

Editorial

The first four papers included in this edition of IJEIEC were keynote presentations at The Centre for Equity and Innovation in Early Childhood's (CEIEC) 6th Annual Conference *Honouring the Child, Honouring Equity, Cultures, Challenges and Change in Troubling Times*. A key focus driving this conference was an exploration of the place of children's rights, human rights and equity throughout the early childhood and children's services field – including pedagogies, practices, programmes, policies, theories and research. The central questions underlying this exploration included:

- What troubles us and what should we trouble to honour children's rights and equity?
- How can/do we act as change agents in our local contexts to make a difference?
- What are the limits and the possibilities in working for equity in diverse cultural contexts?
- What do we need to rethink and/or do differently to construct safer and fairer lives for all children?

- How do/should we work with cultural dissensions and tensions?
- How can we know the world differently in order to transform it?

The four keynote speakers – Lilian Holt, Bill Parker, Peter Moss and Radhika Viruru rose to these challenges in a variety of ways. **Lilian Holt** drew on her life experiences as an Aboriginal Australian and her interest in the human condition to explore how we can act as change agents in the current political climate to advance an agenda of reconciliation and respect for diverse cultures. In her paper she highlights the 5 H's- History, Honesty, Humanity, Humour and Hope – as essential ingredients for building respectful relationships in the spirit of reconciliation. An interrogation of whiteness, she argues, is critical to building understandings of the dimensions of disconnectedness, connectedness and diminishment underlying relationships and re-creating an honest and humane process of reconciliation.

Bill Parker drew on his experiences of childhood and his professional roles as Principal of a Secondary School and Superintendent of Schools in and Services in Whyalla, South Australia, to tell a story of “how the children from the Baxter Detention Centre came to attend our schools”. As his story unfolds he highlights the ways in which the children in the Baxter Detention Centre inspired him to negotiate and fight the broader political, social and economic agendas that sought to silence and sideline these children’s right to attend the local school.

Peter Moss argued the importance of drawing on post-foundational theories to pursue social justice in early childhood education. In his paper he explores the ways in which these theories can foreground the values of multiplicity, dialogue and democracy and advance an agenda of political and ethical practice. Such an approach he asserts can create new possibilities for challenging the positivism, modernity and managerialism that governs early childhood education.

Radhika Viruru drew on the concept of resistance underlying postcolonial theory to highlight what form of freedom it seeks to move towards and the implications this has within international early childhood contexts. She invites the reader to explore how young children as a colonised group might conceptualise resistance and envisage freedom.

These papers are supported by four articles. **Kylie Smith** examines how different forms of observational and assessment formats can assist early childhood teachers to create fairer and more equitable ways of giving children voice in their classroom practices. She highlights the ways in which different

theorisations of children can create multiple possibilities for viewing children and interpreting their experiences and worlds. **Veronica Pacini-Ketchabaw** uses anti-racist and transnational feminist frameworks to analyse the narratives of migrant women using forms of childcare for their young children in British Columbia, Canada. In so doing she highlights the ways in which discourses on childcare and migration are deeply embedded in ‘multicultural liberal ideological principles’ and argues for a more transformative and critically reflective approach to the issues of migration.

Lisbeth Pike, Alan Campbell, Paul Murphy and Michelle Tolson outline findings from interviews with children who participated in individual and group counselling sessions at Anglicare (Western Australia) following parental separation. The program, called Change Wizards, reflects a paradigm reconsidering the place of children’s voices and participation in decisions that directly affect them. The children who participated in the study suggested that the overarching consideration for practitioners must be to provide children with an environment where they can feel heard, safe and respected. In the final paper, **Bob Perry, Terry Mason, Sue Dockett and Tracey Simpson** present key findings of their two year project, undertaken by a team of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal researchers, concerning ‘what might be done to make transitions to primary school as successful as possible for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and their families’. By identifying a number of different practices they highlight the ways in which different community issues will impact on children’s transition to school. They

underscore the importance of developing respectful relationships and protocols between all the stakeholders involved to build diverse practices that support the successful transition to school for Aboriginal and Torres Torres Strait Islander children.

These papers collectively are a powerful testament to the power of narrative and theory in troubling the early childhood landscape. By focusing on what troubles us - the tensions and challenges that we face in our work across diverse contexts and settings - we can begin to explore and build new possibilities for honouring children in more equitable and respectful ways.

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