

“How Come Australians Are White”: Children’s Voice and Adults’ Silence

Prasanna Srinivasan

That is to say there may be ‘knowledge’ of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning. ... Of course this technology is diffuse, rarely formulated in continuous, systematic discourse; it is often made up of bits and pieces; it implements a disparate set of tools and methods. ... Moreover, it cannot be localized in a particular type of institution or state apparatus. (Foucault, 1977, p. 16)

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the resonance of nationalistic language in children’s everyday narratives exchanged in early childhood settings. Children as national subjects is a concept that is less explored especially within Australian early childhood settings, with a few exceptions (see MacNaughton 2001; MacNaughton and Davis 2001, 2009; Skattebol 2005). These works particularly reveal how young children use “race” and “colour” to classify the national subject as “Australian” and the “not Australian,” the outsider. I use some of the narratives from my doctoral thesis to introduce such “race”-based nationalism in children’s voices. Through these narratives, I highlight how the ownership of national identity is not available for all children, and its impact on the identities of those children who are “brown.” In the second part of the chapter I further the inquiry to the discourses of the early childhood educators (ECE) who supported and covertly fuelled children’s “race”-based nationalism. I particularly draw upon postcolonial and critical race theories to engage with and challenge these discourses, and to outline some of the counter discourses that can be made available for these educators.

TAINTED BY “WHITENESS”: NATIONAL CONCEPTION

This nation called Australia is a colonial conception borne out of the colonization of indigenous spaces. In Australia, early colonizers not just claimed ownership of the space, but also politically governed the nation with overt political discourses that legitimized its “whitening.” By “whitening,” I mean the overt imposition of colonial conceptions of cultural and political systems that aimed to subjectify and to subjugate individuals and groups with nation and national identity. Although one can argue that Australia, as a multicultural nation, has come out of the clutches of colonization, the colonial conceptions of nation and national subjects have become meaningful entities that define and influence one’s identity behaviors. And, these nationalistic concepts were originally attached to not just nation-building, but also to building a “white nation” (Hage 2000, 18–19). The aim of the “White Australia Policy” (1901) was to create, protect, and maintain the national identity of Australia and Australians with overt policies that kept its borders closed for those who were not from “white Anglo-Saxon” or “white Anglo-Celtic” heritage. Moreover, this overt political “whitening” also resulted in the erasure of “black” presence, the original owners of this land from whom this space was forcefully clenched to create this nation, Australia. As stressed by many authors, national identities have become the daily colloquial realities not just in Australia, but also in many modern-day societies (Taylor 2004, 17–21; Appadurai 2006, 4–8). Hence, with nation and national identity, the colonial conceptions undeniably becoming daily realities, the then conceptualized national subject, the “white Australian,” too, has become a part of everyday discourses of many individuals’ thinking, being, and belonging within Australia, the nation. The demise of the White Australia Policy in the early 1970s has done very little in erasing the association of Australia’s national subject with “whiteness.” With the historical images of “white Australian” conceptualized through “whitening,” many who are naturally “white” still claim and cling to the ownership of this national identity, and thereby create a hierarchy of being and belonging as “Australian” and “not Australian.” This causes specific tensions and poses a threat to social harmony, especially in a society that is becoming more and more heterogeneous culturally, religiously, and most of all “racially.”

The political institutions of Australia are very aware of this complexity and have repeatedly strived to aspire for social cohesion, especially with educational policies. Since the advent of multiculturalism in Australia with the political demise of the White Australia Policy, educational policies have been developed to build a society that aspired for national unity along with the maintenance of diversity. Many authors believe

that such multicultural educational policies have been about studying the "other," the cultures of Aboriginals and migrants with the "white Anglo-Australian" as the national subject in the middle (Aveling 2002, 120; Leeman and Reid 2006, 62). These policies underline respect and acceptance for diversity, and at the same time come back to epitomizing the identity of the nation and the national subject to extract commitment toward these identities from all Australians. It is this desire for national integration, which seems to stem from the fear of diversity that fuels and maintains strong nationalistic aspirations in national subjects (Srinivasan 2014, 12–14). Thus, the juxtaposed phenomenon that this presents has tested Australia's social and national cohesion time and time again (e.g., racism against Aboriginal Australians, Cronulla riots, violence against international students, and even recent bouts of individual racism against those seen as outsiders). These incidents were repeatedly based on defining "whiteness" as "Australian," the national subject, and "brownness/blackness" as outsiders or "not Australian." Hence, both the "Australian" and "not Australian" subjects in their day-to-day life still conceptualize this Australian identity in a concrete form with specific attributes, and thereby repeatedly compare and contrast individuals and groups against these characteristics.

