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Karagiozis in Australia: Exploring Principles of Social Justice in the Arts for Young Children

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Abstract

This paper examines Karagiozis – Greek shadow puppet theatre for children – as a way to explore how the Arts might support socially just education in the early years. As authors from diverse cultural backgrounds with different experiences of arriving and residing in Australia, we consider themes of social justice identified in a Karagiozis play and an interview with a Greek-Australian Karagiozis puppeteer, drawing on Nussbaum's (2000) Capability Approach. Layered analysis of the data

provides a basis for examining: (1) the potential of Karagiozis for exploring social justice themes with young children; and (2) intersections between social justice themes identified in Karagiozis and circumstances for multicultural groups in the Australian context. This paper builds awareness about the value of employing the Capability Approach as a framework for exploring matters of social justice and contributes to dialogue about the value of the Arts in opening possibilities for young children's learning and meaning-making about social justice matters in local and global contexts.

Introduction

For young children, the Arts encompass different ways of knowing and understanding. Engagement with the Arts creates spaces to widen opportunities to learn in different ways and to learn about life matters beyond the constructs of traditional forms of schooling (Piscitelli, 2011). In particular, drama or performance offers a balance of thought and feeling that enables audiences to make meaning in real life (Stinson & O'Connor, 2011). As Knudsen (2013) explains, audience members including children will inevitably place what is seen and heard in a performance experience within the context of "prevalent cultural frames in our societies" (p. 171). Performance, then, is one form of the Arts which provides time and space for associations and reflections, with children anchoring the experience to familiar or pre-existing frames of understanding (Knudsen, 2013). In this sense, drama or performance can stimulate social and moral development in young children and support understanding about one's experiences both in relation to self (one's life world) and the experiences of others (Belliveau, 2006). Developing sensitivity to understand self in relation with/to others can support engagement with themes such as standpoint, relationships, freedoms and injustices – all of which underscore local and global matters of social justice.

The Arts and Social Justice

The facility of the Arts to support children to make meaning about matters of social justice is widely advocated. McArdle, Knight and Stratigos (2013) describe the Arts as a "crucial methodological and intellectual tool" (p. 357) for exploring matters of social justice. As teacher educators, McArdle et al. employ visual arts practices to support pre-service teachers' capacities for "imagining" that is central to both visual arts practice and being responsive to and mobilising social justice. Similarly, Belliveau (2006) engaged drama as a method of inquiry for pre-service teachers to explore matters of social justice such as bullying. As an alternative practicum, 12 pre-service teachers created and toured a play about anti-bullying in elementary school settings, with the data highlighting how the drama created multiple sites of learning and resolution for both play-makers and children as audience. In an elementary setting, Downey (2005) engaged drama to sensitise children to the realities of injustice in their

own and others' lives. In teaching and learning, drama became a tool and catalyst for children's critical inquiry and opened possibilities for exploring life themes such as power and responsibility in individual life choices (Downey, 2005).

In relation to younger children, Phillips (2008, 2011) employed social justice storytelling as a practice to explore how children aged 5-6 years can enact active citizenship and social actions. The aim of the research was to evaluate how storytelling provoked young children's critical awareness and whether lasting impressions of social justice were evident in children's responses and actions over time. Phillips (2011) identified that through engagement with the Arts, and storytelling in particular, young children develop great capacity to think critically about complex issues (e.g., child labour, endangered species) and to respect others' perspectives and contributions.

Combined, all of the above examples of practice show intent to "channel creativity onto the social tasks that need doing" (Gablik, 1991, p. 142) – described more recently by Garber (2005) as a re-visioning of the Arts as tied to social justice. In relation to Arts pedagogy that supports visions and explorations of social justice, Tremblay (2013) emphasises the role of artists/educators in teaching students (including children) to use art to communicate challenges to social inequity in local contexts. Artists/educators can support this process by modelling to children how to contribute to and create art that is socially engaged, and by suggesting directions to explore that might cause audiences or viewers "to reflect on social realities and the need for a just society" (Tremblay, 2013, p. 2). Intent to engage children in meaningful conversations about art works and performances supports evidence that even young children are intellectually capable of observing and reflecting upon various forms of art, including their own (Piscitelli, 2011; Savva & Trimis, 2005).

