

Revision of paper presented as cutting edge workshop at 11th Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education: Research, Theory and Practice, international conference at Arizona State University, Tempe Arizona USA, January 5-9, 2003.

## The OECD and the notion of expert in ECEC: a play

### **Abstract**

*A two day face-to-face workshop was held in Oslo Norway, June 2002. Present were 37 administrators and bureaucrats for Early Childhood Education and Care, representing 15 nations involved in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. This paper is a play on the paper presented by the developmental psychologist positioned as expert. The nations represented at the workshop were Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom and OECD representatives in France. The paper played upon was presented in advance to the participants on a Norwegian website. After the conference its revised version was made available internationally on [www.oecd.org/els/education/review](http://www.oecd.org/els/education/review). It is this version from which I now quote.*

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## PROLOGUE

This paper is a result of my attendance by invitation at the two day workshop held in Oslo Norway in June 2002. The workshop was organised by the Norwegian government's Royal Ministry of Children and Family Affairs (*Det kongelige barne- og familiedepartement*) in collaboration with the OECD's ECEC representatives based in Paris France. Attending the workshop for the two full days were the national coordinators, directors, senior planning officers, policy makers, ministry of education representatives, child research representatives, administrators and senior advisers of ECEC from Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. We met in an Oslo hotel's conference room and dining room, after an introductory meeting in the City Hall (*Oslo Rådhus*) with its gorgeous view of the fjord in the heart of the city. There were forty-six of us. Included in the two days was our division into small groups, so each group could be mini-bussed to a different day care centre, to briefly see and hear for ourselves what is happening with the very young in institutionalised care and pedagogy.

The selected very young whom we saw and heard were in pre-school day care centres (*barnehager*) in parts of Oslo where there are less white middle-class children than is usual. This selection was because the focus of our two days was on 'early childhood education and care for bilingual children and for children from low-income backgrounds.' The focus relates to the publication "Starting Strong", which is available for purchase from the internet. Also on the internet was the paper presented as the plenary presentation for our two days <http://odin.dep.no/bfd/engelsk/topics>. It is this paper's final revision that is central to what I write now.

I say 'write' but I have decided in fact to write nothing at all. If I write nothing then I cannot be quoted. This is a reversal of a normalised academic practice: you are confronted only by my silence. As I already have a tenured position as a full Professor, I am not trying to climb a career ladder, get a Doctorate or become famous. What I would like to do with this paper which I shall not write, is challenge: (1) the notion of writing as research, (2) the positioning of bureaucrats in relation to teachers, children, parents and the teachers of the teachers, and (3) query the nature of research and its position of power in and because of particular discourses, and (4) what is happening and not happening regarding social justice for the very young.

Instead of spelling these things out, as is usual in an academic paper, I propose just hinting. I shall do this through my careful selection and placing of extracts from texts. For those of you reading this without having been at my 'cutting edge workshop' in Arizona, I shall explain my practice of presentation. My workshop is nothing more than an exercise in cutting and pasting. (Yes, that's right, as the children do, scissors and glue, chopping and discarding, putting it together.) I cut and superimpose, juxtapose, combine and overlay. What I am touching on is research methodology: how you analyse, interpret, critique and deconstruct. I also touch on what we do at the computer as we think across possibilities, go between the files, reconceptualize the discourses, and come up with something new. In doing so I bring in a uniquely Australian irony; and would warn American readers accordingly that they may be unfamiliar with this ironic genre. (Following Australian researcher Erica McWilliam who has written of an "irony deficiency".)

If you put the above practice into the scripting of a play (not the pedagogized play of preschooling but the plays where you pay to go and sit in the audience) then you've got some idea of how I shall write myself out of this paper: as does the playwright. [1] What I shall do is try to construct a paper chat room, a space for ideas to bounce, a location of challenges to power/knowledge. This fits with my current reading of Michel Foucault (1979) and of Hannah Arendt (1961;1968: republications of her books from the 1950s). Arendt tells me this about Walter Benjamin: (1968, p. 156) 'he was a born writer; but his greatest ambition was to produce a work consisting entirely of quotations'. As I am reading this [2] and worrying about my cutting edge workshop for Arizona, then this is what I decide to do: juxtapose the text that troubles me

(Leseman, 2002: 2003) with some selected quotations from thinkers I'm currently reading. I shall do it like a different kind of play. [3]

In so doing I would point out that the play requires the reader to read between the lines of the actors in it. This reading between the lines becomes the reader's own deconstruction of the text. I am thus requesting a different academic reading. The play could be performed by a group of Doctoral students or critical theorists open to postmodern literary practices. These practices also deconstruct early childhood notions of 'play', by discursively focusing on speaker-actors and the words we learn to say.

