

CHAPTER ELEVEN:

DISCUSSION

As I stated in the Introduction, my concern in this thesis has been to shed light on contemporary constructs of ECEC in NSW by historicising the present. My aim was to determine the conditions that gave rise to ECEC in NSW with the purpose of using these historical understandings to reflect on contemporary ECEC. In this chapter, I highlight the similarities I found between the historical and contemporary constructs, and argue that these similarities exist because, in both periods, ECEC has been shaped by the same discursive framework, consisting of economic, scientific, liberal / progressive, nationalist and gender discourses. Identification of the discursive nature of these constructs enables contemporary constructs to be challenged. I contend, however, that whilst it is possible to transform discourses so that alternative constructs can emerge, the possibilities of what ECEC can 'be' is confined and constrained by this discursive framework. I go on to discuss the implications of these findings for ECEC policy makers and professionals. Also in this chapter, I (i) argue for the usefulness of historical study for addressing issues of the present; (ii) acknowledge the limitations of my study; (iii) highlight the contribution my work makes to the scholarly literature; (iv) make suggestions for further research; and (v) offer some concluding thoughts.

Historical and Contemporary Constructs of ECEC in NSW

My study found remarkable similarities between the ways in which ECEC was constructed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the ways it is constructed today. These findings have been summarised in Appendices 9 – 14 where I juxtapose in tabular form the contemporary and historical constructs, and summarise the

problematizations of these constructs. As has been argued throughout this thesis, each of these constructs of ECEC is problematic in some way. None is value free.

Constructs of ECEC in NSW Emerge within a Particular Discursive Framework

I contend that the similarities between the historical and contemporary constructs of ECEC exist because, in both periods, ECEC in NSW has emerged from within a discursive framework consisting of economic, liberal / progressive, scientific, nationalist and gender discourses, illustrated in the diagram below (Figure 20) which was introduced in Chapter Two. These discourses give rise to various ways of viewing education, children, and women. Although these discourses are themselves fluid and constantly shifting, they form a discursive framework that creates spaces wherein multiple constructs of ECEC can emerge.¹

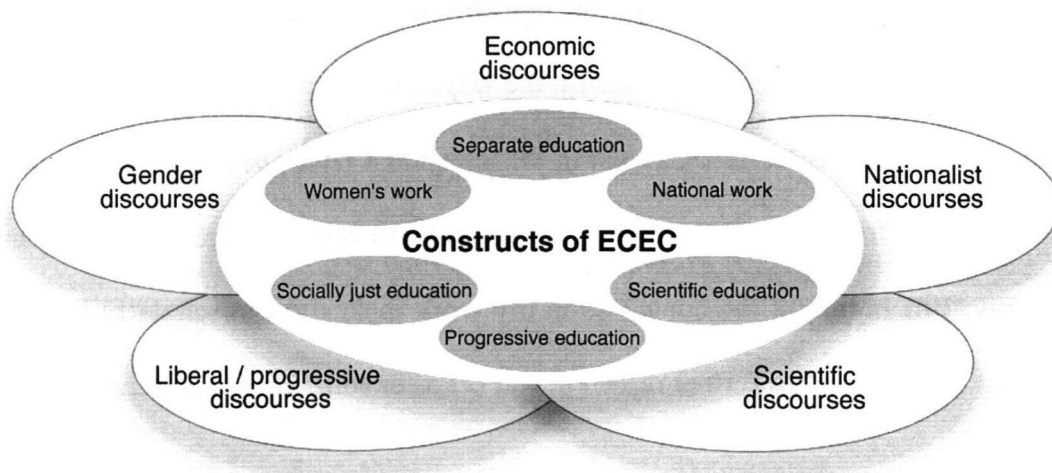


Figure 20: The constructs of ECEC identified and the discursive field within which they emerged.

¹ H. L. Dreyfus, & P. Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (2nd edition with an afterword by and an interview with Michel Foucault) (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); K. J. Gergen, *An Invitation to Social Construction* (London: Sage, 1999); M. Jørgensen, & L. Phillips, *Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (London: Sage, 2002); E. Laclau, & C. Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London : Verso, 1985).

Economic Discourses

Economic discourses were foundational for the emergence of ECEC in NSW. As my historical examination has revealed, it was within the economic discourses surrounding the depression of the 1890s, that the education of children younger than six years was constructed as an unnecessary expense for Government, on children considered too young to learn, dangerous to their health and outside the parameters of State provision. These discourses lead to the exclusion of young children from public schools, but also created the opportunity for ECEC to emerge as education separate from that for older children.

Today, the invidious power of market economic discourses mitigates against state provision of services such as ECEC, and continues to reinforce the boundary between prior-to-school ECEC and State funded school education, which marginalises ECEC.²

These market economic discourses, with their emphasis on private consumption and private enterprise, increasingly shape ECEC. Market economic discourses have created a space where ECEC can be constructed as a commercial venture, in response to private demand, and have heralded perhaps one of the most significant shifts in the landscape of ECEC in NSW.³ In ways unprecedented, within market economic discourses, ECEC in NSW is constructed as a commodity, with its quality and availability determined by the market forces of individual consumer choice and purchasing capacity.⁴

² F. Argy, 'Australia at the crossroads: Radical free market or progressive liberalism?: Key issues and conclusions', *The Australian Economic Review*. 31 (4) (1998), 373 – 383; C. T. Bathala, & A. R. Korukonda, 'Social performance of free markets: Issues, analysis and appraisal', *International Journal of Social Economics*. 30 (8) (2003), 854 – 866; D. Bryan, 'Australian economic nationalism: Old and new', *Australian Economic Papers*. 30 (57) (1991), 290 – 309, p.293.

³ D. Brennan, 'Child care and Australian social policy', in J. Bowes (ed.), *Children, Families and Communities: Contexts and Consequences* (2nd ed.) (Sydney: Oxford University Press, 2004), 210 – 227.

⁴ F. Press, & C. Woodrow, 'Commodification, corporatisation and children's spaces', *Australian Journal of Education*. 49 (3), 278 – 291; J. Sumsion, 'The corporatization of Australian childcare: Towards an ethical audit and research agenda', *Early Childhood Research Journal*. (forthcoming).

There are, however, tensions evident between these constructs of ECEC, that emerge within market economic discourses and construct ECEC as a private, individualistic matter, and the constructs of ECEC as national work that I go on to discuss later in this section. The latter emerge within nationalist discourses and suggest ECEC should be available to all children for the benefit of the nation. The differences between these constructs highlight the often conflicting and contradictory ways ECEC can be constructed within the discursive framework of one place and time.

Liberal / Progressive Discourses

Liberal / progressive discourses have also been highly significant for the construction of ECEC in NSW. My investigation revealed it was liberal / progressive discourses of the late nineteenth century that led to an increased interest in children and calls for educational reform. These discourses created a space where Free Kindergartens could emerge as models of new 'progressive' pedagogy.

Liberal / progressive discourses, which focus on individual freedom and choice and creative self-expression, still pervade contemporary Western ideology.⁵ These discourses continue to uphold the child-centred, play-based and individualistic aspects of ECEC, which are not only considered by many ECEC advocates to be central to current ECEC pedagogy, but are also evident in the documents governing ECEC in NSW.⁶ Further, contemporary liberal / progressive discourses continue to create an

⁵ M. Olssen, J. Codd, & A-M. O'Neill, *Education Policy: Globalization, Citizenship & Democracy* (London: Sage, 2004).

