begin, by saying, 'I had thought

about it before I write it down (sic). I had to make it have sense so you know what the story's about and that's it'. This showed, in my estimation, that she was aware of the importance when storytelling of communicating with an audience, for she told me this as a way of helping the listener, to understand the way she had developed the story.

Although this concludes my analysis of the stories inspired by How the sun came, I wish to include also a story which Richard (10.9 years) created, based on Bee and Mantis. I told this Bushman creation story to the class on 7th October 1993, and then set them the task of making a storyboard of it. Most of the class found the story a difficult and rather unsatisfying piece. They were asked to respond to it by first producing a storyboard, which, as described on p. 163, is a series of images depicting the story, like a cartoon strip. They were then asked to list the questions about the story they would ask if they could meet the storyteller who first told the story. Because the original material depicted in Richard's storyboard intrigued me, I asked him to tell me the story behind it, while I scribed for him. That he possessed a lively eclectic curiosity and inquiring mind, was clear from both his story and the interview, the data form which is reported and analysed below.

My retelling of the stimulus story is not reproduced here, as it was very short, and its essential details were included in the first three sentences of Robert's retelling.

6.2.4.4 Richard's story work

6.2.4.4.1 Story 4: Richard's story (7th October 1993)

In the beginning in the middle of space a Bee and a Mantis were flying through the darkness. Then the bee landed on earth where it was totally covered with water and the mantis stood on a flower.

As he stood there the earth evolved around him. As the earth got older and older it got more and more dangerous because people were inventing dangerous things and were being very competitive and killing off lots of fish and animals till most of them were gone. They were all killed either by humans or toxic waste.

On the seabed the last fish put a warning for any travellers who arrived there: Warning: toxic - humans have arrived!

6.2.4.4.2 Interview with Richard (3rd February 1994)

FC: Can you tell me where you got the ideas for this story?

R: From the story you told me - it was based on that.

FC: Why did you decide to make the story about toxic waste?

R: Because the days are polluted - the world's so polluted.

FC: Before the story begins there was no light. Do you know why?

R: Because it's in space.

FC: What do you think the story means?

R: Means not to use up the resources of the world and not to dump toxic.

FC: What kind of story would you say this is?

R: Save the environment.

6.2.4.4.3 Analysis of Richard's story work

Richard's story, told in only six flowing and well-crafted sentences, began by reiterating the one I had told, compressing it slightly but retaining every important detail. From line four, he created spontaneously without any direction from the stimulus story and his narrative moved in one economic sentence ('as he stood there the earth evolved around him') from the beginning of the world to his own time. Here he introduced his own concerns about the environment, grasping the essence of the Bushman story and using it to say something personal and passionate about his own world and the conduct of his elders. In a longer, but no less economic, sentence he castigated the aspects of modern society he deplored, such as irresponsible inventions, competition, and destruction of the natural world, and introduced the ghastly consequences which result. His final sentence concluded the story with wry humour, by expressing his pessimism about the human race. It opened the possibility that the life force would reenergise, and left listeners to wonder about the enigma of the 'travellers': who will they be, and where from?

Of the four stories presented here, this was the only one created in the oral form, because, as indicated above, it was told to me by Richard from his pictures, quite quickly, at the end of the day, yet at a pace which enabled me to scribe it as he went along. These factors account for the brevity and immediacy of the story, and its lack of descriptive or explanatory passages. But on the other hand it does not really need these, because it is robust, well-shaped and retains both the content of the stimulus story and its form, which Richard recreated to meet his own needs as a storyteller and narrator. Richard's interview data shows he was aware of the source of his story: 'From the story you told me, it was based on that'. He understood his story as having a message, though not a moral one, in contrast to Lilith. He obviously felt strongly about environmental issues, for these figured in three of his responses, and his emotion was communicated in the metaphor he used in replying to my question about his decision to make his story about toxic waste, when he said: 'Because the days are polluted, the world's so polluted'. His answers also indicated pragmatism, for his response to the framework question was characteristically short, logical and scientific: '*Before the story begins there was no light. Do you know why?*' 'Because it's in space'. In this story, Richard combined an interest in science with an ability to understand and use characteristics of traditional story form.

6.2.5 Storymaps by Lorna and Richard (14th October 1993)

Examples of another form of story making were collected during this residency. After being told the story The swallowing drum, on 14th October 1993, two children, Lorna and Richard, were asked to respond by mapping it. Their responses provide examples of the interplay between children's personal knowledge and schemata of their world, and the storyworld depicted by the storyteller. A definition of the term 'storymap' appears above, p. 165. Both storymaps discussed below are included in appendix 4.

6.2.5.1 My summary of the story The swallowing drum

Because there are no children's written or oral versions of the story to compare with my told version, this story is summarised only, rather than included in a full written form based on my retelling, but with sufficient detail to provide the context for the storymaps that were created in class.

The swallowing drum is a West African story of the journey of a little girl, called Ibanang, into a forbidden forest close to her village. The forest contained a giant swallowing drum which swallowed her up when she reached the centre of the forest. Her mother searched her out and rescued her, and the story ended happily.

The story is set in Nigeria, a fact which was included in my introduction, and which the children internalised, for they searched out and found Nigeria in an atlas. I tried not to make the story's setting too exotic and foreign in the exposition, avoiding, for instance, the word 'jungle', and using 'forest' instead. However, the children's storymaps gave an insight into their mental images of the story, and offered a chance to find out how they pictured the world of the story in their imaginations.

6.2.5.2 Analysis of Lorna's storymap

Lorna's storymap was the simpler, showing every key feature of my version of the story, including two paths which led into a forest, and three bends in the path which the central character, Ibanang, followed. Although she did not include any material not mentioned in my story, her map demonstrated an ability to combine elements of this story world with her own. It included an archetypal depiction of the houses in the village, as 'pointy roofed square-windowed town cottages' (of which there are many around her school) and the trees in the forest, which were a variation on the lollipop deciduous trees so often drawn by young children. Lorna's storymap would not be out of place in a popular cartoon or comic. Did this mean that, in listening to the story, she had imagined it in a familiar location? This is one of the ways in which professional storytellers take ownership of new material, as shown by the responses to the storytellers' questionnaires reported in Chapter Four. One of the most common ways they made a story their own was to set it in a location with which they were familiar. Asking children to draw storymaps of the stories they have been told seems therefore to be a valuable way of investigating their responses. If, as Lorna seemed to, they

visualise stories in familiar surroundings, then this is an indication that they fit the storyworld materials into their own existing schemes of knowledge, working in the same way as storytellers past and present in the oral tradition.

6.2.5.3 Analysis of Richard's storymap

Richard's storymap was more complex than Lorna's, as were his responses to stories in general. He made his own contribution to the story, through adding his own ideas and locations, such as 'the port' and 'bandits' corner', while still representing, like Lorna, every location originally mentioned. His map synthesised the traditional material and his own ideas to create a story which had greater personal significance for him than the original as heard. It represented a more urban location than either Lorna's, or the original story's, and included a port replete with cranes, and a car park situated just outside a village, in a street like the one in which he himself lived. By setting all these features on an island his storyworld was separated both from real life, whence he had drawn his key elements, and from the original setting of the story as told to him. However, he did not impoverish it by doing so, because all its essential features were retained, and his additions gave him ownership of it.

Both Lorna's and Richard's storymaps were examples of what was called in the storytellers' questionnaire 'making a story one's own', because they brought characteristics and conventions from their own experience into the storyworld and synthesised what they heard with what they knew.

6.2.6 Findings from first residency

Undertaking this residency, hearing the children's retellings of my stories, and interviewing the children, all proved informative about processes by which children's story retellings are developed. The influences on the children's storytelling and source material in this residency were readily identified because of my dual role as researcher and teacher-storyteller. This made it possible for me to identify ways in which the children were synthesising known and new material to create personal original stories, as the residency was going on.

The analysis of the children's storymaps (above) revealed similarities between the children's thinking and a typical way in which professional storytellers take ownership of new stories. This is by setting the narrative in an imagined and visualised landscape and setting from their own experiences, thus making the unknown familiar, so that it is more easily remembered, retained and retold.

This residency at Andrew Marvell School had provided a great deal of data and also clarified which kinds of data were the most relevant for answering the research question, taking into account the children's ages. The following two residencies, carried out between April 1994 and April 1996, with younger children, added further

evidence, as well as introducing new strands.

6.3 Case Record Two: Queen Anne's School Nursery (April to July 1994)

6.3.1 Specific aims and rationale of residency

This residency was undertaken part-time in the nursery class of a London inner-city primary school over the Summer term of the academic year 1993-4. This residency was a short-term intervention with the aim, agreed between the teacher and myself, of enriching the children's oral language through storytelling.

The agreed aims of the residency were:

- i) To use stories as a way of developing the children's imaginative and oral potential.
- ii) To create a classroom environment, in particular a storytelling 'corner', where telling, sharing and taping stories would be part of the regular offer of activities in the nursery.

Within the residency, the opportunity to undertake more research as a participant observer presented itself. The research was focused on the question: 'What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?'

The aims of this part of the research were:

- i) To collect children's own stories as inspired by my stimulus stories
- ii) To ascertain whether or not listening to these traditional tales influenced the children's storymaking, and if so, in what ways

This nursery, which was attached to a primary school, was staffed by a nursery teacher and a nursery nurse, who worked together with a roll of thirty children between four and five years old. The majority of the children had full-time places in the nursery, but twelve places were half day, with different children attending morning and afternoon. The whole class worked with me on each visit. The nursery teacher also selected a group of six children to take part in some intensive and regular storytelling with me. The teacher was particularly interested in the imaginative play of young children, and had been a puppeteer before retraining as a teacher. She was interested in the potential contribution of storytelling to children's learning and was enthusiastic about hosting the residency.

6.3.2 Working methods

I worked in partnership with the teacher to achieve the aims of the part-time residency, which consisted of six visits to Queen Anne's nursery as a visiting storyteller. My visits lasted half a morning, and were made at two week intervals. Between visits the teacher encouraged children to use the storytelling corner and tape recorder both with her and independently, as a learning environment to build up their storytelling skills and

maintain progress towards achieving the aims of the residency.

At the beginning of the residency the teacher selected a group of six children whom she felt would benefit from some small group input, and considered motivated for stories. A pattern for the storytelling sessions emerged as follows: A story was told to the whole group, then the majority of the class went with the teacher and nursery nurse to assembly. The selected group stayed out of assembly to work with me on the story, using discussion, storytelling, drama and play, for about half an hour. When the class returned, other children were given the opportunity to be involved, and the original group could continue or go to other activities. In between my visits, the teacher facilitated the telling of stories by children to each other, to her and onto tape, and also enabled the children by working with them on their stories. It took a while to get the pattern established, and the process was worked out as the residency progressed. Expectations were adapted as the importance of waiting and giving the children time to take ownership of the activities became clear. A structure to the sessions that enabled the children to create their own stories was gradually established.

Three kinds of taped material were collected over the twelve weeks of the residency. Some of this, which was taped by me during my six visits, constituted a record of events during the sessions. In other cases, recordings were made by children using the tape recorder independently, alone or in a small group, in the storytelling corner. The third source was the teacher's recordings of dialogues between herself and a child. These dialogues, which took place between my visits, usually began with an invitation to the child to tell a story, sometimes with other children listening. At the end of the residency, all the tapes were transcribed, and the transcripts checked by me against the tapes. This mass of material, which transcribed six ninety minute tapes, was analysed with a view to selecting up to three transcripts as data for the research (see appendix 5).

All the tapes recorded stories, songs, conversations or rhymes from the children. The audibility and intelligibility varied, with the clearest tapes being those made when an adult was supervising the child. During most of the recordings either the teacher or I was present, sometimes directing, sometimes facilitating the children's oral work. The criteria for selecting material for analysis were that it was clear and intelligible, and unfortunately this excluded most of the independent recordings made by the children. Another selection criterion for the analysis of children's stories was that their source was clearly identifiable as being a story told in the residency, which meant that only some stories were included. The final selection criterion was that the material for analysis should be relevant to the research aims for the residency. Based on these criteria, and with the aims of the residency in mind, I have selected two transcripts for inclusion in this chapter.

The first transcript was of two stories told to the teacher by two different children in

one continuous tape recording session during the third week of June 1994. The stimulus was my retelling of the traditional tale The unicorn on the third session of the residency, on 8th June 1994.

The second transcript was of an extended piece of storytelling and conversation, taped during my fourth visit to the school, on 28th June 1994. I had told the story The magic flying horse to the whole class, and then a group of four children stayed in the nursery with me to work from the story, while the rest of the class was in assembly. The transcript recorded nearly the whole of that small group session.

Once the transcripts which met the selection criteria had been selected, I analysed them with the research aims of this residency in mind.

6.3.3 The children's story work

6.3.3.1 Context of transcript one

Transcript one contained a record of two stories told more than a week after hearing my version of the traditional Indian story The unicorn, on 8th June 1994. Although time had elapsed, the children's stories were based on the one they had heard on my third visit. The two children whose stories were analysed were Harry (aged 4.2 years) and Royston (aged 4.7 years). Harry was a quiet child who was just beginning to settle into the nursery. He had never sat down voluntarily to draw, and so it was a significant event when he produced a unicorn picture after hearing the story. It was literally the first drawing he had made at school since starting nursery in January 1994. Because of this apparent break through, the teacher wanted to gather an oral response from Harry about the story which had stimulated his graphic work. The other child whose story was included for analysis was Royston. He was enthusiastic about stories and wanted to be involved every time in working with the tape recorder. He was a confident storyteller who displayed a delight in patterned language and story composition which encouraged his shyer peers. Royston's voice was heard on all the tapes collected over the term. During the same session in which Harry recorded his story, Royston was stimulated, by both this and my original telling, to tell his own unicorn story. The transcript extract is reproduced in full below, to enable a direct comparison between the children's versions and the stimulus to them. A full written version based on my retelling of the stimulus story is included first, for ease of reference. This version comes from Collins (1996).

6.3.3.2 My retelling of the story The unicorn

Once upon a time there was a man who had a very sad life. He and his family had no money. They were very poor.

That was sad, but it was not the saddest thing. His dear old mother was blind. As she got old, her eyes got very weak until she could not see at all.

And that was sad, but it was not the saddest thing. His wife wanted to have a baby. For a long time she had wanted a baby, but no baby had been born.

And that was sad. For her, it was the saddest thing.

One day the man and the woman looked in the cupboard for something to eat, but there was no food at all.

He said: "I will go hunting and catch something for us all to eat."

His wife and his father watched him go out hunting. His poor blind mother listened to him go out hunting. He took his gun and he went.

He walked across the fields for a long time, but he didn't see anything he could hunt for food.

He walked by the river for a long time, but he didn't see anything he could hunt for food.

He walked in the forest for a long time, but he didn't see anything he could hunt for food.

Then he came out of the trees and into a clearing. In the middle of the clearing was a strange animal. It looked like a beautiful white horse with a long tail and a long mane, and shaggy silver hoofs, but from the middle of its forehead grew a straight shining silver horn. It was a unicorn!

The man had never seen such a beautiful animal. He stood and looked at it for a long time. But then he thought about his mother and his father and his wife. They were at home waiting for him. Waiting for him to bring back some food.

He looked at the unicorn again. It was so beautiful. But he thought to himself: "It still is something to eat though."

He put his gun on his shoulder and he aimed it at the unicorn. When he looked at the unicorn along the gun the unicorn turned and looked back at him. It seemed to be looking right into his eyes. It had such beautiful sad intelligent eyes that the man could not kill it. He put down his gun.

Then he heard a voice - not with his ears, but with his mind, as though the voice was talking to him inside his head.

"Thank you for saving my life. Because you did not kill me, I will give you a wish, just one wish. Whatever you wish for, it will come true. Wish well!"

And then the voice stopped, and the unicorn reared up on its back legs, and turned, and galloped away across the grass, with its long mane and tail flying behind it in the wind.

The man went home. When he came into the house his wife and his father looked at him to see what food he had brought. When they saw that he had no food they looked sad. His mother listened hard. He told them the story of the unicorn and the wish.

His mother said: "Son, use your wish for me, so that I can see again. It is so sad to be blind and never to see the sun, or the flowers, or your face."

His father said: "Son, use your wish to wish for money. Then we will never be poor and hungry again."

His wife said: "Husband, use your wish to wish for a baby. All these years we have wanted a baby, and now we can have one at last."

The man looked from his mother to his father to his wife. He only had one wish. Whose wish should he choose?

He went outside and walked up and down for a long time, for a short time. He looked at the stars in the sky. What should he wish for? Whose wish should he choose? He thought and he thought and he thought.

His mother and his father and his wife waited for him in the house. At last he came inside again. They all looked at him, but nobody said anything. They waited for him to tell them his wish. The man looked from his mother to his father to his wife. Whose wish was he going to choose?

At last he spoke. He said: "I wish my mother was looking at my baby lying in a cradle all made of gold."

With his one wish, he had made everybody's wish come true.

His mother could see.

His wife had the baby she wanted.

And with a cradle made of gold, they would all be rich!

With that one wish, they could all live happily ever after.

6.3.3.3 Transcript one: Harry's and Royston's stories (18th June 1994)

SH(teacher): Now Harry is going to tell us all about his story and his picture's about ... what's it about Harry?

Harry: A unicorn

SH: A unicorn ...OK .. speak near to the machine

Harry: Can I just tell it to the machine like you did?

SH: Yes

Harry: A unicorn a big unicorn a little -

SH: Speak loudly

Harry: A big unicorn and a little unicorn and he was a baby they lived in a nest and one day a little girl came to the unicorns I mean a little man came to the unicorns ... and he met a uni ... big unicorn said it is still something to eat though and all the unicorns came up they said na I can't kill you they all turned and he found ... and he went back and caught some fish and went home again ... that's the end.

Royston: My name is Royston

SH: What's your story about?

Royston: I got ... I had a horse yeah and I had a big horse and it had a nest and it went in his nest and it had his grass and he ate it and it had his milk so I went and it had a man yeah and the man could kill him and do a big flag (?) and the cat ... and the cat ... jumped on the horse and the horse jumped down to from the moon and then he jumped back up again then he flied away again then he flied away again then he flied away

again ... that's the end

6.3.3.4 Analysis of Harry's and Royston's story work

The transcript shows that Harry had changed the story to make it work better for him than my version, by providing fish for the man to catch, so as to solve the initial problem of the family's hunger. But the significant point for the aim of the residency, which was to ascertain whether and how listening to stories influenced the children's storymaking, was the phrase: 'it is still something to eat though'. Here Harry used my exact words, and the cadence with which I had delivered them, about a week before he spontaneously reproduced them in his telling. Storytelling language, which is often patterned and rhythmic, can be extremely memorable, as in this case. Harry was able to remember and use the language which had appealed to him; he took ownership of it and it enlarged his own vocabulary, and at the same time he used the repeated phrase as a memory trigger for his retelling.

Royston transformed the unicorn into a horse, and kept the element of the hunter from my version ('the man could kill him'), as well as picking up on the notion of the nest which Harry had created for the unicorn. Thus his story, in its three core elements, combined my material, Harry's reworking, and Royston's own ideas. In doing this Royston was operating within the oral tradition. He brought together old, new and original strands in a creative act which resembles the work of storytellers of differing levels of experience in different times and places.

There is one aspect of this session which is particularly important given the aims of the residency, which were to ascertain ways in which a heard story can influence a child's version of a story. However, this cannot be deduced from written transcripts, but is immediately evident when listening to the tape. Royston's use of his voice in the telling as an expressive tool was extraordinary. He made a loose chaining of events the main focus of his story (see Applebee, 1978). Once he moved away from the slightly confused narrative exposition, which ended: 'the man could kill him and do a *big flag* (inaudible word)', he began a chant with a sing-song, incantatory cadence in which the delivery was closely related to the content. His use of rhythm to hold the story together and emphasise pattern replicated qualities of the oral tradition characterised in the work of Homer, which were previously discussed in Chapter Three (pp. 95-96). Royston intuitively used patterned language and patterned voice to carry the tale along. There were further examples of his sense of storytelling language elsewhere on the tapes, including in the second transcript discussed below.

This transcript was relevant to the aims of the research because the children's memory strategies in evidence, the use of language and the expressive qualities of their voices, were all stimulated by the storytelling they had heard.

6.3.3.5 Context of transcript two

The second transcript was of an extended piece of storytelling and conversation, made during my fourth visit to the school (28th June 1994). The stimulus was the story The magic flying horse, which was told to the whole class. The majority of the class then went to assembly with their teacher. A small group of children stayed with me. The group of children consisted of three boys: Harry, Royston, Tony, and one girl: Lola. The transcript recorded nearly the whole of the small group session of storytelling, conversation and dramatic play in which the focus group engaged with me.

For the purposes of this analysis, it is not necessary to reproduce the entire text of the stimulus story, and a summary of its narrative is sufficient. The story described a journey out into space made by a child and a magic flying horse, from which they brought back pieces of the moon, the sun, the stars and the rainbow. The narrative was patterned and structured.

Because the transcript was long, the lines are numbered for ease of reference.

6.3.3.6 Transcript two: Harry's, Royston's, Tony's and Lola's story and drama work (28th June 1994)

FC: ... I've only got one for Harry. Harry, do you want to tell one more cos otherwise it's not fair .. it's not fair then, is it?

Tony: No

5 FC: Go on. Let's give Harry another .. come on then Mr. Harry .. it's your story time .. Harry the storyteller

Harry: I was playing down the stairs and I went outside and played on the horse and then ..

FC: Where .. where did you play? I didn't hear .. I went outside and played on what? .. That's why I can't hear

10 Harry: Went outside .. and then it went and flied over the rainbow

FC: What did?

Harry: The horse .. (inaudible) .. the rainbow

FC: What was it like when you were over the rainbow .. what place were you in?

15 Harry: I got a bit of the rainbow straight away when I was flying

FC: How?

Harry: Cos .. cos it was going slow .. Then someone throwed me up something and I didn't know what it was

FC: What did they see?

20 Harry: A book

FC: What book was it? A magic book?

Harry: Yea .. (inaudible) .. you know what was in there?

Royston: What?

Harry: Presents
 25 Tony: Presents!
FC: In the book?
Harry: Yea
FC: Who for?
Lola: Why did they do it?
 30 Harry: The horse
FC: Aah .. what presents did the horse get?
Harry: Don't know
(Inaudible)
Tony: Horseys?
 35 Harry: Yea, baby horseys.
FC: Aaah ...
Royston: I had a big horse yeah and it had some baby eggs ..
FC: Thank you .. now that's fair isn't it, cos now I've got two ..
Royston: I .. I had a tiger -
 40 FC: Sssh, noisy boy. You had a what?
Royston: I had a tiger yeah and the tiger .. the tiger had some eggs yeah and it
got it out yeah and they were baby tigers yes .. so I cuddled them yeah
then I put them in the water yeah .. then .. then they came out yeah then
they picked it into .. my room .. then it growed then .. then I watered it
 45 FC: What did you water?
Royston: The eggs .. the eggs of the tiger
Harry: Then it got bigger
FC: Sssh let him tell
Royston: Then it got bigger and bigger and bigger until when it wasn't bigger
 50 than me ..
(Inaudible)
Tony: Why don't we read a story?
FC: Sssh, hang on, listen. Then it got bigger and bigger until what?
Royston: Until when it got ..
 55 FC: Can you put the book back?
Royston: And then I jumped on the tiger yeah till when we flied all the way up
to the sky and I got a piece of moon and a piece of rainbow and a piece
of rain and ..
FC: Wait a minute ... wait for me, wait for me ... jumped on the tiger then I
 60 went...
Royston: Then I got all of it
FC: What did you get?
Royston: I got all of it ...
FC: A piece of ..
 65 Royston: Moon ..

FC: Moon. What else?

Royston: Rain

FC: Yeah ..

Royston: And .. and .. rainbow .. then then I had all of it

70 FC: Yeah, I've caught up with you now. And then what happens?

Royston: Then I came down yeah then I went all the way up to the sky yeah
then .. then my mum saw me yeah and my mum said who .. who got
you that tiger? And I said I bought it yeah .. it was a real one .. and I
made magic for it

75 FC: Wait a minute, wait a minute .. my mum saw me and she said 'who got
you that tiger?' and what did you say?

Royston: I said I got it ..

FC: Yeah

Royston: From the shop from the tiger shop

80 Harry: Come on Roysey
(Inaudible)

FC: Must be like a pet shop

Royston: It's a tiger shop

FC: And it was a real one but it was magic

85 Royston: It was a real one then it .. then I ..

Harry: Does it sell lions in the shop?

Lola: Magic?

FC: Don't know, ask Royston

Harry: Royston ...

90 Royston: Magic in its eyes

Harry: Does it sell lions in there?

Royston: Yeah

Harry: Lions!

FC: Would you buy a lion if you went to Royston's shop?

95 Harry: Yeah if it was a real one

FC: Right, tell you what ..
(Inaudible)

FC: Tell you what, let's make this the lion and tiger shop. I'll work in the shop
and you go there and then you come in the shop and you can buy lions
or tigers whatever you like

100 Tony: And I'll make the tigers

FC: You're gonna make the tigers? This is going to be the shop here .. I'll work
in the tiger shop

Tony: I think .. this is going to be .. this has got to stand up

105 FC: Yes I think so, it goes at the side

Tony: Yeah .. I think it goes .. (inaudible) Here's the face

FC: Oh right, you coming to the tiger shop?

Royston: But these are the tigers

FC: Oh you're gonna wear them and be the tigers .. go on then .. bring them in
110 the tiger shop .. that's brilliant ...

(No further intelligible speech recorded)

6.3.3.6 Analysis of story and drama work

This transcript is evidence of the children spontaneously using the storytelling session as the starting point for some dramatic play, inspired by their own versions of stories. Their play also drew on some high quality resources available in the dressing up box, which enabled them to become absorbed in a sustained sequence of dramatic play together.

For both Harry and Royston, the journey up into space was a key feature of their retellings, which became the catalyst for the stories which they created. The other children exhibited less enthusiasm for the storymaking, as evidenced by Tony's question at line 52, 'Why don't we read a story?' The session was rather long given the age of the children, but was structured around the school timetable, so could not be altered. I suggested making the 'tiger shop' because I felt that the children needed a change of activity, and the way that they developed this idea surprised and delighted me.

From line 102, while Tony and I began to set up some stage boxes for the tiger shop in the gathering area of the nursery, where we had been taping the storytelling, Royston, Harry and Lola were in the dressing up area of the nursery, finding and putting on three body suits made of fake fur, to act out the tigers. I had not seen these resources either stored or in use during any of my visits to the nursery and it was clear that the content of Royston's story had reminded the children of them. A lively session of dramatic play followed, with the 'tigers' playing, sleeping and fighting as to the manner born. Royston's story literally galvanised the children into action, after reaching a point in the session when their attention was low and they really just wanted to escape (lines 47 to 55). From this point my interventions diminished markedly: I was no longer leading the session; in fact, on two occasions (see lines 59 and 75) my interventions were requests for Royston to wait for me as I frantically tried to scribe fast enough to keep up with him. The other children's attention was caught by the power of Royston's storytelling, and their questions and comments became completely focused on his story. The interplay between the principal storyteller and the other children was reciprocal at this point. Harry wanted to know if lions as well as tigers were included in the story, so Royston happily included them. (lines 86 to 93). Harry's exclamation 'Lions!' was full of delight. Similarly Royston picked up on Lola's question to me about magic, which I turned back to him. (lines 87 to 90). He accepted Lola's suggestion and incorporated it creatively, by agreeing that the tigers had 'magic in their eyes'. He led the collective storymaking and seemed to inspire the rest of the group,

myself included. My suggestion of creating the tiger shop moved the children from the narrative into the dramatic mode, which was a timely change of energy, and more constructive than the remarks which characterised my earlier interventions in the discussion, when I vacillated between control tactics and leading questions.

As well as stimulating the collective storymaking inspired by Royston's story and facilitated by him, the Tiger story also revealed in Royston's solo storytelling a capacity to create and sustain a narrative fiction. This fiction, the genesis of the tigers, which developed from eggs which Royston looked after by cuddling them and watering them, was coherent, intriguing and operated convincingly in the area of story truth (lines 41 to 50). The 'tiger's eggs' were a reminder of the nest from his unicorn story, suggesting to me that the concept of nurturing was a continuing preoccupation of Royston's.

This piece of collaborative storymaking shows these children building from a known, heard story to create their own narratives. They transformed and developed the story of The magic flying horse in a way which enabled first Royston, and then the rest of the group, to create a story world of interest to them, and in which they could play out their imaginative ideas.

6.3.4 Findings from second residency

Although the data reported in this chapter constitutes only a small part of the content of the data collected during the whole residency, I chose to make a close study of the storytelling of these young children, through in-depth analyses of relatively small amounts of material. There is potential for further analysis, in the future, of the large amount of transcribed material collected from this residency at Queen Anne's Nursery between April and July 1994.

The research aims of the residency were achieved, in that children's personal stories were collected orally on tape, together with further data in the form of graphic work and taped records of imaginative play directly stimulated by stories. It is clear from the evidence in the transcripts analysed to date that listening to traditional tales did inspire the children's own storymaking in the following ways:

The children used the story input from my storytelling and each other directly to inform and shape their own stories. It influenced their use and understanding of story form, their narrative skills and confidence, as is evidenced both by events during the residency and the full transcripts (see appendix 5). Noteworthy achievements across the whole curriculum were made by individuals. For example: Harry freely chose to draw for the first time, and sustained his concentration while doing so; Royston was able to lead and cooperate with a group in a more constructive way than had previously been achieved, according to his teacher.

The language of the traditional tale influenced the children's stories directly. Evidence can be found in their choice of vocabulary, patterning of language, and vocal cadence. There were similarities between the strategies the children adopted and the memory strategies reported by the professional storytellers in their questionnaire responses. Based on this evidence, a tentative hypothesis can be formulated that where story content and traditional storytelling skills are made accessible to young children they contribute to the development of language and memory skills.

The children's own stories as inspired by the stimulus stories and each other's demonstrated that they were able not only to recall and retell the stories they had heard, but also to create their own narratives using the stimulus story as a starting point. The oral stories collected during this residency compared favourably in structure and content with those written by the older children during the first residency.

An unexpected finding was that the children were able to do more than retell the traditional stories intended to provide models for their storytelling attempts, and assist their recall and sequencing. It confirmed that they were also able to use them to 'scaffold' their own stories. The two 'unicorn' stories and the 'baby tigers' story are examples of storytelling which were both inspired and supported by the children's memories of the stories they had been told. It appears that the memory of a traditional oral storytelling can furnish scaffolding for the child's own stories in the same way that an adult's support scaffolds a child reading, enabling him or her to tackle a text which could not be managed without support. This confirms the hypothesis regarding the Vygotskian notion of scaffolding in the case of hearing and retelling traditional tales (explored in Chapter 2, pp. 73-75). This hypothesis is that scaffolding is not provided in this instance by the presence and support of an adult but is embedded in the structure and language of the traditional tale itself.