This paper examines the potential of Karagiozis – Greek shadow puppet theatre – to serve as a catalyst for exploring social justice themes with young children and sensitising them to historical and contemporary injustices in their own life contexts. Nussbaum's (2000) Capability Approach is used as a contemporary theory of social justice to provide reference points for analysis of a traditional Karagiozis play, the perspectives of a Karagiozis puppeteer, and circumstances for multicultural groups in the Australian context where Karagiozis has been performed as part of Greek-Australian cultural practices since the early 1970s.

A Contemporary Theory of Social Justice

Social justice as a concept is contextual and fluid, and, as such, not easily defined. Nussbaum's (2000) Capability Approach is a contemporary theory of social justice that supports examination of themes including justice, injustice and well-being. As explored throughout this paper, these themes have much relevance to different experiences of arrival

and settlement in the Australian context, both historically and to the present day.

The Capability Approach was first developed by Sen (1999) and further theorised by Nussbaum (2000). To understand the central term of Capability, it is useful firstly to consider the broader concept of functionings, as defined in Sen's original theory. The concept of functionings has Aristotelian roots and "reflects the various things a person may value doing or being ... functionings can be considered very basic, such as being adequately nourished, or more complex, such as participating in the community" (Sen, 1999, p. 75). Moving to Capability, Sen (1999) defines this as "the substantive freedom to achieve alternative functioning combinations" (p. 75). For example, a rich person may choose to fast for religious purposes, but a poor person who is forced to starve does not have this option or this capability. Nussbaum (2000) built on Sen's theorising to produce a list of ten basic capabilities. As explained in full by Nussbaum, the ten central human functional capabilities are:

- 1) *Life*: Living without having your life reduced in length or quality;
- 2) *Bodily Health*: Maintaining good health, nourishment and shelter;
- 3) *Bodily Integrity*: Moving freely and securely. Enjoying sexual opportunities, having a choice in reproduction decisions and being safe against sexual assaults and violence;
- 4) *Senses, Imagination, and Thought*: Using the senses to imagine, think and reason. Opportunities to attend formal education and training and expressing ourselves in different ways with respect to others and enjoying life;
- 5) *Emotions*: Expressing different feelings and emotions and having attachments to things outside of ourselves;
- 6) *Practical Reason*: Forming a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection about the planning of one's life;
- 7) *Affiliation*: a) Living with others, recognise and show concern for fellow humans, engaging in various social interactions, forming friendships and being empathetic to others. b) Having the social bases of self-respect and non-humiliation; being treated as a dignified being whose worth is equal to that of others. Protection against all kinds of discrimination. Being able to work in an environment with meaningful relationships and mutual recognition;
- 8) *Other Species*: Showing concern for and living in relation to animals, plants, and the natural world;
- 9) *Play*: Laughing, playing and enjoying recreational activities;
- 10) *Control over One's Environment*: a) Political: Being able to make political choices and having the right to political participation, protection of free speech and association. b) Material: Being able to own property (land and movable goods), having real opportunities and equal rights with others of owning a property; having the freedom from unwarranted search and seizure.

According to Nussbaum (2000), the above list is not a “complete theory of justice”, but it provides “the basis for a decent social minimum in a variety of areas” (p. 75). The list is characterised as open-ended, humble, temporary (not timeless), contestable and flexible, and independent of religious or cultural views. It encompasses a number of separate components, all fundamental but also distinct in their quality (Nussbaum, 2000). In line with Sen (1999), Nussbaum (2000) suggests that it is important for societies to provide the “social basis of the capabilities and not the capabilities as such” (p. 82). Importantly, she emphasises the necessity for all governments to move beyond a narrow focus on enhancing basic skills (e.g., literacy and maths) and to be concerned with all capabilities, even when they seem not so useful for economic growth, or political functioning, such as *play*. In relation to play, Nussbaum suggests that exercising a function frequently in childhood is necessary to produce mature adult capability and this will contribute to human and social development. Nussbaum’s point is useful to this paper and early childhood education more broadly as it leans towards disciplines including the Arts (e.g., performance, playmaking) and how they can become a vehicle for facilitating development in one or more capabilities during early childhood. In this paper, analysis and discussion are focused on three of the ten Capabilities: senses, imagination and thought (Number 4); affiliation (Number 7); and, control over one’s environment (Number 10).

Introducing Karagiozis

Karagiozis – shadow puppet theatre – has its origins in Egyptian and Turkish satirical shadow theatre. During the 19th century this type of theatre was ‘transferred’ to Greece. In times of crisis (e.g., when Greek people were fighting the Ottoman Empire) Karagiozis became extremely well-known and loved by the oppressed Greek people (Papaliou, 2014). Almost two centuries after it first appeared, Karagiozis has been transformed in various ways and performed globally, although the basic structure remains intact.