⁶ Department of Family and Community Services, *Children's Services Regulation*, 2004. Accessed on 25 September, 2005, from: http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/html/comm_partners/childrens_regs.htm; Department of Family and Community Services, *The National Agenda for Early Childhood: A Draft Framework* (ACT: Commonwealth of Australia, 2004). Accessed on 27 May, 2005, from: http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/family/early_childhood.htm;

emphasis on progress and improvement.⁷ Perhaps this futuristic orientation is why ECEC professionals are willing to embrace 'new' curricula and why ECEC in NSW continues to be highly influenced by work from the United States, Britain, New Zealand and Europe.

Liberal / progressive discourses also underpin the focus on social justice in ECEC.⁸ In the past, liberal / progressive discourses not only gave rise to new ways of viewing poverty, but constructed children as vulnerable and innocent, thus creating the opportunity for ECEC to emerge as a way of both rescuing and forming children, and 'reforming society'. Similarly, contemporary liberal / progressive discourses that have a social justice ethic and call for fairness and equity, create spaces for constructs of ECEC to emerge as socially just education that aims to ameliorate the effects of disadvantage and to change inequitable practices.

Scientific Discourses

Analysis of the historical texts revealed how ECEC in NSW was constructed within scientific discourses, dominant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Within these discourses, children became a focus of enquiry. The importance of the environment on children's development was recognised, which made intervention meaningful, and there were calls for education to be more 'scientific' in its approach and evaluation. Within these discourses ECEC emerged, not only as education based on

National Childcare Accreditation Council, *Quality Improvement and Accreditation System Handbook* (3rd ed). Accessed on 25 September, 2005, from:

http://www.ncac.gov.au/qias_publications/new_qias_publications.htm#Handbook.

⁷ Olssen, *et al.*, *Education Policy*.

⁸ Olssen, *et al.*, *Education Policy*.

scientific knowledge, but also as education that used scientific methods to ‘improve’ teaching.

Scientific discourses continue to inform ECEC in NSW, as our understandings about how children grow and learn are informed by scientific research.⁹ Moreover, there is sustained interest in the role that ECEC has in either enhancing, or jeopardising, children’s development and well-being. Scientific discourses, therefore, continue to uphold the construction of ECEC as scientific education based on scientific knowledge, with the aim of improving children’s development in a scientifically ‘measurable’ way.

Nationalist Discourses

Historically, nationalist discourses have been highly influential in constructing ECEC. In the early twentieth century, when Australians felt threatened by a possible ‘invasion’ from the ‘north’, those operating within nationalist discourses argued for the importance of a strong economy to ensure national stability: Children were seen as valuable assets and there was increased concern with their welfare. But they were also viewed as potentially dangerous and requiring strict supervision. Within these discourses, a space was created wherein a construct of ECEC as national work could emerge, as an important way of saving children by providing safe and healthy work-related child care, and as a means of producing future productive citizens and reducing the costs associated with crime and punishment.

In a similar way, in contemporary NSW, the uncertainties of a globalised economy have increased nationalist discourses and once again the “dialectic of the global and the

⁹ S. Ryan, & S. Grieshaber, ‘Shifting from developmental to postmodern practices in early childhood teacher education’, *Journal of Teacher Education*. 56 1 (2005), 34 – 45.

local” asserts the need for a strong workforce who are able to compete in an increasingly competitive market.¹⁰ Upholding these nationalist discourses are neo-liberal discourses that assert the role of the State in producing “enterprising and competitive entrepreneur[s]” who will contribute to the national wealth.¹¹ And so, just as it was over a hundred years ago, nationalist discourses once again create a space where ECEC is constructed as contributing to national wealth by providing work-related care, an investment in the future potential of children, and a way of reducing the cost associated with anti-social behaviour. As previously mentioned, however, unlike in the past, the rise in market economic discourses has vested much of the provision of childcare with the private sector, rather than with philanthropic organisations.

Gender Discourses

Since its inception, ECEC in NSW has been shaped by gender discourses. In the late nineteenth century, ‘new woman’ discourses were on the rise and women were taking on increasingly active public roles in politics, employment and education. However, the most powerful gender discourses constructed women as essentially different from men, and the care and education of young children as women’s work. These discourses, whilst creating a space for ECEC to emerge as legitimate employment and education for women, served to reinforce the notion that ECEC was both work done by women, and work done for women.

In the twenty-first century, despite significant shifts in gender discourses, the feminisation of care and education of young children has been resistant to change and

¹⁰ N. Rose, *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.144.

¹¹ Olssen, *et al.*, *Education Policy*, p.136.

continues to construct children's care as primarily women's concern.¹² In the NSW context, much as they did over a century ago, gender discourses continue to uphold the construct of ECEC as women's work, that is, as work 'naturally' conducted by women but also done for the benefit of women.

In summary, in this section I have argued that the economic, scientific, liberal / progressive, nationalist and gender discourses from which ECEC first arose in NSW, continue to provide a framework that creates the spaces wherein particular constructs of ECEC emerge. Historical and contemporary constructs of ECEC have been intimately connected to the constructs of education, children and women that these discourses uphold. Below, I show how my work challenges these contemporary constructs but go on to argue that whilst alternative constructs are possible, ECEC is constrained by the discursive framework in which it operates. I then discuss the implications of my findings for ECEC policy makers and professionals.

Challenging Contemporary Constructs

By showing how constructs emerged within discourses, my study challenges the taken-for-granted nature of contemporary constructs. For instance, my finding that it was within the economic discourses surrounding the 1890s depression that children were excluded from publicly funded state schooling, challenges the supposed naturalness of this separation, revealing it to be merely an 'accident' of history, albeit upheld by dominant beliefs about children, the ways they learn, and the role of government in the

¹² M. E. Hauser, & J. J. Jipson (eds.), *Intersections: Feminisms / Early Childhoods* (New York: Peter Lang, 1998); S. Rocco, 'Construction of gender in 'early childhood': An introduction to feminist poststructuralism', in E. J. Mellor, & K. M. Coombe (eds.), *Issues in Early Childhood Services: Australian Perspectives* (Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown, 1994), 103 – 116; C. Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theory* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987).

provision of education for young children. By identifying the separation of ECEC from later education as a construct, rather than a 'truth', this construct can be challenged.

In a similar way, my study challenges the social justice construct of ECEC. In late nineteenth and early twentieth century NSW, advocates constructed ECEC within liberal / progressive discourses as socially just education. But looking back on these constructs we can now see how, although they may have had many positive effects, power operated to uphold dominant ways of being that continued to marginalise certain groups. On reflection, many contemporary arguments for socially just ECEC can also be seen to be based on particular ways of viewing the world that may merely reinforce white, middle-class ideals.¹³ The profession of ECEC in NSW has inherited a rich tradition of striving for social equity. However, what we consider 'socially just' at any moment, is a function of our position in the socio-cultural and historically contingent discourses. Future historians may well look back on our practices and consider them ill-conceived or even harmful.

Revealing the socially constructed nature of ECEC enables previously taken-for-granted constructs to be challenged. But are alternative constructs of ECEC possible? I address this question below.

Are Alternative Constructs of ECEC Possible?

My answer as to whether alternative constructs of ECEC are possible is both 'yes' and 'no'. On the one hand, as discourses shift it is possible for alternative constructs of ECEC to emerge. Dahlberg, Moss and Pence argue, for instance, that through criticising

¹³ N. Norguay, 'Social difference and the problem of the "unique individual": An uneasy legacy of child-centred pedagogy', *Canadian Journal of Education*. 24 (2) (1999), 183 – 196.

dominant discourses, not only can “the constructions and practices that they produce ... be challenged” but “spaces can be created within which alternative discourses and constructions can be produced and new boundaries created”.¹⁴ The ongoing struggles between discourses constantly shift the terrain within which ECEC is constituted, and thus offer opportunities for ECEC to be constructed in ‘new’ ways.¹⁵ It is possible, therefore, for ECEC to be constructed differently. For example, my study identified that young children once received education within the school system: If contemporary economic and nationalist discourses were to shift sufficiently, it might be possible to once again create a space where ECEC could emerge as an integral part of a free and universally available education system.