Young children are not outside this nationalistic discourse, which is tainted with whiteness. Even the current *Early Years Learning Framework* (Commonwealth of Australia 2009) uses nationalistic language, as it highlights the basis of this framework by quoting Goal 2 from the *Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australian* (Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs [MCEETYA] 2008). This goal (MCEETYA 2008, 8–9) specifically outlines what all young Australians, the national subjects, should become, and thus legitimizes the educators' aspirations for developing national subjects within early childhood settings. With educators being and becoming committed to the development of "Australian," they also simultaneously and unconsciously developed the "not Australian" subject, as Stuart Hall (2003, 72–73) contends: the creation of a subject with particular attributes always results in the creation and elimination of an oppositional subject without those designated attributes.

DID I WANT TO TALK ABOUT "BLACK/WHITE": MY NATIONAL CONTEMPLATION

I did not plan to talk about "race" and its role in categorizing "Australian/not Australian" in my thesis, but the narratives "spoke color." I originally aspired to inquire the contradictions of practicing multiculturalism within discourses of nationalism in early childhood

settings. Hence, I engaged in participatory action research (Martin, Hunter, and McLaren 2006, 179; MacNaughton and Hughes 2009, 49–54) in two early childhood settings. I conducted my participatory action research in two long daycare settings that educationally cared for children below one to five years of age. The children, families, and educators in these centers were ethnolinguistically and religiously from varied backgrounds, including “white Anglo-Australian.” I wanted to explore how and whose cultures were being named and enacted in these spaces, and I especially wanted to engage with the voices of children and families, who shared my ethnolinguistic background. Hence, these centers, with four to five children and families from the Indian subcontinent, seemed highly appropriate to explore my research topic, and I planned to immerse myself with the physical, social, and metaphysical environment two days a week in each of these settings for six to eight months. However, one center withdrew after the first two months and I continued with the other one till the end of my research journey. Due to my postcolonial partialities, my research project was named as “Contesting identities in othered voices,” and as I embarked on my project I was critiquing my own postcolonial lens and yet, I could not relinquish the postcolonial in me. As a theoretical and philosophical body of knowledge, postcolonialism identifies and challenges the colonial discourses of “othering” (Said 1978, 45–46) that were used to classify and categorize the colonized in comparison to who the colonizers were. Edward Said (1978, 40, 140–149) meticulously outlines the colonial discourses with which the colonizers created binaries of “us” and “them” to establish the superior “self” (Us, the colonizers) and the inferior “other” (Them, the colonized). When I embarked on this inquiry I was conscious of my postcolonial subjectivity that repeatedly surfaced, analyzed, and categorized interactions that I perceived as colonial acts of “othering.” Authors such as Anshuman Prasad (2004, 7) highlight how earlier works on postcolonialism were critiqued for engaging in the use of the very same binary language that these theories challenged, and therefore I quelled the postcolonial in me that had the propensity to classify and categorize our identity exchanges. However, as my inquiry progressed, the binary language with which children and adults classified self and others became central, and they categorized using whiteness to mark who was Australian and not Australian. I gave myself permission to allow my postcolonial self to raise and make meaning of our interactions. I realized that we were all dominated and colonized by whiteness, which dictated our daily subjective realities, our voices, and our silences (Srinivasan 2014, 144–148). Hence, I combined postcolonial and critical race theory (Frankenberg

1993) to speak with this unspoken element that consumes our daily thoughts and actions. In children's and adults' interactions whiteness was "normalized" (Frankenberg 1993, 14–20, 140–149), and, in this case, nationalized to establish this as the primary and yet undefinable attribute of the national subject, Australian.

Throughout my action research inquiry, children's nationalistic interactions or "color speaks" used in classifying the national subject and the outsider kindled and maintained the desire for whiteness in young brown children. My postcolonial subjectivity erupted and prompted me to respond and react to challenge those categorizing voices. Yet, I allowed to be silenced, and I did not share my postcolonial interpretations with the ECE at that time of my action research inquiry. In the following I share a few of those whiteness tainted nationalistic narratives to trouble the nuanced silences and voices of educators with whom I conducted my inquiry.

