



Chapter 3

Conformity, Rebellion and the Underdog (Primary School Years)

Part A - Schooling

All my primary schooling was done at The Gap State School. Over the next 7 years I would transform from a very shy child to a more confident outgoing kid. My world would grow from the few houses in Broadland St to feeling at home in the suburb as a whole. I would walk to play at different friends' houses on the other side of The Gap, and to the shops to collect groceries for mum. I started playing soccer and cricket with the local clubs, and exploring the surrounding mountains and local creeks with friends. All this led me to get to know the geography of the suburb very well. While I was growing up, The Gap was rapidly changing. Farms gave way to suburbia, with young middle class families moving in to newly built homes.

The Gap was a very geographically defined community surrounded by hills and mountains that now form part of Brisbane Forest Park. This helped create a real sense of community. A newly built High School also meant children could do all their schooling in The Gap building stronger connections between families. My family would often talk about different local identities, our neighbours and the parents of my sisters' friends, which made The Gap a very familiar and safe place for me. Playing club sport I would also develop a pride in and attachment to my suburb as we competed with teams across Brisbane. I can remember feeling a sort of smug superiority about living in The Gap

School

My first few years at school were a real period of transformation. I was very distraught on the first day. I felt alone and scared and cried. Everything was big and strange. Unfamiliar big people were talking to me and directing me to sit and stand and move in different directions. I was bitterly distressed that my friend Scott was placed in another class. I hated school in year 1. I did not





want to be there. I was in a sea of strangers with a serious teacher who I was scared of. She got angry at me when I could not understand something she wanted me to do. I still can remember the images from a terrible reoccurring nightmare that involved my grade one teacher. I am sure she was not that bad, but I found everything very foreign and a struggle. I am told (but don't remember myself) that I ran home several times when class stopped for lunch breaks.

Fortunately, my sister Cathy would come and play with me at lunch times (flicking the metal milk bottle lids to fly through the air). I still played a lot with my good friend Scott after school but at school he was very popular and played with others from his class. I came 2nd last in my grade 1 class, and narrowly missed being kept back. My friend Mark who sat beside me came in last. My father recalls that saying to Mum "it looks like we have a dumb one here".

Grade 2 was much better, I had a very nice teacher who was friendly and reassuring. Slowly I started to feel more comfortable and to play tiggy with other boys from my class at lunch times. Cathy would get to play with her own friends again. After a shaky start I started to fit in with what was being asked in primary school. I was eager to please the teacher, be accepted and do well. I can remember responding to the commands of teachers to sit up straight so eagerly. I am amazed in reflection how quickly we all conformed to the school system. All the kids were eager to get picked to do tasks. While at home the objective was to avoid having to do tasks that your parents wanted done, at school we were all so keen to take jobs on. We all wanted to be recognized and selected above the others. I still have the bodily memory of arching my back to the extreme (how this equated with straightness, I am not sure) with my arms crossed in front of me in order to be praised by the teacher. This competition for attention was being used very effectively to control our behaviour.





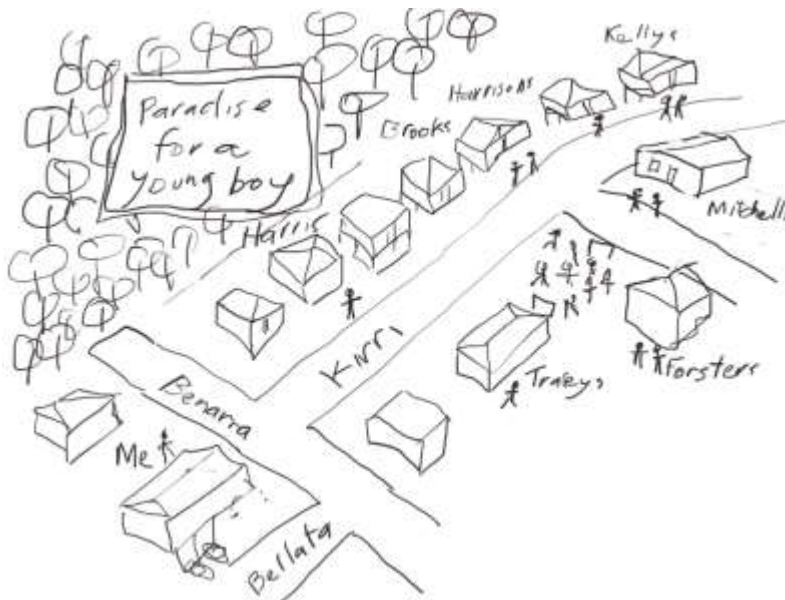
At the end of year of year 2, I was placed in the middle of the class. In these days your seat in the class was determined by your marks. The smart kids sat up the back with the slowest ones at the front. In this way everyone in the class could see their place and whether they were rising or falling. During my second year, I moved from the front row to further back in the room. I learnt position was very important. And conforming would bring rewards. A successful socialization process had begun.

While very reluctantly going to school in year one, by year 3, I was getting up early and heading off to school early so I could play games with others before school. My academic progression continued in my third year and I was soon sitting up the back with the smart kids. I really enjoyed my grade 3 teacher, he often brought a ventriloquist doll to class and he would make us all laugh. Now even school lessons had started becoming fun.