On the other hand, ECEC in NSW is somewhat confined by the framework of economic, liberal / progressive, scientific, nationalistic and gender discourses. As I argued in Chapter One, power operates through discourses to uphold dominant ways of being; discourses also tend to reinforce one another, making them resistant to change.¹⁶ The similarity between the historical and contemporary constructs I identified, attests to the enduring nature of these discourses and suggests that, whilst some shifting of discourses is possible, they may ultimately define the possibilities of ECEC. As such, I contend that ECEC advocates need to be cognisant of these discourses, understand the limitations and opportunities they afford, and acknowledge that people may vary in

¹⁴ G. Dahlberg, P. Moss, & A. Pence, A., *Beyond Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care: Postmodern Perspectives* (London: Falmer Press, 1999), p.34.

¹⁵ Dreyfus & Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*; Laclau, & Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*.

¹⁶ V. Burr, ‘Overview: Realism, relativism, social constructionism and discourse’, in I. Parker (ed.), *Social Constructionism, Discourse and Realism* (London: Sage, 1998), 13 - 25; N. Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992); M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings by Michel Foucault, 1972-1977* (C. Gordon Ed., and Trans), (New York: Pantheon, 1972/1980); Laclau & Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*; D. N. A. Hayes, ‘Genealogical tales about educational provision in Australia since colonisation: Tracing the decent of discourses of gender equity’, *Australian Educational Researcher*. 27 (1) (2000), 47 – 69; R. Wodak, *Disorders of Discourse* (London: Longman, 1996).

their understandings about the meanings of ECEC, depending on the discourses within which they are operating.

Implications of the Study for ECEC Professionals and Policy Makers

There are a number of implications of my study for ECEC policy makers and professionals. First, by showing there are multiple constructs of ECEC that emerge within a variety of discourses, my study suggests there may be diverse perceptions of what ECEC 'is'. Although there may be broad agreement that ECEC should promote physical, psychological, emotional, moral and intellectual health and wellbeing, there may be significant differences in the ways ECEC is constructed by individuals, depending upon the discourses within which they are operating.¹⁷ For instance, those operating primarily within economic discourses may be concerned with costs and benefits of ECEC, and which services give the best 'value for money'.¹⁸ Increasing our understanding of how our own and others' perspectives are discursively constructed may enhance the likelihood of our being able to enter into, and sustain, meaningful dialogues with others and may promote more collaborative decision making between those with vested interests in ECEC, such as, ECEC professionals, parents and children, providers and policy makers.

In particular, policy makers, as those responsible for future directions of ECEC, need to recognise the complex ways ECEC is constructed, and how these constructs emerged and are upheld, in order to understand the sometimes contradictory arguments given for particular constructs of ECEC. Moreover, when hearing submissions from various

¹⁷ A. C. Huston, 'Reforms and child development', *Future of Children*. 12 (1) (2002), 59 – 77.

¹⁸ A. C. Huston, 'Connecting the science of child development to public policy', *Social Policy Report*. XIX (IV) (2005), 3 – 18.

lobbyists they should reflect on the arguments given and interrogate the particular positions they uphold, and ensure they give due consideration to each of the multiple views.

Second, my study suggests that those of us who advocate for ECEC should use all the discourses at our disposal. One of the most important lessons I have learnt from my examination of the past is the need for ECEC advocates to operate and negotiate within the discourses of their day. The women pioneers of ECEC in NSW used the discourses of their period to construct and advocate ECEC. They used liberal / progressive discourses to argue that ECEC was necessary for the development of an advanced society, and scientific discourses to legitimate their practices. Operating within economic and nationalist discourses proved an effective strategy for drawing attention to the needs of children. They also negotiated within the potentially stifling essentialist gender discourses to advocate ECEC as an avenue for women's employment and higher education.

I would argue that today's ECEC advocates would do well to emulate their pioneering foremothers. For instance, it is important that ECEC professionals understand that ECEC is situated in economic discourses that extend beyond national borders to the global context.¹⁹ Traditionally, economic matters have not been part of the ECEC practitioner's professional preparation, so we are often ill-prepared to talk with authority on such matters. This omission has been to the detriment of the field. If ECEC professionals want to remain relevant, it is imperative we have at our disposal the language required to enter into the economic debates in an informed and meaningful

¹⁹ Argy, 'Australia at the crossroads'; Bathala & Korukonda, 'Social performance of free markets'; Bryan, 'Australian economic nationalism'.

way. Issues of social equity are not confined to those of us within the field of ECEC. We may have much to learn from economists who are concerned with issues of social equity and fair distribution of wealth.²⁰ It is essential that we, as ECEC advocates, understand how to use economic debates to advocate our cause.

Similarly, the construction of ECEC within nationalist discourses has proven a powerful and effective strategy for those advocating ECEC in the past. If we are to have our voices heard, we may need to continue to operate within nationalist discourses. Given their power, to ignore the nationalist discourses may be foolhardy indeed.

In a like manner, we need to understand and use scientific discourses. Despite the recent criticisms of scientific constructs of ECEC, such as those from deconstructionists discussed in Chapter Three, advocates of ECEC cannot dismiss scientific discourses. Not only are they too powerful to be ignored in today's world where rationality is particularly highly valued, but historical research attests to their longevity. To ignore scientific discourses is likely to be futile.

Scientific discourses have proven highly valuable in the past for advocates of ECEC and contemporary ECEC professionals, too, can embrace scientific discourses and make them work for us. I am not suggesting that scientific discourses should replace pedagogy; we need to have clearly articulated educational philosophies.²¹ But we can use scientific understandings to support and inform our practices, as long as we approach scientific research reports with a healthy degree of skepticism. I would

²⁰ Argy, 'Australia at the crossroads'.

²¹ M. Vandenbroek, 'From crèches to childcare: Constructions of motherhood and inclusion/exclusion in the history of Belgium infant care', *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*. 4 (2) (2003), 137 – 148.

suggest, also, that we should be involved with the planning and implementation of scientific research examining ECEC and children's development, and contribute to shaping the future directions of scientific research towards answering the questions we consider most important.

Third, my study suggests that early childhood professionals like myself need to continue to strive to recognise the bias in our work. As previously argued, no construct of ECEC is value free. Even our construction of ECEC as socially just education is potentially marginalising. Indeed, I contend that the creation of an ECEC that is socially just for all is unattainable: All we can ever hope for is an understanding of how power operates through our practices. Despite these problematisations of socially just constructs of ECEC, I am not suggesting that these ideals be abandoned. Rather, I argue that ECEC professionals need to acknowledge them for what they are; culturally and historically contingent ways of looking the world. If advocates choose to advocate ECEC on the basis of social justice, and I think we should, we need to be open and transparent in our arguments, reflect on our beliefs, and clearly articulate our ideas. As Moss says, ECEC professionals:

... continually confront choices — about purposes, meanings, practice, and relationships — which require us to make decisions that are ethical in nature. These are judgments of value, which cannot be left to experts or managers nor can be answered by the application of some universal moral framework.²²

Ultimately, it is up to individuals to critically reflect on, and make ethical choices about, their daily practices and how these practices may influence, not only the lives of the children in their care and their families, but also the wider social context. Perhaps too, given the lack of evidence of a socially just construct of ECEC evident in public

²² P. Moss, 'Ethics in the nursery,' *Every Child*. 7 (3) (2000), 6 – 7, p.6.

documents examined in Chapter Four, those who advocate ECEC on this basis need to work more effectively to communicate this construct to the wider public audience.