## ACT ONE

[A foreign conference room, with empty seats for key speakers facing an audience]

*Enter Paul Leseman and Sue Grieshaber, stage right and stage left They both begin reading aloud immediately, to the audience. Whilst one reads aloud the other mouths words unheard and unwritten. The two voices, as two monologues, follow swiftly, without a break. As the words underlined are said, they appear above the character's heads, just below the proscenium arch, as surtitles in large illuminated letters, in English and also in a second language not in a Roman alphabet. The words remain until the next key points appear. The dates and pages of the quotations are not said aloud.*

**Sue Grieshaber** ' ... the processes and relationships through which boys and girls conduct gendered lives' (2001, p. 230)

**Paul Leseman** 'In many countries, systems of early childhood care and education (ECEC) are currently under review. A major force behind the reappraisal is the growing labour force participation of women, putting heavy demands on the existing

systems that are forced to expand their capacity and to extend their services.' (2003, p, 4)

**SG** 'The work of men and women is to construct gendered practices and activities; in this sense, they are said to be "doing gender". '(p. 231)' [4]

**PL** `When using a child-focused strategy, activities are mainly provided to or directed towards the child; his or her parents or other stakeholders not being targeted or only secondarily for instrumental purposes.` (p. 21)

**SG** 'The culturally dominant form of hegemonic masculinity is "an expression of the *privilege* men collectively have over women (Connell, 1996, p. 209, in Grieshaber p. 231)' ... '[My] example shows how Bev has participated unknowingly in positioning Robert to adopt the discourse of hegemonic masculinity.' (p. 236) 'This means that mothers like Bev are restricted to selecting options from available discourses because they have no access to powerful discursive resources that are necessary to generate alternative practices.' ... 'Bev, desirous of the sensitive mother discourse, unknowingly co-constructs her son in ways that are detrimental to her own position as a mother and woman.' (p. 236)

**PL** 'Does early, intensive, long-day-care - as a recent study suggests - lead to the externalisation of negative, aggressive behaviour in young children? One may dispute such far-reaching conclusions based on a single study, conducted in a particular social and cultural context.' (p. 4)

**SG** (p. 255) 'Foucault's theoretical concept of governance and governmentality provides a theoretical frame for this research. (p. 255) [5]

**PL** 'It is only three decades ago that leading psychologists argued in response to the disappointing results of the first nation-wide evaluation of Head Start programmes in USA that the genetic-biological nature of cognitive competence precluded any major lasting improvements in this area by pre-school programmes.' (p. 6)

**SG** 'Governance refers to all those ways of reflecting and acting that aim to shape, guide, manage, or regulate the conduct and ways of reasoning embedded in institutions, groups and individuals.' (p. 256)..Foucault proposed the notion of *governmentality* as a blurring of ... the boundaries between the self and society.' (p. 255)

**PL** '... researchers have found that perceptual-attentional mechanisms that regulate the emotion-motivation of an individual by being alert to relevant stimuli, by selectively attending to stimuli and by shifting attention from one to another stimulus.' (p. 8)

**SG** 'The two ways of governance used by Foucault - governance of others and governance of oneself - both include the creation of what is called governmentalities as to who should govern and toward what end' . (p. 256)

**PL** 'In the early years sensitive responsive caregiving (i.e., reacting promptly to signals of emotional distress or to signals of bio-psychological needs) is associated with the establishment of secure attachment between child and caregiver and the establishment on the part of the child of a working model of social relationships that promote affiliation, trust and cooperation.' (p. 9)

**SG** 'These ways of reasoning or governmentalities are a result of complex circulating discourses at global, national, and local levels that are filtered through different texts, regulations and policies, the media, statistics, what comes to be known as authoritative knowledge, social scientific and other educational expertise, pedagogical reforms, and through the ways we (parents, teachers, children) come to reflect and reason (self-govern) in our most private thoughts.' (p. 256)

**PL** 'The recent OECD report *Starting Strong* (OECD, 2001) describes these developments in 12 OECD countries, detailing the recent changes in ECE [Early Childhood Education] systems and national policies, and revealing common challenges and solutions. ... What is, or can be, the role of ECEC [Early Childhood Education and Care] in improving social integration? The approach is research based.' (p. 4)

**SG** 'Such institutional practices then become accepted as normal and "natural" behaviour for parents and young children.' (p. 224)

**PL** 'The category excludes children at risk of learning and behavioural problems due to endogenous organic disorders or to other non-social causes. In this section, we shall further examine how socio-economic, cultural and socio-linguistic factors may impede optimal child development.' (p. 13)