In grade 4 my parents began building a house in Bellata St. After selling Broadland St we lived in Pirrie St for 12 months while the Bellata St house was being built. Pirrie St was a very new world for me with a new group of neighbourhood children to play with. At this point, The Gap still had many small farms and Pirrie St ended at a farm with cows. The Conway family lived next door to us and they were right beside the farm. With other nearby kids we would spend most afternoons playing in this cow paddock. A main game involved throwing and dodging fresh cow manure, a game I was well schooled in from my country cousins. It was great to play with city kids who were used to getting hit and splattered by fresh cow pats. I am also now ashamed to say we all tormented the plover birds in the paddock so that they would swoop at us. This activity was an exciting and fun game at the poor bird's expense.



As a team, we collected cow manure to sell to the neighbours. An activity my new neighbourhood friends had done many times before. This involved doorknocking neighbours to see if they wanted some. My job was dragging the bags around. This was a good earner till my dad made us ask the farmer for permission, which he declined. While I think I could see the correctness of my dad's position, I was very disappointed and embarrassed particularly as it also ruined my friend's income.



Moving to Bellata St. meant a whole new group of neighbourhood friends. Amazingly, from these families including the Forsters, Tracys, Harrisons, Brooks, Mitchells and Kellys there was 12 boys around my age and only only 2 girls (who were much younger). This meant there was always plenty

of boys around my age to play with and I spent most of my time after school playing cricket and soccer on their footpaths and in their backyards. I loved all this fun activity generally only heading home when it started to get dark. . For me this was an amazing place to grow up. With these neighbourhood friends and my other school friends we would also spend weekends climbing and exploring the surrounding mountains, making cubbies in the rocks and in trees.

Years 4, 5, 6 and 7 continued my increasing confidence and self-belief in my abilities. I can remember trying to finish tasks as quickly as I could to get affirmation from my teachers. Homework would also be done as quickly as possible or postponed, so I could join the neighbours for soccer or cricket.

I find it hard looking back especially with my current sense of shyness, that in grade 7 I performed in the school play at a local hall in front of parents and students. I played a town drunk and so enjoyed the laughs I was getting that I



continued to ham it up throughout the play. This I discovered later disrupted the central characters main songs much to the dismay of their parents.

By grade 7, I saw myself as smart and competent. I was best friends with the popular kids and leaders and we now lived in a brand new home designed by our old neighbour Mr Ryan. I felt very privileged and lucky. All was good.

Socialization

School of course is about preparing people for life in general as part of our socialization process but in particular it is about preparing us for work. It is also about identifying who will do what sort of job. Certain skills are selected as desirable like reading ability and numeracy, as it is these skills which are highly valued later in the work place. Being smart and moving up in position in the class were all based on these particular skills. It is easy to imagine, in a different society, the desired skills could have been very different. If our work and survival revolved around hunting for food, perhaps the accurate spear throwers would have been sitting at the back of the class. I was very happy to take on the rewards and to be seen as a smart well behaved child. It looks like I was very competitive and wanted to be winning all the time, but I don't think being better than my friends was actually my motivation. I was eager to be liked and to please my teachers, to do this in the school environment meant being better than the competition.

The socialization process was also about preparing us a citizens and to conform to the rules of the land and its values. We would begin the day by recited the Lord's Prayer and singing "God Save the Queen" which we did enthusiastically staring at a picture of Her Majesty which took the central place above the blackboard. We as a republican now it's amusing how enthusiastically I embraced these tasks, and it is also very disturbing that we were so clearly being indoctrinated by the state and how easily we were becoming model citizens.





Part of the socialization process involved using various carrots and sticks to mould us into productive law abiding citizens. When I was in grade 4, I managed to get 2 out of 10 for a spelling test. It was assumed by the teacher, I had not done my homework and a couple of us were sent to the principal's office. He gave us the cane across the hand for this failure. I felt the injustice here but also the comradery of my fellow poor spellers. The principal was new and ambitious and keen to literally beat us in to shape. It was not the last time I got the cane from him but on this occasion I did feel very aggrieved as in my mind I was just a bad speller.

I was hit in the middle of the back and propelled forward by this principal a few other times generally for being in the wrong place or not following directions as required. We were all scared of Mr Christiansen and yet so eager to please and be rewarded. I was very excited to be chosen by him with my friend Greg Dall to look after the microphone on assembly. He would speak from a veranda beside his office to all the children on parade and we had to shift speakers and hit the right buttons in his office at the right times. One morning the whole of assembly could hear my friend Greg and me talking instead of the principal. We were both propelled a few extra metres for this stuff up.

The rewards and punishments of the school system became very clear, and it was very effective in getting us all to conform. The naughty kids were disciplined. The lazy kids missed out on the rewards. The kids good at reading, writing and arithmetic became the top students and were given various privileges and praise and then trusted to take on new responsibilities.

Hierarchy

All societies socialize their children, but what was happening here was clearly preparation to follow orders from superiors introducing and preparing us for the hierarchical systems of work, government, and law and order. We were becoming good future workers, citizens and potential leaders. The power structure in my family was very flat. Mum and Dad had authority but it was constantly undermined by all of their children who would challenge and complain about any of their decisions. In practice both Mum and Dad really encouraged us to think for ourselves and my Mum ensured we were never





forced to do things we did not want to do. When we wanted to do something my parents were generally very encouraging and supportive. School on the other hand was very hierarchical. You could see and feel the chain of command

This hierarchy was seen as normal and expected. People had power over other below them and being in control was a desirable thing. Fitting in was sensible behaviour but a couple of exceptions come to my mind that somehow showed me in an early formative way the limits of and cracks in this hierarchial system.