Finally, it is incumbent upon early childhood professionals to reflect on, and make visible to others, how our work in ECEC is discursively shaped and perhaps work towards changing those discourses which marginalise or disempower. For instance, discourses that construct children as commodities, or exoticise or objectify them, should be challenged and countered by discourses that empower children. Similarly, we could strive to challenge the constraints that gender discourses place both on women and men. For, as long as there are gender discourses that normalise child care as a 'women's issue', there will be cultural anxiety surrounding the non-maternal care of young children. Moreover, ECEC will continue to be constructed as natural women's work, requiring limited qualifications and poor remuneration, and men will continue to be marginalised from the profession.²³ It may, therefore, be in our best interests to work towards shifting gender discourses towards greater gender equity.

In the preceding sections, I have shown how my study challenges contemporary constructs, and argued that, although it may be possible for alternative constructs to emerge, ECEC is somewhat constrained by the discursive framework in which it operates. I have also drawn implications of my work for ECEC policy makers and professionals. Below, I argue for the usefulness of history for studying issues of the present and acknowledge the limitations of my study, before discussing how my work contributes to the scholarly literature and making suggestions for future work.

²³ J. Sumsion, 'Negotiating *otherness*: A male early childhood educator's gender positioning', *International Journal of Early Years*. 8 (2) (2000), 129 – 140.

The Usefulness of Historical Study for Addressing Issues of the Present

I have found historical work to be an extremely useful method for examining issues of the present.²⁴ The distancing created by time enabled me to 'see' the historical constructs, perhaps more clearly than might have been the case if I were embedded in the context.²⁵ I believe my engagement with these historical constructs increased my sensitivity to similar constructs in the contemporary context. That is, my historical work assisted me to recognise that constructs of ECEC, which had previously seemed so 'natural' to me, were in fact socially constructed.

My historical work, by enabling me to recognise the similarities between past and present constructs of ECEC, has also reaffirmed my postmodern understandings about 'progress'.²⁶ The notion of progress is pervasive and extremely alluring — not only does it give us a sense of superiority over those who came before, it also gives us optimism for a brighter tomorrow. But a progressive view is only one way of looking at the world, and one with which I cannot agree. My study suggests to me that ECEC is not on a progressive march towards some mythical Utopia, but rather is continually being constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed within a discursive field that is itself fluid in its nature.²⁷

²⁴ M. Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (A. Sheriden Trans) (New York: Vintage, 1979).

²⁵ Jørgensen & Phillips, *Discourse Analysis*.

²⁶ R. Appignanesi, C. Garrat, Z. Sarder, & P. Curry, *Postmodernism for Beginners* (Cambridge: Icon Books, 1995); T. Docherty (ed.), *Postmodernism: A Reader* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993); N. Hampson, *The Enlightenment* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1968).; H. A. Giroux (ed.), *(Postmodernism, Feminism, and Cultural Politics: Redrawing Educational Boundaries* (New York: State university of New York Press, 1991); P. Waugh (ed.), *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London: Edward Arnold, 1992).

²⁷ Dreyfus & Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*.

Limitations of My Study

As I have previously acknowledged in Chapter Two, I recognise that my use of history to inform the present could be seen as problematic by some historians. I concede that my identification of contemporary constructs may have been influenced by my historical work and vice versa. However, I was not aiming to find the ‘truth’ of ECEC in either period, but rather to identify multiple constructs of ECEC. I believe my use of history enriched this analysis. Further, I trust that my openness in showing how I identified these constructs within the historical and contemporary texts attests to the integrity of my findings.

I also recognise that my study might be interpreted as limited. First, I examined only one historical period. A genealogy may have allowed for examination through time. However, the strength of examining one historical period in-depth is that I have been able to identify the multiple ways in which ECEC was constructed at that one time. Second, my study was limited by my inability to access the Sydney Day Nursery Association archives, which were closed because of major renovations being conducted. However, there were several documents pertaining to Sydney Day Nursery held in the Mitchell Wing of the State Library of NSW, including all the annual reports for the period examined. These documents, and others accessed, gave valuable, although admittedly not exhaustive, insights into how Sydney Day Nursery was constructed.

I have to acknowledge, also, that whilst engaging with the historical texts, I was troubled by the lack of mention of Indigenous Australians in these documents. I can only speculate why Aboriginal children were not mentioned. Their invisibility may be because it was thought unnecessary to draw attention to the race of children — but this

seems unlikely. Alternative explanations are that there were few Indigenous people living in the inner-city areas where the Free Kindergartens and Sydney Day Nursery were situated, or that those who did live close, chose not to attend or were actively discouraged from attending the Free Kindergartens and Sydney Day Nursery. Their exclusion from the documents may also reflect the general absence of records relating to either the children's or parents' contributions. I find the omission of Indigenous issues particularly concerning because it means that, despite my concerted and overt efforts to try to include Indigenous issues in this thesis, my study actually contributes to the exclusion of Indigenous Australians from our history — for this I am profoundly sorry.

Contribution of the Study to the Scholarly Literature

My study contributes to the scholarly literature in a number of ways. First, my findings contribute to the body of work that deconstructs ECEC, by providing an Australian perspective. A number of the constructs I identified in the NSW context are similar to those identified in other contexts by authors whose work I have discussed previously. For instance, my construct of ECEC as *Socially Just Education: Rescuing Children* is very like the discourse of ECEC as *Services for Children in Need* that Moss identified in the United Kingdom, and the discourse *For the sake of the children*, identified by Duncan in New Zealand, both mentioned in Chapter Two.²⁸ Likewise, my construct of ECEC as *National Work: Facilitating Workforce Participation* resembles Moss and

²⁸ J. Duncan, 'For the sake of the children' as the worth of teacher? The gendered discourses of the New Zealand national kindergarten teachers' employment negotiations', *Gender and Education*. 8 (2) (1996), 159 – 170; D. S. Lero, 'Early childhood education: An empowering force for the twenty-first century?', in J. Hayden (ed.), *Landscapes in Early Childhood Education: Cross-National Perspectives on Empowerment — a Guide for the New Millennium* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 445 – 457.

Brannen's and Moss's discourse *Childcare for Working Parents*, identified in the United Kingdom, also mentioned in Chapter Two.²⁹

Moreover, the individual and play based nature of ECEC, which I include in my construct of ECEC as *Progressive Education*, has been identified and problematised by writers such as Cannella in the United States, and Ailwood writing of ECEC in Queensland.³⁰ Similarly, the scientific focus apparent in my construct of ECEC as *Scientific Education and Care*, also discussed in Chapter Three, has been particularly well documented in the United States.³¹ In addition, the economic function of ECEC, which is an aspect of my ECEC as *National Work*, has been identified in Queensland by Thelander, as I mentioned in Chapter Two.³² The similarities between the ways ECEC is constructed across place attests to the dominant nature of these constructs and further upholds my argument that there may be limits to the way it is possible to construct ECEC, at least within dominant Western discourses.

There are, however, some differences between my findings and those of other writers. In particular, I did not find, as Moss did, that ECEC was constructed as *Nursery*

²⁹ P. Moss, & J. Brannen, 'Concepts relationships and policies' in J. Brannen, & P. Moss (eds.), *Rethinking Children's Care* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003), 1 – 22; Lero, 'Early childhood education'.