**SG** '... sensitive mothers were inevitably middle class' [and] 'reflected the type of mothering characteristics endorsed by psychologists and teachers to covertly regulate children.' (p. 225)

**PL** 'What is meant by early childhood? A practical solution seems to be to relate the end of early childhood to the age at which most commonly (i.e., in most countries, for most children) formal instruction in reading, writing and mathematics starts, that is between age 6 and 7. It should be noted, however, that both earlier and later boundaries are defensible and that, from a developmental psychological point of view, any sharp boundary is somewhat arbitrary.' (p. 13)

**SG** 'Authoritarian parenting practices often incorporate behaviourist approaches, where children are seen as passive organisms responding to environmental changes. ... authoritarian practices of parenting consist of power-assertive or coercive forms of verbal hostility, corporal punishment, non-reasoned punitive strategies, and directiveness.' (p. 226)

**PL** 'In his famous article on maladaptive patterns in the affective regulation of parenting, Dix (1991) reviewed many studies that reported a relation between parents' stress and depression and their lack of emotional involvement in child rearing, lack of monitoring, emotional unavailability and harsh disciplining.' (p. 15)

**SG** 'Permissiveness involves a lack of follow-through, ignoring misbehaviour' ... 'permissiveness is not the preferred discourse of developmental psychology as it fails to produce children who have been successfully encultured.' ... 'Permissive parenting

is therefore a potential threat to the established social and moral order of society.' (p. 227)

**PL** 'A third strand of research relates the cultural belief systems of parents and communities of parents to developmental outcomes and school achievement. ... Traditional beliefs are characterised by a so called collectivist orientation, meaning that the interests of the individual child are subjected to the interests of the greater social unit of the (extended) family and local community ... Modern beliefs are characterised by a so called individualistic orientation, meaning that maximal actualisation of the individuals' talents - cognitive, creative, artistic - are put on the foreground, and emphasise socialisation goals as emotional independence, self-will, verbal intelligence, competitiveness, intellectual and artistic excellence, for boys and girls alike.' (p. 17) [6]

*The characters exit on opposite sides of the stage, the same sides from which they entered.*

## **INTERLUDE**

*The playwright appears on stage.*

**Jeanette Rhedding-Jones** At this point I give you a break from my relentless juxtapositionings. All responsibility for such is mine, and following usual academic practice I have not contacted the named persons asking for permission to quote their published work from its acknowledged and thus locatable sources. The scenarios and conversations between these persons are my fantasy. In actual life, however, we often talk past other people, not taking up the matters they see as crucial, and failing to look beyond what we already know. The illuminated surtitles are what I want to highlight in each of the imagined exchanges or point-missings. The quotes are my gift to you for your academic writing [7] and for changing practice.

*Enter two persons bearing large trays attached to their bodies with halter-neck sashes. From the trays the audience may obtain free of charge popcorn, peanuts and paper-wrapped sweeties. They do so and begin to eat.*

## ACT TWO

### Scene One

*Around a coffee table in a staff room. Coffee making facilities upstage right, door downstage left. Several persons are sitting in relaxed fashion, occasionally looking up from what they are reading (and scribbling on or rubbing out) to read aloud. The others focus only on their own texts and the coffee they drink or get. They occasionally go and find a pencil or eraser, walk across the room or look out the window from whence comes the noise of the young at play.*

**Patrick Cook** 'Some members have even suggested that reform isn't necessarily progress, and that progress requires some sort of change. Perhaps they are having difficulty with some of the terms.' (2002, p. 82)

**Gordon Tait** '...[I] question the dominance of this discourse' [regarding how] 'the rhetoric of 'quality' holds inordinate sway in early childhood research and practice'. [The focus is on] 'not only the intellectual frameworks that shape its pedagogy, but also the very institutions themselves'. (p. 232) ... [We should] 'question the dominant, often simplistic, assumptions that define many significant aspects of the field, and replace them with a far more complex and layered set of questions, assumptions and points of departure. Likewise [we should] look specifically at the discourses surrounding the notion of quality in early childhood education. These too .. [should be] problematised, from their relation to particular forms of government, to their role in the psy-disciplines and customer-driven culture..' (2000, pp. 231-232)

**Gail Boldt:** 'In Penn's introduction, she makes a brief argument that theory, policy, and practice cannot be seen as separate, and policy-makers, practitioners and researchers must heed the words and experiences of one another.' (2001, p. 123)

**Elisabeth Lloyd** [8] '[Research] methods may be understood ... as ways of approaching philosophical talks, some of which are favoured within any particular style or school of philosophy.' (1995, p. 191) ... 'eg hermeneutics may be preferred within an Existential approach'... 'Part of *what feminist philosophers want* , then, must be interpreted within the context of philosophical method. The basic goods are analytic and interpretive tools that have been developed through investigations of the nature and influences of sex and gender differences, investigations called "feminism". .... (1995, p. 189)