This residency, at Queen Anne's Nursery in the summer term of 1994, contributed valuable findings to the overall aims of the research and furnished evidence to support the hypothesis that storytelling contributes to the formal education of primary age children. The third and final residency gathered evidence of children's work with stories from a different age group within the primary school.

6.4 Case Record Three: St. Andrew's Primary School **(January to April 1996)**

6.4.1 Specific aims and rationale of residency

St. Andrew's Primary School was an inner-city school with eight classes, including a newly-built nursery. The school served an area of London with a large Bengali population. Two-thirds of the children spoke English as an additional language, with over fifteen first languages spoken. An OFSTED inspection of the school in the

Autumn term 1994 had been broadly favourable, but had identified a need to enrich the descriptive language in the children's creative writing and oral work as an area for development throughout the school. On the recommendation of the language coordinator, who had attended an in-service course I had led at the Centre for Language in Primary Education on 23rd March 1995, the head teacher invited me to undertake a year-long residency of one day a week at the school, as part of their programme to address the OFSTED recommendations. I shared the residency with another storyteller, who worked for one term, while I worked for two. Over the year we worked with every class in the school.

The agreed aims of this residency were:

- i) To use storytelling with traditional tales from many cultures in order to encourage a richer, more descriptive spoken vocabulary in all the children in the school
- ii) To focus particularly on children with English as an additional language, within the context of the classroom.

During this long residency, there was the opportunity to conduct a third and final piece of research as a participant observer which focused on the research question 'What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?' I decided to use storytelling and dramatic play once again, to test out my ideas about the relationship between the two forms and to further develop the analysis undertaken during the second residency.

The aims for the research in this residency were:

- i) To collect data on children's drama and dramatic play created in response to traditional oral storytelling from many cultures
- ii) To ascertain whether listening to traditional tales influenced the children's own descriptive language, and if so, in what ways

During the Spring term 1996 I worked for one afternoon a week as the storyteller in residence with the Year Two class of thirty children of six and seven years old. It was agreed that the residency would take place in this class. The teacher was also the language coordinator for the school, and placed a great deal of emphasis on enabling all the children to become fluent and confident users of the English language. Because of this teacher's commitment to language work, he was prepared to engage actively in the drama and storytelling activities I led with the class. The opportunity to work alongside the class teacher was not available in the earlier case studies. I welcomed it because it enabled observation of a teacher and children working together using story. A further benefit of this residency for the research was the opportunity it provided to work with children at the end of Key Stage 1. In combination with the earlier work with nursery and Y6 children, the aim of gathering data across the primary age range was achieved.

The storytelling sessions in this residency were planned as a stimulus for speaking and listening work. Using folk tales and legends from many lands, and exploring the stories through discussion, drama and visual art, the teacher and I aimed to pursue the school's aims in a lively and productive way.

6.4.2 Working methods

I spent every Tuesday afternoon throughout the Spring term 1996 working with the class as storyteller in residence. A pattern of working developed during these afternoons which began with a story from me in the classroom, followed by a session of drama and games related to the story in the hall, which lasted between 40 and 50 minutes, until playtime. After returning from play, the class sat on the carpet to tell stories and sing songs until hometime, with the children, the teacher and the storyteller (myself) all contributing. The story work which is reported below was undertaken near the beginning of the term's work in the Year 2 class, on 31st January 1996. It took place on the third half day of the residency, and was followed up by the teacher in some additional class time during the following week. The follow up time was used to produce written work which was an unexpected and valuable outcome of this residency.

6.4.3 The children's story work

As the starting point for the residency in the Year 2 class the class teacher and I agreed that I would contribute to the class topic of 'Journeys' with a range of stories from a variety of cultures. The second session was spent working with the Native American story Grandmother Spider. It was not possible to tape record the drama, which took place in the school hall, because of the lack of specialist equipment to record adequately in so large a space. The data on this session is gathered from my planning and evaluation notes for the session, and from observation notes written as soon as possible after the session, and checked in informal discussion with the teacher. The drama was followed up after my session by the teacher using a creative writing task, which involved the children in writing a letter in the role adopted in the drama. In my experience, writing in role can be a highly motivating stimulus, and in this case the letters, which were the first unaided pieces of creative writing produced for this teacher by the children, were a source of further data, especially regarding the influence of the storytelling and drama on the children's engagement in the writing task. Three letters were chosen, in consultation with the teacher, for detailed analysis as part of the research, because they were written by the children whose contributions in the drama we considered most noteworthy. They are described and analysed below, in the discussion of the data following the written version of the stimulus story, which is included in order to give the necessary background to the description of the drama session and discussion. This text was written specifically for inclusion here, and is based closely on my oral retelling. The published version from which I first derived my retelling of this story can be found in Gersie (1992, pp. 176 -177).

6.4.3.1 My retelling of the story Grandmother Spider

At the beginning of the world there was only darkness - the animals were always bumping into each other. They never saw anything, always feeling their way in the darkness. They said to each other, 'We need light'. They knew that there were people living far away who did have a light - they kept it up high in the highest fir tree, so that the light shone down all around.

The animals met together and began a great conference to choose someone to get light from the fir tree and bring it back for them all. At last Eagle was chosen.

She flew through the darkness and soon came to the place where the light was shining. She landed in the highest branches of the tree. She had flown so swiftly and silently that no one had noticed her. She pulled off a little piece of the light and put it in the long thick feathers on the top of her head to hide it from the people. But it began to smoulder and scorch and singe the long feathers on her head. Smoke came from the feathers. A horrible smell of burning came from the feathers. The people noticed the smoke and the smell. They shouted at Eagle and made her give back the fire. She flew home with nothing. And worst of all, she had no feathers left on the top of her head - she was bald. And even today, in America, those birds are still called bald-headed eagles, because of what happened long ago.

But still the animals wanted the light. Again they argued. Who should go? At last Possum was chosen.

He ran quickly and quietly through the forest until he reached the tall fir tree. He climbed the tree so stealthily that no one noticed him. He broke off a little piece of light and hid it in the long thick fur of his tail. But the fur began to burn. Smoke came from it. A burning smell came from it. The people realised that someone was trying to take their light. They shouted at Possum and made him give back the fire. He had to go back with empty paws. And worst of all, there was a long dark stripe of burnt fur in his tail. And even today, in America, the possums still have a long dark stripe in their tails, because of what happened long ago.

But still the animals wanted the light. They argued and shouted. A little voice said, 'I'll go'. No one heard. They kept arguing. Then the little voice spoke again, 'I said I'll go'. They looked all round. Who was speaking? At last they looked down. They saw Grandmother Spider. She was so small and quiet that no one had noticed her. At first the animals laughed at her. But at last they agreed that she could try.

She set off, slowly and steadily, spinning out a thread of web behind her so that she could find her way home again. She went first to the river bank, where she took some wet river clay and shaped it into a thick walled pot with a lid. When the clay had dried and hardened she bound the pot onto her back with her web. Then she set out towards the light. The journey took a long time because she was small, and slow, and old. But she was steady. At last she reached the fir tree and she climbed up to the top. She was so small that the people did not even see her. When she came to the top she untied her web and took the pot off her back. Then she took off the lid and put a little bit of light inside the pot. When the lid was back on there was no sign of the light

inside it. She bound the pot onto her back again. It did not burn her because the thick walls of the pot kept all the heat inside. No one noticed that Grandmother Spider had taken some of the light. Slowly she set off home again, following the trail of her web.

When she got home she undid her web. She untied the pot from her back and lifted the lid. She took the light and threw it high, up high, into the sky. The light shone down all around.

On one day Grandmother Spider brought two gifts to the people. She brought them the sun to give them light and warmth. And she taught them the art of pottery.

6.4.3.2 Drama session

The story was told in the classroom, before the class went into the hall with their teacher and myself for the drama session.

The aims of the drama session were:

- i) To emphasise the value of co-operation, and to explore with the children ways of obtaining the light other than theft
- ii) To familiarise the class, who were new to drama, with drama strategies and conventions
- iii) To create opportunities for oral work in role

In the hall, some time was spent in whole group discussion which aimed to establish a storyworld for the story. This strategy, referred to above in connection with storymaps (p. 164), is one which I use to create a shared representation of the world of the story. School equipment stored in the hall was used to symbolise key elements of the landscape of the story. Blue gym mats were used to mark out the course of a river, which acted as a boundary between the dark land of the animals and the place of the light. A tall stand from a high jump bar represented the fir tree where the light was kept, and the children decided where in the hall it should be positioned. An area near the front of the hall was designated as the place for the animals' meeting place, which was labelled a 'talking circle', after a term taken from Native American custom. The talking circle was used both in and outside the drama, to create a ritual form for discussion which enables everyone to have a say. In the talking circle ritual, the turn to speak moves around the circle, sometimes symbolised by a ritual object which is passed around. In Native American ritual this would normally be either the calumet, known as the 'peace pipe', or a talking stick, a carved and ornamental ritual object. Only the person holding the talking stick has the right to choose whether to speak, which ensures that everyone is able to take a turn without interruption. In this drama some Tibetan bells, which I regularly used to signal for quiet, and which were greatly admired by the children, were used as the talking stick, and were passed around ceremoniously, as they were recognised as having a ritual significance concerning listening.

Once the storyworld had been established, the drama began with discussion in the

talking circle. The children were asked to work with a partner, to maximise the opportunities for purposeful oral work, and to agree together which animals they would choose as their roles in the drama. I asked them to introduce themselves in role around the circle, with the aims of strengthening their commitment to the drama and of sharing ideas.

Then I instructed the children to go away and explore the storyworld. After a short period of unstructured dramatic play, which was intended to allow them to explore and build belief in the storyworld they had created, I began to narrate the drama, in order to help them to focus their work. I told each pair of animals to find a safe place to shelter for the night, and once they had selected their places I narrated in the drama how they all fell asleep, and dreamed about the bright light. After a quiet period for reflection and visualisation, I signalled with the Tibetan bells that they should 'wake up' and quietly share their dreams with their partners. Then I told them to set out on their journeys to 'find the light'. I said that they might meet other animals on their way, with whom they could interact or not as they chose. I did not narrate the journey to look for the light, so was able to observe the children's drama from the outside. After a short period of productive work, several pairs began to lose focus and race around the hall, so I signalled them to 'freeze', again using the Tibetan bells. When they were all 'frozen', I walked around and quietly questioned children in role and repeated their answers for the rest of the class to hear, or commented on their stance or facial expression, 'wondering' about the success of their quest. Then I gave them the signal to unfreeze and told them to travel back to their 'homes' and quietly rest there. When all the pairs had returned to their starting points, I asked them to come quietly back to the talking circle to tell us all about their adventures. In discussion in role in the talking circle, the 'animals' were asked, 'Where did you go? Who did you meet?' They explained what strategies they had used to try to get the light and whether they had been successful.

The class teacher participated in the drama, modelling for the children and encouraging them to take their work seriously. On this occasion, both he and I felt that the contributions as we went around the talking circle were in need of enrichment, because the children's accounts of their drama work were brief, and seemed lacking in descriptive language or expressions of feelings. So when it came to the teacher's turn he took on the role of Gary, a miserable gorilla: the first of the animals questioned to have been unsuccessful in the drama task of getting the light. As I questioned him and he answered in role about his character and feelings the children quickly became concerned about Gary's plight and the focus of the next part of the drama became a quest to cheer him up, with offers of help, friendly overtures, and gifts. One of the most significant of the many presents offered to Gary was a book. When the teacher, in role, asked whether he would be able to read the book, as it would need to be in his own language, the children swiftly reassured him that it would, indeed, be written in

gorilla¹. Both he and I were intrigued by the notion of a book 'in gorilla', and felt that it offered an opportunity to encourage the children to reflect on the needs of users of languages other than English.

6.4.3.3 Writing task: letters to Gary the Gorilla

Before the next session in the residency, therefore, the teacher gave the children the task of writing in role as the animals searching for the light, in order to make Gary's book. On my next visit, I was shown the letters and I asked if I could take copies in order to include them in the data for analysis in the research. Permission was granted, and from the letters, which included a piece of developmental writing from every child in the class, I selected three by children whose contribution to the drama had been noteworthy, in order to follow up their drama work. These three letters are included below, in both the children's and standard orthography. The originals are reproduced, together with the letters from the rest of the class, in appendix 6.

6.4.3.4 Zoe's, Dana's and Louis' letters to Gary the Gorilla

Zoe's letter

Der Gary Gorilla

Me and my dad went to sllep when evry one was aslep we went to a camp we trid to get the lit but thay cut as then we trid agan but thay cut as agan so we trid agan and agan in til thay wur asllep we trid and we got it.

My dad sgd them away.

We wur sorry

We cam to tns kamp that we tuk the lit from then w gav them gift from Baby King Kong (Zoe).

Zoe's letter (standard orthography)

Dear Gary Gorilla

Me and my dad went to sleep when every one was asleep we went to a camp we tried to get the light but they caught us then we tried again but they caught us again so we tried again and again until they were asleep we tried and we got it.

My dad sent(?) them away.

We were sorry we came to this camp that we took the light from then we gave them gift.

from Baby King Kong (Zoe)

Dana's letter

Dear Gary Gorilla

I went on thes gune wich had a dog in it and a spider in it to and a mecke ther was of snake I had to climb a tree and I climb a tree because ther was no liat but ther was a liat

¹ it is interesting to compare the 'willing suspension of disbelief' practised at this point by these seven year olds with Nigel Hall's findings that children under six years old believe that animals cannot read 'because cats go miaow and dogs go bow wow' (1987, p. 32, among other references).

*in ta a tree but nan of the annols wood not go to get it but ther was a litol vous ta went licke I said I will go I will go in a swit vous. the spider got the liut and ther card it and Gary the gorilla was sad and snake maked Gary the gorilla happy.
from snake (Dana)*

Dana's letter (standard orthography)

Dear Gary the Gorilla

*I went on this journey which had a dog in it and a spider in it too and a monkey there was of snake I had to climb a tree because there was no light but there was a light in to a tree but none of the animals would not go to get it. But there was a little voice that went like I said I will go I will go in a sweet voice. The spider got the light and they carried it and Gary the Gorilla was sad and snake made Gary the Gorilla happy.
from snake (Dana)*

Louis's letter

Dear Gary Gornilla

*Dear Gary I will give you the box of liyt oll of the liyt but I have lost it I will get a nuvr box of liyt and I will give you a shivty dunru and 100 box dunrus wen I whent to get the box of liyt I scerd dum away but I had poblms whiv the box of liyt dast wiy Im givint to you but you wot have poblms wive the box of liyt because you or a big big gornilla
From Liyun*

Louis' letter (standard orthography)

Dear Gary Gorilla

*Dear Gary I will give you the box of light all of the light but I have lost it. I will get another box of light and I will give you a shivty(?) banana and 100 boxes bananas When I went to get the box of light I scared them away but I had problems with the box of light that's why I'm giving it to you but you won't have problems with the box of light because you are a big big gorilla.
from Lion*

6.4.3.5 Analysis of Zoe's, Dana's and Louis' letters to Gary the Gorilla

Zoe (7.2 years) was so excited by the character of Gary the Gorilla that she chose to be Baby King Kong, demonstrating knowledge of intertextuality that went beyond stories and books into film. As Eve Bearne observed, it is 'in 'intertextuality', this linking with other stories and other familiar patterns of life ... that the power lies' (in Styles, Bearne and Watson, eds., 1992, p. 148). Zoe exercised 'power' not only in naming her *alter ego* in the drama, which can itself be a powerful act for a young child, validating and lending 'reality' to his or her imagined world, but also in her work in the drama, as she directed her partner in their shared enactment of their many attempts to 'get the light'. She exercised power in a third way in her letter written in role, as she used the task to

organise her experiences from the drama into a narrative for her reader, Gary the Gorilla. She used her letter to recount the experiences which she and her 'dad' had lived through in the drama. She wrote not only of her adventures with her partner, but also of her feelings of sorrow about the 'theft', and her attempts to right the wrong: 'w gav them gift'. From my observations over the year I had learnt that Zoe was a kind-hearted child who looked for ways to help anyone who was upset, and she brought this quality to her role as 'Baby King Kong', as shown by the final phrase of her letter.

Dana (6.11 years), who chose the character of a snake for herself, included a lot of detail about her drama work in the letter, including her encounters with a number of other 'animals' and her reenactment of the events of the story which had been told. She and her partner had worked quietly for some time in a corner of the hall, where they had concentrated at the beginning of the drama on making a 'home' for themselves among the legs of the P.E. apparatus. She had responded well to the 'dream' section of the drama and had talked quietly and earnestly with her partner for some time after it, before leaving the 'home' they had made to go and search for the light. Although it is a disadvantage of paired work in drama that the children's discussions remain closed to the teacher, because they are 'inside the situation, while the teacher remain(s) outside' (Johnson and O'Neill, eds., 1984, p. 58), it seemed to me from observation of their demeanour and body language that Dana and her partner were on task in their visualisation of the dream and the following discussion, and that they had brought commitment to the 'world of the drama': an aspect which Dorothy Heathcote calls 'living through' (ibid p.55). In her follow-up to the drama, as evidenced by her letter in role, Dana showed great empathy for the character of Grandmother Spider, describing how she spoke in 'a litol vous' and 'a swit vous'. She was also at pains in her extended piece of writing to record Gary's feelings and her attempts to make him feel better: 'and Gary the Gorilla was sad and snake maked Gary the Gorilla happy.'

The third child, Louis (7.5 years), was a struggling and reluctant writer who expressed himself on paper less fluently than the other two. According to the teacher, the letter to Gary was a major achievement. Louis identified himself as 'Lion', and his letter gave little direct information about his drama work. This was possibly because he had little experience from the session to write about, as he and his self-chosen partner had quickly become over-excited, and had spent a lot of the drama indulging in 'pretend fighting' and rushing around the open space of the hall, which they seemed to find over-stimulating. However, Louis had adopted his role as Lion with a great deal of empathy for Gary the Gorilla, and used his letter in an effort to boost Gary's self image, depicting his character as having the same kinds of difficulties as Gary. This showed that he could identify with the diffident character which had been created, even though it was almost the opposite to his own experiences as an indulged only child who usually got his own way, according to the teacher's character sketch of him in conversation with me. The last sentence of the letter described problems which 'Liyun'

had faced, even though there had been no enactment of them during the drama time. The 'problems' therefore must have arisen from empathic reflection, either during the talking circle or during the work on the writing task itself, which I did not observe. Louis wrote, 'I had plobls whiv the box of liyt dast why in givint to you'. He added, finding a positive comment to make to Gary which would boost his self-esteem, 'you wot hav ploblms wive the box of liyt because you or a big big gorilla'. Drama is, in my experience, an excellent vehicle for the development of empathy. Louis, who was regarded by his teacher as self-centred and often difficult to manage as a result, had used the drama to think about the feelings of a character very different from himself, and to offer encouragement in a way which suggested some development of empathy with that character. Louis' letter offers evidence of the kind of learning about thinking and feeling which was discussed in Chapter Two (pp. 86-87), evidence which supports David Best's contention that 'the kind of feeling which is involved in the arts requires understanding' (1985, p. 129).

6.4.5 Findings from third residency

In seeking to meet the first research aim of the residency, namely to collect data on children's drama and dramatic play in response to traditional oral storytelling, there was success in making observations of the children's drama, but these proved hard to analyse because of their ephemeral nature. This should have been considered more carefully when initiating the research, as video recording would have provided an objective record had it been organised in advance. Given this shortcoming in the research, it was fortunate that the storytelling and drama work of the case study were extended into creative writing by the teacher. This meant that useful data was produced. It is for this reason that the analysis of the residency work focuses on the children's letters written in role.

The findings from these letters suggest that working in role was a powerful stimulus to these children's creative writing. Together with the familiar framework of the traditional story it provided a structure to and support for the children's writing. As Helen Dutton noted, 'suitable provision for socio-dramatic play can allow literacy and literate behaviour to be displayed' (Hall and Abbott, eds. 1991, p. 45). However, literacy skills were not the area of children's learning which the research sought to investigate, so this finding is peripheral to the main thrust of the residency.

By working in drama, the children were enabled to draw on their own ideas, to build on and develop starting points from the oral story, and work in equal partnership with the teacher. All this contributed to his aim of cultivating a language-rich environment, a respectful and caring ethos in the classroom, and to develop the children's confidence and self-esteem.

The second aim of the residency, to determine whether or not, and if so how, listening

to traditional tales influences the children's own descriptive language, could only be addressed in relation to the children's creative writing. There was evidence that the drama and storytelling had contributed to their written work, for example in Dana's evocative description of Grandmother Spider's 'swit vous'. The children's unaided first drafts were lively pieces of writing which benefited from the language and thought promoted in the discussions and drama.

The children's storymaking was a collaborative activity in which ideas about the 'storyworld' were pooled through the drama and shared in the 'talking circle'. Working in role was seen to be a powerful stimulus to children's creativity, providing the kind of structure and support which the familiar framework of the traditional story can also provide. The children were enabled to draw on their own resources, to build on and develop starting points from the oral story, and to work in equal partnership with the significant adult in their education. This contributed to the cultivation of a language-rich environment, a respectful and caring ethos in the classroom, and the growth of confidence and self-esteem in the children.

This residency added to the information about story work collected during the first two, and ensured a spread across the primary age range. It enabled the testing of more storytelling and drama strategies in the pursuit of an answer to the question: 'What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary school children?' The findings of all three residencies will be synthesised now and are presented below.

6.5 Findings from the three residencies

During and after the three residencies I analysed children's retellings of traditional stories in a variety of media: spoken, written, graphic, and enacted through both dramatic play and structured drama work. The data from the residencies furnished evidence from a range of age groups in the primary school that when children retell traditional stories they draw on the version of the story they have heard, their own knowledge and beliefs about the world, and their own creative ideas. These children's retellings were a blend of the storyteller's material and their own ideas, a synthesis of original and retold material.

When the children used traditional tales as a basis for their own told stories their stories were of higher quality than they could have created unaided. Quite simply they were 'better stories' than the same children could have made up alone. By 'better stories' I am referring to:

(i) Issues of content:

Plot, such as Lilith's complex story How the earth was saved! (Case record one, story 3)

Language, such as Soraya's invention of the forceful epithet 'eyes like torches' for her character Immy the Robber (Case record one, story 1)

Character, such as Karen's creation of the lively team of Coyote and Tiger
(Case record one, story 2).

(ii) Issues of form:

Construction, such as Richard's economical representation of the passing of millennia: 'As he stood there the earth evolved around him'
(Case record one, story 4)

Sequencing, such as Dana's retelling in her letter of the key events from the story of Grandmother Spider (Case record three, Dana's letter)

Pattern of events, such as Royston's description of the stages of development of the tiger eggs and baby tigers (Case record two, second transcript, lines 41 - 44)

(iii) Issues of performance:

Vocal pattern, such as Richard's effective use of repetition: 'As the earth got older and older it got more and more dangerous..' (Case record one, story 4)

Rhythm, such as Royston's half-spoken, half-sung ending to his first story, a sequence which begins 'and the cat jumped on the horse...' (Case record two, first transcript)

Cadence, such as Harry's accurate use of my phrase 'It still is something to eat though' (Case record two, first transcript)

There was evidence of influence from listening to the traditional tales in all these aspects of the children's retold stories in the case records. There was also evidence of influence in the written, drawn and dramatic retellings of the stories which were produced in literacy, art and drama work.

In these residencies, the traditional stories did act as scaffolding for the children's own storytelling, and supported them into Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development. In the same way that a child reading with an adult can successfully tackle a more complex text than s/he can manage alone, these case records demonstrate that a child tells better constructed and linguistically richer stories using the scaffolding of a traditional tale than s/he can invent alone. I maintain that this scaffolding is provided not just by the particular storyteller from whom the child hears the story for the first time, but by the many other storytellers who have previously told the story, shaping and polishing² it over many tellings. Their scaffolding is 'contained inside' the version of the story the child hears in a storytelling rendering. It offers support both to language, as used by Harry when he reproduced the vocabulary and cadence of my phrase 'it still is something to eat, though'; and to content, as Lilith demonstrated when she created her own version of How the sun came and included details drawn from the Sumerian and Biblical flood legends which she knew.

² this expression was coined as a metaphor for educational storytelling by Betty Rosen (1991) for Shapers and polishers.

These case records also provide evidence that children use skills of choosing, remembering and telling stories to retell traditional tales in primary classrooms. The same skills were identified by storytellers in the questionnaire survey and discussed in the literature about the history of storytelling in earlier oral cultures. This correspondence suggests that both story content from traditional tales and also traditional storytelling skills are accessible to young children, and contribute to the development of their language and memory skills. Children and traditional storytellers work on retelling stories in similar ways. Therefore the skills which storytellers use, and their techniques for honing these skills, as described in Chapter Four, might contribute to the development of all children's language and memory skills if they were introduced into the primary curriculum. This could be achieved either through the work of teacher-storytellers or through adding to the repertoire of teachers' skills, during initial or in-service training.

The case records analysed in this chapter go some way to support the hypothesis that storytelling contributes to children's general education. Traditional storytelling does offer something to the formal education of primary school children: both the employment of patterned language and body or verbal rhythm; and the strategy of mapping and imaging the story, whether conceptually in the head, or literally on paper; are important mnemonic tools used by both the storytellers and the children in this research. These techniques have been recognised as strategies for assisting memory and recall. They are not really valued, in literate societies, as possible oral approaches to memory work. The memory depends for effectiveness on organisational schemata, according to Bartlett (1932); Walter Ong described how it works in a different way when writing and reading are not used to support it (1982, ch. 3). The more stories one hears, the better one's memory for them becomes. I have stated repeatedly in this thesis my view that told stories are more memorable than read ones, because they are 'shaped by tongues'. In primary schools it is my observation that little systematic attention is paid to developing the memory, in spite of the fascination with it in society, evidenced by specialist variety acts, small ads, television programmes and other manifestations of popular culture. If teachers were to understand and use some of these traditional storytelling techniques, this could benefit young children's education, by increasing their effectiveness as learners and boosting their self-esteem.

It is my contention that storying, as Moffett (1968) maintains, is the child's best-developed way of thinking and communicating about the world, in that it provides a conceptual framework for thought. My contention, as tentatively confirmed by this research, that the language of traditional tales scaffolds the child retelling stories into the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978), just as an adult helper can scaffold the child when reading (Meek, 1988), has implications for reevaluating the contribution of hearing and retelling traditional tales to children's education.

The children in the residencies found it difficult to articulate their thoughts about stories: and evidence about their understanding of stories was gathered primarily from their work. The attempts to gather data from the oldest children in the first residency through interviews and worksheets were inconclusive, and so were not repeated with the younger children in the later residencies. The residencies established a lack among the children of a metalanguage with which to talk about stories. More was learned about their understandings of stories from the stories that they told, drew, wrote, and played out than from discussion with them. My way of working as a participant observer, which was chosen for all three residencies, proved to be appropriate for this research because my own observations provided insights about children's learning and developing understanding of story form which they themselves could not articulate.

The research question this chapter has addressed was too broad. In seeking answers to it I could not develop all the insights the data suggested. Nevertheless, it has opened up many possible avenues for future research.

In the next and concluding chapter the findings and conclusions from the residencies are synthesised in a consideration of all the different strands of the ideas in this research. It reflects upon the findings and implications of the research as a whole, and considers to what extent the original research questions have been answered.

7.0 Chapter Six: Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter, the main findings of the research are summarised and analysed, and the implications of the research for storytellers, teachers and researchers are discussed. The original research questions and aims are restated and evaluated, in order to determine whether and to what extent the questions have been answered. The analysis presented in the chapter is divided into four sections.

In the first section I draw together the key findings from all the chapters and the theoretical, chronological and empirical approaches to the work, and establish the connections between them. In the second section I explicate the implications of the research, and consider what has and has not been achieved in the research. I also outline possible avenues for future research which are indicated by the state of knowledge about the storytelling revival and its contribution to formal education, as defined by the present research. In the third section I examine strengths and weaknesses of the thesis, in order to critique the research. In the final section I reflect upon my experience of the roles of storyteller and researcher, and draw out some similarities and differences which have been identified.

7.1.1 Restatement of research questions

The research questions which were set out in the introduction were the following:

What is revival storytelling as distinct from other kinds of storytelling?

How did revival storytelling evolve historically in England and Wales, and what is its relationship with the European oral tradition?

How do revival storytellers select, prepare and present the stories they choose to tell, in formal and informal educational contexts?

What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary age children?

What would constitute a praxis of storytelling?

7.1.2 Restatement of methodological principles of the research

The research was undertaken in accordance with the following principles of method :

To set the storytelling revival in the context of the history of the oral tradition, in order to ground it in the chronological development of the craft.

To investigate the work of individuals, rather than seeking generalisations, in order to create a qualitative study.

To undertake the research from the standpoint of the practitioner researcher.

7.1.3 Restatement of aims of the research

The aims of the research, as stated in the introduction, were:

To increase the knowledge base concerning revival storytelling in England and Wales.

To investigate the educational value of hearing and retelling traditional tales.
To contribute to the development of a praxis of storytelling.

7.2 Key findings: connections between different strands of the research

Chapter One set out to ground current storytelling practice in theory, by investigating theories about storytelling of relevance to the revival, and exploring the importance of oral storytelling as a traditional craft. It also sought to make connections between different theoretical perspectives on storytelling. The focus of the chapter was on the first two research questions. Initial steps towards answering these questions were taken. In the concluding summary to the chapter, I made five key points:

- i) Storytelling represents an accumulation of human energy and wisdom, and has historically been used as a powerful teacher of traditions, customs and memories.
- ii) Scholars of folklore have created a metalanguage for organising the structure of stories, which could be taken as the beginnings of a story grammar.
- iii) The various elements of an oral storytelling event cannot be adequately represented by a written text.
- iv) Narrative is a universal form which can act as a bridge between cultures, and which is familiar and accessible to children as part of their own culture. Patterned language carries importance in narrative.
- v) Women have historically played an important role as transmitters of the oral tradition.

