

2008 Radford Lecturer

The Globe, the Unconscious, and the Child

Professor Bernadette Baker

Professor, School of Education, the Center for Global Studies, and the Holtz Center for Science and Technology Studies at the University of Wisconsin, USA.

Professor Baker's research has examined shifting analytics of power in political philosophy, inscriptions of the child within prescriptions for child rearing, and the conceptualisation of change in canonized anglophone texts (*In Perpetual Motion: Theories of Power, Educational History, and the Child*). She has also edited with Katy Heyning *Dangerous Coagulations: The Uses of Foucault in the Study of Education* and has forthcoming with Sense Publishers an edited volume titled *New Curriculum History*. She has published widely in educational philosophy, educational history, and curriculum studies.

The Globe, the Unconscious, and the Child

This presentation examines world-forming strategies, their implications for ontological inscriptions in democratic settings, and the nature of educational work performed on and with the child at the classroom level. Drawing historically on theories of globality and postcolonialism, of mind and unconsciousness studies, and of child development it elaborates how particular parameters and foci were formed, affirmed, and elided in the constitution of an educational field. Through the specificity of concerns expressed at the turn of the 20th century, the analysis offers new ways of reapproaching and rephrasing debates about sustainability, community and belonging in the 21st.

AARE President's Address



Professor Noel Gough

No Country for Young People? Anxieties in Australian education

Foundation Professor of Outdoor and Environmental Education and Director of the Centre for Excellence in Outdoor and Environmental Education Latrobe University, Victoria, Australia.

Professor Gough's teaching, research and publications focus on research methodology and curriculum studies, with particular reference to environmental education, science education, internationalisation and globalisation. In 1997 he was awarded the inaugural Australian Museum Eureka Prize for Environmental Education Research. He is the author or editor of five books, including *Curriculum Visions* (2002) and *Internationalisation and Globalisation in Mathematics and Science Education* (2007), and has published more than 100 book chapters and articles in scholarly journals. He is a current editor of *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry*, the journal of the International Association for the Advancement of Curriculum Studies.

No Country for Young People? Anxieties in Australian education

No Country for Old Men is a 2007 crime thriller movie that tells the story of a botched drug deal and the violent cat-and-mouse drama that ensues as the protagonists crisscross each other's paths in the desert landscape of 1980 West Texas.

No Country for Young People is not a crime thriller, although it includes an accusation of criminality and lashings of symbolic violence. It's a story of botched educational ideals and the political melodramas that ensue as multiple stakeholders crisscross each other's paths in the educational policy landscape of 21st century Australia. But beyond this slightly stretched comparison, *No Country for Young People* is primarily a meditation on contemporary anxieties in Australian education. It is partly inspired by Peter Pierce's 1999 monograph, *The Country of Lost Children*, in which he portrays Australia as a place where the innocent young are most especially in jeopardy. In 19th century literature and art, the recurring motif of a child lost in 'the bush' became an increasingly significant dimension of European settlers' experiences of Australia, whereas the

latter half of the 20th century saw analogous cultural narratives shift towards urban environments and the plight of young people abandoned or endangered by their parents' generation.

In contemporary popular culture, Australia's late industrial cities and suburbs are places where children are aborted, abandoned, murdered or never conceived, and in which many adults and social institutions – through neglect or deliberate intention – are dedicated to their ruin. In life

these young people are prey to parental abuse, prowling paedophiles, Internet porn peddlers, religious sects, and serial killers, and in death they become raw material for sensationalising community fears through media-driven and/or politically motivated moral panics. Like the bush-lost children before them, these 'at risk' young people symbolise adult fears of self, society, and the future, but now they also attract more obscure anxieties. Characters worry about whether their children have a future in Australia, sometimes asking if succeeding generations should be brought into being at all. Doom-laden scenarios concerning global warming, food and energy security, and other aspects of Australia's social, economic and environmental sustainability exacerbate such fears.

My concern is that the most common public policy response to these persistent fears and insecurities is to retreat to a *politics of complexity reduction*. Many politicians and public opinion leaders see teachers and schools (aided and abetted by trendy intellectuals and postmodernist academics) as being in the vanguard of people and institutions dedicated to Australian children's educational ruin, and simplistically seek to 'protect' them with blunt instruments such as back-to-phonics literacy and a national curriculum. I will argue that Australia's young people are much more seriously endangered by the symbolic violence of those who position them as docile receptors of whatever schools and teachers serve up to them, and who treat them as passive screens upon which to project their own anxieties about their location in place/space and time.

Changing climates: a growing national perspective on education in Australia



Professor Barry McGaw

Director, Melbourne Education Research Institute (MERI), University of Melbourne, Australia.

Formerly Director for Education in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) based in Paris, Professor McGaw has also served as Executive Director of the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Professor McGaw has a distinguished research record in educational measurement and learning, and extensive experience in curriculum development and assessment management in the upper secondary years. He has chaired or been a member of government committees in Australia, England, Canada and Ireland. In 2000, Professor McGaw was a key figure in the development of the OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which measures the reading, mathematics and scientific skills of 250,000 students from 32 countries. The research also explored the significance of school structure and approaches to ensuring school success.

Changing climates: a growing national perspective on education in Australia

Globalisation has increased the level of interest in international comparisons in education as it has in many other domains. This interest, however, is not new. In the 1970s, the Karmel Committee used international comparisons of levels of expenditure to support the move to increase funding for school education in Australia from the Commonwealth Government. The contemporary interest in international comparisons has retained a focus on inputs but, as in many national discussions, has added a strong focus on outcomes. The need to do this is underscored by the international evidence that the relationship between levels of expenditure and quality of outcomes is relatively weak. The interest in outcomes has also been sharpened by evidence of the importance of education to national economic wellbeing. This presentation will examine the evidence on the relationship between education and the economy, including the mediating role of productivity, using both quantitative and qualitative measures of education. It will present the most recent international comparative evidence on educational quality and examine some of the important relationships between quality and student, school and system characteristics. The presentation will situate the

current developments of a national curriculum for Australia in the discussion of economic development and also broader conceptions of wellbeing. It will examine the current national curriculum development strategies in the light of these considerations.

Research approaches to the academic preparation and support of Australian Indigenous students for higher education studies



Professor Martin Nakata

Director of Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning & Chair of Australian Indigenous Education, University of Technology, Sydney, Australia.

Professor Nakata has spent many years exploring the knowledge interface between Western disciplines and Australian Indigenous people to find a way to think about Indigenous education beyond the 'cultural difference' agenda. His book, *Disciplining the Savages - Savaging the disciplines*, which draws on some of this work, has recently been published by Aboriginal Studies Press.

Research approaches to the academic preparation and support of Australian Indigenous students for higher education studies

Professor Nakata's Keynote Address will explore how the academic performance of Indigenous students has been investigated in the higher education sector and where this fits within the academic support context, and teaching and learning developments in Australian universities. He will suggest an approach to Indigenous academic skills support that equips Indigenous students with tools for managing their engagements with the content of Western disciplines, and then call for more focussed research around Indigenous students' approaches to processing intellectual content while developing their own Indigenous standpoints.