³⁰ J. Ailwood, 'Governing Preschool: Producing and Managing Preschool Education in Queensland Government Schools.' PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2002; G. S. Cannella, *Deconstructing Early Childhood Education: Social Justice and Revolution* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997).

³¹ See for instance: M. N. Bloch, 'Critical perspectives on the historical relationship between child development and early childhood research', in S. Kessler, & B. B. Swadener (eds.), *Reconceptualizing the Early Childhood Curriculum: Beginning the Dialogue* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1992), 3 – 20; S. G. Goffin, 'Child development knowledge and early childhood teacher preparation: Assessing the relationship — a special collection', *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*. 11 (1996), 117 – 133; S. Lubeck, 'Deconstructing "child development knowledge" and "teacher preparation"', *Early Childhood Quarterly*. 11 (1996), 147 – 176; S. Lubeck, 'On reassessing the relevance of the child development knowledge base to education: A response', *Human Development*. 43 (4/5) (2000), 273 – 278.

³² C. Thelander, 'Early childhood education policy and 2010: Critical perspectives', in B. H. Knight, & L. Rowan (eds.), *Researching in Contemporary Educational Environments* (Laxton, Queensland: Post Pressed, 2001), 149 – 167.

Education for the Over Threes: Rather, I found that when ECEC was discussed, particularly within the NSW media, there was little differentiation made between the various types of ECEC services.³³ The tendency not to differentiate between services could suggest the media's recognition of the multifunctional services that ECEC performs. Conversely, and far more likely, it might reflect a lack of understanding of the complex and diverse nature of ECEC in NSW. As I described in the Introduction, the provision of ECEC in NSW is a complex array of services, catering for different ages, under different legislation and with different funding arrangements.³⁴

A second way my study contributes to the scholarly literature is by capturing the multiplicity of meanings of ECEC in one particular context, NSW. My study provides a picture of the complex, diverse, and even contradictory meanings of ECEC that can exist at any one place and time. This is not to suggest that the constructs of ECEC I have identified are the only ones possible; there may be others that I have 'missed'. Further, although I have tried to be open about the ways I have coded and categorised the data to develop these constructs, people may disagree with my analysis. Nevertheless, my study highlights how ECEC can be variously interpreted.

Third, my study adds to historical deconstruction work, by contributing to our understanding of the ways discourses shape the possibilities of ECEC.³⁵ There are similarities between my findings that dominant discourses of late nineteenth and early twentieth century NSW created a space where various constructs of ECEC could emerge and that these discourses continue to shape ECEC, and those of Pacini-

³³ Lero, 'Early childhood education'.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Thelander, 'Early childhood education and 2010'.

Ketchabaw, who found that, in the Canadian context, the dominant discourses of the early twentieth century that made the enactment of the Day Nursery Act (DNA) possible, “remain embedded within the current Act”.³⁶ Moreover, my study resonates soundly with Ailwood’s genealogical work, in which she found that in early twentieth century Queensland, the discourses of gender, science, play, Fröebelian kindergarten, philanthropy and Empire were productive, and remain evident in contemporary texts about preschool education in Queensland, along with the discourses of change, postmodernism and globalisation.³⁷ These similarities illustrate how ECEC continues to be shaped by similar discourses across time and place. Moreover, like Vandenbroek’s work in Belgium, my study suggests that these dominant discourses have tended to exclude those from the lowest socio-economic or marginalised groups.³⁸

Whilst I found previous deconstructionist writing particularly valuable for my analysis of how power operates through these discourses in ECEC in NSW, upon critical reflection, I have some reservations about deconstructionist work. Firstly, as Hatch suggests, problematisation is rather elitist.³⁹ The language employed by many deconstructionist writers is often highly specialised and perhaps exclusionary. Secondly, and perhaps more troublingly, with an increasing recognition of the ways our work is problematic, there is a danger that such critiques could paralyse us into inaction. As such, my intention when I analysed the ways power operated through ECEC in NSW, was to provide a balanced and pragmatic approach. Throughout my

³⁶ V. Pacini-Ketchabaw, ‘The meanings embedded within childcare regulations: A historical analysis’, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*. 6 (1) (2005), 41 – 53, p.42.

³⁷ J. Ailwood ‘Governing Preschool: Producing and Managing Preschool Education in Queensland Government Schools.’ PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2002, p.8.

³⁸ Vandenbroek, ‘From crèches to childcare’.

³⁹ A. Hatch, ‘Critical and feminist reconstructions of early childhood education: Continuing the conversations. A Colloquia organised by G. S. Cannella’, *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education*. 1 (2) (2000), 215 - 221.

problematisation of the contemporary constructs, I argued that, whilst ECEC advocates and practitioners need to recognise the ways our work may uphold inequitable practices, we also need to 'get on with the job' of ECEC. To do 'nothing' is not an option.

Finally, my study contributes to the scholarly literature by providing a critical history of ECEC in NSW. I recognise, as other historians have done previously, that power operated through these early constructs of ECEC.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, I value and respect the work of our foremothers. My reading of the texts suggests to me that the women pioneers of ECEC were attempting to do what they thought was best for children who they considered 'in need'. Certainly, as shown in Chapters Five to Ten, many of their practices were dubious, and may have contributed to the subjugation of working-class children and their families. But, just like many of today's ECEC advocates, these women were middle-class, and they could not help but see the world through middle-class eyes. It is easy to look back with hindsight on the 'mistakes' of our past — but when we are engaged in the 'fray', it is not so easy to recognise how we perpetuate power relations. Yet, how would children have benefited if these early advocates of ECEC had done nothing, for fear of doing the 'wrong thing'?

Suggestions for Further Research

When I first attempted to write this section, I hit the proverbial writers' block. After having spent so long on my study, and experiencing the usual doubts of doctoral students regarding the relevance and importance of their work, I could not in all conscience make recommendations for future researchers. The breakthrough came when

⁴⁰ D. Brennan, *The Politics of Australian Child Care: Philanthropy to Feminism and Beyond* (rev. ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); J. Kelly, 'Not Merely Minded: Care and Education for the Young Child of Working Women in Sydney: The Sydney Day Nursery and Nursery Schools Association, 1905 – 1945.' PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1988.

I began to consider what I would do if I were granted a post-doctoral scholarship. The following discussion of suggestions for future research is, therefore, a mixture of logical 'next step' recommendations, as well as some rather more personal future ambitions.

There are a number of directions that future research into the social construction of ECEC in Australia could take. First, as this study suggests, media plays a significant role in shaping our understandings about what ECEC 'is' or 'could be'. But there are few studies examining media representations of ECEC in NSW.⁴¹ Detailed analysis of media representations of ECEC is required to identify the dominant images of ECEC conveyed in public texts.

Second, there is a need for further research examining the history of ECEC in Australia. There is a dearth of historical research examining ECEC in NSW, particularly from the 1920s on. It may well be that at different times ECEC has been constructed in radically different ways. Further research should include in-depth studies of particular historical periods to identify moments when other constructs emerged and what gave rise to these. Additionally, comparisons could be made across and between the Australian States and Territories, for each state in Australia has its own unique history that may have led to different constructs emerging, and as such, warrants individual examination.

Third, there are relatively few historical texts that examine the lives of the women who started Kindergarten Union and Sydney Day Nursery Association. In-depth biographical

⁴¹ For an example of media analysis see J. Hayden, 'Beyond Mr Bubbles: An analysis of the public image of early childhood care and education in Western Sydney', *Journal of Australian Research in Early Childhood Education*. 1 (1996), 65 – 76.

histories could develop our understandings about the capacities and qualities of these women, so that their pioneering work is neither misunderstood nor forgotten.