My first day at these settings began with "brown" children's open "color speaks" that detested their "brownness" to desire "whiteness." Within the first few weeks, "white Anglo-Australian" children categorized "self" as "white" and "Australian," and the "other," "black/brown" children and adults as "not Australian." It is not that those children who were "brown" did not contend this exclusion; they vehemently tried to argue that they were born in Australia and therefore are "Australians." Due to the repeated continued denial of this national identity for them by those children who named "self" as "Australian," they succumbed to identify themselves as "white." So strong was this urge to claim the national identity, that from *being* "brown," they were "whitened" to *become* "white." ECE who were around allowed children's "race"-based categorization to continue with strategic voices and silences. Their nationalistic fervor was expressed strongly and vociferously, supported with discursive strategies that justified their emotional investment in maintaining the identity of the "white Australian." My subjective experiences of the past that I endured due to my "brownness" in Australia surfaced, as I armed myself to "color" that "white Australian" with vociferous children and silencing "white Anglo-Australian" educators. However, my attempts were repeatedly negated very skilfully by those educators. These educators saw themselves as "just Australian" and therefore vehemently rejected my attempts to designate a hyphenated identity for them. I am equally guilty of engaging in silent practices, as I did choose silence to save my study, in which I had invested much of my time, resources, and emotions. I could not risk losing all of these with my postcolonial quest to "color" and taint the nation and its identity.

PICKING UP THE “BITS AND PIECES”: EARLY CHILDHOOD CONVENTION

I now discuss how to equip oneself to pick up those subtle “bits and pieces” that Michel Foucault (1977, 16) talks about in order to fragment the technology of nation-building. For Foucault (1977), “bits and pieces” served as diffused strategies that discursively epitomized particular knowledge attached to institutionalized systems of power. Discourses serve as maps that inform how individuals should be, think, and act particular subjectivities within a given society (Weedon 1987, 35–37; Spears 1997, 6; Gee 2010, 11). Enacting institutionally backed discourses are dominant, as they endow the subject with realizable normality and power (Weedon 1987, 136–137; Blaise 2005, 18–20) that stem from practicing what is “acceptable” and “appropriate.” Discourses, after all, are constituted and held together by strategies, and these strategies specifically aim to convey certain ideas that particular subjectivities want to propagate or resist power. I would like to stress here that strategies include verbal language statements, non-verbal actions or practices, and silences, as all of these mobilize particular ideas that those subjects deem as being worthwhile within that context. Hence, I name these strategies as “bits and pieces” that legitimized the continuation of “whitened nation” technology in particular ways. Here, the nation-building endeavor was mobilized through “bits and pieces” attached to the discourse of childhood innocence. However, this becomes evident only when these “bits and pieces” are picked up and contested to surface their connections to the persistent propagation of this “whitened nation.” After all, in early childhood settings, the discourse of childhood innocence is still dominant (Grieshaber 2001, 68; Meyer 2007, 87; Reimers and Peters 2011, 89), and as Paul Connolly (2008, 174) contends, this dominant discourse still dictates and silences the voices that aim to disrupt children’s gender and “race”-based arbitrations of power. Educationally caring for the “innocent child,” a discursive early childhood convention still attached to dominant sites of power, served as a chaste vehicle to mobilize the “whitened nation” technology in early childhood settings.

In what follows, I share one such sequential narrative and fragment the silencing and silent nation-building technology of “white Anglo-Australian” educators and children into “bits and pieces.” These now fragmented “bits” and “pieces” that lock together serve as strategies that remain disguised in the conventional discourses of early childhood educational care. The convenient disguise that early childhood convention offers to epitomize national convention ensures the sustained materialization of “white Australian” by “white Anglo-Australian” adults

and children. However, as soon as the "bits and pieces" of national convention are picked up by those who want to contest such practices, they are consolidated by educators with early childhood convention that affects the maintenance of "whitened Australia."

