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When Religious Values and Sex Education Intersect: Critical Perspectives



‘Folk media, religion and sex education’

Presented by Anna Hickey-Moody, RMIT University, Melbourne

Anna Hickey-Moody is Professor of Media and Communication, an Australian Research Council Future Fellow and an RMIT University Vice Chancellor’s Senior Research Fellow. Anna is located in the Digital Ethnography Research Centre where she leads the Creative Research Interventions in Methods and Practice (CRIMP) feminist research collective. She currently supervises 6 PhD students and holds honorary appointments at Goldsmiths and Manchester Metropolitan University. She has written 5 books.



‘Modern Values, Traditional ‘Muslim’ Parents and LGBTQI + Rights’

Presented by Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen and Sulamith Graefenstein
The Australian National University

Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen is the Head of the School of Sociology at The Australian National University. She has undertaken research in the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. Her research focuses on building transdisciplinary understanding of sexuality and gender across diverse lifeworlds, taking account of issues related to sexual citizenship, cultural and religious difference and technologies of sexuality, education and health. She is associate-editor of Sex Education, and co-editor with Louisa Allen, of the Handbook of Sexuality Education (Palgrave).



Date

Monday 17th of
March 2020



Time

6pm – 8pm



Venue

UniSA City West Campus
JS1-13 (Jeffery Smart
Forum)

‘Folk media, religion and sex education’

Presented by Anna Hickey-Moody, RMIT University, Melbourne

Children’s art is a powerful form of folk media that communicates their life worlds, experiences, and beliefs. This paper explores the work of Muslim children as part of the ‘Interfaith Childhoods’ trans-national, multi-faith research project. The mixed methods used in the study include collaborative art making between children, which often involves Muslim children working together, and / or working with children from other religions and secular worldviews to develop visual representations of their world and images of what they want the future to look like. In the process of this encouraged collaboration, children create visual depictions of “what really matters” to them through drawing, painting, collaging and a range of three-dimensional practices such as papier-mache and tent cities. This paper reads the art works of Muslim children as folk media expressions of religion and identity. Alongside these quotidian knowledges about religion, which are pedagogically powerful because of their relatability and work as a vernacular religious education, other forms of folk media provide different educational experiences, such as children’s first experiences of sex education. The user generated content platform Tic-Tock features children speaking to children about experiences that range from frivolous science experiments to sexual encounters. These various forms of folk media need to be taken seriously because they express children’s life worlds more accurately than formal school curriculum or political debates about religious exemptions. I will propose a concept of folk media that robustly accounts for the everyday mediated experiences of children’s worlds and situates the child’s knowledge experience at the centre of debates surrounding exemption, faith and sex.

‘Modern Values, Traditional ‘Muslim’ Parents and LGBTQI + Rights’

Presented by Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen Co-authored with Sulamith Grafenstein

The Australian National University

Protests related to the introduction of Statutory Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) in Birmingham primary schools have been the subject of much media debate, court actions and public commentary. This paper contextualises these protests and the associated media reporting in relation to recent histories of suspicion based on allegations associated with Birmingham’s Muslim communities. Particularly, in Birmingham, statutory SRE is also linked to past panics related to ‘Prevent’ and to the ‘No Outsiders’ curriculum which teaches tolerance of diverse groups, including those of different races, genders and sexual orientation. Drawing on Jasbir Puar’s conceptual term ‘homonationalism’, we consider how notions of whiteness inform understandings of ‘Britishness’ in media representations that contribute towards an increased racialisation and ‘othering’ of the English Muslim parent community in Birmingham in the context of these protests. We also raise questions about the absence of young people in this divisive debate. By way of conclusion, we therefore look at recent international surveys conducted in Canada and Australia that take account of young people’s religious and non-religious worldviews, including their thoughts on inclusive sexuality education.

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