**Gaile Cannella** '...the language of experts like psychologists and educators.' (2001, p. 17)

**EL** 'As Morwena Griffiths and Margaret Whitford point out ...."part of the practice of feminism is concerned with the essentially philosophical activities of redrawing concepts ... [and] redefining what counts as significant or important " ' ... 'core issues' of metaphysics and epistemology' ... 'feminism is also an issue of *method*' (1995, p. 189)

**GC** 'Psychology arose as the vehicle for the nineteenth-century application of these positivist assumptions to human beings. Further, within the context of "childhood", younger human beings were not only psychologized but biologized.' ...'Educators, whether claiming to be developmentalists or academics, declare sets of child learning needs that are viewed as applicable to all younger human beings.' (2001, p. 16)

**EL** Examples of core issues are 'the nature of knowledge and justification ... identity and existence ... how and whether we know meanings' (1995, p. 190)

*Patrick Cook and Gordon Tait stand up, pick up their papers and leave the room.*

**GC** 'Children are constructed as the ideal victim.' ... 'children are signified as the ultimate "Other" than the adult' (2001, p. 20)

**EL** 'Feminist methods provide ways to be attentive to ... problems of hypervaluation and devaluation' For example 'How seemingly "neutral" principles may have profoundly sexist consequences when applied: eg. investigation of the concept of "objectivity".' (1995, p. 192)

**GC** '... the Western patriarchal notion that the more "superior" groups must govern and regulate others ... the assumption that led to the enlightenment subjugation of the poor, women, the mentally ill, and children.' (2001, p. 20)

**EL** 'feminist philosophers, such as Lorraine Code and Susan Bordo, have made investigating intuitive and practical knowledge a priority in their epistemological and historical research.' (1995, p. 193)

*A loud distress noise from the playground. They both rush to the window and then run out of the room. Christine Woodrow and Marie Brennan have been reading silently. One or the other of them speaks the following lines, the actors may choose who says what.*

**Christine Woodrow or Marie Brennan**'... conceptualizing childhood or change' (2001, p. 23)

**CW or MB** '...the potential of agency for the child and for the early childhood educator by using the lens of ethics' (2001, p. 23)

**CW or MB** '...consider how dominant images work' ... 'provoking critique and encouraging contestation' (2001, p. 23)

**CW or MB** '... strategic activities for interrupting these dominant images through teaching, advocacy, and research.' ... 'It is not yet widely understood that childhood is a socially constructed concept.'(2001, p. 25)

**CW or MB** ... 'shaped by a culturally specific set of ideas, philosophies, attitudes, and practices which define the nature of childhood for that setting and situation' (2001, p. 25)

**CW or MB** '... a concern with ethics denotes an orientation to critical interrogation of the values and consequences of practices' ... 'This is a practice-based version of ethics: ethics-in-use.' (2001, p, 32)

**CW or MB** 'In resisting the ethical positions embedded in the dominant images of childhood'...(2001, p. 37)

**CW or MB** 'interrogation, resistance and interruption of the dominant images ... through at least three projects: teaching, advocacy work, and research.' (2001, p. 38)

**CW or MB** '... children become the object of the surveillance gaze, the target of policy' (2001, p. 40)

**CW or MB** 'If we were able to rework care and justice as necessarily related, there would be the possibilities for reworking the nature of relations between privileged and oppressed, between powerful and not so powerful, between adults and children.' (2001, p. 35)

*Enter Kerry-Ann Hewett, Shirley Kessler, Julie Lokelani Kaomea and Mary Jane Fox, speaking to each other as they arrive. As they sit they continue talking, to each other, not reading aloud. CW and MB stop reading aloud on the arrival of the newcomers. CW and MB then begin reading silently, sitting beside each other and pointing things out in the one book they share.*

**Kerry-Ann Hewett**'... the power of being on the margin' (2001, p. 117) ... [9]

**Julie Lokelani Kaomea**: '... what happens when individuals or groups subvert these categories by their very existence' (2001, p. 179)

**KAH** 'We play out different roles and wear different masks as the result of colonialism'. (2001, p. 121)

**Shirley Kessler** 'Critical theorists also acknowledge that low-income children, children of colour, as well as women, are members of social groups which have different access to social and economic resources and which differ in terms of political influence and power' (2001, p. 127)

**Mary Jane Fox:** 'I must not impose my Western perspective on the analyses of non-Western subjects. I must try to locate the agent of change in the "subaltern", not merely those with Western education. And I must be tenacious in my efforts to hear all indigenous voices in the texts I analyse.' (2001, p. 210)