In Greek shadow puppet theatre, the puppeteer satirises authority figures and situations through the main character, “Karagiozis”, who represents common folk in Greek society. In response to situations involving a social or political injustice, Karagiozis adopts different trades or professions (e.g., teacher, doctor, senator and cook) to develop cunning solutions and pranks to undermine authority figures and resist injustices (Papaliou, 2014). Described as impoverished, Karagiozis’ physical appearance is ugly and hunchbacked. He has a wife and three sons and his family situation is used in the plays as a basis for developing often crude and mischievous plans to bring in money and to care for his family. As the general theme of the plays is oriented around resisting, tricking and undermining authority to counter social and political injustices, Karagiozis is portrayed as a determined, funny and good man who cares greatly for family and for friends who suffer similar injustices due to their circumstances and positioning in society. As a performance genre, Karagiozis integrates both oral and written

sources in a largely oral performance. Each play addresses both marginal and dominant group themes and values and is an interactive intertext that is contextually responsive to economic, social, political, historical and geographical issues in both the Greek context and international contexts where Karagiozis is performed (Papaliou, 2014).

Today, Karagiozis remains popular and is used frequently by educators in Greece and abroad (e.g., in Greek schools in Australia) as part of teaching practice. In Greece, the popularity of Karagiozis has grown in recent years due to the financial crisis and the turn to more traditional forms of entertainment (Karellas, 2012). In Athens, there is a Greek shadow museum, with annual festivals taking place each year (e.g., Spathareia), together with a number of projects (e.g., Karagiozis music project) and performances in the Athens Concert Hall. Throughout Greece, Karagiozis is a popular form of entertainment in early childhood centres and primary schools. Karagiozis plays are also accessible to audiences via Internet media sites including YouTube, with more than 700,000 views in some cases.

The performance of Karagiozis in Australia first occurred in Melbourne in 1972, following the arrival and settlement of director and actor Dimitrios Katsoulis. Around this time, directors and local actors organised the *Elliniko Theatro Afstralias* (Greek Theatre of Australia) with the group representing a diversity of artistic disciplines (Tamis, 2005). Since 2011, Karagiozis has been a permanent exhibition in the Immigration Museum of Melbourne. The Australian-Greek community embrace opportunities to host professional Karagiozis puppeteers from Greece to perform for children and adults in local festivals or for important national celebrations. Local Greek Community Schools also support informal attempts by teachers and amateur puppeteers to introduce young children to the shadow puppet theatre genre.

Karagiozis theatre often invites children as audience members to contribute to playbuilding. Norris (2009) explains how playbuilding invites performers to discuss and learn together about topics of shared concern, mostly focused on social issues including prejudice, bullying, equality and respect, and conflict resolution. In Karagiozis, playbuilding involves the puppeteer engaging children in discussion about what might happen without losing the integrity of classic Karagiozis themes. Children's contributions can be offered formally through the co-writing of scripts prior to the performance, or informally during the performance through questioning and informal dialogue with the main character, Karagiozis. In some Australian primary schools, children who learn Greek as a second language are invited to engage in the playbuilding process by creating/writing their own scenarios with Karagiozis as the protagonist, in the lead up to the performance. While children are free to select the topic, in most instances, the scenarios centre around children's dual Australian-Greek identity, their parents' or grandparents' arrival and settlement in Australia, cultural

comparisons (e.g., how Karagiozis' stomach suffers from eating deep fried fish and chips); and challenges in learning Greek/English (e.g., Karagiozis has to pass a test in English in order to get a visa). In this sense, the playbuilding process affords time and space for supported discussions between children, and between children and the Karagiozis puppeteer, teachers and other adults around learning and maintaining Greek language and heritage, along with explorations of socio-political issues including immigration, settlement, cross-cultural experiences, language and diversity. Playbuilding leads to the performance of Karagiozis by the puppeteer, with children as audience. Integral social themes that address matters of social justice continue to be explored throughout the performance, as the puppeteer and the audience co-contribute ideas and experiences.