Chapter Two addressed the fourth research question. It reviewed literature about storytelling in education and identified theories which went some way towards answering the question 'What does storytelling offer to the formal education of primary school children?' It identified a model of learning provided by the adult reading with a child, and compared this with the storytelling model, described as one offered not only by the adult storytelling to the child, but also by the influence of the many storytellers who have told and shaped the story over time. It also identified gaps in the literature on storytelling and education, and summarised the key findings under three headings: knowledge, metaphor and culture. Here I report those findings:

- i) Stories provide a conceptual framework for thought, which is used throughout life, but particularly in childhood, for shaping experience into a comprehensible whole. Mental imaging is an important aspect of this framework.
- ii) Stories provide support for children's developing competence in the areas of the emotions and imagination.
- iii) The structure of traditional tales can function as Vygotskian 'scaffolding' for

children's own storytelling.

- iv) Analogies can be drawn between oral cultures of the past and individual children's cultures, for, in both, storytelling functions as conceptual and communicative scaffolding.

Chapter Three returned the focus to the second research question, and investigated the evolution of revival storytelling in the context of the European oral tradition. I followed three lines of thought through the historical survey. These were:

- i) Storytelling as an educational activity
- ii) Storytelling for ritual or ceremonial purposes
- iii) The role of women storytellers in the oral tradition.

I drew out similarities between different aspects of revival storytelling and their historical antecedents, connecting:

- i) The bardic tradition with revival performance storytelling
- ii) The fireside tradition with the fireside aspects of the present revival, arising from the folk music revival, and also with the role of women in the tradition
- iii) The continuing tradition of storytelling as an educational activity, which can be traced back as far as records exist, and remains important in revival storytelling today.

I identified these connections through the historical research into the European oral tradition described in Chapter Three, which confirmed that they are legitimate.

Chapter Four, which focused on the third research question, constituted empirical investigation of the craft of a group of revival storytellers. It investigated the ways they select, prepare and present the stories that they choose to tell. This chapter also addressed the fourth research question, in that it gathered the views of these storytellers on the contribution of storytelling to the formal education of primary age children. I expected that the findings of the survey would be of interest to both storytellers and teachers. Responses from both groups to informal presentations which I have made on the storytellers' questionnaire responses indicate that they are indeed of such interest.

The key findings in answer to the question about the storytellers' craft were that:

- i) Storytellers in the revival are both contributing to the reestablishment of the oral tradition in England and Wales and drawing on that tradition for craft skills.
- ii) A range of traditional oral methods, as listed in Chapter Four (p. 141)

are in common use among revival storytellers for remembering and preparing stories for performance.

- iii) Storytellers rate their own intuition highly as a factor when choosing stories.
- iv) Storytellers' preparation of stories is frequently characterised by the 'assimilation' of a story, through 'living with' it. This process is different from the rehearsal of an actor, but appears to have factors in common with the ways in which children become absorbed in dramatic play (p. 135 et seq.).

The key findings about the contribution of storytelling to the education of primary age children were as follows:

- i) The storytellers in the survey considered that children of primary age can develop storytelling skills, that they can work easily and successfully with told stories, and can contribute to the revival of the oral tradition.
- ii) A range of techniques and strategies used by storytellers in classrooms has been identified (pp. 147-149), which could be used by both storytellers and teachers to enrich the formal education of primary school children.

In Chapter Five I also focused on the fourth research question and analysed my own work as a teacher-storyteller in three different schools. The data confirmed some of the key findings from the literature on storytelling in education through my own observations and practice. In testing out the working hypothesis that storytelling has a great deal to offer to the formal education of primary school children, I came to the following conclusions:

- i) In retelling traditional tales, children draw on the version or versions of the story they have heard, their own knowledge and beliefs about the world, and their own creative ideas, creating a synthesis of original and retold material. (See, for example, Royston's blend of my retelling of The magic flying horse; Harry's rendering of this, which he had just heard; and his own ideas about tigers, as recorded in transcript two from the second residency)
- ii) Storytelling and dramatic play complement each other. As shown in the descriptions of the two pieces of drama work in the second and third residencies, drama can be an effective learning medium through which children can explore and collectively retell stories.
- ii) Traditional stories can act as scaffolding for children's own storytelling, supporting them into the Zone of Proximal Development, and enabling them to create retellings of higher quality than they can manage alone. (For examples of this scaffolding, see Lilith's and Richard's stories

from the first residency, or Harry's retelling of The unicorn in the second residency)

- iii) Children and traditional revival storytellers work on retelling stories in similar ways. The traditional storytelling skills practised by storytellers in the revival are accessible to young children, and have the potential to contribute to the development of language and memory skills when introduced into primary classrooms, by storytellers or teachers. (For example, see Lorna's and Richard's storymaps in the first residency, which I have argued are a graphic version of the internal visualisation practised by storytellers, including CF, as a memory aid)
- iv) The children in the residencies lacked a metalanguage with which to talk about stories, as evidenced by the interview data from the oldest children, in the first residency. The acquisition of such a metalanguage would enable them to articulate their thoughts about stories and storytelling and become more conscious of the skills they exercise when working with stories. There is a need for teachers and storytellers to work on supporting children to articulate their thoughts and feelings about stories and their own work with them.

7.3.1 Implications of research for storytellers

The fifth and final research question, 'What would constitute a praxis of storytelling?' has not been fully addressed, and was perhaps too broad to be answered in this research. However, it is important for future studies. The first aspect of a praxis of storytelling would, in my view, be historical. Its function would be to ground present practice in an understanding of past tradition.

The research links revival storytellers' working methods, through their responses to the questionnaire, with what is known about storytellers working in past, oral cultures. A particular focus on the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome meant that the research concentrated on European culture. The shortcomings of this approach were noted in Chapter Three. A less Eurocentric survey is needed in the future, gathering information about oral cultures which are still vibrant and have not needed 'reviving', as the tradition in England and Wales has done.

However, this research did find evidence of close similarities and vertical links in the working methods of ancient and modern storytellers, especially in two areas. One is the use of visualisation and inner imaging, first described by Cicero and Quintillian, as recorded by Yates (1966), but also reported by several revival storytellers responding to the questionnaire survey, including CF, RWa and BH.

The second similarity lay in storytellers' use of rhythm and pattern, as memory systems. Milman Parry (in Parry, A., editor, 1971) and Eric Havelock (1963) reported

on evidence of these strategies in the work of Homer. Albert Lord found close resemblances between the work of the Ancient Greek bards and twentieth century Serbian storytellers (1971). Dell Hymes reported on the importance of these aspects of language in Native American culture (1982). Many storytellers who responded to the questionnaire survey described their use of bodily and verbal rhythm, and patterned language, including BH, VN, WD, EC and JuP. These memory systems, and the way in which they have reappeared in the work of storytellers who have not been born into an oral tradition, are a paradigm of the way in which oral cultures transmit knowledge; for it is not only content but also form which is embedded in the stories and passed on from one teller to another.

By demonstrating these similarities in the practice of revival storytellers and their predecessors, who have shaped the material, making it orally memorable and transmittable, the research has pointed out the debt which storytellers owe to the tradition. This does not require them to adhere totally to the form in which a story is received. Honouring the oral tradition is achieved by each storyteller telling the story in his or her own way, as appropriate for the time and place of the telling. This keeps traditional stories in the canon. The stories that disappear are those which become fossilised and irrelevant to the concerns of their audiences. They no longer have anything to say, so they are no longer heard. Linking traditional forms with contemporary concerns, as Richard did with his version of Bee and Mantis in the second residency (p. 173) is an important factor in keeping the tradition alive.

The research suggested that women have had an important historical role in the oral tradition, passing on stories through the generations. Evidence was found in feminist folklore studies of women storytellers, in the idealisation of female informants by nineteenth century folk tale collectors, and in the content of stories themselves, both in the common use of the imagery of women's work of spinning and weaving as a metaphor for storytelling, found as far back as the Greek myths, and in the important archetype of the character of the woman storyteller, epitomised by both Scheherazade and Mother Goose. Alongside this a new role for women storytellers is emerging, as indicated in Chapter One (pp. 41-42 and p. 45), as women, and some men with a feminist perspective, are bringing forgotten or unknown tales of strong girls and women back into the repertoire.

This feminist perspective, together with what Jack Zipes called 'the fragmentation of modern culture' (in the Times Educational Supplement of 31st March 1995, p.14) has contributed to the present storytelling revival. Perhaps this is beginning to create the guidelines for 'the modern age' which Jung believed could be provided by mythic stories and images (Staude, 1981, p. 99).

Another key finding which contributes towards the development of a praxis of

storytelling is that there are also horizontal links connecting the craft skills developed by storytellers working professionally in England and Wales at the present time. Illuminating these common practices to storytellers who have tended to work in isolation from each other, and mainly without access to living bearers of tradition, enables a theory of practice in the storytelling revival to be developed. A shared vocabulary, and a common understanding about revival storytelling, would assist storytellers to engage in meaningful dialogue about methods. Much more, however, remains to be done to develop this praxis. In particular, the creation of a metalanguage with which to conceptualise storytelling is needed: a vocabulary to talk about story form, which would be the equivalent of the classification systems identifying folk tale motifs developed by Thompson, Aarne and Propp, described in Chapter One (p. 29). To date, for example, no equivalent term to 'literature' has been found to describe the body of works which are held solely or mainly in oral form, a lack which the Chadwicks noted almost seventy years ago (1932, p. 5).

A definition of storytelling as a performance art has emerged in this research, derived from contemporary folklore research by Finnegan, Brunvand and Freeman, as reported in Chapter One (p. 31). This definition needs to be recognised and agreed by those who have significant roles to play in the strengthening of the oral tradition. A written version and an oral telling of a traditional tale are different, as this research has made clear. Describing storytelling as a performance art, rather than as literature, which is the only category under which storytellers can apply for funding presently from the London Arts Board, gives a fuller picture of all the features of a storytelling. Until arts funding bodies like LAB reconceptualise storytelling as performance art, rather than as literature, the important act of telling will continue to be undervalued. When the teller and the listener 'meet' in the metaphoric space between them where the story is made, that connection is shaped by the time, place, people and atmosphere at the moment of telling. The performative aspects of storytelling have further significance: the process of telling, reworking and retelling a story develops the individual storyteller's understanding of the story, thus enabling more deeply grounded telling. The process of being worked and reworked by different storytellers, and by the same storyteller in different times and places, renders the story more tellable, more shaped, and more memorable. This is a unique feature of the collective nature of the oral tradition. It is described by Betty Rosen as 'shaping and polishing' (1991), by Hugh Lupton in performance as 'the invisible storytellers who stand behind us as we speak', and by me as stories which have been 'shaped by many tongues'. It is something which is not found in the world of literature. It also has implications for education.

7.3.2 Implications of research for teachers

Similarities between the ways in which storytellers and children work with stories were identified in Chapters Four and Five, which substantiate my claim that storytellers and children of primary age work with stories in comparable ways. The implication of this

finding for teachers is that the strategies and techniques developed by revival storytellers are accessible to children and could be used as educational tools to help develop oral language, listening skills and conceptual development.

The premise that traditional storytelling is accessible to everyone is based on four principles. The first is that literacy skills are not needed in order to enjoy told stories: only a relatively small group of people are excluded, mainly through sensory impairment. Further work is needed to ensure that they, too, can have equal access. Secondly, they are accessible because traditional tales deal with themes which are universal (see, for example, Paley's gloss on The three little pigs, quoted in Chapter Two, p. 73). Thirdly, sharing stories develops empathy, particularly in the case of personal stories, but also through traditional tales which can throw fresh light on one's life. Fourthly, the language, form and imagery of story provide tools for shaping and sharing life events and making sense of experience, especially to children, who, as Moffett made clear, 'apprehend what others say through story' (1968, p. 49).

The importance of affect is often underestimated in education, but the emphasis which storytellers (including HL, RD and MO in this research) placed upon having an emotional connection with the story is comparable with the child's tendency to engage with objects which are perceived as enjoyable, and therefore desirable. The importance of play to children was noted by the storytellers in the survey, such as JaP, BH and LA, and also demonstrated in the reports of the residencies. When Royston made sing-song patterns of language in his storytelling, or dressed up in a tiger suit to take part in dramatic play, he was using his enjoyment of play to engage with stories. This supports my argument for the educational significance of play and its characteristics, because of the affinities with ways of working which are typical of the oral tradition. Understanding these affinities may help teachers to reevaluate the importance of the emotions and play in the education and development of primary age children in general. These are important but sometimes undervalued ingredients in primary education. However, they are areas in which the contribution of traditional storytelling, though significant, is not unique. In the next section I outline those features of working with traditional oral storytelling which I consider have a distinctive contribution to make to primary education, as demonstrated by this research.

7.3.2.1 Distinctive qualities of revival oral storytelling with educational implications

Three distinctive potential contributions of revival oral storytelling to the education of primary children were identified in the research. These were:

- i) The connections between traditional story forms and children's own preferred language use
- ii) The contribution of working with traditional stories to the development of

memory skills

- iii) The scaffolding embedded in traditional stories which can take a child engaged in the process of retelling traditional tales into Vygotsky's ZPD.

7.3.2.1.1 Connections between traditional story forms and children's preferred language use

The research found connections between children's typical language use and the forms of traditional story, both in the literature review on storytelling in education (see, for example, Egan, 1988, p. 116, or Bruner, 1986, p. 131) and in the two facets of the empirical work: the questionnaire survey and the case records in schools. MM, a storyteller well-respected for her work in educational and community settings, described children's work with stories as 'very natural and unforced; it arises from ... an instinctive sense (fed by good storytelling) that stories are for them'. This belief that children have an apparently 'natural' affinity with traditional stories is felt as a 'hunch' or intuition by many storytellers, but the questionnaire survey data substantiated this view, bringing out similarities between children's and storytellers' ways of using language and stories which are discussed below.

KH specifically addressed the relation between hearing and retelling traditional tales and children's vocabulary and language variety, writing that 'children remember very well the language of a storytelling, if it is delivered with conviction and ingenuity', and that children may directly 'pick up much vocabulary and language'. This was a response with which WD would seem to agree, for she commented that children 'can usually retell tales having heard them v. accurately'. AK offered an example of a child's creative language, noting: 'they use phrases such (as) 'soft and smooth like velvet' when they're describing a cat/kitten ... (and) can be more creative than adults'. The following extract from TT's questionnaire response identified spontaneity as one aspect of this connection between children and storytellers: 'Children merely have a fresher and less inhibited love of language: the chief tool of the storyteller'. This point was also addressed by GL's comment that children are able to make traditional stories contemporary and fresh because 'children do update - put in current relevancies'.

Other storytellers made less specific but equally strongly-felt claims for the connections between traditional story forms and children's own preferred language use. RP's view was that some children 'are 'naturally' good at telling stories ... intuitively us(ing) many of the techniques that adult storytellers strive to grasp'. SJ also felt that children were potentially more adept at traditional oral storytelling than adults, for she wrote: 'Children have often seen things in the stories that I have told which I may not have noticed'. This notion that children have an awareness of fundamental principles in the nature of storytelling was emphasised by the influential storyteller HL, who picked out four key storytelling skills which he believed he had acquired, through trial and error,

by working over time with children. He wrote:

I've learnt almost all my storytelling techniques from telling to children. The importance of rhythm, honouring the repetitions, making the world of the story consistent, finding the balance between narrative and description ... they are the best audience because you know when you've got them!

MD added another point, which brings out the similarities in the way children and storytellers respond to stories, namely: 'wonder, acceptance, delight in 'what happens next', seeing the whole story in pictures, loving each story for what it is, these are all traits we (revival storytellers) share with children' (my parentheses).

7.3.2.1.2 The contribution of working with traditional stories to development of memory skills

The research identified similarities between oral culture and children's culture, focusing on three mnemonic tools: patterned language, oral or body rhythm, and inner and graphic imagery. These are used by both ancient and modern storytellers, as described above (p. 207) and were used by the children in the residencies, especially Richard in the first residency and Royston in the second. Although these techniques were recognised as strategies for assisting memory and recall by the storytellers in the questionnaire survey, and also in the literature by Cicero and Yates (1966), they are not sufficiently valued as oral approaches to memory work in the present climate of education, which strongly emphasises literacy.

The memory depends for effectiveness on organisational schemata; it works in a different way when writing and reading are not used to support it, as HE's response to the survey confirmed: 'The more stories one hears, the better one's memory for them becomes' (see appendix 3). In my view, and that of the storytellers in the research, retold stories are more memorable than read ones, because they are 'shaped by tongues'. The capacity of children to concentrate on stories well-told and to listen 'is frequently under-estimated, especially by teachers', according to RP. The experienced teacher-storyteller TA observed that children may bring to a storytelling session skills which have been lost by many adults, commenting: 'When they are listening, most 'enter' a story in a way adults can no longer manage'. In her questionnaire response, MO observed: 'I believe that (re)telling a story is important if (children) are to remember it' (my parentheses). Both hearing and retelling traditional tales were regarded by the revival storytellers in the survey as of equal value, in educational terms, for the development of children's memory skills. GH suggested that symbolic qualities of stories are significant in this respect when she said: 'deeper meanings (of a story) begin to strike a chord in the children listening and I believe that those are the stories which help memory'.

The frequent references in this research to mapping and imaging the story, whether conceptually in the head, or literally on paper, demonstrate the value of this mnemonic strategy. Several revival storytellers in the survey referred specifically to the value of inner imagery in aiding recall of a story. For example, RD described how he used 'sequencing mental images to keep the links in action', while JE used a familiar analogy for the internal mental processes which accompany her storytelling. She wrote: 'it's like setting the video off in my head and telling it'. BH, a highly influential figure in the world of revival storytelling, described his strategy as: 'I visualise as intently as I can when I tell'.

Similarly, the 'maps of play' drawn by Myra Barrs' subject Ben (1988b), and by the children working on the story of Baba Yaga and the black geese with Susanna Steele (see Chapter Two, p.66); the children's storymaps from the first residency (in appendix 4); and the storyworld created in the school hall by the children in the third residency, are all examples of children using the technique of imaging, but externalising it as graphic images or dramatic play. As these children were unable to articulate their thoughts about storytelling it was not possible to determine for sure whether they were also using internal imagery as a memory aid, although TT, a storyteller who has worked with children for many years, wrote that 'children tend to remember stories as a series of pictures'. However, whether he was referring to graphic or inner images was not clear. The evidence from the case records cited above does suggest children use a transitional strategy, that of externalised imagery, to hold the structure of a story in their memory.

To summarise therefore, the traditional mnemonic strategies which are fostered by revival oral storytelling, and contribute to children's developing skills, are the use of:

- i) patterned language
- ii) corporeal or verbal rhythm
- iii) internal or graphic images.

7.3.2.1.3 Scaffolding embedded in traditional stories which takes the child into Vygotsky's ZPD

If teachers were trained to understand and use some of the techniques which are described in this thesis, this might increase children's learning and boost their self-esteem. This would require teachers to recognise and value the oral skills which children already possess.

Storying, as Moffett (1968) established, is the child's foremost approach to thinking and communicating about the world, for it provides a conceptual framework for thought. From the literature review, the questionnaire survey and the empirical work in the schools, in which Harry's story based on The unicorn is the most compelling of

several pieces of evidence, I propose the following: The language and structure built into traditional tales through repeated shaping by storytellers scaffolds the child retelling stories into the Zone of Proximal Development, just as an adult helper scaffolds the child when reading.

The case records of the first and second residencies provide empirical evidence for this claim. It is also supported by the questionnaire response of KH, who noted that children 'remember very well the language of a storytelling', and felt that the important thing is 'to help them become conscious of' taking ownership of the story by building on the scaffolding offered by the storyteller's version. GH's observation addressed the same point, for she said that 'we dispense with that style - that poetic style of traditional tales at our peril because we lose the capacity to retell it'. In her taped response to the questionnaire she described how:

You get even five and six year olds picking up this thing - this telling a story and they take on the ritualistic storytelling ... somehow there is this instinctive response of beginning the ritual ... it must be something that's been handed down for many many centuries because very young children can take it on so quickly and I know they are imitators but it is not just that they are imitating your style - they are imitating a pattern of language and I feel that is an important step ... towards being articulate

As a consequence of my research, I now agree with GH that the child retelling a story is taking his or her place in a long line of storytellers sharing traditional tales with listeners, and sharing also, even through generations of storytellers, the skills and strategies which are fostered by the content and practices of the oral tradition. These are skills which scaffold the individual storyteller's work with a story, by offering support from the metaphorical storytellers 'embedded' in the tale. The aspects of story form which furnish this support are the shaping, patterning or vocabulary which have been contributed to the tale as it has been passed on 'by word of mouth'.

This point concerning the educational value of revival oral storytelling has important implications for the re-evaluation of the distinctive contribution of hearing and retelling traditional tales to children's learning. It requires a new reading of Vygotsky and a commitment to using storytelling as a learning medium in the primary classroom.

7.3.3 Implications of research for researchers

The finding from the literature review that narrative is an important structuring device for children's thought and language suggests that the approach of the child, who, in Moffett's words (1968 p. 49) 'for a long time (must) make narrative do for all', might solve the lack of a shared and understood language in which to talk about stories and storytelling. Is narrative the first step towards a cultural metalanguage, in which stories would not only be the subject discussed, but also the shared and mutually understood

language in which the discussion can take place? This is a research area where storytellers, folklorists and academics could work together to elaborate a shared vocabulary. A precedent already exists in the teaching stories and 'stories about stories', which characterise oral traditions around the world, such as The story spirits, a Korean folk tale, or The tailor's button, a Scottish version of an old motif, also found in The Arabian nights.

Poetry is an important aspect of such a shared vocabulary. Connections between poetry and storytelling are found in their earliest form in children's rhymes and the patterned language of traditional stories which are best loved and best remembered¹. Literature as diverse as the writings of Strabo (1917 edition, pp. 67-69) Claude Levi-Strauss (1978) and the Times Educational Supplement of 31st May 1996 brings out evidence of a conceptual connection between poetry and storytelling. In Chapter Two the educational value of rhythmic language was confirmed by the repeated use of the metaphor of music by authors including Myra Barrs (1992), and Tony Burgess (1984). In Chapter Three the equation of story with song was found consistently through the records of storytelling in Ancient Greece and Rome, and amongst the Gaulish and Celtic Bards (p. 96). Revival storytellers still recognise the close relationship of story, poetry and music, as the analogy used by both SJ and RP of storytelling and improvised music makes clear, as does the frequently cited use of rhyme and rhythm, by AJ and SJ among others. Oral stories and poetry interlace the poetic, the fantastic and the everyday, not only in their themes, but also in the language and form in which they embody these themes.

A third aspect which I propose for future research into a metalanguage of storytelling is metaphor. Metaphor is an ideal vehicle for conveying truth in the make believe world of the story, because it allows fantasy to illuminate reality. In this sense, stories of imaginary creatures doing imaginary deeds not only amuse and delight, but also engage a listener emotionally by speaking with authenticity about his or her own deepest thoughts and concerns. In the first residency, Richard, seeking to verbalise the meaning of his story, showed that he was able to express himself through metaphor (p. 174). The ability to express one's thoughts in ways which are understood by others is part and parcel of coming to know and understand the world, and for this reason metaphor is an important tool to know and be able to use. Strabo described the appeal of the metaphoric element of storytelling language to children as being that it 'tells them, not of things as they are, but of a different set of things' (1917 edition, pp. 67-9). I suggest that, just as in Strabo's time, there is still an important role for teachers and storytellers to play, in encouraging and enabling children to develop a metalanguage for sharing their understandings of stories. This is an area of knowledge which needs further research.

¹ such as 'Fee fie foe fum', or 'I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house in!' or 'What big eyes you have, grandmother ...'

There are implications arising from this research for both the educational provision which is currently in place for children, and teachers' professional practice and development, in the links which have been established between music, poetry and story in this research. Teaching and learning would be enriched if the connections between these three art forms were made explicit. This is important for storytellers to acknowledge, too.

In terms of provision for children, it is my contention that hearing and retelling traditional tales should figure more largely in the primary curriculum in Britain than is the case at present. The first main benefit would be the development of facility with metaphor, the importance of which has already been discussed. The second, which depends on a new reading of the Vygotskian notion of scaffolding the child's learning, would be the possibility for the child to scaffold her/his own learning in oral work with traditional tales, playing for him or herself the role that the supporting adult fills in other spheres. This is based on a metaphorical view of the traditional tale, as embodying in its language and form the generations of previous tellers, who thus provide the scaffolding by 'standing behind the one who is telling the tale'².

Finally, the implication for teachers' own classroom practice is that they should be retelling, listening to and working with traditional tales, and with oral stories of all kinds, throughout the primary years of schooling. In my experience as a teacher-storyteller, most teachers do little storytelling themselves. It is easy to understand why this is so, and I acknowledge the pressures which impinge upon their opportunities to develop new skills. However, the recommendation that teachers should also be storytellers is not an empty one. It is based not only on the view that teachers can and should learn new skills, but also on the recognition that they already possess many of those they need to tell stories. Furthermore, they have a unique advantage over any visiting professional storyteller: they know and understand the children in their classes, and can choose material and ways of working which will be appropriate and congenial in a way which no stranger can hope to emulate. The personal relationship of teacher and children is the foundation stone of successful teaching, and one which teachers could build on if they wished to be storytellers too.

These observations about the transferable skills which teachers could bring to storytelling are relevant in other spheres too. Although parents and other carers of children such as nursery nurses, play workers, medical staff and librarians have not been included in this research, they too have skills which they could bring to bear on storytelling, and which would enable them to discover the benefits of using traditional storytelling in their work with children. This is an area which must be researched more fully in the future.

² from the introduction to the Company of Storytellers' performance of 'The three snake leaves', which has toured theatres and arts centres in England and Wales since 1995

Finally, embedded in these recommendations for teachers are implications for teacher education too. When teachers in training have the opportunity to hear and work with stories themselves, then they will come into school feeling confident in their abilities to put storytelling at the heart of their teaching.

7.4 Critique of research

To complete research without subjecting it to rigorous scrutiny and establishing an evaluative perspective would be to leave the findings and recommendations open to criticism. I have therefore reviewed and reflected upon this research as objectively as possible, given the difficulties of distancing myself from work which has occupied me for six years. I undertook a critique of three aspects of the research: the first, into the aspect of its form, scrutinised the methodology. The other two concerned the two main strands of content: the research into the storytelling revival and the research into the educational role of storytelling. The critique is therefore reported in three sections.

7.4.1 Critique of methodology

The first aspect of the research which is critiqued is the methodology, including the underlying assumptions of the research which informed the approach to the problem. One important aspect of the methodology was its acknowledgement of the 'interpretive, subjective dimensions of educational phenomena' (Cohen and Manion, 1995, p. 120). The significance accorded to the views of individual storytellers was one consequence of holding to this philosophy. This qualitative approach adopted was deemed most suitable for research in which the views of practitioner storytellers should be documented and disseminated to others. This mode of research and research reporting was a necessary condition of ensuring that the research would be seen as relevant by storyteller-practitioners in the revival.

The decision to report case records from small scale work in schools was a second result of acknowledging the subjective dimensions of educational research. Following the models adopted by Wells (1986) and Fox (1993), the empirical research reported on story work with small groups of children in some detail, and was not intended to arrive at generalisations about the potential of all children in working with story. An advantage of this, as with Wells' and Fox' work, was that it created an opportunity for the children's voices to 'come through' in the text, which seems particularly apposite in a study of the oral tradition. A disadvantage, however, was that it was difficult to link my work as a teacher-storyteller in this strand of the research with the findings from the questionnaire survey of thirty eight storytellers. Was it legitimate to do this? I considered this question carefully in reflecting on the research and decided that investigating practitioner-research necessitated writing about my own practice. The description of my work as a teacher-storyteller stands as an example of only one possible way of working with stories in schools, but the report benefits from the insight which the stance of participant-observer brings. Although a study of other

storytellers working in school would complement the information gathered from the questionnaire responses, this would be another kind of research altogether.

A further concern about the case records arose in reflection about the children's work selected for scrutiny in Chapter Five: were the choices I made too narrow and contrived? The data from each school resulted in the first place from my direction and choice of aims. Then I exerted further influence on it by selecting the work of certain children rather than others, in order to reinforce findings I wished to stress. A trawl through the entire collection of data would no doubt reveal stories, in both written and taped forms, which could shed a different light on these children's responses to storytelling. It may be appropriate in the future to reexamine the complete data from the three schools, with this potential criticism in mind.

It is also necessary to revisit the issue of bias which was discussed at the beginning of Chapter Four. The concern arose from the fact that I was working with people I knew, often as friends, both the respondents to the questionnaire survey and the teachers with whom I worked in schools. Although this could have been avoided in the schools, the nature of the storytelling revival itself, as outlined in Chapter Four (p. 122 et seq.) meant it was inevitable that the storytellers would be known to me. Their responses were full and detailed, however, and it may be that my personal contacts were a factor in achieving the quality of data which was collected. Whether or not the storytellers felt they had to 'tailor' their replies to my research interests is an issue which is difficult to resolve, but my subjective impression is that these people would not deliberately misrepresent themselves, because of their convictions about the value of their craft. In the case of the schools chosen for the residencies, although it would have been possible to choose to work with teachers whom I did not know, it seemed more appropriate to set up residencies where there was already a shared context. This also was more consistent with the approach of the rest of the empirical research.

To conclude the critique of the methodology of this research, the use of the 'tools of the trade' of storytelling in order to scrutinise it was a positive aspect (see p. 21). It led me to use a working method which searched for historical evidence about the oral tradition in stories as well as in academic texts and historical accounts, to report on stories told and retold in schools, and to use oral interviews as well as a written form of survey to collect data from practitioners.

However, a criticism which could be levelled at the research is that most of the empirical evidence presented was not oral. The storytellers' responses were written, except where individuals themselves expressed a preference to respond orally. Moreover, the children's story work in two of the three residencies was collected and analysed in written form. This came about partly because of the ephemeral nature of the spoken word, which makes detailed scrutiny or analysis of it difficult, and partly

because of the exigencies of the research process itself, which requires verifiable evidence. This aspect is discussed further below, in the fourth section of the chapter, which considers the relationship of the roles of storyteller and researcher.

7.4.2 Critique of research into the storytelling revival

A shortcoming, of which I became aware in reflecting on the research as a whole, was the tight focus of the empirical work in schools on working with folk tales, to the exclusion of other genres of traditional tales; for example, legends or wonder tales. Personal stories were brought into the study because of the review of literature on autobiography, but the important point about the transferability of skills from traditional tale telling to telling one's own stories which was made by June Peters (p. 78), was not developed. The potential for learning contained by the rich variety of other traditional tale forms in the oral tradition was not demonstrated by this research, and would make an appropriate focus for further research.

A finding which became clear from the literature review, especially from the writings of Owusu and Campion-Vincent (p. 32), was that while stories can function as a positive force for change, they may not always do so, because they can also express or confirm prejudice. The craft itself is neutral and can be used for good or ill, as is true for all art forms. It is the practitioner who determines how it will be used. The implications for the ethical dimension of this research were not sufficiently explored.