*Lights gradually dim as Fox is speaking. The others are listening to her.*

### *Scene Two*

*Inside an elevator. The elevator is in constant slow motion, travelling both up and down, without persons entering or leaving it. The two characters speak not to each other but to the left and right walls of the elevator, though they are facing each other.*

**Bernadette Baker** 'Foucault ... suggested cutting off the King's head in order to view power in local and specific sites, in everyday institutional practices, and in/as techniques, strategies and tactics that simultaneously enabled productive and repressive moments and pointed to power's circulation as a series of *effects*.' (2001a, p. 158)

**Paul Leseman** 'Parental choice - socio-economic and ethnic attributes ... As a matter of fact, parental decisions can be seen as the final link in a chain of factors leading to utilisation of ECEC provision or, alternatively, to care for the child at home.' (2003, p. 25)

**BB** '... power as technologies of seeing' (2001a, p. 158)

**PL** '...new issues are being raised. Societies are becoming aware that early childhood is a particularly sensitive period marked by both a high and low degree of adaptability or vulnerability of the developing child to the stimulation and stresses of his or her environment. With this new knowledge, uncertainty has also arisen concerning the impact of changes in traditional child-rearing patterns on the cognitive and social-emotional development of the young.' (2003, p, 4)

**BB** 'Foucault's own predilection to ask what matters'. (2001a, p. 158)

**PL** 'Leseman et al (1998) conducted a statistical meta-analysis of evaluation studies of center-based pre-school programs ... that were published between 1985 and 1996. 18 methodologically sound studies yielded 64 different experimental-control comparisons on three areas of outcome measures: IQ and non-verbal cognitive, language and pre-literacy, and social-emotional.' (2003, p. 25).

**BB** 'The dominant co-ordinates of 'the State' ...' (2001a, p. 158)

**PL** 'In most countries educational priority policies are based on broad sociological factors or categories, mutually overlapping and inter-correlated, such as family income-level, poverty, social class, region or neighbourhood of residence, parental educational level, family structure (single parenthood), native language of the parents, country of emigration et cetera.' (p. 13)

**BB** 'governance' 'government' and 'governmentality' ... need to be suspended.' (2001a, p. 158)

**PL** 'How parents' cultural child rearing beliefs may affect children's development, successful integration in the school system and adjustment to the present-day modern (individualised) high-tech societies, still is a largely unanswered question.' (p. 17-18)

**BB** 'Foucault's power-as-effects operates within a ... spatial metaphor of spinning toward localized centres amid efforts to decentre structural power... Power can only

be viewed as 'power' after the fact, after one has already determined what constitutes an effect ...' (2001b, p. 292)

**PL** 'A further complicating factor concerns the type of first languages and the predominant social-communicative functions they serve in their contexts-of-use. L1 may structurally be closely akin to L2 (as in the case of English and French bilingualism, the most studied bilingual situation worldwide), sharing many of the lexical, morphological, syntactic and discourse-organisational structures, or, in contrast, structurally deviating (as in the case of German and Turkish, Swedish and Tarift-Nerber, or Dutch and Somalian ....' (p. 19)

**BB** 'For Foucault, change, movement, rupture, continuity cannot be theorized or identified without an appeal to 'power' (2001b, p. 292)

**PL** 'Despite the experimental evidence of advantages of bilingualism for a number of cognitive and linguistic skills, several studies document that, in particular, successive bilingualism has a negative effect on L2 development and on school achievement in L2 contexts in general, often in addition to other effects of the home environment ...'. (p. 19)

**BB** 'Power is still theorized as an explanatory device which mobilizes, somewhere from both within and without, that which can be visibly tracked.' (2001b, p. 293)

**PL** 'On the contrary, there appears to be a competitive relation between L1 and L2 concerning available (informal) instruction time and children's cognitive resources in the acquisition process'. (p. 15)

**BB** 'The child is positioned as an effect of power and the means to further effects' (2001b, p. 294)

**PL** 'This is probably attributable to structural dissimilarities of L1 and L2, and different uses of L1 at home (not for cognitively complex functions, not for written communication), compared to uses in school of L2.' (p. 15)

**BB** 'The child is a subject produced through an visible/invisible binary between institutions practices, movements and gazes, a subject who learns to move through the surveillance and language of others by everyday technologies and actions around them.' (2001b, p. 294)

**PL** 'In an additional series of questions, a relatively large part of ethnic minority parents (41%) expressed a lack of trust (not further qualified) on official non-parental childcare.' (p. 37)