The Arts and Multicultural Discourses in Australia

The introduction of Karagiozis in Australia provided opportunities for artisans to preserve and share traditional forms of Greek culture. Cultural resources, such as those aligned with the Arts, provide multiple entry points for analysis in the Australian context. Firstly, in terms of how culture, language and identity expressed through the Arts are interconnected with human experience and the wellbeing of people arriving and settling in foreign lands and, secondly, in terms of how discourses of multiculturalism delineate 'acceptable' representations of culture (e.g., art, food, music, dance) that are 'safe' for consumption by mainstream society. In Australia, discourses of multiculturalism have moved through distinct waves in line with post-war migration marked first by multiculturalism and more recently by political intolerance. In the early 1970s, when Karagiozis was first introduced in Australia, multiculturalism was an ideology that encouraged arrivals to maintain their cultural identities and separateness rather than assimilating into the Australian mainstream. The emphasis on difference and diversity contrasted with the desire for a cohesive and unified nationhood that underscored the approach to multiculturalism installed from the 1990s under a conservative government policy shift (Gozdecka, Ercan & Kmak, 2014). This shift occurred at the expense of multiculturalism by influencing public discourse toward a more isolationist, intolerant and xenophobic position on arrivals and by dismantling state apparatus which had given support to multiculturalism and Indigenous peoples' rights (Bertone & Leahy 2003; Every & Augoustinos, 2007). Institutional changes impacted long-standing immigrant settlement policies such as access to employment opportunities and social security on arrival. At the governmental and public level, these shifts showed an assimilationist disregard for the precepts of multiculturalism. More recently, conservative government policy continues to avoid direct engagement with racism in Australia and has contributed to a moral panic and deficit narratives around arrivals (Gozdecka et al., 2014).

The Arts have been central to stories of migration in Australia, as told and shared in local

neighbourhoods, schools and public institutions including museums and galleries. Edmundson (2009) explains that the Australian arts and heritage sector has reflected policy reforms accompanying the adoption of multiculturalism since the 1970s. For example, in the 1970s-1980s, specific funding for multicultural artists and public programs became available through government sponsored organisations including the Australia Council and Office of Multicultural Interests (Edmundson, 2009). With the instalment of a conservative government in the 1990s-2000s, the Arts were subject to evaluation or “the culture wars”, as they were referred to at the time. A prime example was a review of exhibitions and public programs at the National Museum of Australia, one of which was *Horizons*, a permanent exhibition “dedicated to the history of immigrations and multiculturalism in Australia” (Ang, 2009, p. 17). Ang (2009) describes *Horizons* in the following way:

Horizons told the story through a kaleidoscopic range of objects such as a traditional Castellorizian costume worn by a Greek migrant, an English settler’s toy farmyard set, crockery from a convict housewife’s kitchen and an Italian barber’s shaving tools – the familiar stories of migrants and their rather quaint objects of diasporic memory. The exhibition also, however, evoked the darker side of the story of Australian immigration, represented most notoriously by the White Australia Policy, which pointed to the intrinsically political nature of the nation’s history of settlement since the arrival of the British: the attempt to create an exclusively white nation-state by keeping undesirable non-whites out (and by ‘whitewashing’ the blacks within). (pp. 17-18)

The removal of the exhibition in 2003 and its subsequent replacement with an exhibition described by Ang (2009) as a “depoliticised representation of cultural diversity” in which migrants, traders and travellers were merged into a “singular category of people and objects on the move” (p. 20), is an example of government intervention that forces the social, political and economic realities of Australia’s immigration history from view. It is also an example of how it becomes possible and necessary to locate cross-cultural or more broadly socio-political equivalences in representations and understanding of art (Morphy, 2009).

Locating socio-political influences in representations and understanding of art also translates to notions of consumption. The consumption of art has links with hegemonic boundaries around what is culturally tolerable and ‘safe’ for consumption by the mainstream. For example, engagement with the Arts can translate to a selective mode of interacting with difference, with imposed conditions. In relation to Indigeneity, Phillips (2005) explains how individuals in the mainstream exercise power by accepting some forms of difference (i.e., art, music, dance), but with the condition of not needing to interact directly with Indigenous people, or questioning their own subject position in interactional patterns. As Phillips (2005)

writes:

... selectivity enables the fortification of a particular moral positioning with respect to relationships with Indigenous peoples, for its own self-congratulatory sake as well as within the broader project of Australian multiculturalism (I like to watch corroboree, ergo I 'accept' Aboriginal people, ergo I am not complicit in their oppression). (p. 19)

For the mainstream, selectivity enables appreciation for some aspects of difference without threat to a moral position fortified by notions of 'tolerance' and 'acceptance'. While the Arts are interconnected with human experience and the wellbeing of people arriving and settling in foreign lands, an examination of context enables insights into socio-political equivalences with representations, understanding and the consumption of the Arts.