Challenges to the system

A new girl arrived to our grade 4 class. She was clearly very distraught and over the next few weeks would often be crying or showing her distress in other ways. When a suitable chance appeared she would flee out the door and run away. When the door was locked she would take off through the windows (we were on the ground floor fortunately). While this girl would over the next few months begin to conform and accept school (proving its socialization power), it also made it clear that the teachers really could not stop her when she wanted to run away. This was clearly a very traumatic experience for this girl, but her presence in the class was also unsettling for us all, not just because of an empathy for her distress, but I think also for an empathy for the distress of our teacher who struggled and failed to contain her. There was a sense things were out of control for everyone. There would be a big commotion whenever she tried to escape with other children screaming and calling out. It displayed to all, that the system had its limits. The teachers and principle were not all powerful. Her rebellion was continually thwarted, and eventually she conformed, but each time she tried to escape the class room, sometimes successfully, there was an example provided that we could also escape if we wanted. Rebellion was possible.

A very different and obtuse example of a crack in the system can be seen from a situation in grade 5. Our Teacher Mr Flynn would get very angry with the whole class or individuals if we did anything wrong, yelling at us, and towering over us. He would go very red in the process. We were all scared of him. One day when he leant over to look at someone's work in front of me, I noticed he was losing his hair. It shocked and surprised me and completely unintentionally I sang out as if it was a 'eureka' moment, "Flynn is going bald". I can't explain





why I was so loud, I meant only for Michael Adams, the person beside me to hear, but I must have been somewhat excited at the discovery. As soon as I realized what I had done I sunk in to my seat in absolute fear. Mr Flynn towered over me growling and demanded several times for me to repeat what I had said. I cowered and kept denying any utterance was made, but then my more cheeky friend Michael Adams broke the dead lock by also very loudly saying “he said Flynn’s going bald, sir.” I thought my life was about to end, but unexpectedly he just grimaced and moved away. Incredibly no punishment came my way. It seemed like I had hurt his feelings. My friend Greg who was much more socially skilled and popular with teachers, tried to convince me a lunch break to go and apologize. I neither had the social skill or bravery to do such a thing. While generally mortified by the experience, some part of me recognized for a moment I had some power in the situation in a context where I had always felt completely powerless. Maybe I could be naughty or a rebel. I certainly liked telling the story to my family and others (once the dust had settled and I could see there would be no further repercussions).

Another example arises from what happened in lunch breaks. While our bodies were quickly being trained to be able to sit still, do our work alongside others, without talking in the class room, our lunch breaks allowed children to jump around and scream and to a large extent to do their own thing. Away from the class rooms, we had more freedom. In the playground we did not have teacher to organize us, we had develop our own ways of deciding things. We had to negotiate with each other. In the playground the more athletic kids had more influence than the smarter kids. Sometimes it was the person who owned the ball or the bat who made the decisions. Leadership would emerge to run and organize different games, but for the most part we settled into ways of organizing teams without too much effort. We had no adults to organize us. So rather than a hierarchy, the playground was a more flat structure.

Typically the younger children stayed closed to the buildings playing tiggy and chasey, while the older boys took to the oval to play soccer and cricket and games like red rover. The girls, including the older ones would played hop scotch, skipping rope and elastic in the parade area. While the stereotypes existed, boundaries would be crossed with boys having a go at the girls’ games and vice versa from time to time.





While these traditional games were copied from our older siblings we often developed new rules and also made up a few of our own games. I can remember feeling a sense of achievement and pride in some of our invented games. It was clear that the further we were from the building the more freedom we had. One game we invented was very rough and played in the cricket nets at the far end of the playground. It was exciting and great fun. A mix of soccer, league and basketball, with 40 or so kids in a small area. Over time some bad injuries occurred and eventually teachers intervened to ban our invention. Nevertheless it showed a clear contrast. While we were being groomed in the classroom to take our place in the workforce, to obey rule and support Queen and country and to be able to sit quietly and do our work, the playground showed we could manage our own activities and we could make our own rules, particularly if we were further from the site of power.

While focusing on these cracks in the system, it is important to emphasise the dominance and power of this socialization process. School had quickly moulded us to support the state; to obey our elders; and to work hard to become productive citizens.

All cultures prepare their young people to fit in and to take up responsibilities to ensure survival. The extreme of this is the preparation of young people to die for their tribe, culture or nation. The end of World War 2 was only 20 years before my primary education began. I was aware I might have to fight for my country one day. I think this preparation was stronger than it is for children today. Nevertheless it is clear however is that the state can easily use school in this way.





The focus of our education was not about equality and community where everyone would benefit equally. We were being prepared to accept different positions and rewards depending on how well we were achieving in relation to the needs of the nation.

Part B – sport and competition

Dad and sport

In my primary school years Mum would continue to be that constant source of safety, but my Dad became more obviously involved. In these primary years I would start to model myself more on my Dad. My father was an ambitious businessman who made you think you were special and capable of doing anything (something he thought about himself and so it would naturally be a part of his children). I knew from a very early age that there was something scary about this ambition, I was more like my mum, more frightened of the outside world. Nevertheless, perhaps to please my father, I imagined myself from a very early age being in charge of things. It was my destiny to be a boss, to climb the hierarchy. To be “king of the castle”. I knew I would need to be stronger and tougher. I assumed this would come with age.