**BB** 'Foucault (1980) acknowledged that one could not identify power without a concept of resistance' (2001b, p. 298)

*The lift stops. The two characters look at each other briefly, then quickly exit the elevator in different directions. Spotlight on Michel Foucault, who enters the stage and the elevator immediately they have left the stage. A stage hand brings him an ordinary chair, upon which he sits. The elevator rises with him in it , to a greater height than it has before. He addresses the audience. Slight pauses for distant drums or light changes between some of his utterings. He does not move. [10]*

**Michel Foucault** '... a number of interesting questions ... can all be summed up in two words: knowledge and power.' (1979a, p. 29)

**MF** '... what is in question is that which governs statements and the manner in which they govern one another in order to constitute a set of scientifically acceptable propositions, which may in consequence be verified or falsified by scientific procedures. In short, a problem of the regime or politics of the scientific statement. At this level, it is a question not of knowing what power weighs on the science from outside, but what effects of power circulate among the scientific instruments.' (1979a, p. 32)

**MF**'... this problem of the "discursive regime", or the effects of power peculiar to the statemental game.' (1979a, p. 32)

**MF** '... to see historically how truth-effects are produced inside discourses which are not in themselves either true or false.' (1979a, p. 36)

**MF** '...power had to be able to gain access to the bodies of individuals, their acts, their attitudes, their modes of everyday behaviour. Hence the significance of methods like school discipline, which succeeded in making children's bodies the object of highly complex systems of manipulation and conditioning.' (1979a, p. 41)

**MF** '... "truth" is centred on the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it ...' it is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great and political or economic apparatuses (universities, army, writing, media ...)' (1976a, p. 46)

**MF** 'By "truth" is meant an ensemble of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation and functioning of statements' (1979a, p. 47)

**MF** .. 'a "regime" of truth' ... 'this "regime" ... has been a condition of the formation and development of capitalism' (1979a, p. 47)

**MF** 'The problem is not one of changing people's "consciousness" or what's in their heads; but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth.' (1979a, p. 47)

**MF** '... detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony (social, economic and cultural) within which it operates at the present time' (1979a, p. 47)

**MF** '...there are no relations of power without resistances ... resistance to power doesn't have to come from elsewhere in order to be real ... it is there where power is; it is therefore, like power, multiple and integratable into global strategies.' (1979b, p. 55)

**MF** 'To say that "everything is political" is to recognise this omnipresence of relations of force and their immanence to a political field; but it is to set oneself the barely sketched task of unravelling this indefinite tangled skein.' (1979c, p. 72)

**MF** '...in cutting off the head of the king, the French revolution decapitated every paterfamilias.' (1979d, p. 86)

**MF** '...this discourse on everyday life was quite entirely turned towards the king; it addressed itself to him; it had to creep into the great ceremonious rituals of power; it had to adopt its form and to assume its signs.' (1979d, p. 87)

**MF** '... a power relation which was haunted by the figure of the king - by his real power and by the fantasm of his potency.' (1979d, p. 87)

**MF** 'What I have said is not "what I think" but often what I wonder whether it couldn't be thought.' (1979b, p. 58)

*Lights out.*

### **ACT THREE**

[The same foreign conference room as in Act One, with empty seats for key speakers facing an audience]

*Enter Paul Leseman and Chandra Mohanty. Two monologues and illuminated surtitles as for Act One.*

**Chandra Mohanty** 'the predominantly white upper-level administrators at our institutions and their "reading" of the issues of racial diversity and pluralism' (1990, p. 197)

**Paul Leseman** 'Leseman *et al* found a moderating role for outcome domain (stronger results in the cognitive and language domain than in the social-emotional domain) , age of onset (stronger effect sizes for a start at or before age three compared to a later start), professionalism of intervention agents (stronger effects for professionals than

for paraprofessionals and parents), and pedagogical concept (stronger effects for a child following a 'developmental' approach than for a didactic, programme following approach.' (2003, p. 25) [11]

**CM** `...it is important not to ignore the power of a predominantly managerial class (men and women) who, in fact, frame and hence determine *our* voices, livelihoods, and sometimes even our political alliances.` (1990, p. 197)

**PL** 'Miller and Bizell (1983) and Larsen and Robinson (1989) found that boys showed greater cognitive gains in a child-centred developmental programme, whereas girls profited more from a didactic approach. However, Stipek et al (1995), who also looked for interaction effects of programme type (didactic vs developmental) and gender, did not find moderating effects of gender on programme results.` (p. 30)

**CM** '... workshops [regarding the management of racial diversity] involving upper-level administrators, counsellors, and students in numerous institutions of higher education - including the college where I teach - shed light on a particular aspect of this industry [of the Race, Industry and Prejudice-Reduction Workshops] ... Interestingly, the faculty often do not figure in these workshops at all ...' (1990. p. 197)