In this paper, the art form Karagiozis is examined to consider its potential for exploring broad themes of social justice (e.g., justice/injustice, inclusion/exclusion) with young children. Analysis is also focused on locating intersecting points between social justice themes in a Karagiozis play and circumstances for arrivals and multicultural groups in the Australian context. The section following outlines the study method and approach to analysis employed.

Method

Two data sources were collected and analysed for this paper. Firstly, a Karagiozis play titled "Karagiozis Baker" was chosen because it is very well known and included frequently in the repertoire of accomplished Karagiozis puppeteers. The play script was accessed in the text *Karagiozis* authored by Myrsiades and Myrsiades in 1992. The central premise of Karagiozis Baker is the protagonist's attempt to find food for his family. Karagiozis, the central character, offers to help his best friend to run a new bakery. In reality, Karagiozis doesn't know how to bake and is only interested in 'stealing' the food for his family. However, the Turk Sultan (the authority) comes to the bakery and comes up with an idea to deceive the clients and steal their food. Karagiozis obeys the Sultan at first but at the end he uses his cunning mind to take the food for his family and blame the Sultan for his actions. The second data source was a semi-structured interview (Glesne, 2011) with a Greek-Australian Karagiozis puppeteer and primary school teacher who employs Karagiozis theatre to teach Greek language and culture to primary school students (ages 5-12 years) in the Greek community in Melbourne and Sydney. Questions posed to the puppeteer did not mention social justice specifically. Rather, they were focused on his perspectives about key themes in Karagiozis plays, the experiences of children in the playbuilding process and as Karagiozis audiences, and the learning that occurs through the performance of Karagiozis in primary school settings.

Analysis

Analysis of the two data sources was theory-driven. This decision was purposeful given our interest in the Capability Approach as a contemporary theory of social justice, and evaluation of its facility to provide a framework for thinking and speaking social justice in educational research. An English translation of *Karagiozis Baker* was read first by Hatzigianni (Author 1) using Nussbaum's (2000) ten central human functional categories to guide coding and to identify salient themes of social justice. Prior to coding, agreement about the premise of each Capability was reached between the three authors. Collaborative discussion occurred during coding to allow input from Miller (Author 2) and Quiñones (Author 3), and to cross-check data against the agreed premise for each Capability. Extracts from the *Karagiozis* play were recorded on ten separate pieces of paper, one for each of the ten capabilities (see Table 1.) Some play extracts were grouped under more than one Capability. Johnson and Christensen (2012) refer to this occurrence as co-occurring codes. Co-occurring codes are sets of codes (in this case Capabilities) that “overlap partially or completely” and “might suggest a relationship among categories” (p. 526). The three most salient Capabilities identified in analysis of the *Karagiozis* play were then used to guide analysis of the interview transcript to look for convergent and divergent perspectives spoken by the *Karagiozis* puppeteer. In reading through theory, coding is used to identify core consistencies and meanings in data, and across data sets (Patton, 2002). Finally, selected extracts from both the play and interview data, related to the three most salient Capabilities, were analysed to identify points of intersection with multicultural discourses that have shaped Australian migration patterns and experiences.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1 outlines Nussbaum's (2000) ten capabilities and the number of times the core premise of each Capability was identified in the play, *Karagiozis Baker*.

Table 1

Instances of the Ten Capabilities in Karagiozis Baker

Nussbaum's Ten Capabilities	Number of times identified in Karagiozis Baker
Life	7
Bodily Health	8
Bodily Integrity	2
Senses, Imagination, Thought	13
Emotions	9
Practical Reason	1
Affiliation	27
Other Species	2
Play	0
Control over One's Environment	31

Table 2 presents examples of extracts from Karagiozis Baker related to the three most salient Capabilities: control over one's environment; affiliation; and senses, imagination and thought.