"HOW COME AUSTRALIANS ARE WHITE?":¹ A NATIONAL CONTENTION

I begin with the mat time during which a book, *All the Colours We Are* (Kissinger 1994), on skin color was read with children by Gina. The children in the following narratives chose their pseudonyms. Gina and Katherine were white Anglo-Australian educators in the room, and right from the very start both these educators maintained the "children don't see 'colors' due to their innocence" discourse, even though they repeatedly heard, from afar, children inquisitively questioning my skin color. In order to respond to children's inquisitiveness, I carried picture books that explained and named skin colors. Bikky (a four-year-old Turkish girl), asked about the origins of my skin color and this time Gina was too close to disregard Bikky's quest:

"Can I ask you something? Why did god give you black skin and gave me white skin?" asked Bikky in a very low voice. "What does she want?" asked Gina, as she chose a book to read for group time. "Bikky is curious to know about how we get our skin colour and she wants me to read a book on it. I have it in my bag", I replied. "I can read that book if you want" (Gina). She read the book, and Gina stopped and kept asking me about the meanings for words like, "melanin, ancestors, pigments" and adding phrases, "mmm . . . that is surprising, I don't know why they say that in children's book." (Gina)

Gina, as a qualified educator responding to children's impromptu interest, accepted to read the book. However, Gina's reluctance became highly evident as she stopped and paused with much unease right from the beginning, and the "bits and pieces" of averseness to "color speak" flowed one after the other. With the initial "bit" Gina deemed the words melanin, ancestors, and pigments as unsuitable for young children, which should never be present in a children's book. In fact, this was too much even for her, a qualified ECE to comprehend. Hence, it was my responsibility to explain these terms to both adults and children. Although this "color speak" was started by Bikky, the "piece" that accompanied this "bit: highlighted that I had to carry the burden of "color speaks." I was made to feel as if this was my initiation, interest, and intention and therefore I should handle this. Most of all, the first "bits and pieces," guised and guided with the mask of children's naivety, legitimized Gina's

distance and silence. The second “bits and pieces” that followed ensured that the “whitened nation” remained undisrupted:

“It depends on how hot it is where you live. The sun can make you go very dark, see you have to protect yourself from the sun, it is very hot in Australia. Katherine you don’t stand a chance, you are stuck with your skin color” (Gina). “But, how come Australians are white, when it is hot here, because sun makes us go brown doesn’t it?” (Lisa the zebra, four years old). “Hey, I dare you to read those words at the bottom, go on read it”, Katherine interrupted and giggled as Gina tried to read the sentences written in Spanish.

The book then moved to explain the relationship between skin colors. This was simple language, and a concept not too complex for children to understand. In fact, children understood the relationship between hot sun and dark skin color or “brownness” very adeptly. More so, they were also aware of the language of “race” and “color” attached to the identity of “Australian,” the national convention. Hence, Lisa the zebra appropriately queried using this political language, which defined and colonized the identity of this aboriginal land and its “brown” inhabitants with “whiteness.” Lisa the zebra asked, “How come Australians are white when it is hot here, because sun makes us go brown doesn’t it?” Lisa the zebra expressed her awareness of the politically presumed identity of “white Australia” by “white Australians.” This could have been the turning point that forced Gina to engage with “color speak,” as Lisa the zebra was disrupting the past overt colonial and the covert postcolonial colonization of “Australian” subjects. Swiftly Katherine guarded this political space by coming to Gina’s rescue. She introduced the second “bit” that diverted the conversation by challenging Gina to read the sentences below in Spanish. I wanted to double dare Gina to “color speak,” as uncomfortable as it may be for her as a “white Australian.” I shockingly heard Katherine’s giggles at Gina’s attempts, as Lisa the zebra’s pursuit to figure out the cause of “whitened nation” was completely dismissed. Here, the giggles were the “piece” that accompanied the “bit,” to showcase their disinterest or discomfort in acknowledging the loss of “color” and culture of the original owners of this land. This “piece” had the capacity to reduce the tormented histories of the colonized people of this land into giggles. Thus the “bits and pieces” further sealed the lips of the “white Australian,” who now continued to strategically evade any cracks that disrupted the “whitened nation”:

“I give up, okay where do you get your skin color from? Say it in one word and you can go to wash your hands” (Gina). “Paint” (Veejay,

4 year old, Asian Australian girl). “I would have said the same thing, Veejay, well done” (Gina). “White” (Leo, white, Anglo-Australian boy). “What, bright or white?” (Katherine). “I mean bright” (Leo). “Mmm . . . bright, not white interesting” (Katherine). I remained silent and watched this happen. I later apologized to Gina[,] “I am sorry I put you on the spot by making you read that book”. “No worries, can you see children didn’t still quite get it. I would have been the same when I was four” (Gina).