Fourth, we need to develop accessible professional archives. As previously discussed, my inability to access Sydney Day Nursery Association archives limited my study, but even without this disruption, finding archival material relating to ECEC was challenging. A great deal of valuable material exists. For instance, the Institute of Early Childhood Collection at Macquarie University, which houses archives of the Sydney Kindergarten Teachers' College, the Nursery School Teachers' College, and related materials, for example, holds some wonderful examples of student workbooks that give important insights into changing pedagogy and practices. Unfortunately, however, much of the material in the Institute of Early Childhood collection and the Kindergarten Union archives requires more detailed cataloguing. Investment of both time and money is required to make this material more readily accessible. Moreover, the work of contemporary ECEC practitioners, which will hopefully be the subject of future histories, needs to be archived and cataloged in a central ECEC repository.

Fifth, I believe that we need to make the history of ECEC come alive for the present generation of ECEC professionals so that they can see the value of doing historical work and how it can inform their practices and understandings about ECEC. This means those of us who 'do history' need to develop ways to effectively communicate our findings beyond the confines of academe to make them more accessible to a wider professional and public audience. One avenue that I would like to explore is the possibility of writing a script for a dramatic production about the establishment of Free Kindergartens in NSW.

Finally, it is important to make visible the ways ECEC is constructed cross-culturally. Most of the reported research examining ECEC has come from Western nations; there is relatively little known about how ECEC is viewed or constructed in non-Western countries, at least in English language texts.⁴² Have other nations taken on the 'cargo-culture' of ECEC, or are there perhaps constructs that we from the West have been blind to?⁴³ Given the dominance of Western ideas in contemporary times, it is imperative that we counter this hegemony by making visible 'other ways of being'.

Concluding Thoughts

My study suggests that the movement of ECEC through time is not a linear, sequential progression. Rather it is marked by multiplicity and is constructed within a socially and historically contingent discursive field. The development of any 'new' constructs of ECEC will occur within this discursive context. It may be that ECEC is confined within economic, scientific, nationalist, liberal / progressive and gender discourses. At different times different discourses become dominant, shifting the focus of ECEC — but at all times multiple constructs will be possible. ECEC professionals would do well to recognise the potentials of this discursive framework. We can actively seek to understand its possibilities, to define the pedagogical implications of each construct, to share our common understandings. This is not to say that any one construct of ECEC is necessarily 'better' than any other. Rather, this discussion would put forward propositions that can be investigated and challenged by those concerned with ECEC. In this way, new possibilities for ECEC might emerge.

⁴² For an example of cross-cultural analysis see J. Hayden, (ed.), *Landscapes in Early Childhood Education: Cross-National Perspectives on Empowerment — a Guide for the New Millennium* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000).

⁴³ R. Johnson, 'Colonialism and cargo cults in early childhood education: Does Reggio Emilia really exist', *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education*. 1 (1) (1999), 61 - 78.

In conclusion, my examination of contemporary ECEC through historicising the past has provided a valuable contribution to the field of ECEC. It has identified multiple constructs of ECEC that exist in NSW today and discussed the ways power operates through these discourses; thus, providing an Australian perspective to the international literature. By examining the discourses within which ECEC first emerged, my study has shown how contemporary ECEC came to be constructed in the ways it was. Finally, it has provided an example of how historical research can be a valuable tool for helping us to critically reflect on contemporary constructs.

I leave the final words of this thesis to Margaret Newman, Kindergarten advocate of the nineteen hundreds. A good deal more than “twenty years” have passed since she made this prophetic statement, but I feel sure that, although I have found much to criticise in both past and contemporary constructs of ECEC, she would have welcomed this critique as an important contribution to the ongoing dialogues about ECEC:

Kindergarteners of ten or twenty years hence will probably find much to criticise in our work of to-day. I wonder how they will view it, and what criticisms they will make upon it?⁴⁴



⁴⁴ M. A. Newman, ‘Some phases in Kindergarten history’, *The Australian Kindergarten Magazine*. 1 (4) (1911), 5 – 7, p.7

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Formation not re=formation (Circa 1910).

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Appendix 1: Letter from KU Children's Services.

28 June 2002

ABN 89 000 006 137

129 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Box Q132, QVB Post Office NSW 1230
Tel: 02 9264 8366 • Fax: 02 9267 6653
email: childrensservices@ku.com.au
website: www.ku.com.au

Ms Sandie Wong
6 First Avenue
Willoughby NSW 2068

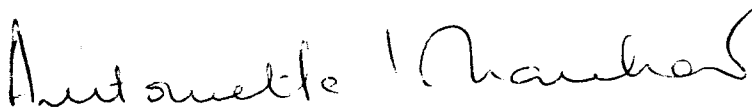
Dear Sandie

Hello Sandie, nice to hear from you.

I am only too happy to give you written permission to access the Kindergarten Union archives in the Mitchell Library. I am sure the KU archives will provide valuable documentary evidence for your thesis on the social construction of Early Childhood Education in NSW late 19th and early 20th century.

Best of luck and success in your thesis.

Yours sincerely



Antoinette le Marchant
Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 2: Letter from *The Bulletin*.



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Appendix 3: Letter from KU Children's Services.

19 December 2005

129 York Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Box Q132, QVB Post Office NSW 1230
Tel: 02 9264 8366 • Fax: 02 9267 6653
email: childrensservices@ku.com.au
website: www.ku.com.au

State Library of New South Wales
Macquarie Street
Sydney 2000

Dear Sir/Madam

This letter authorises Sandie Wong, a doctoral student at the Institute of Early Childhood, Macquarie University – New South Wales 2109, permission to include copies and photographs (letter attached) to complete her thesis entitled, *The Social Construction of Early Childhood Education in New South Wales: Historicising the Present*.

Please do not hesitate to phone my secretary, Jan Allan, 9268 3904 if you have any queries concerning the letter.

Yours faithfully



Antoinette le Marchant
Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 4: Letter from SDN Children's Services, Inc.



CHILDREN'S
SERVICES INC.

educating and caring for our children
Patron: Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir AC
Governor of New South Wales

September 8 2003

Sandie Wong
Institute of Early Childhood
MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY 2109

Dear Sandie,

We were pleased to receive your letter of 30 August 2003 requesting permission to access our archives for the period 1905 - 1915.

SDN Children's Services now has a History Room at our Centre at Woolloomooloo (Cnr. Reid and McElhone Streets). We are experiencing an unanticipated delay in transferring our records from storage to the History room.

I will keep in touch over the coming months and advise you when access to the archives will be possible.

Thank you for your interest in our archives and best wishes for your doctoral studies.

Yours sincerely,

Effie Bland
Chair
History Committee

SDN Children's Services Inc.
A.C.N. 000 014 335
Level 1, 141-145 Pitt Street, Redfern, NSW 2016
Phone: (02) 9699 9311 Fax: (02) 9319 2394
Email: info@sdn.org.au
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Appendix 5: Summary of Data Sources.

SUMMARY OF DATA SOURCES

	Contemporary	Historical
Public	<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i> World Bank OECD	<i>The Sydney Morning Herald</i> <i>The Dawn</i> <i>The Bulletin</i>
Professional	NEW South Wales Curriculum Framework Early Childhood Australia documents.	Kindergarten Union archives Sydney Day Nursery archives Professional reports
Government	Hansards Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) Task force on Health and Well being Pathways to Prevention National Agenda OECD Australian background report	NSW Parliamentary Debates Government reports

Appendix 6: Example of early stage data analysis.