Table 2

Extracts from Karagiozis Baker related to three salient Capabilities

Capability	Data Extract	Page
Control over One's Environment	VEZ: "I am ordering you" - he tells K. that the bakery will be closed by his soldiers because of its smoke.	63
	VEZ: He makes up a story about Koran and the way food was stolen. He explains to K.: "We'll say Muhammad performed a miracle and that our Bible, the Koran, says so. In this way if your customer doesn't believe the Koran I can also punish him and have him pay a fine. You have nothing to worry about Karagiozis".	73-74
	K. and HAT are always worried about being able to feed their families.	40/48-49
	K: "He asked me for a melon, but did not have money to buy him any".	44
	K. is also jealous of certain materialistic goods, such as a 'watch'.	32
Affiliation	HAT - SAM: They have a discussion about the importance of family, education and they agree despite their different religions. They also talk about the whole neighbourhood being sad because they lost their baker.	45-46
	K: He tries to find 'tricks' to earn money. He thinks of "burning down the bakery and claim insurance money". His point is sarcastic and politically oriented when he states: "Some people burn entire ships to collect insurance".	60
	Men from three different cultures (Egyptian, Arab and Greek) visit the bakery. Karagiozis treats them with respect. Vezyris (the Turkish Authority) is the one who will deceive them with a religious lie and steal their food.	67 - 87
Senses, Imagination, Thought	UG: Let's have a Tsamiko (traditional Greek dancing).	28
	K: This is living (music and dancing - enjoyment).	28
	PIT: Attempt to count from one to nine. K. tells him that he doesn't know how to count.	36
	K. emphasises the value of Education to his sons.	36-39

Note: K: Karagiozis; SAM: Sampanaga, Turk officer; UG: uncle George, Karagiozis's uncle; HAT: Hatziavatis, Karagiozis's Greek friend; PIT: Pitsikokos, Karagiozis's son; VEZ: Vezyris, the Turk Sultan.

In this section, we examine the three most salient Capabilities identified in Karagiozis Baker and the interview with the puppeteer to identify the potential of Karagiozis as an art form to explore social justice themes with children, and to identify links between social justice themes and circumstances for multicultural groups in Australia. This layered analysis supports exploration about the contextual application of Nussbaum's theory and how the Arts provide multiple entry points for exploring and responding to social justice matters, particularly in relation to the process of playbuilding.

Control Over One's Environment

This Capability includes two dimensions: the political and the material. The first dimension refers to political rights, including free speech and political participation. The second refers to ownership rights over property and land, or opportunities for employment. Nussbaum (2000) highlights equality as a basis for all choices in this Capability.

The political and material dimensions of this Capability were threaded through both Karagiozis Baker and the interview with the Karagiozis puppeteer. The imposed authority of the Turks and the lack of ownership rights for the Greek people are demonstrated when Vezyris (the Turk Sultan) threatens to close down the bakery because of the smoke it creates, as shown here:

K: Master, I am a poor man, a family man. If you tear down my bakery, how will I feed myself and my children?

VEZ: That's not my concern. All I want is peace and quiet and clean air here where I live. Besides, it's not permitted to have a bakery blowing smoke right in front of the serai (the inn). Now then, I don't want to hear any more about it. In twenty-four hours you are to have workers tear down this bakery. If the bakery is not torn down, I will order my own soldiers from the serai to take shovels and pick-axes and tear down the bakery, and you'll be taken to prison and punished. (pp. 61–63)

In this extract, freedom from unwarranted seizure (Nussbaum, 2000) threatens Karagiozis' ownership of the bakery and his ability to provide for his family. Vezyris (VEZ), the Turk Sultan, exercises authority over Karagiozis, firstly by implying the Bakery presents a threat to his personal wellbeing and, secondly, via imposed orders for the bakery to be torn down within twenty-four hours to avoid imprisonment and punishment. Authoritarian themes in the play can open dialogue with the audience around power relations, resistance and ownership in different locations and time frames, as identified by the Karagiozis puppeteer when speaking about key messages he raises with children before and following the performance:

The message was to resist against rich people, not to do whatever they say. This is what the Greeks did many years later, at the Second World War, when the Germans were in Greece. But it was not only when Greece was under the Turkish empire, Karagiozis didn't finish then [...] that's the big challenge, to keep that and to try to adjust Karagiozis philosophy in modern times.

The intent of the puppeteer to engage rather than marginalise social justice themes in the play aligns with studies by Downey (2005) and Phillips (2008, 2011) that demonstrate children's intellectual capacity to think deeply about issues of power, control, resistance and ownership. In modern times in Australia, these themes continue to play out in conservative government policy that detracts from valuing multiculturalism. For example, the moral panic and prevailing deficit narratives around 'arrivals' and migration patterns (Gozdecka et al., 2014). The puppeteer draws attention to political elements of control when speaking about how Karagiozis:

doesn't like to be under the power of someone else, he wants to be free. He knows that he can't change the world; he can't change what the Greeks are. He wanted to try, and to show them the way, how to be independent.