The above “bits and pieces” silenced any further “color speak”, never to surface again with the children. This final nail buried all “color speaks” and ensured that it was laid to rest in peace. So impatient was Gina that she hastily dispersed the children without completing the book. Gina held the scepter of colonial “whiteness” with such a firm grasp, as I bowed down, ashamed of my own silent governance of my safe research space. This final nail, the “bit” that sealed the deal was to say the origin of our skin colors in one word. In the end, Gina felt that children still did not understand because they were only four and she could empathize with those nascent, innocent, and untainted early years. That was the “piece,” the discourse of innocence again that strategically laid anymore “color speaks” to be ironed out of early childhood. Maybe it is because Gina is “white” and I am “brown” that I felt the opposite of what she believed about children’s ability to grapple with “color” complexities. I heard Lisa the zebra when she asked, “How come Australians are white?”, and to me that indicated that she got it. Moreover, the very same four-year-olds were knowledgeable enough to grasp an understanding of Gina’s and Katherine’s reluctance to “color speak” and they nuanced their replies to suit those reluctant adults’ whims and fancies. What followed showcased how these “bits and pieces” allowed children to take charge of maintaining the “whitened nation.”

“CAUSE AUSTRALIANS ARE WHITE”: NATION CONSOLIDATION

The “bits and pieces” of early childhood convention that ever so slightly veered toward national convention was discursively pulled back to silence any “color speaks” with young children. Children continued to “speak colors” just with me and requested me to read the book, *The Colors of Us* (Katz 2002), which I also carried in my bag. Yet, none of these books were allowed to be placed on the bookshelf. I read this book nearly every day with small groups of children, and it made skin colors seem highly palatable. Despite repeated reiterations of this book, the silencing discursive strategies, the “bits and pieces”

of early childhood convention, now materialized into defining the “Australian” and “not Australian.” In what follows I share those nationalistic narratives that flowed on to consolidate the now “whitened nation” and the further silencing “bits and pieces” that reified the educators’ reluctance to disrupt children’s “race”-based national consolidation. Feeniyana, a four-year-old, white Anglo-Australian girl classified Pookey, another four-year-old Indian Australian girl, and me to consolidate this national identity:

“I am white, so I am Australian. Pookey is black not Australian. Like you she is Indian.” (Feeniyana). “No, I am white, I am Australian” (Pookey). “But Pookey, remember what we read in ‘Colours of us’, you are like, peanut butter and is it white?,” I asked. “Okay, I am Indian like Prasanna and I am from Melbourne. I am both and so I am a bit white” (Pookey). “Bikky is white, she is Australian” (Feeniyana). “Why do you say that?,” I asked. “Cause she is white, Australians are white (Feeniyana).”

Children by now understood that the educators in the setting were going to turn a deaf ear to their “color speaks,” and therefore very openly engaged in classifying their peers and adults using “race” as the basis of constructing national identities. More than the “bit” that classified “white” as “Australian,” it is the “bit” that classified Pookey as “not Australian” that kindled her desire for “whiteness” in her “brown” self. Pookey immediately was ready to “whiten” her “brownness” to have a slice of that national power. She knew being classified as “not Australian” relegated her to the margins, an outsider status, hence she jumped to become “white.” Pookey’s desire for national power was so strong that she reconciled to claiming this with “bits” of “white.” These “bits” now became linked by “pieces” that reinstated the national identity of Australians, more specifically “white as Australian.” Here, Feeniyana, a four-year-old child, moved from the establishment of her individual identity, to conceptualizing the nation’s collective identity as, “cause . . . Australians are white.” Feeniyana, the child, now took the role of the colonizer and “spoke” to “whiten” the subjects of Australia, by fuelling a sense of inadequacy in those were otherwise. More “white” children engaged in “othering” our “brownness” and nationalizing “whiteness.” Gina and Katherine were not very far from this table but they remained very busy and focused in their tasks. Many weeks later, however, Gina came back to justify their silence:

But it is difficult to talk about color. If a child comes and asks me, why are you white, I wouldn’t know what to say. You say pigments and stuff about your skin when children ask you about color, but what can we say, nothing.