Anderson, F., M., Dane, (no initial) Dumolo, H A., Benjamin, Z., & Desailly, E (1916?). *Articles on Kindergarten*. The Kindergarten Union of New South Wales.

*This pamphlet, entitled *Articles on Kindergarten*, appears to be a document intended for public circulation. It explicitly attempts to set out the values and purposes of kindergarten and so is a valuable document for the study of the construction of ECE. It includes records of subscriptions to the Kindergarten Union, and seems to be attempting to solicit public financial support. So it may well be an example of an early charity advertisement.*

Anderson, F. (1916?). What are you doing to help the little children. In F. Anderson, M. Atkinson, (no initial) Dane, H. A. Dunolo, Z. Benjamin, & E. Desailly, *Articles on Kindergarten* (pp. 5 – 6). The Kindergarten Union of New South Wales.

*Anderson's writing is quite different in this pamphlet from that in the *History of Kindergarten*. Here she really gives way to rhetoric and hyperbole. See for example the quotes below.*

Anderson (1916. p.5) describes the work of Kindergartens:- “The Free Kindergartens save them [the children] from the pollution of the streets, and teach them to love truth and honour. Will you help them?”

Anderson (1916?) goes on to ask (p.5)

“Do you ever think of other people's children? I don't mean of your neighbour's children, who sit on pleasant verandas, grow like follows in the gardens where they play, but the children who live in one room in a poor street, or play in a little shop upon a dusty by-way – the children of the drunkard, or of the desolate woman, the children of those whose only ideal centres in the public-house at the corner. Do YOU ever think of THEM?”

It's all quite melodramatic. Is this in keeping with the literature of the time? Again there is the metaphor of the garden. It is obviously a most useful device for writers. It's also interesting that Anderson specifically ask about the children of the working woman.

Anderson (1916?) argues that unless something is done a cycle of vice and criminality will ensue.

“They will do as their parents did before them, and the generation of vice will never cease, for they have no higher ideal, and without a vision, the people perish. Why should we not cease to manufacture criminals? ... Policemen and lock-ups, magistrates and gaols, are very expensive. ... Why do we not economise, and at the same time save the body, should and spirit of the little child?”

Appendix 7: Example of beginning coding and development of categories.

In Chicago , since the establishment of Free Kindergartens, “the number of children sent to the reformatory institutions has shown a marked decrease” (free Kindergarten schools: Visit to the Woolloomooloo school, *SMH*, September 1, 1897, p.4).

Concerns with the Australian Identity

“There was no Australian race or type of people; but no doubt there would be in course of time, and a great deal would depend upon the efforts of the present generation as to what class of people the future Australian race would become. They should endeavour to so mould it as to make it the very best type possible. The work of nation-building was a slow process. The kindergarten movement was an important factor in the work of the building up of a nation. (Kindergarten School, Newtown, *SMH*, December 10, 1898, p.10).

Racist policies

There was a fear of invasion from non-whites. These non-whites were considered to threaten the jobs and business of Europeans. Syrians hawkers described as “cunning ... insolent ... inconceivably disgusting” (The Syrian Invasion: An Outcry Against Coloured Hawkers, *SMH*, January 17, 1893, p.6).

Reports the publication of a book by the Victorian Agent-General, Dr. Pearson, in which he justifies the exclusion of Chinese from Australia on racial grounds. (The Chinese in Australia, *SMH*, January 5 1893, p.7).

But some argued for accepting non-whites.

“With a declining birth rate that is causing alarm to thinking men and women, with a high death rate amongst our little children, here we are locking up our lands against others who would bring capital, labour [sic] and wealth among us” Joanna Lindsay, A White Australia, *The Dawn*, February 1, 1904, vol 17 (10), p.6).

Federation

“Loyalty and attachment to the Empire in seeking to build up, under the silken threads of connection with the Empire, a commonwealth here, which would be as free for all the purposes of human life and progress and liberty and law and order as any government formed by man could be. (Cheers.) Beyond that he still cherished the dream that these Australian colonies and all other parts of their wide extending Empire might unite in one great constellation of glories, the mother with her daughters spreading light, civilisation, and liberty all over the world.” (Report on an Address by Sir Henry Parkes, Federation of the Colonies, *SMH*, July 31, 1893, p.5).

Save Money

“One reason for asking for State assistance was that they were preparing the children for the public schools, and were preventing them from growing up into criminals, as many of them would otherwise do if left in the streets in their early years. Money spent by the State now helping the movement would mean less money spent in the future in

Appendix 8: Example of early stages of development of broad categories.

The Sydney Morning Herald

PROGRESS

Social Reform

Saving them from the gutter

“Mrs Westenholme briefly explained the advantages of the kindergarten system in saving children from the contamination of the gutter during their early years” (The Kindergarten Union: Deputation to Mr Garrad, *SMH*, February 7, 1897, p.3).

Rescuing them from their corrupt homes

“Taking little children from their often too busy mothers and placing them in this delightful garden, where their natural questionings could be answered by the teachers, was far better than their being idle or exposed to the possible dangers and troubles of some of their homes” (Newtown Free Kindergarten school: Sale of gifts, *SMH*, October 17 1898, p.3).

Beautiful surroundings

“The training is moral quite as much as mental, and every effort is made to have the children in pure, wholesome, and beautiful surroundings” (Newtown Free Kindergarten school: Sale of gifts, *SMH*, October 17 1898, p.3).

Reform children

“Too many children were left to roam about the streets. That developed the worst side of them; the kindergarten school, on the contrary, would develop the best side of them” (Kindergarten Union, *SMH*, August 2, 1895, p.3).

Especially useful for backward children

“One of the essential differences between this kind and the ordinary schools system is that it takes hold of young children even at the age of two years and by practical tuition prepares them for the ordinary course of public school instruction, and no class of children have the effects of kindergarten life more far-reaching [sic] than among nervous or backward children” (Newtown Free Kindergarten school: Sale of gifts, *SMH*, October 17 1898, p.3).

For the lower order

“The fields of operations being confined in most instances to districts inhabited by the lowest strata of society, there is still a much higher object in view, that of redeeming lowest humanity through the children giving the world better, braver, and truer men and women” (Newtown Free Kindergarten school: Sale of gifts, *SMH*, October 17 1898, p.3).

Perhaps constructing FK for poor constructed it as a 'deficient' education – however did have education for rich too.

Constructs those from lower order as less worthy.

Appendix 9: Summary of Findings: Separate Education.

ECEC Constructed as Separate Education:			
Contemporary Constructs	Contemporary Problematisation	Historical Constructs	Historical Problematisation
<p>Early childhood is constructed as the period birth to eight years.</p> <p>ECEC is constructed as education for children aged birth to eight years.</p> <p>Two distinct constructs of ECEC exist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school based • prior-to-school. <p>Prior to school ECEC is separate from later education.</p>	<p>Based on problematic assumptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EC period is separate: Objectifies and 'others' young children. • Assumes EC important: Legitimises intervention and tends to be pessimistic. <p>Marginalises ECEC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not universally available. • Contributes to care / education dichotomy. <p>Children need to cross educational borders.</p> <p>ECEC seen as preparation not education in its own right.</p> <p>BUT We may need to acknowledge young children are different in order to assist them. If not separate then ECEC may not exist.</p>	<p>Emerged within Economic discourses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education of poor as too expensive. <p>Education for children younger than 6 years emerged as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An unnecessary expense. • Children too young to learn. • Dangerous to their health. • Outside parameters of state provided education. 	<p>Excluded young children from state provided schooling.</p> <p>Tended to construct young children as incapable.</p> <p>Supposed health concerns are unsubstantiated.</p> <p>Ignored long history of young children attending schools.</p> <p>Advocates of ECEC needed to overcome these constructs of young children and ECEC.</p> <p>BUT Created the exigency for a separate ECEC.</p>

Appendix 9: Summary of Findings: Separate Education.