Considerable attention was paid to the contribution of storytelling to memory skills, and this is addressed in more detail below. The issue is raised here because of concerns about whether claims for the evidence are over-inflated, and too strong a case has been made for the continued existence of characteristic mnemonic techniques from the oral tradition in the work of revival storytellers. The *ars memoria* was discussed in Chapters One and Four, and similarities between the memory techniques of ancient and modern storytellers were emphasised, and connected in Chapter Five with children's use of graphic images to record and recall a story. However, the parallels are not exact, and it is possible that I have over-stretched the evidence in trying to make this an exemplar of the transmission of oral techniques through the oral tradition.

Different sections of the research contributed findings relevant to the study of women in the oral tradition: namely, the literature reviews of feminist theory and of feminist perspectives on folklore in Chapter One contextualised the information about women's important role in the history of the oral tradition, included in Chapter Three. Furthermore, the survey responses of women revival storytellers to Question G, asking them to describe the different situations in which they work (for example Helen East, appendix 3), showed that Stones' observation that 'men tend to have the floor ...' (Stone, 1986b) is no longer true, and women storytellers are establishing themselves as performers of revival storytelling. The work of the feminist researchers Drake, Elliott

and Castle (1993) reported in Chapter Two epitomises the collaborative nature of women's work with stories, and should be read in conjunction with Susanna Steele's words about the way she reframes stories so that she feels comfortable in telling them (p. 42). The three different aspects of the research, empirical, historical and theoretical, each brought a particular perspective on the role of women in the oral tradition, and created a fuller picture than had previously been available.

Before moving on to critique the research into storytelling in education, there is a final positive point to make concerning the research into the area of the emotions. Chapter Four established that professional storytellers do recognise the role of the emotions in their own practice, and that for many of them, including BH, MO and RD, liking a story is a necessary prerequisite for 'taking ownership' of it. Although this finding was not fully developed in the consideration of the educational role of storytelling, it was made explicit in the analysis of data from the questionnaire survey.

7.4.3 Critique of research into storytelling in education

In hindsight, the original focus of the research on the contribution of storytelling to education was too narrow: by restricting my analysis to the acquisition of craft skills I neglected some areas of learning altogether, and only touched on others. There is a need for a more inclusive view of learning to underpin an investigation into the educational value of storytelling. One aspect of learning which was not sufficiently analysed was the affective realm of the feelings and the emotions. A brief enquiry into the possibility of educating the emotions was undertaken in Chapter Two, and claims were made both for the educability of the emotions and for the potential of storytelling to support this learning (pp. 71-73). However, this claim was not supported by empirical work in the residencies, which would have strengthened the argument.

Similarly, storytelling as a channel for moral education was not fully explored. The chronology of the oral tradition demonstrated that the contribution of stories to moral education has a long history: in sacred and religious texts, in the chronicles of the early Christian church by writers such as Bede (p. 101), and later in Perrault and Grimm (pp. 107-108). The children in the first residency explored issues of truth and falsehood in their considerations of the creation stories they worked with, as did both Josh in Carol Fox' study (1993), and the children in Vivian Gussin Paley's nursery (1992). My own experience of storytelling with children confirms that they bring a lively concern for truth to the stories they hear, and the first question I am most commonly asked is: 'Is that a true story?'. A full analysis of the contribution of storytelling to moral education would be a useful focus for future research.

Within the area of skills learning which was the major focus of the work, memory and visualisation were favoured over language skills. Many aspects of spoken language use were barely touched on. Observations about 'grammar, style and vocabulary' were

made in Chapter Three with reference to the Arthurian story Sir Gawaine and the Green Knight (p. 104), but were not applied to the story work of either the professional storytellers or the children in the residencies. Given the many layered analysis which Carol Fox was able to make of her subjects' stories, it is clear that a lot of potential for investigating children's learning of language skills was not exploited by this research, though it would be possible to remedy this in the future.

The role of traditional stories in creating and affirming cultural identity was touched on in Chapter Two (p. 83), but not sufficiently developed. It would have been possible to ask the revival storytellers to consider the cultural role of storytelling explicitly by including a further question in the questionnaire, but the issue was not prioritised. It is also an area which could have been discussed with Lilith in the first residency, for in the analysis of her story I assumed that she was drawing images from her own Libyan cultural heritage, but did not take the opportunity to discuss with her whether my assumption was correct (p. 172). This omission was partly because of the evidence I gathered, through undertaking the research, that the children in the residencies found it difficult to articulate their thoughts about storytelling. However, Lilith might have been able to express her views on the question of cultural identity, and this was an area of the research where more empirical evidence would have strengthened the case made from the literature review.

This point leads into my next criticism, which concerns a lack of evidence to support the claim made in Chapter Two, based on my reading of Applebee's thesis (1973), that stories promote reflection. I do not consider that the residencies offer sufficient evidence of this, although it is a point confirmed by the responses of professional storytellers; for example, in SJ's observation that children 'use story to deepen and question their understanding of reality', or CF's comment that storytelling permits a 'slow inwardness of response and interpretation' which he notes is usually lacking elsewhere in the curriculum. In the third residency the aim of encouraging the children to reflect on the needs of speakers of English as an additional language was articulated. It was hoped that the task of 'writing a book in gorilla' would further this aim. Their comments in the drama work, and the letters to Gary the Gorilla, showed the children had empathy for 'him' as a character, as described in the analysis of data in Chapter Five, but the aim of promoting a greater awareness of the communicative needs of others was not proved.

Two brief points about my working methods in the three residencies should be made here, before addressing the final criticism, which concerns the needs of teachers. This is something which the research addressed only peripherally. In the second and third residencies I made considerable use of drama as a learning medium in the practical work. This arose fortuitously in the second residency, as transcript two shows (pp. 183-186), and it was the success of the strategy on this occasion, together with the

expressed aims of the teacher, which led me to employ it once more in the third residency. I had not really considered until then the interrelationship of storytelling and drama, and in fact tended to keep them separate in my first four years of working as a teacher-storyteller. I used to think of myself as either 'doing drama' or 'working with storytelling', but rarely combined the two when working in schools. I described myself, before beginning this research, as having 'moved from drama into storytelling'. In my own professional practice, this was based in a decision not to 'act' any more, but to 'work as myself, without hiding behind the mask of a character' (see p. 16). However, in coming to this decision about performance style I had also lost sight of the pedagogical benefits of educational drama, which is a valuable medium for children to explore and articulate ideas and feelings. It is also an oral medium, which makes it particularly appropriate for working on oral stories. As a result of the work in the second and third residencies, I have reconceptualised my 'storytelling work' and am now using drama strategies in workshop situations like those described in Queen Anne's Nursery and St. Andrew's School. At a future date, a full study of the relationship between storytelling and drama as a learning medium would develop the initial thoughts which have been provoked by this empirical research.

The second point concerns children's understandings of story structure. In Chapter One I reported Vladimir Propp's interest in how children come to understand story structure (1968, p. xv). The empirical research has provided evidence that even children as young as Harry and Royston, who were both under five at the time of the residency, can use story structure with understanding, to create patterned and well-crafted narratives. It has not discovered, however, how they acquire that understanding, offering no answer to Propp's question 'Does the child unconsciously extrapolate fairy-tale structure from hearing many individual fairy tales?' Carol Fox' work (especially 1987 and 1993) has offered an answer to the question based on children's early experiences of having stories read to them, but I would like to try to find an answer from a more thorough study of children's work with oral stories.

Finally, in this critique of the research into storytelling in education, an omission in the empirical research needs discussion. Although MO commented, in her response to Question I in the questionnaire, 'I feel as if their teachers are the people with the most useful comments to make here', the report of the empirical research does not include a survey of the views of teachers. There are two issues here.

Firstly, as stated, the research does not report on the views of teachers. In fact, a survey of teachers, by means of a teacher's questionnaire about the educational value of storytelling, was intended to be part of the empirical research, and collection of data did take place in the three schools where the residencies were undertaken. However, when decisions had to be made about sharpening the focus of the research, this avenue had regretfully to be abandoned. It is an area which needs further research.

Secondly, reflection on the practical applications of this research leads to the conclusion that teacher anxiety about storytelling is not sufficiently addressed by the report of the research. Teachers like the one at Andrew Marvell School, who saw storytelling as an area in which she lacked expertise (p. 163), will find little to reassure them in this thesis, with the notable exception of the resource offered by the rich store of ideas from storytellers for classroom activities arising from storytelling work (detailed on pp. 147-149). The step from inviting a professional storyteller to work in school to becoming a teacher-storyteller is one which few teachers make. The professionalism and expertise of revival storytellers creates a paradox: more than one teacher has said to me, most recently on an in-service course at the University of Cambridge School of Education on 15th March 1999, 'I could never tell stories like you do'. The question of whether teachers can really be empowered to undertake storytelling themselves has not been answered in this research, although it is something which I see them as uniquely qualified to do, because their knowledge of and relationship with the children in their classes provides a foundation for storytelling work which no visitor, however skilful a practitioner of the craft, can access. My personal experience of working, outside the parameters of this research, with teachers whose initial training course, at the University of Greenwich, contained a substantial experience of storytelling, has shown me that including storytelling in initial teacher training is an effective way of enabling students to view it as an intrinsic part of their repertoire of skills. Another successful training ground for confident teacher-storytellers is the storytelling module developed for an in-service diploma of the University of Leicester, together with the foundation of the story clubs that some course members established in their schools, described by Jane Hislam, in 1996.

This concludes the critique of the research. The final section of this concluding chapter outlines how undertaking the research has impacted on my work as a teacher-storyteller, and considers the inter-relationships between the two roles I adopted while doing research into storytelling.

7.5 Consideration of the roles of researcher and storyteller

To be successful, as stated in Chapter One (p. 55), research must recognise the characteristics of the phenomenon which it investigates. My approach to this research has been framed by my experiences as a storyteller, and in some ways has also affected it. The ephemeral nature of the spoken word has made it an inconvenient subject for academic research, because of the difficulties of verifying evidence. This has often required recourse to written data, whether of children's stories for analysis in Chapter Five, storytellers' opinions in Chapter Four, or written texts such as The Odyssey in Chapter Three. The same issue also affected the literature review in Chapters One and Two. However, the intrinsic importance of the spoken word to the research has meant that this problem had to be addressed.

7.5.1 Influence of my being a storyteller on the process of research

I decided for a number of reasons to accept as inevitable the interplay of oracy and literacy in the research, and to recognise it as a reflection of the storytelling revival itself. First, the questionnaire survey showed that practitioners interweave written and oral versions of stories. This takes place both in their working methods, where a mixture of oral and written methods of recalling a story was found, and in their search for material, where 'other storytellers' and 'books' were cited as the two most frequently used sources (p. 131). Second, the chronology developed in Chapter Three showed the historical importance of the interplay of oral and literate culture in England, as Margaret Spufford's research identified (1994, p. 13).

In using the doctoral thesis, a quintessentially literate form, to study the oral tradition, I have been confronted by a paradox. But I have also been able to synthesise elements from the two forms, which I now consider to have strengthened my practice in both areas. Drake, Elliott and Castle (1993), who explored the process of research from a feminist perspective, as described in Chapter Two, used the experience of telling their life stories to each other to negotiate 'a search for meaning' in their lives 'through shared interpretation' (p. 294). Their use of oral autobiographical story as an intrinsic part of their research methodology led me to consider my research, into storytelling using traditional tales, as a similar search for meaning. The experience of undertaking the research used the tension created by the interplay of oracy and literacy inherent in the paradox of the activity. This led me to engage more deeply with the issues at the heart of this interplay, primarily through reading the work of Walter Ong (1982). It also led me to propose in my research an analogy between the historical relationship of oral and literate cultures and the contemporary child's developmental move from a personal oral culture into the social culture of literacy.

7.5.2 Influence of my being a researcher on the process of storytelling

My own work as a teacher-storyteller was affected in several ways by undertaking the research. Opening up my practice in the three residencies for scrutiny led me to reflect on my personal praxis, and in particular to confront the dichotomy which I had unconsciously created in my work between drama and storytelling, as described above (p. 222). This has caused me to re-evaluate the way I work in schools. Devising the questionnaire about storytellers' working methods required me to analyse my own practice at a level with which I had never before engaged, in order to formulate appropriate questions, as Chapter Four records.

Most fundamental of all was the influence wrought on me by the wide reading required for the research. Undertaking the reading for the literature reviews and chronology of the oral tradition grounded my practice in a deeper understanding of the tradition than I had previously owned. The literature search was for me the equivalent of the storytelling apprenticeship which is undertaken in traditional cultures as a training for

professional storytellers (see Pellowski, 1990), except that my 'apprenticeship' served metaphorical teachers. I have proposed in this research that the anonymous tellers of traditional tales leave traces of their influence in oral versions of stories, creating scaffolding for the storytelling efforts of new tellers. Now I propose an analogy between this scaffolding of form and the scaffolding of content which the literature on the theory and chronology of the oral tradition provided. The effect of my reading about the oral tradition, in terms of the impact on my professional practice, was to ground my work as a revival storyteller in a deeper knowledge and understanding of the oral tradition. One aim for the completed research is therefore that of disseminating the findings about the chronology of the oral tradition among revival storytellers. This may address the problem which Ben Haggarty described as one of dislocation from a tradition (see Chapter Three, pp. 113 - 114), by promoting a clearer understanding of the derivation and antecedents of the revival.

7.6 Conclusion

This thesis has researched both storytelling and education. It has not been possible to develop fully all the issues which it opened up. Rather, the intention has been to map out the areas which need further investigation, and to mark out new territory for research. The revival of storytelling in England and Wales is a welcome and worthwhile phenomenon. It has a great deal to offer to storytellers, teachers and children of primary age. This thesis aimed to bring together and synthesise information to illuminate the work of revival storytellers in England and Wales today, to contribute to the development of a praxis of storytelling, and to make more explicit the educational value of hearing and retelling traditional tales. Although there is still a great deal of further study to be done, these aims have, to a certain extent, been met. The research questions have been answered.

An introductory study of the storytelling revival in England and Wales, and in particular of its contribution to the education of primary age children, has been completed. The development of a praxis of storytelling has begun, although this is work which cannot be completed by one person alone. Like the oral tradition itself, the pursuit of a theory of practice for revival storytelling in England and Wales needs to be a collective effort. I hope that the initial efforts which I have made in this research will be developed, improved on and completed by others. Unlike Hugh Lupton, who uses the metaphor of 'the storytellers standing behind us as we speak', I look to the storytellers standing in front of me to complete this work, whether they be professional storytellers working in the revival, or the child storytellers like Lilith, Richard and Harry whose work has enriched this research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Biographical details of storytellers

Appendix 2: Extracts from storytellers' questionnaire responses

Appendix 3: Extracts from storytellers' interview transcripts

Appendix 4: Children's story work

from Andrew Marvell Primary School

Appendix 5: Children's story work

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Appendix 1:
Biographical details of storytellers

Introduction to the biographies

These biographies, except where stated, come from the Directory of Storytellers, published by the Society for Storytelling in 1995, and are reproduced in an edited form. Biographies marked * come from the booklet Traditional storytelling and education, incorporating an update of the 1990 directory of storytellers, by Tony Aylwin, published by the University of Greenwich, London, and revised 1994. Biographies marked ** come from other published sources or have been provided by the storytellers themselves for this research.

Lenny Alsop (LA)

Lenny Alsop has been artistic director of a theatre company and has been a storyteller for ten years. His special interests are: community development, and communication and spoken language. **

Tony Aylwin (TA)

Tony Aylwin retired in 1992 from a career in teaching and teacher training. Since then he has concentrated on storytelling. His work in school involves a 'story fair' approach, helping children to develop as storytellers. As organiser of the 'Storytelling in Hope Club' for adults in south east London, he is involved in creating programmes with club members.

Bob Barton (BB)

Bob Barton, who lives in Toronto, Canada, has toured globally as a storyteller, teacher of storytelling, author and speaker. He was one of the original founders of the Storytellers School of Toronto. He is the author of several books on storytelling in education and picture book folktales for children. **

Tim Bowley (TB)

Tim Bowley is based in West Wales but travels all over the country telling stories from European fairytales to Native American and Zen stories. He also runs a storytelling/ritual theatre group which meets on four weekends in the year. *

Eileen Colwell (EC)

Eileen Colwell has worked all her life in children's literature and storytelling, first as a librarian and then as a teacher of librarians. She has published many anthologies of stories and was involved with storytelling in the early days of children's television. In 1965, she was awarded the MBE for her services to children's libraries and books. **

Kevin Cotter (KC)

Kevin Cotter is a storyteller and puppeteer who works with very young children. Since completing the storytellers' questionnaire he trained as a teacher, and now teaches an

early years class in a Devon school, where he uses his storytelling and puppetry skills in his teaching. **

Michael Dacre (MD)

Michael Dacre has been a full-time storyteller since 1988, before which he worked in community theatre, TIE and oral history. He was Storyteller-in-Residence at the Beaford Arts Centre in North Devon, 1990-1991 and winner of the Crick-Crack Lying Competition 1992.

Wendy Dacre (WD)

Wendy Dacre is a professional singer and community artist working alongside storytellers. With her husband, Michael Dacre, she presents British and Celtic material in researched programmes.

Amy Douglas (AD)

Amy Douglas began telling stories in public when she was 14, at 15 she became the 'Young Storyteller of the Year' at Sidmouth International Folklore Festival. She is a founder member of 'Tales at the Edge', and also the 'Festival at the Edge'. In 1993 and 1994 she completed a year's 'Storytelling Apprenticeship'.

Roy Dyson (RD)

Roy Dyson has a long association with the folk song and dance movement and in more recent years has developed an interest in traditional English tales. He is developing training courses for adults, especially teachers and librarians, to enable conversion from storyreader to teller.

Helen East (HE)

Helen East is a storyteller who has helped to broaden knowledge of multicultural stories. Since founding Common Lore, the multi-ethnic group of storytellers and musicians in 1981, she has worked on making widely available authentic retellings of stories from around the world. *

Jean Edmiston (JE)

Jean Edmiston tells a mixture of traditional stories and her own stories. She has worked in primary schools, secondary schools, colleges, libraries and at festivals with children and adults.

Clive Fairweather (CF)

Clive Fairweather is a storyteller and folk singer specialising in English, Irish and Northern European country tales for adults and children; village folklore and gossip; oral and social history; academic ghost stories in the M.R. James tradition; English seasonal celebrations; Biblical and mediaeval texts. **

Ben Haggarty (BH)

Ben Haggarty is internationally recognised as a key figure behind the storytelling revival in Britain. He has worked as a teller of traditional tales since 1981. He co-founded the Company of Storytellers in 1985 and The Crick Crack Club in 1988. He was crucially involved with the National Oracy Project in 1986-7 and has made many national radio and TV appearances.

Kelvin Hall (KH)

Kelvin Hall uses an international repertoire. He won the Hodja Cup at the 1993 Crick Crack Grand Lying Competition. He is also a psychotherapist and runs workshops linking story with therapy and personal development.

Grace Hallworth (GH)

Grace Hallworth developed her storytelling skills at Boys' and Girls' House, Toronto Public Libraries. She also observed librarian-storytellers at work in the New York Public Library Service. In 1956 she arrived in England and joined the Hertfordshire Library Service at the pioneering stage of children's library services. She has published several books and articles and taken part in storytelling programmes on radio and television.

Sharon Jacksties (SJ)

Sharon Jacksties has a particular interest in multi-cultural sources and female heroines, and also devises programmes for specific events or places. She is bilingual, and can perform in French. She has a background in community theatre and dance.

Anne Johnson (AJ)

Anne Johnson performs and runs workshops using literary/folk, fairy and people's own stories. She has piloted many peoples' history projects and writers' groups and been published as 'Commonplace Workshop' a community publishing project.

Amoafi Kwapong (AK)

Amoafi Kwapong specialises in African music and stories and stories from around the world. She uses musical games from Africa, the Caribbean and other parts of the world as well as riddles and proverbs. She also uses traditional dances, movement and games. She was born into the oral tradition in Ghana.

Roberto Lagnado (RL)

Roberto Lagnado was ILEA's (London) storyteller for some 20 years. Born in Egypt, he tells myths and legends from all over the world. Since the abolition of the ILEA, he has worked in many of London's royal palaces and art galleries. *

Ginny Lapage (GL)

Ginny Lapage was closely involved with the National Oracy Project as a storyteller and teacher working with Travellers. She is currently pursuing her interest in Gypsy Folktales through doctoral research. She is a member of the Folklore Society and the Gypsy Lore Society.

Hugh Lupton (HL)

Hugh Lupton has been a storyteller for fourteen years, working with all ages. He tells stories from many cultures, legends, folk tales and ballads. Over the last ten years he has toured Britain, Europe, America and Africa as a solo performer and with the Company of Storytellers. He has appeared at major arts and literature festivals in England.

Mary Medicott (MM)

Mary Medicott has been a professional storyteller since 1981. In the mid-80s, she pioneered Community Storytelling. She devised the TV series 'By word of mouth', selected the children's book Time for telling, and has appeared on educational videos, including the Oracy Project's 'Common bonds'.

Vayu Naidu (VN)

Vayu Naidu is influenced by her family's Southern Indian storytelling traditions, which she combined with her own research at higher degree level. She performs with the theatre company Brumhallata and leads storytelling workshops. *

Marion Oughton (MO)

Marion Oughton has specialised in storytelling in education, including health education, since 1985. She runs participatory workshops and tells traditional stories from around the world and autobiographical stories. Articles about her work have appeared in educational and library publications.

Rob Parkinson (RP)

Rob Parkinson has been a full time professional storyteller since 1984. He uses storytelling and music in his performances.

Jacqueline Paschoud (JaP)

Jacqueline Paschoud has been a storyteller since 1984. She began working with under fives for the Lambeth Libraries Outreach Service and has gradually expanded her audience to include all ages. She has been a member of Lambeth Storytellers and The Ogresses. **

June Peters (JuP)

June Peters works interactively with younger children, specialising in 'Story Fairs' -

which involve older children hearing, learning, rehearsing and retelling stories to younger children. She uses traditional mbira (Zimbabwe thumb piano) tunes, harp or violin to accompany stories.

Ashley Ramsden (AR)

Ashley Ramsden completed a speech and drama training and then started storytelling in 1984 when he co-founded 'Mythos', a storytelling company. For five years he has been resident storyteller at Emerson College in Sussex where he has organised three international storytelling symposiums and a School of Storytelling.

Jim Riordan (JR)

Jim Riordan is a Professor of a University Department of International Studies and, therefore, has little time for performing. A speaker of Russian, he has collected folktales, eg in Siberia, and has published many anthologies which serve as useful material in school. *

Betty Rosen (BR)

Betty Rosen retired from a 25 year teaching career and then went on to write 'And None Of It Was Nonsense', which describes four years of storytelling work in her last full-time post. She then became a free-lance teacher and storyteller. Her second book 'Shapers And Polishers' covers this new area of experience.

Patrick Ryan (PR)

Patrick Ryan, former primary school teacher, works full time as a storyteller. Born in America, he has collected stories from Ireland, Britain and America, and researched storytelling. He has performed, lectured and led workshops for children and adults in many venues throughout Europe and North America.

Paula Sorhaindo (PS)

Paula Sorhaindo was born on the Caribbean island of Dominica, but moved to Ipswich, Suffolk, at an early age. She is considered one of East Anglia's leading young performance poets and storytellers. **

Susanna Steele (SS)

Susanna Steele is a storyteller, poet and writer of Irish descent. She has made a special study of witches, looking both at the history of the persecution of women as witches and at images of witches in children's stories and literature. She combines storytelling with a lecturing post at the University of Greenwich. **

Taffy Thomas (TT)

Taffy Thomas has twenty five years professional experience as storyteller, teacher, fisherman, entertainer and community artist and works in schools, libraries, village

halls, festivals or outdoors.

Richard Walker (RWa)

Richard Walker is a storyteller and children's entertainer, and founder of 'Tales At The Edge' and 'Festival At The Edge'. He is a regular radio broadcaster and Editor of 'Facts and Fiction'.

Robin Williamson (RoW)

Robin Williamson was a founder member of The Incredible String Band 1965-74, Merry Band 1976-79 and has been a storyteller since 1980. He has done scores for TV and film, as well as books and recordings and story cassettes.

Rick Wilson (RiW)

Rick Wilson has over 12 years experience of storytelling to all ages from inner city community centres to rural idylls and ancient sites. He leads performance and workshop sessions in storytelling and drumming.

Appendix 2:

Extracts from the storytellers' questionnaire responses

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: LENNY ALSOP

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

Mostly from books. I read a great many and select one or two to try out. Often I'll look for a story that answers some specific theme or item - say if I'm asked for a French farming story with children in it etc. etc.... Often, also, I collect stories and jokes that I hear - and, sometimes, from other "storytellers". Occasionally, I will remember the outline of a story from somewhere or other - maybe my childhood - and I'll soup them up a bit. In many projects that I do, the students COLLECT stories, and sometimes I use those in my permanent repertoire.

B) What influences your choice of material?

Ultimately, whether I can tell it well, and people enjoy and respond strongly to it. I like strong structures and patterns, and narratives that are clear and possess some ingenuity. I do not favour involved "plots" or psychological explorations. I like "literary" rhythm in a story and, somewhere, a spiritual or humanistic basis. No messages, as such. I like spaces or areas of stimulation to promote dreaming and wondering. I like cunning and trickery in a story format.

C) How do you make a story your own?

Chiefly by telling and telling and telling, again. Then it's like finding the richer dimensions -that all oral stories have, and reinterpreting them (a) in the very contemporary idiom and (b) in a way which is congruent and natural for my own voice and personality and c) flexibly, not fixed too much, so they remain versatile and able to be fine tuned, as it were, to match the different audiences and situations that I'll come across. I do, occasionally, dispense with what I might judge to be sexist, racist etc., or just rubbish.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Depends on the story in question. Also, my aims at the time. For heavy formal complex stories, perhaps I will focus on creating a vocal and eloquent delivery capable of sharp communication and, more or less, aesthetic appeal. For most stories, these days, I don't prepare, as such. I find I can read a story, say twice, and begin to tell it. Then the work starts. I usually tell the stories to my children first. They act as guinea pigs.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

I am more inclined to read different versions of a story I find in a book. With stories heard orally I think my first consideration is to replicate the story I "heard".

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

Not overtly. Maybe my mind works independently, here. - Because, it's sometimes as though patterns and sequences are visually imprinted in my imagination. Although

these appear, as it were, "in the back of my mind", they are nevertheless constant enough for me to find I can speak freely and still give my attention to everything else that's going on. They are a sort of steering and reviewing facility.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes. Schools, libraries, museums, art centres, play schemes, festivals, special projects (usually of a community nature).

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

It is difficult to generalize. Children grow with stories according to their own developmental agenda, together with the particular circumstances that pertain. Generally children are naturally endowed with curiosity, mental energy and the possibility of vigorous response. The oral form of stories are well suited to these qualities and stories are perhaps used by children as tools in the diverse and great quest of "winning through" (which is what most fairytales are about).

I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own? (eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)

At the end of the day a child makes a story his or her own by playing in some way with it. The more involved the child is with the play it affords, the more it becomes "owned" by the child. Children make stories their own best when they "play" with the story in groups - where their voices and ears can interact with the voices and ears of their friends.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

It would depend on the adult - and how they do their learning. Certainly, children seem closer to the more primitive components of the fabric of traditional stories. Also, their experiments with communication and expression are more extensive and overt than in the case with the typical adult. So a professional storyteller has every chance of learning much.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? **YES/NO**
Maybe.

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994
NAME: TONY AYLWIN

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

From hearing storytellers in clubs, festivals, etc.
From hearing storytellers on audio cassette.
From reading books.
Often a mixture of 2 or 3 of the above.

B) What influences your choice of material?

Being inspired by a performance, e.g. Abbi Patrix sent me back to Moe and Asbjornsen's Norwegian Tales, although I had read them years ago. For telling in adult sessions, it's nice to have a story few will know, so I'm interested in rare books or tapes, e.g. Serbian Tales or French Storytellers' tapes. For children, I choose tried and tested stories, but also try to include at least one new one each time, though it may be dropped for ever afterwards!

C) How do you make a story your own?

I don't try consciously. Some stories move me strongly and I begin to ask myself why - I think then I might put more emphasis on certain points to strengthen what has moved me, e.g. in the Lavana story, I think it is the wish to be a good king contrasting with his ignorance of his poorest subjects that needs to be brought out - I don't think I've got this right yet. I'm conscious of copying something of Tuup when I tell "Hare and Tortoise" and Jan Blake when I tell "Superman" etc. - but it helps to know that I could never tell in their brilliant ways.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

If it's a book, I read it aloud into a tape recorder and play it back (normally in the car) - after that sometimes I don't bother to perform them! With long stories, I do a fair amount of writing to ensure that I remember essential bits. With Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, I go back to the original poem which I studied at University. Sometimes I lie awake in bed and run through the story silently, but that usually sends me to sleep.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

Oral - tell them afterwards as soon as possible, though I seem to be getting worse at remembering. Written - see (D).

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

I'm interested in visual imagination, though more for bringing a story to life than for memory. I don't think I do use such methods, but perhaps that's because my opportunities for telling long stories are rare.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

In primary schools, infant and first schools including nurseries. Usually whole day Story Fair retelling programme. Inner city (Lewisham, Greenwich, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, etc.) outer boroughs (Bromley, Bexley, etc.) Kent, Essex and Southampton.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

When they are listening, most 'enter' a story in a way adults can no longer manage. When preparing in groups, the dominant children still like to dominate and the shy ones keep quiet, but faced with a real audience such differences seem to disappear.

I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own? (eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)

Certainly retelling - usually something of their character emerges, though this is not always a plus (e.g. macho boy who couldn't tell an Idle Jack - type story in a timid way) - but that would be a good talking point. Making their own versions has its problems - a typical teacher-led exercise, it goes wrong if the essential story gets changed - or deliberate updating to contemporary city life from the timeless past. Drama activities seem excellent, especially where they allow children to dwell on behaviour in the story, e.g., hot seating. Very rare, I think, to find children (beyond infant range) rewriting traditional stories, that is, attempting to retell them without any 'clever' alterations of the Paperbag Princess kind. When they do rewrite stories, then unconsciously part of their personality appears in the story, for example a ten year old Deptford girl rewriting Jason made him thirteen years old, thereby making him more of an age she could identify with.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

Probably from their freshness and enthusiasm - maybe also from what is seen as the rough edges - advising others can make us reflect on our own behaviour.

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994
NAME: BOB BARTON

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

Mostly I spend my time searching through old anthologies of folklore for the material I use. The Osborne Collection (rare and out of print children's literature) of the Toronto Public Library is a favourite haunt.