Dad was a clear link to the outside world and all the battles and pressures that would be involved. I felt his interest and desire for me to do various things. In the early years this would manifest in pressure to play sport. My shyness made me resist and while dad did not push too hard I still felt the pressure and his





disappointment when I was not keen on playing rugby league (which he played as a kid). Fortunately, Mum protected me from having to join a team. Scott my best friend from the street, played soccer. While he had been playing soccer from 4 years old, I only got enough confidence to start playing in under 8s.

I can also remember dad talking to a teacher at school who then coaxed me to join the school cricket team. I was not pleased about dad's influence in this way, but I was also keen to please my teachers, so I joined in the school team cricket practice. Mum did not seem to want to shape me, but I could feel Dad's presence in the background forming and guiding. After my reticence to play organized team sport, thanks to Dad's encouragement I would start to love it. I would leave home early before school to be able to get a good game of cricket or soccer in before the bell rang. Sometimes I would be there so early I had to wait for ages for others to turn up before any game got started.

Once we started playing inter school sport, my father would take time off work to drive kids to other schools. He loved watching me play, particularly soccer and would get very excited on the sidelines running up and down with the action. I felt a pride that my father was there and so interested in what I was doing. I felt my Dad was special in comparisons to the other dads who seemed absent. He made me feel special.

The Petries and sport

My friend Scott's father Keith Petrie was his coach for weekend club soccer. After one year playing for the 8b's I was promoted to the 9A team because (I think) of my friendship with Scott and not my skill. Unlike today where clubs are encouraged to make sure all kids get a go, I hardly played a game in under 9s mainly being a reserve. I would slowly get better and keener to do well. If I had stayed in the b team it unlikely I would have got as good at the game. It raises the question of how many kids miss out on pursuing their talent as they are not picked to be in the stronger competition. I felt at the time that I was unworthy of the promotion. I knew other kids in the 8b's were better than me. I felt the injustice of this and the shame of being the beneficiary of this privilege. This was a first lesson and experience of the adage that 'it's who you know, not what you know'.





Dad would become the manager of the team. He later joined the club committee and got involved in working bees to improve the facilities and so on. This was an early example for me about playing a part, and contributing to community institutions. I could see other fathers not putting their hands up for jobs. I knew he was doing more not just for my benefit but as part of the community. Dad also joined the local Lions club about this time. Even at this age I was proud of my dad for his commitment to me and the wider community.

Playing sport and winning now became key features of my life. I would become part of strategy discussions with Scott and his father. If school taught me about hierarchy, sport taught me about competition. Scott was far more competitive than me but I would emulate his passion and I would start to see our suburb as the best and to be aggrieved by bad umpire decisions that did not go our way. With soccer I started to really begin to understand about team work, about moving in to space to make it easier for the person with the ball to deliver a good pass. It involved sometimes making that extra effort to look after your team mate even though you were already puffed.

I also learned that getting to the ball first could make a huge difference and this involved taking risks of physical collisions with the opposition. Going in to these collisions confidently helped to prevent injury (so we were told) and it also had an intimidating effect on the opposition players leading them to hesitate and hold back. This attitude did not come naturally to me but my passion for playing the game meant I started to employ this attitude and I could see the benefits I got of gaining control of the ball first. While I was not a fast runner or particularly skilful, I did have a good ability to see spaces and move to them and to see spaces for others. This space awareness meant I was good at delivering a pass for the forwards to run on to. This with my willingness to go in hard on the tackles and collisions made me a good soccer player as a junior and by under 10s I was playing regularly and no longer sitting on the bench as a reserve. By the end of under 12s Scott was still far and away our best player but I was getting referred to as the next best player.

So from the shy 5 year old I had become a competitive, assertive engaged 10 year old. Born in December, I was a year young than some of the others in my class or team and I was generally the smallest as well, but I now understood





from my dad, my friend Scott and his father what would be required to climb the hierarchy. Everyone wanted to be “king of the castle”. I guess I did to.

Contrary influences

While winning was the goal of competition, my family provided a challenge to this value. Mum was a supporter of the underdog and also did not like to be seen as lesser than others. These two things together could create some odd responses. In the company of new people her social anxiety could lead her to be a bit defensive and a fear of being looked down upon could lead her to often sound like a bit of a snob as she would often boast about somethings to keep up with whatever the new person was relaying about their life. The attempt to “keep up with the Jones” always felt a bit odd and not really a reflection of my mum. In fact, my dad and sisters would often rib her by calling her a snob. Even as a small child intuitively I could recognize the snobbery as a contradiction and a product of her nervousness rather than something she wanted to be like. It also showed that we might behave very differently to how we see ourselves on occasions, but that consistency and congruence is a good thing.

As a little kid I picked up from these family interactions that being a snob was not good. My family seemed to embrace equality and mateship. Support for the underdog seemed to be a shared family value and it left a strong imprint on me. I could feel a sense of family identity around this that made us different to many of my friends and their families. We were not underdogs ourselves, we saw ourselves as special, as achievers, but also people who might want to help others achieve. A desire for winning and supporting the underdog (the losers) do seem to contradict each other and over time my support for the underdog would strengthen compared to the goal to be on top.

Part C - Other influences at this time

Friends

My two best friends in primary school were Scott Petrie and Greg Dall. They were both bold confident, smart kids who were very good at sport and most importantly they were good at making friends and attracted other kids around them. Scott was my best friend from about the age of 4 and Greg came in grade 3. They both lived on my neighbourhood block and so proximity and walking





home together overcame my shyness. Geography made us friends. (The power of geography socially will continue throughout my life.)