Appendix 10: Summary of Findings: Progressive Education.

ECEC Constructed as Progressive Education			
Contemporary Constructs	Contemporary Problematisation	Historical Constructs	Historical Problematisation
<p>Progressive Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child-centred. • Play-based. • Evolving. 	<p>Reflects dominant liberal / progressive ideologies of freedom and focuses on the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freedom illusionary. • Limits education. • Places blame for failure on the individual. • <p>Play becomes an instrument of power:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colonised. • Limited 'romanticised' view of play. • Contributes to the marginalisation of ECEC. • <p>Dynamic nature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests uncertainty. <p>BUT Focused on children. Enjoyable learning. Responsive to change.</p>	<p>Emerged within liberal / progressive discourses :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased interest in children. • Calls for educational reform. • KG constructed as progressive education. <p>FK emerged as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A model of progressive education. • Early childhood education. • Preparation. • Child-centred. • Play-based. • Dynamic and shifting. 	<p>Children under scrutiny.</p> <p>Reinforced boundary between early education and later education.</p> <p>Preparation construct mitigated against the implementation of KG in schools.</p> <p>Focused on individual.</p> <p>Colonised play.</p> <p>Viewed as faddish.</p> <p>BUT Arguably more humane. Reflects willingness to change.</p>

Appendix 10: Summary of Findings: Progressive Education.

Appendix 11: Summary of Findings: Scientific Education and Care.

ECEC Constructed as Scientific Education and Care			
Contemporary Constructs	Contemporary Problematisation	Historical Constructs	Historical Problematisation
<p>Scientific Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informed and upheld by scientific research. • Concerned with children's development. 	<p>Built on questionable truth claims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upholds dominant western ideals. <p>DAP challenged:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Scientific' ECEC practices continue to lead to inequitable practices. • Governs children. • Focused on child development not curriculum. <p>BUT Problematisation perhaps overstates the influence of science on ECEC.</p> <p>Science gives valuable insights into children's development, growth and learning.</p> <p>Scientific research increasingly recognises ecological factors influencing children's lives.</p> <p>Scientific research legitimises ECEC practices.</p>	<p>Emerged within scientific discourses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children became focus of enquiry. • Recognition of the importance of environment on children's development. • Calls for education to be more 'scientific'. • KG constructed as 'scientific' education. <p>ECEC merged as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECEC based on scientific knowledge. • FK scientific teaching. 	<p>Questionable knowledge base. Increased the power of the middle-class.</p> <p>Objectified children as public bodies.</p> <p>Studies conducted of negligible value.</p> <p>Excluded parents.</p> <p>Dubious links to eugenics.</p> <p>BUT Increased understanding about the importance of the environment on children's lives.</p> <p>Upheld the value of ECEC.</p>

Appendix 11: Summary of Findings: Scientific Education and Care.

Appendix 12: Summary of Findings: Socially Just Education.

ECEC Constructed as Socially Just Education			
Contemporary Constructs	Contemporary Problematisation	Historical Constructs	Historical Problematisation
<p>Socially just:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rescues children by ameliorating and compensating for disadvantage. • Reforms society by challenging inequitable practices. 	<p>Constructs children as vulnerable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May contribute to children's vulnerability. • Isolates children from 'real world'. <p>Curriculum may perpetuate dominant ideals.</p> <p>Inequitable access to high quality ECEC perpetuates injustice.</p> <p>Constructs teachers as saviours:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May contribute to poor working conditions in ECEC. <p>BUT Socially just ideals are deeply held convictions.</p> <p>Reflects a desire in the field to create socially-just practices.</p>	<p>Emerged within liberal / progressive discourses : New views of poverty:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty could be ameliorated. <p>Children innocent and vulnerable.</p> <p>FK emerged as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philanthropic organisations. • Rescuing poor children. • Forming children. • Reforming society. 	<p>Constructed ECEC as deficit education.</p> <p>Focused on children's weaknesses.</p> <p>Focused on morality rather than physical safety.</p> <p>Focused on individual, ignored social factors.</p> <p>Colonised poor.</p> <p>Focused on mothers.</p> <p>BUT A genuine desire to assist children.</p> <p>Offered material support to young children and their families.</p>

Appendix 12: Summary of Findings: Socially Just Education.

Appendix 13: Summary of Findings: National Work.

ECEC Constructed as National Work			
Contemporary Constructs	Contemporary Problematisation	Historical Constructs	Historical Problematisation
<p>National work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in the future potential of children which reduces costs associated with anti-social and delinquent behaviour. A commercial venture that benefits the nation. Facilitates workforce participation. 	<p>Objectifies children as resources.</p> <p>Economic arguments may be flawed.</p> <p>Commodification of ECEC threatens its quality.</p> <p>Competition engendered by commodification may be detrimental to ECEC.</p> <p>Dominance of workforce participation construct may limit ECEC.</p> <p>BUT Offers opportunity to advocate for ECEC in powerful ways. Ensures accountability.</p>	<p>Emerged within nationalist discourses: Increased interest in Australia as a nation.</p> <p>Children seen as valuable assets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concern with their welfare. Interest in investing in children. <p>Children seen as potentially dangerous:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> need management. <p>Education a means of crime prevention.</p> <p>ECEC emerged as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saving children by providing work related care and a medicalised model of care. Producing future productive citizens. Crime prevention. 	<p>Contributed to the care / education dichotomy.</p> <p>Commodified children. Instrumental view of education.</p> <p>Upheld the construct of children as dangerous</p> <p>BUT Provided legitimisation for ECEC.</p> <p>Gave status to ECEC professionals by constructing them as doing important 'national work'.</p>

Appendix 13: Summary of Findings: National Work.

Appendix 14: Summary of Findings: Women's Work.

ECEC Constructed as Women's Work			
Contemporary Constructs	Contemporary Problematisation	Historical Constructs	Historical Problematisation
<p>Women's work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work done by women. • Work done for women. 	<p>Naturalises ECEC as women's concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subjugates women. • Disadvantages poor women. • Limits men's participation. • ECEC seen as a natural attribute not professional. • Upholds cultural anxiety about non-maternal care. • Upholds view ECEC done for love not reward. <p>BUT Legitimises women's involvement in ECEC.</p> <p>Provides an important profession for women.</p> <p>Provides important service for women.</p>	<p>Emerged within gender discourses:</p> <p>Essential women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women essentially different from men. <p>New woman:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for women to become politically active. • Increased participation in education. • Increased workforce participation. <p>ECEC emerged as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimate employment for women. • Education for women, both professional training and mother education. • Work done for the benefit of women. 	<p>Perpetuated gender role segregation that disadvantaged women.</p> <p>Professionalisation of ECEC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • created a hierarchy. • mothers blamed for children's 'deficits'. • <p>Reinforced childcare as a women's issue.</p> <p>Non-maternal care constructed as 'unnatural'.</p> <p>BUT Created the opportunity for women to enter into public life.</p> <p>Created 'niche' employment market for women.</p> <p>Women were actively constructing ECEC within the confines of their day.</p>

Appendix 14: Summary of Findings: Women's Work.