B) What influences your choice of material?

I'm always looking for stories which contain the element of surprise; ones which twist and turn and keep the listener guessing.

C) How do you make a story your own?

In some instances I rewrite the story entirely, especially if there are lengthy expositions to be tightened, characters to be developed or sometimes dropped, dialogue to be invented etc.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

I divide a story into acts just like a play and then cut the act or acts into scenes. I like to imagine that I'm watching a play and block the story out in my mind in that fashion.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

Stories from oral sources are always easier for me to learn. Sometimes I can retell them after one hearing. That is seldom the way for written sources.

F) Do you use any oral methods (eg rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

Images are very important to me in taking on a story and as I mentioned earlier I place those images in the context of a stage play.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes. As a visiting storyteller and artist-in-residence. (several visits to same children

over a period of weeks)

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

Given the opportunity, children love to remake the stories, sometimes borrowing characters from a tale and putting them into new situations, building on and extending a story, particularly if there are gaps to be filled and often remaking the story if it does not sit comfortably with them.

I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own? (eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)

Playing the story out, painting or drawing and writing feature most prominently.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

Yes. I think that in retelling a story we should always leave plenty of space for the children to consider a story's possibilities and to continue to take it in different directions within the context of the world of that story.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES/ NO

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: JEAN EDMISTON

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

From memories, from books, from friends - other storytellers. Reading through books in Waterstones or Library. From books in my house and Letterbox, books in friends' houses - sometimes friends or family send me a story they think I might enjoy.

B) What influences your choice of material?

Makes my hair stand on end. Something in the story I can relate to - a character - event - a landscape. Can I see the story - does it make pictures/images for me - does it evoke feelings I can understand.

C) How do you make a story your own?

I read it and read it - then tell it - it comes out as something else usually. Or I make up my own stories - often mixing me/memory/feelings/bits of stories or images that have stuck to me.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Read and read - rewrite bits maybe - key events. Then I say it to myself - then out loud in bath, often. Can't manage yet to tell into a tape recorder - I feel daft. Tell it to a friend of my son or daughter. Sometimes I use objects to mark off story as I tell.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

Stories from oral sources are easier - must rely only on memory - when it's from written source - temptation to check if I've got it "right" is inhibiting. When it's my own stories - it's easier to remember as well - visualisation.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

Yes I use visualisation - landscape - the place is important and with some stories it's like setting the video off in my head and telling it. As I said sometimes I mark the events off with objects I take along.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes. In schools - large numbers in hall, smaller groups in classrooms. Also large group in libraries. Also I've worked with small groups of young children on community bus.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

Sadly I've not had too many opportunities to work with children and stories over period of time - usually I do my bit and leave - but on occasions I've worked on stories I've found they want to tell me their stories - they ask is that true? They seem to attach themselves to one character.

I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own? (eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)

Making their own versions in my experience - retelling and changing - adding bits often they chose to write (school influences?) them down even though they don't have to. Making something from the story - twice I've been shown tiny dolls of a character and been told their life story (on a second visit).

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

Yes - there's something about the emotion with which children respond - they accept a story and quickly and often with little inhibition make a story their own in some way - not aware of "rules" or what is or is not storytelling - they just do it - naturally and with enthusiasm often.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? **YES**

Good luck. I enjoyed doing this Fiona - thought provoking. It'll be interesting to hear about result of survey.

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: CLIVE FAIRWEATHER

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

The short answer is from a lifetime's eccentric reading. I use the classic English, Irish and Northern European collections of folktales, especially Joseph Jacobs, Asbjornsen and Pourrat, plus modern works in the same field. I borrow from dictionaries of folklore, and from works of social and rural history. My language-base for storytelling comes from long familiarity with the speech-rhythms of the Authorised Version and the Coverdale Psalter. I also draw upon the Icelandic Sagas (trans. Magnusson & Palsson), the Kalevala (trans. Bosley), and journals, memoirs and diaries from many periods of history, especially the records of 17th century antiquaries such as Gough, Aubrey and Sir Thos. Browne. I read Middle English fluently and Mediaeval Latin adequately, which gives me access to the original phrasing of Chaucer, Sir Gawaine or Giraldus Cambrensis. I write academic ghost stories in the style of M.R. James. I collect family stories and traditions, local tales, village gossip and modes of speech, using notes or tape-recordings when appropriate.

B) What influences your choice of material?

I specialise in tales that illustrate the dreams and fears of the labouring poor in the rural communities of the last century. The style can be identified in Thomas Hardy's collection *A Few Crusted Characters* (published in *Life's Little Ironies*, 1891) - an emigrant returning to the village of his birth is regaled with a series of local anecdotes, superstitions and recollections supplied by the occupants of a carrier's cart in its slow progress back from the market town. I am inclined to adapt material from other cultures - an Aesop's fable or an African folktale - to conform to this traditional English setting. My own family history is often integrated into the story, through the circumstances of my father and my grandfather's lives in Southern Ireland before the First World War. I have a large repertoire of English folksongs and country lore, and have learnt (from listening to storytellers such as Robin Williamson and John Campbell) to blend songs, gossip and stories together in a way that follows the natural rhythms of conversation and recollection. I like an audience that will subscribe its own memories and observations. I see storytelling as an aspect of social history and community life. It stands in opposition to mass entertainment, noise, novelty and rapid change, and to the current fragmentation of the family and the countryside. Most of my performances are in country locations, and some involve historical role-play in the character and costume of a farm labourer of the 1870s. There is a danger here of stories becoming isolated, removed from their family context into a cultural theme-park.

C) How do you make a story your own?

I keep notebooks, indexed and cross-referenced, to enable me to build programmes for a particular audience or occasion. Every story in my repertoire is held in these notebooks, reduced to its barest elements for immediate recall. The writing of such a synopsis is my first step towards learning a new story. As I live alone, I am able to reconstitute the narrative at will, speaking episodes aloud, in character, just for fun. I like to discover the country voice, the spoken rhythms, in the story, and often use the Norfolk dialect that I knew in childhood, or the Southern Irish that I heard from my Grandmother. As I have no car, and work in rural surroundings, I often rehearse lumps of story or traditional songs while trudging over the fields. I tell the good bits to cows and magpies. This seems a wholly appropriate method of rehearsal for the type of material I am exploring. But every time I reconstruct the story I re-invent its language -

I never seem to approach it the same way twice. A responsive audience will conjure the authentic voice from me without further effort. A dull audience can have the opposite effect.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

I begin with a slip of paper containing a list of titles taken from my notebooks, and chosen to suit the occasion. I trim this list to sensible proportions, keeping plenty of material in reserve, in case the mood of the occasion takes an unexpected turn. I read through the synopsis of each story on the list. I choose my opening item with great care, but all the rest depends on the reception of this first offering. Stories usually follow each other with their own momentum. Judging what an audience is ready to hear next is one of the most important skills of the trade, a skill that would-be storytellers need to learn. There must be room for the God-given and the unexpected. I usually begin with a storyteller's prayer and invocation, which I found in Lady Gregory's *Vision & Belief in the West of Ireland*. Each story is itself a gift or blessing. The detail, the passion and the phrase-making must happen for the first time in performance - to rehearse it beforehand would be tedious and artificial. But it should be noted that appropriate language is the key to storytelling. A failure in this respect is what separates many would-be storytellers from success with their material and with their audience.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

No. All stories from written sources had their beginning in the spoken word.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

No, unless you include the tunes and rhythms to which old ballads are set. But in committing stories to memory I rely upon a strong sense of location: I move each episode into a house, a field or a landscape that I know well. This enables me to visualise the action and the sequence of events with complete confidence. I respond to a text rather as a book-illustrator would do, using his background knowledge to organise the foreground detail. Three great, fearsome sets of books belonging to my Grandfather made me a storyteller long before I could read - these were: *The Harmsworth History of the World*, 1904, (in 8 volumes, leather bound), a *History of the Great War* (in 6 volumes), and bound editions of the *Boys' Own Paper* for the 1880s and 1890s. Each of these books was copiously illustrated with steel engravings or photogravures of the most sinister and stupendous kind. I was a solitary child, and these illustrations (I never read a word of the text) had a lasting impact upon my imagination. Now, taken as a whole, my repertoire is full of laughable, grotesque and shocking elements, comparable with those taken from life in the pages of Francis Kilvert, the Victorian diarist, or Thomas Bewick the naturalist and wood-engraver (1753 - 1828). So memory is served by a strong visual sense, and needs no further help. My stories are like burrs in an old dog's coat - they cling to me even when I'd sooner shake them off. Here, for example, are two sentences immediately brought to mind from the 13th century *Njal's Saga*: 'Kari rushed at Kol with his sword drawn and slashed at his neck. Kol kept on counting, and his head said 'Ten' as it flew from his shoulders.' My only aid to memory during a performance is the slip of paper mentioned in Section D). But this only contains a shortlist of titles, two or three additional catch-words, and perhaps an important name or date. Without my glasses I can't even read what I've written, and I generally mislay the piece of paper. So I rely upon my Irish ancestry and my university degree in English to pull me through.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

As English and History teacher, and as a storyteller, I have worked with children of every age-group (principally with top juniors) for over 30 years. I am into second generation audiences - telling stories to children whose parents heard me storytelling when they themselves were little.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

Reading or listening to stories allows children to rehearse new ways of acting and reacting, thinking and feeling. Stories demonstrate the logic of cause and effect. They multiply possibilities and alternatives. They suggest appropriate ways of responding to challenges, mysteries, surprises, threats, fears, invitations, seductions, deceptions and triumphs. Small children use dressing-up clothes to identify who they are, who they will become. Stories serve the same purpose. They allow children to absorb conventional wisdom and natural justice, to receive warnings, promises, reassurances, and to know the security and repose and certainty that comes with endings. Stories illuminate the importance of memory and expectation, prediction and anticipation. They allow children to find - and to escape - their place in time, their place within the family, their place within one race and culture. They can reinforce a sense of local or regional identity, but they also represent children's only means of independent travel, free from the confines of their watched-over and restricted lives. They offer the stimulus of danger in safety. Stories are the strangers that children are not supposed to talk to - but without whose help the family becomes a prison. Stories are the voices of God - as when the child Samuel heard, in the darkness of night, a voice that said: 'Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle.' Stories offer strength in adversity. They are more faithful than dogs. They forge magical alliances and summon archetypal helpers.

But schools often use stories abominably and without respect. In the context of large classes, team teaching, codes of practice and the demands of the National Curriculum, a restless superficial busy-ness can seem reassuringly efficient. So schools are organised to be continually busy. (It should be noted that television, computer games, video films, holiday plans, and other aspects of contemporary children's lives promote the same determined busy-ness). This discourages children from making their own intimate, private, more reflective responses, whether to stories or to other creative opportunities. The current of the work, and the current of the age, runs against this. Teachers are under pressure to resist the intimate and the slow-moving, just as supermarket staff are discouraged from gossiping with customers in the check-out queue. So stories that deserve a lifetime's meditation are reduced to sound-bites, sampled as topic-work, and then tossed aside. The tidy and the cheerful are preferred before the wayward and profound. As explained above, I became a historian and a storyteller because of hours behind the sofa feeding my soul into the pictures of the Harmsworth World History - An Incident in the Wars of the Hanseatic League - Last Procession of An Imperial Monster - The Retreat of the Goths After the Battle of Vesuvius. Strangely, there were always boys standing about in these unimaginable scenes, boys with whom I fiercely identified. For me there was no cinema, no television, no mass music culture - just these compelling images in black and white. In a sense I am still the child I was - telling stories to the cows and magpies. The National Curriculum has been designed to exclude experience of this kind, in every area, especially language teaching. I am therefore distrustful of the worth of stories in the hands of teachers, a docile, unimaginative breed of civil servants employed by the state to fulfil its quotas in the name of progress and efficiency.

**I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own?
(eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)**

Through all the methods listed, and more besides, including unexpectedly powerful dimensions such as dreams and fears, interior monologues and sustained fantasies. In the classroom, drawing and painting are important media, since they retain some of the slow inwardness of response and interpretation that has been lost in other areas of the curriculum. But children's powers are limited by poor models, inattentive teaching, lack of practice and experience, inadequate reserves of language, lack of technique and poor concentration. They cannot easily discriminate, they mimic brash, predictable alternatives more easily than difficult and subtle ones. They are seldom obliged to defend their fantasies or justify their conclusions - for everything at primary school level is subject to the same bland process of assessment. Moreover children are impatient and inattentive. They live in a world where everyone hears and no-one listens, everyone looks and no-one sees - where radio and television never stop talking, where a thousand coloured worlds change colour every minute. You couldn't hear the voice of God in all that babble. Besides, what is the point of making a story your own, if the only purpose is to complete the appointed exercise and hurry on to the next one? These circumstances represent a considerable challenge to the professional storyteller.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

From children, storytellers might learn how to play with truth. Children never know whether stories - or realities - are true or untrue, or how much of the story is true, or in what way it is true. If I show you the silver bullet taken from the wolf's heart, does it prove I shot the wolf? Is it possible that Kol's severed head could speak one final word? Children rely upon what they are told, believing and disbelieving by turns. They live in a world of fearful and amazing possibilities. This theme of What is True? is central to the storyteller's art. Two thousand years of history revolve around Christ's action - both child-like and profound - when He broke the bread and said, as if telling a story: 'This is my body'. Children respond to objects and to ritual actions with awe and uncertainty - they sense the unfamiliar ground, the threshold of a mystery. So objects can be made to cry aloud in the hands of a good storyteller, just as they will for a wizard or a God. (A poor storyteller allows the listeners' uncertainty to slip into derision). I once owned a mammoth's tooth that had been dredged from the North Sea fishing grounds. Incredible object. Then the fisherman who had given it to me, demanded it back. I wish I could have kept it. To place it in a child's hands was the best kind of storytelling - the moment when Time turns in a circle, and the very old and the very young are re-united:

Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning

But children ought to learn from storytellers, not the other way around. This is the conventional wisdom of every traditional society. Storytellers must be the elders of the tribe, the grandparents and other permanent, slow-moving figures of which so many modern children have been deprived. Only in an age as frantic as our own, could it be suggested that a storyteller's wisdom could be learned from the young. It is the duty of the old to speak and the young to listen and keep silent.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES/NO

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994
NAME: ANNE JOHNSON

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

From books, from other storytellers, from the radio, write them from fragments and anecdotes.

B) What influences your choice of material?

If it captivates me I use it.

C) How do you make a story your own?

By keep telling it and then I grow into it - I often add chants, songs, call-response, rhymes.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Listen to myself telling them on tape - tell them in front of a full length mirror. Go for a long walk telling the story as I go.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

From written sources I memorise parts when the language is really wonderful so as not to lose it. I rewrite some stories completely so as to make them my own. I don't tell a story I have heard another storyteller tell until I have rewritten it in case I copy too much the way they perform it.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

I see it as I tell it. Memorizing for me is a very visual thing.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes. Parties/playgroups/schools/nurseries/libraries/festivals.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

Children love to tell stories to adults and each other and so however it is worked into everyday school activities is good. Children of all ages, and I include secondary school, connect with storytelling in a very complete way. A good storytelling makes them feel and the kind of thinking that arises from a 'felt experience' is much more interesting.

- I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own?
(eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)**

In all these ways, but the writing comes last and is enlivened and inspired by the other activities.

- J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?**

Yes not to worry about making bits up - being fantastic, and to tell the stories that really interest you - not the ones you think you ought to tell.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: GINNY LAPAGE

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

1. By listening to other storytellers.
2. By reading collections of published folk/fairy tales.
3. By researching archive material.

B) What influences your choice of material?

I choose what I enjoy! Also what I remember. Schools often specify a theme which I then research so I have "collections" of materials. (Nat.Curr. influences too).
The type of audience influences the choice of story I tell, too.

C) How do you make a story your own?

Keep the structure but use own words, turn of phrase or inflection - pop in phrases which will tie me personally to the story e.g. tags or openings.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

I speak them aloud - either to a friend/the wall!/on tape - until they "flow". Practise on characterisation.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

Oral: Listen - repeat asap after - make brief (6 or so words/phrases) notes - retell asap or I'll forget.

Written: Read - gabble from memory - tell at good listening pace re-check areas that seem thin. Make brief notes and headings.

I keep a file of story titles with the key words and the source noted as well. This jogs my memory by just seeing the title and I can re-tell a story which I learnt some time before.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

Find patterns of events, repetition - organise closures - keep to minimum of notes - key words/phrases.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes - schools, libraries, playgroups - may be workshops, maybe straightforward performance.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

They ask - "is it true?" which I find leads to an interesting discussion! They tend to say: who's going to play what part even though it is made clear that it is telling not acting. They are not often familiar with this form of "story emparting". Older children with written sources try to commit to memory (learn by rote) as opposed to learning by heart - that is, understanding it and making it their own.

**I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own?
(eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)**

The younger they are the more they want to characterise e.g. "act out" story. I've had some rap versions and also some straight storytelling in top juniors and lower secondary age group. Acting out is not so successful at this age, I find.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

I find it surprising how fast they can remember the whole thing! Children do update - put in current relevancies - just as the 'folk' tellers in the past did.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994
NAME: HUGH LUPTON

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

Partly from written, partly from oral sources. I usually use several versions of a story in preparing my own telling.

B) What influences your choice of material?

Something in me has to respond to the material - whether it makes me laugh, moves me, disturbs me or teaches me something.

C) How do you make a story your own?

By shedding the received text, and seeing the pictures, then finding my own language for my own pictures (holding on to refrains etc).

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Imaging, imagining, writing, forgetting my own text and going for long walks trying out the language and rhythms, telling to a tape-recorder and listening back, then evolving the story through interaction with audiences.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

It's much easier to tell a story that you've heard - the work on "re-oralising" has been done for you, it can, though, be harder to "make it your own", the "ghost" of the version you heard it from can loom very large.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

I learn the stories as a sequence of images, the "seeing" for me is very important, also refrains and repetitions and formulaic passages, once they are learnt, help the process of memorising the story as a whole.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes, frequently (5 and over) in schools, libraries, fairs, festivals, family performances etc. (as audiences) and in schools as workshop participants.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

As an audience children are always thirsty for stories - and will allow themselves to "enter" the world of a story in an almost trance-like way (especially junior-age

children). And they often remember the stories to the smallest detail. Re-telling a story, though, and holding an audience with it, is for them quite a different and difficult skill.

**I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own?
(eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)**

They always want to act the story - and they have lots of fun doing so, though it rarely works as a performance (really they're playing the story). I try and get them to go through that and then "tell" their versions more formally. A lot of tremendous written work has come out of storytelling workshops - but later, when the stories have been digested, discussed and pondered on. I'm not interested in them sitting down and writing what they've heard.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

I've learnt almost all my storytelling techniques from telling to children. The importance of rhythm, honouring the repetitions, making the world of the story consistent, finding the balance between narrative and description they are the best audience because you know when you've got them! Also the "playing" aspect is important, entering the world of the story either as a listener or as an actor.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994
NAME: MARION OUGHTON

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

At the start of my professional storytelling life, I told only stories from oral traditions. I find these stories mostly in collections of folk tales from round the world (I enclose a copy of the bibliography* I currently give to teachers etc). The books are new and second hand, found by accident, bought on purpose, received as gifts. I have in my repertoire a few traditional stories which were told and read to me by my parents. A few more I learnt by hearing other storytellers telling, either in the flesh or on tape.

After 3 or 4 years, I began to use autobiographical and family stories in my workshops, which make up the bulk of my work. Increasingly over the past three or four years, I also use personal stories in performances. These stories come from my memory. I occasionally quiz my family for details of incidents which I half remember.

In the past 2 years, I have occasionally been asked by schools and primary health care centres to do storytelling for specific curricular areas (e.g. environmental studies, history) or health issues. In these cases, I create stories for the occasion, stories which I may keep in repertoire, or not use again.

*entire handout enclosed, "Hints" for secondary, as I've run out of 3-11s - but they're almost identical anyway.

B) What influences your choice of material?

Traditional Stories: I have to like the story. It usually has a female central character, or several strong female minor characters. Occasionally I change a male central character into a female. The story has to be unlikely to be well-known by school age pupils, as most of my work is in schools, and I aim to tell them stories they do not already know.

Personal Stories: Events and incidents in my childhood which evoke memories of feelings which I think young people will empathise with - e.g. being lost, feeling embarrassed, shy, lonely, angry.

Created Stories: These I make up to order, according to the demands of the booker.

C) How do you make a story your own?

Traditional Stories: I look for as many different written and oral versions of the story as I can find. I go back to similar stories I already know. I try to get information about the culture from which the story comes.

Whether the story is written or on tape, my approach - I think - is the same. I read it aloud or listen to it, then I tell it aloud several times. If it is once heard and not on tape, I make sure that I tell it aloud soon after hearing it. I often tape record working tellings, so I can at leisure look for passages where I can insert repetition or a song, look for phrases or individual words I like and want to use again. I leave it alone and let it sink in, thinking about it from time to time. I come back to working on it, always looking at the mental images conjured up, never attempting to describe them in detail, but holding onto those images and remembering that I am aiming to help my audience to see their

own mental images.

For stories which I intend to use in workshops, in which pupils talk in pairs during the telling of the story, I find and create possible pair-talking tasks - the basic tool of my workshops. (e.g. Find out from your partner how they would feel in this situation. Decide with your partner three ways to solve this problem. Ask your partner what they would take if they were going on a similar journey).

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

See C) above.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

I don't think so, though I am aware that I have never told a story fresh having read it once, whereas I can do that after one hearing. Certainly, from hearing a story I have clearer mental images than from reading.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

I put rhyme, repetition, strong rhythm, two line songs into many stories, but always think of those elements as being for the benefit of the listeners rather than for me. It is the mental images which are my strongest aid to memory.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

A great deal. Mostly in schools, less often in libraries (both class visits and general public), play schemes, health centres, arts centres, festivals etc. Both performances and workshops.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

Random thoughts, not prioritised or ranked: Infants will often take a story I have told, including a life story, and retell it as if it happened to them. Infants and juniors often want to know if a story is 'true'. Teachers often tell me that they notice their pupils using more gesture, facial expression and voice dynamics after seeing me work.

In some of my workshops, I group and re-group the pupils, in order to provide a new audience several times, so that pupils can retell and retell their story. Pupils as young as Y4 are capable of looking back over the drafts of their story and picking out ways in which they have changed and improved the story.

Nursery and Reception children often give no setting for their life stories (e.g. I fell out of bed). The older/more skilled in storying they become, the more elaborate the setting (e.g. One night when I was sleeping on the top bunk, I was messing about and I fell

out of bed). The older they become, the less imaginative they are, or perhaps the more reluctant to show their imaginations.

**I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own?
(eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)**

The ways I work, I rarely hear children tell stories, and rarely have the chance to meet children again later, so do not find out what has happened to the stories they heard. Even more rarely am I involved in acting or writing - though pupils often ask me if they can act it out or write it. I feel as if their teachers are the people with the most useful comments to make here.

I notice children changing the name or sex or age of a central character, changing the setting, changing minor details of a story I have told, or another pupil has told.

I believe that telling a story is important if they are to remember it, so provide opportunities in my workshops for telling (in pairs and groups, without help or hindrance from adults). I assume that what is going on is making the story their own, and from the outside what I see is hands and arms going in gestures, audience rapt and leaning into the story.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

We can always learn.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES/NO

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994
NAME: ROB PARKINSON

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

All over the place of course, because once you're 'keyed up' for stories, they seem to come at you from all angles. But to be more analytical, some of the main sources are:-

1. Source unknown - these are stories I've known so long that I simply don't know or can't remember where or how I heard or read them. They include stories I heard as a child, family stories, legends, jokes and anecdotes used to illustrate 'study' areas (psychology, education, 'spiritual' studies etc.).
2. Contemporary oral sources - events etc. on the 'storytelling scene' as well as tales heard in ordinary life. I do find it hard to use stories told by other 'public' storytellers because very often the tale comes stamped with a recognisable professional personality.
3. Books of course. Like most 'revivalist' storytellers, I've a large and ever growing collection from scholarly to popular. I like to know more than one version of a story chosen from a book and sometimes put together elements from different presentations of similar patterns - not of course 'approved of' in some circles, but I reckon it's valid if it works and 'harmonises'.
4. Cassettes - to a certain extent. I listen to a lot especially in the car, but remarks under point 2 also apply.
5. Original stories - I write stories as well as telling them, but a story made up for telling is different. However much based on experience, it grows and changes with repeated telling.

B) What influences your choice of material?

1. Choosing material is first of all an intuitive process. There has to be a kind of recognition when a story is first heard or read, something that engages me. This doesn't mean that I necessarily understand what a story is about straight away; in fact it can be more interesting to gradually discover meanings through repeated tellings. However, I am particularly interested in stories that seem to mean something: it's my starting point, rather than whether a tale comes from a particular tradition - or even whether it is in fact traditional.
2. Strong imagery appeals to me particularly; I like to be made to 'see' the story and rarely forget it when that happens.
3. Of course I look for stories that suit the way I tell tales. I probably do that without thinking about it.
4. However, external factors also may influence. For example, when an organisation has asked for a particular theme in a performance or where the minstrel image I've cultivated to a certain extent is being stressed.
5. In work with children, I may have other motives for choosing tales. For example, I often look for tales which can include participation either in the form of choruses, questions and answers etc. or in the playing of simple musical instruments along with me. But I still have to like the story well enough - I've dropped a fair number of effective participation pieces over the years because the story itself has stopped being interesting.

C) How do you make a story your own?

First of all, I'm not sure a story ever really is 'my own', even if I've made it up myself: stories seem to have a life of their own somehow or other. However, putting pedantry on one side for the moment, I suppose the story begins to become 'mine' when first of all it has communicated something and then secondly I've begun to think about it. A short story, an anecdote or a fable or a joke, you take in and it's more or less there, waiting to be spontaneously 're-cast' as you tell it, though even that would improve with retelling. My method with a long story would be first of all to get to know how it works by visualising the stages of the tale. Sometimes I summarise in writing, though rarely consult the summary afterwards - I do it simply to clarify the pattern. Sometimes I transpose and reset a story pattern in a different cultural historical context. I also think about individual characters in a story, their motives etc., and they may begin to 'talk' to me (sounds crazy of course) as well as chewing over the metaphors, what individuals and events might 'stand for' in a larger sense. I'm often surprised by what seems to 'come out' as I go over the tale repeatedly. Someone once said to me that storytelling connects with 'the wise part of the mind' and I reckon that's true - though it probably touches on some pretty daft bits as well.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

I think I've partly answered that already under C). I'm very much an improviser in performance and one of the delights of performing stories is the constant discovery of new landscapes, new details, new techniques of telling as one works with an audience and 'listens' to its questions. Having said that, a story has to be well enough prepared and known for anything of that sort to happen, as well as to cope with those occasions when it simply doesn't. I often introduce new material in workshop situations, playing some of my workshop games with the tale perhaps. I've never known a first telling of a story, however well 'prepared', to be as good as subsequent retellings: one needs the 'contributions' of audiences to make a story come to life. In general, I don't memorise in the conventional sense, but I suppose what is in my mind is something akin to a jazz score, with main themes and motifs written in and large areas marked for improvisation - though of course these become more set and a kind of script develops as a story is told and retold. Extras like musical effects or tricks such as juggling are introduced initially through watching and sensing when something is needed, though may then become part of the 'script'.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

The essential difference is that with a story I've heard, I'm further on in the process: because if I've really heard it enough to remember it, then I've also 'seen' it and I don't have to go through those stages of summarising I've mentioned. As I said earlier, working with a story I've read may include looking at different versions and certainly involves an attempt to get away from the written presentation, away from the words and into the pictures as it were.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

Yes. Visualisation, as I've implied, is extremely important in the way I work with stories. Also the 'rhythms' and 'cadences' of the story itself, the 'threes' etc. Threes are quite easy to remember but lists I've always found difficult, so will work on those

using association etc. Rhymes I don't find useful as ways of memorising stories; they seem to me to be extras, or separate pieces requiring a different kind of memorisation.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes, very frequently as a visiting 'performing' storyteller in schools, libraries etc. giving performances of stories to larger audiences and running workshops with class-size groups. I also very much enjoy telling tales to children in informal circumstances.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

I find it hard to generalise because like adults they vary of course, but here are a few points:-

1. Children as listeners (I know that probably isn't what you meant, but with the excuse that listening is also a way of working with a story...): I find that the capacity of young children for listening to stories is frequently underestimated, especially by teachers. Very often infant teachers will confidently assure me that their children won't listen to stories for more than half an hour or so, whilst my experience is that they can and will listen to very long and complex narrative structures lasting more than an hour if the impact is varied sufficiently and they are involved in the 'performance'. What is more, they will listen better and more closely than many adults. I think that this is because for them, the story can become the whole world for the time of the telling, whilst adults present have a lot of other mental distractions to cope with. I've said before (and will no doubt say again) that the difference between working with adults and children is that the one audience you're trying to reach the child in the adult and with the other you're contacting the adult in the child.

2. Children as storytellers:

a) Under 11 is a very broad range of course. There's an unselfconscious stage between very approximately 7 and 9 when children will improvise stories very happily for each other and that is very interesting to study. I've noticed how the most popular tellers will often make up details and whole plots and sub-plots in response to audience mood.

b) There definitely seem to be those who are 'naturally' good at telling stories, who intuitively use many of the techniques that adult storytellers strive to grasp. Some may also be good at writing stories whilst others have difficulties on the page but come to life when telling. Good story writers may also be poor storytellers - they may be trying to be too 'literary' or it may be a problem of personality.

c) I'm not sure that the distinction that adults make between personal narrative and received tales is quite so clear to children, for whom the one will often run into the other.

d) It is generally easier to get children to make up stories than to work creatively with traditional patterns. They are more used to being asked to invent tales and teachers, many of whom see creative writing as either a way of getting children to improve their writing skills or as simply self-expression, don't often teach the notion of plot. But I find that top infants and all juniors do take very well to retelling stories and playing with them, some far better than others of course as I've already suggested.

**I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own?
(eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)**

'Intuitively' seems to be my key word in these answers and here it is again. Children in retelling stories may intuitively make them their own - some of them anyway; they will use their own words, re-set the tale, invent extra bits and so on. Many will automatically want to act out stories in small groups, a response which is natural enough though of course is much encouraged in school work anyway and could be said to be culturally conditioned. Children seem to like to make their own versions of tales, but can easily lose sight of the original plot.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

This one does all the time - intuitively of course. I suspect that the most important lesson to learn from children is being unselfconscious and natural in storytelling (well, I try anyway), which is not always easy for adults - especially with what is almost becoming the officially sanctioned mode of highly prepared, excellent but for me sometimes too self-conscious-to-be-really-effective theatrical storytelling.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: JUNE PETERS

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

Other storytellers, picture books of trad. stories, collections of trad. stories.