Their parents also became my parents' friends, so cementing the connection. Had our parents picked us in cars from school perhaps I could have missed out on the same sort of friendship. I feel I was very lucky here, I learnt a lot from their confidence. I looked up to both of them. I would emulate or copy the way they did things and the way they related to others. Greg returned to Victoria in grade 11, but Scott stayed a friend with lots of contact till the end of Uni. While he went to Brisbane Grammar School and I went to a State school, we played soccer and cricket on weekends together and tennis socially on school holidays. We hung out a lot together. I eventually stopped running home when his parents came out side and his parents became like second parents. I learn a lot from them also. They were different to mine and so offered alternative ways of seeing things.

Greg was the new kid in the class and I noticed how he quickly made friends with others. He had lots of jokes to tell when he first arrived which always attracted a crowd. Interestingly Scott and Greg initially clashed, they were both natural leaders and on one occasion a punch up ensued with each having their supporters behind them. Later they would become good friends, which was very good for me as for a while I was stuck in the middle. As the 3 of us became best buddies I think in a way I rode on their coat tails to the top of the power hierarchy within the broader friendship group. Being a 2 IC I think is a role I have often gravitated to throughout my life.

Mum

While Dad played an increasing role in my activities outside the home, my Mum on the other hand was the keeper of the inside world and someone who I still spent the most time with.

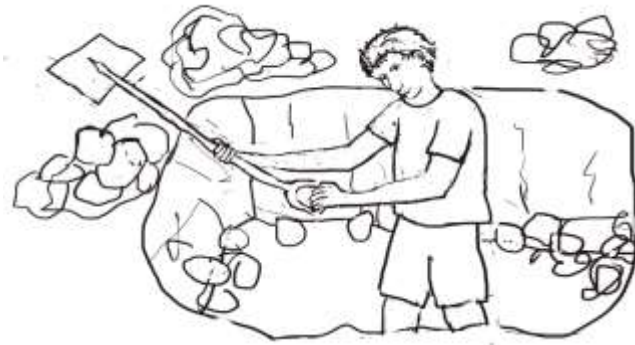
I don't remember ever being particularly praised by mum, but she definitely was never negative in any way. I never felt I had to do something to make her proud, she was always supportive of her children no matter how good we were at something. While my father used praise to steer us in certain directions, mum was happy with whatever direction we went in. By not using praise Mum





allowed us a freedom to find our own interests. This is very different to my own parenting style and I wish I had realized the value of her approach earlier.

Mum did not play with me and mostly just let me do my own thing. I loved digging big holes in the back yard which I am sure other parents would not have allowed. Some of my holes were deep and big. One rainy night mum informed dad on his return from work that I had dug another hole and he somewhat



angrily march down the back to inspect and fell in, what was now a watery pit. Everyone (including dad eventually) thought this was hilarious, so more holes followed. In digging a new hole I chopped my toe with a spade and had to be taken to the doctor for repairs but

I was not perturbed and just was more careful in future excavations. I also enjoyed playing in the sandpit making dams and water courses. I was regularly covered in dirt and mud. Later at friend's birthday parties, when someone asked mum who was her child was, she simply had to point to the one covered in the most dirt. She was not embarrassed by her shy grubby child, she let me be.

TV

While family, school, and sport became key features of my socialization, the newly invented TV also had a huge influence bringing in cultural mores from the wider society. While family are clearly so very influential in our formation as people, we grow up in a wider culture which also structures what we think and how we behave. The culture makes us in to the sort of people the culture wants to have within it. This wider culture fortunately in not homogeneous. There is much diversity and the bits we are attracted to say a lot about us and also play a part especially for a young person in forming the sort of person we want to be. Various cultural stories provide heroes to be emulated. TV was a relatively new invention but it quickly became a key way of telling these cultural stories

So a reflection on the fictional and non-fictional characters that I was attracted to growing up must say something about me. Many cultures have stories about





various characters which are part of the process of moulding us in to good citizens. Which characters was I attracted to? I have often thought that our personality or who we are is really just a reflection of the composite of all the relationships we have to people and the things around us. One way to tell part of my story is to write about all the people who I have been attracted to or liked connected with.



Superman - Superman is obviously a hero for lots of kids. My superman stories came from the early TV series. I would fly around back yard after watching the show. I was attracted to his strength. One day after a show I climbed a tree and fell down unable to breath after winding myself. In that moment I think I had the awful realization that I was not actually a superman. To be indestructible like him would have been very

comforting. Maybe for a shy, scared kid the idea that you could change in phone box and become a superhero was aspirational.

Superman was very admirable not only because he used his super powers for the good of others, he was also not boastful or arrogant. This is what we were all meant to be like. Living a double life as Clark Kent who is just a good friend to those around him was curious. Why did he need to protect his true identity? A need to connect to people to have friends without them knowing his powers was instructive to me. You did not need accolades to do the right thing.