Restoration of independence is central to migration experiences. In Karagiozis Baker, themes of economic independence and freedom from imposed authority can support discussion about settlement experiences in Australia across generations, locations and time frames. In contemporary Australia, political elements of control increasingly deny personalised and flexible approaches to settlement practices, particularly for arrivals with refugee status (Multicultural Development Association, 2011). This impacts the ability of arrivals to regain a sense of independence and control over their new environment; in turn, impacting equality and opportunities related to employment and ownership (Nussbaum, 2000).

Affiliation

The Affiliation Capability refers to the importance of learning to live with others and to recognise other human beings without discrimination. Nussbaum (2000) considers Affiliation to be one of the most central Capabilities and one that "suffuses all the others" (p. 82). In Nussbaum's (2000) words, Affiliation adds the "truly human character" (p. 244) to one's life. Reference to respectful relationships was evident in how the puppeteer described the potential of Karagiozis plays to teach children about human relationships:

They [children] learn how to be fair, how to be friendly, how to cooperate with friends, how to be positive, how to make laugh, how to make fun of other people

but also respect them. And they always learn to find a way to help with friends...

The puppeteer's comment aligns with Belliveau's (2006) findings about the power of performance to stimulate social and moral development in young children and to support understanding about one's experiences both in relation to self and the experiences of others. In relation to the central character, Karagiozis, the puppeteer continues:

He knows some things about other parts of Greece because some friends of his come from Greek Islands and they do have their own music, dance, food and he respects that even if at the beginning he makes fun of them.

Yes, he [Karagiozis] makes laugh of their dresses, their appearance, their big noses, their bodies, their voices [...] but he always helps them when the Turkish Sultan, the King, wants to take advantage of his friends.

For young children, explorations of difference are important. Children develop a strong sense of self and others in the early years, and can carry these ideas into adulthood (Derman-Sparks & Ramsey, 2006). Particular meanings attached to difference can become problematic in terms of how people from diverse backgrounds are positioned and represented. Throughout Australian history, cohesion between multicultural groups has been largely coercive in terms of the positioning of Indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees in proximity to the mainstream, as a homogenous category on the periphery of society. In the post-war period in particular, the situatedness of some migrants (e.g., Greek, Italian, Vietnamese) as different from other migrants (e.g., Irish, English, Scottish) showed a relation to the mainstream (or whiteness) as a legal power and status, and differences in proximity to British imperialism (Edmundson, 2009; Moreton-Robinson, 2003). This is reflected in the above extract in terms of the legal power and status of "the King" and the need for cohesion within and across cultural groups to present a united front in resisting imposed forms of authority. The above extract also makes reference to great diversity within and across cultural groups – a reality that is often unrecognised in mainstream societies due to limiting homogenous categories (Ang, 2009).

The invisibility of particular cultures in multicultural societies could also be interpreted as a subtle theme in the extract below, despite the more prominent thread about respectful human relationships between people from different cultural backgrounds:

MB: You know, Baker, I'm a neighbour and I would like to be a customer of yours.

K: Oh, thanks a lot.

MB: Say, Baker.

K: Yes, sir.

MB: You should know that I've been here in your county for only a few years, since I was born and reared in Egypt.

K: No kidding.

MB: No, I'm not. It's been exactly three years since I arrived in your city.

K: Well then, welcome to our city mister. And your name?

MB: I'm called Master Kemil.

Here, notions of affiliation and multiculturalism appear to share a similar underlying premise of a civic nation in which people of different ethnicities work and live together in harmony and show respect for difference. In Karagiozis Baker, people from different ethnicities do appear to get along well – one example being a long dialogue between Hatzivatis (the Greek man) and Sampanega (the Turk man), both of whom express fondness for each other and respect for each other's religion. In the extract above, there is also a subtle suggestion of invisibility – perhaps a reflection of how invisibility can become a subtle daily experience for individuals in minority groups (Ang, 2009), to the point that it becomes the fabric of their existence – “It's been exactly three years since I arrived in our city (MB). Well then, welcome to our city mister (K)”.