**PL** `Can we posit that the greater the socio-economic and ethnic disadvantage, the greater the benefits?' [12] (p. 30)

**CM** 'the efforts ... to take questions of difference and diversity on board should not be minimized. However, these efforts should also be subject to rigorous examination because they have far-reaching implications for the institutionalization of multiculturalism ... While multiculturalism itself is not necessarily problematic, its definition in terms of an apolitical, ahistorical cultural pluralism needs to be challenged.' (1990, p. 197)

**PL** `Although controls are recruited in a nearby community, and occasionally carefully matched with programme participants, there probably was good reason to begin with Head Start in the first and not in the second community. This may explain

the differences in the post-intervention social and educational context found by Lee and Loeb. The idea that programme effects can be nullified by subsequently (extremely) adverse conditions fits in well with recent theorizing in developmental psychology and developmental neuroscience, attesting to the dynamic transactional and situated nature of skills.`(p. 31)

**CM** '... for the university to conduct "research and business as usual" in the face of overwhelming challenges posed by even the very presence of people of color, it has to enact policies and programs aimed at accommodation rather than transformation.' (1990, p. 198)

**PL** 'If regional supply variation and demographic characteristics, mother characteristics and family structure were controlled, ethnicity no longer predicted choice patterns, although the overall effect without control for co-variables was quite big.` (p. 36)

**CM** '... all framed in the language of research, consultancy, and training' (1990, p. 200)

**PL** 'Early and Burchinal (2001) addressed ethnic differences in ECEC use in the USA, where American families from African descent use center-based care far more extensively than families from Latin-American descent, with European-American families occupying a position in between. A large number of preferred characteristics was examined to explain ethnic differences in the type of care used.` (p. 36) [13]

**CM** '... in other words, domesticate race and poverty and difference by formulating the problems in narrow, interpersonal terms and by rewriting historical contexts as psychological ones.' (1990, p. 200)

**PL** 'According to Edwards et al (1996) the parental fee level (after redistribution measures) is the *nexus* of demand and supply of ECEC. Based on their country level data, they estimated that a \$1 increase in price *ceteris paribus* reduces the number of hours of care demanded per child by 1.8 hours per week, while raising the number of hours supplied by 1.3 hours per week.` (p. 33 ).

CM 'One very important ideological effect of this is the standardization of behaviours and responses so as to make them predictable and thus manageable across a wide variety of situations and circumstances, If complex structural experiences of domination and resistance can be ideologically reformulated as individual behaviours and attitudes, they can be managed while carrying on business as usual' (1990, p. 200)

PL `...although quality appears to be an important consideration, parents often lack a precise knowledge of what constitutes quality. Ideally the supply matches the demand, but in reality, in some countries, the supply may not be adequate, both quantitatively and qualitatively ( i.e., not matching parents' preferences and socialization goals, and concerns about quality). (p. 39-40)

*The characters exit on opposite sides of the stage, as did the characters in Act One.*

## EPILOGUE

*Seven young people aged four and five enter stage right. They are dressed in full brass band attire, with pill-box hats and chin straps, tailored jackets and stripes down their long-trousered legs. Each carries a small brass wind instrument, cornets and the like. Their woman teacher enters last, with full-size trumpet. Two of the young people are black, all others are white. Some are girls and some are boys. The young people and the teacher commence to sound the instruments simultaneously, so that unlike the melodics, the rhythms are together. No attempt at harmony. Clappings from the audience and a second item follows. [14]*

**Young people** (in chorus, to the audience) Irony is a feature of postmodernity. We represent and respect low income and high income, minority and majority backgrounds in early childhood education and care.

*The young people and their teacher bow low and exit the stage. [15]*

**ENDNOTES TO THE TEXT**

[1] Plays I have seen recently and which have influenced my scripting of these imagined dialogues and monologues are *Soulmates* by David Williamson, a Sydney Theatre Company production which I saw 16.7.02 in Melbourne; and *Hedda Gabler* by Henrik Ibsen, a *Nationalteatret* production which I saw 7.6.02 in Oslo, in Norwegian.

[2] I shall include more quotations from Arendt (1968 & 1961) in these endnotes. She has informed this play of mine both methodologically and theoretically.

[3] The practice of writing an academic play (but not basing it on quotes from other people) is also adopted by Mary Gergen, in her chapter in Steinar Kvale's book *Psychology and Postmodernism* (1992, London and New York: Sage). Mary's husband Ken told me at the international transdisciplinary conference on Discourse and Cultural Practice (Adelaide, February 1996) that he told Steinar he could only publish his chapter if they also published Mary's. So they did. At this conference I saw and heard Mary and Ken Gergen read aloud as performance their drama-text "Playing with Ourselves".