Prince planet -I know this character was influential but it is harder to recount as his story has not survived as strongly in current popular culture. He was a young boy and so it was easier to identify with him I guess. Maybe it was more to do with the fact that he had a pendant that could give him superpowers. I could not be superman but maybe if I had a pendent I could be a hero like him. I remember a key adversary of his was some sort of giant, and so this cartoon series was always a bit of a

David and Goliath type story. The underdog, the small person, could come out on top. This is the basis of all revolutionary thinking, the poor or oppressed will



inevitable rise up and this is a good thing. Another similar cartoon, Astro boy also helped sow these seeds in me



Zorro - I Loved the Zorro TV series. When I was about 6, I was given a much loved present which was a sword which had a piece of chalk at the end for a Christmas present, so I could write Zs everywhere like Zorro. Again he like superman did the right thing for others from a secret base. This was different however. He had no superpowers just his wit and skill. So when he was in danger it was very scary and more real in this sense. I can remember watching in fear from behind a chair in some scenes. I wished I could be like superman but it was a clear fantasy. To be more like Zorro or Robin Hood was a possibility.

The moments of the most memorable suspense from the Zorro TV show was when his identity was almost revealed to the bad guys. Why is this so important? Why is the secret identity so important to these stories, when in today's society being the centre of attention is a much stronger objective?

Zorro was part of affluent society, his struggle was more about freedom and challenging oppressive authority. My next hero was similarly inspired but also fought for the poor against the rich. In this way Zorro was perhaps a hero for the budding small L liberal while Robin Hood was more a hero for the young socialists.



Robin Hood - Robin Hood was a real favourite and I think the most influential of my TV heroes. Being a skilled archer and fighter was appealing, but what really stuck in my mind was the explicit agenda of taking from the rich and giving to the poor. I think this greatly contributed to my adolescent socialist/communist sympathies.



Robin Hood lived at the edge of the society in the woods, with a band of fellow travellers. It's the first inkling for me of a communal society or living. It was also very simple living in contrast to the excesses of the rich. Further, they were a joyous lot of outlaws. Everyone else both rich and poor seemed trapped in a very depressing, dirty, dark society. So this TV series help create the idea that to be on the edge was good. Despite his simple lifestyle the beautiful rich girl still loved him. This all made a simple communal lifestyle look very desirable.

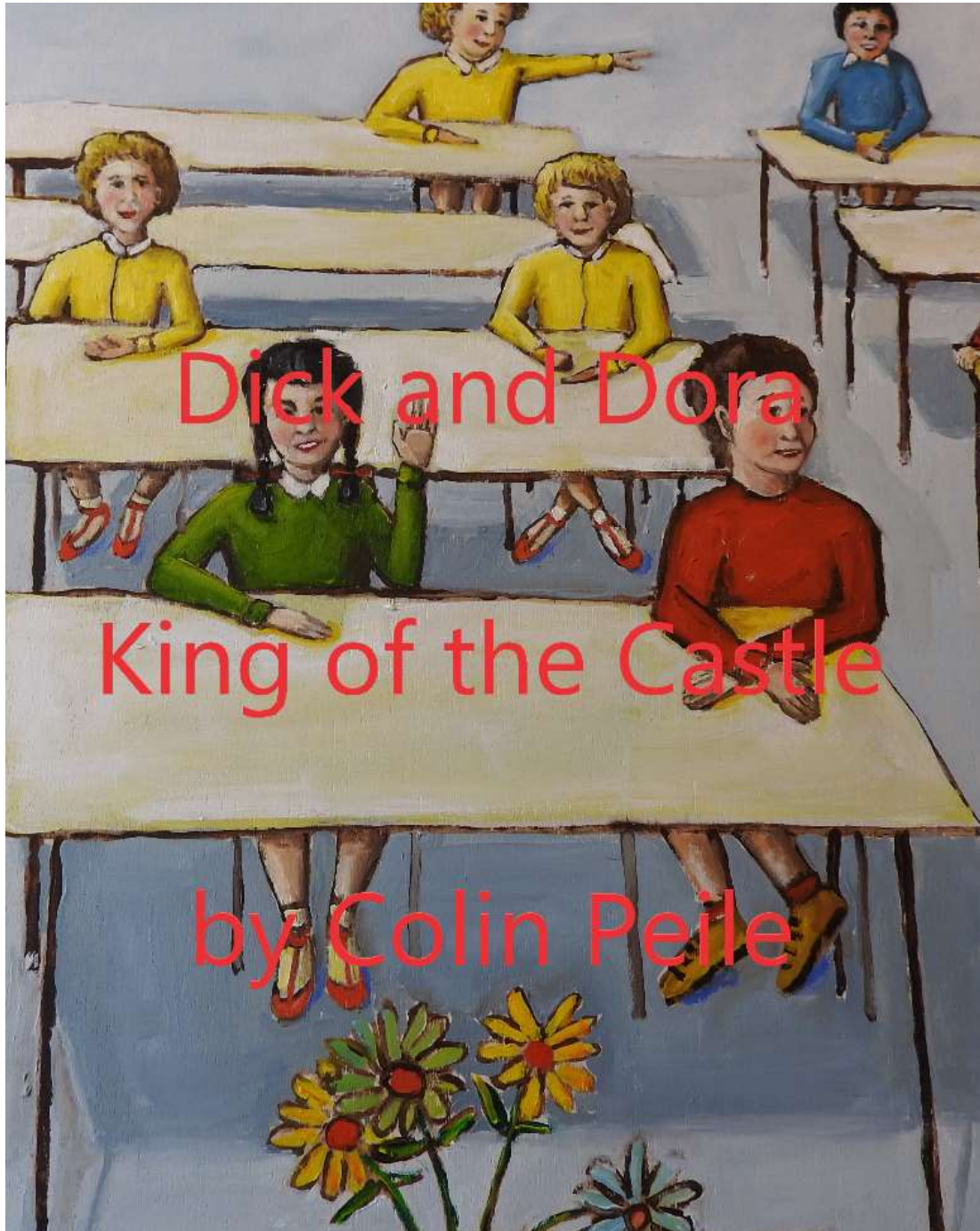
He had no super powers. He had tremendous skill as an archer, but it was a skill that could be learnt. Here was someone who was a more realistic proposition to emulate. Also he wasn't just a lone hero but rather part of a team, a community. Working with others for change was implicit in his stories. The fact that Friar tuck (as a religious man) was involved and also gave a legitimacy to being an outlaw and to fight against the evil government. Rebellion against the state could be moral and desirable.