B) What influences your choice of material?

If I like it - because the content troubles me in some way, because there are good rhythm and songs in it, because there are good images in it.

If it fits in well with other stories I am telling.

C) How do you make a story your own?

Telling it orally again and again. The right phrases come if I do this. I am experimenting with placing certain stories in my own past and cultural experience and giving them specific name places and historic timings.

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Telling it out loud to myself while I play my mbira - sometimes I record parts of these sessions. I then write down particular phrases and runs which I'm pleased with and which only seem to arise in this way and which I might forget. I use writing and drafting increasingly to work out the logic of particular bits which get stuck when I practice orally. (i.e. the bit where Janet first sees Tam Lin at the Well) I also work at visualising these particular scenes.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

I will always do a storyboard for a story from a written source and this helps me shape it - not always from an oral source. I think I do much less work on stories from oral sources. But that's just laziness - when I was forced to change "Grandmother's Button" I did the same sorts of things with it as any other story (out loud, writing and drafting and visualising).

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

I'm not sure what the difference is between working on a story and committing it to memory. I've noticed that increasingly I want to use alliteration (Section C). Maybe I use a combination of a series of key images which take you through the narrative, with key authoritative phrases which if I memorise and use, then trigger off a flow of the right sort of language and the right sequence of thoughts to build around the image and lead on to the next - I think - Certainly I memorise the beginning of stories. The rest is more likely to follow right if I have that "key authoritative phrase".

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Class teaching, storytelling workshops, storytelling sessions.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

I think there is a huge variety of responses and preferred strategies that arise from differences in personality, cultural experience, and school experience. In any class someone will always say 'is it true' if the story has touched them, someone will want to write it, someone to act it, someone to change it, someone to stay with it.

I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own? (eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)

Depends on age. My favourite thing is early years is to see children go off to enact a story they've just heard in the role play area. Juniors in general want to make their own versions, but I'm never quite sure if this is because of what they've come to expect or to feel is expected from them from years of school experience, or if it really is a personal preference. I think children want to work from their strength - if they see this as writing then this is what they want to do initially.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

I think we and teachers too, can learn to respect children's work with stories and observe peer responses to children's stories rather than our own, in order to gauge what is a "satisfactory" piece of work on story.

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994
NAME: JIM RIORDAN

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

On travels round the world, especially at story - telling festivals where you see how various stories work. For example, I was at a festival in Toronto and saw some wonderful American and native peoples and Canadian storytellers involving their audience. I also have used stories I've heard in Russian and Siberian wooden cottages.

B) What influences your choice of material?

Involvement of children - through rhymes or songs or jokes. 'Provocative' material - e.g. involving black girls as the 'god' in a story, upsetting stereotypes on sex and race. Stories that inspire, motivate children. I'm not telling stories for myself, to show off (I have to remind myself of that often) but to inspire children to create themselves.

C) How do you make a story your own?

By using various accents and dialect - in my case, a West Country accent and working class (robust, colourful, poetic) language - again so as to give children confidence in 'their own' language (rather than imitate 'drawing room novelists').

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Practice at home so that I basically have the plot and much of the language. Repeat over and over again, like preparing for an exam. And then try them out on children, polishing the performance all the time. I also sometimes use simple props (e.g. 3 oranges).

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

No - I never read stories to children. I always tell them so that I'm free (arms, legs, head) to move about and include any spontaneous occurrence (head entering, burps, farts, rain, wind, bell ringing) in the telling.

F) Do you use any oral methods (e.g. rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

No - just darn hard work and constant repetition.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes - in schools and libraries.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

I've only experienced children writing stories. I collect a class-load, go over them and address every child. Children have extremely creative imaginations and it is the storyteller's job to fire that imagination. On the other hand, some children have real writing talent; some haven't; some are good artists - that ought to be encouraged equally. Some have neither. Each child is different.

I) In your experience, how do children make stories their own? (eg through retelling, making their own versions, acting, writing)

Dunno - too many factors (including psychological) involved.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

Good gracious yes. They couldn't become decent storytellers unless they responded to what children do and want.

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions? YES

Appendix 3:
Extracts from storytellers' interview transcripts

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: EILEEN COLWELL

(extracts from a taped interview at Miss Colwell's home: 16/8/1994)

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

Well of course I find them all in books because the whole purpose of being a librarian is in books and I tend ... I look through many many collections of traditional stories, I always use them a great deal, traditional stories, but I also used literary stories as for instance stories by Walter de la Mare and Eleanor Farjeon and I find that not many people tell that kind of story, not nowadays, cos the stories that are written by people like Eleanor Farjeon have to be told exactly as they are in the same words, you're using an author's words. ... Of course, I've really answered that, haven't I, it's the fact that I was a librarian and my whole purpose was to introduce books. I didn't ... don't think I ever told say one of my stories that I'd invented, not unless it was in a book. I had to abide by that, as a librarian.

B) What influences your choice of material?

(Included above)

C) How do you make a story your own?

Partly by reading it and reading it and I always learnt a story by telling it to myself aloud. I never just read a story in a book and read it and read it and then told it right off. I always told it to myself until I was absolutely familiar with it, it was me, and I did this by, by telling myself stories as I walked along the road. I was known in Hendon because every now and then somebody would come up behind me and I didn't realise they were coming you see to stop in time and they used to look at me quite kindly - oh that's the children's librarian, she's getting ready for a story, but I think that was very important because once you've found the words for it you don't lose it, it's become yours, whereas if you just told straight from the printed page it wouldn't be the same. Of course with the literary stories that doesn't apply. But, the same way, the traditional stories I used to go over and over them until they were absolutely part of me, I didn't have to think about it at all (*Before you told them to anybody?*) Yes, before I told them to anybody (*That's a lot of preparation*) Yes a lot of preparation, but that just suited me because I did quite a lot of walking about (*Actually that's something that I do .. walking .. I call it walking the story in*) Yes (*I think there's something about the walking and the thinking and the muttering that kind of goes together quite well*) Yes, they do, and it becomes your story (*Yes, that's interesting. I think you'll find the next question is a bit overlapping*)

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Ah yes, well that's the same sort of thing, but of course I would read it through several times first because for one thing I often kept a little plan of the story and I would put the opening sentence and the names of the chief characters, because you tend sometimes to forget those and just a very brief idea of what the story was about and a concluding sentence because you must round off a story in such a way that the children are left content and satisfied or possibly thinking of something, wondering about something and finding their own conclusion for it and I did it that way because then I could keep a register of stories and years afterwards I could turn up a story there, read those notes and tell the story in a few minutes - I'd have it back again, but of course that's long - long experience - forty years of storytelling.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

Yes, I suppose I would, but actually I very seldom worked on an oral story because my .. at that time there were not the storytellers about to give you oral stories. You couldn't hear them in the same way, and while of course you sometimes pick up odd stories from people you meet, you know; stories of their childhood or something like that, and then you can use a different kind of system where you'd have really to write it almost yourself, in a case like that, if you only hear it once, wouldn't you, you'd have to have the chief points about it. I didn't have many opportunities of hearing traditional stories like you do nowadays, hearing all these storytellers, I was the only one telling.

F) Do you use any oral methods (eg rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

I think probably I see a series of pictures ... in my mind, and I would see them in ... in colour, I think, and in sequence of course, and I could pass from ... from picture to picture, and I think it's absolutely vital that a storyteller should see what's happening ... in her own mind, if you don't see it it's difficult to describe it as vividly ... you'll see them, like old Jeremy Knollkins in Walter de la Mare ... he's the best and the richest sweep in Cheriton, but a miser ... you can get a good picture can't you of such a person, and the sequence of events in which they would be involved, one thing would lead to another ... there's very much a dreamlike quality about stories. So I think I see it more than anything. So that's how I'd tell a story, not keeping to the original language necessarily.

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

Yes I see. Well I was telling stories in the library of course mainly and also, well first

of all pre-school children because I had a pre-school story hour for the little ones under school age - very disconcerting but as you know *-(Did you do a whole hour?)* No. *(laugh)*. Half an hour for the little ones. And then the other children used to come after school in their own time and they'd last say to about 45 mins, that's enough I think for anybody and in those I would always include a piece of poetry of some kind. ... The ones who came to the story hour were anything really from about 7 upwards because they often had to bring little brothers and sisters after school hours and they would stay with me until 12 probably - I doubt they were much older than that and then apart from them I told a lot of stories to adults because I went round lecturing you see - nearly always say near the end, shall I talk some more about this or shall I tell you a story. *(And they'd all go - tell us a story.)*

H) What observations can you make about the way that children work with stories?

... undoubtedly you can tell when a story is enjoyed and often it is quite oral too - you hear a sigh or a chuckle or something like that, you can always know -can't you - whether your story is accepted or not ... I wouldn't see any physical results I mean nothing in writing for instance, but that's not my sphere - I would only know and also the fact that years afterwards I had parents come in and say do you remember that story you used to tell about so and so - forgotten and now I'm telling it to my children ... *(But that's interesting what you're saying about their responses and also how well children will remember a story over a long period. I've noticed that with this holiday in Devon - there were children who would come - I've been going 5 years and there were children who would come each year and they'll remember a story from one year to the next and you'll say - have you heard it in between and they'd say no. Tell us such and such - tell us the story about The Swallowing Drum or tell us The Tiger Story you know and there are particular bits of language in it that they will remember and if there is a pattern or a phrase or something like that they will remember exactly bits of the wording and that I think is amazing.)* Yes I do remember one particular child who - I had one story and I said you can all tell me stories you see and I remember now that two or three of them did - who had the courage - did produce stories that I'd told with all the details, ... so they do remember in detail if it appeals to them ...

I) In your experience how do children make stories their own? For instance, through re-telling them or making their own versions or acting them out?

I wouldn't have much experience of that although they do make - one year for instance at the Parents Evening I said now what story shall we make a play out of? ... They'd got the details, they remembered the details and they put themselves into that story obviously taken their imaginations so that was an example but I wouldn't often see that

sort of thing. I wouldn't know about it. (*But when you were talking about the children re-telling stories that they'd heard from you - that's similar isn't it?*) That's a similar idea, yes. (*Do you find they change the story or not - or they -?*) No I don't think they change it much, they occasionally add a little detail maybe out of their imagination or out of their own - setting the story a little bit in their own life but I don't think I would see it quite as a result of that - quite as you might see it. Obviously they remembered them and made them part of their own as these parents who remembered them all those years.

J) Do you think storytellers could learn anything from the way that children work with stories and respond to stories?

I imagine they could but this again is a question a bit outside my experience because as I say I don't see the results you see in the same way - it goes on out of my care as it were and I only accidentally hear but I think you could certainly learn from the way children receive stories and get to know just what does appeal to their imagination, don't you.

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: HELEN EAST

(extracts from taped response to questionnaire: undated, summer 1994)

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

Well, they're about, 50 per cent oral and 50 percent written, it depends, for example, if I'm asked to do a project on a topic I'll go to various libraries, particularly the Folklore Society library, the British Museum library and the Kensington library and any other specialist libraries relating to that topic, so I might go off to you know London Dungeon or I don't know what and umm, so that's for sort of specific topics, otherwise I spend my time with my ears open learning stories, listening ... to all sorts of people, I suppose about sort of twenty five per cent off other storytellers and about twenty five percent off umm you know what you call domestic storytellers, people who don't tell professionally. Yeah, and the situation I'm in depends on which kinds of stories I'm telling, you know if I'm up in Scotland, surrounded by storytellers, I tell almost totally oral stories.

B) What influences your choice of material?

Well first of all I suppose a story has to appeal to me, but then there are all sorts of different types of story that appeal to me for different reasons so it's partly the mood I'm in, it's partly things that I've gone through, and then it's partly thinking about audiences, and you know I mostly .. mostly work with children so I'm thinking about stories that I think will mean something to - to people that I tell them to.

C) How do you make a story your own?

Well, sometimes... I translate it if you see what I mean, you know somebody tells it to me, and it's from Murundu or wherever so in translating it I'm kind of putting it into my own words and so on, so that sort of makes it my own. And then there are other stories, that I suppose what I mostly do with the longer stories is I try and put myself into the story in some way and then I identify with a character and I start thinking about what .. you know what it would mean to me to be in that situation when I get you know especially if somebody's in an unhappy or difficult situation and I need to sort of know what it feels like to be in that one if you see what I mean. I almost never write stories down for my own purpose of learning, I record and write them down for books and whatever to be faithful to the original teller but if it's a story for me to tell I don't write them down I just turn them around and around in my head and sometimes I forget about a story for years and years and then it sort of pops up in my mind pertinent to something that's happening and then I start thinking about that and re-turning it around in my .. mind. And also the final thing that makes a story my own is telling it really,

because most of the time I'll tell a story that I've just sort of vaguely got in the back of my mind and the first time I tell it part of my brain is thinking you should have worked on this bit or you should have worked on that and then the next time I tell it I'm you know a bit more sure of where it's going and then sometimes when I tell it it suddenly comes out how I want it ... sometimes it doesn't. I think that leads into the next question ...

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

Generally I just work on them by thinking about them really, that's the most thing. You see if I work with (x) then it's different because very often if we're trying to work on .. on marrying rhythm and music or whatever then we'll probably go through the story together and we'll have a tryout and then there are certain bits that you know the words might sort of lend itself to the rhythm particularly and that sort of gradually develops as a kind of partnered thing so .. when I work with (y) of course things get more set as well but working on my own I just think about them and working with other people I actually what you call rehearse in some way. Occasionally ... I bring myself to tell the story to someone who's going to criticise me in some way ... but I don't like it so much.

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

Well, oral stories I tend to hear and um ... if I'm in the right frame of mind ... then if I like them I'll just remember them and sometimes I might go back to somebody and I might say 'Hey, you know, what was the ninth riddle in the run?' or whatever, but, you know so some details I might really need to think about, but generally, the bones of the story, the shape of the story, I can just hear and ... and tell myself. But a written story, I find them a little harder to learn and I maybe have to read them - I probably read them once and sort of think I like it, and start thinking about it in my mind, and then I need to read it again, and then quite often I find that, umm, years later I read it again and by that time my version is totally different.

F) Do you use any oral methods (eg rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

I wouldn't tend to use rhyme because .. although rhymes kind of stick in my mind quite easily but it's too much attention to individual words. I certainly use, you know, inner images and so on because those are the images that I have when I hear the story, so they're sort of imprinted on my mind but I don't deliberately work through any of these methods, although I must say I suggest all these methods to people to try out in workshops, when I'm working you know, on ways of learning stories but for myself I

don't tend to use any of them. So, one more point on this, and that is, that I think that the more you learn stories the easier it is to learn them, and I've been doing it sort of I suppose for a job for a good many years and so I find it easier in a way because of the patterns the patterns are very familiar and so I know something and I just have to remember one or two separate details that are from a different version, if you see what I mean, and also because I think that that part of the memory develops the more you use it so for example I'm much better at remembering jokes than I was when I was ten.

G) Do you work with children under 11 years olds and in what situations?

Fiona, I work with children under 11 years in every possible situation that I am allowed to work with them and also in all sorts of situations where I'm not working at all i.e. practically every child I know whenever they see me demand stories to help them you know walk a long way or anything so all situations, yes really really all and especially I think to particularly aid trust, to bind a group together, so I suppose in ways that you might call sort of social training but in all sorts of situations. For a child to get to know me I tell them stories because that way they get to know me quite quick or a group of children.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

Aye, yi, yi - well sort of sometimes they take them on like play acting, like dialogue, like you know different parts they almost act them out, they live them. Sometimes they absorb them into their own lives and they change the patterns of them. Sometimes different details within a story has resonance within a child; sometimes the very act of being able to tell a story gives the child confidence in themselves and their ability to hold an audience; sometimes the story itself can inspire a child and help them to find you know strength or confidence; sometimes it can affect their dreams; sometimes it can go sort of deep into their sub-conscious and you're aware that a child is affected by a story in a way that they're not aware of necessarily, it's coming out in the way that they're playing or constructing a sentence or something like that; sometimes a child will use it to create a pattern in life for themselves if you see what I mean, there's sort of an order to somehow impose control on live events in the way that you can in a story. I think actually this is a bit of a vague question because it also depends on stories, what stories we're talking about, yeah.

I) How do they make stories their own?

Well to a certain extent they make the story their own by re-telling it ... I suppose when the details begin to sort of you know become particularly theirs or a certain expression

slips in that shows that they are down beneath the words, they've really got the feeling of what's happening you know like ... they might say they're really knackered suddenly you know instead of saying they were so tired, they'd worn their feet up to their knees or whatever, you see what I mean, so they drop the formula for their own expression, that's making it their own but then particularly it's making their own when they start to work on it I suppose in writing or in other forms and it begins to change and when I really feel it's been made their own is when they don't actually recognise it as the original story ... they've absorbed it and re-created it and really would feel very strongly it was their own work, that's why the whole question of children plagiarising material starts being rather strange because we are all doing that all the time so when they've fully re-shaped, I think it's fully their own and when it's least their own is when they're just totally parroting, I've also heard that.

J) Could professional storytellers learn from the way that children tell stories ?

Well this is kind of a loaded question I think because I think a lot of professional storytellers work in very different ways.

Personally I think that we could all learn from absolutely natural deliveries rather than awareness of self presence on stage but that's only my personal opinion about stories that I think that they don't need to be polished performances to be effective. That's not what a lot of other people would think but I suppose you want to know what I think.

I also think you can learn particularly from the way that children have a sort of ability to go from one story to another, to another, to another, to another, I mean they can be absolutely inexhaustible in their telling or re-telling of stories amongst themselves and I think that's again something that we can learn you know that it's not, the way that memories are triggered off, again this is getting away from the idea of waiting until something is perfect before you deign to deliver it and more about seizing on the feel of the moment to say what you want to say, so it's kind of getting back to the idea that - the Trinidadian expression, 'Mouth open Story jump out' ...

And yes of course I would be prepared to be interviewed on these questions and I hope you can follow all this tape.

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: GRACE HALLWORTH

(extracts from a taped conversation in Grace's kitchen: 18/8/1994)

FC:(beginning not recorded) I know the story you're talking about - it's words have brought me here.

GH: Yes - it's a talking book and that is very powerful and that is like a folk tale telling because it's so succinct, it's got a strong, well it's very true, it's full of images. The imagery is very strong because of the economy of words. The more you have the more cluttered the picture because the picture is in a way - of as it were - frustrated by words, words are blurring the images and this I think is why folklore is so successful and has gone on for so long - classical writers use that style quite a lot but what I found was that when I told the children a story ... that I had heard by some children in Binghampton telling them about local legends ... some anecdotes ... the way I should be talking to you and they told me that this happened when this man killed his enemy and the family had a feud for a long time, and so on, that sort of very very loose narrative prose style. And then I said to them a strange thing and I told that to the children that I knew that story - I knew it as a folk tale and they said no this happened up in the mountains just above this town and I said I am not saying that it didn't happen, I am telling you I know the story and I told them the story of 'The Tailypo' and they were stunned because they recognised that it was their story but when they were telling me that story, those children were retelling that story they didn't tell it to me in the anecdotal style, they told it to me in the style that I had told them the folk tale in and so because that had a greater ... mnemonic if you like

FC: I'm glad you can say that - I can't say that.

GH: Not only was there repetition in the story which of course in a sense is a mnemonic feature because you have the triggering factor there but because of the style of the telling which made it so much simpler so that we actually dispense with that style, that poetic style of traditional tales at our peril because we lose the capacity to retell it but also we lose the inner mysteries as somebody has described it because it is in the, it is in the, in that style that it is almost hypnotic ... rhythm but you begin to sink yourself into the story ... and in sinking yourself into the story, or the story sinks itself into you, I think it is both, you begin to understand things about the story, you begin to get the meaning so it is that, what I call the rhythm and the pace carry the essence of the story and I have proved this with a story which - I'm always forgetting - (*Grace checks some cakes in the oven*)

FC: I know, every time you look. (laughter)

GH: Now where was I?

FC: You were talking about the rhythm of the story.

GH: When I was telling, when I was at a school in Derbyshire, a very small village and it was a secondary school and the children, I had started reading, telling them stories from 'Mouth open Story jump out' because I said these are real legends that people tell us as having happened and I said every community has this kind of story in some cases it's called the urban legend but of course it is told everywhere and we looked at things like a farm machine which you know the woman with the beehive in her hairdo and all those things people tell - as well somebody told me this happened to their cousin etc., and I said that ours in Trinidad have a rather strong influence of the supernatural and supernatural characters and I told them some of them, they began to tell me some of their local legends from that area, that village which was quite self-contained.

There was a village and all around is open country you know and so a lot of grandparents are still alive, living if not with the children, close by to the children are fed the legends by the grandparents and they told me about this legend about a farmer which they said happened a long long time ago - a farmer his two daughters and the widow and her son and they told me this 'Jenny Challond' (?) everybody came up and gave me their version of it along with other stories and I said but you know that 'Jenny Challond' I know that, as a story from a ballad, oh it comes from Scotland, no it doesn't, it's Dutch, so I told them 'Binorie' and I mean they were rapt - these were fourteen year olds - they were rapt listening to that: Once upon a time there were two kings' daughters that lived by the mill stream of Binorie and Sir William came courting the elder and he plighted his troth with love and with rings but after a while his eye fell upon the younger sister with her cherry cheeks and her golden hair and his heart went out to her and he no longer loved the elder sister so her hate grew and grew and she plotted and planned to kill her sister, you know you, it's got a rhythm, it's got a - and there is no if and but and a but a er, er, you know straight and these are not the exact words in the book either but you pick up the feeling of the words and even in the words you substitute they fit the pattern of the rhythm, do you know what I mean? So it isn't even that you are bound by the same words, you are simply held by the rhythm like a mantra, simply held by the rhythm and you fit your words into that and your words are appropriate to that. Now a very interesting thing you know people say old languages are old fashioned and archaic, no child has ever asked me the meaning of plight and troth isn't that amazing, no child has ever said to me neither here nor in the States, what does it mean 'plight a troth' because the context is there, so even this business of archaic language is risible and when it comes down to it -

FC: It is the place where you could pause and they would tell you

GH: So it just goes to show how much children grasp that adults either have lost their awareness of that they were able to grasp these things when they were children from a context of a story, so I did this with some children at a school in Cheshire - 9 to 11 - and I was doing a residency and I had to go back the next term and I went, did four days, and then I went back the next term for four days and when I went back the children were just absolutely excited and it was because Steven one of the boys had - knew this story so well that they said to me 'He's champion, he's champion let him tell you' and I said 'Okay when we have our session', Steven, Steven, Steven - so I said 'Let's have some other people first' because I reckoned that Steven must have been very good if all the children were clamouring for him and I didn't want him to do his and then the others feel badly about it. 'Let's have some of the others first and then Steven' and I knew it was, I almost wept, this ten year old child a boy who had this sensitivity for a story and I mean he just told it from within himself and the same rhythm and the song that I had given, I had a tune for the little song I did, where she sings at the end what happened, the ghost, through the harp and he had that all down to a 'T' and in his own style and I mean you know there was a storyteller but all the children knew it, all of them knew it because the story itself lent itself, the pattern of the story, not just the event because you could tell, you could tell that story loosely, 'There was this girl who lived ...' you know and it would mean very little but it went so deep in those children the story that they wanted to talk about it, all they wanted to do was just wanted to talk about these sisters and talk, talk it out so that you saw how the story not only the sound appeal but the sense of it, the meaning, deeper meanings of it begin to strike a chord in the children listening and I believe that those are the stories that help memory, I really do. I think that if you and that is not to say that you don't actually tell stories, you make a story and try to learn ... and you see the others are very difficult to learn. I have been trying to learn a story called, "The Smart Dog" for years, as I told to you, for years and I am not happy that I've got it right and it is a simple story but it doesn't have those qualities. You know there's a lot of jokes about talking dogs, children will tell you about the dog that went to the library and borrowed books. I mean there is a child in Buckinghamshire who told me this years ago and never returned them and the children's librarian said he had to and he wouldn't so she followed him and he went into a park, in the park was a pond and he threw the books in the pond, but there was a frog in the pond and the frog caught each book and said, "read it, read it, read it". (laughter) This old woman who had a dog as a pet and every day at a certain time she went down to the newsagent to get her newspaper and one day she was ill, didn't feel well and couldn't go and the dog said he would go for her and she went, she gave the dog the money and told him you know to go down and come back straight away and the dog went and never came back, never came back and the old woman eventually had to put on her coat and hat and go down and she saw in a side street she heard a lot of yelps from dogs and she looked and there was her dog romping with some other dogs and eating ice lollies ... and she went up to the dog and scolded it and said, "You've never done this sort of thing before, I'm ashamed of you" - he said well "You've never

given me any money to spend before" - hilarious when you get a good raconteur of jokes you can spend the whole session telling these jokes.

There is the one that some children at a secondary school gave me about the man who goes into a pub and outside the pub there is this big huge dog and on the opposite side there is a little terrier and as he is going in he looks at the dog and the dog says, "good morning" and he looks again and the dog says, "I said good morning" and he's stunned, he's so stunned he rushes in to the pub, he says, "hey what kind of dog you have out there, the dog just said good morning to me" - the pub owner said, "surely not, you sure? - what kind of dog" - "A big dog with lots of long hair," "Oh I'm sure he didn't" - "He did twice" - he said "Tell me was there a little Scottie opposite?" "Yes" said the man, "Yes actually there was I noticed it as I came past" - "Ah" he said "that's what it is. Yon dog's a ventriloquist." (*laughter*).

FC: Oh no.

GH: I could keep you here all day - not what you came to hear.

FC: Oh no, it's fine.

GH: In that and those are triggering things with jokes, jokes are more difficult - if you say to children do you know any jokes, it is very hard but the minute one starts they trigger, there are trigger words aren't there so something triggers off and that's another kind of memory aid, the triggering word in jokes because once you get the word, you get the joke usually, if you get the word you get the joke, for jokes - I don't know about riddles - riddles are another matter but they've taken this theme - there is a collection of Australian told tales and in it is this story/tale about the Smart Dog, quite long, they've lengthened it and it is the same ventriloquist at the end idea and I am trying to learn this story to tell and it's very difficult to learn it because there is nothing in it that aids the memory. I can tell you the outline of the story, now a story I have been looking at it for so long and reading and rereading, I should by now be able to tell but it is difficult for me to get and what I'm looking for is a rhythm, something that gives me some help in memory. I know the sequence of events, that's no problem, I can tell you what happened in the beginning, how it developed and right through to the end.

FC: You can tell me about it but you can't tell it to me. Yeah, yeah, I know what you're saying and it is interesting when I was reading about this ... book about Homer and he is saying there that the two things that helped the poets, one was the rhythm of the lines because it is all in hexameters, the other was the playing of the harp and that it was that body rhythm, not even the sound - the body rhythm of mm mm mm that kind of put the poets into the frame where the events could come up - I

thought that was really really interesting. It wasn't the tune it was the act, the rhythmic act of playing and I thought that's interesting.

GH: I'm telling a group, it may be that same group of ten to fifteen year olds that when they want to tell a story, when they want to learn a story to tell it - and I thought don't learn it word for word by heart, get the feeling of it, get the events, draw pictures, move about but I said 'Before you tell it to people always tell it to yourself aloud, not quietly, aloud' I said 'Because the rhythm of the body you have to feel the rhythm in your body and you can only feel that by saying the words out loud.' There is a rhythm in your body that corresponds to the rhythm of the written thing and you have to get that, you have to get that and the only way you can find that out is by telling it. Because quite often I read a story and it seems to be fine for telling and I start to tell it out loud and I have to go back and change things, I have to go back and amend it, adapt it, cut out bits, you know until when I speak it, if that rhythm in my body corresponds to the rhythm of the page - or the page corresponds to the rhythm in my body, the two things must feel right but it is the rhythm in the body that (*inaudible*) takes the prime.

FC: And you sometimes with children - you see them actually externalising that don't you, they are rocking or something. I don't think grown ups do that so much but you know -

GH: But now at the Proms have you noticed how since - I mean - this began with the Last Night of the Proms really -

FC: They all do that (*swaying*)

GH: Last night I switched on just for a few minutes to see because I heard Trevor down below listening to some of it and I thought I heard some music that sounded interesting and I switched on the T.V. and I - there were these men swaying to the Viennese music, so it has now become - you see probably they've always felt that -

FC: They had to hold it in ..

GH: Well The Last Night at the Proms has made it respectable for them to sway, so now everybody is swaying but it just goes to show that that was something that was there all the time you know waiting to be set free - so that's that business with rhythm, pace and yes length of lines too.

FC: I don't know about that so much now but it is - when you tell - I quite often tell Molly Whuppie and which I really like and even with very young children they all know the giants... you know the Fee Fi Fo

Fum one and they know and even if they don't know it as four lines but know it just as two, they don't know 'I'll grind his bones to make my bread' but you can see that they know it has got to go dah dah dah.

GH: Right but we should know this because often you can't remember the words of a song - it goes dum dum dum, in doing that you can bring the words back up.

FC: And also sometimes you know I think more with a song - just any word won't do - so I'll do 'blworm' or something and you can't quite remember what the word is supposed to be, you have to leave it just as the rhythm

GH: I don't know, is it Rose Weir who talks about the crib language or in the crib or something - when she's talking about the pre-sleep monologues ... the pre-sleep monologues and she's also...

FC: Oh I do know what you mean, yes I know -

GH: A rhythm, the child takes all the words it hears and makes a rhythm of it -

FC: Something about a shampoo, one of them is full of the word "shampoo".

GH: ... If it hears chicken - egg - tea - cup - plate - floor - flowers it will put those words in a rhyming, not in a rhyming - in a rhythmic pattern and play with them, play with those words until it gets the pattern the way it wants it and out of that comes the actual spoken, the language, the logical language, it first starts with this rhythmic - playing with words and then comes the phrase and then comes the sentence so it is the rhythmic thing that starts the language. ...

(section omitted)

GH: ... The second thing is that in it there needs to be a style that is something that I can feel happy with. I mean there are certain styles that I have heard people tell that I am ... entertained by but I wouldn't tell those stories because it is not my style. You know it's like clothes, you can look at somebody in something and say hey you look nice in that but that doesn't mean that it is going to suit you so you get a feel about the stories that your being is going to be happy with and what's interesting is how even that can pass away. There are stories that I used to tell when I was younger that I don't tell now. I don't feel that I want to tell them now, it isn't that there is anything wrong with them I just have gone through them and passed that, now I'm somewhere else so but even what you, even your selection is a temporary thing in that you know that one

day you are going to have grown out of that story for one reason or another and I thought it was just me but I've heard other people say it so it must be a universal thing. So because I think the stories themselves are growing points for you and at that time that story is a growing point for you but if you've grown then it is no longer a growing point for you. Some stories linger because they have so many layers that you can tell them and retell and retell them and perhaps you never grow out of them, I don't know but it is because there are so many layers, multi-layered.