Senses, Imagination and Thought

Senses, Imagination and Thought underpin the ability for a human to use their five senses and to think in a “truly human” way (Nussbaum, 2000, pp. 78 - 79). The importance of free expression, enjoyment of life and training is core to this Capability. According to Nussbaum (2000), all humans have a right to basic mathematical, literacy and scientific knowledge, and should also be encouraged to integrate their cultural beliefs and practices into everyday life experiences – the core premise of multiculturalism in Australia in terms of arrivals maintaining their cultural identities and separateness rather than assimilating into the mainstream (Gozdecka et al., 2014).

Karagiozis provides children with opportunity to engage their senses through playbuilding and to create moments of imagining that reflect some of the challenges of real-life situations (Norris, 2009). As explained by the puppeteer:

It has to do about the way the kids think when they play Karagiozis. They think that [...] we must be positive even if anything seems to be difficult and not easy, we have to try, never to give up, and it doesn't matter if something not be 100% successful at the end [...] what matters is to try and the journey, not the end of the journey.

The puppeteer's comment about how children "think when they play Karagiozis" highlights the potential for engaging young children in an interactive and collaborative art form, along with the potential for developing children's imagining. As an extension of the playbuilding process where children contribute script ideas and explore themes of identity, familial and cross-cultural experiences, during the performance, the puppeteer uses the main character to ask children questions (e.g., when Karagiozis asks for advice on how to solve a problem or how to help a friend) and to engage them in informal dialogue. These bi-directional interactions add a dynamic and open-ended dimension to this form of drama, but also have the power to influence children's attitudes and beliefs. For young children, a sense of imagining is critical in terms of possibilities and projections about their life course and what opportunities might be available to them as adults. In the creative journey that is Karagiozis, the puppeteer explains how he is able to cultivate a self-expressive purpose and positive attitude toward life, as premised in the Capability: Senses, Imagination and Thought. For the puppeteer, the shadow theatre enables children to imagine what Karagiozis (and perhaps by association, themselves) can represent through the stories they help to create:

Karagiozis can be even a scientist, even an astronaut, even a professor, even an academic teacher [...] He tries everything, he doesn't give up. [...] the big challenge is to try to create our own story with children. That's what I did and I am still doing, respecting of course everybody's character.

In the playbuilding process, the puppeteer also makes the point that "the most important step is to respect the tradition of Karagiozis [...] You cannot change the traditional role that he represents". This ensures that children will engage with social justice matters central to Karagiozis theatre including freedom from oppression, and rights to education, employment, equal opportunity and enjoyment as a member of a particular society. Similar to McArdle et al.'s (2013) theorising about the Arts as an "intellectual tool" (p. 357) for exploring matters of social justice, Karagiozis presents children with an opportunity to imagine and therefore be responsive to and mobilise different scenarios and outcomes. As players and audience members will inevitably place what is seen and heard in a performance experience within the context of "prevalent cultural frames in our societies" (Knudsen, 2013, p. 171), Karagiozis becomes a tool for responding to and representing migrant experiences for young children, particularly those from Greek-Australian backgrounds. This is critical in terms of sensitising children to some of the realities of injustices (Downey, 2005) in a multicultural society, both in terms of their own experiences, and the experiences of others. This includes building resilience and expressing optimism about life, as is central to this Capability, and to Karagiozis, explained by the puppeteer in this way:

He [Karagiozis] represents sense of humour [...] “don’t worry, everything will be fine, even if we are poor, even if we don’t have a very special house, even if we don’t have food today ... don’t worry be happy” [...] he represents optimist way of thinking.

Conclusion

This paper examined the potential of Karagiozis – Greek shadow puppet theatre for children – as a way to explore how the Arts might support socially just education in the early years. Reading excerpts from a Karagiozis play and an interview with a Karagiozis puppeteer through Nussbaum’s (2000) Capability Approach identified salient themes of control over one’s environment, affiliation, and senses, thought and imagination, all of which underscore circumstances for migrants in multicultural Australia. Affiliation (social interaction) and control over one’s environment (participation in political choices) are recurrent principles in deficit narratives around arrivals, particularly refugees, in the Australian context, thus highlighting how Nussbaum’s theory of social justice can be applied to examine circumstances in local contexts. As an art form, Karagiozis showed potential to support children’s learning and meaning-making about social justice matters in relation to self and others. Through humour, imagination and co-constructed playbuilding between children and artists/educators, Karagiozis addresses both marginal and dominant group themes and values that have much relevance to experiences of arriving and settling in the Australian context.

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