[4] 'From the Goethe essay on, quotations are at the centre of every work of Benjamin's. This very fact distinguishes his writings from scholarly works of all kinds in which it is the function of quotations to verify and document opinions, wherefore they can be safely relegated to the Notes. This is out of the question in Benjamin.' (Arendt, 1968, p. 202)

[5] 'this collection [Benjamin's collection of quotes] was not an accumulation of excerpts intended to facilitate the writing of the study but constituted the main work, with the writing as something secondary. The main work consisted in tearing fragments out of their context and arranging them afresh in such a way that they illustrated one another and were able to prove their *raison d'être* in a free-floating state, as it were. It definitely was a sort of surrealistic montage.' (Arendt, 1968, p. 202)

[6] 'There are good reasons why Benjamin's philosophical interest from the outset concentrated on the philosophy of language, and why finally naming through quoting became for him the only possible and appropriate way of dealing with the past ... in the final analysis all problems are linguistic problems; they simply do not know the implications of what they are saying' (Arendt, 1968, p. 204)

[7] As I have never produced a text like this before, and as you might not be prepared to take up the challenges I issue this way, I list for your use some other publications in the field of early childhood education and its related discourses (Rhedding-Jones, 1995; 1996a; 1996b; 1997 ;2000a: 2000b: 2000c; 2000d; 2001; 20002a; 2002b; 2003a: 2003b; 2004)

[8] 'For Benjamin to quote is to name, and naming rather than speaking, the word rather than the sentence, brings truth to light.' (Arendt, 1968, p. 203)

[9] '... it is obvious that the enormously difficult melting together of the most diverse ethnic groups ... can only be accomplished through the schooling, education and Americanization of the immigrants' children. ... The immigrants, the newcomers, are a guarantee to the country that it represents the new order. The meaning of this new order, this founding of a new world against the old, was and is the doing away with poverty and oppression.' (Arendt, 1961, p. 175)

[10] 'he [Walter Benjamin] understood language as an essentially poetic phenomenon ... we are dealing here with something which ... is certainly extremely rare: the gift of *thinking poetically*. And this thinking, fed by the present, works with the "thought fragments" it can wrest from the past and gather about itself.' (Arendt, 1968, p. 205)

[11] 'The disappearance of common sense in the present day world is the surest sign of the present-day crisis.' (Arendt, 1961, p. 178)

[12] '... the political role that education actually plays in a land of immigrants, the fact that the schools not only serve to Americanize the children but affect their parents as well ... encourages the illusion that the new world is being built through the education of the children.' (Arendt, 1961, p. 177)

[13] 'Common sense - which the French so suggestively call "good sense," *le bon sens* - discloses to us the nature of the world insofar as it is a common world' (Arendt, 1961, p. 221)

[14] These children actually performed 7 June 2002 at the two day workshop "Early Childhood Education and Care for Children from Low-income or Minority Backgrounds". Their audience, after lunch, at the hotel where the workshop took place, was comprised of the OECD representatives and the co-ordinators, researchers and bureaucrats from the 15 nations. The children's chorused words are of my imagination. Their uniforms, age group, race and gender diversity, brass instruments, sound and teacher are not.

[15] 'And education, too, is where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices, not to strike from their hands their chance of undertaking something new, something unforeseen by us, but to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world.' (Arendt, 1961, p. 196)

### **Additional notes**

1. Before compiling the first draft of this play of quotations I showed the Leseman paper (2002) to a number of colleagues, teachers and postgraduate students in Early Childhood Education in Norway and asked them if they were reacting to it as I was. They were.

2. In terms of the 'crossing borders' conference theme for which this paper was written, I am not advocating a new academic writing where everyone concocts 'plays'. I have done so simply to get some political ideas across quickly. Following Ien Ang, I am trying to 'slowly dissolve the boundaries between the past and the future, between 'where we come from' and 'what we might become', between 'being and becoming' (Ang, 2000, p. 11). The 'we' referent I take to mean 'we who do research' and 'we who work for social justice for the very young'.

3. Another border I cross is this one: 'the problem of science ...: postmodernism equals literature, sociology equals science' (Barrett, 2000, p. 19).

4. I have not just been entertaining myself with the text of a play. I have been playing with poststructural theory. Michèle Barrett (2000, p. 18-19) says 'Post-structuralism has made an enormous contribution, indeed a revolution, in exposing the processes that help us to understand how sociology has allied itself to modern rationalism, and has hidden its judgments behind a rhetoric of scientificity and objectivity.' It's not individuals that are problems. It's disciplines and institutions.

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