Part C

Dick and Dora - King of the Castle





One Day at school the teacher went home sick. Dick decided to have some fun while there was no teacher there.

Dick organized Jill, James and Dora to put there desks on top of each other



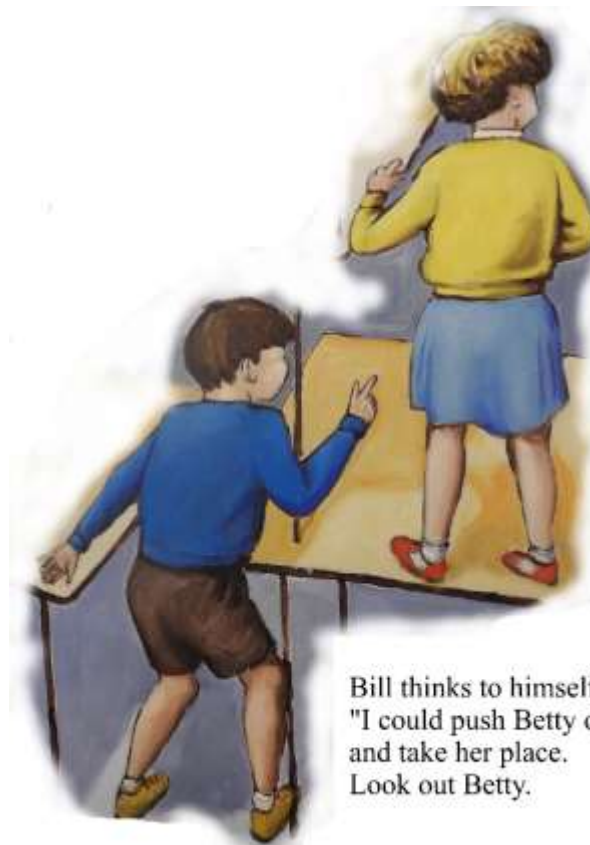
Dick then climbed on top and yelled "I am king of the castle"

"Not for long" said Jack, as he grabbed Dick's leg



Dora is trying to stop James getting up. "Help me Dick", she says as she pushes down on James's head.

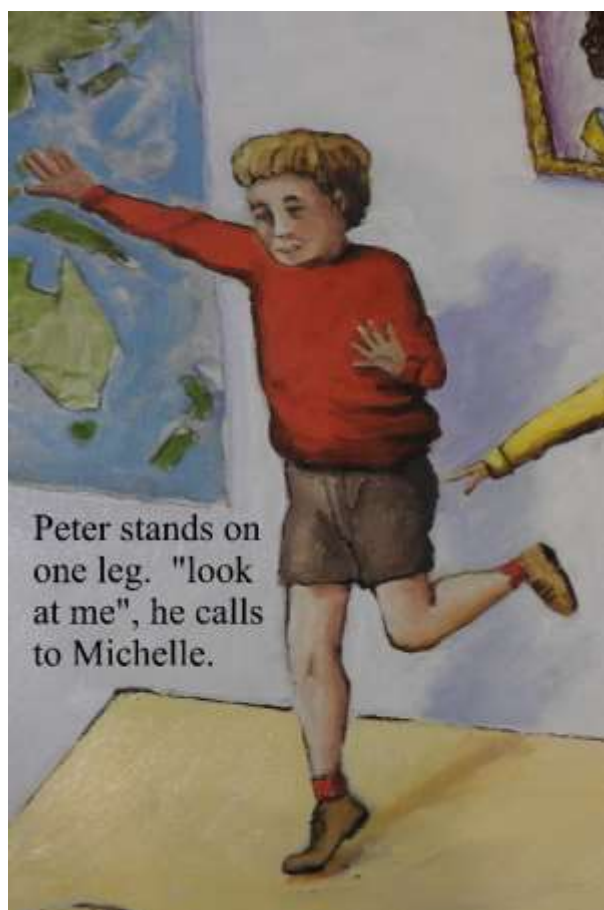




Bill thinks to himself,
"I could push Betty off
and take her place.
Look out Betty."