Other stories you've done it, you know what the meanings or you feel you do and you don't need to because I think we have a way of exploring meaning to for you not just for the listener but for you, you explore meaning through the stories you tell so once you feel you've got the nut the kernel - well that's fine you know I put it aside and I'm on to the next thing so that is one thing but the style is also very important. Now sometimes all those things are right but the length is too long or it is too wordy and that is when I have to put it down and edit it. I can't edit it by just making notes because I'm - I've lost the style for one thing.

FC: Yes that's right.

GH: I've lost the rhythm. If I just jot down so and so did this, so and so did that, I've lost the rhythm - I have to start creating my own rhythm but if I wanted it because the rhythm is right why am I going to create my own rhythm, if you see what I mean. What is the need to create - if I have to create so many things the story isn't right for me, I don't tell it. There is a lot of these stories in a book by Jack Zipes, he has a number of stories at the back of his 'Don't bet on the prince' or something and it is one about the princess who is so awful and she gives her suitor so many impossible tasks and this lovely prince comes along and he is madly in love with her and he's the only one left when all the others fall out of the competition, he is the only one left and he finds a witch down the road and she's a lovely young woman and she helps him with the tasks and the final task is to produce a wedding dress for this bad tempered princess which is this and that and the other and this witch, young, says, 'I'll bring it actually, it will look better if I wear it', so she comes up to the palace the next morning and the princess - where is the dress she says to the prince, 'Why haven't you produced it?' and the young witch wears it and the prince realises that he is in love with her and says, 'How could I not have seen - you know - how lovely you are?' And when the princess had tired of her tantrums of getting over the shock of being rejected she says to her father, I mean it's quite hilarious about the way she wards off her father by - how many times have I told you I don't want to get married, it is a primitive custom, you know all the modern sort of phrases, attitudes. Well when she gets tired of - when she's gone through her tantrums she goes to her father and says what she really wants to do is travel so he puts her on a plane and sends her off and she arrives in a country where there is a prince who is so bad tempered he rejects all the princesses his mother chooses

for him, just as ... she goes to the door and knocks and the mother says, 'You're just the sort of, you're so beautiful, just the sort of princess I would choose for him but he is so awful he doesn't want to marry anybody. Now he's asking that anybody who approaches for his hand will have to grow a tree upside down on the ceiling, have to do this'. 'But' she says 'There is a very nice wizard living down the road, if you talk to him nicely he may be able to help you,' which is where the story began, with the prince having to go to - it's lovely - at the moment I'm so - but I like the story, it's got a nice style but it's too wordy so I am typing that out and editing as I type, what I do is edit as I type, then I tell it to myself, tell it out loud, listen to it and go back and edit again until I've got the rhythm right, until I feel in talking it out the rhythms right and then I'm ready to go with it so that is how - now if I am creating a story from the start as I have done with some of these, I do the same thing, I go through several typing runs and then I read it, even when it is not a story for telling, I find myself doing the same thing. I read it and then I speak it out loud and I tell it to children or read it to them and on reading it to them I discover that I don't really need this word and this word is wrong and this word but it is only when I am doing it with them I discover all these things, then I come back and I edit again until and even then when the book is published I look at it often and I think 'Oh my god, but that is not right. How did I let that go?' But it is a constant, I mean I never feel that the stories I do are without the need for correction so that even the stories I write I constantly retell when I'm telling them but I don't know whether that's answered your question about selection. Selection or creating, it has to have the right sound and it has to be something that I ... (*inaudible*)

(*section omitted*)

FC: What about when you're actually telling a story, do you decide what you're going to tell, you know would you say you plan your programme?

GH: I always leave with - I sit down perhaps a week before, two days before, whatever time I have and look at the children I'm working with, which is why I need to know who I am working with and what sorts of things I want to share at this time and then I arrive and start off very casually, maybe with a story about myself in a way that I hope will allow me to pick up the vibes in the classroom or the group because I need to know the responses of the children as well as the teacher. I need to know what I am facing because one can meet all kind of responses, all kinds, you know you name it, you can meet it. I know now from thirty something years experience that if I meet certain kinds of responses this ain't going anywhere and this approach is going nowhere and that is going nowhere and that is only going so far. So if I am still uncertain I start to move through in a way which says 'This is a space for you to come in' because in schools I am predominantly sharing, letting them know what I'm coming to do and I say that I need the teacher with me in this ... (*inaudible*) but I say I'm

talking about the spirit, with me in spirit, with me in spirit, if I'm sharing it's like a sitting around and sharing the stories. You don't expect people to sit like this when you're sitting around in your house - you expect them - 'Yes, I remember, yes' - This is how people sit around and share stories. So I am talking about the spirit. If the spirit is right the rest will come and one teacher who I (*inaudible*) I don't know whether the teachers will want to bare their souls.

FC: People are so, they're just so anxious, even before they know what's going to happen.

GH: When I tell the children about my sister's cat bringing its kittens, and putting them under my bed I didn't know I was baring my soul but it won't have effect ... that was a school I decided I wasn't going to because I don't need that. We're talking about sharing stories, this is not a political statement, this is not a religious statement, this is not even a social statement for heaven's sake, this is simply fun, sharing with fun. If you are starting already to put up barriers, this is a place not for me. I have no right there. Somebody else maybe but not me so I eliminate a whole lot of situations that I have experienced before and that I am told now to put myself into, putting it quite frankly, I feel I am too old to willingly put myself in situations that I don't have to face. If I am doing it for fun. This is why I'm doing it. (*laughter*).

FC: Yes, quite.

GH: Somebody else has another idea well let them find somebody who will satisfy that but I am doing it so that the children can see that sharing stories is fun, so that they want to do it and so I am saying that if this is what, the message I bring, I need the teachers to enhance that because when the children see the teachers involved in that way, they go yes, they say, 'OK, this is more important than we thought it was' and they themselves then become very interested and involved in a new way and you know you leave the session on a high as though you're doing drugs because everybody has been welded together in a group of sharing people. It is not teacher, storyteller, children - it's just a group of people sharing and also the times that that happens are so rare, pitifully rare and the times that that happens the teachers almost without exception say, 'Oh crumbs I can do this now' and this - that's exactly what I hoped you would say because that is why I am doing it this way so that the teachers can say - 'But I can do this now', so - so that there isn't a mystique about it that they don't think oh god no I can't do it. They don't even try but they as they begin to feel that way their confidence grows so that they themselves begin to tell stories without even realising that they have taken another step from telling their own stories to telling other people's stories but it is the first step that I want to get, so that is one of the reasons I go into schools.

If I am giving performances which I often do in a secondary school because they're

putting fifty, sixty, seventy children together and I say that has to be a performance because I cannot get that number of children to share. Sharing predominantly is done in a class with its teacher because the children are tribal, they see their class as a tribe, the teacher is the chief and me as the person coming in so sharing can be done there, they are easy with each other but as soon as you start lumping children together and increasing numbers we have to do the thing we do at festivals or big concerts, you know, otherwise you're not going to hold fifty or sixty children. However, I always put something in which allows for response if there is a willingness so that even in a performance session the children can go away feeling that they did something, they offered something.

What I am aiming for in these sessions predominantly is to convince children that they are already telling stories because they are, they are telling stories or they already tell jokes and they are telling riddles, when they tell something that happened to them on the way home, or going to school, and they tell things that happen on their holidays, they're telling stories and from children I have gleaned a whole lot of interesting facts so that I begin to wonder why it is so many children are lost in M&S. I'm always getting stories from young children 6, 7, 8 'When I was little' they say at seven.

FC: I know - so sweet.

GH: Stories of them being lost, getting lost. Quite amazing. So then I tell them, quite often I know a story, either told or read, which correlates and I'll read it to them or tell it to them, now that's shaped very literary so that they see the story that happens to them in life has a parallel and they see how they can shape their story to tell them so that it sounds literary and you get even five and six year olds picking up this, this thing, this understanding so that you, after a while of telling you get a six year old or five year old telling a story and they take on the ritualistic storytelling. It's quite amazing if you are sharp enough to keep an eye open for it, how in no time at all very young children will pick up this, the minute you bring them out and this is why I like to bring them out if they will come because standing in front of a class and looking at the class somehow there is this instinctive response of beginning the ritual, once upon a time a long time ago there was a boy - I mean they just take on that role so it must be something that's been handed down for many many centuries because very young children can take it on so quickly and I know they are imitators, but it is not just that they are imitating your style, they are imitating a pattern of language and I feel that that is an important step towards to not being articulate only in the sense of being able to string words together because there are a lot of people who can do that and it means nothing but being articulate in expressing deeper emotions, what they see ... the frustration of so many people in the world today is that they are not able to express what is deep within them and is part of them, so it stays in there and it festers and you get all kinds of things coming out as a result. I feel if more people had the words and the confidence they

could say it, 'This is what is bothering me' and say it with a sort of confidence that makes other people listen. You go to the doctor, if you have no confidence you never tell them what's wrong with you - have you noticed that?

FC: Yes.

GH: I mean I sit there until they listen to me because I feel that this is important that they should be listening and I am - I think it is simply because of my storytelling experience. I think damn you, you listen to me. (*laughter*).

FC: This is a whole offshoot from storytelling nobody had thought of -

(section omitted)

Storytellers' Questionnaire: June 1994

NAME: JACQUELINE PASCHOUD

(Taped interview made at Campus Arts Festival, Devon: 4/8/1994)

A) How and where do you find the stories you choose to tell?

Some of them I find out in books and some of them I hear other people tell, and some of them I make up myself, if somebody's asked for a story about a particular subject and I haven't got a story about that subject then I will make one up (*What, drawing ... adapting stuff or sort of starting from scratch?*) Starting from scratch but using the usual sort of patterns that come through stories ... three events happening, and all this business ... but mostly from books or from other people. ... I try to find books in remainder shops and things like that so other people are unlikely to have heard the same stories (*That's very cunning*) ... I don't ... I like to find .. you know ... I always feel that you need to find more obscure sources so that other people don't know them.

B) What influences your choice of material?

There's some things I know I can do and there are some things I know I can't do ... I don't do the deeply meaningful myth thing very well. What I do better is the fairy story type ... thing so ... I tend to look for stories that I can tell in that way that are not ... I don't like stories in fact that have a lot of very long complicated names and places and things like that partly because I can't remember them but partly because I don't think it sounds natural me saying them and I like to be able to ... tell stories in a way that sounds natural for me and things that have got long intricate names which are really very important to the story I may not get those right and therefore it won't sound natural and so I tend to shy away from those sort of stories or see if I can simplify them in some way.

C) How do you make a story your own?

I tend to try and adapt it into a fairly chatty style, I try and make it .. umm .. yeah ... something that it sounds as though it's natural for me to say, not something that I'm ... performing, so that it sounds as though I'm an act performing something, but it's me, speaking the words, so I try and ... and think of the way I would say things, putting the ... put the words in the order that I would usually say them ...I get .. I've got told off by people in the past because ... when I've told African or Asian stories, I've been told I don't tell them in the way that those stories would be told umm, but to me ... people seem to find that offensive, but to me it would be more offensive if I tried to imitate a diff - somebody else's way of telling a story. I think an African storyteller would tell an African story in an African way but an English person shouldn't try and tell an African story in an African way, they should tell an African story in an English

way because that's natural and right ... otherwise I .. it makes me feel it's a bit of a piss take actually trying to tell it .. I don't like to hear English people telling Caribbean stories in Caribbean patois for example I think that's not right, but the essence of the story might be good and so an English person could tell that story but not in the way ... do you know what I'm saying? (*yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah*)

I think it should sound natural

D) How do you work on your stories to prepare them for performance?

I get a bit worried about this because I very rarely speak them in words before I actually tell them for the first time, I speak them in my head a lot ... I read them and I speak them in my head, but although a lot of people recommend sort of standing and giving forth and recording them on tape and all this sort of thing I feel a bit embarrassed about that. I would feel embarrassed sitting in a room telling a story to myself, so unless I'm learning something off by heart, like the epilogue to that story I did the other day ... unless there's a bit I need to learn off by heart, in which case I will say it out loud, I've only usually said it in my head before I actually do it so I tend to prepare them for performance by performing them but that might be just telling (e) about the story or telling (j) about the story, I'll say it out loud to one of them and therefore give a minor performance of it before I do it (*What about the stories you've heard but not read...*)

Well if I've heard it I remember that much easily ... more easily if somebody tells me ...if somebody tells me a story once I will probably be able to retell it... I may have to make up bits that I don't quite remember, but I can usually retell a story that I've heard only once in which case again I'll probably try it out on somebody, I'll speak it through to somebody to make sure I've got it before I actually do it ... but I wish I learnt all my stories by being told them because I remember them so much more easily ... if I'm remembering stories from written stuff I might have to read it 8 or 9 times but if somebody tells me a story then the next day I could go and tell that story and it would probably be quite different but it would be a version

E) Do you work in different ways on stories from oral and written sources? If so, please describe the different ways you work.

So that, we've really answered that

F) Do you use any oral methods (eg rhyme, association, inner images) to help you to commit a story to memory?

(*Laughs*) Well, I don't really know what an oral method ... (*Well, that's why I put some examples*) I don't think I do that, no I don't think I do do that, I don't do any of those things (*That's alright, you don't have to do any of that*)

G) Do you work with children (under 11 years old)? In what situations?

I do work with children under 11 a lot.

(Because that's really - research is about children - the College.)

That's mostly what I do. In schools, in playgroups and nurseries and play projects and things like that and libraries so those sort of things. Some are meant to be funny, some are meant to be educational but I tend to do the same thing situations but that's what I do.

H) What observations can you make about the ways children work with stories?

Children don't worry so much about stories - children are far more willing to re-tell a story that in fact they don't know at all - they'll make up huge chunks of it because they're not worried about people knowing they don't the story. They can re-tell a story that they barely know at all and they'll say they're about to tell you the story of say, Little Red Riding Hood but the story that they tell is bits of Little Red Riding Hood that they've remembered and bits of everything else they've ever heard - stirred up together and they will just tell you that and - *(Michael is trying not to be disruptive did you notice that. Shall I turn it off? There are only two more questions)* Only two more questions. There's H - have I just answered that? *(Yes, yeah you have that's what you're talking about.)* Yeah that's what I was talking about.

I) How do they make the stories their own?

They will play them out with other people - *(Play them out, act them out, pretend?)* Pretend them and - now you say this and they'll tell other people what they've got to say to be a part of what they're doing and bring people into that and the fact that they'll re-tell anything whether they can - writing - I think children find quite - I think I was talking to ... about that the other day - find it quite difficult because once they've got to write it it becomes very inhibited and typed because they've got ... language and they've got to - *(They've got to limit their language to what they can do?)* Yeah, yeah, yeah so I think children are more likely to give an interesting version of a story if they re-tell it or act it out.

J) Could professional storytellers learn anything from the ways that children work with stories?

I think that they could loosen about getting it right. I mean I know that I get very uptight about getting it right and things - I didn't get that right but I don't think it

matters about getting it right really. (*Wendy was saying that, wasn't she about the adaption?*) Yeah, yeah and I think people are less sort of purist about things and more willing to have a go at it and tell the version that comes naturally and not worry so much. Like I said earlier about this must be told in such and such a style which isn't actually your style at all. Children always tell it in their own style, in their own words with their own presentation, rather than try and mould it on somebody else that they admire or something like that - you know what I mean.

If professional storytellers were more like children they would be more individualistic, creative. (*Thank you Jacquie.*)

Would you be prepared to be interviewed on these questions?

(*You just have been.*) No. (*laugh*).

Appendix 4:
Children's story work
from Andrew Marvell Primary School

How rain came in Antarctica: by L

One hot sunny day in Antarctica an eagle came flying down from the air and all the people from Antarctica didn't know what it was so they ran just for safety because sometimes people throw balls from the mountain - there's Vikings - we don't like them.

Then it came down and down and when it landed in the middle of them they all looked at it and the eagle said "What are you lot looking at ? Look I've come to help - your weather is awful so if I open this box the weather will be OK. You don't have to put up with all that hot sun all the time."

And they said "What will the weather be like?"

"Well", said eagle, "It will be raining sometimes and sunny sometimes."

So they opened the box and it was raining.

And that is how rain came in Antarctica.

How the Earth was saved!: by Lilith

One day the world had flooded and the animals had to be saved. At that minute came a man made of gold on an ark.

"Come on, quick, before you drown!"

So on went the deer, eagle, beaver, otter, bear and water rat.

The man knew how to make the world back again!

All he needed was a bit of soil so he asked the water rat "Please Brother Water Rat, dive down into the water and go and get me a grain of earth!"

So the water rat dived in and swam for hours and just put his paw on a bit of earth when he ran out of breath and floated to the top and beaver saw him and took him on board and took the grain of earth from his paw and the gold man put his finger on his eyes and the water rat was alive. The gold man wasted no time - he threw the bit of earth and blew as hard as he could and they were no longer floating any more! The animals turned to thank him but the gold man had gone!

And that's how the earth was saved!

How the seas came: by Karen

One day long ago a king ruled the world. He had one slave called Coyote, he was kind of a wolf. There was a treasure that Coyote knew and noone in the whole wide world knew about it. It was in the cellar, there was a silver thing; but nowadays they call them taps. The king didn't know about this. He thought what on earth are they? One had a blue spot on it and one had a red spot on it. Anyway he had to tell his friend tiger about

this.

Tiger lived in a big piece of land that dipped down the way. There was quite a lot of them in the world. "TIGER TIGER! Do you know what is in my cellar there are two silver things with a blue dot on one and a red dot on the other. Come and see".

Tiger said "Alright". When they got in the cellar the tiger said "Wow. Twist that thing on the top." So he did and all of a sudden loads and loads of water came pouring out. They got out the door and forgot to turn it off again and water went out the front door and into the holes. That's how seas came.

Once there was a coyote: by D

Once there was a coyote and he wondered how there was not any darkness and when he heard that there was a moon in a little bag he set off to find it. And then he got tired of walking on flat ground. He came to a mountain. He climbed up the mountain; he came climbing down and he saw a big bag but he didn't want to open it because it might be dangerous. So he went up to the bag and he said to himself "It wouldn't hurt if I just peek." So he opened the bag and the moon went flying up in the sky.

There was night and morning but from then the coyote was not happy and now when the coyote wasn't happy he said to himself "At least we can see at night."

But later in his life he got married and he didn't think about the moon he just lived happily ever after.

How Mars was discovered: by F

Once a long time ago Coyote lived on the earth and he wondered every day and every night what was the little red star that was in the sky every night. So Coyote wanted to go into space. So he made himself something to go into space with.

So the very next day he went to the eagle with an even bigger helmet and then he asked the eagle if he wanted to go up to space with him and the eagle said "Yes I have always wanted to go up to space."

So the Coyote said "Put this helmet on and fly up to space with me on your back."

So they went up to space and found a red planet and they saw this sign on the planet and it said Mars and from that day on everybody has never forgotten Mars.

How the wind came: by K

Coyote was outside in his garden and it was very very hot. So Coyote went inside and got all his stuff. After that Coyote set off for his adventure to look for the wind.

Coyote went in the forest and went over hills and he went over mountains.

Then Coyote found a box and Coyote opened the box and to his surprise there was some wind in it.

So Coyote went to his house and then he let the wind out.

How rain came: by Soraya

One day in America there was no light. When it was night it was dark when it was morning it was dark. So Coyote slept all day. So when he was hungry it was hard for him to find some food for him to eat.

But one day he said I must find a best friend and that is going to be Immy the Robber. So he started to look for Immy the Robber. Finally Coyote found him because he had eyes like torches. He was easy to find because he had eyes like torches.

So one day they both went to the north. Immy the Robber flyed and Coyote walked. While they were walking and flying right in front of them was a big red box. So Coyote picked it up and Immy said open it up. So Coyote opened it. Just then rain came light came trees grewed plants grow food grow.

Coyote and Immy the robber were so happy they did not see the other animals because it was dark they did not know that there was other animals.

Richard's story

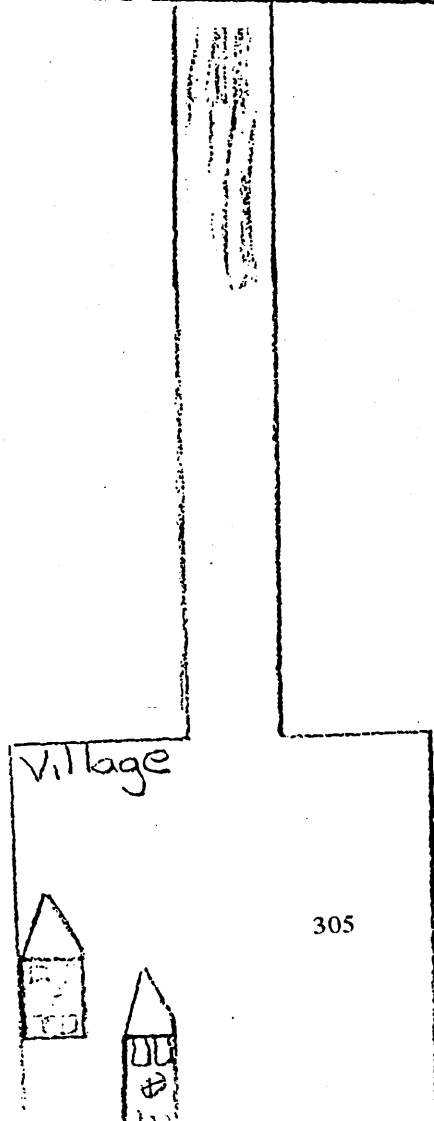
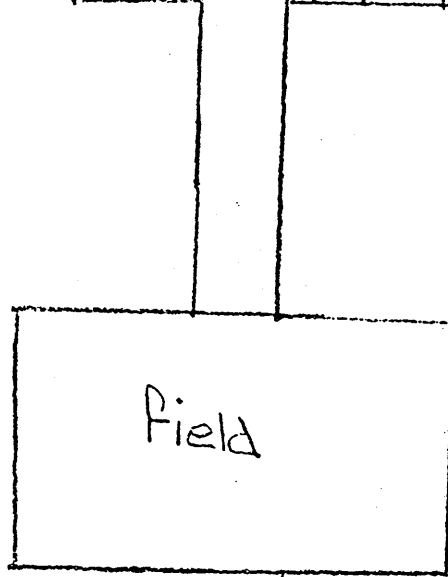
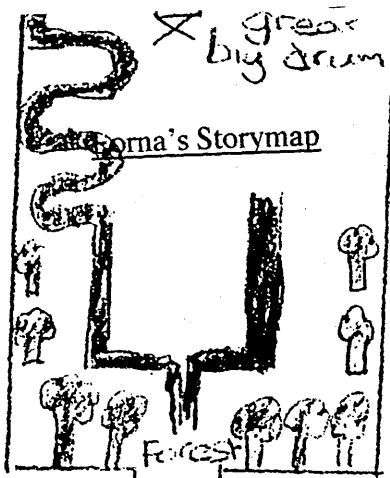
In the beginning in the middle of space a Bee and a Mantis were flying through the darkness. Then the bee landed on earth where it was totally covered with water and the mantis stood on a flower.

As he stood there the earth evolved around him. As the earth got older and older it got more and more dangerous because people were inventing dangerous things and were being very competitive and killing off lots of fish and animals till most of them were gone. They were all killed either by humans or toxic waste.

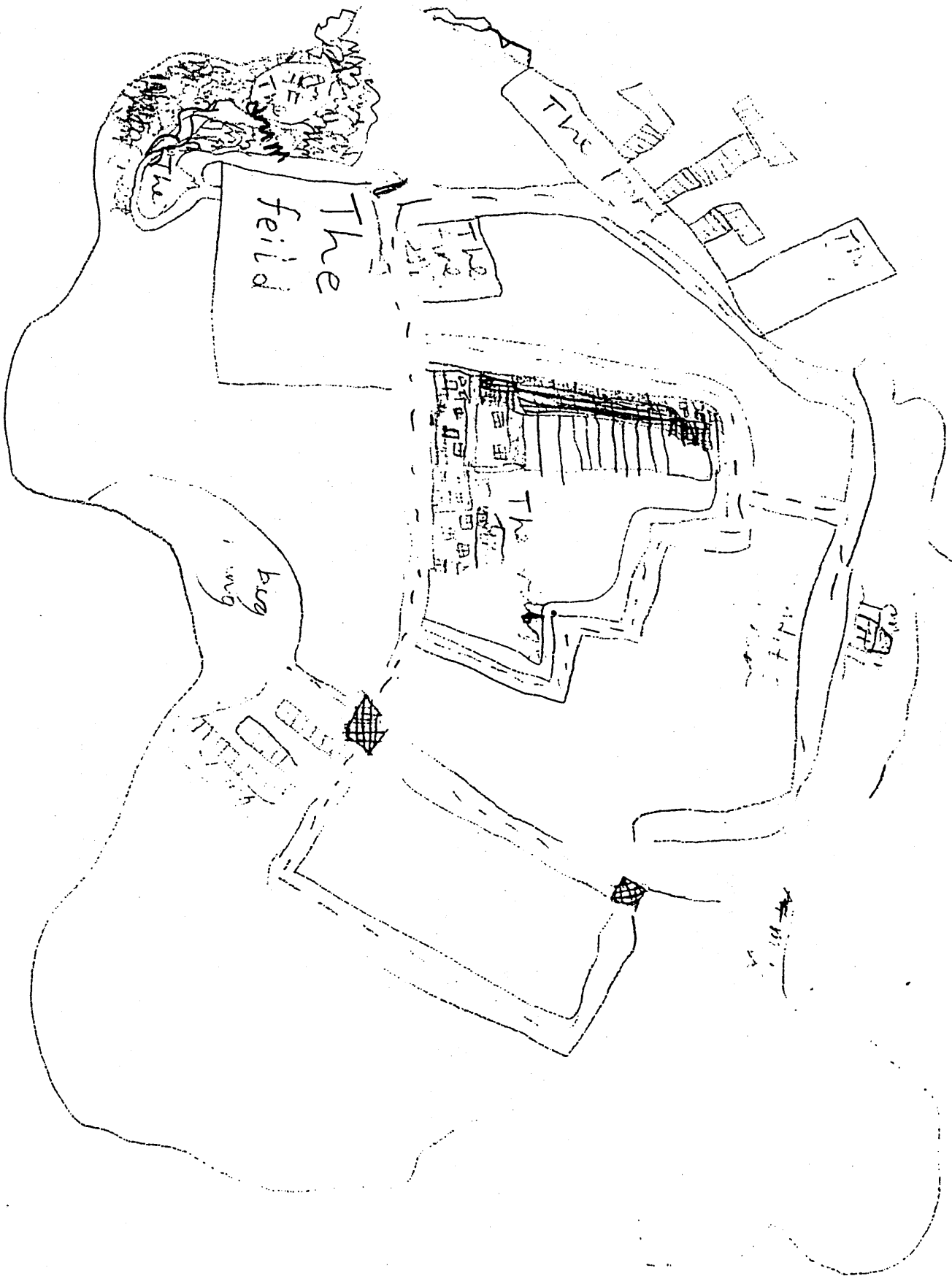
On the seabed the last fish put a warning for any travellers who arrived there: Warning: toxic - humans have arrived!

daura.

Tubanang



Richard's Storymap



The way

Richard

Appendix 5:
Children's story work
from Queen Anne's Nursery School

Transcript One: 26/4/1994

Amal: There is a twinkle then the doggy said I want the doggy and why don't you let it go? Then the doggy and the cat said I want the bone then the hare said I want the bone I'll eat it myself she said. Dina said I can't believe that the cat said I want the bone then the doggy said I can't write the story then he can't start the story the doggy said that.

Michael: Twinkle little star catch some a star and a dog nailed a bone and the dog smelt a bit of meat and eat it and he smelled some meat to eat and some tomato some cake and some pie. That's it.

Zainab: The train run to and they eat it all up and ran again in the food and they break the plate horses jump in the plate and break it all up and they shot the plate and they got knife and fork and they shook the bell she's gone the elephant said up two three four (4 times) jungle book, jungle book oh nanny she said fed up up two three four (3 times)

Transcript Two: 5/5/94

Colin: This is about story this is about story we having a song

Ebony: My name is Ebony and we telling a story about ... Jack and the Beanstalk and he said that it was time to go bed ... and it was to do .. he go to bed cos it was night time ... that was the end

Royston: Once upon a time there was one boy called Royston and the boy was ... playing over there and he was playing in here so he was playing so he was playing over there playing shopping list .. so he came back and he saw Sarah and Sarah was ...(interruption) ... Michael and me was walking to the wolf's house and we saw the wolf and the wolf ate us ... it's finished

Michael: My name is Michael one day Yow and me was walking along and we saw a monster and he had b? on his face and the b? ate him .. us and that's the end

Off we go .. Tell me your story Vanessa

Vanessa: I can't do it

How does it start? .. who's in the story? .. who's in your story?

My mum

Yeah? are you in it as well, or just only mummy?

Mummy

And what is she doing?

She's messing up my room

Mummy's messing up your room? Her mummy's messing up her room. Why?

Cos her likes doing it.

She likes doing it? Do you like it if she does that? Or do you tell her off?

Tell it off.

You say .. you tell her off. So what did you say to mummy? When she me-

Don't do that again.

Don't do that again. So was she sorry or was she still being naughty?

She's being naughty

Oh dear Vanessa's mum is being naughty... in the story ... so what did you do Vanessa?

I bashed her up

Did you? What did you do?

Bashed her up

Bashed her up. Poor mummy. What happened then?

Then I kicked her

Oh no ... this is a bully story. So how did the story end?

Cos my ... my daddy was there .. my only daddy was there .. alright

Your daddy was there and he was alright ... that's good ... thank you for your lovely story

Go on then Michael tell me your sunny story.

Michael: *One day there was a nice sunny story and there was a boy went to the .. and he took all his clothes off and went in the sea and he went down down in the water and that's the end*

Amal: *A boy was walking down the street from the school and he fall down .. the blood come from .. from his .. his hand .. and he can't walk then the ambulance come and nobody come and help him .. then everyone see him from the floor and everyone come and put him in the water*

Terence: *(sings Ba Baa Black Sheep)*

Who can tell me the story .. who can tell me the story of that song

Michael: *I know .. I know a wicked one about ... that one*

You know a wicked one about what ... about baa baa black sheep one. Go on then

One day there was baa baa black sheep he was walking along

Tell me .. cos I can't hear you

And he didn't have no eyes what he bumped over (?bruise)

He didn't have any eyes so he bumped over?