The notion that one had to be "white" to be and become "Australian" continued and so did the exclusion of those who were categorized as "black" and "brown" from the national space. After many weeks of hearing such "color speaks" by children, Gina had to come up with a fresh set of "bits and pieces" that could finally enable her to relinquish her responsibilities of challenging such "race"-based conceptions. This "bit" passed all accountabilities of disrupting "whiteness" to me, because I am "brown." The "bit" suggested that I was the one with all the answers, the "pigment and stuff." Hence, this was my problem, my puzzle, that I had to negotiate, as I had the lot. The final liberating "piece" valorized all who were "white" to maintain their silence, as it suggested that they cannot say anything. Thus, once and for all, Gina released "whiteness" from engaging in any conversations that can even remotely trouble the "whitened nation." This "normalizing and neutralizing of whiteness" (Frankenberg 1993, 228), the ultimate "piece," that regarded their "whiteness" as nothing enabled them to clench and maintain their "white power," and its continued survival through children's undisrupted "whitened nation"-building technology. Once these fragmented "bits and pieces" of early childhood convention were picked up, they surfaced in the national consolidation in the form of "white Australian," the colonizer of the past, the present, and the future. I began to wonder why "white Australians" could not disrupt "whiteness," which may be less pigmented in comparison to my "brownness," nevertheless, endowed with an abundance of power.

Was the "white Australian" so distraught about sharing their ownership of this nation that they will not "color speak?" Or, was it because the "white Australian" was reluctant to share the historical and socio-political power attached to "whiteness?" Whatever their reason, in post-colonial Australia the faceless colonizer was now sitting back relaxed on his/her throne, while children and adults colonized by "whiteness" were conducting the "whitening" errands for the colonizer.

HOW COME "WHITE AUSTRALIANS" WILL NOT "COLOR SPEAK": A NATIONAL (RE)CONSIDERATION

Discourses and language serve as points of disruption, to reveal both dominance and resistance at an individual level (Weedon 1987, 35–38; Hall 2003, 72–82). Yet, within early childhood settings it was highly problematic to interrupt "race"-based nationalistic discourses. It is not that the "white Anglo-Australian" educators overtly seconded and condoned children's conceptions of "white Australian." It was their reluctance and silence to engage with children's "color speaks," strategically supported by the discourse of childhood innocence, in

combination with those that nullified “whiteness” maintained and circulated the power of “white Australian.” One would imagine that the field of early childhood in Australia with the centralization of *Rights of the Child* (United Nations 1989) would consciously engage in challenging discourses of childhood innocence. However, it was evidenced that such notions were not only still dominant, but also deliberately used to divert and avoid engaging with the complexities of contesting “whiteness.” I now ask as a “brown,” “not Australian” subject, when will “white Australians” “speak color?” After all, “color speak” was initiated by “white Australians” historically to grasp and clench the ownership of this nation and its identity, so should they not also take the responsibility of unclenching this power?

I conclude by challenging “white Australians” to (re)consider “speaking color,” especially with young children. It is only then that “brown Australian” will be able to own and share this spatial power in the present and in the future. Otherwise, despite the political abolition of the White Australia Policy, the covert images of “whitened nation” will continue to dominate this space and its subjects. Most of all, the “race” ideology will continue to segment this society, as these will be propagated not via overt exclusionary policies, but in the colonizing voices of young, not-so-innocent children, and in the silences of educators. I hence urge every “white Australian” ECE to take responsibility and

(re)consider the *“bits and pieces”* of early childhood in nation building,
 (re)consider their reluctance and silence,
 (re)consider hiding behind the disguise of nothing,
 (re)consider tainting “whiteness” and that “color” that holds power,
 and
 (re)consider the power in clenching the identity “Australian” with their “whiteness.”

And most of all, to (re)consider what it feels to be “brown” and desire “bits of whiteness” with feelings of inadequacy in being and becoming in this space.

Until these national (re)considerations are consciously met to disrupt the discursive practices that establish the binaries of “Australian/not Australian,” “whiteness” will time and again colonize the minds of all subjects, children and adults, in Australia for many years to come. Let us together challenge that faceless “white colonizer” within each one of us.