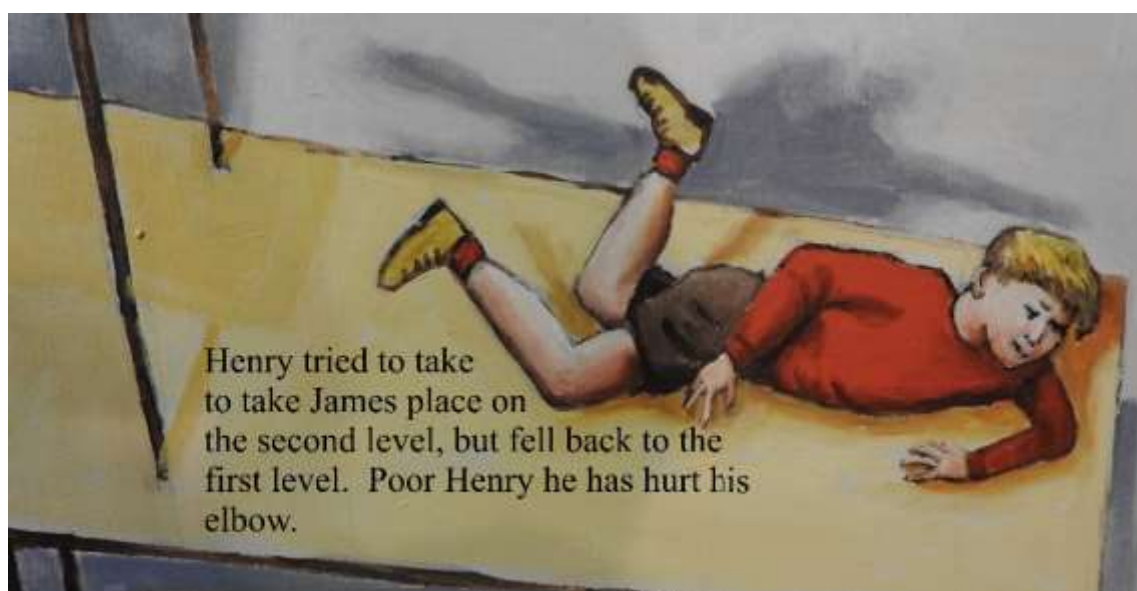
Some children do not want to
join in the game. Michelle
looks out the window. She
thinks she would like to live
in the little white house



Peter stands on one leg. "look at me", he calls to Michelle.

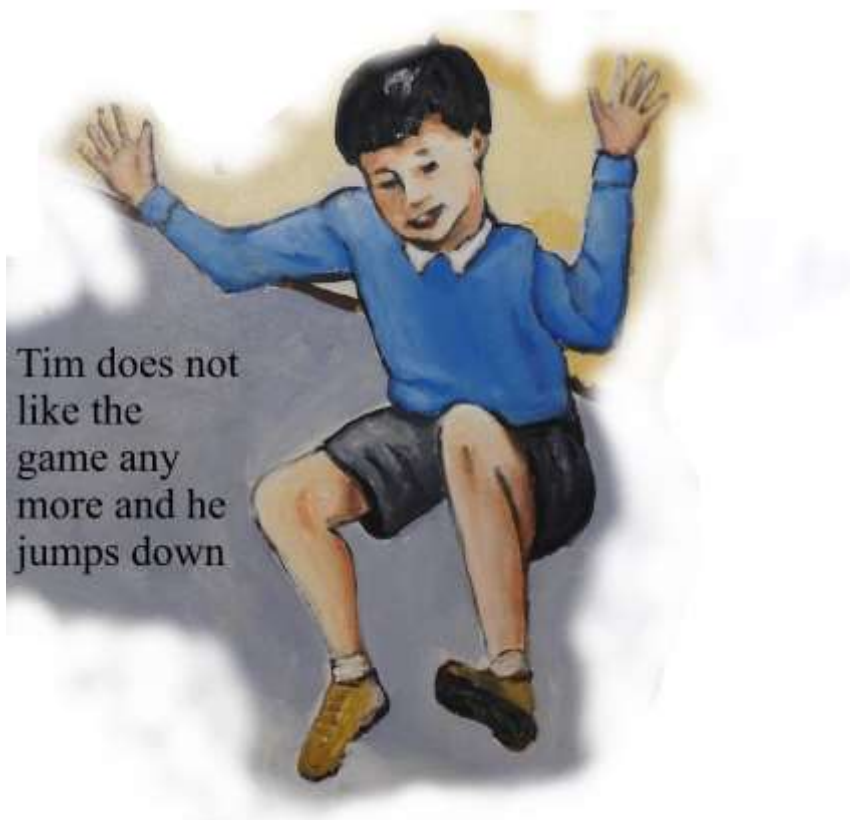


Peter tries to get the ball off Bruce. Its my ball, give it back yells Peter.
"Finders keepers" says Bruce as he struggles to hang on.





Jenny tried to climb up but slipped and screams out as she falls. Its going to hurt when she hits the floor



Tim does not like the game any more and he jumps down



The End



Conclusion

So over these primary years I changed a great deal. I remained shy, but I learnt how to put this aside and be more outgoing. I was being moulded in to a productive, law abiding responsible member of the community via learning from Family, friends, school, sport and TV. I was learning about my position in the class and the status that goes with this. I was learning hard work would be rewarded. I was now coming near top of my class and starting to believe I could be good at anything. I was initially very poor at school and sport but over a few years this turned around. This created a new sense of confidence. While winning was desirable I was also becoming a supporter of the underdog. I myself started school as an underdog and I knew first hand things could change.

Building on the child's sense of connection to family, in these primary school years there is a strong push to get children to think and act on behalf of the whole community, to become good 'citizens'. This has been used by the state to also prepare young people for war, to become soldiers to protect their families and community. On a more positive note, children are being encouraged to see themselves as part of the community, and to do things for the common good. Children are learning about mutual interdependent relationships between people and between people and the environment. At the same time the seeds of a more individualistic ambition and purpose are sown by grading students and rewarding the best and brightest and the fast and strong. High school will tend and nurture this individualistic ambition.

The tension between on one hand community and co-operation and on the other hand individualism and competition has begun.

VS