Yea .. and there was a ladder

There was a what?

And there... and there was a lad .. a ladder.. and he was singing some of the.. and he bumped into the ladder and the man fell down and he hit .. he hit a lady and a girl and that's the end

Oh no he bumped in the ladder cos he hasn't got any eyes?

Yeah

Amal: Came with a shadow then the recorder player started and it started with a .. no I'm not and she put it on and she put it on and all the button got smashed up and the shadow and the paper

Where's the shadow for your story? You keep telling me about a shadow. Can you see it?

And there's a window and umm .. and the magic come and put it over and the magic come all the way downstairs and broke it somebody

Where did it come from?

Umm ... from the garden ... somebody found it from .. the baddy from the baddy
Somebody found the magic from the baddy

And the baddy always tried to thief away

What did the baddy do when he'd got the magic?

Umm .. they hold the fish then he magiced the fish as well

What happened to the fishes when they were magiced?

They made into the eggs

He magiced the fishes into eggs. Does anyone know what happened then? (Discussion moves on)

Transcript Three: 8/6/1994

(After hearing The Magic Flying Horse)

Royston: I heard the rain ... the sun ... a big one (*rainbow*) ... and it got me up for school

Tony: The wheel of my bike was in the boot and it was staying there forever

Harry: When I was in bed the rainbow came in and the sun came in ... I said ... I went down the stairs and outside there was a magic horse when I went on his back he flied I did go I did went in the moon there was lots of cheese I went on the moon there's lots of cheese 'cos the moon's made of cheese I know because I watched it

Royston: I've got a magic giraffe it's got powers in its eyes and when it opens them it's got powers.

Lalade: Horse I don't know what it do ... it's brown ... I can colour it in ... it can change to black or when you buy it ...

Who buys it?

Mummy and daddy

Where can you buy it?

Near my house

Tony: Once when I was in bed my mum went to sleep in her own bed ... and Theo was snoring right through the whole house even right through the door ... when Theo was snoring a horse came and it ate him up and the police came to make the horse in

prison and shot the horse

Lalade: The magic horse it go to the park it jump over people it jump over the spider web, the swings, over the lines (*of the swings*) it went to the sky it just came back down. That's all.

Harry: I was playing down the stair and I went outside and played on the horse and it went up and jumped over the rainbow. I got a bit of the rainbow straight away when I was flying cos it was going slowly. Then someone threw me up something and it was a magic book. and in the book there were presents for the horse - baby horses.

Royston: I had a tiger yeah and the tiger had some eggs and it got them out and they were all baby tigers and I got them and put them in the water and they came out then they came in my room and I watered them and they got bigger and bigger until they got bigger than me and I jumped on the tiger and I went up in the sky and I got a piece of moon a piece of rain and rainbow I got all of it then I had all of it then I came down and then I went all the way up to the sky and my mum saw me and she said who got you that tiger? and I said I got it from the shop from the tiger shop and it was a real one then it had magic in its eyes.

Yow: There was a little boy in his bed and there was a horse there and he was talking to him and they was playing games and fighting and playing a game from the TV then they went downstairs and they got something to eat and they went back to the bedroom then they went home

Michael: One day there was a little boy walking home and I stepped with my big shoes on then he fell .. that's the end

Michael: One day I flied up in the sky in a magic elephant and it could talk for real then it landed and turned upside down and it couldn't get back up .. that's the end.

Yow: When I had a car for a toy and he flied up in the sky like this (*opens doors and bonnet of toy car*) look what he done .. the end.

Transcript Four: 28/6/1994
(After hearing The Unicorn)

What would you wish for?

(Tony, Royston, Lola, Harry)

- a sweet packet
- chocolate and sweets and crisps and fruit and icecream
- a horsey

- apple
- banana
- a bag
- some money
- to go out on my own - to the sweet shop to buy all the sweets
- to buy a bag and moneys, near my cousin's house
- a carpet it might be Aladdin carpet when he flies and genie and Princess Jasmin and we would all go on the carpet you you and me
- I want a magic horse and magic cat - they chane into a horse the horse would change into a boy the boy would change into a dog the dog would change into a house the house would change into a cat
- My house would change into
 - a giant
 - some stars
 - some bubbles
 - a big giant doo doo
 - a power ranger dinosaur
 - a tree - a monster tree it would go thump thump

because it's a monster we ought to run so fast it would run so fast it would go on our hands reach you and have you for dinner

Tony: If a tree came near me a super tree I would box it down ... it can fly I would fly it where I want to go it would scare the people and it would buy me something ... some sweets

Lola: I saw the magic tree the magic tree changed into a school the school changed into a house the house changed into Royston Royston changed into a elephant the elephant changed into Harry Harry changed into a cat the cat changed into Tony Tony changed into a fish the fish changed into a bowl the bowl changed into a stool the stool changed into a chair the chair changed into a bee the bee changed into a table the table changed into food the food changed into a banana the banana changed into a apple the apple changed into a book the book changed into a floor the floor changed back to a bee

Royston: My one changed into a tree and the tree changed into Fiona you hit my tree so he bited you so I let him bite you he bought me some sweets and I gave one to him and he ate it yeah

Transcript Five: 28/6/94

Right tell me the story of your picture

Royston: This is the horse and this is the .. the cat .. the cat .. the cat jumped up on the horse the horse jumped down on the moon the horse jumped back up the house he went in the house he had for dinner (*sings*) .. that's the end

Let's see your picture ... what's your picture Tony?

Tony : The unicorn

Oh lovely .. tell me about the unicorn

Tony: (inaudible) - singing

So the unicorn went to Royston's house and Royston forgot and he never shut the door...

Listen to Harry's story see if I've remembered it right ... when I was in bed the rainbow came in and the sun came in and I said ... and I went down the stairs and outside there was a magic horse and when I went on his back he flied and then I went .. I did go .. but I don't know where you went 'cos then Zubedat and Zainebe came

Harry: I did went in the moon

Where?

Harry: In the moon

And what was it like?

Harry: There was lots of cheese cos when it went in the moon there's loads of cheese I said that's not cheese ... it was made of cheese I said that's not made of cheese

(Interruption) ... Why was there lots of cheese on the moon?

Harry: Because .. cos .. the moon's made of cheese

How do you know?

'Cos I watched it

Now Harry is going to tell us all about his story and his pictures about ... what's it about Harry?

Harry: A unicorn .

Ok speak near to the machine

Harry: A big unicorn and a little unicorn who has a baby who lived in a nest and one day a little girl came to the unicorns and then a man came to the unicorns and he met a uni .. big unicorn and it is still something to eat though and all the unicorns came up they said na I can't kill you they all turned and he found ... and he went back and caught some fish and went home again.. that's the end.

Royston: My name is Royston

What's your story about?

Royston: I got .. I had a horsey yeah and I had a big horsey and it had a nest and it went in his nest and it had his grass and he ate it and it had his milk so I went and it had a man yeah and the man could kill him and do a big flag (?) and the cat .. and the cat .. jumped on the horse and the horse jumped down and then he flied away again then he flied away again then he flied away again.. that's the end

Transcript Six: Between visits: 28/6/94 - 12/7/94

Terence: My name is Terence .. umm .. (*recites Jack and Jill*) Once .. a little boy called Michael went through the woods and he saw another boy called Michael and he .. and he ..and he was .. and he was .. and they was friends and they lived together and they both went through the woods ... the end

Michael: This is Michael I'm going to sing you a song about .. I'm going to tell a story about a hungry caterpillar .. once there was a hungry caterpillar eat through one cake one salad one whole big piano then a chair then a tape then (*inaudible*) then a shell and then he .. and then he just turned into a butterfly

Ebony: My name is Ebony ... once 'pon a time I have a little frog in my g .. in my garden and it was in the pool and it wasn't .. it .. and it was swimming and the mummy frogs come and he give them a breakfast and they have everything what .. from .. from their tea and they have a tea and it was .. and it was sad ... and ... and it was everythink from the monster and the monster come to eat the frogs and it .. and it was .. and it was pumping and then they get out

Transcript Seven: 12/7/94

If you went up the beanstalk and found the giant's castle what would you find there?

- all the food
- money
- lights
- money
- a car
- the toys
- toys ... mouse
- a car
- a rabbit
- a man
- a cat
- the giant master
- a cow

Lola: Fee fi fo fum
five four three two one
zero - blast off

What do you think about the work we've been doing?

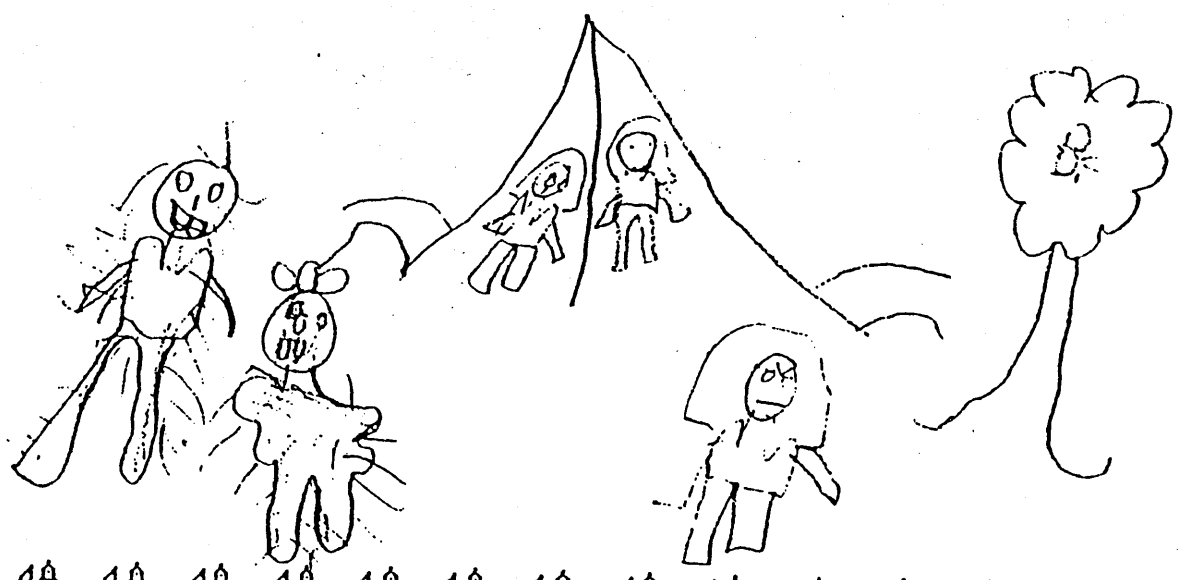
I like stories
I love stories
I done a story
I like it .. I like it
I like stories .. I love stories
I like it, I like stories
The only one I like is Jack and jill
... the elephants

Appendix 6:
Children's story work
from St. Andrew's Primary School

Den Gary Goring

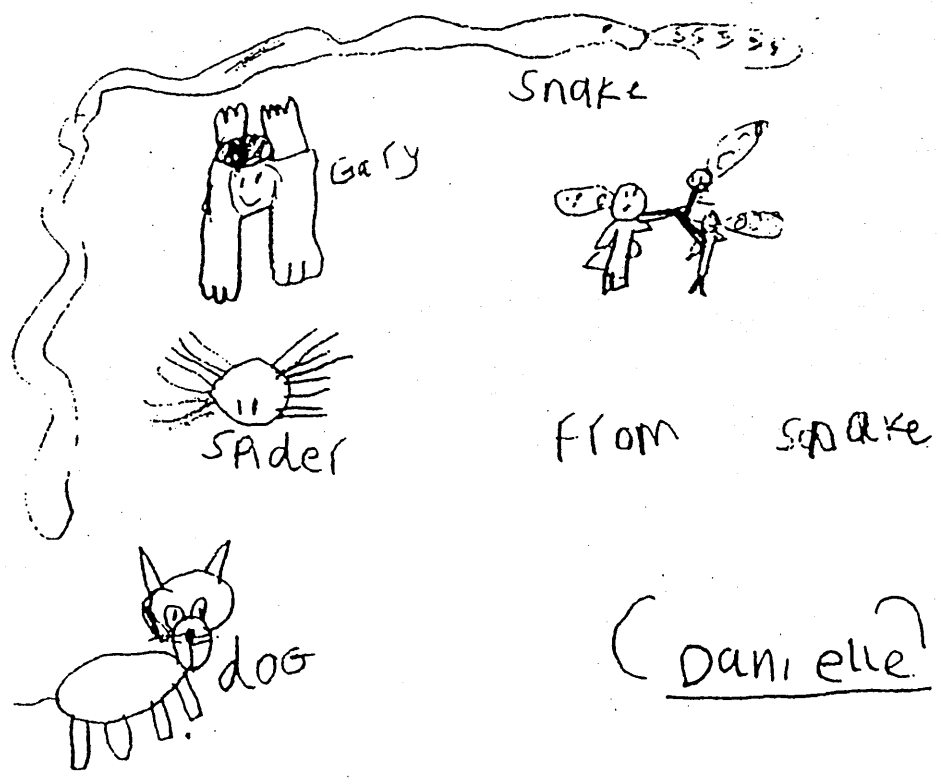
me and my Dad dad went to
SIPP when every one was a SIPP
we went to a camp we trid to
get the lit but they cut as
then we trid again but they cut as
a gas so we trid trid a gas
and again in lit they wur
a SIPP we trid and we got it
my dad sogd them a way

~~we wur sorry~~ we wur sorry
we cam to this kamp that we tuk
the lit from then w gas them
from Baby King ~~to~~ kong



Dear Gary Gorilla

I went on the Gure wich
had a dog in it and a spider in it
to and a mecke ther was of
Snake I had to climb a tree
and i climb a tree because
ther was no ~~tree~~ But ther was a
Liat in ^{to a tree} wood hot go to get it But
ther was a Liat you ta went
like i said i will go i will go in
a swit you the spider got
the Liat and ther card it
and Gary the gorilla was sad and
snake made Gary the gorilla happy.



(Danielle)

Dear Gary Gornilla

Dear Gary
of light I will give you the box
lose it I will get a box have
light and I will give you a box of
DUNRU and 100 box
when I want to get the box of
light I scared
problems why I had
wax have give the box of light
box of light because wife
big big Gornilla you the
or a

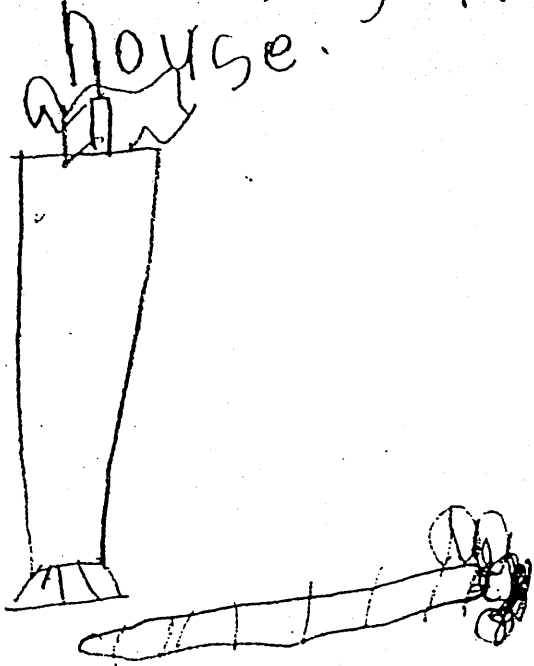
Dear Gary, I will give you the box of light all
of the light but I have lost it.
I will get another box of light and I
will give you a

_____ and 100 box
when I want to get the box of light I scared
them away but I had problems with the box
of light. That's why I'm giving it to you.
But you won't have problems with the box of
light because you are a big big gorilla.

FROM LIYUN

From Liyun

Dear Gary Gorilla
X Me the snake went
on a Lit Jrney to get
a I Hfid to climb
pu a X try and I fell
Dan a try I sill had
the Lit then I SWID.
BAK



From Snake

(Amber)

Dear Gary Gorilla

We had to go up the rope my hands
was red I had to go to the
docter I got some Creme then
I had to go up the ~~seeps~~ ~~sepas~~
I fell asleep and as we came
home I fell asleep and that is how
we got the sun.

Gary →

From Snake

(Hang yee Lee)

Dear Gary, Gonilla

~~At~~ ten into a snake

and my ^{partner} ~~part~~ new was a ^{use}

ski ^{cre} had my I wet

up to get The lyt

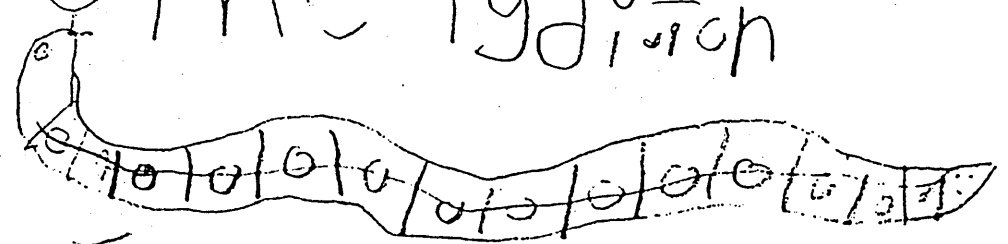
when EPTBBPY went

to slip my path new

to my ten I got it

Ten I see scritto

Fe The lydition



Fro snake

Cshammi



~~*~~ Dear Gary Gon ~~the~~

I ~~*~~ ^{saw} cor the lut in
the tree that like
cum pepol the Gary
KAN KAN gat the lut
sow the gri got the
lut

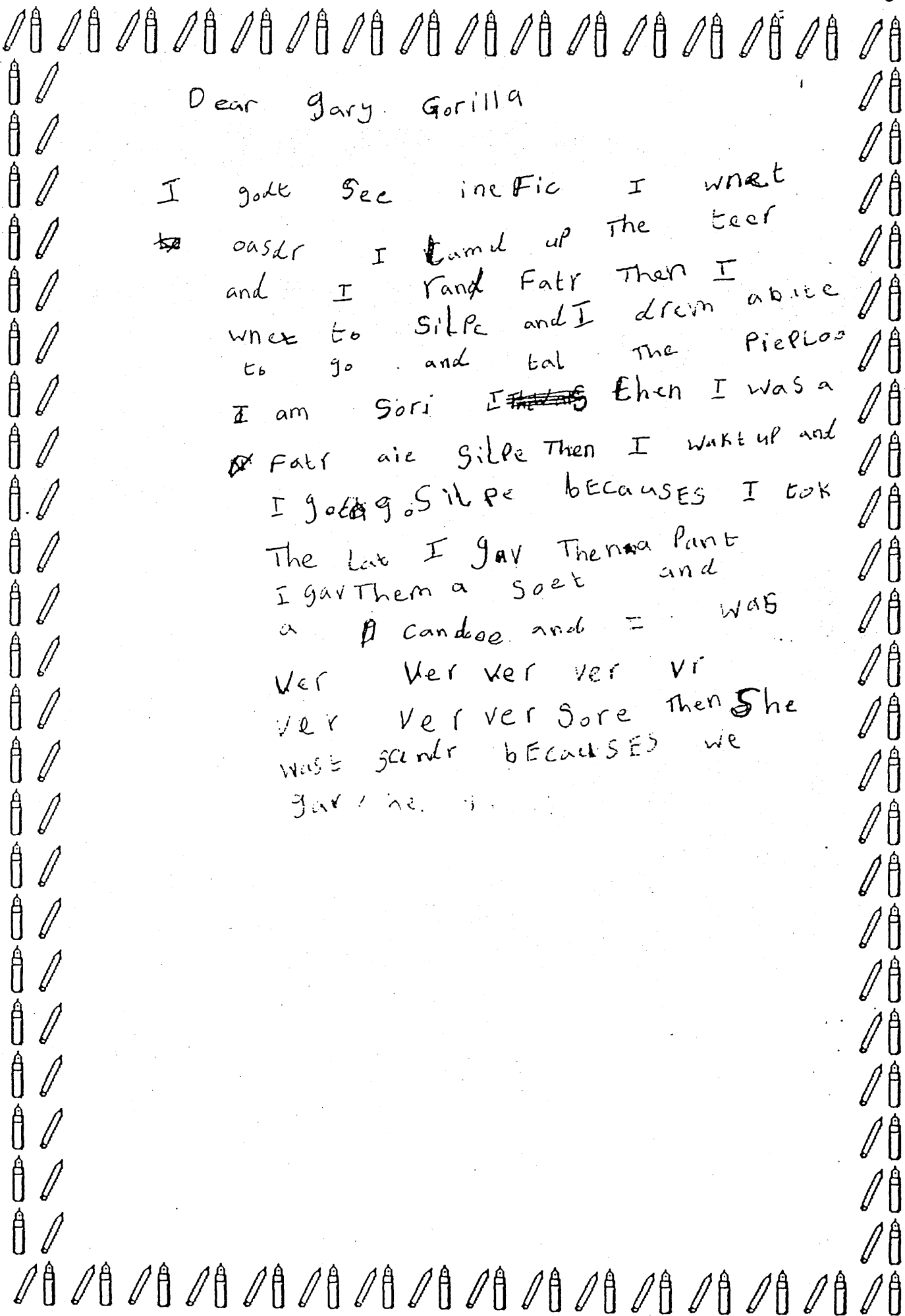
From Snake

(Shahid)
gri

Dear Gary gorilla
 I wish you some
 Binamis and I wish
 you a pet and I
 wish you some gorilla
 book and I wish you
 a big hat and I wish
 you a big house and
 I wish you a big
 bike and I wish you
 a big pen and I wish
 you a big crocodile
 and I wish you a
 big box

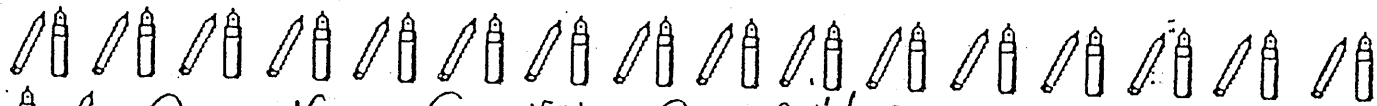


from
 L. M. Crocodile



Dear Gary Gorilla

I gotte see ine Fic I wnet
 to oasdr I camd up The teef
 and I Rang Fabr Then I
 wnet to silpe and I drem abite
 to go and tal The Pieplos
 I am Sori I ~~the~~ Ehen I was a
 Fabr aie silpe Then I wakt up and
 I gotte g. silpe becauseS I tok
 The lat I gav Therna Pant
 I gav Them a soet and
 a A candoe and = WAS
 Ver Ver Ver Ver Vr
 Ver Ver Ver Sore Then She
 was sentr becauseS we
 gar ne .



Dear Gary Gonilla

I.v bin on a atventlyer x I had
to get a lite ~~for~~ from The ~~atventlyer~~
ckachenese me and my purneraid
big jups to get the Lite Then I
Went ~~to~~ bac home.

Cheer!

From

David

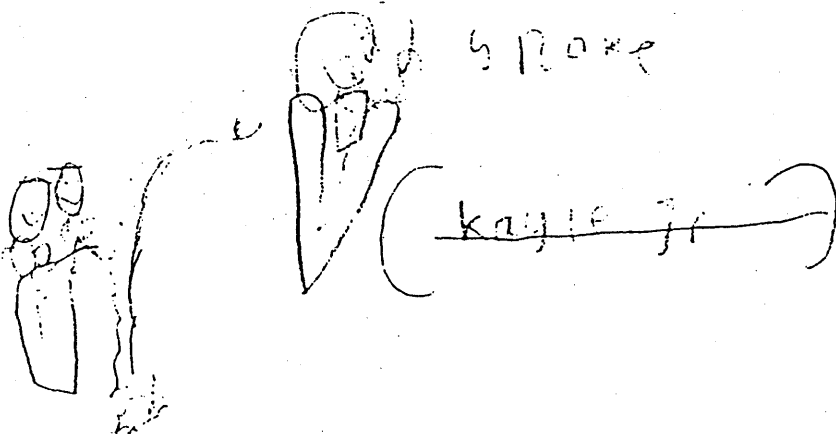


Dear Gary Gorilla

I went on a meerkat avloed
and it was good and I was
time to find the little and
Ramp had to side up the tfeet
get the little because if the
pile had word up they would
see us took the little
from the tree fully word
gave rain like back and word
away with the little

From

by Rose



Dear Grapy Granilla.

Fst i wete ~~te~~ on h
at vetnh at one eklok

in The ~~that~~ mode
dawn two The A We Wt
~~we~~ we pot sm A We Wt
W9 mad a pat ~~and~~ and
W9 wat p W9 F wa we
~~W9~~ F Th9 Jit

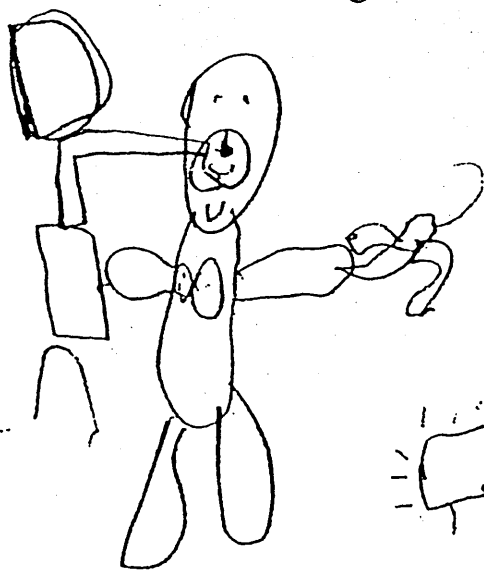
Ben
Luc M

Dear Gare Gorilla

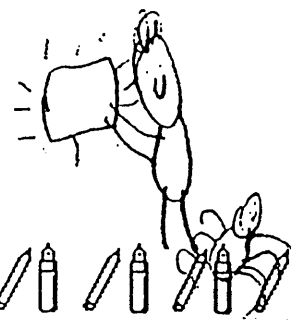
the xethee da I den a
eaven - i lookt
for a bit / it

I faxndet bi going
on a line and I got
the lit from

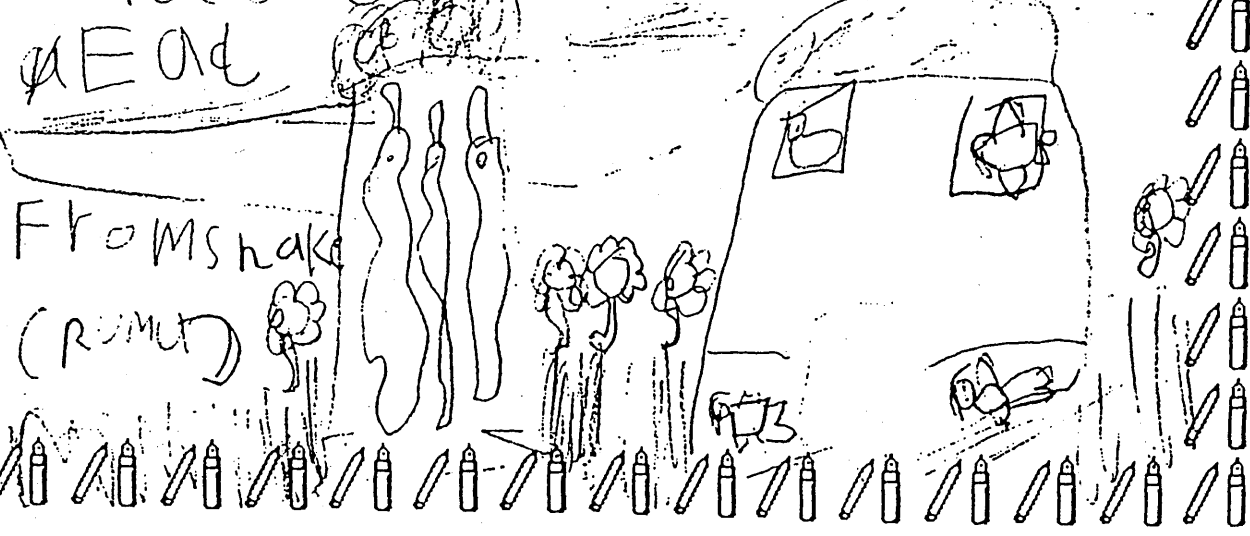
SPI



and be
the end



Dear Gary aorilla
Ruma and Kayleigh
~~are~~ and Han Yee ~~we~~ went
to get the Latit was to
huy so we clam on the
Tree we put soem-Mad
on as now NAVFK
Look at ~~the~~ as they
was a Sulp Naste we
went sole bak home
we put the Lat in
a had PLs we
went to Sulp in the



From shake
(RUMU)

Dear Gary Gonilla

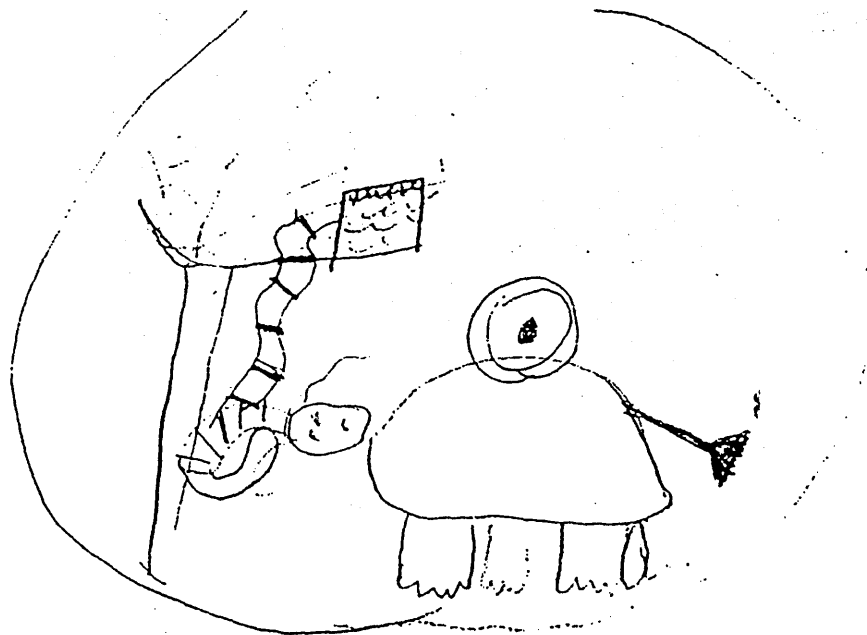
~~Best friend~~

~~was~~

Dear Gary Gonilla

I am a Shaky
mi pre n is a

eLeFat THE
eLeFat Hold
mi tYW



Dear Gary Gorilla

my aud for my frad and ~~me~~

me wul good frad and

We hUP to goa The we

got up The tee aid we got

The Latu we hUP it cu Ther
and it was a good aud for

Form Wolf
(Enamul)