NOTE

1. I quote here a child's voice. This is how the child asked this question, which was left unanswered hastily.

REFERENCES

- Appadurai, A. 2006. *Fear of Small Numbers*. London: Duke University Press.
- Atkinson, S. 2009. "Adults constructing the young child, 'race' and 'racism.'" In *"Race" and Early Childhood Education: An International Approach to Identity, Politics and Pedagogy*, edited by G. MacNaughton and K. Davis, 139–155. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Aveling, N. 2002. "Student teachers' resistance to exploring racism: Reflections on 'doing' border pedagogy." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education* 30 (2): 119–130.
- Blaise, M. 2005. *Playing It Straight: Uncovering Gender Discourses in an Early Childhood Classroom*. New York: Routledge.
- Commonwealth of Australia. 2009. *Belonging, Being & Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, edited by Employment and Workplace Relations Department of Education. Barton, ACT: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth of Australia.
- Connolly, P. 2008. "Race, gender and critical reflexivity in research with young children." In *Research with Children, Perspectives and Practices*, edited by P. Christensen and A. James, 173–188. New York: Falmer Press.
- Foucault, M. 1977. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by A. Sheridan. New York: Vintage Books.
- Frankenberg, R. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gee, J. P. 2010. *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis [Electronic Resource] Theory Method*. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor & Francis.
- Government of the Commonwealth of Australia. 1901. Immigration Restriction Act. Canberra.
- Grieshaber, S. 2001. "Advocacy and early childhood educators: Identity and cultural conflicts." In *Embracing Identities in Early Childhood Education*, edited by S. Grieshaber and G. S. Cannella, 60–72. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Hage, G. 2000. *White Nation: Fantasies of White Supremacy in a Multicultural Society*. New York: Routledge.
- Hall, S. 2003. "Foucault: Power, knowledge and discourse." In *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, edited by M. Wetherell, S. Taylor, and S. J. Yates, 72–82. London: Sage.
- Katz, K. 1999. *The Colors of Us*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Kissinger, K. 1994. *All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Got Our Skin Color*. New Jersey: Red Leaf Press.
- Leeman, Y., and C. Reid. 2006. "Multi/intercultural education in Australia and the Netherlands." *Compare* 36 (1): 57–72.

- MacNaughton, G. 2001 "Silences and subtexts of immigrant and non-immigrant children." *Childhood Education* 78 (1): 30–36.
- MacNaughton, G., and K. Davis. 2001 "Beyond 'othering' rethinking approaches to teaching young Anglo-Australian children about indigenous Australians." *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 2 (1): 83–93.
- . 2009. "Discourses of 'race' in early childhood: From cognition to power." In *"Race" and Early Childhood Education: An International Approach to Identity, Politics and Pedagogy*, edited by G. MacNaughton and K. Davis, 17–30. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- MacNaughton, G., and P. Hughes. 2009. *Doing Action Research in Early Childhood Studies: A Step by Step Guide*. New York: Open University Press.
- Martin, G., L. Hunter, and P. McLaren. 2006. "Participatory activist research (teams)/action research." In *Doing Educational Research: A Handbook*, edited by K. Tobin and T. Kincheloe, 157–190. Rotterdam: Sense.
- Meyer, A. 2007. "The moral rhetoric of childhood." *Childhood* 14 (1): 85–104.
- Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs. 2008. Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians.
- Prasad, A. 2003. "The gaze of the other: Postcolonial theory and organizational analysis." In *Postcolonial Theory and Organizational Analysis: A Critical Engagement*, edited by A. Prasad, 3–46. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Reimer, M., and C. Peters. 2011. "Theorizing young people." *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 3 (2): 88–99.
- Said, E. W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Skattebol, J. 2005. "Insider/outsider belongings: Traversing the borders of whiteness in early childhood." *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood* 6 (2): 189–203.
- Spears, R. 1997. "Introduction." In *Critical Social Psychology*, edited by T. Ibanez and L. Iniguez, i–xvi. London: Sage.
- Srinivasan, P. 2014. *Early Childhood in Postcolonial Australia: Children's Contested Identities*, edited by M. N. Bloch, G. S. Cannella, and B. B. Swadener, *Critical Cultural Studies*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Taylor, P. C. 2004. *Race: A Philosophical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- United Nations. 1989. Convention on the Rights Of the Child. New York: United Nations.
- Weedon, C. 1987. *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.